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Résumé de l'article

Le paradoxe de la diversité est tel que les interventions réussies en matière de diversité nécessitent le soutien du leadership alors même que la diversité dans le leadership fait défaut. Afin d'explorer ce paradoxe au Royaume-Uni, nous examinons les progrès dans la diversité des rôles de leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur, secteur dans lequel il existe beaucoup de soutien à la diversité.Grâce à un examen critique et exhaustif de la littérature, nous illustrons la persistance des inégalités qui entravent la diversité et l'inclusion dans le leadership. Nous étudions les formes saillantes de l'inégalité en matière de leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur, y compris la recherche sur le genre, l'origine ethnique, la classe sociale, l'orientation sexuelle ainsi que le handicap. Nous démontrons que la diversité dans le leadership demeure un défi important dans l'enseignement supérieur. A travers cet exemple, nous démontrons que le leadership occupe un espace contradictoire en termes de diversité démographique, à la fois en tant qu'objet de critiques en raison de son profil homogène mais également en tant que force essentielle pour progresser vers une plus grande égalité. Nous étudions le paradoxe de la relative homogénéité du leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur contre ses rôles de champion et de promoteur de l'égalité. Il s'agit d'identifier les moyens par lesquels la diversité démographique ainsi que le potentiel du leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur peuvent être encouragés.

The paradox of diversity in leadership and leadership for diversity*

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Résumé

Le paradoxe de la diversité est tel que les interventions réussies en matière de diversité nécessitent le soutien du leadership alors même que la diversité dans le leadership fait défaut. Afin d'explorer ce paradoxe au Royaume-Uni, nous examinons les progrès dans la diversité des rôles de leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur, secteur dans lequel il existe beaucoup de soutien à la diversité.Grâce à un examen critique et exhaustif de la littérature, nous illustrons la persistance des inégalités qui entravent la diversité et l'inclusion dans le leadership. Nous étudions les formes saillantes de l'inégalité en matière de leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur, y compris la recherche sur le genre, l'origine ethnique, la classe sociale, l'orientation sexuelle ainsi que le handicap. Nous démontrons que la diversité dans le leadership demeure un défi important dans l'enseignement supérieur. A travers cet exemple, nous démontrons que le leadership occupe un espace contradictoire en termes de diversité démographique, à la fois en tant qu'objet de critiques en raison de son profil homogène mais également en tant que force essentielle pour progresser vers une plus grande égalité. Nous étudions le paradoxe de la relative homogénéité du leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur contre ses rôles de champion et de promoteur de l'égalité. Il s'agit d'identifier les moyens par lesquels la diversité démographique ainsi que le potentiel du leadership dans l'enseignement supérieur peuvent être encouragés.

Mots clés : Diversité, égalité, leadership, enseignement supérieur, genre, origine ethnique et handicap

Abstract

The paradox of diversity is that successful diversity interventions require leadership support when diversity in leadership positions is so evidently lacking. In order to explore this paradox in the UK, we examine progress towards demographic diversity in leadership roles in the higher education sector, a sector in which there is much espoused support for diversity. Through a critical and comprehensive review of the literature, we illustrate the persistent nature of inequalities that hinder diversity and inclusion in leadership. We examine studies on salient forms of inequality in higher education leadership including research on gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and disability. We show that leadership diversity remains a significant challenge for the higher education sector. Drawing on the example of this sector, we demonstrate that leadership occupies a contradictory space in terms of demographic diversity, both as the focus of criticism due to its homogeneous profile and counter-intuitively as an essential force for progress towards greater equality. We investigate the paradox of the relative homogeneity of higher education leadership set against its role for championing and promoting equality and identify ways in which demographic diversity as well as the progressive potential of higher education leadership may be fostered.

Keywords: diversity, equality, leadership, higher education, gender, ethnicity, disability

Resumen

La paradoja de la diversidad trata de que las intervenciones exitosas de la diversidad requieren apoyo de la direccion cuando la diversidad en las posiciones de liderato està obviamente faltando. Para explorar esta paradoja en Gran Bretana, examinamos el progreso hacia la diversidad demografica en los papeles del liderato en el sector de la educacion/ensenanza superior, sector en el cual se encuentra mucho apoyo para la diversidad. A través de una resena critica y comprensiva de la literatura, ilustramos la naturaleza persistente de las inegualdades que dificultan la diversidad y la inclusion en el liderato. Examinamos los estudios sobre las formas salientes de inegualdad en la direccion de la educacion/ensenanza superior incluso la investigacion en campos de genero, etnicidad, clase, orientacion sexual and discapacitad. Ensenamos que la diversidad del liderato sigue siendo un desafio significativo para el sector de la ensenanza superior. tomando ejemplo en este sector, demostraremos que el liderato ocupa un espacio contradictorio en términos de diversidad demografica, ambos como el enfoco de una critica debida por su perfil homogeneo y, de forma contra-intuitiva, como fuerza essencial para el progreso hacia una igualdad mas grande. Investigamos la paradoja de la homogeneidad relativa de la direccion de la educacion/ensenanza superior en oposicion con su papel de lucha y promocion de la igualdad y identificamos maneras de una posible instigacion tanto de la diversidad demografica como el potencial progresivo de la direccion de la educacion/ensenanza superior.

Palabras claves: Diversidad, Igualdad, Liderato, Direccion, Educacion/Ensenanza Superior, Género, Etnicidad, Discapacitad

The diversity management literature suggests that leadership support is a prerequisite for the effective design and intervention of diversity interventions (Nishii and Özbilgin 2007). However, the literature fails to consider that the leaders from whom we expect support for diversity interventions are not themselves from a diverse group. We

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demonstrate in this paper that where leadership is homogeneous, leadership support may remain a naïve expectation. We have chosen the higher education sector as a case example, given that it is a sector characterised by its readiness to embrace the liberal values of equality and diversity, despite scant evidence of change in the demographic diversity of its leadership.

In particular, we seek to address the question of why, in spite of various initiatives, the leadership of higher education is starkly lacking in diversity (Race for Opportunity 2010) and at the same time why 'inequality regimes' (Acker 2006), processes through which gender, class and ethnicity-based inequalities are entrenched, persist within the sector. Disabled people, women and ethnic minorities are, for example, still markedly underrepresented in positions of authority, including as Vice-Chancellors in UK higher education institutions. While demographic data are not yet available on those in senior management positions in the UK, it is well-known that only one minority ethnic Vice-Chancellor has ever been appointed as head of a British institution (Bahra 2011). Key objectives of the research on which this paper is based, were to synthesise the literature on leadership and diversity primarily with reference to disability, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age and socio-economic group in order to explore the paradox of diversity and leadership in the higher education sector.

The lack of demographic diversity in the upper echelons of higher education as highlighted in recent reports (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education 2009, Race for Opportunity 2010) contradicts the strengthening legal and policy contexts of anti-discrimination that render many forms of inequality illegitimate and unlawful in the UK. The Equality Act 2010 aims to harmonise existing discrimination laws, strengthen them and enhance progress towards equality. The Equality Bill was introduced following the amalgamation in 2007 of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equality Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission into the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC has also taken on responsibility for other aspects of equality including sexual orientation, age, religion and belief and human rights. Set in this context, the paucity of progress towards diversity in leadership positions in higher education deserves careful scrutiny.

Aside from the persistent underrepresentation of certain groups, it is crucial to consider the role of leadership itself in tackling inequalities, a point that has been made in two key studies on the experiences of disabled and black staff in further and higher education (Commission for Black Staff in Further Education 2002, NIACE 2008). Both reports highlight the vital role of leadership in tackling inequalities. Throughout the NIACE report's recommendations, emphasis is placed on the key importance of good leadership stating for instance, that:

> The key message flowing from our findings and other evidence is that there is widespread institutional discrimination in the lifelong learning sector. Indeed, some organisations are not compliant with their Disability Equality Duty. This is in large part the result of the systematic failure in public policy to address the needs of disabled staff. Effective leadership and management will be needed to counter this and achieve disability equality. (p.11, NIACE 2008)

Lumby (2007) not only concurs with this view, but in addition states that the role of leadership with regard to equality is coming under increasing scrutiny. Though leaders may not hold all the power and access to resources, they have the potential to disrupt power relations through their formal role of authority and access to other sources of power. They can validate the experiences of disempowered groups and provide support in times of backlash to equality initiatives. The management of diversity in higher education seems increasingly justified, given that higher education institutions are becoming more diverse in terms of the student body with women for example, now constituting more than half of all UK undergraduates (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2012). Furthermore, the higher education workforce is becoming more diverse as a result of the globalisation of knowledge and the crossnational transference of professionals engaged in academic research (Smetheram et al 2010). Brown (2004) contends that given the inevitability of more diverse staff and student bodies, higher education institutions '…do not only have a responsibility but must assume leadership position on this crucial issue of preparing citizens for the world they now face' (p.21).

We first explain the methods of our review and go on to explore the paradox of leadership and diversity through a number of themes that emerged in our review of the extant literature.

Methodology

This study draws on a review of the literature which was funded by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, a body set up in 2004 to provide support and advice on leadership, governance and management for UK universities and higher education colleges.

The research comprised of two elements – convening an expert group of academics experienced in areas relating to the topic being studied and carrying out an in-depth literature review. An expert panel was convened in order to include experts across salient strands of diversity such as gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and age. Members of the panel were invited to suggest leads for the literature review across significant themes, to comment on drafts of the report and highlight areas for further development. This is common practice in the UK for national reports and serves to solicit critical peer review for the research. The panel was made up of five experts chosen

on the basis of their significant contributions to the field of equality and diversity. They had extensive knowledge of their fields, having published widely in disability studies, women's employment, diversity and leadership, the sociology of race and ethnicity and diversity management. The panel attended two face-to-face meetings with the first held at the start of the project and the second, four months later. Members were asked to give an overview of their own perspectives on the issues and project. This was followed by a discussion of key themes emerging from the literature. A note of the meeting was then circulated together with a list of articles and books mentioned at the meeting.

The group kept in touch via email. This method of communication proved to be a valuable forum for debate and discussion as well as providing a space to post other relevant publications. Contact amongst the group members was maintained almost to the point at which the final draft of the report began to be drafted. The group met a second time to discuss a draft interim report that the researcher had prepared (the first author of this paper). Members were asked to give feedback on the final report, which then informed the development of the final document.

The guidance of the expert group was critical to the success of the project. Key issues emerged in the course of the discussions, including the variety of meanings associated with concepts such as 'diversity', 'identity' and 'diversity management', the sorts of problems that marginalised groups face when studying or working in higher education and the types of experience they encounter when promoted to leadership positions.

An extensive literature search was carried out using journals on the sociology and psychology of education, educational administration and public sector management, management in general, higher education studies, disability studies, race studies, women's studies and comparative education. These were identified using the collections of the Newsam Library and Archives of the Institute of Education, University of London that holds extensive collections of current and historical materials on education and related areas of social science. Further journals were identified through citation in our initial database of publications. All back numbers in the years 2002-09 were searched using the journal publishers' websites. From this search around 200 key papers were identified. Key reports were identified, particularly those published by commissions set up to investigate the experiences of minority groups in higher and further education. Books and book chapters relevant to the topic were also identified. The literature was then grouped into thematic areas and used as a basis on which to structure the final research report.

Key themes that emerged from the literature review included the nature of organisational inequalities on the basis of disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, class and other factors, leadership theory and the suppression of 'difference', challenges to traditional leadership theory emanating, for example, from the disability movement, contextual issues such as new managerialism and neoliberalism and their impact on higher education, equity-related themes in higher education research including scholarship and equity and issues around career advancement and diversity. The final theme was around leading for diversity in educational contexts. While these themes emerged in the main report, we focus in this paper on the paradox of leadership.

Our analysis begins by examining the leadership of higher education through the lens of diversity. We look at chief executive level (Vice-Chancellor), governance and management. We then consider what the evidence has to say about organisational practices that appear to perpetuate inequalities. Next, the paper seeks to explain why inequalities persist and even appear to be worsening. Finally, we consider initiatives and research to which the sector can look in order to assist it in better championing equality and fostering demographic diversity.

Diversity in higher education leadership

Gender, ethnic and class penalties are reflected in the demographic characteristics of UK vice-chancellors (VCs). Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008) analysed the characteristics of this group using data from the period 1997 to 2006 inclusive and found that almost all VCs appointed since 1997 were white, twenty-three per cent had been undergraduates of either Oxford or Cambridge and 28 per cent had been postgraduates at these universities. Furthermore, VCs in the pre-92 universities, those institutions reputed to be more research focused, were twice as likely to have been to Cambridge or Oxford as VCs in post-92 universities, many of which were polytechnics before acquiring university status. Additionally, the post-92 institutions have played a key role in widening access to higher education. In terms of gender, 85 per cent of VCs were male. Fewer women VCs were married or living with a partner (68 per cent) compared with 96 per cent of the male VCs. A further difference in personal circumstances was that half of female VCs had children compared with 81 per cent of male VCs. Disciplinary backgrounds also varied by gender; though the majority of VCs appointed in this period came from social science backgrounds, all 17 women VCs who took up post were social scientists. The male VCs additionally had backgrounds in science, business administration, arts and humanities, medicine, law and accountancy and technology and engineering. As mentioned earlier, only one non-white VC is leading a UK higher education institution and given that ethnic minorities are better represented as students in higher education as a proportion of their total population, albeit concentrated in the less prestigious institutions (Race for Opportunity 2010), it must be asked why this is not mirrored in the leadership of higher education institutions.

A critical locus of influence in higher education institutions is the governing body (or Court as it is termed in Scotland), defined by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) (2009) as having collective responsibility for overseeing the activities of institutions, determining its future path and nurturing an environment that will achieve the institution's mission and maximise the potential of students. In addition, governing bodies should ensure compliance with the statutes, ordinances and provisions regulating institution and their frameworks. The CUC guidance states that the governing body should 'ensure non-discriminatory systems are in place to provide equality and diversity of opportunity for staff and students (p.10).

In terms of the diversity of the governing bodies themselves, data on their demographic profile is not collected on a regular basis, thus necessitating reliance on survey data and anecdotal evidence. A report by Equality Challenge Unit (2008) acknowledged the limitations of the data in this area. A snapshot produced for research by Cranfield University on how governing bodies engage with equality and diversity issues (Anderson et al 2009) showed that not all the governing bodies who participated in their research monitored for gender composition (73 per cent), and even fewer monitored for race (46 per cent), age (40 per cent), disability (33 per cent) and religion (eight per cent). As regards the actual composition of the governing bodies, women were just over 30 per cent of governors and 17 per cent of chairs. The demographic profiles of governors by ethnicity and disability were not available due to incomplete data.

Similarly, few data are available at management level, although a study of Scottish further and higher education (McTavish and Miller 2007) produced a wealth of quantitative data on the gender balance of management in these sectors indicating that women in Scotland are 25 per cent more likely than men to enter higher education as students but they make up only 40 per cent of academic staff. Women in higher education in Scotland are underrepresented in the highest positions and are overrepresented in non-permanent, part-time jobs. Women make up 14 per cent of professors in Scotland. Seventy per cent of Court members are men. There is a gender pay gap of 18 per cent. There are only three women principals of Scottish universities, which is 15 per cent of the total. The Scottish statistics thus also display a dismal picture of gender disparities across the sector including in roles at leadership level.

Gaining a professorship is clearly an important stepping-stone to a senior position in higher education, Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008) for instance, found that 82% of the VCs in their study were professors. Recent data indicate that white men continue to dominate the professoriate; an analysis of the 2009-10 HESA dataset showed that 76 per cent of UK national staff and 67 per cent of non-UK national staff in professorial roles were white males (ECU 2011). This contrasts starkly when ethnicity is taken into account; black and minority ethnic (BME) UK national men made up three per cent of the professoriate, BME UK national women made up one per cent, non-UK BME men made up five per cent and non-UK BME women were one per cent. While there is progress in terms of gender representation, though slow, when gender and ethnicity are considered together, representation remains severely lacking for minority ethnic women in the sector.

While quantitative data are useful in providing an overview, qualitative data exploring the experiences of women and minority groups in higher education reveal ways in which inequalities are enacted and reproduced at the micropolitical level of organisations. Feminists and Black researchers emphasize the importance of experiential knowledge in uncovering and confronting many forms of discrimination in the workplace. Maylor (2009) notes that experience is valued both in Black Feminism and Critical Race Theory and argues that the task of applying these concepts to the experiences of Black women is crucial to develop knowledge, understandings of Black women's research experiences, meanings that they give to these and the forms of discrimination that they face.

Maylor (2009) discusses the experiences and challenges that Black female researchers encounter when they carry out research, particularly when the research focuses on such issues as equality, diversity and race. She describes one incident in which her identity as a black academic researcher is not recognised. A white, European visiting academic assumes Maylor is a helper, leading Maylor to speculate that her skin colour has caused this women to assign her to a slower status position. This is in spite of the fact that the visiting academic is a specialist in citizenship, a field which upholds (or pertains to uphold) such values such as tolerance, respect and understanding of different cultures and religions. Maylor contends that as a Black researcher working in higher education where the majority of researchers are white, and the expectations of funders and institutions are that the researcher is white, she is placed with additional burdens:

> Developing researcher/interviewee relationships can take much longer when one is placed in an environment, which only serves to undermine your well-being and positive sense of being Black. The experiences I have encountered as a Black researcher have not only made me more self-consciously aware of my identity as a Black person, they have also set me apart as being 'different' and as being perceived as such by 'outsider' groups with whom I engage/undertake research with. (p.60).

Maylor concludes that naming one's experiences is a positive way of dealing with experiences of racism while undertaking academic research.

The approach of examining people's experiences at micro level is employed by Morley in her study of women

academics in Greece, Sweden and the UK (Morley 1999). She contends that the conceptual framework of micropolitics reveals the subtle ways in which dominance is achieved in academic organisations. She points out that it is in the everyday practices of negative behaviours such as bullying, manipulation and sabotage that competition and domination are perpetuated, even though these behaviours may seem inconsequential. Morley examines for example, the role of feminism in pedagogical and teaching methods areas which feminists consider sites for potential change. Morley's analysis reveals tensions and contradictions in pedagogy that aims to be empowering but at the same time may be based on simplistic notions of change (Morley 1999). In the next section we explore a number of overarching themes and perspectives that may account for multiple, persistent forms of inequality in higher education and organisations generally.

The paradox of diversity and leadership reframed

A wide array of political, social and economic patterns affects the way diversity and equality are regulated at work (Özbilgin and Tatli 2011). In order to reframe the paradox of relying on leadership to deliver diversity when leaders tend to come from homogeneous backgrounds, we need to explore historically significant patterns which have explanatory power in their specific context (Syed and Özbilgin 2009)

In the particular context of Britain, patriarchy as an on-going historical social system, Black Feminism as collective resistance against the tyranny of multiple forms of inequality and neoliberalism as a political system deserve our attention. In this section we explore how these social, political and ideological patterns shape our understanding of diversity and leadership. In order to explore how these three historical patterns complicate our current understanding of leadership and diversity in the UK, we have selected four contemporary assumptions that collude to retain homogeneity in leadership positions in the UK. These assumptions are the value- neutrality of leadership, elitism in leadership, marketization and the neo-liberal turn in higher education. Arguing that these assumptions are fundamentally flawed, we illustrate their negative consequences on leadership diversity in the UK.

Assumption one: value-neutrality of leadership

Patterns of inequality in higher education, to a great extent, echo those found in organisations in general. Classical organisational theory in the Weberian tradition depicted bureaucracy in its idealised, rational form, as impersonal, rule-governed and value-neutral (Pringle 1989). A major challenge to this view, in particular the claim of value-neutrality and the lack of acknowledgement of racialised, classed and gendered practices within organisations, came from Acker (2006) who argued that organisations are sites of much economic and social inequality in the U.S. and other industrial countries. Acker proposed the concept of 'inequality regimes' as a feature of all organisations that could be characterised as '…loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organisations" (p.443). Inequalities are manifested in the way leaders, managers and heads of department have more power and pay than secretaries, production workers, students and so on. Acker points out that organisations vary in the extent to which these differences exist and that inequality regimes are influenced by historical, political, social and cultural factors.

Acker places less emphasis on disability as a disadvantage in the labour market, even though it is well-documented that people with disabilities face substantial barriers in the workplace (Danieli and Wheeler 2006). Absent from Ackers' analysis is any consideration of religion, sexual orientation and other aspects of difference. Neither is there a thoroughgoing analysis of intersectionality. The dangers of overlooking intersecting forms of inequality are highlighted by Crenshaw (1991) who noted the feminist practice of politicizing the experiences of women and the antiracist practice of politicizing the experiences of people of colour as if they were mutually exclusive. Marginalisation can occur not only through material practices but also through exclusion from discourses of equality and diversity.

Notwithstanding the above critique, Acker's analysis provides a useful reference point for examining inequalities in higher education. Data from the higher education sector, both routinely-collected information and empirical studies, indicate that the sector is riven with inequalities on the basis of the factors mentioned above. Consonant with Crenshaw's research, people in higher education with intersectional identities are required to negotiate multiple barriers in order to achieve successful careers (Carter et al 1999, ECU 2011). Morley (1999) usefully points out that organisations interact with the wider society in which power relations operate on the basis of patriarchy, heterosexism and racism. Mills argues, for instance, that 'organisational life exists in a dialectical relationship to the broader societal value system, each is reshaped by the other' (Mills 1988, quoted in Morley 1999).

Leadership theory, in common with organisational theory, has tended to suppress 'difference'. Parker (2005), for instance, points out that race and gender are suppressed and neutralised in both traditional and feminist analyses of leadership. The value-neutrality of leadership is clearly questionable when considering who occupies the most powerful positions in organisations and how behaviours within these spaces reflect the cultural norms of the dominant group. It has been pointed out in relation to disability, that the dominant construction of leadership connotes a leader who is not disabled, with disabled leaders seen as a contradiction in

terms (Foster-Fishman et al. 2007). This view is manifested in data collected by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) (Disability Rights Commission 2006) that found disabled people were less likely to be working as managers and senior officials in the general workforce than their non-disabled counterparts. One of the most shocking findings of the DRC briefing was that people with disabilities were a small minority in senior positions in disability-related charities with the RNID for instance, having only 13.6 per cent of its managers with a hearing loss.

Further empirical evidence bringing into question the value-neutrality of leadership comes from research in the arena of British politics. The House of Commons provides a stark example of how the norms of the dominant group are woven into everyday organisational practices. In research carried out by Whitehead (1999) the culture of the House tends towards a 'macho' rather than consensual approach, with one MP in Whitehead's study commenting that

> The macho, schoolboy's way of doing things leaves a lot to be desired. At times parliament just sounds a real rabble – you can't believe the heckling (p.23).

Several female MPs with whom Whitehead spoke had experienced physical, emotional and verbal abuse by male politicians in the parties. This included being groped and called 'whores' and 'slags'. A further manifestation of the dominant masculinist culture was the atypical lifestyle required of female MPs involving constant travelling, high pressure, and for women with families, an apparent role reversal in the traditional sexual division of labour, with partners carrying out the majority of domestic work and childcare. This research led Whitehead to conclude that the House of Commons 'remains a culture in which the masculine subject is privileged…….and where competition, aggression and adversarial practices are constitutive of 'the way we do things around here' (p.24).

Several studies undertaken in the 1990s highlighted the presence of sexual harassment experienced by women academics in UK universities (Bagilhole and Woodward 1995, Morley 1999). Bagilhole and Woodward identified a range of experiences in response to direct and indirect questioning including verbal comments, physical conduct and verbal requests. They suggested that sexual harassment was likely to be underreported and underestimated and that experiences of harassment could have a detrimental effect on women's confidence and commitment to the academy. The strong presence of gender as a construct in academic work and the dominance of masculinity was highlighted by one of the research participants in this study:

> A certain way that academics behave is defined by men because they were there first. You have to divorce oneself from one's femininity in order to be taken seriously as an academic. You have to be harder, more professional because of all the preconceptions about your ability which you have to overcome before people actually see you (p.49).

To sum up, value-neutrality remains a widespread assumption in the ways leadership is practiced when the evidence suggests that leadership practices suffer from a wide array of biases. While contemporary studies reveal power imbalances on the basis of class, gender, race and so on in the practices of leadership, the next section highlights how the founding assumptions of elitism in leadership continues to haunt its enactment in the present day.

Assumption Two: Elitism

Leadership is a concept founded upon elitist assumptions. Elitism is also a historically significant pattern in the higher education sector. Leadership in higher education, therefore, is predicated on doubly strong assumptions of elitism. The bourgeois university has its roots in the Ancient Greek gymnasia, libraries and academies. Reserved for the elite, the Greek universities were, according to Faulkner (2011), developed in part as '..a wider elite reaction against democracy' (p.29). Faulkner points out that in spite of challenges from popular movements at various points in history, the possibility for revolutionary change was hampered by knowledge compartmentalisation and limiting access to the social elite, an elite that was predominantly male (Rich 1979). This elitism was not seriously challenged until after the Second World War when the mass expansion of higher education gave rise to the entry of students from relatively ordinary backgrounds. This placed pressure on the rigid frameworks that constrained knowledge production and was one of the factors that led to the international student revolt in 1968 which Faulkner argues was mounted '….against academic structures and curricula that marginalised radical and generalising social theory' (p.33).

Faulkner's analysis is corroborated by Rich (1979) who similarly describes the university up until the 1960s as a privileged enclave, though somewhat more defensible than other sites of privilege. According to Rich, the university was not sufficiently in touch with power abuses and uses and was '….romanticized as a place where knowledge is loved for its own sake, every opinion has an open-minded hearing' (p.132). Rich also notes the radical critique of higher education that emanated from the student movement of the sixties, exposing the racism of higher education and its curriculum, its support for political, economic and military activity, its use as a base for weapons research and its role as a site for the reproduction of the power of white, middle-class men.

Elitist assumptions in higher education and its leadership appear to be here to stay as the current government in the UK is concentrating funding towards a small number of elite, 'world-class' research universities. Research funding in England will be further concentrated in large research-intensive universities because of a redistribution of funds

allocated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Times Higher Education 2012). Unpacking elitist assumptions across multiple levels of social, economic and political life and in higher education leadership is one of the first steps towards questioning the interlocking mechanisms that foster the otherwise invisible causalities between inequalities and elitist assumptions made around leadership.

Assumption three: marketization can improve regulation

The last three decades have witnessed the exposure of economic sectors in the UK that were previously sheltered from market and financial logics to marketization and financialisation. These include health care, higher education, the railways and, more recently, the probation service. Morley (1999) charts the broadening of the higher education market in the post-war period, asking whether 'more means less?' (p.32). In the period before the Second World War only three per cent of the UK population, mainly young men from the ruling classes, attended university. Driven by the view that improving access to higher education would invigorate the economy, the 1950s and 1960s saw the beginning of the mass expansion of the university sector, so that by 1962/3, seven per cent of the population were attending higher education (Ainley 1994). Morley argues that the 1963 Robbins Report (Robbins 1963), that recommended that all young people qualified by ability and attainment should go to university, reinforced the notion of age-related meritocracy. Furthermore, Robbins failed to problematize power relations arising from gender, class and race.

The expansion of the sector has continued apace in recent decades as a result of widening access to women, mature students, people of working class backgrounds and those from minority ethnic groups. By 1994 women made up half all students. Morley is, however, guarded in viewing this as a triumph for equality and feminism, saying that: 'It is debatable whether this came about as a commitment to equity or as a market strategy to widen the consumer base' (p.32, Morley 1999). While increased participation has been achieved for many groups, it has been well-documented that 'non-traditional' students are clustered in the lower status institutions, in particular the post-1992, former polytechnics. In addition, there may be poorer outcomes for some students, such as lower degree attainment for black and minority ethnic students even when school attainment is taken into account (Broecke and Nicholls 2007).

Notwithstanding the critique of higher education policy in the second half of the 20th century, higher education institutions have purported to service the public good and been able to justify public funding. Lynch (2006) states that universities

> …are seen and claim to be seen as the watchdogs for the free interchange of ideas in a democratic society; they claim to work to protect freedom of thought, including the freedom to dissent from prevailing orthodoxies (p.1).

Lynch notes, however, that in recent decades universities have transformed into consumer-focused corporate networks. Although marketization as we described above appears to be innocuous at first sight in terms of its implications for leadership, the reality appears to be different. The marketization of higher education and the increasing emphasis on managerialism has implications for gender. Deem (2003), in a study of gender, organizational cultures and the practices of manager-academics in the UK, finds that while greater emphasis on management has provided some benefits for women through promotion, their perceptions of their practices and expectations that other people have of them are still marked by gender. Lumby (2007) has argued that power differentials have been intensified in organisations as a result of managerialist practices, with leaders using more coercive power through controlling resources and making greater use of surveillance techniques such as audit and quality assurance. Lumby asserts that the current emphasis on performativity and accountability have affected education on a global scale and that leadership contextualised in this way represents a profound embodiment of masculinity. Given this scenario, it is not difficult to account for the lack of women in leadership positions.

Assumption four: The neoliberal turn can foster better leadership

Neoliberalism, which is having far-reaching effects on universities both in the UK and abroad, has been characterised as '….a set of ideas and practices centred on an increased role for the free market, flexibility in labour markets and a reconfiguration of state welfare activities' (p.1, Willis et al 2008). The rise of neoliberalism according to Willis et al, has important implications for social justice, with the privatisation of virtually all services creating a climate of winners and losers as well as various movements for social justice to contest and deal with neoliberal change.

Lynch points out that in a marketized higher education system, access will depend on the capacity of the market and the ability to pay. In democratic, publicly-organised systems, people's rights to education are protected, even if partially. Globally, education is being redefined as a commodity that can be traded on the worldwide market. This is driven by the potential profitability of education which in the year 2000 was estimated to be worth $2 trillion. In Lynch's opinion, there are global efforts to change the role of the university from a centre of learning to a business organisation characterised by an operational rather than academic focus.

Giroux (2011) views neoliberal reform as constituting a devastating and dangerous attack on the democratic values and freedoms of the university which has:

> ….weakened if not nearly destroyed those institutions that enable the production of a formative culture in which individuals learn to think critically, imagine other ways of being and doing, and connect their personal troubles with public concerns. Matters of justice, ethics and equality have once again been exiled to the margins of politics. (p.145-146).

While Giroux is aware that the history of higher education is not untarnished through, for example, its relations with the military and corporate business, he states that the political nature of education has been viewed by the American public and intellectuals as central to a democratic society as well as to the civic mission of the university.

The rapidity and far-reaching impacts of neoliberal reform are remarkable when juxtaposed against very slow change in gender equality in the academy (Morley 2011). Women may be seen as winners and losers; visible as students and mostly invisible as leaders or as producers of knowledge. The invisibility/visibility, student/staff parallel has also been used to describe the experience of black women academics (Mirza 2006).

The impact of neoliberal reform on equality in higher education has been explored with regard to gender and leadership in Irish higher education (Grummell et al 2009). The introduction of marketization into all levels of education and public policy in Ireland has led to a shift from democratic accountability to a market model of education with profound implications for gender. Based on interviews with seven women and men appointed to top-level positions, Grummell et al. find that there is a care 'ceiling' resulting from women's caring work in the home. This is associated with a strong, imperative for the women but not for the men. The care ceiling is carried into the workplace and acts to disadvantage women where the demands of the performance culture require senior leaders to be 'care-free' and thus able to give the level of commitment demanded.

We have considered organisational, historical and contemporary influences on higher education and its power to perpetuate inequalities on the one hand via hierarchical organisational practices, and to challenge them on the other through democratic processes and critical pedagogy, the latter described by Giroux (2010) as an '..educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect power to knowledge and the ability to take constructive action'. The four fundamentally flawed assumptions in the organisation of leadership in the higher education sector have far-reaching, negative consequences in terms of the lack of diversity both as a leadership demographic and a leadership practice. The assumption of value-neutrality, elitism, marketization and the neo-liberal turn appear to have dismantled some of the progress accrued since the 1960s and while opportunities have opened up for many, there is still resistance to allowing non-traditional groups to access power in the form of leadership and senior positions in academia. We now examine the possibilities for change.

Leading for diversity

Leading for diversity is not a well-theorised field, particularly in the context of higher education. Cross (2004) examines the challenge of institutionalised campus diversity in the South African context whose post-apartheid Constitution aimed broadly to create a society which was non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory. People were required to recognise their differences while living in peace and harmony. The Constitution also recognised the right to equality regardless of difference or distinction and disallowed any form of discrimination. The abolition of rights defined by race and the new Constitution meant that South African universities were required to participate in the change process, including by protecting national cultures that were disintegrating, by restoring traditions and reinventing identities based on cultural heritage. Cross states that this is becoming more difficult as globalisation impacts on the South African economy and has meant gearing the curriculum more towards the labour market and adopting a more business-like approach.

Cross highlights the need to sustain research and intellectual activity in the diversity field in spite of the pressures of globalisation and marketization. He emphasises the need for an integrated approach that is driven from the highest levels of institutions:

> ……the paper reaffirms the need for a leadership-driven integrated approach within an institutional planning framework which sets parameters, targets, priorities and clear lines of accountability and responsibility for the diversity project. (p.407)

Cross distinguishes three approaches to diversity – the 'add-on' approach that involves adding diversity or diverse groups into the existing curriculum, the affirmative approach which questions the Eurocentricity of the curriculum and brings in the experience, voices, etc. of marginalised groups and the transformative approach that not only challenges existing curricula but provides '…….a paradigm shift and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from different perspectives' (p.404).

Struggles for the legitimacy of knowledge domains that challenge the status quo have been noted elsewhere. Coate (2006), using archival data and interviews, describes how boundaries are maintained around curricular innovations, arguing that the history of women's studies provides a revealing perspective on how knowledge is socially constructed. This is played out, for example, in the difficulties women's studies has had in establishing adequate resources. Professorships in this area were personal chairs not established posts and this, Coate argues, was an indication of the lack of universities' commitment to the continuation of

this area. She suggests, however, that women's studies may have had an enduring impact through better acceptance of feminist scholarship, pedagogy and theory. A further challenge to be overcome in relation to the politics of knowledge production is in academic publishing. Özbilgin (2009) argues that journal ranking is yet one more form of discrimination in the higher education system structured by gender, class and race inequalities. Perhaps one of Özbilgin's conclusions – that the emancipatory potential of research that improves our understanding of the world poses a threat to institutionalised forms of white, patriarchal domination – in part explains Coate's analysis of the apparent 'failure' of women's studies to survive as a mainstream academic discipline.

Cross, as was pointed above, highlights the importance of planned, strategic interventions to bring about change with actions at the highest levels of educational institutions. There is evidence to suggest, however, that in the UK at least, leaders in the sector vary in the extent to which they acknowledge equality as a problem. A study by Deem and Morley (2006), which included interviews with senior managers in higher education institutions, identified three main groups of respondents: those who felt the main changes with regard to equality and diversity had already happened, those who felt some change was still required and those who had more imaginative but not very radical ideas. Ironically it was found that in those institutions whose equality policies were least comprehensive, the senior managers held strong views about equity.

Lumby (2006) points out that homogeneity and shared vision are desirable goals in leadership, with leaders often seeking appointees who are like themselves, as one respondent in her study of leaders in the learning and skills sector remarked:

> Somebody from a different ethnic background or disability might see things quite differently to you. Making the team more representative of society would make it much more difficult to manage. (p.162, Lumby 2006).

The notion of privilege may offer an explanation as to why leaders express such views. It is doubtful whether the research participant above was conscious of the privilege bestowed on her/him on account of her/his whiteness and able-bodiedness. Leonardo (2004) points out that being white accrues unearned advantage but at the same time he argues that whites engender an '..utter sense of oblivion to their privilege' (p.138). The privileged group, according to Choules (2006) has the power to violate humanity and equality of people outside the groups. She provides examples of privilege as having the power to name the world, the ability to ignore less powerful people with no comeback, and the power to organise things using one's own frame of reference.

This paper has set out formidable challenges for equality and diversity which face higher education and its leaders in the 21st century. In the UK context, there is a need to change the demography of the leadership towards a group of people that is more diverse and inclusive. This recommendation is not easy to achieve as it requires political will. Although the political will does not exist in the UK at present, the European Commission plans to impose a 40 per cent female quota on listed company boards, a move supported by France but not by Britain (Financial Times 2012).

Another recommendation that we have is for introducing voluntary measures. Britain has a strong culture of adopting voluntary measures which are built around a repertoire of rationales, including social, economic, business, legal, and moral cases for diversity. There is a strong case for recognising that the talent pool for leadership is becoming more diverse. Therefore, there are multiple cases for releasing the untapped potential of diversity for leadership. This will require programmes to train leaders for succession planning and the recruitment, retention and development of talent from diverse backgrounds. Starting with awareness-raising, there is a need for stronger interventions at the institutional level to challenge homogeneity amongst leaders in the sector.

It would be naïve to expect a homogeneous group of leaders to effectively champion diversity. Therefore, in order to tackle the paradox of leadership and diversity, work has to focus on both changing the composition of leaders based on the principles of meritocracy and to raise awareness and develop the skills of leaders for the effective championing of diversity interventions in the sector. This dual agenda, although complicated by power relations, is essential if we are to expect long-lasting changes towards equality and diversity in higher education. Current strategies for training leaders for championing diversity should be supplemented with efforts to change the composition of the leadership elite in the sector.

We are going through testing times. It remains to be seen, for example, whether the leadership of the sector can reverse the negative impacts on equity caused by government policy, including the introduction of tuition fees. The most radical challenge to the new funding regime has not come from higher education leadership but from the student movement whose actions culminated in the 2010 student revolt (Rees 2011). Leadership represents huge potential for change, but it is an open question as to whether this potential will be realised in the coming decades.

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