**Female administrative managers in Australian universities:
not male and not academic**

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Women make up 65 per cent of the staff in Australian universities who do not perform academic work. While there is a growing body of research on women in senior management and the experiences of female academics in Australian universities, there is less literature on women working in the administrative stream, especially those in middle management. Using a national sample of 172 university female middle managers, the paper reports on issues for this under-researched cohort. Despite a prevailing Australian paradigm of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination, women commented on many instances of discrimination, masculine culture, inflexibility regarding their carer responsibilities, lack of recognition and opportunity and an academic/administrative divide that was gender inflected. A number of women also queried whether female managers should adopt masculine management styles. Despite indications from this research and the literature that gender issues are worse in other sectors, the numerous comments in this research paint a picture of continued male hegemony that devalues and marginalises administrative women's contribution in the management of Australian universities.

Keywords: administrative managers; discrimination; gender; leadership style

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the experiences and perceptions of a cohort of university staff that is relatively under-researched. The focus is on female administrative middle managers and the large range of gender issues that emerged from a survey of their roles and experiences. Female academics have been studied extensively, and there is a small but growing literature on administrative staff, yet to date gender has not been addressed at length in the administrative stream, and specifically not for those in managerial roles. This is important, not just for social justice and equity, but also for the emerging significance of administrative staff in supporting, or enforcing the new performance regime in the Australian university sector.

Gender in organisations

The primary concern of senior management around the globe is the lack of high quality and abundant numbers of potential leaders (Cormier, 2007). Female managers are an important source of competitive advantage (Burke, Burgess, & Fallon, 2006) and their underutilisation should be of concern to organisations and society (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006).

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However, women often do not do well in organisations due to direct and indirect discrimination, family formation, inflexible workplaces based on the standard male career model and constraints on moving for better opportunities due to their partners' career commitments (Wolfinger, Mason, & Goulden, 2008). In Australia, there have been many years of legislative, social and policy change but women still do not hold substantial numbers of leadership positions (Still, 2006). For instance, while women make up 45 per cent of the workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010), in Australian Stock Exchange top 200 companies, only 2 per cent are chaired by women, only 8 per cent of board members are women, and 53 per cent do not even have one female board member (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency [EOWA], 2010; Women on Boards, 2010).

It may be that men are so steeped in the masculine culture they do not recognise its existence or effects (Ryan, Haslam, & Postmes, 2007), however, long-held ideas and definitions promulgate a culture based on masculine values and behaviours, which are challenged when women move into management (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Not only organisations but also qualifications and discursive constructions of merit are gendered (Benschop & Brouns, 2003). Hegemonic masculinity provides the implicit motive for organisation processes that render women inferior (Acker, 1990; Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985) and consists of constructions of competence, forcefulness, toughness and being unemotional (Bowles & McGinn, 2008; Tubbs, Ottenbreit, & Falk, 2008; Vanderbroeck, 2010). The 'boys club' (homosociability) and the fact that men advance faster than women inhibit women's development (EOWA, 2008a; 2008b). Despite the pipeline argument, it is not just a matter of time until enough qualified women progress through the ranks to assume their rightful place in the organisation's power structure (Benschop & Brouns, 2003; Chesterman & Ross-Smith, 2006). Indeed, in recent times the status of women in management has regressed (Burgess, Burgess, & Fallon, 2010).

Gender in higher education

Since universities are seats of higher learning, critical inquiry and innovation it could be expected that they are more enlightened when it comes to gender equity, but this does always not appear to be the case. Equity has not been attained in universities 'even with a critical mass of senior women, because of work intensification, the "greedy" organisation and the pervasiveness of a discourse steeped in gendered versions of management' (Chesterman, Ross-Smith, & Peters, 2006, p. 88).

Women are still under-represented at senior levels in Australian higher education, although their situation is said to be better than in other sectors. There was a significant improvement in the status of women in Australian universities between 1995 and 2005 (Winchester, Lorenzo, Browning, & Chesterman, 2006) and Australian universities were leaders in advancing women to higher levels with legislation and specific programs improving the numbers, putting this country's performance on a par with Scandinavia, the US and Canada (Chesterman & Ross-Smith, 2006). However, gender disparities have remained, with women more likely to be employed outside the academic stream (Carrington & Pratt, 2003). In 2009, females constituted 65 per cent of the non-academic workforce (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010). Women university managers also suffer a dearth of development opportunities (Wallace & Marchant, 2009) and a discourse of efficiency and economics has replaced that of equity (Wagner et al., 2008).

This paper focuses on female administrative managers in contrast to academic managers who have been well documented in Australia at senior levels (Blackmore & Sachs

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2001; Chesterman, Ross-Smith, & Peters, 2003; Özkanlı & White, 2009; White & Özkanlı, 2011) and in middle management (Wallace & Marchant, 2009), with similar coverage overseas (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Ebner, 2007; Gopinathan, 2007; Krefting, 2003; Niven, 2007; Van den Brink, Brouns, & Waslander, 2006). Administrative managers deserve to be studied in their own right due to their pivotal role in teaming with academic staff to provide improved student outcomes in today's regulated and measured, managerialistic environment (Szekeres, 2006). AQ4
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Administrative staff in higher education

Administrative staff operate in areas other than direct academic teaching or research. Managers in this stream include directors, coordinators, registrars and team leaders; of institutional research, student services, academic administration, admissions, alumni affairs, marketing, public relations, business development, finance, library, human resources, information technology, capital and property (Rosser, 2004; Szekeres, 2006). Extant literature addresses terminology (Conway, 2000), antipathy from academics (Dobson, 2000), performance appraisal (Barrett, 1993), job satisfaction (Rosser, 2004) and development needs (Carroll, 2009). However, these studies tend to be gender blind. 90
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Terminology

We acknowledge the power of discourse to define the terrain and that this has implications for administrative managers' status. Conway (2000) addressed terminology at length, yet the literature remains inconsistent. The first, and least preferred, option is 'non-academic' staff (Szekeres, 2006). The second and relatively traditional term is 'administrative' staff. The management literature has moved on from discussing administration yet this term prevails. Indeed much academic and popular discourse today focuses on leadership rather than the more transactional conception of management (Sorenson, 2007). Further, contemporary information and communication technology has rendered obsolete the clerical, low status tasks that previously characterised administrative work (Noon & Blyton, 2007). A third option, 'allied' staff, is used in New Zealand (Wohlmuther, 2008, p. 325). This term appeals in that it is aligned with health care practice where allied staff team up with medical staff in health care. The term implies a degree of solidarity in the common goal of patient care, whilst (rightly or wrongly) maintaining the distinction from medical staff with greater responsibilities, qualifications or status, but without using a pejorative or exclusionary term. In Australian universities, staff other than academics are also referred to as general staff and industrially classified as higher education workers or HEW. The term fails to capture today's higher education context where many of these positions constitute specialist roles demanding higher skills and qualifications. The final option is professional staff which may be more appropriate and is partly in line with Shelley (2010) who, when referring to research managers, argued that a new type of hybrid professional is emerging. For the sake of simplicity we will use the most commonly used term of 'administrative' while acknowledging its contested meaning. 100
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Academic apartheid

The next issue of interest is the apparent academic/administrative staff divide. Classic organisation theory distinguishes between the line and staff. The line carries out the primary business of the organisation, whereas staff assist the line with specialised services 125

and activities that are indirectly related to the aims of the organisation (Kindig, 1961). In universities, administrative personnel would be referred to as staff, with academics being the line. In theory, staff should only suggest ideas, or try to influence the line, rather than having authority over what they do. Their assistance can be perceived as interference or an attempt to control the line who may resent staff authority (Wood et al., 2004). This general theory is reflected in the higher education literature as a divide between academics and others. Administrative staff have been depicted in problematic ways (Szekeres, 2006), for example, with reference to a binary divide in which administrative staff feel antipathy from academics (Dobson, 2000, p. 203). In New Zealand there was a perceived academic–allied staff divide and allied staff were often overlooked (Wohlmuther, 2008). Administrative staff are viewed (presumably by academics) as ‘the bearers of much that is wrong with the academy, e.g. bureaucratisation, economisation and management by documents’ (Gillberg, 2010, p. 133). On the other hand, administrative staff have been discussed in other research, which genuinely attempts to portray positive aspects of their role (Kuo, 2009).

Invisibility versus increasing significance and demands for more professionalism

Administrative staff perceive that they are overlooked, invisible or forgotten (Castleman & Allen, 1995; Wieneke, 1995; Wohlmuther, 2008). This is a paradox since they have become vital in new government regimes (Szekeres, 2006), which create new challenges (Blättel-Mink, 2008), expect greater professionalism, degree qualifications, new professional bodies, standards and identities (Santiago, Carvalho, Amaral, & Meek, 2006; Whitchurch, 2006).

Despite the range of literature and issues reviewed here, gender has received little attention for administrative staff. Several authors have propounded the notion of women being invisible when discussing gender and the concept of invisibility has been extended to administrative staff as a whole. The explicit situation of being administrative and being female (i.e. not male and not academic) has not been addressed to any extent. For example, Allen-Collinson (2009) examined the particularly interesting role of research administrators. They are perhaps closest to academic staff in terms of their role in universities’ defining line activities, but Allen-Collinson (2009) argued that they were rendered invisible because they were administrators. The argument was not made for invisibility on the basis of gender, even though females made up 77 per cent of the sample. Another study of this role found that men advance faster and are paid more than women (Sebalj & Holbrook, 2009). It may be that female administrators are doubly marginalised.

To understand the nuances of female administrative managers’ experience, systematic qualitative and quantitative research is needed (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006). Thus the experience of administrative managers viewed through the gender lens forms the research issue of interest here.

Method

The method was a mail survey sent to female, administrative, middle managers in all Australian universities. The survey was mailed to women identified as middle managers from the then Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) *List of Senior University Women* (AVCC, 2004). Listing was by invitation or nomination. In Australia, administrative staff are designated as higher education workers (HEW) in a classification structure of 11 levels, from one (lowest) to 10, and above HEW 10. HEW 10+ includes directors and managers who generally are on individual contracts. The population of interest is an elite

cohort since only 40 per cent of female administrative staff occupy positions of HEW 6 or above, and only 6 per cent of female administrative staff occupy the top three levels (HEW 9, 10 and 10+) (AVCC, 2006). The research had full ethics clearance.

The larger research project targeted both academic and administrative managers, although only findings for administrative managers are reported here. A total of 750 surveys were distributed with 342 usable replies (academic $n = 170$, administrative $n = 172$), giving an overall response rate of 46 per cent. This is comparable to Rosser (2004) and towards the high end of mail survey response rates (Neuman, 1994).

Survey items included closed answer questions regarding demographics, educational levels, years in the role, mobility, developmental opportunities and types of work undertaken. Open-ended questions addressed the role of female managers and, of particular interest in this paper, the questions: 'What do you consider to be the greatest challenges facing female managers in the tertiary management environment?' And 'Do you wish to add any further comments about being a female manager in the university sector?' A deeper understanding of social phenomena can be obtained through qualitative methods of exploration (Silverman, 2001), and this paper focuses on the qualitative data collected.

Comments were transcribed from questionnaires to a list, and then analysed by successively defining and refining themes or categories (Creswell, 2002). Each author scrutinised the list independently and ascribed key words to each comment. Where two themes appeared in one comment, the comment was separated into two. Following this, comments were grouped under their relevant themes and re-scrutinised to ensure that there was a good fit. In some cases there were sub-themes and new key words were allocated to capture their particular nature, resulting in smaller groupings. After independently categorising comments, the authors agreed on the groupings ensuring trustworthiness (Healy & Perry, 2000). The results for the administrative staff are reported here.

Sample details

Table 1 shows age, tenure, HEW level and qualifications. These figures reveal an ageing cohort of female, administrative middle managers, with 82 per cent being over 41 years of age, and 42 per cent over 51. Over half the sample (56 per cent) have worked at their current university for nine or more years, with 21 per cent for more than 15 years. The most frequent classification level was HEW 10 (49 per cent).

Two thirds (67 per cent) had at least a bachelors degree, with 39 per cent holding a masters and 4 per cent a doctorate, suggesting a more qualified cohort than in New Zealand, with 30 per cent bachelors, 9 per cent masters and no doctorates (Wohlmuther, 2008). These figures also support the notion of professional rather than general staff.

Role titles included senior human resources consultant, project director, faculty manager, director of innovation/change, head of business development, library team manager, information technology team manager and head of the legal office, among others. These women occupied significant professional roles relevant to important strategic functions of the university.

Working hours are shown in Table 2. Compared to the Fair Work Australia (2010) guideline of 38 hours, only 19 per cent worked these hours or fewer, with the most common response being 41 to 50 hours.

The challenges of being a female administrative manager

The questions about being a female manager evoked large numbers of, and emotive, replies, with the main themes and illustrative responses shown in Table 3.

Table 1. Sample characteristics.

Age (years)	n	%
61–70	2	1
51–60	68	40
41–50	70	41
31–40	30	18
Total	170	100
Tenure (years worked at current university)		
15+	36	21
9–15	61	35
5–8	16	9
3–5	38	22
1–2	21	12
Total	172	99 ¹
HEW level		
10+	55	32
10	85	49
9	19	11
8	12	7
Total	171	99
Highest qualification		
PhD	7	4
Masters	65	39
Bachelors	40	24
Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate	38	23
Professional development/other	15	9
Total	165	99

Note: Some figures do not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 2. Hours worked.

Hours per week	Number	%
<36	7	4
36–40	26	15
41–50	92	53
51–60	40	24
61+	6	3
Total	171	99

The three main themes were about women’s approach to management (17 per cent) and the skills and politics required, being treated differently or discrimination (12 percent) and a more difficult operating environment (11 per cent).

Discussion

In this section the results are discussed using a model of different levels of analysis from organisational behaviour which uses three levels: individual behaviour, the group and the organisation (systems, structure and culture), with the whole set in the context of external influences and the changing environment (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-Marsh, 2008). Themes from the results can be related to each component of the model.

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Table 3. The challenges of being a female administrative manager.

Theme	Details	No. of comments	%
Women's approach to management	Need for business-like approach – confidence – promote self – not willing to apply – want to be liked by all – too nice – learn how to play the game – read political tea leaves – be politically tough – stereotypes – women's approach to management – femaleness	29	17
Discrimination	On appearance – errors of women more serious – seen as a 'girl' who won't understand – glorified secretary – talked to differently – condescending – personal criticism – not being taken seriously – perceived as not as good – skills/ability not recognised	20	12
Changing environment	Reducing resources – getting harder – compliance – budgets	19	11
Numbers/hierarchy	Influence of critical mass of women versus male dominated senior ranks (do/don't have women VC) – invisible women – history of males – long standing	15	9
Work/family balance	Difficulty or impossibility of family plus career – career breaks	12	7
Masculine culture	Rumour – gossip – bullying – victimisation – status and voice attributed to men by men – 'high flyers' – perceived authority – 'top dog' – automatic credibility to men	11	6
Human resource management systems and organisation structures	Lack of career development – mentor – limited skills development opportunity – lack of role models – lack of support – lack of recognition – attitude of senior staff (irrespective of gender) – excessively demanding senior management	10	6
Boys club	Transparency – hidden decision making – informal decision making – boys club – old boy mentality – glass ceiling – more resources to men – networks in traditional male domains	10	6
Office queen bee	Women as a liability – competitive women	8	5
Women working harder	Women doing lots of work to be competitive for top jobs – having to earn place	7	4
No gender issues		14	8
Other		16	9
Total		171	100

Individual level of analysis

Firstly, at the individual level of analysis women's individual behaviour in terms of how to act as a manager (in feminine or masculine ways) emerged. There are individual male behaviours in terms of specific acts of discrimination against women and also perceived incompetence in men's work performance which also relate to this first level of analysis. 230

Should the feminine be valued over the masculine?

The most interesting and prominent theme was about behaving in feminine or masculine ways in order to be successful (which implied fitting in with the masculine culture), compared to being feminine, which was seen as being 'too nice' and not politically tough or astute. The women reported that they needed to learn how to play the game, act more confidently and promote themselves. Mackenzie Davey (2008) recognises this issue in noting that organisations are political and that the political behaviour is based on masculine values. These women articulated what Benschop and Brouns (2003) pointed out, in that definitions of effective management are constructed in masculine ways. 235 240

Individual discrimination

Another theme relates to discrimination. Remembering that this was a cohort of professional university managers, most with a university education, including over one third with postgraduate qualifications, the number and range of responses were remarkable and speak of a pervasive devaluing of female administrative managers. These results suggest that patriarchy is alive and well in universities, as observed by Le Feuvre (2009), and that women face extensive but unfounded bias about the value of their work (Mayer & Tikka, 2008). 245

Group level of analysis

Secondly, the group level of analysis sees male group behaviours such as the boys' club, and other issues in groups of women, such as the office queen bee (Ellemers, Van Den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass, & Bonvini, 2004). Inter-group differences between administrative and academic staff were also noted. 250

Masculine culture and homosociability

Two main themes emerged at the group level of analysis about masculine culture and homosociability. Decision-making is not transparent and male power structures are closed to women. This situation contrasts with university administrative managers wanting equity in institutional and departmental selection practices, to improve prospects for sideways and upwards career movement (Rosser, 2004). The findings about male culture, discrimination and homosociability fit well with Klood (2004). When attributing management style to men, women talked about an overall male culture, specifically about bullying and also the status and voice that men accord to each other but not to women. 255 260

Gender issues that intimated a male 'in group' were mentioned as one of the greatest challenges. This took the form of 'hidden decision making and exclusion from the "real" meetings'¹, and in certain areas such as 'the blokey [an Australian colloquialism 265

for masculine men] finance department' it was seen that senior men accord each other status and voice, which they do not extend to female managers. Further, 'men's opinions are still seen as more legitimate and not much has changed since the 1970s'. There was 'a lack of transparency and informal decision-making among a few men' and 'avuncular behaviour' that was 'condescending and disempowering'. It appears that hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985) persists as the ideal for managers in higher education institutions. Men inhabit positions of power and reproduce social relationships which perpetrate their dominance (Carrigan et al., 1985). It seems that a competitive entrepreneurial and political environment is the norm, despite other research finding that both men and women in higher education welcome the change to a more friendly and collegiate work environment (Chesterman et al., 2006).

Academic apartheid

Another concern for female administrative managers related to 'academic apartheid'. As one comment indicated, 'It's the Feudal system – the aristocracy [academics] and the serfs [administrative staff] and the attitudes and elitism of academics'. Others cited the 'divide between academic and administrative staff and the lack of respect for administrators and their experience and qualifications' and 'the belief that administrative staff are not interested in or are totally removed from academic endeavours'. These concerns were echoed by others and were gender inflected, since 'not being taken seriously by older, male academics' was implicated in this divide. Another woman noted the 'Perception that they [female administrative managers] are not as good' and 'Competition from older, male academics, who think management is easy and they can just move into an administrative role if their research career fails'. As Eveline (2004) found, Australian universities need to realise that these managers are highly professional, want to take part in decision-making and do not see themselves as 'hand maidens'.

Organisation level of analysis

Third, the organisation level of analysis sees comments about the structure of male dominated, hierarchical institutions, including the low numbers of women at higher levels, masculine culture, and unsupportive human resource management systems associated with lack of career development and work/family conflict.

Numbers of men and women

The relatively low numbers or total lack of senior women were noted and this led to invisibility of women or a situation where 'women are relied on as "high performers" but men who are "high flyers" appear to have an easier ride and are better rewarded'. The women felt they had to work harder to be accepted, recognised or promoted. Ramsay (2000, p. 7) also identified this continual imperative for women to re-establish credibility, and how it drains morale and threatens productivity. Other comments included that 'Our uni has no senior females at all and is isolated from networking with other women and there is no support or encouragement from senior males'. This endorses Özkanli and White (2009a; 2009b), who identify the key role that vice-chancellors play in establishing an inclusive culture and gender balance within senior management by putting women in acting roles, providing support and encouraging them to apply for senior positions.

Work family conflict

Another theme was the difficulty of balancing work and care responsibilities. With 57 per cent working over 46 hours per week, it is little wonder that achieving a balanced or care-friendly lifestyle was a challenge. For example, 'We have predominantly female senior management but I still see colleagues struggle with children and elderly parents. Those in management can't work part-time'. The long hours and presenteeism were identified as being at odds with other policies. While universities have family friendly policies, senior management attitudes do not always support them. For example, 'Many female management staff are returning from maternity leave very early because of the pressure put on them by management that "We have childcare at uni"'. These comments are in line with McDonald, Bradley, and Guthrie (2006) who studied university administrative staff with children and found an attitude that fewer than full time hours signalled lower commitment.

External environment

Finally, the changing and competitive nature of the external environment is reflected in comments about general change, challenges and scarce resources. These comments confirm Morley (2005) who observed that the quality movement promotes masculine values and discourse; and also McTavish and Thomson's (2007, p. 421) comments about the 'focus on managerialism and competition provides a context for a re-invigorated 'agentic' gendering'. Female administrative managers appeared to be tuned in to the increasingly managerialistic and performative climate, its gender-inflected behaviours and their need to negotiate the politics to survive.

The second aspect of the external environment is whether universities lag or lead other sectors in gender equity. Some women perceived that gender equity and women's experiences are better in the university sector, whereas others thought they were worse, or getting worse. Other research shows the university sector performs poorly in cross-unit co-operation, wellness and work-life balance (Langford, 2010).

By viewing the research themes around these three levels of analysis plus the external environment from the organisation behaviour model, it can be seen that women's concerns about being a female administrative manager relate to the whole range of the model and are not just confined to one level of analysis, such as their own behaviour or that of individual men. There are collective, systemic and external influences and issues as well. This suggests that the solutions are also multi-level.

Implications for practice

A growing literature promotes new leadership archetypes privileging feminine attributes over the masculine (Sinclair, 2005). Transformational leadership is the *plat du jour* of leadership gurus (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Parry, 1996; Sorenson, 2007). Today's organisational environment calls for a style in which both men and women exhibit such attributes as supporting followers, being consistent, adhering to principles, being considerate of others, recognising them, openness and availability, integrity, trust, and 'walking the talk' (EOWA, 2009). Senior management should be aware of various needs of staff, identify appropriate values and change practices accordingly. Leadership that integrates and creates synergies is vital. Developing organisational and individual capacity in a shifting environment demands these skills (Robinson & Harvey, 2008), and 'retaining women leaders in

the twenty-first century will require an intention to engage them as equals and to co-create a new amalgam of leadership' (Cormier, 2007, p. 4). Some evidence suggests that women are more likely to exhibit the skills and behaviours of this new style of transformational leadership (Eagly, 2007; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Our results imply this alternative, more inclusive and collaborative style would be preferable to these female administrative managers, but as noted also by White and Özkanli (2011), they may be restricted when attempting to develop an effective style. It seems that even if they did aspire to a different style of leadership it might not fit the prevailing culture, structure and environment of their institutions.

Limitations and further research

As with most research, this study exposes both limitations in the present method and opportunities to extend the inquiry. Since the two main survey questions were framed around respondents' experience as a female manager it is not surprising that gender issues were at the fore. Nonetheless, respondents could have indicated that gender wasn't an issue (as did around 4 per cent). They could also have pointed out that it was *better* to be a female manager. In other words negative responses were not the only option to these open-ended questions, yet they dominated. Next, the method for categorising and summarising comments meant the order and size of theme categories were not immutable since it was possible to group and re-group some categories, thus increasing or decreasing their proportion in the total. For this reason the paper is cautious about claiming the order and size of themes is definitive. However, female administrative managers' concerns do appear to be extensive.

The sampling frame used for the study was not an exhaustive list. It may bias the results towards those who are more ambitious, since they were nominated for listing. Such women may confront male hegemony more frequently, thus overestimating the experience of discrimination in the population. Additional research should include female administrative staff from lower levels and also conduct comparisons with males. Next, given that around half of women contacted did not respond, non-response bias is possible. Non-respondents may not have responded since gender was not problematic for them. In this case our results may overstate gender issues. This study adds to the literature by examining administrative female managers in universities, complementing studies of academics at senior and middle levels. The one group that remains unexamined in terms of their gender experiences is sessional or casual academics. Finally, this study was only conducted at one point in time, in one country, with its unique history, culture, policy and legislation. It would be interesting to investigate whether the results generalise to other countries.

Conclusion

Women are still underrepresented in Australian university administrative management. They work in a culture that values masculine characteristics and behaviours in male power structures and cultures. Effective management is defined around masculine values, despite the emerging management and leadership literature that recognises alternative humane and inclusive styles. Clearly for at least some female administrative managers in Australian universities there is a long way to go before realising Kloot's (2004) vision of a new culture with deeper solutions and inside-out change.

The administrative stream is variously called non-academic, general, allied or professional staff. The evidence suggests that the term professional would be more appropriate,

due to their qualifications and specialist roles, particularly in the increasingly performance orientated, competitive environment. This environment does not appear to favour women's experience.

Female administrative managers in this study tended to be older but there were also quite a few relatively new to their role, possibly reflecting the government's increased demands for accounting, reporting and compliance. They work relatively long hours and this has been noted as creating difficulties for managing care responsibilities which are at odds with a culture of presenteeism and performativity.

In terms of main themes, individual instances of discrimination were noted, and these were set in the context of male hegemony across individual, group and organisation levels of analysis, subject to external influences. Issues of a status divide with academics were noted, although this academic apartheid was not the major theme. The major theme appeared to be the tension between adopting a masculine management style in order to succeed in male power cultures and structures.

A large proportion of women make up their ranks, yet gender issues experienced by women managers in this stream have largely not been surfaced prior to this research. They have perhaps been made doubly invisible in the academy due to being both non-male and non-academic.

Acknowledgement

A preliminary analysis of the overall research project data was presented at ATN/WEXDEV International Conference, *Change in climate? Prospects for gender equity in universities*, 2006, Adelaide, South Australia.

Note

1. Direct quotations from the survey are not attributed to protect the privacy of survey respondents.

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