



GENDERING MODELS OF LEADING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (LAP): THE ROLE OF SOCIAL IDENTITY, PROTOTYPICALITY AND SOCIAL IDENTITY PERFORMANCE IN FEMALE ACADEMIC CAREERS

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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL IDENTITY, PROTOTYPICALITY AND SOCIAL
IDENTITY PERFORMANCE IN FEMALE ACADEMIC CAREERS**

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Abstract (75 words)

In this paper we argue that Leading Academic Performance (LAP) expectations in universities are gendered, hindering female academic leadership. Integrating concepts from social identity theory of leadership, prototypicality, and social identity performance we describe how evaluations of female academic performance are shaped by gender social identity negatively affecting the career advancement of female faculty. We then illustrate *how* female academics can perform their academic and/or female social identities in order to be considered as *leading* academic performers.

We all thought that women getting the jobs were all you needed to achieve equality. But it turns out that the experiences of different people are not necessarily the same, or equal, in the same place¹ (Hopkins, 2002)

In Europe the “Bologna Declaration” signed by 46 countries in 1999 promised to make European Higher Education more compatible, comparable, competitive and attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents. One of the major goals of these reforms is “to match the performance of the best performing systems in the world, notably the United States and Asia” (EU website, 2007). European universities have thus recently experienced strong external pressure to clarify and reshape their expectations and models of *Leading Academic Performance* (LAP).

The “business case” put forth to European universities to improve LAP is very clear: The environment of European universities is changing, such that expectations of university and individual academic performance are shifting and broadening. Because Higher Education is embedded in global market economy with performance principles, universities have become goal setting organizations that need to compete on an international academic market (for details see EU website, 2007). Academic labor is thus pressed to become “profitable” scientifically, “prolific” in findings, and patent driven. Research and science are expected henceforth to focus on quantitative gains, marketing strategies, innovation and to comply with “market-oriented” demands. Research is not only to be considered as a public good but also as an intellectual property that needs strategic positioning in the market place. And therefore, to ensure these new performance standards, universities must be riveted on university rankings and value creation in order to establish and maintain international visibility and continue to attract public and private funding. Universities are thus expected to be competing to gain

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recognition for the quality of their courses, for the excellence of their research and for the breadth of the services they can deliver. As a direct consequence, European universities are stressed to clarify, review and redefine their expectations and models in terms of LAP. In other words, European universities must meet the standards of Anglo-Saxon and Asian universities. Thus, it is clear that how to achieve LAP (*at the university and individual levels*) has become a strategic issue for Higher Education in Europe today (see European Commission report, 2005).

Different strategic responses have been adopted by European governments to meet this challenge. Some have favored broader reforms in order to modernize and strategically position their university systems (Jacobs & van der Ploeg, 2005). Countries such as Denmark, Sweden and France have reorganized their Higher Education sector (Bouvet, 2006; Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2005). Other countries such as Italy (decree 133 voted in October 2008) have recently opted for the privatization of Higher Education. In the Netherlands, there has been pressure to implement human resource practices derived from private business models to universities (Karsten, 1999). In effect, since 2000, Dutch universities are no longer managed by academics but rather by professional business managers applying private sector criteria on the academic field thus stressing new performance expectations (Maassen, 2000). Public as well as private funding to universities have also been active areas of debate, where the focus has been on the need to develop new quality standards and new processes aimed at steering the governance of universities towards increased performance (Aghion, Dewatripont, Hoxby, Mas-Colell & Sapir, 2007; van der Ploeg & Veugelers, 2008).

The emergence of new LAP expectations and models has not been innocuous as it has put pressure on universities to deliver more visible results, notably by requiring them to assess more regularly their academic corpus with regards to their performance. Hence, the resulting academic performance management systems do not only rely on global indicators such as

university rankings and other quality certifications (such as EQUIS for Business Schools) but also on *individual level indicators* such as faculty impact factor, teaching evaluations, evidence of service to university and the community, etc. Inevitably, emphasis on faculty individual indicators of performance can affect *how academics actually perform their job*, for instance by leading to academics devoting more time to research than to teaching and service (Taylor, 2001) as indicators tend to be riveted towards research achievements.

In sum, 10 years after the Bologna process started European universities are now placing greater emphasis on measuring, quantifying and objectifying individual academic inputs and on establishing direct links to objective performance indicators. Following the example of the Anglo-Saxon and Asian academic performance management systems (EU website, 2007), as well as the best practices approach from the private sector, European universities have clearly redefined for their academic personnel what it means to be a *Leading Academic Performer*. The question this paper asks is what are the consequences for the already precarious situation of female academics?

Building on the European experience this paper posits that LAP expectations are clearly gendered which hinders the chances of increasing female academic leadership. We start by questioning the view that LAP is gender neutral and presenting an overview of some of the facts and figures of the under representation of women in academia. We then propose a brief review of the major socio-psychological explanations that have been put forth to date. We then build on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to posit that much of the application of LAP criteria and the modalities of their acceptance and transgression are affected by gender social identity group memberships. We then integrate concepts from social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001) and prototypicality (Turner, 1991) to describe how the performance evaluation of leading academics is not simply the act of assessing the dealings and accomplishments of fellow academics; it is the assessment of the dealings and

accomplishments of an ingroup or outgroup member by means of the interpretative lens of a social identity ingroup membership. Furthermore, we link concepts from a recent model on how social identity is performed (Klein, Spears & Reicher, 2007) to describe how academic performance is not merely enacting neutral academic behaviors along the teaching, research and service triad: it is also the purposeful and strategic public expression or suppression of behaviors relevant to a salient ingroup social identity towards an audience of ingroups and outgroups. In this way we offer some new insights into how performance evaluation of peers in universities could lead to biases that favor the attribution of leading academic performance only to those academics (male and female) that are closest to the “ingroup” - masculine prototype. Finally, we discuss implications for theory and research on the under representation of women in leading academic positions.

LAP AS GENDER NEUTRAL?

In the official discourse surrounding the future of Higher Education in general (e.g., debate surrounding university rankings, evaluation of academic performance, etc) LAP is explicitly linked to scholarship and meritocracy. In fact, the academic profession has often been put forth as ostensibly meritocratic (Merton, 1978), favoring universalistic over particularistic evaluation criteria (Leahey, Crocket & Hunter, 2008). Universities have long positioned themselves as focusing only on criteria of scientific objectivity and excellence.

A major implicit assumption that underlies the pursuit of LAP is that individual academic performance (with regards to teaching, research, and service) can be measured through impartial - gender neutral - criteria. Academic performance evaluation methods are clearly positioned as relying on scientifically objective measures such as university rankings, journal rankings and individual rankings. For individual academics this concretely means counting publications in high-impact factor journals along with citations in a limited set of

peer reviewed journals that each university recognizes in establishing LAP through merit only. Indeed, one of the major arguments for academic performance evaluation based on rankings is that they help promote merit and fairness in hiring, as well as in promotion and tenure decisions (Clarke, 2002). But the scientific objectivity of these measures remains under strong scrutiny, mainly from academics themselves who have voiced concern because of the risk of having arbitrary ranking criteria (why only journal articles? why these journals? why English journals only? Etc...) as well as many other more methodological limitations such as productivity not necessarily being linked to impact (Adler & Harzing, 2009; Lawrence, 2003; Starbuck, 2005). The debate on the relevance of these academic performance measures in attributing leading academic positions remains to be settled in European universities as well as in most American and Asian universities though it is beyond the scope of this paper. We argue that a crucial issue being shadowed by the focus on “academic performance measurement” is the gendering of LAP models and expectations.

The objectivity of *science* has been often put to question, specifically with regards to its presumed gender neutrality. The controversy started in the 1970's primarily supported by a feminist epistemological approach to science. The major arguments put forth were that scientific theories and approaches cannot be viewed as a dichotomy between scientific (truth) vs. human (social reality). Scientific theories are affected by the biases of the scientists and the beliefs and values of the society which produces the scientific theories (Rosser, 1987). Even though the social culture of academia leads many scholars to believe that as “objective” scholars they are able to overcome gender biases (West et al., 2005), historians as well as sociologists argue that the development of scientific knowledge is produced within political and social contexts (Keller, 1982). Hence, science is also a social process (Longino, 1990) subject to social, normative and discursive influence.

Thus, LAP, although discursively presented as gender neutral - portraying a scientist engaged in a quest to acquire scientific knowledge and consecration based on demonstrated abilities and competencies - is no less a model embedded in a system where consecration is granted by peers, actors of a social system themselves. The reality is that academics, women like men, are subject to the membership rules of the scientific community which sanctions the way they have undertaken their occupation (Hubbard, 1988). It is by following the proper procedures that academics can be consecrated by peers as being leading academic performers. And since academia has been and still is a male dominated professional community where membership rules have been and still are mostly determined by men and biased in favor of men (Bailyn, 2003; Powell, Bagilhole & Neale, 2004), it is fair to say that the academic profession is NOT gender neutral but a “professional culture based on a traditional linear, male model” (Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley & Alexander, 2008).

The groundbreaking MIT (1999) report on the alarming under-representation of women faculty showed that *equal* in academic merit did not necessarily lead to being equally valued in evaluations of performance, to cite the report: “inequitable distributions were found involving space, amount of 9-month salary paid from individual research grants, teaching assignments, awards and distinctions, inclusion on important committees and assignments within the department” (MIT, 1999: 8). More importantly, this report found that each generation of young women at MIT, including those who were senior faculty at the time of the study, believed that gender discrimination was “solved” in the previous generation and would not impact their career and thus they were being treated fairly. However, the study revealed that this belief had gradually disappeared as women realized the rules were not the same for men and women as they advanced in ranks. The 1999 report had world-wide impact and prompted similar studies in many other universities, particularly in research universities with a strong emphasis on science and engineering (Columbia university internal report by

Applegate et al. 2001; Princeton university internal report by Zakian et al. 2003; University of Michigan internal report by Freese et al., 2004; also See Dominici et al. 2008 for a review of research university reports on gender).

Thus, apparent gender neutral objective evaluation criteria may in fact mask a gendered conception of academic merit (Winchester et al., 2006). For instance, the inflexibility of some academic performance evaluation methods may fail to deal with underlying cultural or social impediments that can prevent women's ascension in academic hierarchy, such as combining family life and an academic career (de Henau & Meulders, 2003; Winchester et al., 2006). In fact, the academic definition and measurement of merit is interlaced with gender inequality and male privileges (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Epstein, 1988; Hopkins, 1999; Martin, 1994; Valian, 1998). For example, formal gender university policies designed for more equity and better recognition of women faculty's merit and contribution to academia have been proven to be quite "superficial organisational arrangements" based on deal-making and rule-breaking between males as a norm (Sheridan, Rindfleish & Kjeldal, 2006). It seems that despite the fact that university policies that focus on merit only when evaluating academic performance are intended to have benefits for women, women actually continue to experience inequity in the measurement and judgement of their academic merit (Baker, 2009 ; Sheridan, Rindfleish & Kjeldal, 2006). Some female academics have even gone as far as to take their fight for the recognition of their merit and their right to obtain tenure to court, filing complaints and challenging the gendered collegial practices (AAUW Educational Foundation & AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund, 2004).

Notwithstanding, discursively LAP is still being verbalized as scientific and as gender neutral. This makes it extremely difficult to voice alternative discourses questioning the meritocracy of academic performance evaluation in regards to gender which could in term

explain the collective denial of gender biases by both men and women academics (West et al. 2005; MIT, 1999) towards the leading academic performer (LAP) models.

In sum, the academic profession often portrayed as gender neutral, remains clearly male dominated. The 2005 unforgettable discourse of former Harvard university president, Lawrence H. Summers on the *causes* of the under representation of women in science clearly illustrates how being male is still seen as an important attribute of LAP (Kray, 2007; The New Republic, 2005). We argue that the gendering of LAP needs to be more explicitly recognized and studied, particularly with regards to the potential negative implications for the already precarious situation of female academics which is reviewed in the following section.

GENDERED ACADEMIA: FACTS AND FIGURES

The extended under representation of women in academia, particularly in positions of leadership has long been recognized. Gender issues have been acknowledged as inherent to the academic field (Burton, 1997; Carrington & Pratt, 2003; Castleman, Allen, Bastalich & Wright, 1995; Chesterman, Ross-Smith & Peters, 2003; Probert, Ewer & Whiting, 1998; Probert, 2005). Moreover, gender inequalities in Higher Education are spread across countries and continents (Husu & Morley, 2000). Some authors have gone as far as to suggest that women may well constitute “the academic proletariat” (Aziz, 1990; Benokraitis, 1998; Halsey, 1992; Hawkins & Schultz, 1990).

Although the percentage of women in the academic profession (at all levels) has grown across Europe in the last 20 years, cross-national research still shows that only around a quarter of academic staff in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands are female, with statistics dropping to less than ten per cent when considering full professor level (Enders, 2000). In Germany for instance, women represent fewer than 10% of senior professorial positions (Majcher, 2001). Scandinavian countries are not to be envied.

Even though they might have some of the most sophisticated equity policies, women are still only 17% of the professoriate in Norway and Sweden (Musselin, 2005). In French speaking Belgium, only 8% of the professorial positions are held by women faculty members (de Henau & Meulders, 2003).

In addition to the lack of female academics in senior tracks, there is also a persistent pay gap which disadvantages women. In the US, where statistics on pay differences seems to be more readily available, a number of studies on salary differences in academia show that female faculty are paid less than their male colleagues even when controlling for variables such as rank, discipline and institutional type (Hampton, Oyster, Pena, Rodgers & Tillman, 2000; Perna, 2001). In Europe, the UK's *Education Guardian* called attention to the gender pay gap "scandal" (MacLeod, 2003). For instance the Higher Education Statistics Agency in the UK revealed that in 2007- 2008 there was still a gender pay gap of 13,9% between male and female academics aged thirty-one to fifty-six (HESA- <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/>). In fact, women faculty's salary disadvantage is present across all ranks and institution types: figures show that on average, academic males are earning 20% more than academic females (AAUP-www.aaup.org).

In addition, as full-time tenure track positions continue to decline while non-tenure track positions and contingent positions continue to rise in academia (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006), more women than men are being hired to fill contingent non-tenure tracks jobs (West & Curtis, 2006). Key to the problematic issue of having more female academics on less prestigious and less secure non tenure-track and contingent positions is the fact that research funding is often more accessible to academics in stable positions (West & Curtis, 2006). In Europe, the UK National Centre for Social Research clearly identified that female academics are less prone to being eligible for research funding applications as a consequence of being on fixed-term contracts, or more junior positions (NCSR, 2000). And because full-time and tenure positions are hard to secure (Hawkins & Schultz, 1990), it has been found that

academic women have to move several times between institutions and/or work in two or more institutions to advance in their careers (Aziz, 1990).

There is also some evidence showing that, just like in the US (August & Waltman, 2004; Long, Alisson & McGinnis, 1993) and Australia (Carrington & Pratt, 2003), women are promoted less hurriedly in European academe. For example in Belgium men have 1,96 times more chances of obtaining an academic promotion than women (de Henau & Meulders, 2003). In France the figure rises up to 2,39 times more chances of obtaining an academic promotion (Boukhobza, Delvault & Hermann, 2000). Even in fields which are seen as more “feminine” like sociology it has been shown that women are less likely to be hired for leadership positions (de Henau & Meulders, 2003; Mirsa & Karides, 1999).

But *why* is it still so hard for women to achieve positions of academic leadership?

GENDERED ACADEMIA: KEY SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

In the past the observed lack of female representation in top academic positions has been theorized and explained by numerous economic, sociological and psychological theories. In this section we focus on briefly reviewing key socio-psychological explanations, namely: the impact of socialization processes, the impact of family roles and lifestyle choices, and the impact of gender biases or sex stereotypes on promotions.

With regards to the impact of socialization, Judith Butler (1993) has suggested that gender is merely a “performative act” rooted in the socialization process. According to Buttler (1993), gender exists through socialization such that both women and men learn their respective gendered roles and the expectations and limitations framing their gendered meanings. Thus, socialization affects how women behave on the job and which jobs are perceived as suitable (Charles & Davies, 2000). In academia, women have been said to prefer teaching and community service over research for the reason that women have been socialized

to be more communion-oriented (Nicholson, 1996; Onsongo, 2000). Socialization has also been proposed to explain why some female faculty perceive their success in academia as being more associated to chance or luck more than to competence (Morley, 2003), or why letters of recommendation for faculty positions more often associate women with teaching than research – “her teaching” vs. “his research” (Trix & Psenka, 2003). Other authors have studied the socialization processes of new female faculty and have shown how systematic gendered messages lead them to feel excluded from being able to participate fully in more powerful roles (Dallimore, 2003).

Gender biases and sex stereotyping have also been put forth as an explanation for the lack of advancement of women in leading positions in academia. These biases have created inequalities in the distribution of academic workload with female faculty carrying heavier teaching and service loads which reduces time for research, a key criterion for promotions (Winchester, Shard & Browning, 2006; Winkler 2000). A recent survey of 265 faculty members in the UK (40% females) found that female academics reported to work overtime more than men because of their heavier teaching workloads (Todd, Madill, Shaw & Brown, 2008). What’s more, women claimed being more encouraged by their universities than men to focus their time and overtime on teaching rather than research. When asked “what is the most important determinant of an academic evaluation?” women rated teaching as being more important, while men rated research as more important. Furthermore, women reported preferences for teaching over research but not men. This survey corroborates past findings suggesting that women are more likely than men to turn away from research due to a strong preference towards teaching (Athena project, 2004). The reported preferences towards teaching over research by women are suggestive of the consequences of the socialization processes discussed above. How women make sense of the teaching vs. research dilemma is

crucial given that in faculty promotion evaluations of teaching *clearly* have a lower status than research (Cooper & Nojima, 2002).

Lifestyle choices and family roles have also been identified as a potential explanation for women's lack of advancement in academia (Jacobs, 2004; Mason and Goulden, 2002; 2004, Wilson, 2003; Wolfinger, Mason & Goulden, 2008). Specifically, reproductive roles and family obligations of female academics have been put forth as explanations for lower and slower advancement (Morley, 2003). Mason and Goulden (2002) examined whether babies matter for the career advancement of male and female PhD students at the University of California and found that men with "early" babies - those with a child entering their household within five years of their receiving the PhD - were actually 38 % more likely than their women counterparts to achieve tenure. In a later study, again with PhD students at the same university, Mason and Goulden (2004) found that female faculty with children under 6 years old were least likely to secure a tenure-track position, contrary to men with young children who were most likely to secure a tenure track position. Advancement might further be hindered by the fact that female faculty with younger children have been found to have lower research productivity (Stack, 2004). In addition, because of their greater involvement in childrearing women may be confronted with structural impediments such as lack of childcare facilities within universities, or the difficulty to travel abroad to colloquiums or research sabbaticals (Mason & Gould, 2004; University of California report by West et al., 2005).

Beyond the issues of time allocation, and family choices, access to information and knowledge on promotion procedures is still problematic and therefore negatively affects women's career choices further slowing their promotion and progress through faculty ranks (Fox & Colatrella, 2006; West et al., 2005). A survey conducted within the UK on gender differences in science engineering and technology research careers revealed that at the assistant professor level women faculty had poorer knowledge of promotion procedures and

criteria and were less likely than their male colleagues to report that they wanted leadership on a research team (Athena project, 2004). The lack of access to information on academic opportunities and on the availability of research grants might be explained by the weakness of mentoring and critical networks of female faculty. Dallimore (1998) found that “both the more significant messages (e.g., like how one balances teaching, research, and service responsibilities in order to get tenure) and the seemingly inconsequential messages (like where to get a stapler or a cup of coffee) are likely to be relayed informally during conversation” (p.20). Because promotion criteria are indirectly linked to collegiality and informal networking (Vasquez-Cupeiro, 2006) and because women have more difficulties in entering the circles of academic power (Acker, 1995), women are hence in a particularly sticky place (Tesch, Wood, Helwig & Nattinger, 1995).

In sum, the alarming under representation of women in leading positions in academia can probably be explained by a combination of the different reasons presented above, as well as other explanations at a more economic level not presented for lack of space. But the question of why women are not perceived and may not perceive themselves as leading academic performers remains to be more directly examined.

IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER EXPLANATION: SOCIAL IDENTITY?

In this section we explore the questions of how gender group membership (social identities as women and/or as academics) in the context of universities affect the way female academics make sense of LAP expectations and models, and how external constraints impact and shape their social identity performance (as women academics). We build on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to describe how LAP expectations and models might be gendered through the social identification processes. We further discuss why women are not perceived and may not perceive themselves as leading academic performers.

A social identity approach contributes to the current debate as it provides an integrative and dynamic account of leadership and performance in academia as gendered intergroup processes. Social identity theory was introduced to advance an explanation on how individuals define their particular place in society in relation to their membership to certain social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The group membership entails a cognitive awareness that one belongs to a group together with emotional and value significance of the member towards his/her group. At the basis of this approach is the underlying assumption that group membership is instrumental for achieving a positive self-definition. In other words individuals define themselves to a large extent based on collective characteristics of the ingroup to which they claim membership (Hogg & Williams, 2000), this includes group membership in organizational contexts as well (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

We argue that a social identity approach can thus explain how female academics make sense and respond to LAP expectations. Social identity can influence how female academics interpret events, how they emotionally react to them and how they behave and go about their work based on the relevance of their membership to specific ingroups (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000). But most importantly, social identity can also be affected by the way others (e.g. the audience) attribute group membership to the individual (Klein et al., 2007). We argue that the extent to which female academics perceive themselves as primarily being a woman or an academic, or as a female-academic subgroup, will shape their thinking, feeling and consequent academic performance behaviors. The context will be important in determining the emotional significance and valence of these social identities (Turner, 1982). Being a female in a university could for instance be negatively emotionally loaded if one views women as a powerless minority that is largely under represented in most universities. Alternatively, being a female in a university could be positively emotionally loaded if one views being a woman as being part of an “elite group”. But women may also view themselves

first and foremost as academics, and distance themselves from being a woman hence not even perceive the under representation of women as a personally relevant issue. Thus, based on the social identity approach we argue that gender social identity will be important in determining how female academics make sense, feel and behave in view of new LAP expectations and models.

The concept of prototypicality (Turner, 1991) is particularly relevant in this discussion and may offer a new explanation of *how* female academics make sense and respond to evolving models of LAP in European universities. Within the social identity approach, the concept of “prototype” refers to a set of attributes that identify and prescribe attitudes, feelings and behaviors that incarnate a member of a group and provides a basis to differentiate ingroups from outgroups (Turner, 1991). The prototype is emblematic of expected ingroup behavior, of what group members should strive to become to fully embed their membership. We are suggesting that the perception of leading performance in academia is highly influenced by prototype considerations of the dominant ingroup in this context. Concretely, we propose that in academia there is a generic prototype that prescribes how leading academics should behave. We argue that this prototype is constructed and adapted to the ongoing changes in academia. The pressures put forth by LAP expectations have inevitably lead to the emergence a LAP prototype that we have argued here is *gendered*.

Based on our previous discussion of the social identity approach we will now discuss in detail how the concept of prototypicality has consequences on the way women academics make sense of the LAP prototype, and how this influences their social identity performance as academics.

THE IMPACT OF THE LAP PROTOTYPE ON FEMALE ACADEMICS

According to social identity theory prototypical members of a group are those members that approximate the most the ingroup prototype (Turner, 1982). The more an ingroup member is assimilated to the prototype the more he or she is viewed as committed to his or her identity and belonging to the group. The theory argues that individuals will characterize themselves and others by relying on relevant ingroup or outgroup social categories. Through this social categorization process, ingroup members accentuate prototypical similarities among group members and accentuate differences between members of ingroup and outgroup (Tajfel, 1959, 1969). In this way prototypicality plays an active role in shaping the social identity of a group as it is the symbol of the group's aspirations in an individual.

Hogg and colleagues (Hogg, 2001; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer & Hogg, 2004) have further suggested that it is precisely prototypicality that plays a key role in leadership establishment. Prototypicality is the basis of perception and evaluation of self and other ingroup members. Thus individuals are highly sensitive to their salient group's prototype. Hogg (2001) insists that the most prototypical members of a group are perceived to best embody the behaviors to which other ingroup members should conform. Again, following our argument that the LAP prototype consists of male characteristics and attributes, it might be particularly hard for women, especially those with very strong female social identities, to embody the LAP prototype and to be associated to the LAP prototype by peers.

The major claim made by Hogg and colleagues is that the more the individual associates himself or herself with the relevant ingroup, for instance as a leading performer in the academic ingroup, the more salient (meaningful) normative characteristics of the prototype of the ingroup become significant to evaluate behavior. Also the more a member of the ingroup is perceived as possessing the appropriate prototypical characteristics (hence masculine academic characteristics

and attributes) the more he or she has a chance of being perceived as a leader. Leaders that are perceived to be more group prototypical are perceived to be more effective and receive stronger leadership endorsement (Hogg, 2001; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

Thus logically, if the LAP prototype is based on male academic prototype, this approach clearly offers new insights as to *why* it may be harder for female faculty to advance to leading positions in academia. For instance, the marked under representation of women in higher ranks in universities and science could stem from the fact that women are less likely to be identified, both by male and female academic peers, as being close to the LAP prototype characteristics and attributes. Similarly, past findings suggesting that fewer women apply for highly competitive research grants could be explained by the fact that women are not seeing themselves as being close to LAP prototype. For example, in French speaking Belgium only 20% of total financial applications on both regional and federal grants are requested by women academics (de Henau & Meulders, 2003).

In this approach to leadership Hogg (2001) further suggests that highly prototypical individuals attract the most attention of the group. The subjective importance given to a prototypical individual behavior has been shown to be disproportionate. Prototypical individuals have their behavior more often positively attributed (Erber & Fiske, 1984; Taylor & Fiske, 1975). Highly prototypical members will be more prone to exercise influence and gain compliance as an effect of social attraction; this is likely to encourage internal attribution and intrinsic ability or charisma giving a leadership status to the most prototypical individual of the group (Hogg, 2001).

In addition, Hogg (2001) has also argued that the ingroup member who is perceived as prototypical (for instance a leading academic performer that is being recognized by peers through an award or a promotion) is underpinned by a depersonalization process. He or she is no longer viewed as a unique individual but only as a match to the relevant ingroup prototype. It is what the individual symbolically represents as a prototype that becomes the focus of attention, not the individuality.

To sum up, the social identity approach to leadership proposed by Hogg (2001) has the potential of offering new explanations of the well established under-representation of women in leading academic positions. Concretely, social identity explanations focus on the psycho-social mechanisms within the individual level of analysis and as such are complementary to other explanations coming from socialization research on lifestyle choices or gender biases put forth in the literature. Based on this approach we have described how the LAP prototype that is predominantly male could have a negative impact on female faculty promotion and consecration. If we accept the argument that LAP prototype is based on male characteristics and attributes, this approach could help explain why women are having a harder time in obtaining higher rank positions of leadership and influence in academia. In other words, most academic females may have a certain lack of fit with the existing LAP prototype. In the next section we push this reasoning further by focusing on the consequences for women of strategically performing one's social identity in the academic context.

PERFORMING LAP

Identity performance has been introduced by Klein and colleagues (2007) to characterize “the purposeful expression or suppression of behaviors relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity.”(p. 3). When performed, group norm relevant behavior such as leading academic performance of female academics, is expected to be recognized by the audience (e.g., academic peers) as a manifestation of group/social identity. Through their behavior, group members such as female academics can claim their social identity as leading women academics and hope to benefit from it while expecting from the audience to recognize the connection between the behavior and the social identity of the ingroup. However, expressing one's social identity is dependent on situational constraints and the type of audience to which the social identity is performed to. Thus, for academics, the acknowledgement of expressions of leading academic performance by females will

depend on who the audience is in a given situation is (e.g., evaluations of performance by the department, the university, or international ranking bodies, and most importantly the composition of these bodies) and of their salient social identities.

The concept of social identity performance entails an important *strategic* dimension with individuals aiming to present the relevant social identity in order to trigger the desired impact on a given audience (Klein et al. 2007). For instance what academics decide to show as relevant with regards to their gender social identity (e.g., leaving a research meeting early to pick up their children) will depend on what they want to be recognized as relevant within the context and constraints in which the identity can be expressed. This could help explain why some women academics may strategically play down being female or being a mother as a function of the audience and as a function of the stakes involved in the interaction.

But as Klein et al. argue (2007) the construction and the confirmation of a social identity, such as leading academic performer will be heavily dependent on the audience's reactions to it. What's more, the audience to which the social identity is performed does not necessarily need to be physically present. This implies that women may actually perform in anticipation of the audience's positive or negative reaction (e.g., not announcing a pregnancy in anticipation of a negative reaction from a PhD advisor).

Building on Klein and colleagues' (2007) concept of social identity performance we have discussed how the expression of social identity is *strategic* and context dependent and thus social identity performance can be adjusted as a function of the desired effect on a given audience. This means that women in academia may take strategic stand points in an attempt to shift the perception of their academic behavior as corresponding to leading academic performance.

Women might thus feel they need to strategically perform their social identity and that it is safer performing masculine relevant behaviors or playing down aspects of their feminine behaviors, or even playing up acceptable feminine behaviors relevant to academia. Indeed, social identity

performance in the case of academic women could involve playing down certain feminine behaviors in academic contexts when confronted with powerful outgroups (e.g., male academics) in order to avoid being stigmatized or identified as a minority or as acting in a non-normative way with regards to that outgroup (Reicher & Levine, 1994a, 1994b). Female faculty may therefore not be inclined to display stereotypical feminine behavior, and feel they cannot join the academic profession as women without endorsing more masculine norms in their academics performance. For example, Amanda Sinclair (2007) has described how when teaching MBA students the behavior of taking off a business suit jacket during class might be acceptable for male professors (seen as getting down to work) but not for women professors (seen as becoming unprofessional). Alternatively, female faculty might devote themselves to service and teaching which corresponds to women's communion-orientation (Ashmore, 1981; Williams & Best, 1982) and which might be accepted as more appropriate for women in academia.

Moreover, female faculty may prefer to engage in social identity performance that aims at changing negative stereotypes of women and at enhancing or upgrading the position and treatment of women in academia. For example through academic performance that underlines their female academic group membership to out-group members in contestation of the existing power imbalance (Spears, 2001). This type of tactic was most visible in the 70's with the wide feminist movement in the US which questioned the foundations of science based on gender issues. This is also the case of female academics who have labored for the recognition of discrimination towards women in academia and who have actively participated in the application of equal opportunity measures (for a review see Fisher, 2006).

The risk inherent in any of these strategies is to see these feminine aspects (played up or down) further reinforcing the negative stereotypes that often stigmatize female academics (e.g., not a serious researcher, too concerned or not concerned enough with her family, not being "woman" enough) by male and female peers (Probert, 2005). On the one hand, women who play up their

femininity in academia, encouraged by the view that women leaders in academia or women professors bring something *unique and special* to academia, also involves risks because women could become trapped into only being recognized through their *unique and special* feminine qualities (caring teacher, emphatic colleague, etc.). On the other hand, women who play down their femininity might become trapped by feeling inhibited about making requests on issues such as better childcare or longer maternity leave.

Likewise, women performing a gender neutral scientific academic social identity might end up showing less solidarity toward female academic peers that perform in more stereotypically feminine ways. These women for whom a gender neutral academic social identity is salient, above and beyond gender, could consequently become guardians of outgroup (male academic) norms making it harder for other women to ascend the hierarchy ladder. This could explain what has been addressed in the literature as the “queen bee” syndrome which means that women who make it to the top make it harder for other women to climb the ladder (Abramson, 1975; Ellemers, Van den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass & Bonvini, 2004; Staines, Travis & Jayarante, 1973).

Ultimately, the strategic performance of social identity membership as a woman academic might be perceived by some as too difficult or not worth the effort in view of the potential penalizations by the outgroup (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs & Tamkins, 2004). This could in part explain the leaking pipe in academia, or why so many women seem to simply “opt out” (Chesterman et al., 2003; Ginther & Kahn, 2006; Williams, 2001).

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have argued for the gendering of leading academic performance expectations. We discussed how these expectations are changing in European universities in the context of the Bologna reforms and focused on exploring some of the implications for the advancement of female academics. After briefly reassessing the claimed gender neutrality in

academia we have offered an alternative explanation for the under representation of women in academia building on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001) and social identity performance (Klein et al. 2007).

We have argued that the enduring under representation of women in leading positions in academia may be in part explained by how social identities in the context of universities may affect the way individuals (females but also males) make sense of leading academic performance expectations and models. Through Hogg's (2001) social identity theory of leadership we have discussed how prototypicality affects attributions of leadership in academia. According to this approach, prototypicality helps explain who and what behaviors are perceived and valued with regards to leadership performance. When a social identity is salient, prototype based leadership attributions are more likely to occur, thus leading less prototypical group members to empower the most prototypical group members as leaders. Through the concept of prototypicality we have explained why female academics might find it hard to perceive themselves and be perceived as leading academic performers hindering their opportunities to attain senior positions. Our major claim is that most women might simply not be associated (by themselves and others) with the prototypical academic membership because it is based on masculine characteristics. This has many implications for the existing literature on women in the workplace. For example, since female faculty are not or rarely representative of the mostly male academic leadership ingroup, we have argued that it is unlikely they would through prototypicality be perceived as leading academic performers. In this way, attribution biases of LAP could help explain the well documented literature on the glass ceiling (David & Woodward, 1998; Kanter, 1977; Liff & Ward 2001; Morisson, White & Van Velsor, 1987).

Furthermore, we have build on the concept of social identity performance to describe how external constraints (i.e., who is the audience) impact and shape how female academics perform their social identities. Though we have focused in this paper on the consequences for female academics it

is clear that both women and men in academia are confronted with administrative and work/life constraints, cultural impediments, professional regulation and power struggles. However, because academia is a man's world (Wilson, 2004) we claim that female academics *are more likely* to and more systematically subject to be exposed. These constraints are likely to impact the way they behave and consequently the way they perform their social identities as academics when interacting with others.

The social identity approach we bring forth does not only help explain the chronic under representation of women in leading positions. It can also bring hope: prototypes *can be managed*. The positive aspect of a social identity analysis of leadership in academia is that the more women in academia know about the gendered LAP prototype (expectations based on masculine characteristics and attributes) the more they will be able to strategically position their academic behavior and perform their social identity to influence audiences to get recognized as leading academic performers. Social identity research has shown that negative social identities can be managed through several strategies (Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke & Klink, 1998), namely de-categorization (e.g., framing situations of academic performance in a way that focuses on unique, personality and competence characteristics transcending gender issues), re-categorization (e.g., placing emphasis on shared European academic values vs. American academic values), sub-categorization (e.g., by bringing forth a positive aspect of the female stereotype in the context of a research project like capacity to multitask) and cross-cutting (e.g., by emphasizing the values of male faculty that are dedicated to teaching and female faculty that are devoted to research).

Also, because the LAP prototype in Europe is *still* evolving, and will continue to evolve over time and across context, those who are currently perceived as leading academic performers in European universities may decrease in prototypicality leaving more space for less prototypical members. In this sense, academic women in European universities should embrace the opportunity

of participating more proactively in the redefinition of the emergent LAP expectations and models to become better “identity entrepreneurs” of academic leadership (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996).

The good news is that LAP prototypes can change in time as a function of changes in the social comparative context (Hogg, 2001). On February 11, 2008 Harvard University announced the appointment of Drew Gilpin Faust, a history professor and founding Dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, as its next president. “In academe, there’s no greater symbol than president of Harvard. It sends a very powerful message” said in published reports Nancy Hopkins, a biology professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). MIT is led by Susan Hockfield, its first woman president. During her press conference following her nomination Faust said “*I am not the woman president of Harvard. I’m the president of Harvard*” (cited by Fain, 2007). This is identity entrepreneurship in the making.

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