



Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia

Expert Report

4.1 Gendering Decision Making and Communications Processes



TITLE: 4.1 Gendering Decision Making and Communications Processes

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Deliverable Title:

4.1 Gendering Decision Making and Communications Processes: Report of Recommendations Developed

Expert Report Number: **FESTA-2015-001.**

ISBN: **978-87-93152-05-2**

Publication Date: **January, 2015**

External Document.

ABSTRACT

Three higher level education and research institutes cross nationally researched decision making and communications processes to explore their gendered effects. This report sets out the structure of positional power and the arenas of decision making in the organisations. Drawing on documentary evidence and interviews with decision makers and committee members in these institutions, it reveals the ways that organisation practices in relation to decision making and communications conceal the operation of power and contribute to gender inequality. Recommendations are made which address structural and cultural issues to facilitate more transparency and accountability in decision making and communications processes and to advance gender equality.

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FESTA is an EU- Framework 7 funded project under: SiS.2011.2.1.1-1 *Implementing structural change in research organisations/universities.*

Executive Summary

The purpose of this action-research project is to effect structural and cultural change in higher level education and research institutes, and particularly in their decision-making bodies and processes so as to create more transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, which will advance gender equality (FESTA, 2012).

The partners in this work package are three higher level education and research institutes in Ireland, Italy and Turkey and case studies were undertaken of these organisations. In Ireland, the partner is a government-funded, independent university, which provides research and teaching from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels. In Italy, the partner is a non-profit, independent organisation, which conducts research in technology, science and humanities. In Turkey the partner is one of the oldest and leading research universities, providing research and teaching from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels.

We locate this action-research in the context of theories of gender and power. Gender is both an institution and a social construction, which ascribes particular roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes to men and women. Gender schema theory explains how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained, transmitted and differently evaluated. French and Bell (1995) argue that the concept of power is central to understanding organisational life, because people devote much of their energies at work trying to accomplish tasks either for themselves or on behalf of others. Power may be defined as the extent to which individuals are able to pursue, or convince others, to take a certain course of action. The essence of power is therefore control over others' behaviour (Morley et al, 2004). The questions driving this research are *Who has power?; How is power exercised, presented and understood?; and what are the gendered implications of the exercise of power?*

This work package is concerned with the meaning of power, its operation and effects and therefore we used qualitative research methods. We also conducted a documentary review in the case study organisations to examine those processes and procedures which lead to career-enhancing decisions for people in such organisations.

Qualitative methodology is both processual and reflexive, in the grounded theory tradition. To examine the decision making and communication processes and people's interpretation of them in our institutions, we took a critical realist approach. A purposive sample of people who participate in committees or have decision making power outside the committee structure was used, focusing particularly on decisions which allocate positions, resources and make appointments, as these have potentially career enhancing effects. Overall the sample included twenty-five positional power holders in the institutions, nine women and sixteen men. We analysed the data from semi-structured interviews with them using content analysis. We developed a specific cross-national method which recognised the different contexts and cultures within which we conducted this research. This methodology facilitated an in-depth interrogation of the practices cross-nationally.

We found that 69-100 per cent of all mid-to high level positional power structures and positions in all three organisations were held by men. There was an absence of awareness of gender, even while there was rhetorical support for involving more women in decision making. There was evidence of the operation of gender schemas and unconscious bias, with the overwhelming view being that women's attitudes and behaviors were 'the problem'. We found that institutional control is maintained in various ways: through committee decision making, policies and procedures as well as through retaining power at the highest level in each organisation. Some committees were exercises in approving already taken decisions. This system of apparent democracy maintains central control, but may limit the ability of individuals at faculty and department level to participate effectively. Ostensibly objective procedures for creating decision making committees has the potential to conceal gender schemas because those who participate on committees are unaware of their own gender blindness. Respondent's accounts suggest that decision making by consensus is the norm across the three institutions. On closer examination, this is not real consensus, but a decision to agree with the power holder (the Chair) because of ties of loyalty; a recognition that disagreement is futile because many decisions are 'pre-cooked'; or rhetorical compliance to avoid endless meetings and discussions.

In the three institutions, the role of the Chair on committees was considered significant, both in directing the outcome of the decision and in reaching what was presented as consensus. Thus, in the Irish and Italian organisations, the chair of a committee is influential, particularly on hiring and promotion committees. In the Turkish organisation,

there is no chair, as such, on these committees. However, the Dean summarises the committee members' reports, which are then submitted to the University Executive Board and Faculty Boards where decisions regarding hiring and promotion are taken.

We found that different perceptions of transparency exist in the three institutions and different practices in relation to recording and circulating minutes are evident within and between different levels in the organisations in Ireland, Turkey and Italy. Similarly different perceptions of communications exist in these organisations. Hierarchical top-down systems of communication are the norm, and a strong theme in respondent accounts is the absence of opportunities to communicate upwards, particularly in relation to objecting or complaining about decisions.

Recommendations to create **structural change** include:

- making the gender situation visible by publishing gender disaggregated data;
- establishing an independent equality committee with top level support;
- gender auditing the organisation;
- ensuring gender balance on key committees;
- having an independent (gender) observer at recruitment and promotion committees to eliminate potential bias in decision making.

Recommendations to create **cultural change** include:

- training decision makers in gender awareness;
- making committee membership more transparent;
- creating accountability measures for decision makers;
- circulating minutes of all decisions and meetings;
- regular meetings between management and staff for information exchange.

Those to support women to **participate fully in organisational decision making** include:

- Encouraging women's participation in management positions
- Sharing good practices – female role models
- Training for women in leadership and decision making

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1: Introduction

FESTA

Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia (FESTA) is an action-research project concerned with implementing changes in the working environment to create organisational climates where female academics and researchers are valued and fostered. The seven different partner institutions in FESTA are taking actions on some core issues, which have rarely been directly addressed in previous research or implementation projects. These core issues include examining the daily environment of researchers, formal and informal decision making processes, meeting cultures, PhD supervision, perceptions of excellence in hiring processes and in the work environment, and resistance to equality measures (FESTA 2012:3). The goal of FESTA is to effect structural and cultural changes within universities and research institutions, to create those which are inclusive and transparent, and which eliminate barriers to women's advancement.

Task objective

The objective of task 4.1 is to increase transparency and inclusivity in formal decision-making and communication processes in a research unit (team, department, faculty) in order to enable and create an enduring transformation of the organisational structure and culture. Such transformation will facilitate the more active participation of women in all decision-making and communication processes.

4.1 Task

The task in work package 4.1 is to analyse the decision making and communication processes in three partner institutions in Ireland, Italy and Turkey and make recommendations to develop more inclusive and transparent processes. These recommendations include the development of transparent procedures so that women and men can understand how committees are convened; how committees conduct their

business and how decisions made both by committees and by individuals with positional power affect scientists, both male and female (FESTA, 2012:12). The original design of this task as set out in the Declaration of Work (DoW) was to develop one single set of procedures for decision making. However, on the basis of the data collected, it was decided to develop a set of recommendations for all decision makers. This will have a bigger impact than a single set of procedures and will reach more decision makers in the institutions.

4.1 Interim Report

This interim report outlines the schemas of the decision making processes in the three partner institutions, details the methodology and research design, provides a full and in-depth analysis of the data, and makes interim recommendations to improve decision making and communication processes in order to increase gender awareness and to facilitate more gender balanced outcomes.

4.1 Final Report

Based on the analysis in this report, we will develop training programmes for decision makers to reveal the ways current procedures affect the promotion prospects of staff. We will also develop training courses for women to help them become effective decision makers, focusing on the specific career trajectories of women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). In the final report we will include details of these training initiatives as well as their evaluation to determine the overall effectiveness of this work package.

Partner Organisations

The partners in this work package are three higher level education and research institutes in Ireland, Italy and Turkey.

Irish Organisation

The Irish organisation is a government-funded, independent university, which provides research and teaching from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels. There are four faculties: Science and Engineering; Arts Humanities and Social Sciences; Education and Health

Sciences; and the Business School. Within each faculty there are academic departments and research institutes and centres. Overall the institution has over 13,000 students and 1,300 staff.

Italian Organisation

The Italian organisation is a non-profit organisation, which operates as a research foundation, conducting research in the fields of technology, science and humanities. Research, knowledge and/or technology transfer are the main tasks. Teaching is not part of its activities, which means there are no undergraduate students. However, in partnership with the University, it provides funding to some PhD students who conduct their research there. The structure is made up of seven research centres (equivalent to faculties in the Irish and Turkish organisations). The two main research centres are structured into research units (equivalent to departments in the Irish and Turkish organisations). At the end of 2012, the organisation had 482 staff and 88 PhD students.

Turkish Organisation

The Turkish organisation is one of the oldest and leading state technical universities in the country, providing research and teaching from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels, in the science, engineering, architecture and business.. There are 13 faculties, six institutes (graduate schools), a music school and six service departments. Within each faculty there are academic departments and some research centres. Multidisciplinary research centres operate under the control of the Rectorate. It is one of the largest technical universities in Turkey with approximately 30,000 students and 2300 academic staff.

Report structure

The report outlines theories of gender, power and decision making within which we locate our research in chapter two. Chapter three examines the structures of power and control within the three organisations, including levels of power and arenas of decision making. The methodology, research design, research sample, data analysis and cross national methodological challenges are outlined in chapter four. We discuss our key findings in chapter five: focusing particularly on those relating to power and gender schemas, the role

of the chair in decision making, decisions relating to promotions and appointments, transparency and communications. In chapter six we make recommendations to improve decision making and communications in the organisational processes, structures and culture, as well as recommendations to empower women to participate more fully in decision making.

2: Gender, Power and Decision Making.

We are concerned with both the structural as well as cultural aspects of decision making in organisations. We locate our examination of decision making structures within theories of gender both as an institution and as a social construction, and within the context of power in organisations.

At a structural level, universities and higher education institutions have historically been male dominated both in terms of those at the top of the management and academic structures. In Europe 90 per cent of universities are headed by men as are 80 per cent of those in (full) professoriate positions (Eurostat, 2013). The stratification system ranks individuals and groups in terms of their value to society and systematically places males in more highly valued roles than females. Until very recently, the stratification system located men in such a way that they had virtually total and exclusive access to the entire range of public resources available within society. The pragmatic recognition that males controlled economic, political, educational, occupational, legal, and social resources created a situation in which men identified with and sought help from other men (Lipman Blumen, 1976:16). Furthermore, Lipman Blumen (1976:16) argues that is practically a psychological truism that individuals identify with other individuals whom they perceive to be the controllers of resources in any given situation.

At a cultural level, gender is a social construction which ascribes particular roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes as appropriate for men and women. Gender schema theory explains how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture. Gender-associated information is predominantly transmuted through society by way of schemata or networks of information that allow for some information to be more easily assimilated than others. Gender schemas are unconscious allegiances to behaviours society considers gender appropriate, such as independence and assertiveness for men and submission and sensitivity for women. Valian argues that 'gender schemas' are universally shared, and they result in our overrating men and underrating women in professional settings, but only in small, barely visible ways: those small disparities accumulate over time to provide men with more advantages than women (Valian, 2005). Gender schemas affect judgments of people's competence, ability and worth. Ridgeway (2011) also argues that cultural stereotypes play

an important role in maintaining gender inequality, as cultural (gender) stereotypes classify people into two groups (i.e. men and women) and normatively attribute different and 'natural' personal qualities to them (aggression or dominance to men and submissiveness or subordination to women), with higher value placed on masculine qualities.

Lipman Blumen (1976) has explored homosociability and claims that men are attracted to, stimulated by, and interested in other men. It is a process that is noticeable in early childhood and is channeled and encouraged by the entire range of social institutions within which males live. Academic institutions, where men dominate both in number and hierarchy are examples of homosocial institutions. This homosociability, or as Gallant (2014) calls it 'Similarity Attraction', is associated with men supporting each other and their actively 'paying it forward'. Morley (2008) argues that careers are progressed through informal homosociality, coalitions, networking and sponsorship. Micropolitical relays of gendered power are notoriously difficult to capture. Micropolitics is about influence, networks, coalitions, political and personal strategies to effect or resist change. Gendered power can be relayed informally via rumour, gossip, sarcasm, humour, and denial, 'throwaway remarks' and alliance building. Academics generally establish connections on the basis of gender homophily, however, as Šadl (2009) argues, it is predominantly men who form social networks, with male academics giving support to their male colleagues.

Ely and Meyerson (2000) argue that gender is a complex set of social relations enacted across a range of social practices that exist both within and outside of formal organisations. Gender is an institution which is embedded in all the social processes of everyday life and social organisations (Lorber, 1994). Yancey Martin (2004) argues that conceptualizing gender as a social institution is necessary to make the origins and perpetuation of gender explicit. Seeing gender as a social institution has the effect of undermining popular presumptions that gender is somehow 'natural', biological, and essential (Lorber 1994). Seeing gender as a social institution also draws attention to power and practices. The structuring of behavior through recursive practices privileges some practices over others and some practitioners over others. A conception of gender as an institution requires attention to power (Acker 1992). To ignore power is to fail to understand the hows and whys of 'structures of inequality and exploitation' (Collins 1998:150). Seeing gender as an institution facilitates examining practices of decision making and the exercise of gendered power to reveal competing interests.

Power is an element in almost all social relationships, as, according to Statt (1994), one of the most striking aspects of our everyday experiences of organisations is that some people seem to have more influence over what happens than others. French and Bell (1995) argue that the concept of power is central to understanding organisational life, because people devote much of their energies at work trying to accomplish tasks either for themselves or on behalf of others. Power may be defined as the extent to which individuals are able to pursue or convince others to take a certain course of action. The essence of power is therefore control over others' behaviour (Morley et al, 2004). Weber (1947:152) defined power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance'. Weber focused on the existence of conflicting and competing interests and examined power from the perspective of domination. Dahl (1957) also defines power as a relation among social actors in which one social actor can get another social actor to do something that they otherwise would not have done. Pfeffer (1981) claims that power has sometimes been seen as about force, it is the force sufficient to change the probability of the social actor's behaviour from what it would have been in the absence of the application of that force.

In this report, we are concerned with power that is exercised through the concepts of authority and influence, what Pfeffer (1981) describes as vertical or hierarchical power, the legitimate power of supervisors over subordinates, what we are calling positional power. Most studies of power in organisations have focused on this type of power. Authority is the legitimate power conferred on the person by virtue of their position in the organisations' hierarchy, while influence is broader in scope than power and involves the ability to exert power over others without formal authority. In this research, we are concerned with the legitimate power of those on committees and those who have legitimate power outside the committee structure. We are also interested to learn of responses to this legitimate power and if there is resistance to power, the degree of resistance to power and if conflicts occur (Morley et al, 2004).

Decision making is an exercise of power; therefore we are concerned with the operation of power in our analysis of formal decision making and communications processes. The power to allocate resources, in terms of positions and funding is an exercise of power, potentially favouring the interests of some individuals or units over others. Smith (1975:360) argues that it is through the structure of ranks and the procedures by which

people are advanced from one rank to another that the university maintains control over the nature and quality of work that is done and the kinds of people who are admitted to its ranks and to influential positions within it. It is predominantly men who dominate the upper echelons of society and also indeed of higher education and research organisations, and these are the controllers of resources.

One answer to the question of why there are not more women at the top, particularly in male dominated organisations and professions such as science, is that gender schemas skew our perceptions and evaluations of men and women, causing us to overrate men and underrate women. Another explanation is that men are the controllers of resources, and practices of homosociability and the operation of gender schemas maintain power and resources under masculine control. The system of convening committees to evaluate applicants for promotion has the potential to conceal gender schemas.

Furthermore, managerial measurements and metrics, although ostensibly objective, can contain subjective elements. In the organisations studied, the majority of those assessing candidates for selection or promotion are men, as men dominate on key committees.

According to the EU (2012a), in universities, research institutions and grant awarding bodies, the vast majority of crucial decision-making processes were established at a time when the presence and impact of women was limited at best. While some decision-making processes may have adopted gender mainstreaming principles, in many institutions, gender is seen as a residual or irrelevant consideration in the enactment of power. Our recommendations include elements of a gender mainstreaming approach to address gender inequality in our organisations. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy, dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects. Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality (UN, 2014).

In this research into decision making processes in higher education and research institutes, we are concerned with the key concepts of power and gender. We examine decision making structures and practices; we examine the composition of committees and decision making processes at institutional, faculty and department level. We are particularly concerned with decisions which allocate positions, resources and make appointments, as

these have potentially career enhancing effects. We examine such decision making and communications practices to identify the ways in which power, homosociability and gender schemas operate in these organisations. We make recommendations consistent with elements of a gender mainstreaming approach to identify ways to counteract gendered effects of current decision making and communications processes and practices.

3: Structures of Power and Control

In this section, we outline the positional power structures in the three institutions focusing particularly on arenas in which power operates in relation to formal decision making and communications.

The Irish Organisation

The Irish organisation operates under the aegis of the Universities Act, 1997. Overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested by the State in the Governing Authority (GA). The Governing Authority, a 34-member body, is appointed in accordance with the Universities Act. Members of the Governing Authority include external members and staff representatives. The President is appointed by GA and accountable to it. Day to day management of the university is provided by the President and an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is made up of nine members, the President, Vice President Academic and Registrar, Vice President Research, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources and the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, the Dean of the Kemmy Business School and the Dean of Education and Health Sciences.

The President of the University is the Chief Executive Officer and is ultimately responsible for all of the operations of the University. Each faculty is headed by a Dean. The Faculty Management Committee consists of the Dean, Faculty Manager, Heads of Departments, Assistant Dean Academic Affairs and Assistant Dean Research. Within each faculty there are a number of departments, each of which is led by a Head of Department. The academic affairs of the University are managed by Academic Council.

The Italian Organisation

In the Italian organisation, governance and management structures are made up of a Board of Governors, President, Scientific Committee, Executive Head, Directors of Centres, Research Boards, Board of Auditors, Panel of Founders and Supporters. The Board of Governors is the policy-making body that sets the general policies, advised by the Scientific Committee. It passes resolutions concerning policy guidelines, the general objectives of the

scientific programme, and general management directives. It also sets out the criteria and procedures for evaluating the organisation and results achieved. It is responsible for the approval and amendment of the internal regulations; for the approval of the annual financial statements and the budget; for the definition of the organisational units and the appointment of the relevant managers. The President convenes and chairs the Board of Governors; leads and coordinates the functions of the Board of Governors; supervises the enactment of the resulting resolutions and the organisation's overall performance. The Executive Head oversees the unitary approach to the guidelines and objectives set out by the Board of Governors and is accountable for their overall implementation. He assures the enhanced efficiency, cost-effectiveness and efficacy of the resources employed in connection with the activities of the organisation.

Each Research Centre is led by a Director. The two main technological-scientific Research Centers have a Research Board made up of the Director of the Centre – who chairs it – and the Heads of Research Units. The Research Boards are advisory groups to the Directors of the Centers. The Research Boards support the Directors of the Centres in defining scientific strategies, technology transfer and regional impact; collecting input on matters related to the operation and management of the Centre; collecting information regarding activities of the Research Units; and promoting uniform communications among the Centre personnel.

The Turkish Organisation

In Turkey the higher education system works under the umbrella of a central authority called The Council of the Higher Education (CoHE). The President of the Country appoints the Rector (following nominations that are based on the elections by the university academic staff and consultations with the CoHE) for a four year period. The Rector can be re-elected for a second term. The Rector has three vice-rectors, a general secretary and advisors: collectively this group forms the Rectorate. Although advisors do not have formal power, they play a crucial role in informal decision making processes.

University governance and management operates under the control of two main bodies under the Rectorate: the Senate and the Executive Board. The University Senate consists of the Vice-Rectors, Deans, a faculty member from each faculty, who is elected by

the Faculty Council for a term of three years, and the Heads of affiliate Departments and Institutes under the Rectorate. The University Senate is concerned with all policy decisions related to academic, educational and research areas and is also chaired by the Rector.

Day to day management is provided by the University Executive Board with 35 members, and chaired by the Rector. The University Executive Board consists of all the Deans of Faculties together with the Directors of Graduate Schools that are called “Institutes” plus three members elected by the University Senate. Faculties are headed by Deans. They have Faculty Councils which consist of Department Heads together with representatives of academic staff elected by the same staff. Faculties also have Executive Boards which consist of three Professors, two Associate Professors, one Assistant Professor and one Research Assistant representing academic staff. Vice-Deans are also members without voting rights. Both the Faculty Council and Faculty Executive Board are chaired by the Dean. Within each faculty there are a number of departments, each of which is led by a Department Head. Institutes have Institute Councils that consist of the representatives of each of the departments. The three members of the Executive Board of the Institute are elected by the Council of the Institute together with Vice-Directors of the Institutes. The Institute Council and Institute Executive Board are chaired by the Institute Directors.

Positional Power Structures

In each of the institutions there are seven broad levels of positional power. The most senior level is the Governing Authority/Board of Governors/Senate. In the Irish and Italian organisations, the Governing Authority is made up of external members and elected employees, while in the Turkish organisation, the Senate and the Executive Board share power in different areas, and do not have external members. The most senior officer is the President/President/Rector, who manages the institution, supported by the Executive Committee/ Executive Head/ Executive Board, who deals with day to day management of the institution. The next level of positional power is the Deans/Heads of Centres, to whom the Heads of Departments/Heads of Units report. Within all three institutions, academics/researchers at all levels can be invited to participate in committees on an ad-hoc basis.

Table 1: Levels of Positional Power and Gender

	Irish Organisation		Italian Organisation		Turkish Organisation	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Governing Authority /Board of Governors/ Senate	83%	17%	78%	22%	73%	27%
President / President/ Rector	100%	0	100%	0	100%	0
Vice Presidents/ Vice Rectors	50%	50%			100%	0
Executive Committee/ Executive Head/ Secretary/Executive Board	78%	22%	100%	0	78%	22%
Deans/ Directors of Centre	75%	25%	100%	0	69%	31%
Heads of Department/ Heads of Unit	75%	25%	83%	17%	73%	27%
Members of committees ad-hoc						

In all three institutions, the greatest positional power at management level is in fact held by the President or Rector who in each case is male. The most senior committee is the Executive Committee in the Irish organisation, the Executive Board in the Turkish organisation, while the functions of these committees are carried out by one person (The Executive Head) in the Italian organisation, which is a reflection of the relative size of this organisation. In the Turkish organisation, the Rector has supreme power, he is elected by academics holding a PhD and is appointed in a process where the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) makes the shortlist and the President of the country finalizes the decision. In the Italian organisation, the President is appointed by the local Autonomous Province and chairs the Board of Governors, whereas in the Irish organisation, the Governing Authority has the power to appoint the President. Strategic areas of decision making at management

level are centralised at the Executive Committee/Executive Head/Executive Board level, however committees and positions throughout the organisations have power to make decisions, within defined parameters. Consequently individuals and committees lower down the organisation are largely concerned with implementing those decisions arising from policies developed at higher levels.

In every case, at all levels, women are not well represented. All the university heads are men. In Ireland there is a state regulation that 40 per cent of positions on State Boards should be occupied by women, however, O'Connor (2008) found that only one Irish university met the recommended level. The Irish organisation in this report was not that university. In the Irish organisation, eighty-three per cent of the Governing Authority is male, in the Italian organisation, seventy-eight per cent of the Board of Governors is male, and in The Turkish organisation, seventy three per cent of the Senate is male. The Executive Committee has similar gender representation, seventy-eight per cent in both the Irish and Turkish organisations are male, while in the Italian organisation, the Executive Head is male. At the centre or faculty level, there is a slight improvement, with seventy five per cent of Deans in the Irish organisation, and sixty-nine per cent of Deans in the Turkish organisation being male, however in the Italian organisation at Centre level, all the the Directors are male. At department level, in the Irish organisation, seventy-five per cent of Heads of Department are male, while in the Turkish organisation, seventy-three per cent are male, whereas in the Italian organisation eighty-three per cent are male. Thus at all levels, in the three organisations, roughly 70-100 per cent of all the holders of these positions are men. The picture presented in the Italian organisation is worse than in either the Irish or Turkish organisations, except at Governing Authority /Board of Governors/ Senate level. Our research explores whether the dominance of men on committee structures and in leadership positions confirms Lipman Blumen's (1976) view of homosociability, confirms or challenges Valian's (2005) views about gender schemas, or reveals other aspects of gendered power in organisations.

Women hold the minority of decision making positions and are not well represented on decision making committees in all the partner institutions. This is representative of the EU. In 2010, on average throughout the EU-27, fifteen per cent of institutions in the Higher Education Sector were headed by women, and just ten per cent of universities had a female

rector. On average in the EU-27, thirty-six per cent of board members were women in 2010, having risen from twenty-two per cent in 2007 (EU 2012b). Thus the partner institutions reflect gendered international trends. Even in the Turkish organisation, where women are better represented, they still have not achieved parity, with thirty-one per cent of women holding Deanships, and this is the area where women are best represented. The least gender balanced institution is the Italian one, with women only represented at the highest and lowest levels of positional power, and completely absent at four levels in between.

Arenas of Decision Making Power

Within each of the different levels of positional authority, committees and individuals have power to make decisions affecting a wide range of areas:

Table 2: Arenas of Decision Making Power in the Irish Organisation

Irish Institution	Committee	Area of decision making power.
Individual Level	President	Manages the University, represents the university externally,
	Vice President	Provides strategic direction, Allocate resources Chair boards/committees
	Dean	Allocate resources Chair boards/committees Advertise Posts
	Head of Department	Allocate resources Chair boards/committees Advertise Posts, drafts job descriptions.
University/Institute Level	Executive Committee	Manages the University, provides strategic direction, allocates resources.
	Recruitment Sub-Committee	Allocates Posts
	University Review Committee	Reviews applications under the Retention scheme (where an employee has been offered employment elsewhere and applies for promotion to be retained).
	Selection Boards	Makes appointments including those at

		Professoriate level.
	University Promotions Boards	Makes Promotions: Lecturer above the Bar, Makes promotions from shortlist for Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor.
	Assessment Panel	Appoints personal chairs at Professorial level
	Academic Council	Responsible for the academic affairs of the university.
Faculty Level	Management Committee	Manages faculty affairs.
	Faculty Board	Responsible for the academic affairs of the faculty.
	Faculty Research Committee	Management of Research affairs
	Faculty Promotions Committees	Recommends promotions to University promotions boards
	Exam Boards	Approves exam results.
Department Level	Department team	Manages department affairs
	Course board	Monitors and reviews programmes
	Department Committees	Report on programme delivery to Department team.

Table 3: Arenas of Decision Making Power in the Italian Organisation

Italian Institution	Committee	Area of decision making power.
Individual level	President	Manages the institute, allocate resources and defines the long-term operations program, sets out the criteria and procedures for evaluating the organisation and the results achieved. Represents the institute externally.
	Executive Head	Oversees the unitary approach of the guidelines and objectives set out by the Board of Governors and is accountable for their

		overall implementation.
	Head of Centre	Manages the center and, at the center level, takes decisions on resource allocation (people allocation, economic resource allocation, hardware /instruments allocation...) and on scientific program and explorative projects.
	Head of Unit	Manages the unit and, at the unit level, takes decisions on resource allocation (people allocation, economic resource allocation, hardware/ instruments allocation) and on research projects.
University/ Institute Level	Board of Governors	Manages the institute, allocates resources and defines the long-term operations program, sets out the criteria and procedures for evaluating the organisation and the results achieved.
	Scientific committee	Supervises the scientific activities and acts as consultant for the Chairperson and the Board of Governors by providing opinions and proposals.
	Ad hoc recruitment committees	Recruitment/selection
	Panel of Founders and of Supporters	Maintains vital relations with social and economic institutions in the local area
	Board of Auditors	The Board of Auditors fulfills statutory obligations set out in articles 2403 and 2403 of the Italian Civil Code.
Centre Level	Research boards (Directors of the Centre and Heads of its Research Units)	Advises and supports the directors in taking decisions on resource allocation (people allocation, economic resource allocation, hardware/instruments allocation)

Table 4: Arenas of Decision Making Power in the Turkish Organisation

Turkish Institution	Committee	Area of decision making power.
Individual Level	Rector	Manages the University

	Vice Rector	Responsible for research, international relations and student affairs as delegated by the Rector.
	Dean	Allocates resources Chairs boards/committees Proposes Posts to the Executive Board of the University
	Head of Department	Allocates resources Chairs boards/committees Proposes Posts to the Faculty Executive Board
University/Institute Level	University Senate	Decision making body at policy level about new programmes, new developments.
	Education Committee (operates under University Senate)	Evaluates new courses, new undergraduate, MA and PhD programmes and new curricula and reports to the Senate.
	Quality Committee (operates under University Senate)	Takes care of the quality of teaching research and international accreditation of educational programmes
	Executive Board	Manages the university, monitors and finalises all recruitment and promotion processes of academic staff and advises and proposes resource allocation.
	Recruitment/promotion committee (operates under Executive Board)	Evaluates proposals and submits to the Executive Board
	Scientific Research Committee (operates under Executive Board)	Evaluates and allocates funds for research projects proposed by the academic staff, chaired by one of the Vice Rectors
Faculty Level	Faculty Council	Takes care of academic decisions concerning new programmes, new courses
	Faculty Executive Board	Day to day decisions and also promotion and recruitment decisions to be proposed to the University Rectorate
	Faculty Quality Committee	Takes care of the quality in teaching and research and international accreditation of

		educational programmes
	Faculty Education Committee	Evaluates new courses, new undergraduate, MA and PhD programmes and new curricula.
Department Level	Department Council consist of all academics in the department	Makes proposals and advises on elections of Head of Department. Discusses the academic and practical issues and gives advice to the department head
	Department Quality Committee	Takes care of the quality of teaching and research
	Department Education Committee	Evaluates new courses, new undergraduate, MA and PhD programmes and new curricula.

This data is based on three institutions at one point in time. This research project commenced in 2012. Longitudinal data would show trends in gender representation. Our purpose in presenting this data is to indicate the starting point in these institutions. Following our research, our findings, our recommendations and training interventions, we will present quantitative and qualitative data to determine the impact of this project on the gender representation on decision making structures and practices in these three organisations.

4: Methodology

Description

This research is concerned with case studies of higher education cross nationally. Three case studies were undertaken on higher level education and research institutes in Ireland, Italy and Turkey. This research uses qualitative research because it is concerned with the meaning of power, its operation and effects. Exploring the exercise of power in such institutions, this research uses grounded theory to explain women's under-representation at senior levels. The methodology is both processual and reflexive, in the grounded theory tradition.

Ontology

We are concerned with power, and the ways it is exercised, presented and understood in organisations. The specific phenomenon we wish to investigate is the influence of decision making and communications on women's careers. To examine the decision making and communication processes and people's interpretation of them in our institutions, we took a critical realist approach. 'Critical realists retain an ontological realism (there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions), while accepting a form of epistemological constructivism and relativism (our understanding of this world is inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoint)' (Maxwell, 2012). Grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly 'interpretivist', we are concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted (Mason, 2002:3). Critical realists deny that we can have any "objective" or certain knowledge of the world, and accept the possibility of alternative valid accounts of any phenomenon. Different accounts and interpretations of the ways power is exercised, presented and understood are important in revealing the perspectives of the powerful and the less powerful. Stanley and Wise (1993) assert that there are multiple realities and that individuals understand social reality through lived experience, which is 'daily constructed by us in routine and mundane ways, as we go about the ordinary and everyday business of living' and argue social realities are constructed through human perceptions. The belief that

the social world is interpreted and constructed does not deny the importance or validity of agency and lived experience. It is important to 'take other people's truths seriously' and accord respect to people... for whom experiences are 'valid and true' (1993:116). We believe that all theories about the world are seen as grounded in a particular perspective and worldview, and all knowledge is partial, incomplete, and fallible. As decision making is an exercise of power, we specifically investigated events regarding decision making and committee participation and the meanings people attached to them.

Research Questions

In order to understand the phenomena of decision making and communications and their relationship to women's underrepresentation at senior levels in the three organisations, the questions driving this research are *Who has power?; How is power exercised, presented and understood?; and what are the gendered implications of the exercise of power?* We designed our research methodology to provide answers to these broad questions, as well as to provide sufficient knowledge to generate theory from the data collected.

Epistemology

Our epistemology is concerned with what counts as data and evidence, and how we can use this knowledge to generate theory to enhance our understanding of organisational decision making and communications and their gendered effects. We undertook documentary reviews within the case study organisations and conducted interviews with decision makers. We were specifically concerned with those decisions that impact on people in terms of career advancement, and which have potentially gendered implications. The decision makers could be individuals or committee members with the power to make decisions which, directly or indirectly, affect the career prospects of women, and which deal with resource allocation, with promotion and with recruitment. In order to understand the phenomena, processes and effects of decision making and communications in the respective institutions, we developed interview guides, both for committee members (Appendix 1) and individuals with power outside the committee structure (Appendix 2). We

developed our three key questions into wider concepts which included Power, Decision Making Processes, Communications Processes, Consensus, Gender, Committee Composition, and Influence. These concepts were reflected in interview guides.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a way of generating new theory grounded in the field but also set in the context of existing theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Therefore it does not set out to test an existing hypothesis but seeks to generate theory from the research situation in the field as it is (Kennedy & Lingard 2006). The essence of grounded theory is the inductive–deductive interplay, beginning not with a hypothesis but with a research situation. The grounded theory approach is not linear but concurrent, iterative and integrative, with data collection, analysis and conceptual theorising occurring in parallel and from the outset of the research process (Duhscher and Morgan 2004; McGhee, Marland and Atkinson 2007).

We deconstructed various theories of organisation decision making and communication, and aimed to generate new understanding of gender, power and decision making in higher level education and research institutes. The result is a theoretical explanation of the social phenomenon under investigation (Strauss and Corbin 1998). This analysis process is known as the ‘constant comparison method’ (Glaser and Strauss 1967) in which the core category, in this case power, subsumes the major categories and explains much of the variation in the data (McGhee, Marland and Atkinson 2007).

Research Design

The research design involves three case studies of institutions cross nationally. The research methods are qualitative and the research sample was selected in each case study to provide opportunities for comparison at similar levels and positions. The sample thus avoids Galton’s problem (Naroll, 1965), and enables inferences to be drawn from cross-cultural data. Content analysis was used to analyse the data, and issues and challenges with such cross-national comparative analysis are outlined.

Case study

Case study research is an appropriate method for this empirical enquiry, as it facilitates investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomena (decision making and communications) and context (education and research institutes) are not clearly evident. The advantage of a single case study is the opportunity it offers to understand a phenomenon in depth and comprehensively. Critical realism is particularly well suited as a companion to case research. It justifies the study of any situation, regardless of the numbers of research units involved, but only if the process involves thoughtful in depth research with the objective of understanding why things are as they are (Easton, 2009:119). A disadvantage is that the logic of generalisability is different for case study research and a key constraint is its low (statistical) representativeness.

However, the advantages of conducting three case studies are the opportunities to conduct comparative analyses, because of the similarities in the structures in higher education and research organisations cross-nationally; the opportunity to identify phenomena which are idiosyncratic (which would not be possible with a single case) and finally, because the issue of women failing to reach senior levels in STEM is a global phenomenon, the three case studies offer an opportunity to develop an explanation for this phenomenon by comparing case studies cross nationally.

Case studies are more suited to questions which can be explanatory in nature. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequency or incidence (Yin, 1984, 1993, 1994). Case study research allows the researcher the opportunity to tease out and disentangle a complex set of factors and relationships. This case study is a process of iterative–parallel research, which involves investigating three cross-national social entities about which data are collected using multiple sources and developing a holistic description through an iterative research process.

Research Methods

Qualitative research offers an ‘unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts’ (Mason, 2002:1). We selected qualitative, semi-structured interviews, as a method which is both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (Mason, 2002:3). We were concerned to explore social

structures and the social meaning given to power and decision making in organisations, and semi-structured interviews provided an understanding of depth and complexity in people's situated and contextual accounts. Within each organisation, we conducted a number of interviews with individuals. We asked different questions of committee members and individuals with regard to decision making and communications. The lead partner (Irish organisation) developed a series of questions for the interview guide designed to provide knowledge of the meanings given to these concepts by organisational actors. These questions were informed by the Irish and international literature on the culture and structure of higher level education and research institutions, but modified by partners to fit local contexts. As the Irish organisation is also participating in a work package exploring perceptions of excellence in hiring processes, some specific questions relating to those issues are also included in the interview guide. Guides contained a combination of open and closed questions, as well as reflecting on critical incidents. The critical incident technique was a mechanism to encourage interviewees to stop and think about a specific experience/fact/event/process, and the feelings they experienced in relation to it (Chell, 2004). The Italian organisation found the guides appropriate, however, there was pressure to ensure the interviews were completed in the time allocated, so some questions regarding committee composition and (formal) roles were omitted. All interviews were conducted in Italian and most took place in the institution. The Turkish organisation conducted joint interviews for work packages concerned with both formal and informal decision making and communications. While translating the interview guides for formal decision making prepared by the Irish partner into Turkish, the Turkish partner also translated questions from the informal decision making interview guide, and prepared new interview guides which included questions from both. The questions suggested by the Irish partner were all compatible with the structure in the Turkish organisation.

We also conducted documentary review in the case study organisations to examine those processes and procedures which lead to career-enhancing decisions for people in the organisations.

Research Sample

As this research is concerned with the way power is exercised in decision making, we selected respondents based on their decision making roles on committees as well as individuals with decision making power outside the committee structure. The selection of committees and individuals was based on those committees which allocate positions, resources and make appointments, as these have potentially career enhancing effects. We also wished to engage with committees at all levels of the organisation, at department, faculty and the most senior management level. Committee members and Heads of Department/Units roles reflect organisation structure, with the individuals we interviewed exercising agency as members of committees and as individuals with power outside the committee structure. We also aimed to interview a balance of male and female participants. This was a purposive sample. As individuals were selected on the basis of their position in the organisation, all consented to be interviewed and none refused.

Table 5: Positional power structures in the organisations

Level	Irish Organisation	Italian Organisation	Turkish Organisation
1	Governing Authority	Board of Governors	University Senate*
2	President	President	Rector
3	Vice Presidents	n/a	Vice Rectors
4	Executive Committee	Executive Head	Executive Board*
5	Deans	Directors of Research Centre	Deans
6	Heads of Department	Heads of Research Unit	Heads of Department
7	Members of committees (ad-hoc)	Members of committees (ad-hoc)	Members of committees (formal and ad-hoc).

** In the Turkish Organisation, the Senate and Executive Board are both top level decision making bodies in different aspects of decision making.*

Overall the sample included twenty-five positional power holders in the institutions, nine women and sixteen men. In the Irish organisation, the sample included three women and six men, In the Italian organisation one woman and seven men, and in the Turkish organisation, five women and three men, being twenty-five in all. This was a purposive sample of people who participate in committees or have decision making power outside the committee structure. The gender variation in the sample reflects the gender balance in decision making positions in the institutions, with the Italian organisation having the least gender balance in these areas in the three case studies at the time the research was being conducted.

As we had selected a purposive sample, we invited participants to interview, sending a participant information letter and, in the case of the Irish organisation, the interview guide. As individuals were selected on the basis of their position in the organisation, all consented to be interviewed and none refused. Interviews contained a combination of closed, open and reflexive questions designed to capture the meanings respondents assigned to the concepts derived from the research questions.

Ethical approval was received in one organisation where respondents signed consent forms, the interviews were recorded and transcribed, with respondents reviewing the transcripts post interview. These steps were not required in the other two organisations – reflecting different practices cross-nationally. Each partner conducted, recorded and transcribed their own interviews. Participants were given identifier numbers and pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. All participants expressed concern regarding anonymity, hence identifier numbers are used for respondents and institution names are obscured.

From documentary evidence on the decision making processes in our respective institutions and supported by qualitative data in our interviews, we developed schemas of the actual decision making processes involved in recruitment and promotion in our respective institutions. These flow charts reveal the stages in the decision process (Appendix 3).

Table 6: Participants arena of Positional Power in the Irish Organisation

Pseudonym	Gender	Level	Identifier Number
Benjamin	Male	4 and 5	IE/41/X/M/44
Blake	Male	3 and 4	IE/41/X/M/45
Claire	Female	3 and 4	IE/41/X/F46
Alexa	Female	7	IE/41/X/F/47
Marissa	Female	7	IE/41/X/F/48
Patrick	Male	7	IE/41/X/M/49
Danielle	Male	6	IE/41/X/M/50
Trevor	Male	6 and 6	IE/41/X/M/51
Alejandro	Male	6	IE/41/X/M/52

In the Irish organisation, three members of the Executive Committee were selected, one of whom was also a Dean. Two Heads of Departments were selected, as well as one who was selected because of committee membership, and three members of committees were selected. Many committees are established on an ad hoc basis for a single purpose, which explains the different levels which apply to some committee members. Overall nine people were interviewed in the Irish organisation.

Table 7: Participants in the Italian Organisation

Pseudonym	Gender	Level	Identifier Number
Caleb	Male	1	IT/41/X/M/1
Makayala	Female	1	IT/41/X/F/2
Austin	Male	4	IT/41/X/M/3
Benjamin	Male	5 and 6	IT/41/X/M/4
Kevin	Male	5 and 6	IT/41/X/M/5
Jose	Male	6	IT/41/X/M/6
Nathan	Male	6	IT/41/X/M/7
Samuel	Male	6	IT/41/X/M/8

At the institutional level, two members of the Board of Governors were selected and an individual with decision-making power outside a committee; two Directors of Research Centres were selected; and three Heads of Research Units were selected. The Heads of the Research Units are members of the Research Boards (i.e. an advisory group to the Director of the Research centre); therefore they have been selected for both their role as members of committee and as individuals with decision making power in their Research Center/Unit. Overall eight interviews were conducted in the Italian organisation.

Table 8: Participants in the Turkish Organisation

Pseudonym	Gender	Level	Identifier Number
Aslı	Female	6 (deputy)	TR/41/X/F/1
Gökhan	Male	4 and 6	TR/41/X/M/2
Emre	Male	1,4 and 5	TR/41/X/M/3
Lale	Female	1	TR/41/X/F/4
Murat	Male	1	TR/41/X/M/5
Nisan	Female	1, 4 and 5	TR/41/X/F/6
Nida	Female	1	TR/41/X/F/7
Canan	Female	7	TR/41/X/F/8

In the Turkish organisation interviews were conducted with eight people. The research was designed to include respondents who are involved in decision making committees at department, faculty and university level. There are people who take part in different committees in different levels at the same time. At University level, three members of the Senate were selected. At Faculty level, three members of Faculty committees, two of whom are Deans, were selected. At department level, a Head of Department, who is also on the Executive Committee participated, as did one deputy Head of Department who has power outside the committee structure.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research aims to produce rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data, therefore this research is based on methods of analysis, explanation and argument-building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context. Content analysis was used, because content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; and Weber, 1990). Each unit of analysis was a word or piece of text from the interview transcripts. Content analysis facilitated analysing the large volumes of data in the transcripts in a systematic fashion. It was a useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, and group attention (Weber, 1990).

Key concepts included power and the influence of the Chair on decision making, therefore one question we asked of participants was '*Who is the most influential member of the committee? And Why?*' Each of the questions was linked to a code for the purpose of cross-national content analysis. We developed open codes from the interview guides, with a descriptive statement for each code to facilitate analysis of transcripts. Codes which emerged from answers to the questions in relation to the most influential person, were 'Personality' (descriptive statement: 'References to the influence of personality on decision making and communications'), and 'Power' (descriptive statement: 'The discretion of the person to make decisions which affect others').

For the majority of the questions in the interview guide, content analysis was the most appropriate method, however, in three instances, we asked respondents for examples of situations they might have experienced, as critical incidences. For example: *Is it easy or difficult to reach consensus? Can you give me an example?* and *Is there a process for appealing/challenging committee decisions? Can you give me an example?* These questions provided the opportunity to demonstrate the operation of discourse, where respondents described practices or processes in a particular 'acceptable' way, e.g. *we rarely have strongly contrasting or conflicting ideas because after the discussion we always find convergence* (IT/41/X/M/1). Arising from these specific questions, it emerged that consensus was a particular discourse which was common in all three institutions, suggesting that aspects of the culture in higher level education and research institutions are common cross-nationally.

Having developed codes and descriptors from the interview guides, we developed a proposed coding map, linking the codes to the categories, clusters and themes we anticipated would emerge, based on our interview questions and on our analysis of the literature regarding gender, decision making and communications in organisations.

Cross national content analysis method

Each partner agreed codes and code descriptors, following development of the interview guides. Each partner transcribed interviews, and coded transcripts according to descriptive statements. Occasionally there were linguistic difficulties with the interpretation of particular codes/descriptions. For instance, in the Turkish organisation it was difficult to work with the theme 'subversion'. It was not easy to link the examples under subversion (in the coding roadmap) with the meaning of the word, demonstrating linguistic as well as cultural differences. In the Irish organisation, where the codes originated, subversion, and challenges to authority are normative. Partners resolved these difficulties by generating new codes, or developing more detailed descriptions of existing codes, or deleting codes. The Italian organisation added some new codes as they emerged, which were not represented in the coding map, but were relevant in the Italian context. These codes included 'transparency', 'formal/informal relationships' and 'gender awareness'.

The Turkish organisation added 'informal communications', as this emerged as a context specific theme in Turkish data, which also was not represented in the original coding map. Adding 'Informal communications' as a new code was especially significant for the Turkish organisation as this partner carried out joint interviews that included questions on both formal and informal decision making and communications, as noted earlier. In the Turkish organisation, participant's narrations also contributed to the research on informal communication. Formal communications are intertwined with informal ones. Informal communications have been described as the social glue of the workplace (Chaboki, Wahab and Ansari, 2013), and play a crucial role in examining formal communications. The process of adding codes and refining descriptive statements proceeded throughout this phase of the analysis. Adding codes prompted substantive reflection on the ways power is held, exercised, presented and understood, and deepened our theoretical perspective on the key concepts in the research. Other codes were found to be redundant, for example Turkey

found codes concerning 'decision making about workload' was not at all relevant in that institution.

After all the transcripts were coded, each partner set up a word file containing all codes and copied and pasted quotes from all transcripts in their institution into this single file. Codes were then sorted into categories based on how different codes were related and linked. Themes which emerged during the coding process were noted by all partners and linked to the literature regarding gender, decision making and communications in organisations. Ultimately, a single file was created containing codes, categories, themes and suggested analysis. This file was shared between partners, and additional themes were added by partners which were context specific. For instance, one of the themes that the Turkish organisation added was concerning financial resources. The limited financial resources and the decisions around resources were a theme in the Turkish interviews. The Italian organisation added the theme of 'interconnection between formal and informal aspects' and The Irish organisation added 'denial that gender bias exists'. In all three cases, data was subsequently found in the transcripts which revealed that these themes existed cross-nationally. At this point, the cross-national analysis was centralised in a single file containing all emerging categories and themes, linked to the individual codes with suggested analysis.

At a meeting in March 2014, partners arranged emergent categories into meaningful clusters for analysis. For example the categories of Organisation Power, Resources, Discipline, Gender, Programmed Decisions and Institutional Control were arranged into one cluster *Control, Power and Gender*, while the categories of Information versus Communication, Who can be involved?, Consent, Subversion, and Involvement but no Voice were arranged into another cluster *Informal Communications and Consent*. Other categories were arranged into other clusters and partners selected clusters to analyse.

Each partner agreed to translate quotes relating to the codes and themes contained in each cluster and to send the quotes to other partners for analysis. Each partner then compiled all the quotes per cluster into one document, identifying each partner's contribution, and each partner analysed their cross-national cluster with reference to the extant literature.

Each partner wrote up two cluster analyses, revealing cross national similarities and differences. We interrogated each other's analyses to expose differences and

commonalities in relation to understandings of concepts and contexts. For example, it was apparent that consensus was an important theme in all institutions, however, the meaning of consensus changed depending on the context. In the Irish organisation, consensus was reported, but it became apparent that people agreed with decisions, even if they did not fully subscribe to them, in order to maintain apparent consensus in committee decision making. In the Italian organisation, consensus was achieved through many discussions (up to 13 on a single topic), while in the Turkish organisation, consensus was achieved because disagreeing with a decision was regarded as futile and in some cases, similar to the Irish organisation, people chose to agree with a decision in order not to block the decision making process. These different ways of enacting consensus forced us to consider our perspectives on the concept and to look behind consensus to the operation of power, acknowledging the significance of cultural contexts. For the sake of a better understanding of how the concepts have different implications in different cultures and institutions, the theme 'involvement but no voice' was interrogated. In fact the analysis shows, interpretations of this theme are different between one department and another and even from one interviewee to another. On the one hand it is observed that, according to one academic from the Irish organisation, academics have voice but this should not be perceived as something entirely positive, as sometimes they can spend too much time talking, and in some cases 'less voice' might be better. On the other hand, an interviewee from the Turkish organisation mentioned the way students can object to decisions and also referred to discussions at Faculty Executive Board meetings where different voices occasionally contribute a different view so as to reach better decisions. Alternatively, one researcher from the Italian organisation refers to some specific people whose position might allow them to participate in decision making processes in an advisory capacity, in a way which does not allow them to have a voice.

These examples illustrate the way many concepts and themes were exemplified in different ways in the different contexts, linked to certain local practices. This research is significant in terms of combining all the different concepts operating differently in various micro and macro contexts. Such interrogation of concepts was helpful in deepening our theoretical understanding and challenging our assumptions based on local contexts.

Cross-national challenges

Cross national comparative research, by its nature, demands greater attention to methodological issues than research with a single-country focus. One of the greatest challenges of cross-national comparative qualitative research is to understand the idiosyncrasies of national conditions and the conceptual frameworks of the actors (Mabbett and Boldersen, 1999). In cross-national research, everything is mediated through language, culture, time and technology. By establishing clear parameters and understandings of the objective of the research, the processes to be explored, as well as sharing large volumes of contextual data, common understandings of concepts, themes, and even words and phrases were established and iteratively refined throughout the data analysis phase. Working from clear documents with explicit definitions was important, as was constantly revisiting concepts, categories and themes to ensure common understandings and meanings. While time consuming to establish, involving many discussions and debates, this uniformity in the operationalisation of concepts is important if researchers are to have confidence that the phenomena and processes being compared are the same or indicate something equivalent (Kennett, 2001).

The intercultural dynamics of the research team was also a challenge in reaching common understandings of different national contexts. It was a challenge for each partner to identify the significant contextual issues which the other researchers needed to know. The advantage of this research is that researchers see their organisation from a different perspective. In order for the three research teams cross-nationally to have a full appreciation of the others' contexts, we were forced to examine our institutions as if through external eyes and forced to ask ourselves questions about our institutional practices and processes which we otherwise might not have done.

There were also linguistic issues, since specific words can have different meanings and connotations in different languages. The field researcher in the Italian organisation considered the translation of the interviews from Italian into English a particularly delicate task. Spoken language does not follow precise rules and there are many ways of speaking, phrasing and casual language which are related to the cultural context. There was a risk that some delicate nuances could be lost in translation or that the meaning which was intended might be misinterpreted. Partners who translated as well as analysed their

research had an additional burden, and this additional effort is acknowledged and appreciated.

Reflexivity

Conducting qualitative research in the grounded theory tradition implicitly requires awareness of self and a consciously reflective process called reflexivity, which is 'an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with a particular social identity and background has an impact on the research process' (Robson 2002: 22). We were aware of our potential impact as researchers on the data, and reflexively positioned ourselves in the research process. This is consistent with a feminist standpoint (Stanley and Wise, 1993) which is the methodological approach adopted to reveal the operation of power through decision making processes in the three case study organisations. The principal claim regarding feminist standpoint theories is that certain socio-political positions occupied by women, and by extension other groups who lack social and economic privilege, can become sites of epistemic privilege and are thus productive starting points for enquiry about those who are socially and politically marginalised. They also reveal the way power operates to maintain those who are privileged.

In the Irish organisation, the research team consists of a Professor of Sociology and Social Policy, a Senior Lecturer in Global Software Engineering and a field researcher who has a background in gender, sociology and human resources. This research is part of a larger project concerned with gender in STEM and during the course of the larger project, the field researcher had access to all areas of the institution and conducted interviews and focus groups with more than sixty people, questioning gendered assumptions. There was no difficulty accessing research participants and in some respects this was surprising. Deconstructing gender norms and exposing gender as a social institution can be a difficult process, particularly for those who experience gender privilege. Conducting this research, mostly with men, because these are the majority of decision makers and power holders, was challenging and occasionally uncomfortable for those men. It was obvious that many of these men had never before been asked to consider how or why they reached certain decisions, and some found it quite unsettling. It was also illuminating conducting interviews with women in the organisation who had never before been asked to consider gender. Frequently women are aware of gender in a way that men are not. Bird and

Rhoton (2011) outline the deliberate strategies professional women use to negotiate the barriers and exclusionary tactics they associate with being women. At the outset the assumptions made by the researchers are that gender exists as a social structure, with STEM disciplines being particularly slow to respond to gender change. Since gathering the data, and working with the wider research team on data analysis, the extent of gender blindness has been shown to be greater than anticipated and the ways gender is obscured in apparently objective processes is revealing about the way power operates in diffuse ways.

In the Italian organisation, the research team on the FESTA project is made up of nine researchers. However, on this work package the research team consists of a Senior Researcher with a background in Electronic Engineering and Computer Science and a field researcher with a background in research methods in social sciences, gender and sociology. Despite her involvement in the FESTA project identifying gender as the focus of the interviews, the field researcher tried to assume a neutral attitude both during the introduction and the whole duration of the interviews. This was seen as a strategy to avoid biases both in terms of acquiescence or resistance from the interviewee and to create non-judgmental conditions. At the end of the interviews though, she did not prevent herself from offering her opinions and possible comments. In the Italian organisation, the majority of interviews were conducted with men and most of the questions were unusual for them. Nonetheless, after an initial reluctance, they seemed to be stimulated by the issue of gender and decision making, and participated freely, using gender neutral language as much as possible, which is very rare. The Italian field researcher shared similar assumptions with the Irish field researcher about gender blindness, but in the Italian organisation, the extent of the gender blindness was as high as anticipated. A positive indicator of gendered organisational change in the Italian organisation, is the willingness of policy makers to be involved in interviews on gender, decision making and power.

In the Turkish organisation, the wider research team consists of a Professor of Architecture, who specialised in Higher Education and Gender Studies, a Professor of Sociology of Education and Gender Studies and one junior researcher. In the Turkish organisation, the interviews were conducted in 2013 by a female researcher with a background in philosophy, cultural studies and gender projects. The interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants. There were no barriers to accessing

participants in the Turkish organisation, in fact, all respondents were helpful when setting up a convenient date both for them and for the interviewers.

This methodology facilitated in depth interrogation of the practices of decision making and communications and enabled us to deconstruct theories of organisation decision making and communications, and reconstruct a gendered understanding of the way power operates in decision making fora to create and maintain gender inequality in higher level education and research institutes cross nationally. The differences between researchers helped deepen our theoretical perspectives.

5: Key findings

Introduction

The research findings in relation to decision making and communications processes and practices are explored in this chapter. Firstly we explore the structures of decision making, particularly the centralisation of power and the role of the chairperson in reaching committee decisions. We particularly explore the concept of consensus in decision making as it is interpreted in this cross-national research. Next, we address gender schemas and the possibility that unconscious gender bias may influence decision makers in the three institutions. As women's careers are advanced or not because of the decisions made by promotion and hiring committees, we give these committees a close examination in the three institutions. We also explore the concept of transparency and the ways it is variously interpreted. Finally, we look at communications within the institutions, in relation to communication of decisions and also the communication mechanisms available to individuals within these organisations to challenge or complain about decisions. Under each of these themes, we identify problem areas and make recommendations for improving decision making and communications processes and practices.

Centralised Power

Centralisation of power has been seen as one of the characteristics of managerialism (O'Connor, 2014). Managerialism imported ideas and practices from the private world of business to the world of public service (Deem et al, 2008; Lynch et al, 2012). These practices typically include performance indicators, league tables, target-setting, bench-marking and performance management. The partner institutions, in Ireland, Italy and Turkey all have governance structures and are broadly similar in their governance and management structures. All of them have governance structures, while high level management decisions are taken by the Executive Committee/Executive Head/Executive Board. They do differ somewhat, e.g. the Italian organisation does not have a committee, but an individual at the Executive level, possibly reflecting the size of the organisation.

An established way to exercise decision making power is to hold legitimate positional power in the organisation hierarchy. In the Irish organisation, the line management positions of Head of Department and Dean are permanent 'rolling' positions, i.e. the position remains, but the occupant changes every 3 – 5 years. However, people can be re-appointed with the result that some Heads of Departments and Deans remain in those positions for long periods of time. In the Irish organisation, Deans and Heads of Departments are appointed by those with higher authority, who effectively select their subordinates. Thus, the President appoints the Deans, while the Deans appoint the Heads of Departments, and these positions are bound to the power holder not only by line management considerations but also by the anticipation of future rewards. In situations where one is beholden to a more senior power holder for their position and authority, deferral to the wishes of the more senior power holder is common. Heads of Department and Deans are recruited from the existing pool of academics in the department/faculty. Because men dominate in the hierarchy, and because of processes such as homosociability, those with the positional authority of Dean and Head of Department are predominantly men.

In the Turkish organisation, it is acknowledged that decision making power resides with top level management: *'Of course, there is the effect of top-level management of the University in decisions. Believing that they do not have any influence will not be reasonable'* (TR/41/X/F/8). One of the characteristics of managerialism is that those in line management positions are effectively chosen by the President/Rector or his/her nominee (O'Connor, 2014). In the Turkish organisation, the appointment of Heads of Departments is made by the Rector based on the Dean's proposals. The Rector decides on three candidates for the Dean's position to be sent to CoHE and CoHE appoints the Dean. Six candidates for the Rector's position are elected by the academic staff and sent to the CoHE. CoHE shortlists three candidates which are sent to the President of the country and the President appoints the Rector. The CoHE and the President of the country gave priority to the votes of academics in their decisions until around 2005. Since then, votes of academics are not taken into account in the appointment of the Rector as much as before. This tendency applies at all the levels including appointment of Deans and Department Heads and that creates a feeling of exclusion in this process as demonstrated below:

I feel exclusion especially concerning the appointment processes. I mean the appointments of Head of Departments. We are being by-passed. Or even the Rector. We are voting to elect a Rector. But in the end the Rector is appointed by the President of the Republic. This is antidemocratic (TR/41/X/M/5)

Lawrence (2008) argues that institutional control is associated with systemic forms of power, which tend to work through routine, ongoing practices to advantage particular groups without those groups necessarily establishing or maintaining those practices (Clegg, 1989; Foucault, 1977; Hardy, 1994; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). These forms of power tend to work in an ongoing prosaic fashion that are not often apparent as forms of power, but are associated with automatic forms of regulation that enforce compliance. In higher education and research institutions generally, committees are formed at departmental, faculty and university levels (Denton and Zeytinoglu, 1993), and in the case study organisations, individuals also participate in decision making by serving on committees at university, faculty or department level. In the three organisations, individuals are frequently invited to sit on committees which have been formed on an ad-hoc basis to make a specific decision such as an appointment or a promotion.

The process of convening committees to make decisions where the outcome is known, predictable and routine, is a disciplinary system. Agor (1986) classified decisions into two types, those that are routine and predictable, and those which are new and unstructured. Programmed decisions tend to be well structured, routine and repetitive, occurring on a regular basis, and are based on readily available information. Typically procedures are established to guide decision makers in making programmed decisions which tend to be taken at lower levels within the organisation. Non-programmed decisions are new and unstructured and consequently the organisation has no established procedures or rules for dealing with the decision, which can therefore appear highly complex. Non-programmed decisions tend to occur at higher levels in the organisation, have long-term consequences and require a degree of judgment and creativity. In all three organisations, decisions taken lower down the organisation tend to be programmed, while the significant non-programmed decisions are taken by the top level committee, even while top level committees also make programmed decisions. It was noted in the Irish organisation that

the centralisation of power in the Executive Committee limits the scope of other committees at faculty and department level:

Being on a committee, it's just usually following process rather than developing process. ...The big decisions are taken at Executive [committee]. Like there's no discretion about, you know strategic direction on any of these committees or where we're going. It's usually day to day matters (IE/41/X/M/52).

It was also acknowledged that institutional control is maintained through bureaucratic practices, and centralised in the Executive Committee, which can interpret rules, norms, regulations and taken-for-granted understandings so that institutional control operates throughout the culture through practices and policies. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Douglas (1986) demonstrate that a key aspect of disciplinary systems is that they are 'inward' looking; discipline works through routine practices and structures that shape the choices of actors by establishing boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, but only for actors who understand themselves as members of the community, society or field within which these norms apply. It was acknowledged by one participant, that a system of policies operates in the university which provides guidelines for decision making, however it is suggested that these policies can be interpreted in any way that the Executive Committee wishes:

I am no great believer in strong leaders...I don't believe in dictatorship at all...and there are people who behave as dictators in the academic sphere, yes, yes, and even though there are policies here, there and everywhere, they can be ignored and interpreted in certain ways that the bosses (.) that suits dictators (IE/41/X/M/51).

Policy documents are depicted as the ultimate control mechanisms and suggest that the organisation has a 'role culture' (Handy 1976), which aspires to be as rational and orderly as possible with legitimacy, loyalty and responsibility built around defined roles. In the three organisations, rules and procedures dominate, creating many bureaucratic characteristics. However bureaucratisation may solidify existing power relations and gender inequalities (Acker, 1990).

It is interesting to note, therefore, that putting a policy in place, will not necessarily ensure that policy will guide decision making. Recommendations in relation to policy must also be concerned with implementation of policy and changing practices. Therefore our recommendations are concerned with policy implementation and organisation practices to make decision makers accountable (Recommendations 1,3,5,7 and 10).

However, even with policies to guide decision making, positions lower down the institutional hierarchy have less control over their own faculties and departments. One man in the Irish organisation noted: *'The fact that everything's centralised into university that means you don't have that control'* (IE/41/X/M/52). In the Turkish organisation, it was acknowledged that the management of the university resides at the top, with only academic matters being discussed by the faculty: *'Faculty council meetings is for discussion on academic issues. 'On the other hand, Faculty Executive Board is dealing with managerial issues'* (TR/41/X/F/8). In the Italian organisation, power also resides at the top of the organisation, with the Board of Governors and the President dealing with governance issues; and the Executive Head dealing with internal management issues and exercising executive power. Recurring discussions in the Italian organisation tend to slow down the decision making processes more than bureaucratic practices and formalities do in the other two institutions:

When doing the budget, for example, is not that we meet and decide "ok 500 and 500", no, we need to do an analysis of revenues and costs, and also a pre-analysis and I look for other information, other data... we meet two, three, ten, thirteen times and then, at the end, we can say "well, this might be the balance.. what do you say? And you, what do you say? [...] if there is no agreement in the end I decide (IT/41/X/M/3).

Within the Italian organisation, there were different views regarding the appropriate sources of research funding

Right now there is a strong indication of the Board of Governors that recommends that funding comes from the industry... I think we have to work with companies but I do not believe that a research center may have a long lasting sustainability

having projects with companies because usually these types of projects last six months and, usually, maximum one year. The projects of the European agencies last indeed three years ... I think that a ratio 80 per cent from agencies and 20 per cent from companies could be right. And I continuously feel a pressure by the Board of Governors that says that we should work more and more closely with companies (IT/41/X/M/4).

In the Turkish organisation, one way to ensure the decision meets with the approval of the Executive Board is to 'pre-cook' the decisions. Thus, even at the most senior level, all committee members did not exercise the same decision making power:

As a member of University Executive Board, I feel each issue is pre-cooked before serving at the meeting. For some issues, they can ask what we think as members. But for some other issues, you can observe they have been planned before the meeting. This is not a case of something special to the existing University Management. This is the general operation (TR/41/X/M/2).

This account suggests that some decisions are taken before the meeting, so the committee is an exercise in approving a decision already taken by the Rector or indeed the Head of Department: *'And of course, there might be researchers who visit the Head of Department before the departmental meeting to appeal the decisions. We can never know what is the results of such meetings'* (TR/41/X/F/1). This suggests the formal committee structure operates with apparent democracy, but again informal decision processes, such as deal-making and pre-cooking, may influence committee decision making. This practice similarly occurs in the Italian organisation, mainly with reference to lower level committees:

If you talk about PhD scholarships, you start the discussion by figuring out how many positions have candidates for each unit ... it so happened that we discussed a reduction from five to three PhD grants, but the discussion with those who had to give up the grants had already taken place before the meeting so that the Head of the Unit arrived to the Board meeting already prepared (IT/41/X/M/6).

Another participant in the Irish organisation suggested the formality of the committee structure also slowed down the decision making process, and the fact that power was centralised in the Executive Committee at the top of the organisation, had a negative impact on the organisation's ability to make and implement decisions:

It doesn't feel very dynamic as an institution. And yet, actually when you talk to individuals, individuals are [dynamic], but it feels very un-dynamic, highly bureaucratised, highly managed and highly administered and very clean and it shouldn't be like that (IE/41/X/F/47).

Institutional control is maintained through committee decision making, policies and procedures as well as retaining power at the level of the Executive Committee/Executive Head/Executive Board in each institution. This system of apparent democracy maintains central control, may limit the ability of individuals at faculty and department level to participate in communication and decision making, and has the potential to conceal gender schemas. The centralisation of power per se is not the cause of gender inequality in the three case study organisations. However, decision making roles are held in the main by men, and bureaucratic policies and procedures disguise the centralisation of power and resources (in male hands). In our recommendations, we recommend that the situation be made visible. We reveal the gender breakdown of committees at university, faculty and department level as well as of those who hold positions of power by gender. Making the situation visible will help create awareness of women's underrepresentation at levels of decision making and women's structurally weak position as members of committees (Recommendation 1).

As managerialist metrics and indicators are increasingly becoming normative, we suggest they be employed in the furtherance of gender equality. We will hold committees accountable for their actions and we will establish accountability measures. We recommend establishing accountability metrics in the areas of gender balance on committees, gender auditing of organisations, and setting targets in terms of gender representation at all levels of the organisation (Recommendation 7).

Gender Schemas

Gender schemas are deeply rooted beliefs about what it means to be male or female, beliefs that all people share, male and female alike. Schemas assign different psychological traits to males and females (Martin and Halverson, 1987; Spence and Helmreich, 1978, Spence and Sawin 1985). Gender schema theory explains how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture. Ridgeway (2011) argues that gendered cultural stereotypes play an important role in maintaining gender inequality, as cultural stereotypes classify people into two groups (i.e. men and women) and normatively attribute different and 'natural' personal qualities to them (aggression or dominance to men and submissiveness or subordination to women), with higher value placed on masculine qualities. Gender schemas affect judgments of people's competence, ability and worth. According to Valian (2005), the main answer to the question of why there are not more women at the top in science and technology is that gender schemas skew our perceptions and evaluations of men and women, causing us to overrate men and underrate women. As outlined in Chapter two, Valian (2005) argues that these schemas are universally shared, and they result in our overrating men and underrating women in professional settings, but only in small, barely visible ways: those small disparities accumulate over time to provide men with more advantages than women:

Success is largely the accumulation of advantage, parlaying small gains into bigger ones (Merton, 1968). If you do not receive your share of small gains because of the social group you belong to, you – and your group- will be at a disadvantage....Thus, in a work environment in which everyone intends to be fair and believes they are being fair – men are likely to receive advantages in evaluations that women do not. Over time, these advantages mount up, so that men reach the top faster and in greater numbers than women do (Valian, 2005:35).

In many organisations, gender bias and gender discrimination frequently go unspoken and unquestioned. It is evident in the practices of homosociability, whereby men are attracted to, stimulated by, and interested in other men. In organisations, this homosociability, or as 'similarity attraction', is associated with men supporting each other and their actively

'paying it forward', preferring to collaborate with, recruit and promote other men (Gallant 2014). If those in positions of influence are unconsciously gender biased, their decisions can disadvantage women. The hierarchical system of management committees and line management positions throughout an organisation, suggests a distribution of power commensurate with the level of responsibility, however, the apparent neutrality of this hierarchical structure can conceal gender schemas, depending on the levels of gender awareness of the position holders.

Recent research has provided evidence for the ways gender schemas disadvantage women's careers. In a study of professorial appointments in the Netherlands, van den Brink and Benschop (2011) found that exceptional female candidates were rated equivalent to average male candidates, so much so that women were required to be 'five legged sheep', to be appointed, whereas ordinary four legged male sheep were regularly successful in professorial appointments. Similarly, in the US, in a randomised double blind study (n=127), science faculty from research-intensive universities were asked to rate the application materials of a student, who was randomly assigned either a male name or a female name. Female and male faculty both exhibited bias against the female student, rating the male candidate more employable, and worthy of a higher starting salary than the identical female candidate (Moss-Racusin et al 2012).

Recent research on managerial decision making found that women place greater emphasis on non-financial and personal goals and are more likely than men to see their contribution to the quality of the decision making cycle as a competitive advantage (Kotlyar, Karakowsky and Ng, 2011). However, despite the gains women have made in mid-level management, the number of women in top executive positions continues to remain very small (Klenke, 2003). Faced with contradictory outcomes of different studies, recent research has begun to investigate unexplored variables that might influence the hypothesised relationship between gender and decision-making. Klenke (2003) found :

It is not gender per se that influences and determines differential decision making processes of male and female executives [...]. Instead gender works indirectly through power, organisational politics/political savvy, conflict management and trust and produces differences between female and male approaches to decision making thereby exerting influence on the decision making cycle (2003:1025).

In the case study organisations, women's scarce presence in decision making bodies was highlighted and participants revealed the operation of gender schemas with the overwhelming view that women's attitudes and behaviour are 'the problem' (O'Connor, 2008, 2014). Similar patterns emerged in the Italian organisation, where it was noted that women reject roles of responsibility:

From the EYC project [Enhance Your Competences project] it emerged that the few women who participated in it do not want to be put in roles of responsibility... all of them say "yes, yes, but do not ask me because I have my own things to do, I have my commitments, children"... the usual things (IT/41/X/M/5).

This suggests women self-select to avoid positions of responsibility because of the difficulty of combining caring work with a scientific career. Therefore we recommend that sharing good practices of female role models who successfully hold positions of responsibility will encourage more women to consider going forward for management roles. Female role models may give support to other women scientists by sharing their experiences of how they were encouraged to take on responsibilities and how to manage them (Recommendation 11).

In the Turkish organisation, one respondent reported: *'There are some women who want to leave the office earlier...of course, one can regard this as something natural'* (TR/41/X/M/3). This man shares the view of the Italian respondent that women themselves may reject taking positions of responsibility. Such an observation is evidence of gender schemas as it suggests women are leaving work early because of family responsibilities. The unchallenged assumption that scientific careers necessitate working long hours and this is difficult for women (not men) with caring responsibility, conceals the fact that such ways of working implicitly discriminate against women who typically have competing family obligations. This also points to the need to encourage women to go forward for management positions (Recommendation 13).

Similarly another respondent from the Turkish organisation observes that there is no formal discrimination against women, but informal barriers may come from women themselves: *'Women do not want to take tasks requiring physical strength in*

laboratories. Maybe it's because of the life style they grew up with' (TR/41/X/M/2). He is quick to point out that this is not gender related, there are men who also do not want to do such work: *'Of course, I met a man who is not capable of drilling screws. So, this is not something scientific, this is not something related to gender'* (TR/41/X/M/2). Such attitudes signify the need to challenge stereotypes to make visible women who are successful in different tasks/responsibilities in academia (Recommendation 11), and the necessity of encouraging women to go forward for management positions (Recommendation 13).

Acker (1990) and Williams (2001) found that managers draw on gendered stereotypes when developing organisational charts and job descriptions which reward characteristics associated with men and masculinity and devalue ones associated with femininity. This traditional model of work is increasingly anachronistic. In the past thirty years or so, neoliberalism has affected vast processes of change in organisations: *'In Italy when you get to the top level you have to stay in the office till late, especially in Milan you have to stay until 9... if you leave they look at you'* (IT/41/X/F/2). Typically male colleagues do not regard this as an organisation issue, but a women's issue: *'I see that women throw in the towel even before starting, they do not even try. This is the key point'* (IT/41/X/M/5). This attitude that women quit before they start indicates the male dominated culture of the scientific environment, and the 'othering' that women experience (O'Connor and Goransson, 2014). We note that long hours cultures are not ideal for women or men, or anyone with caring responsibilities. In this regard, making changes to internal structures such as having an equality committee to ensure women and men have equal opportunities to balance work and family life would also support women's participation in management positions (Recommendation 3).

However, it was also noted that respondents considered women's participation in decision making committees as positive. One man from the Irish organisation highlights the scarce presence of women in decision-making boards/committees and exposes the perception that gender balance would positively affect the working of committees:

It would certainly be better to have a better balanced committee, I mean even in terms of simply the workings of any, you know, any committee, any grouping

works better when it's, when it's balanced, I suppose that's my own personal opinion. I've no experience of a committee of, of only women, but I imagine that that is not ideal any more than all male (IE/41/X/M/51).

One respondent from the Turkish organisation also recognises that women are poorly represented in management committees at university level. He asks a very fair question: *'[this institution] has many female researchers, but why do not we see them in management roles? We need better representation of women because we need different perspectives'* (TR/41/X/M/2). While he suggests more women in management positions would be a positive development, he acknowledges he does not take action to encourage women: *'Although I am aware of this case, I do not try to be a part of a possible change'* (TR/41/X/M/2). It is interesting to note that this man acknowledges the need for better representation of women, yet feels no obligation to become involved in creating that change. This suggests that he is aware of the system of male privileging and is happy to benefit from it, therefore does not become involved in challenging the status quo. In the Italian organisation, the presence of women is seen as adding value to the process and the outcomes of committee decision making:

The presence of a woman in the decision-making is a stimulus; if there are competences, obviously, not a woman just to make up the numbers, [her presence] is a boost [...] The presence of a woman at the decision-making table is an accelerator [...] I have always thought that when a woman succeeds she gains a lot more because she has been able to manage many tensions [regarding power positions].. and when she is accepted this has a much higher value. Compared to men, probably "she will be less forgiven" because there is still a male model that rules (IT/41/X/M/6).

There was support for the inclusion of women in senior decision making structures, but an unwillingness to be proactive about its implementation (O'Connor 2014). Similar patterns emerged in the present study. We will take actions to convert this rhetorical support into tangible support within the case study organisations, reflected in recommendations concerning making the situation visible, committee composition,

gender balance on committees, gender auditing organisations and making committee membership more transparent (Recommendations 1 4, 5 and 6).

Unconscious bias, as the name suggests, is not conscious and even a woman who bemoaned the lack of senior women in the Irish organisation, demonstrated the operation of gender schemas, and her own awareness of bias:

I was astounded by the level of bias against [religious group]... Astounded by that, and in that area, I do think education would be good, so I can begin to understand and transfer this idea to gender as well (IE/41/X/F/47).

Some academic disciplines are traditionally gendered. It was suggested that engineering and scientific mindsets are male, while humanities, arts and business mindsets are female, and this is a key issue for the faculty of science and engineering if it is to address gender equality. Implicit in this is the suggestion that attitudes and opinions need to change if more women are to be attracted to science and engineering. Other women, however, discounted the importance of gender, suggesting it is discipline or personalities which are the cause of women's exclusion. One woman in the Turkish organisation reported:

Of course, there are times I felt I have been excluded. Those cases were not because of my gender. There were some other dynamics. I informed the ones who excluded me about my sensitivities. I took steps not to experience the same exclusion again in the future (TR/41/X/F/8).

This woman discounted gender, suggesting her exclusion was due to 'other dynamics', likewise in the Irish organisation, another female academic suggests that personalities are more important than gender:

I do think everything you're talking about is about group dynamics more than gender, yes of course there is gender, but the gender issue didn't dominate, it was the individual personalities (IE/41/X/F/47).

According to her, problems in academia are less about gender issues than personalities. Her narrative may be considered as normalising the effect of gender in the academic processes by generalising the roots of the problems to the issue of personality on an individual level, which also conceals gender schemas operating in the male dominated environment. To facilitate men and women's awareness of the ways gender schemas operate to normalise gender differences, it will be recommended that unconscious bias / gender awareness training be provided to all committee members (Recommendation 2). We will also address the way gender bias can influence decision making processes in training for women (Recommendation 12).

Valian (2005) argues that to be successful in academia, and in other areas, it is important to negotiate effectively. To do that, 'one must have a feeling of (at least moderate) *entitlement*; but women tend to be low in entitlement and men tend to be high'. This was borne out in one interview in the Italian organisation, where a woman committee member admitted to her low sense of entitlement as well as to underestimating her own ability:

Sheryl Sandberg says there is a time when you [woman] think you are a fake, I've arrived at the top level up and you do not believe in your skills... Women underestimate themselves. [we say to ourselves] "it is not true that I'm so good, it cannot be". When I first joined the [committee] I said "what the hell am I doing here? I am not able". But it is not true (IT/41/X/F/2).

To support women to develop a sense of entitlement, it will be recommended that training to empower women to take up leadership roles will be given (Recommendation 13). A training programme for decision makers will also contribute to developing entitlement since the training will also aim to enhance the skills needed for management such as negotiation.

These findings suggest that gender schemas exist and that both men and women in the three institutions assign particular gender roles to women and to men. Both men and women, however, did not consider gender schemas, but discounted the importance of gender. One way to prevent this common problem is to raise awareness of unconscious bias, and we recommend training committee members and decision makers in unconscious gender bias (Recommendation 2).

Role of the Chair

In the three institutions, the role of the Chair on committees was considered significant, both in directing the outcome of the decision and on reaching consensus. In the organisations in Italy, Turkey and Ireland, interviewees report consensus situations as the ones that occur most frequently during decision-making meetings at all levels of governance and management.

According to Kotlyar et al (2011) chairs/group leaders are in the best position to improve the effectiveness of decision-making groups, assuring members' commitment to team decisions and managing team conflict and disagreements. It is suggested, by Flood et al (2000) that leadership (or Chair) behaviour has profound effects on team/board members, including how they relate both to the leader as well as to each other:

Our President ... always manages to mediate, to postpone the decision, finding the situation of mediation on certain issues; I would say that the ... President somehow manages to smooth edges and to find [agreements] ... we can say the President is very good at this and a president has to behave like this, he must listen to diverse positions. If I have a strong idea I do not feel excluded ... I go and discuss and sometimes I can even change my mind... because he convinced me to change my opinion (IT/41/X/M/1).

This respondent in the Italian organisation demonstrated how the President, as chair, uses the process of ongoing discussions and postponing decisions to convince committee members to reach consensus. Similarly the Chair of another committee in the Italian organisation takes the same approach:

There have been debates and sometimes also quite strong and passionate... but they have always gone finally well, I would say ... I think it is a natural way of doing, I think it is good it is like this because on certain issues you have different ideas and if we discuss openly obviously there are clashes.. but, let's say that I slowly try to go toward the "road" I consider to be the right one (IT/41/X/M/8).

Similarly, in this account, the respondent displays his skill at driving the committee towards reaching agreement on what he considers to be the correct outcome. In the Italian organisation, going 'slowly' is significant, and many discussions take place, so that eventually there will be consensus. In all three institutions, it was reported that the Chair was significant in driving the committee towards consensus. On one occasion, in the Italian organisation consensus was achieved because the President altered his initial position, but this was reported as an unusual occurrence:

But to tell you about this decision, the President ... he has probably changed his mind.. or has accepted somehow the idea of a majority of the board [...] we rarely remain with strongly contrasting or conflicting ideas because after the discussion we always find convergence (IT/41/X/M/1).

The significant point is that consensus is depicted as always achieved, and in every situation requires the commitment of the chair. The most common position was outlined by a respondent in the Irish organisation: *'I think in a situation which is led, where there is a leader, ultimately, the decisions may, in the end, be those of the leader'* (IE/41/X/F/47). One respondent in the Turkish organisation suggests:

It's not difficult to reach consensus. Sometimes if there is a very important subject we discuss it even for weeks. The last issue we were discussing was about education in English. Other than such subjects, there is nothing to discuss or disagree as because all meeting agenda is about faculty budget or things like that. There is nothing to discuss about those as we have limited resources (TR/41/X/M/5).

This account suggests that the issues available for discussion are limited. In the Italian organisation, it is reported that while consensus is always achieved, it is not the only way decisions can be made, and the chair has the power to make an authoritative decision:

*But to know that you have the Board consensual or not [makes the difference] ...
I could also make a decision totally in disagreement with 100 per cent of the
Board but it would not be nice and it would not be right (IT/41/X/M/4)*

This respondent reveals that as Chair, he has the power to insist on a decision, but culturally it *'would not be nice and it would not be right'*, therefore an elongated process of negotiation and discussion takes place to ensure that consensus is achieved, but the Chair directs the decision.

In the Irish organisation, many respondents described how decisions were reached by consensus, but in the account below, it is evident that there is not actual consensus, but the view of the majority is presented as consensus:

I've been on both sides of like three/two, five/fours, you know, that, those kind of decisions, you know, I've been on both sides of those in my time ...And ... you just get to the stage where there's no right decision, there's no wrong decision...we go with the majority, but there is a consensus that you would go with the majority (IE/41/X/M/44).

In the Irish organisation, at the Recruitment Committee level, which is sub-committee of the Executive Committee, compliance is achieved through detailed proposal processes and elongated decision making through requests for further information *'the norm would be that we would request additional information. It's rare that it would be an all-out 'No'* (IE/41/X/F/46). The implication is that it would be impolite to refuse a request directly, therefore suggesting the requester modifies or reconsiders their request is one way to avoid a direct refusal, and to reach consensus because the request will eventually be made in a way which is acceptable to the committee, or will be withdrawn. This mechanism is a way of reaching consensus without displaying overt power.

A different focus is offered by a respondent in the Turkish organisation who argues that consensus is easily achieved because Deans do not appear to think independently from their Chair, because of ties of loyalty:

It's not difficult to reach consensus in University Senate because people all think what Rector is thinking of. The Deans in the senate are all appointed by Rector, they never disagree with the Rector. This situation is very absurd and worrying. If a Dean cannot think independently this is not acceptable (TR/41/X/F/4).

This account suggests that the Dean always agrees with the Rector's view, because the perception is that the Rector appointed the Dean. In fact, the CoHE appoints the Deans, but selects from three candidates forwarded by the Rector. The CoHE tends to appoint the candidate who is most favoured by the Rector, for this reason, there is a common perception that the Deans are appointed directly by the Rector. However, in a conflicting account another participant in the Turkish organisation considered the Dean of his faculty to be open and democratic :

In regard to our faculty, of course there is the influence of the Dean's Office. Some Deans may put their influence openly and some others do this in a hidden way. But I still believe there is democracy in our faculty. What I observe is that the dean is following what faculty members suggest (TR/41/X/M/3).

However, one reason offered for achieving apparent consensus in the Turkish organisation, is that the outcomes of decisions are pre-determined: *'Rarely there are times that all members in a meeting do not agree on a decision. But a disagreement may not help to change the decision. Sometimes I feel that all decisions are pre-cooked before the meeting'* (TR/41/X/F/7). This respondent suggests that consensus is the norm, as discussing a 'pre-cooked' decision is futile, as it may have no impact.

Accounts from these respondents suggest that consensus is the norm across the three institutions, however on closer examination, this is not real consensus, but a decision to either agree with the power holder (the Chair), or a recognition that disagreement is futile, or to go along with the decision because otherwise there will be endless meetings and discussions but the outcome will be what the chair determines. In the Italian organisation, the chair leads a process of endless negotiation and discussion. Similarly, in the Turkish organisation, decisions are discussed widely but there may be a perception that the process is directed by the chair, or that the outcome is 'pre-cooked'. In the Irish organisation, the

practice of reaching consensus by cooling out dissent through requests for more information, or by pragmatically accepting the majority view were reported. In all cases, the chair of a committee is highly influential in achieving consensus.

We recommend Chair persons of committees are trained in unconscious bias/gender awareness, particularly Heads of Departments and Deans, as deans have significant influence in the faculty. We also recommend such training for any faculty members who sit on committees, in order to create gender awareness and lead to gender sensitive decisions (Recommendation 2). It is further recommended to make committee membership more transparent (Recommendation 6), and accountability measures for committee decision making be introduced (Recommendation 7), including having an independent observer at committee meetings (Recommendation 10). These measures are consistent with a gender mainstreaming agenda, as outlined in Chapter 2.

Promotions and Appointments

As women's careers are advanced because of the decisions made by hiring and promotion committees, we examine the decision making processes of these committees to determine the influence of gender. Smith (1975:360) argues that it is through the structure of ranks and the procedures by which people are advanced from one rank to another, that the university maintains control over the nature and quality of work that is done and the kinds of people who are admitted to its ranks and to influential positions within it. The system of convening committees to evaluate applicants for promotion has the potential to conceal gender schemas, as these committees are male dominated. In her ground-breaking work, Moss-Kanter (1977) argued that thirty per cent of women, or other marginalised groups, was a critical mass. Once this critical mass was reached, women and other minority groups found their voice in committee decision making fora and participated on an equal footing with the dominant group. To achieve gender equality in promotion and hiring decisions, the equal participation of women and men on all hiring and promotion committees is essential.

In the Turkish organisation, the Executive Board plays a crucial role in promotions and appointments. As one respondent points out: *'Recruitment and promotion criteria are one of the subjects that can be discussed in the Executive Board, and also it would be fair to*

say that the final decisions in regard to recruitment and appointment are made at university Executive Board' (TR/41/X/M/2). Another respondent in the Turkish organisation questions the profile of the Executive Board in terms of gender: '*I am a member of the University Executive Board since 2008, there were women members on the board then, compared to now. Today the number of women professors at the board is very low*' (TR/41/X/F/6). Her point highlights the importance of gender balance on the decision making body, and regrettably notes that in the past women were better represented on the University Executive Board than they are today.

However, in the Irish organisation, one women described the masculine culture of a male dominated promotion committee which discouraged her participation in the decision-making processes:

I would be very very unhappy with the promotions board and withdrew from that process. I sat on that once and it was all men and myself. There was a very definite gender biased comment made at that meeting and I was astounded by it...At one of those I did hear a very strong male, gender-biased comment made about a woman who was applying for promotion, and it was very poor, very poor. It was something like 'She's very eager isn't she?' but it held a lot, a lot, a lot of things in that sentence. And, there was an awful lot in that sentence, and that comment was made about no other application that we were looking at (IE/41/X/F/47).

This account also reveals the operation of gender schemas. Ambition is regarded as a masculine attribute. The remark '*She's very eager*' suggests this women is transgressing gender norms. As this comment was made about no other applicant, it might suggest that the speaker holds traditional ideas about appropriate gender roles for men and women.

In the Irish organisation, in recruitment competitions, candidates attend an interview with a Recruitment Board, made up of subject matter experts, which includes gender representation (i.e. one woman and seven to ten men) as opposed to gender balance (i.e. forty per cent of either gender). As one member of a selection board describes the decision making process:

There's a discussion, generally speaking, before you score. Immediately the candidate leaves, people can then put down scores opposite various criteria, and then there's a general discussion at the end and these scores are collected and collated and, now if it's kind of obvious that somebody is way ahead of everybody else then that's communicated like to everybody, you know, but the - the discussion can modify the scores (IE/41/X/M/44).

The opportunities for gender bias to creep into this process are the weightings attached to the various criteria, the interpretation of the criteria, the different valuations of candidate performance and the influence of the chair. Assessing candidates frequently involves the selection board drawing on their own experiences. For example, in the case of promotions, where candidates are assessed on the basis of their application documents, without interview, one participant noted that those on the faculty committee rate candidates on the basis of their own experience:

In some cases, the people who [are on the committees] are very successful at ticking boxes and have very little respect for the next people they're evaluating...so there's some friction there and I've seen it, of where, you know, 'ah yeah, I did this (IE/41/X/M/52).

Although the rules, norms and regulations regarding promotion and advancement processes appear gender-neutral on the surface, Acker (1990) and Williams (2001) argue that they are biased in favour of men:

Each individual event in which a women does not get her due – is not listened to, is not invited to give a presentation, is not credited with an idea – is a mole hill. Well-meaning observers may tell the woman not to make a mountain out of a molehill. What they do not understand is what the notion of the accumulation of disadvantage encapsulates. Mountains are molehills, piled one on top of the other (Valian, 2005: 35).

In the Irish organisation, a request for a post can frequently conceal the fact that an advertisement can be written with a particular individual in mind, and the recruitment sub-committee of the Executive Committee which allocates such posts is alert to these practices:

So for example here's one that does occasionally exercise our minds, they're looking for a post - have they got someone lined up already for it? And that would be something... we'd approach in a particular way. Sometimes ... it'd be soft information or it would be - you just know by the nature of the application, you just- yeah, you know, that (.) this person wears a green shirt every Monday, and has a preference for brown rice, you know (IE/41/X/M/45).

In the Italian organisation, one centre had decided to reduce tenured positions from five to three and had selected the candidates who provided the broadest skill set to the centre but this decision was rejected by the Human Resources function, as it did not comply with its recruitment procedures:

In this case, the consensus was reached within the sub-board, but there was strong disappointment when we were told that we could not decide on the people [to recruit]. We were firmly opposed to the selection procedures of HR, as it has been made (IT/41/X/M/6).

These accounts suggest that bureaucratic procedures in relation to appointments are designed to be objective and transparent, however, they can be managed in particular ways to influence the outcome. The requirement to observe HR procedures as regards such recruitment suggests a level of bureaucracy, but also a form of transparency in that all candidates have an equal opportunity to compete for these positions. Husu (2000) and Foschi (2004) argue that transparency in appointment processes decreases the chance of gender bias. Such biases are more likely to occur when assessments are based on obscure criteria and the evaluation process is kept confidential.

It has been demonstrated that 'excellence' is a gendered concept (Moss-Racusin et al 2014, Van Den Brink and Benschop, 2011). This raises serious questions about the exercise of bias in decision making. Consequently, training on gender awareness for committee

members is essential to reduce the incidence of gender discriminatory comments (Recommendation 2). In addition to training in unconscious bias, the system of having an independent observer present during recruitment committee meetings to measure and record the quality and quantity of questions asked of candidates, to ensure equal treatment of male and female candidates is necessary to ensure fairness and equality in the process (Recommendation 10).

Recommendations to eliminate gender bias in recruitment and promotion committees include making the situation visible by publishing gender disaggregated data on promotions and appointments, including candidate data such as the numbers of applicants, the numbers shortlisted, successful and unsuccessful. It is also recommended that the application materials (CVs) of successful candidates be made available, so that unsuccessful and prospective candidates can evaluate the fairness of the criteria and process and can benchmark themselves (Recommendation 1). We further recommend that the gender breakdown of such committees be published (Recommendation 1). We also recommend having gender balance on such committees (Recommendation 4), and auditing the decisions made by these committees (Recommendations 5).

Transparency

Gender equality programmes frequently emphasise the importance of transparency and accountability. Transparency in decision-making – defined as information about decisions and decision-making procedures that is provided or available – is generally regarded as a golden tool in policy making (de Fine Licht et al., 2014). Van den Brink defines decisions or practices as ‘transparent’ when information about how they are carried out is accessible to insiders and outsiders in an accurate and comprehensible form. Giddens (1984) defined accountability for one’s activities as explicating the reasons for them and supplying the normative grounds whereby they may be justified. The call for more transparent procedures has its origin in gender research and women would benefit from more open and transparent procedures (van den Brink et al., 2010), particularly in relation to appointments and promotions.

Transparency can lead to positive effects; among them are the willingness to accept decisions, decision-making procedures and the perception of legitimacy that can increase

people's sense of control by making decision makers accountable for their actions. Other benefits are fostering people's understanding of decisions and the decision makers (de Fine Licht, et al 2014). It also encourages objectivity within the process, and discourages nepotism and other inappropriate behavior (Svensson, 2007). On the other hand, there are also potential obstacles that result from increased transparency that may reduce its positive effects. Transparency can induce disappointment with regard to how decision making is actually conducted or may lead to information overload and confusion (de Fine Licht, et al 2014).

The academic appointment system is often described as an opaque process in which an inner circle of elites selects new professors in an informal, closed decision-making process. Enhancing the transparency of academic recruitment is one important aspect of achieving gender equality. A significant difficulty given for not achieving transparency in appointments can be the issue of privacy. Increasing transparency requires disclosing information about the agents, criteria and decision-making process involved. At the same time, departments need to ensure the confidentiality of information pertaining to candidates (van den Brink et al., 2010). Making the application documents of successful candidates available to unsuccessful or prospective candidates would make a significant contribution to transparency in appointments, as it would enable outsiders to hold organisations to account for their decisions (Van den Brink et al., 2010). One respondent in the Turkish organisation argues that a good reason for transparency is that it prevents speculation:

When there is no transparency, the speculation comes into stage. The decisions are for university, so why they do not announce them openly? Reaching transparency is not difficult actually. It is very easy, you can easily announce all decisions or procedures on the website of the university (TR/41/X/F/4).

In referring to the ease with which transparency can be achieved, this respondent is referring to posting the outcome of already taken decisions on the website, and not participation in decision making, or to indicating how these decisions have been reached. There is a perception that making transparent information and/or processes could also reduce individual power. One respondent in the Italian organisation reports the possible

consequences of the implementation of a more detailed and transparent process of communication and evaluation:

The problem is that it will take time to make people understand that there must be a big mental shift... I think it is right and important to do it [be transparent] ... We are not stealing anyone's power but we are helping people to work better. They have to understand that I'm not inventing forms of control but tools that work in their favor (IT/41/X/M/5).

Thus, this respondent suggests that line management will be resistant to transparency measures as it may represent a loss of positional power. Resistance to transparency was also noted in the Irish organisation where a head of department highlights the difficulties he experienced being fair and transparent regarding workload allocation in his department:

What I've learned is you do your best to make sure it's fair for them [academic staff] as well, and they - absolutely, they will not accept your decision until you make it authoritative and this makes it hard work, you know... They [academic staff] will put you in to a cycle of continuous discussions and negotiations, even after the decisions are made, to try and wear you down (IE/41/X/M/52).

He suggests being transparent and fair about decisions may lead to more discussions and negotiations than would occur in the case of authoritative (and closed) decisions. In his opinion, transparency causes controversies, disagreements and a loss of time. He suggests a high level of resistance to authority, even when these decisions are transparent. According to Kotlyar et al. (2011), there are two types of conflicts, task conflict that arises through the discussion and debate of member preferences or opinions regarding the tasks at hand and relational conflict which is most typically counterproductive given that its focus is on people. However, in these accounts, it is evident that while transparency is generally considered to be a positive concept, in both the Italian and Irish organisation, attempts to introduce transparency generated conflict and resistance.

In all three institutions, a key tool which is perceived as necessary for providing transparency is the minutes of the meetings. This, however, assumes that the minutes will

be a fair reflection of the meeting and decisions taken. There is varied use and circulation of minutes in each of the organisations.

At Board of Governors level, minutes are recorded in the Italian organisation: *There is the minute of the meeting which is sent for approval ...and there's the need of the formal approval of it. Every member has to answer the email saying "I approve the minute" or "I wish these were edited"* (IT/41/X/F/2). Also in the Irish organisation, one senior manager suggested that the formality of minute taking and circulating is common practice:

I would say all the committees I'm on are pretty formally minuted and are communicated via minutes. And the minutes are managed by the Chair, in general. That's kind of the process we go with. So in general decisions are formally through the chair, or through the minute taking process. Yea. That's pretty standard here (IE/41/X/F/46).

Despite the acknowledged relevance of the minutes, interviewees highlight various difficulties concerning them. One difficulty is that the minutes may not be a true and accurate reflection of the discussion or decisions taken, and can reflect the views of the chair or the minute taker. Even setting the agenda for meetings can reflect the interests of the chair. A respondent in the Turkish organisation noted further complexities: *'But even one word from the minutes could be perceived very differently.... Many discussions cannot be recorded in minutes so a voice recording may help to increase transparency'* (TR/41/X/M/2). However, voice recording minutes would generate considerable work to transcribe and produce minutes, and would not necessarily guarantee transparency, simply a record of the meeting.

However, in the Italian organisation, the type and level at which the decision is made affects transparency. Decisions which refer to the mandate of the President are formally and openly communicated, while operational ones stay within the small and closed work team:

The more formal decisions.. let's say.. the ones according to the mandate.. are communicated through main documents....Management of normal decisions

regarding routine [matters] are not communicated in a structured way .. it's our weakness.. Only some information is communicated (IT/41/X/M/3).

Interestingly, at the high and mid levels, managers in the Italian organisation are keen to promote minutes, however the culture of the organisation resists. It was noted:

There's no record of the meetings... I have the minute of all the meetings, not formal minutes, but I take notes of everything... when the meeting finishes I am the only one, although I am higher in hierarchy, who takes notes (IT/41/X/M/3).

This respondent suggests that those who are at the meeting know the outcome of the decisions and only they need to know. He keeps minutes, but these are for his own use, not for distribution. Furthermore, even at the same level, there is variation in the practices adopted by committees in the Italian organisation. One Board regards minutes as desirable, even if they are not standard practice: *'We could write the minutes of every meeting but this is very expensive in terms of time... but the minutes should be a routine... I would make it compulsory (IT/41/X/M/7).* However, in another Board, minutes are standard practice and the manager makes the minutes available electronically: *'[The] minutes of these meetings are done...they [are] put into a hard disk of a server and it is available to all the heads of unit (IT/41/X/M/5).*

In the Turkish organisation, there is also variation in practices as regards transparency: *'As a Head of Department, I try to send the minutes of the meeting to all department members (TR/41/X/M/2).*

It is recognised in all three institutions that minutes of meetings provide a record of decisions taken. However, different perceptions of transparency exist in the three institutions and different practices in relation to recording and circulating minutes are evident within and between different levels across the three organisations. In the Turkish organisation, there appears to be acceptance that transparency exists because minutes can be posted on the website, however, given that many decisions are not available for discussion, this transparency is limited. In the Italian organisation, minutes of some committees are taken, and not others. Some committee members express a desire to promote transparency, however, these respondents anticipate problems and issues with its

introduction because culturally this is not the norm. In the Irish organisation, decisions are minuted and circulated to those who participate in meetings. The existence of minutes does not guarantee transparency and accountability, however, and may reflect dominant interests. We recommend that all decisions of key committees should be minuted, as well as the ways decisions were reached. Minutes should be circulated to all those affected by the decisions of the committee (Recommendation 8).

Communications

There is a link between the concept of transparency and the way communications are managed in the partner institutions. The way decisions are communicated can contribute to transparency. One respondent in the Turkish organisation suggests transparency has been achieved because information is accessible:

I guess nowadays all communication procedures are much more transparent compared to previous years. The reason is because of developments in technology. As we are living in a high-tech world, communication is much easier and this is reflected very positively in academia as the information flow became transparent. When I was younger, it was much harder to obtain knowledge and informal mechanisms were much more common. Nowadays, thanks to technology, we do not miss opportunities (TR/41/X/F/8).

This person suggests that technology (websites, e-mail) has made information more available, and this has replaced informal mechanisms, contributing to transparency. In terms of organisation communications, we explore the flow of information from the organisation to the people within it, and we look at the extent to which communications flow upwards, in particular the way complaints or challenges to decisions are facilitated. We highlight issues with communication flow and the significance of these for gendered decision making.

An academic from The Turkish organisation suggests that there is a hierarchical flow of information in the academy. The narrative suggests that information flows in a

hierarchical way from the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), to the rectorate, and down to the deanship and the departments:

Flow of information always goes from top - down. ..The Rectorate sends information to the lower units and they always have more staff to inform the other units of the university. And the Rectorate does not send any information directly to departments, they send information to faculty and the faculty sends them to departments. Actually it starts with Council of Higher Education in Turkey, they send the necessary information to the Rectorate and then the flow starts (TR/41/X/F/4).

This account suggests that formal information follows the chain of command of the hierarchy of the organisation. While discussing the flow of information, one respondent from the Turkish organisation suggests the following:

Sometimes Rectors office may send us a letter and request their demands. Sometimes we send the requests for promotion and new recruitment/posts to them. All these are communicated through official papers not via e-mails. But of course, we always communicate face to face with each other, which is very natural. You may need to get an informal permission by talking about changes in the courses, for example. (TR/41/X/M/3).

This man points out that e-mailing is not regarded as official communication; however, the most popular method of communication is verbal. He says that staff discuss their requirements for posts by speaking to one another. After a series of (verbal) negotiations, the Rectorate asks the department to inform them about their need for positions within a particular time frame, at which point all communication becomes official. His narrative demonstrates that while there is a hierarchy from top to bottom in academic decision-making processes, most communications about requests for positions, are initially undertaken in an informal, unofficial way.

In the Italian institution a respondent reports that information is shared between the heads of units, but is not always communicated downwards:

It is left to the head of the unit to inform his/her staff. The point is that this is still not satisfactory, it is a weak mechanism. Within the units, top down communication is very weak due their culture, they are not used to communicating. In the past, communication took place on a purely voluntary basis: some did [communicate] and others did nothing (IT/41/X/M/5).

However, there are opportunities for those on higher level committees to express their views and opinions to each other. According to one interviewee she tries to challenge positions during the meeting and she is aware that this can make consensus slightly more difficult. Nonetheless, she sees this as an appropriate way for her to contribute to the organisation:

It is something that is starting now according to my initiative [...] I have been appointed for my specific competences, otherwise you would just say "yes" and "no" and again "yes" and "no", but by doing that you will not be able to influence the performance of the institute (IT/41/X/F/2).

However, on a committee lower down the Italian organisation, objections are even not mentioned: according to one respondent, even the "touchy" topics such as the establishment of new research units, which are concerned with distribution of resources and the definition of new research areas, do not create objections and complaints.

Until now, the only things that have been created are the new units and there have been many meetings and discussions on this issue but there has never been anyone who has said he/she is adverse... until now the new research units created are all units that are born without any opposition from anyone (IT/41/X/M/7).

These respondents suggest very different forms of communication on the different committees, at a high level there are challenging discussions, while at a mid level, there are many meetings and discussions, but no opposing views.

Women's low level of participation in committees at university level, and the concentration of power at the top of the university, suggests women may feel excluded from decision making and sources of power. Mor, Barak and Cherin (1998) define inclusion as 'the extent to which individuals can access information and resources, are involved in work groups, and have the ability to influence decision-making processes'. In the Turkish organisation, one woman noted that her office was some physical distance from the main campus which houses the Rector and top committees, and this contributed to a feeling of exclusion:

I believe there is a disconnection between our building and the main campus. There was a period which I was supposed to go main campus frequently due to a managerial position. I understood the difference between being there and being here in that period. People do not invite you to some meetings for example and you never hear about those (TR/41/X/F/6).

This woman acknowledges a feeling of exclusion, but discounts that gender may have contributed, however, the location of the department/faculty can itself reflect gendered processes (O'Connor, 1996). In the Irish organisation relevance has also been given to the symbolic distance that separates the 'core' - a term to describe the Executive Committee - from the people working in the institution, which leads to a perceived inability to influence and having a voice. A female academic speaks about the lack of sense of connection and of a grey institution to give idea of the distance from the 'core':

I feel the overall institution is very grey and very distant and I feel very far from core. Even though occasionally I have made presentations to the so called core or to the top or whatever that is. Yet, I think if there was an Apple or Google, some of these really big corporations, [they] must know how to keep that sense of contact with the core. Someone else has figured this out... But it [this university] has really distanced itself from the people and it's becoming more of a grey institution, hard to identify [with] (IE/41/X/F/47).

Inclusion is focused on the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organisational processes, thus it represents a person's ability to contribute fully and effectively to an organisation (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Roberson 2004). Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality, which involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy, dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects (UN, 2014). Adopting elements of a gender mainstreaming approach will facilitate women's inclusion by ensuring gender balance on all committees and gender proofing all policies and procedures.

In the Italian organisation the professional role of individuals within the institution emerged as a criterion for exclusion. Specifically, doctoral students have a peripheral position both within communications and decision-making processes. From the senior researchers point of view this is to protect them from extra-tasks and to keep them focused on their specific research projects. What is quite surprising is that PhD students themselves are aware of this and comfortable with it because they would see involvement in such processes as a possible distraction from their main focus on research: *'Not everything has to be communicated to the PhD students because they are not proper institute personnel... well, yes, they are members of the unit'* (IT/41/X/M/8). Inclusion has to do with the style of management, too, and in particular with the ability to listen and pay attention to others, to the involvement of others into proposal formulation and being receptive to feedback. It does not necessarily mean shared decisions, depending on who has the power to make the decision, but usually involves some measure of consultation or information exchange. In the Italian organisation a research director organises *ad hoc* meetings open to all researchers. Such events are regarded as an occasion for him to present some decisions taken on specific issues (i.e. types of publication to be fostered, the research strategies of the centre), for the researchers to ask questions, make comments, express opinions with no need of the mediation of other people. These meetings could potentially represent an occasion to express complaints and opposing views, even if such a big audience (200 researchers attended the last meeting) could inhibit or moderate objections and complaints. This process of holding open meetings with the whole centre to exchange views is an indication of two-way communication, which one director regarded as necessary:

I rely a lot on the research board but I have noticed that often it is not enough because the information does not go down. So I've started organizing meetings ... open to all the researchers; I made one a month ago and I will do another one on Thursday (IT/41/X/M/4).

In his opinion, the first meetings for information exchange have been successful in terms of participation and inclusion and he intends to continue to facilitate such meetings. In the Irish organisation, one way to avoid conflict is to prevent opposing views or complaints emerging by having no mechanisms to address them. One participant spoke of his role on the recruitment committee, which is a sub-committee of the Executive Committee, when asked if people ever objected or complained about the decisions the committee makes in relation to assigning posts:

[There's] no opportunity to communicate views upwards. No acknowledgement of complaints. There are complaints ... there's not a procedure [for complaints] because we're doing the Executives' work, so in that sense there's no, there's no higher authority [than this committee] What does happen more likely is that people come back and ask us to reconsider (IE/41/X/M/45).

This narrative suggests there are no opportunities to formalise complaints or disagree with decisions made by the Recruitment Committee. The only mechanism for addressing complaints, is for the complainer to ask the committee to reconsider the decision, or make a new request.

At department level, however, in the Irish organisation, complaints were discouraged in a different way:

I think it's [communication and decision making is] flawed. I think there's very little room for genuine discussion, and departmental meetings are the only place where you can thrash out stuff, quietly. And there's too many things on the agenda at any one time, and they're not held frequently enough. Then you've got

faculty boards where you are basically quietened because you've got external people there, so you can't really wash your laundry in public (IE/41/X/F/48).

This participant suggests that departmental loyalty is also a form of institutional control. Department meetings are held infrequently so the meeting runs out of time before all agenda items are discussed. Difficult or sensitive items can be moved to the end of the agenda where they will never be discussed. However, while there may be no formal complaints mechanisms, a male academic manager from the Irish organisation observes:

People can challenge, academics are vocal people, and a lot of academics, not all, there's quite a number of academics who are not shy about making their views known (IE/41/X/M/45).

This suggests that in the absence of formal mechanisms for communicating upwards in the institution, people nevertheless find informal opportunities to make their views known and their voices heard. Objections to decisions are one of the most important themes that arise from interviewees' narratives. The possibility of objections or complaints and the way they are handled, provides an indication of whether the decision-making processes are conducted in a democratic and transparent way or not. A female academic from the Turkish organisation suggests that:

Students are always objecting to their grades, but apart from this example, academics are generally very reasonable and there are not aggressive objections. I only experience such objections in the university executive committee meetings and the subject was about new recruitment [posts] (TR/41/X/F/8).

This woman states that other than the usual practice of students objecting to their grades, she has not encountered any objections to academic decision-making processes, with the exception of new posts which is an issue of resource allocation. She says that everyone in the faculty is 'very reasonable', which demonstrates she is entirely uncritical of the reasons for the lack of objections. A respondent from the Turkish organisation outlines the complaints process:

You may apply to the Rectorate if you do not agree with a decision. The Rectorate may wish to discuss that disagreement in the University Senate. I have never seen a Professor object to the Rectorate, or I never heard [of it,], if it happened. So, there is a formal way of objecting to any decisions- but the Rectorate decides if they need to be discussed in Senate meetings. The Rectorate does not have to put them on the agenda of Senate meetings (TR/41/X/M/5).

In this man's account, there is an official way to object to a decision; however, it is ultimately the decision of the Rector whether to bring an objection to the attention of the Senate or not, thus the process can discourage objections. However, the opportunity for a judicial review of many administrative decisions is available as a constitutional right, and such reviews are not an uncommon practice. Appeals to the Council of State about recruitment and promotion decisions in the universities have been upheld. Similarly in the Irish and Italian organisations, employment rights are protected in law, with appeal mechanisms available. These are important control mechanisms for securing the rights of academics. However, experience of such appeals did not arise in this research. An academic from the Turkish organisation states the following:

I never experienced an academic objecting to a decision but I see students objecting to decisions related to them. Of course, if an academic objects to a decision, the Rectors office will deal with that. I never came across with such an objection until now (TR/41/X/M/3).

This respondent admits that he has never witnessed an academic bringing an objection to the Rectorate, but objections occur at the level of the department:

Of course, one can object to decisions. But I do not observe individual objections, I mean there are objections in departmental meetings. Such objections help others to reconsider the existing decisions. So, yes there are official ways to object (TR/41/X/F/1).

In this interview, this woman suggests that there are official and possible ways for objections to be voiced within the department. The respondent states that there are conflicting voices within the department as some argue that a decision should be taken in a certain way whereas some others object. She provides a more optimistic account of transparency and the possibility of objecting in an academic environment. These accounts demonstrate that the Executive Committee in the Irish organisation and the Rectorate in the Turkish organisation have structures in place to prevent or discourage objections and complaints, thereby confirming their control. However there may be scope to debate decisions at department level, if the Head of Department places such decisions on the agenda and allows sufficient time for the meeting.

In the Italian organisation, interviewees did not report cases of strong objections to decisions. It was reported that only those at the most senior levels challenge decisions and engage in discussion and debate. There are no references to objections coming from staff at lower levels. What emerges from the interviews is that long, repeated and frequent discussions dampen down possible conflicts, this process has been described by Deetz (1995) as 'involvement but no voice', whereby people's opinions are expressed, but they may not influence the outcome of the decision.

We observed that women were excluded by communications processes, even if they did not see this as gendered. We recommend the implementation of some gender mainstreaming tools to include women in decision making fora (Recommendations 4,6, 7) as well as training for women to empower them to participate more fully (Recommendations 13). We recommend regular and frequent meetings between management and staff, to address the absence of opportunities for communicating upwards (Recommendation 9).

Conclusion

Power is centralised in all three institutions, and, as we have seen, women are not well represented on any committees or individual decision making roles in the institutions. Thus, women may feel excluded from decision making and sources of power. However, women attributed exclusion to other factors, discounting the importance of gender. Power is in principle devolved throughout different hierarchical levels in the institutions, however, decisions taken at levels below Board or Executive, are generally programmed decisions,

where the outcome is known, predictable and routine. Procedures are established for making such decisions in all institutions, which represent a disciplinary system. Such centralisation of power and control over decision making leads to a perceived inability to influence and some people in these institutions describe exclusion. One woman in the Irish organisation spoke of a psychological distance from the 'core' of the organisation, while respondents in the Turkish organisation described physical distance. However, frequent discussions in the Italian organisation, even if unrelated to action, created a feeling of inclusion.

Gender schemas operate in the three institutions to the disadvantage of women. However, women and men have normalised the effect of gender by generalising the roots of the problems to the issue of discipline or personality at an individual level. In examining promotion and appointment decisions, gender schemas were evident and are an important part in the reproduction of male domination. The structurally weak position of women on interview boards and evidence of (unconscious) gender bias effectively silenced women. There was evidence of rhetorical support for increasing women's participation in decision making and in management positions in all three institutions. Decision making was reported to be by some form of consensus in all three institutions, however this apparent consensus is achieved in different ways. In the Italian organisation, endless discussions take place; In the Turkish organisation, some academics feel that there might be decisions which are pre-cooked and that other issues are not available for discussion like the budget, because it is decided centrally, while in the Irish organisation, consensus appears to be rhetorical. There appears to be general support for transparency in the Italian organisation, and decision makers claimed transparency was important and desirable. There is a perception that decisions are already transparent among senior decision makers in the Irish organisation, and the availability of minutes on the website was regarded as evidence of transparency in the Turkish organisation. Different levels of transparency and of recording and circulating minutes within and between the institutions were evident. There is no guarantee that minutes of meetings will improve transparency, because those who produce the minutes can determine their content, nevertheless consistent recording and circulating minutes of all decisions for all committees will improve the communication of information throughout organisations.

Communications are top down in all three institutions and in the Irish and Turkish organisations, the possibility of conflict is reduced by preventing opposing views or complaints from emerging by having no mechanisms to facilitate them. Other mechanisms to avoid conflict are infrequent meetings; insufficient time given to meetings; departmental loyalty which inhibits raising issues in the Irish organisation, and discouraging use of official complaints systems. In the Turkish organisation, even if a complaint is made to the Rectorate, the Rector decides to bring it for discussion or not, but as noted, decisions can be appealed through the courts. Conversely in the Italian organisation, long and frequent discussions aim at weakening opposition and conflicts by looking for convergence and consensus. In the Turkish and Italian organisations, face to face communication was important, and many decisions were made through informal communication channels, before proceeding down an official route.

Power is centralised in these higher level teaching and research institutes but various practices obscure this. These practices are the meetings held by many committees throughout the organisations, bureaucratic processes, limiting the scope of issues for discussion, and preventing objections. In these centralised structures power is gendered, but this is obscured by denial and rhetorical statements.

These findings indicate that there is considerable scope to improve decision making and communications processes, to raise awareness of gender for all those who participate in committees and who have decision making power outside the committee structure, in order to improve the participation of women. Our recommendations are outlined in the next chapter.

6: Recommendations

Institutionalised sexism does not necessarily mean that individuals are biased or discriminatory, but the outcome of the systems they operate may well be systematically biased. Thus, institutional practices which, appearing to be neutral, can actually lead to gendered outcomes, because the individuals who occupy committees and decision making boards are unaware that they can exercise unconscious bias. Cognitive errors in assessing merit, suitability for leadership, or evaluation of performance are embedded in institutional practices, often despite good intentions and a commitment to equality. Research also demonstrates that despite good intentions and a commitment to fairness, both men and women are likely to undervalue women's accomplishments.

These recommendations address institutional and structural issues, as well as cultural ones relating to gender bias. We make two sets of recommendations, one for the institution's processes, procedures and culture, and another set to empower women to participate in decision making processes.

Recommendations to improve Institutional Processes, Procedures and Culture

1. Make the gender situation visible
2. Train decision makers in gender awareness
3. Recommend changes to internal structures, i.e. equality committees independent of Human Resources, with top level support
4. Ensure gender balance on all key committees
5. Implement system of gender auditing the organisation
6. Make committee membership more transparent
7. Create accountability measures
8. Circulate minutes of meetings
9. Implement a system of regular meetings between management and staff for information exchange.
10. Introduce a system of having an independent (gender) observer at committees to eliminate potential bias in decision making.

Recommendations to empower women.

11. Encourage women's participation in management positions
12. Share good practices, i.e. make female role models visible and available.
13. Train women in leadership and decision making

Recommendation 1: Make the gender situation visible

Our findings suggest that making the (gender) situation visible will help create awareness of women's underrepresentation at various levels of decision making and women's structurally weak position as members of committees.

We recommend that data from gender mainstreaming tools be collected and published. Gender statistics will provide data on key gender topics that will highlight possible gender biases within organisational contexts. Gender statistics serve as a starting point for discussions and debates among policy makers on possible evidence-based policies aimed at fostering equal working conditions for men and women. The publication of gender disaggregated data will disseminate information about the condition of gender (in) equality in institutions and lead to promotion of gender awareness and an increase in levels of gender awareness. We believe that policy makers need to be conscious of gender related issues in order to promote policies and practices to advance equality and to develop specific institutional actions, targets and metrics.

We recommend making the application documents, including CVs of successful applicants available to prospective and unsuccessful candidates. This practice would encourage transparency in selection and appointment processes as prospective and unsuccessful candidates could benchmark their own applications in relation to the successful one.

We recommend publishing gender-disaggregated data on personnel in the organisation at each hierarchical level, length in position, contractual arrangement, mean pay rates, members on key decision making fora, numbers of women as external examiners and invited speakers, achievement records and funds (such as recipients of awards, training and travel funds allocated and other gender budgeting applications). A report will be made annually to the Gender Equality Committee (recommendation 3), and the institution will review and track improvements over time.

Recommendation 2: Training decision makers in gender awareness.

Our findings reveal high levels of unconscious gender bias and the operation of gender schema. We have observed that such bias and schema can cloud judgment, often unconsciously and these tendencies are reflected in organisational practices and culture and

inadvertently result in indirect discrimination. All committee members, and particularly chairs of committees should be required to attend unconscious bias and gender awareness training before participating on committees. Such training will prevent gender bias and gender discrimination in decision making processes, will enable men and women to assess and evaluate decisions in a gender sensitive way and reduce the reproduction of gender bias during decision making. An in-depth study of gender training in the EU found that gender training makes a difference. If it is implemented systematically it facilitates more efficient actions and a positive change in the attitudes of policy makers (EIGE, 2013).

Bias was evident on promotion and appointment boards and we recommend gender awareness training for all committee members, especially Chairs in order to minimise such gender biased comments and evaluations. Training will help decision makers to develop sensitivity in perceiving existing gender issues and inequalities. Consequently, this training will provide committee members with the necessary attitude to avoid judging candidates based on gender stereotypes and traditional gendered expectations of appropriate role behavior for men and women. Further, we recommend that it be a pre-requisite for participation on promotion and appointment committees that all members and the Chair must have participated in a recognised training on unconscious bias/gender awareness. Such gender training will reinforce and support a culture of gender awareness, a sensitivity to gender (in)equality, and support for gender balance in committees. Training on gender awareness both for deans/chairs of committees and for academic staff will create a gender sensitive transformation of decision-making processes.

Recommendation 3: Recommend changes to internal structures – establish equality committees, independent of Human Resources, with top level support.

Our findings suggest that members of committees vary in their levels of gender awareness, while there is a general attitude that having more women in senior positions would be a positive development in the three institutions. It has been demonstrated that organisation change requires top level support (EU 2012a). We recommend changes to internal structures with one independent, autonomous equality committee or individual, reporting directly to the most senior office of the organisation, the President/Rector. This equality committee/person will be adequately resourced to drive the implementation of gender

equality measures and metrics. The purpose of the equality committee/person is to gender-audit all policies and procedures, oversee appointment and promotion boards for gender balance, provide an independent gender observer for all appointment and promotion committees and gender proof all the activities of the institution. The President/Rector also reports to / sits on the Governing Authority/Board of Governors/Senate, therefore we further recommend that an autonomous equality committee be established on the highest committee in the institution (Governing Authority/Board of Governors/Senate), to whom the President/Rector will report on equality matters. This committee will be a sub-committee of the Governing Authority/Board of Governors/Senate and chaired by one of its members. This committee will monitor the organisations' progress in the area of gender equality and measure actual performance against gender targets.

Being independent of Human Resources, the internal equality structure will be independent and thus will make recommendations as regards changes in processes and procedures where gender bias may exist. This will address the issues we identified as regards structural barriers to gender equality.

Recommendation 4: Gender balance on committees

Balancing the gender composition of committees improves both the quality of committee work and the group dynamics and symbolically changes institutional cultures. We know from our findings that the structurally weak position of women on committees contributes to reinforcing gender stereotypes and further marginalises women as being the 'odd one out'. Over thirty years ago Moss-Kanter (1977) realised that thirty per cent of women, or other marginalised groups, was a critical mass. Once this critical mass was reached, women and other minority groups found their voice in committee decision making fora and participated on an equal footing with the dominant group. Furthermore the presence of women as decision makers in leading committees provides role models for women in the organisation.

No less than forty per cent of either gender is considered gender balance. In Ireland the state has an official policy of having gender balance on all state boards since 2002 (Ireland, 2014). However, policies are documents which guide decision making, and the target of forty percent has never been achieved. Having gender balance is especially

important in committees which set the research agenda and are involved in shaping the future of the institution through hiring and resource allocation decisions. We recommend that no less than forty per cent of either gender be represented on all the key decision making committees concerned with resource allocation and staffing, at different levels of the organisation. Notwithstanding the small pool of available women, we recommend that all such key committees be gender-audited, so that no less than forty per cent of any committee represents one gender. To facilitate this, we suggest institutions relax their requirements for committee members to have specific levels of seniority, or increase the number of external members of such boards, or include members from disciplines outside the positions being recruited.

Recommendation 5: Gender audit committees and institutions.

Following on from publishing gender disaggregated data, we recommend that periodic (at least annually) each institution undergoes a gender audit. The purpose of the audit is to assess the institutions' accountability to gender mainstreaming policy commitments. We recommend that the audit is comprehensive, and has a broad institutional approach, not just in the STEM area, and a comparative element. The gender audit compares the institution against external, (national and international) benchmarks.

Utilising both qualitative & quantitative methods, and comparing results for both males and females, the domains to be investigated in the audit include:

- Participation of women and men in key committees at department, faculty and university level. (Key committees are those that deal with resource allocation, posts and hiring);
- Access to resources – including research projects, training programmes and organisation/faculty projects;
- Control over resources – including programme/project resources;
- Direct and practical benefits for males and females in terms of training and travel;

- Changes in decision making and committee participation. We specifically recommend that all committees are audited, on indicators such as committee composition, gender composition, applicant pool, decision outcome.

The gender audit will be undertaken by the internal equality committee/person and the results will be disseminated to the whole institution by the equality sub-committee of the Governing Authority/Board of Governors/Senate.

Recommendation 6: Make committee membership more transparent

Lack of transparency in systems creates myths and confusion. Evidence shows women are more likely to succeed in recruitment and promotion when there is clarity about what is required, when information about the opportunities are freely available and criteria used in decision-making are clear and unequivocal. Our findings show that systems in the institutions are not wholly transparent. Whenever possible vacancies on committees should be made public and the conditions for applying should be published as well as the evaluation criteria. The names of the committee members should be published once known.

We recommend that transparency in appointment and promotion committees is particularly important. We recommend that the names of the interview or promotion committees are to be circulated at the same time with details of the conditions for applying for appointment and promotion.

Recommendation 7: Create accountability measures.

Our findings reveal the centralisation of power and the managerialist culture in modern higher education and research institutes. The influence of managerialism can be seen with the introduction of measures and metrics for a wide range of activities from teaching assessments to quality standards. We propose harnessing this aspect of managerialism to measure and improve gender equality by establishing accountability measures for committees at all levels in the organisation. These accountability measures for committees will require periodic reporting to the Governing Authority/Senate/Board of Governors.

Key indicators should be established in terms of targets for gender representation at all levels in the organisation hierarchy, gender balance on committees, gender mainstreaming, discounting leave periods when assessing research output, assessing research quality rather than quantity, re-advertising if there are no women in the applicant pool, gender auditing all committees and committee decisions. The institution should sign up to a set of good practices such as LERU (2012):

- 1) committed leadership at the top, reflected in a formal gender strategy and action plan, with the funding and the necessary infrastructure to make it a reality;
- 2) concrete measures, targeted at specific career phases. These may include gender-specific career development measures and gender-neutral work-life balance measures;
- 3) transparency, accountability and monitoring, in order to successfully implement such measures;
- 4) actively promoting a gender dimension in research.

Recommendation 8: Circulate minutes of meetings.

The way procedures are structured and how decisions are reached should be transparent and objective: there should be no doubt as to how, where and by whom decisions are taken and the underlying discussions made known, in order to avoid the chair or power holder influencing the content of the minutes. Another way to counteract the power of the chair, as well as dealing with the cost of minute recording we suggest that, in turn, each member of the committee is responsible for taking minutes.

Minutes of each decision-making meeting should be recorded and the minutes need to document not just the decisions taken, but the process by which the decision is reached. Minutes should then be circulated to all those whom they affect. Our findings suggest that minutes are considered the first feasible step towards transparency in the decision-making processes, creating effects on decision makers' accountability.

We recommend that each meeting of key decision making committees, at different organisational levels, is recorded with detailed minutes and shared with the staff of the organisation by means of the institution website.

Recommendation 9: Arrange regular meetings between management and staff for information exchange and accountability

The arrangement of regular meetings between the management - decision makers at different levels – and the staff offers the opportunity for the decision makers to update staff on recent developments and affords staff the opportunity to question, clarify or complain about management decisions, communications or other organisational issues. These debates assist with transparency of decision-making and indicate managers' accountability for their actions; they also represent an occasion to share perceptions, needs and expectations from both sides. Furthermore, they increase the degree of inclusivity and foster two-way communication channels: top-down and bottom-up. Our findings underline the importance of this kind of debate and dialogue, and staff need an opportunity to be involved and have their voices heard.

We recommend that meetings between decision-makers (at different levels) and staff are arranged at least twice a year. We furthermore suggest that minutes of these meetings are recorded and shared.

Recommendation 10: Independent observer to participate at committee decision making who has power to intervene before decision is made.

Our findings suggest that the chairperson can set the tone for how biased a selection board will be in its assessment of candidates. To ensure all recruitment committees are fair and unbiased, it is proposed that an independent observer will be present in all committees at which decisions are made which affect the careers of women, e.g. recruitment committees, promotion committees.

The role of this observer is to note the type/frequency and quality of the questions asked of all candidates, or if documentary review, the remarks made about candidates. Before the decision is made regarding which candidates to select, the observer reports to

the committee on their performance in terms of giving fair consideration to all female and male candidates, demonstrating the presence/absence of gender bias. This observer will have the authority to prevent a decision being made where bias is being exercised.

This observer will be independent and report to the President/Rector, as the equality person/member of the equality committee (Recommendation 3). Because the President/Rector reports to the equality sub-committee of the Governing Authority/Board of Governors/Rectorate, the recommendations of the observer and recruitment/promotion committees will be included in the sub-committee's monitoring of the organisations' progress in the area of gender equality and measure actual performance against gender targets.

Recommendations to empower women.

- 11 Encourage women's participation in management positions
- 12 Share good practices – female role models
- 13 Training for women in leadership and decision making

Recommendation 11: Encourage women's participation in management positions

The low numbers of women in decision making positions is a waste of talent. In order to increase the impact of women in decision-making, women should be encouraged and supported to take up management positions.

Key findings reveal the perception that women encounter more difficulties in their scientific careers, since they are somehow more attached to household responsibilities such as family and child-rearing, which are conceived of as natural, female, responsibilities. This gender bias has already been challenged by recommendation 2. Nevertheless, apart from creating gender awareness, women's self-confidence to take on management positions should be developed, because findings suggest that women undervalue themselves. We will provide training for women which will develop self-confidence and a sense of entitlement. The outcome of such training will be outlined in our final report.

A number of key institutional sponsors should be identified who will encourage, support and facilitate women's application for management roles. Such sponsorship will provide women with the necessary self-confidence to improve their impact on and participation in management roles and in decision-making processes.

Recommendation 12: Share good practices – female role models

Our findings show that decision makers accuse women of being unwilling to take positions of responsibility. Creating a platform where women scientists and engineers who have positions of responsibility are visible, can bring a new perspective. This will show that women themselves are not 'the problem' and reveal the patriarchal relations embedded in institutions. Making good practices visible, such as ensuring that invited speakers, keynote speakers and external examiners are gender balanced will challenge gender stereotypes. All public relations activities from STEM disciplines should be gender-proofed (i.e. represent women appropriately), while avoiding tokenism. This could be done by ensuring all visual materials, such as websites, brochures, and promotional material include women, at least in forty per cent (gender balance) of all images; by leaders nominating women for prizes, and by recognizing women's achievements appropriately. Making women's work visible also encourages women already present in scientific institutions to reach higher positions.

Highlighting the experiences of successful female role models will be a source of encouragement for other women. Bringing together different female role models from different academic disciplines will also be significant in recognising women's different situations and needs. Essentially, this recommendation points out the necessity for knowledge transfer from role models to junior female academics.

Recommendation 13: Training for women in leadership and decision making

As clearly highlighted in the key findings women are being excluded from decision-making. This state of exclusion should be tackled and consequently transformed by balancing the numbers of men and women in committees; a suggestion which is stressed in the comments of several interviewees. As previously revealed, narrations evaluate the imbalance between men's and women's participation in academia as a problem that should be addressed.

Specific programmes should be offered to women to help them overcome gender schemas and to develop negotiation and decision making skills.

This training will enable organisations to achieve gender balance on committees by enhancing the effectiveness of women as leaders. This training will also enhance women's awareness of approaches to leadership and provide an opportunity to discuss their individual leadership styles. As again highlighted in findings, this recommendation will also enhance women's skills in regard to networking and negotiation, and also support them to be more effective decision makers and committee members.

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Appendix 1.

4.1 Interview guide (for committee members)

1. How did you come to be on the Recruitment/Promotion/Selection Committee? *
2. How is this committee convened?
3. How were you approached/ did you volunteer to become a member of this committee?
4. How many members are on this committee?
5. Do members have different roles on the committee? What are they? Who does what?
6. What length of time does this committee serve?
7. If a fixed length of time, or specific purpose committee - Have you been on this committee more than once?
8. What is the gender composition of this committee? *
9. Is this usual? *
10. What decisions does this committee make?
11. What is the process by which these decisions are reached?
12. Are all decisions made in the same way? Is there a procedure for decision-making?
13. Is it easy or difficult to reach consensus? *
14. Can you give me an example?
15. Have you ever been on a committee where you didn't agree fully with the decision? *
16. Who is the most influential member of the committee? *
17. Why? *
18. Who is affected by decisions made by this committee?
19. How are people informed about decisions made by this committee?
20. Is there a procedure for communicating decisions? What is it?
21. Are decisions made by this committee ever challenged?
22. Is there a process for appealing/challenging committee decisions?
23. Can you give me an example?
24. Are you a member of any other committees in the University?
25. Do all the committees of which you are a member make and communicate their decisions in the same way? If no, provide examples?
26. What do you think of training members of committees in gender awareness? *
27. Is there anything else you would like to say about any aspect of committee decision making/communicating?

* = Questions contained in questionnaire for WP 5.1 Perceptions of Excellence

Appendix 2

4.1 Interview guide (for individuals)

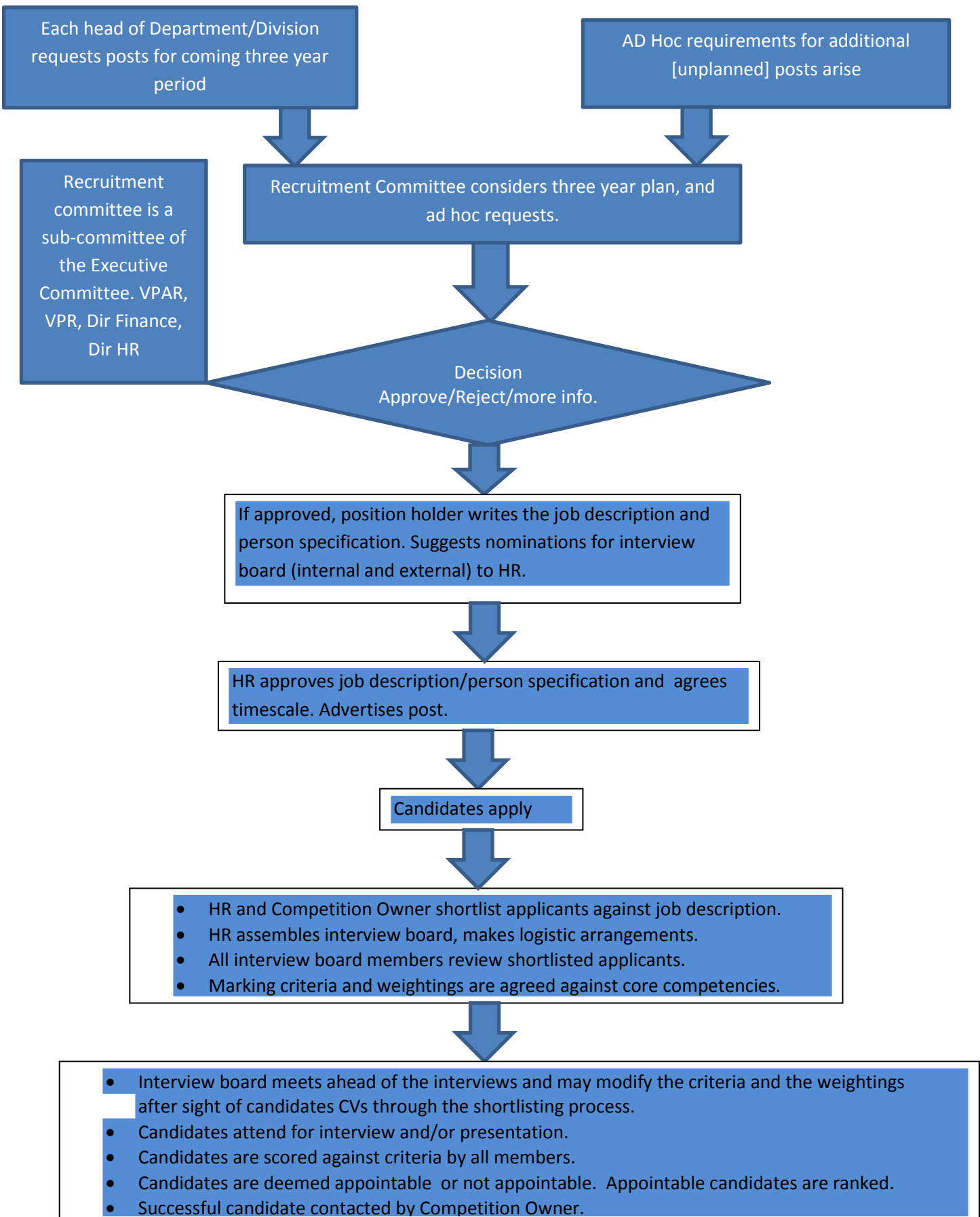
1. How did you come to be Head of Department?
2. Have you been Head of Department more than once?
3. What decisions do you make as Head of Department, that affect ^
 - Allocating funds to people? ^
 - Allocating people to projects? ^
 - Allocating people to tasks? ^
 - Allocating space and material resources? ^
4. How do you feel about decision-making in relation to resource allocation? ^
5. Are there restrictions on the decisions you make? What are they?
6. Are all decisions made in the same way? Is there a procedure for decision-making?
7. Is there a procedure for communicating decisions? What is it?
8. How do all other members of the department know about the decisions you make?
9. Is there any kind of formal meeting of the whole department? ^
10. What are these meetings typically about? ^
11. Who decides which members of the department get to travel for dissemination purposes? ^
12. How formal is communications in the department ?
13. What is your preferred style of communication?
14. What is your preferred mode of communication?
15. Have you ever had to make a decision that you didn't fully agree with? – perhaps because of university policy or other restrictions?
16. Can you tell me about it?
17. Are decisions made by you, by Heads of Department, ever challenged?
18. Is there a process for appealing/challenging decisions?
19. Can you give me an example?
20. Are you a member of any committees in the University?
21. How do all the committees of which you are a member make and communicate their decisions?
22. What do you think of training members of committees and Heads of Departments in gender awareness? *
23. Is there anything else you would like to say about any aspect of decision-making or communicating?

* = Questions contained in questionnaire for WP 5.1 Perceptions of Excellence

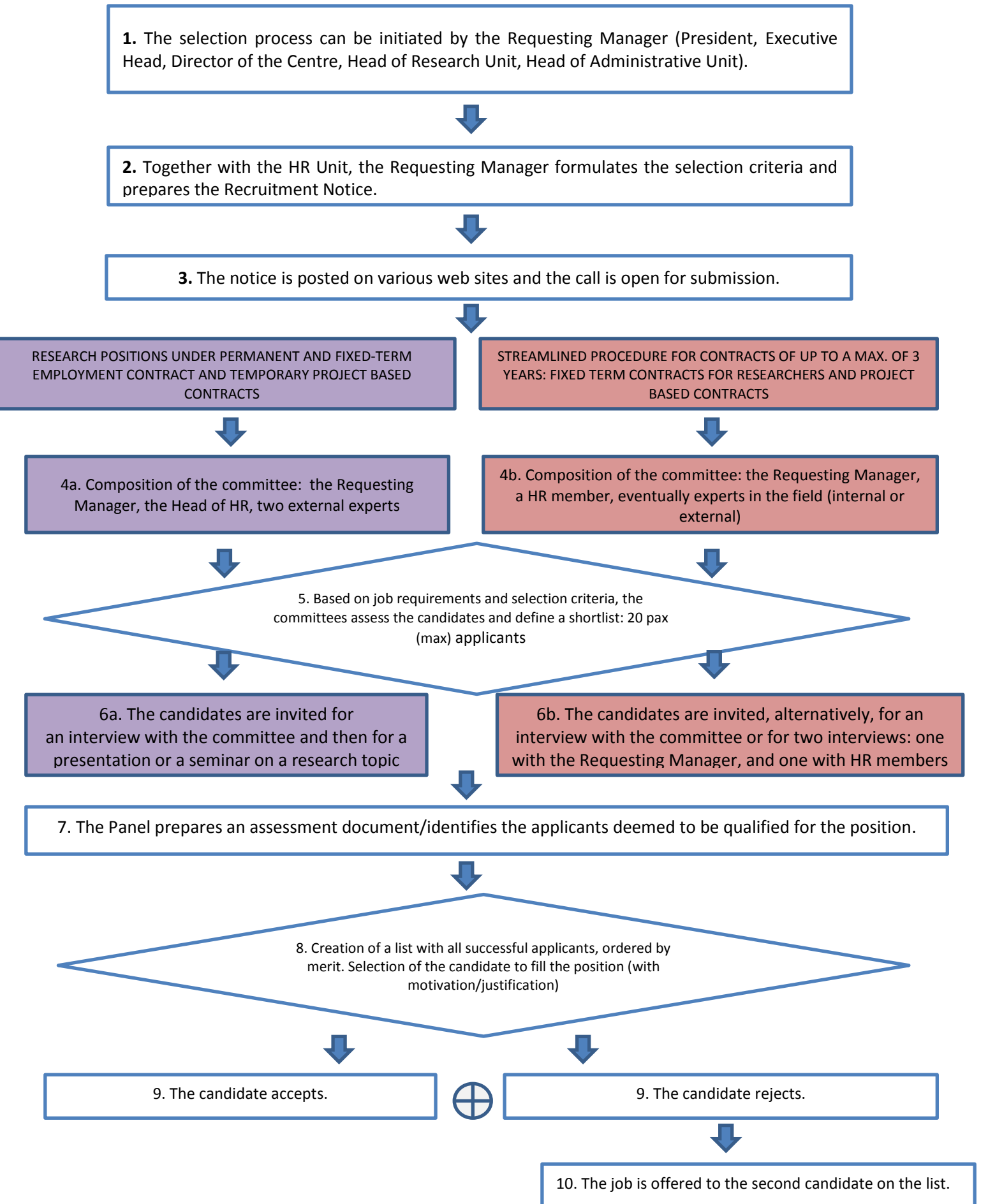
^ = Questions contained in 4.2 (informal decision making) interview guides.

Appendix 3 Schemas of Decision Making Processes

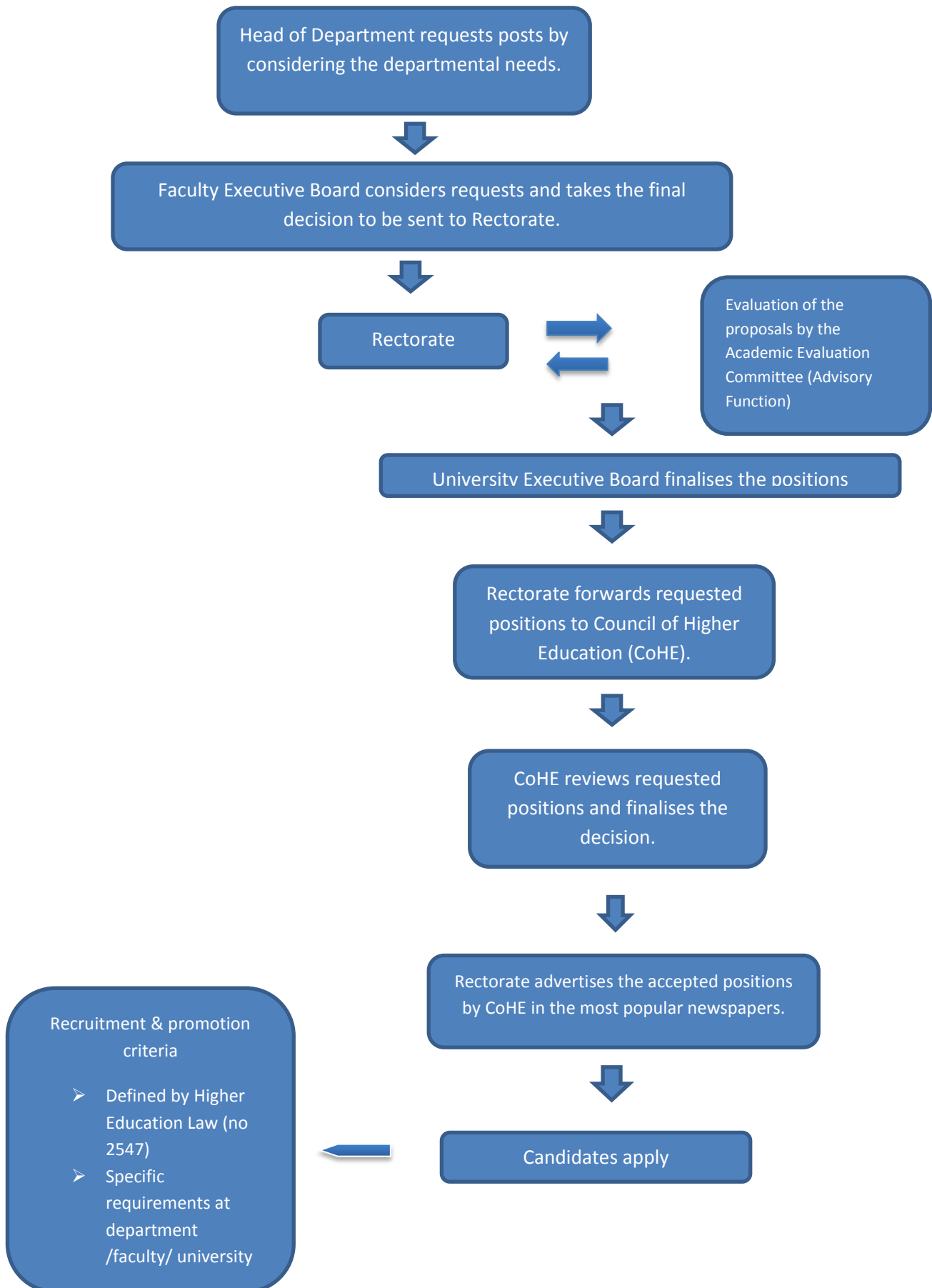
The Irish Organisation: Recruitment Decision Making Process



The Italian Organisation: Recruitment /Selection Decision-Making Process



The Turkish Organisation: Recruitment & Promotion Decision Making Process



The Turkish Organisation: Recruitment & Promotion Decision Making Process (Cont/d)

