Chapter 13
What Does It Mean to Be a "Woman Leader" in Academia?
Imposing Patriarchal and Capitalist Ways of Leadership on Women

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ABSTRACT

This chapter seeks to determine how patriarchy and capitalism together work to oppress women in academic leadership positions. In today's globalized world, higher education institutions, both state and private, either have strong ties with the corporate world or are run as if they are corporations themselves. Women who work their way up to management positions in academia are forced to accommodate patriarchal and capitalist ways of leading, which undervalue democratic processes such as getting legitimacy from people and deliberation, as well as other ways of "doing things" or "leading" differently. This study aims to discuss the multi-layered forms of gender-based discrimination in regard to civil status, age, ethnicity, class, and pay differences in academic leadership positions.

INTRODUCTION

Listening to women,
I heard a difference and discovered that
bringing in women's lives
changes both psychology and history.
It literally changes the voice:
how the human story is told, and also who tells it.
(Carol Gilligan, 'In a Different Voice')
The single story creates stereotypes, and

the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue,
but that they are incomplete.
They make one story become
the only story. . .
(Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The Danger Of A Single Story')

Being a 'leader' in any work environment is conceptualized around qualities and/or characteristics associated with masculine terms of leadership: Decisive, strong, competitive, ambitious, sole decision-maker, confident, cool under pressure, charismatic, doer, committed, competent, courageous, effective, sharp, visionary and so on. This does not mean women don't have such qualities/characteristics, rather this argument emphasizes how these have been associated with one gender and perceived as absolute traits of a 'successful' leader. The ethics of care approach introduced by feminist theorists (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Steiner 2009, 2011) is either not included in leadership conversations or devalued for it does not promise any immediate 'high profit' rates. The long lasting binary opposition -that is still at work- keep positioning male associated qualities as superior to that of women associated ones. Examples include as rational/irrational, mind/body, reason/emotion, work/home, and public/private. Within this context, it becomes especially difficult for women leaders to pursue and execute their own leadership styles.

Furthermore, 'situated knowledges' a term coined by Haraway (1988), as she criticized the pseudo-scientific celebration of 'objectivity' –basically signify the unmarked positions of Man and White. All the other positions are marked by this expected-to-be-unquestioned dominant position. This has occurred for so long, intellectual activity itself has become subjugated (as well as any other possible way of being a leader). In today's globalized world, higher education institutions, both state and private, either have strong ties with the corporate world or are run as if they are corporations themselves. They are increasingly focused on national and international rankings, higher undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers, agility, budget cuts, immediate revenue outcomes and expected savings at the expense of being where knowledge is produced/reproduced and disseminated. And in these new circumstances universities are less likely to be the critical conscience of societies.

Hence, the higher education 'sector' has become an industry on its own. In this socio-economic context, women who work their way up to management positions in academia are forced to accommodate patriarchal and capitalist ways of leading, which undervalue democratic processes such as getting legitimacy from people and deliberation, as well as other ways of 'doing things' or 'leading' differently. As Hartman (1979, 1981), Young (1981) and Walby (1989) have pointed out patriarchy and capitalism work in tandem to oppress women at varying levels. The incorporation of patriarchal and capitalist ideologies put extreme pressures on women leaders in academia to meet 'industrial/sectoral' demands.

For women in the workforce, the lines between public and private are drawn such that 'private' seems to be solely referring to having a partner and/or children. As Pateman (1988) argues, "what it is to be a 'wife' stretches across class and racial differences (p.18)". Her argument, in turn, brings another dimension to the leadership discussions for single women in such roles, in that they become isolated, excluded and in some cases demonized by other women and men. Therefore, the pressures on and discriminative discourses towards single/separated/divorced women end up being multi-layered.

Despite advancements in the field of women's rights, the overarching difficulties related to women being leaders and holding their ground remain largely unchanged. Women have long been on the receiving end of such condescending discourse over the years amidst a male dominated workforce where

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