Gender distributions in New Zealand universities: Guilt in Brotopia

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Keywords
universities; brotopia, zealand, guilt, distributions, gender

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Gender distributions in New Zealand universities: Guilt in Brotopia

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Abstract

The article sets out first to discover the gender balance in universities in New Zealand. The analysis examines three disciplinary areas: the hard and soft disciplines plus accounting, the latter as a discipline of gender balance on entry. The goal is to explain gender imbalance by advancing the problem of internal obstacles such as guilt. The article acknowledges the social constructions that engender imbalance but argues that for a sufficient explanation the internal responses to external constructions should be considered. The method involves an analysis of gender distributions at junior and senior levels in New Zealand universities, relevant case studies of junior academics and theorisation of how guilt arises as an imposed powerful negative emotion.

Keywords: Gender, guilt, social construction, New Zealand, glass ceiling, mommy track.

1. Introduction
This article takes as its background the gender imbalance in universities generally and accounting in particular. It is an imbalance that has remained stubbornly intractable for several decades since first becoming an issue in the 1980s. To explain such intractability, the article draws on the work of Rousseau (1992). His political philosophy argues that inequality is a social convention maintained by selfish desires and by breeding subservience in targeted individuals. It is not a natural state. Equality disappeared when property was introduced and for centuries women, slaves, and animals were property. Women belonged to fathers, husbands or sons and such subservience is maintained by social convention and religion. This article’s purpose is to show how women at work internalize their subservience with guilt feelings. With regard to the background, the method employed follows up on a paper published in *Science* by Leslie et al (2015), which suggests the imbalance is a result of gender prejudice. While not contesting these findings, this article conducts its own survey of the imbalance in New Zealand and suggests that many women academics in trying to manage young families and work, may internalize a sense of guilt for not meeting performance standards. Such feelings of guilt, where they apply, may make women more concessionary with regard to a greater teaching workload substituting for research expectations. The longer term effect on career prospects of such substitutions as practiced in New Zealand may account for the imbalance that exists and seemingly will continue to exist.

Leslie et al (2015) found that across the academic spectrum women are underrepresented in success because women are stereotyped as not possessing innate talent. The plan of the article is to follow up on Leslie et al’s (2015) findings and provide a comparative table showing gender distributions across six disciplines in New Zealand universities. These discipline are selected according to Leslie et al’s (2015) research, which identifies three of “hard belief” disciplines (we refer them as the “hard subjects” in the rest of this article): Economics, Maths and Philosophy, as having high field specific beliefs and as a consequence of holding such field specific beliefs employ proportionately few female academic staff. In this context, Midgley (2014) writes, “The imaginative gender barrier that it [sciences tradition] produces may well be part of the reason why physicists have for a long time been particularly resistant to accepting women as colleagues … even when Marie Curie had received her
Nobel Prize gossip in the profession still suggested for a long time that the work credited to her had really been done by her husband” (p.122). By contrast, three “soft belief” disciplines (we refer them as the “soft subjects” in the rest of this article): Psychology, Education and Communication, are identified by Leslie et al’s (2015) paper as having low field specific beliefs and as a consequence employ proportionately more female academic staff.

Our New Zealand analysis confirms Leslie et al’s (2015) American analysis across all disciplines. Our tabular analysis also includes Accounting as a moderating discipline because Accounting has a balanced gender distribution among junior staff. To explain the findings of the comparative analysis, this article considers the literature of the glass ceiling and the mommy track. The literature considers biological difference, differences due to social constructions and the ramifications of such constructions in creating internal obstacles for women. This article provides further insights into the phenomena of gender distribution by drawing on case studies of New Zealand academics who having completed their PhDs, began their academic careers in different New Zealand universities. The academics studied in this research, five females and one male, also face in common a publication expectation among all New Zealand universities that they achieve one ranked journal output every one or two years. From the case studies, and in the light of Leslie et al’s (2015) findings, this article addresses the implication of the guilt engendered by academics failing to meet performance standards.

The contribution of this study is fourfold. First, this article sets out first to explore the gender imbalance in New Zealand universities and theorize this phenomena by drawing on the glass ceiling and the mommy track literature. Second, this article makes incremental contribution to the existing literature by explaining how women work in academic field internalize a sense of guilt feelings for not meeting performance expectations. Third, the study explores how does this sense of guilt makes women accept greater teaching workloads, which in turn further reduces time spent on research work. This is, in particular, a finding that explains the predominance of males at senior levels in the universities. Finally, the article concludes that there has not been much progress with respect to gender equality over several decades, and therefore this article highlights significant social and policy implications.
The remainder of this study is structured as follows. Section two provides a brief overview of the
gender distribution across disciplines in New Zealand universities. It is followed by a review of the
glass ceiling and the “mommy” track literature in the section three. Section four explains six
individual case histories, while section five provides a reflexive analysis of internal obstacles, namely
guilt and anxiety. Finally, section six discusses the findings and concludes this study.

2. The gender distribution across three “hard”, three “soft” disciplines, and
Accounting discipline in New Zealand universities

Table 1 presented below draws 2018 data from seven of the eight New Zealand universities. The
smaller Lincoln University is omitted from the analysis as it does not teach some of the disciplines
under analysis. Leslie et al (2015) identified three “hard” subjects (Economics, Philosophy, & Maths)
as holding low expectations of female academic staff and three “soft” subjects (Education,
Psychology & Communication) as being without prevalent field specific beliefs. Accounting
discipline is also included even though it was not part of the Leslie et al (2015) investigation.

The reason for the inclusion of “Accounting subject” is that it is the one discipline that across all
seven New Zealand universities is separately identifiable. Also, the gender numbers of Accounting
undergraduates entering university are generally evenly matched as are the gender of staff at Lecturer
level (Bebbington et al, 1997; Mauphin & Lehman, 1990; Keys, 1985; and Bem, 1974). However, the
accounting discipline is, according to Welsh (1992), especially subject to masculine gendering and the
Table 1 presented below shows gender balance at junior level (51% of male lecturers and 49% of
female lecturers) and gender imbalance at senior levels (83% of male lecturers and 17% of female
lecturers). Haynes (2017) shows that female participation in the profession has greatly increased but
admits that concerns about women in the position of the profession’s hierarchy persist (Dambrin &
Lambert, 2013; Haynes, 2013). Haynes (2017) adds that the profession has opened its doors to women
in large numbers but inter-action with career hierarchies, motherhood and work-life issues remain.
Bebbington et al (1997) conclude that subsequent gender distributions in favor of males entering the
profession are not surprising given their finding that masculine characteristics predominate in the profession. It is, therefore of interest to seek possible explanations on whether the university accounting departments mirror the profession and if yes, why at senior levels in university accounting departments males predominate.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

The data disclosed by the above Table 1 show that the three hard subjects (Economics, Philosophy, & Maths) identified by Leslie et al (2015) collectively have a professoriate that is 88% male, while the balance of junior lecturer level staff is 69% male and 31% female. If we accept that these disciplines hold low expectations of female academic staff, then these numbers reflect such beliefs. But, Leslie et al (2015) while acknowledging the prevalence of such field specific beliefs, which would account for the lower percentage of junior female lecturers employed, find such beliefs to be flawed. So we must look for other explanations as to why female academics feature less as junior academics and even more proportionately less as senior academics.

With regard to the “soft subjects” the professoriate is 59% male and 41% female. As expected from the “soft subjects” the gender difference is less, but it is still unbalanced. Especially so, when the junior lecturer balance is 38% male and 62% female. Although these latter disciplines do not reflect the flawed belief that female academics lack the necessary ability, there is need of an explanation as to why with a majority of junior female academics, the senior professoriate is proportionately balanced in favour of male staff.

Finally, although Leslie et al (2015) exclude specific beliefs concerning innate gender ability in the Accounting discipline, the senior staffing in New Zealand universities is very pronounced at 83% male to 17% female as shown in Table 1. This is slightly better than as Broadbent & Kirkham (2008) report of the United Kingdom where approximately 10% of the professoriate were women. For junior lecturing staff in the Accounting discipline in New Zealand universities, the ratios are 51% male to 49% female. It would appear that although junior staff are evenly gender balanced at the senior level there is a significant imbalance. While Accounting is not identified as one of the “hard subjects”,

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according to Franzel’s (2014) American study, women represented 50% of new public certified accountants for the past 20 years but they make up only 17% of partners. It would seem that university accounting departments reflect the trends in the industry. Why this should be so, is difficult to explain.

3. Literature review - The Glass Ceiling and the Mommy Track

An optimistic answer to the question raised above is that the “glass ceiling” is being breached and within a decade there will be a gender balance of senior and junior staff. However, in the late 1970s and 1980s there appeared several publications (Davies-Netzley, 1998; Cotter et al, 2001; Lyness et al, 1997) drawing attention to the same gender phenomena. It may have been thought then that it was only a question of another decade or two before such gender imbalance would disappear, especially so in the universities which were leaders in drawing attention to discrimination. Dambrin & Lambert (2008) in respect of the accounting profession point out that the argument that women started their careers recently and have not had time to climb to the top is not tenable. Dambrin & Lambert (2012) further reject explanations such as: it is just a matter of time, women are different with regard to know-how, motivation, personality traits, more subject to stress and prefer a family-centred lifestyle. This paper also rejects these arguments. With regard to what Dambrin & Lambert (2012) call comprehensive factor or external factors such as organisational barriers and social stereotypes, they see stereotyping as a powerful factor and this paper shares their concerns.

That the same phenomena continue to exist is explained by Broadbent & Kirkham (2008), who assert, “That motherhood creates major obstacle for women in academia not least because institutions have tried to accommodate mothers within their masculine practices and values rather than exploring the need to change those practices and values” (p. 470). The case studies cited below confirm Dambrin & Lambert’s (2008) observation that working conditions such as conferences, business travel and late working hours, reflect institutional practices that explain slow career progression. Broadbent & Kirkham (2008) contend that the reason for women’s disadvantage are not always simple and are to a
great extent institutionalised. An interesting comparison with university accounting staffing can be made from Smith’s (2017) finding that when it comes to NZX-listed companies, the statistics for female participation in governance are about 82% male and 18% female. It would seem that gender representation among senior academic staff in New Zealand university accounting departments roughly mirrors that of the business world.

This article agrees that the reasons explaining female disadvantage are not simple and maybe, in part, due to institutional practices and values. It is well recognised that various social constructions have disadvantaged women (Haynes, 2017). The Economist (2018) cites structural discrimination and quotes the United Kingdom’s Office for National Statistics that the gender median pay gap is only 2% among full time workers in their 30s, yet jumps to 14% in their 40s and 16% in their 50s. The Economist (2018) also cites Britain’s equality watchdog’s finding that one in nine new mothers is dismissed, made redundant or treated so poorly that she leaves. Moreover, a study done by Warwick University found that, among workers who asked for pay rises, men were 25% more likely to be successful (The Economist, 2018). While the question of asking for pay rises is not entirely relevant for the university sector in New Zealand, the equivalent would be applying for promotion to Senior Lecturer. As this article shows undoubtedly female lecturers fall behind their male counterparts.

However, structural discrimination apart, this article is also drawn to what Sandberg (2013) describes as internal obstacles for a more sufficient explanation. While this paper rejects an explanation of internal obstacles it does argue that guilt is externally imposed and is therefore an external obstacle. Dambrin & Lambert’s (2008) male interviewee observed, “…It is probably more difficult for them when they become mothers. But anyway, they already tend to exclude themselves” (p. 488).

Interesting, the male interviewee quoted makes the case for an internal explanation, while this paper argues that such exclusion is the result of externally imposed factors and anger at the guilt being deputed.

Why women decide to exclude themselves is the focus of this article. Give that self-exclusion happens, it may take the form of adopting a different function, what Dambrin & Lambert’s (2008) describe as accepting a consolation grade. Dambrin & Lambert’s (2008) point out that self-exclusion
may, “Result in the barriers that the individual imposes on her or himself (obstacles set up by individuals against themselves). Thus a large number of women exclude themselves slowly but surely from the up and put mode” p. 499). In academia, such self-exclusion may take the form replacing career enhancing research obligations with more teaching (see below).

Confronted by the career hierarchies of gendering institutions observed by (Haynes, 2017), women have to internalise the negative messaging that flows from the practice and values of such workplaces. With respect to her own experiences of career versus motherhood, Sandberg (2013) refers to the problem of guilt management: “Women are hindered by barriers that exist within ourselves. We hold ourselves back … we internalize the negative messages” (pp. 7-8). Sandberg (2013) argues that such internal obstacles deserve a lot more attention. However, this paper refutes the suggestion of internal obstacles and argues that guilt is an imposed emotion and anger is an emotional reaction to external obstacles. The so-called “Mommy Track” offers a kind of explanation. Schulpen (2017) employs a biological explanation: “The notion of a maternal brain explains why so many brilliant and ambitious women, capable of a top career, lose interest in pursuing such careers after childbirth” (p. 42). In other words, biology drives the necessary choice women must make to surrender a promising career to raise a family. “If they continue to strive for the top, they will feel guilty towards their children …” (Schulpen, 2012, p. 42). Schulpen (2012) also implies that guilt can go two ways, and giving priority to family arouses emotions of guilt concerning work. However, the biological imperative concedes the opportunity cost involved especially for highly skilled women (Myrdal et al, 1957; Ahmed, 2011; Hill et al, 2004). If the Mommy Track offers a necessary biological explanation, this article contends it is not a sufficient one.

Dambrin & Lambert (2008) show that accounting firms place both implicit and explicit obstacles in the way of working mothers and it is contended that academia also places obstacles in the form of research performance targets and conference attendance. The case studies below represent fairly common career experiences that also raise the possibility of an internalised, emotional responses. The Sandberg biography is closely mirrored by the first two case studies from New Zealand and the experiences of all four women may be considered typical.
4. **Individual case histories**

To offer an explanation for the imbalance found in the Table 1 above and to search for a sufficient explanation of continuing gender imbalance, other than a lack of innate ability, the article now takes a qualitative approach. Because such an approach cannot be statistically significant only six exemplars are provided, the argument being is that these individual case histories are typical and further cases would be simply repetitious. The cases exemplified are a result of an unstructured interview process, where the individuals concerned were allowed to tell their own stories. The stories provided are typical because they concern junior academics of around 30 years of age who having completed their doctorates have begun academic careers as university lecturers.

Dr A worked for a time after graduation with her first degree in a clerical position. During that time, she completed a Master’s degree with first class honours. Subsequently, she enrolled in a PhD and, on completion, obtained a lecturing position. At about the same time that she completed her doctorate, she married and has now three children under six years old. Her husband works long hours a mental health nurse and though they try to share child care responsibilities, Dr A breast feeds and is the prime care giver. Consequently, she must arrange her career to allow for dropping off and picking up her children from crèche. A further problem is that children at crèche easily catch minor infections from each other, which necessitates sleepless nights, visits to the doctor and days off work. She manages just, but with days off work has to repay colleagues who cover her teaching. Her outstanding characteristic is that she is an excellent teacher and receives appreciative evaluations from her students. She has managed to produce two conference papers but has only been available to attend local conferences. Overseas conference attendance and liaison with academics outside New Zealand has not been possible. She would like to publish with another academic but is comparatively constrained to meeting peers within her own department. So far she has been unable to turn her conference papers into journal publications.
Now, four years into her career, her managers are questioning her ability to meet the departmental performance research standard of one publication in a ranked journal every two years. Her annual staff reviews are now accompanied by increasing feelings of guilt even though her excellent teaching contribution is recognized. She appreciates that her managers are sympathetic to her domestic situation and indirect with regard to her research performance, but nonetheless she is aware of implied negative messages which concern her. Even indirectly spoken the accusation of poor performance is plain. It has recently been made more obvious by changes in her workload, and she has felt unable to protest a small increase in her teaching load, because her research expectations remain unfulfilled.

Returning to the conclusions drawn by Leslie et al (2015) her failure cannot be explained not by a lack of intelligence, hard work or a lack of innate ability.

Dr B is no longer married and is a solo mother employed as a university lecturer. Her story is very similar to that of Dr A. After years of part-time study while working in low paid jobs, Dr B completed her doctorate four years ago and obtained a university position. Having married some years before, on obtaining her doctorate, her husband became distant and they struggled to get along. Hoping to unite as a family, Dr B became pregnant and her child is now four years old. Dr B is now in the same situation as Dr A: struggling to meet the demands of a fulltime job while raising a small child single handed. She has produced conference papers but has no journal publications and her annual reviews draw attention to this deficiency. Dr B is haunted by constant sense of guilt at her failure to publish. Like Dr A, Dr B’s workload has been slightly increased and she has accepted the allocation without protest. The same question arises from findings of Leslie et al (2015) apply as Dr B does not lack intelligence or hard work or is she inadequate in terms of innate ability?

The third case is that of Dr C who completed her PhD twelve years ago and has occupied her present Lecturer position for eleven years. In common with the other female Lecturers cited, she is a mother and had one child aged 11 years. Her problem is that she has produced only one ranked journal output to date and is therefore at career risk. The common expectation at her university being one ranked journal output a year. However, what Dambrin & Lambert’s (2008) describe as accepting a
consolation grade applies in this case as Dr C does more teaching than is normally allocated. Effectively such a consolation arrangement means she is unlikely to ever make a professorial grade.

Dr H received her Bachelor degree with first class honours and university award, and completed her PhD four years ago. Her two children are four and six years old; thus, she experienced a lot of difficulties when she was doing her PhD as children were quite young. During her PhD study, she was also employed as teaching staff. In this role, she taught a wide range of accounting courses and won a university teaching award. With the teaching workload and PhD study, she managed to cope and successfully published in an A journal from her PhD thesis. Two years after her PhD completion, she published another article in an A journal. So far, she had two publications; both papers are published in A journals. When interviewed, she repeatedly emphasized the guilt she felt for being torn between her family and her career. She had constantly to say “no” to children while working on deadlines, and sometimes children were crying and banging on the door because they wanted their mum. She regretted that she should have spent more time with her kids when they needed her. At the same time, she felt guilt with regards to her career, as she believed that she could have done much better academically if she had spent more time on research. She is still very enthusiastic and she is planning to apply for promotion to Senior Lecturer next year.

Dr I completed her PhD five years ago and has remained a Lecturer. Her personality revealed to be very outgoing and cheerful. She is a mother of two young children (one toddler and one preschooler). She mentioned in the interview that she missed the days that she can completely devote herself to work. She expressed her anxiety about promotion as a male colleague has recently been promoted who completed his PhD four years ago. Being a top student in the postgraduate class, Dr I managed to publish in a B journal when she was still doing her postgraduate study. However, since then, she struggled to find sufficient time to do extra research work at home as she needs to look after two children. She also mentioned that she felt the unfairness from performance review meetings with her manager regarding the criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer position. Compared with the male colleague who was just recently promoted based on three years of teaching and three research outputs (1, A journal and 2, B journals), she has been asked to produce more to be eligible for promotion. She
regrets not spending more time with her children as she often has to work long hours. At the same time, she felt she could have done a bit more to meet the promotion requirements. Another interesting observation from the conversation, is that she maintained that the female academics holding Lecturer and Senior Lecturer positions in her department bore a greater teaching workload. We are unable to verify this statement, but this implicit message is that the teaching workload is being a substitute for research expectation.

To contrast the cases above, the article cites one contemporary male Lecturer, Dr J who after graduating with a PhD four years ago is now well into an academic career having achieved three “B” ranked journal publications. Dr J’s one problem is his teaching evaluations are not good and as a colleague he does little intermingling with other staff. Some colleagues regard him as obsessive as he spends long hours alone in his office including weekends. He is unmarried and does not seem to have any family or social life. However, he has successfully negotiated a reduced teaching load because of his research outputs. Dr J will apply in the next promotion round to be a Senior Lecturer and would seem to have a promising career ahead of him. This case raises the question is Dr J’s success due to his innate ability or a result of social constructions?

Finally, we offer the case of Ms K. The significance of this case is that Ms K is not yet on the “Mommy track” and yet can claim to experience gender discrimination. She is about to finish her PhD and has published as first author in a “A” ranked journal and has three “B” ranked publications. Her colleague Mr W is older and is also doing a PhD and it is uncertain as to when he will finish. He has published in one “A” ranked journal as the third author, and has no other publications. As there teaching loads and evaluations are about the same, the difference between them is in personality. Ms K may be described as demure, while Mr W is assertive and constantly lobbying his managers. Sandberg (2015) observes that women often hold themselves back and cites a study done at Harvard to show that while men over-estimate themselves, women underestimate themselves. Whatever the case in this institution where two applicants put themselves forward, Ms K was rejected in the annual promotion round, while Mr W was promoted to Senior Lecturer. In this case the “Mommy track” is not a factor in gender disparity.
5. Reflexive Analysis of Externally imposed obstacles: Guilt and anxiety

The first two cases plus Sandberg’s (2014) experiences reveal that the females may be constructed to accept workload increases. While it is certainly true that the social construction of gender implies the internationalization of beliefs, Sandberg’s work has been significantly critiqued as simplistic with a tendency to blame the victim. By contrast, this paper sees externally imposed social constructions as imbuing and impacting on individuals with an array of emotions and beliefs: fear, anxiety, anger, and guilt to name a few. The increased workload may be viewed as an externally imposed construction which works by imposing guilt then offering an expiation for guilt. That female academics are subject to increase workloads is borne out by a recent survey conducted by the American Economics Association (AEA), the leading professional body for academic economists. The survey published in March 2019 had responses from 9,000 economists and “over 40 percent of the women in the AEA’s survey reported being given a disproportionate load” (The Economist, 2019, p.63).

With respect to the cases of the young mothers interviewed, Wakefield & Hardman (2018) found that women giving birth, even to healthy babies, can be traumatized. Statistics from America and Canada show 8% of mothers develop post-traumatic stress disorder and that, more generally, twice as many women as men display unmanageable anxiety (Wakefield, 2018, p. 27). The point of female vulnerability to anxiety is made by Bonanno (2004) who not only finds that more women than men suffer from anxiety, but that the severely anxious are often regarded in their workplace as malingerers – a suggestion which in turn increases guilt.

Guilt is a commonly imposed emotion and arises from suggestions of not meeting or being unable to meet obligations. Guilt has long been a feature of the human condition and is represented in many religious beliefs. For centuries within European culture, Christianity has thrived on creating a sense of guilt based on the doctrine of original sin. Women are traditionally the targets of imposed guilt being identified with original sin as in the Garden of Eden, Eve persuaded her rather naive partner to eat the forbidden fruit. Female guilt established, a penance was necessary. God said, “I will greatly increase
"your pains in child bearing: with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”” Holy Bible, Genesis 3:16. Rousseau (1992) argues that religions are a force for subservience claiming, in particular Christians are made to be slaves. Most world religions, including Christianity, Buddhism and Islam have male founders and generally women may be found to have subservient roles to men.

Bigoni and Funell (2017) cite Foucault’s thoughts on Christianity and the teaching of truth. Truth is shaped by examination which may take the form of a confession, and much like the public confessions of accused in pre-1911 China, the accused were treated as guilty whether or not they were innocent (Gao et all, 1995). The priest exercises power/knowledge by individualising his flock and subjecting them by way of a penance to acknowledge their sins. Confession or examination may become means for imposing truth and reinforcing the primacy of authority (Bigoni & Funnell, 2015).

Church services whether Catholic or Protestant usually begin after an opening hymn with an invitation to the congregation to announce their guilt. Relief from guilt is offered by the Catholic church in the form of a confession, now called reconciliation and is remedied by doing a penance. A sample viewing of the queues in an Auckland Catholic church of people waiting to confess reveal the majority are women (admittedly a majority church attendees are women). It may be assumed that these women are mostly law abiding so what it is the gravity of their sin that so many are prepared to queue to confess? Why is there such a strong motivation to express their guilt and receive expiation by way of a penance?

The article cannot answer such questions, but it seems that the need to confess guilt is embedded in our psyche and, arguably while most humans feel guilt, women are more vulnerable to this form of anxiety (Bonanno, 2004). The need for expiation from guilt by way of acceptance of a penance is also a strong drive. Over many centuries the Christian Church has preached human guilt for original sin and the need for Christians to confess their guilt. Whether we are believers or not the impact of centuries of conditioning is not easily shed.
Penance may take the simple form of saying special prayers or at an extreme form by the practice of mortification of the flesh. In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul states: "If you live a life of nature, you are marked out for death; if you mortify the ways of nature through the power of the Spirit, you will have life." (The Bible, Romans 8:13). Support for mortification of the flesh appears in the (The Bible, Proverbs 20 (30)): "Blows that wound cleanse away evil; strokes make clean the innermost parts".

The list of devotees of “the discipline” (whipping) include many female saints: St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Ávila, and, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, etc. “Until 1960-1970, such mortification was quite accepted and normal, if you wanted to become a saint, it was assumed you would do corporal mortification.” explains Father Michael Giesler, chaplain of the Wespine Study Center in St. Louis, Mo.

Similar to the Christian tradition of guilt by accusation, under Confucian tradition, decisions of authority could not be protested (Gao et al., 1995; Hu, 2013). The Confucian tradition is dominant in such East Asian countries as China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Singapore. Confucian ideals when combined with a women’s traditional function contribute to the stereotype of the East Asian woman as docile, obedient and eager to please. Not to have an independent critical voice is a female virtue according to Confucian rules of conduct (Arisaka, 2000). Moreover, such Confucian virtues are so strongly inculcated that they are “enforced by women themselves” (Arisaka, 2000, p. 7). The Confucian thinker Zhu Xi (1130-1200) observes: “To do wrong is unbecoming in a wife, and to good is also unbecoming to a wife. A woman is only to be obedient to what is proper” (Chan, 2002). What is proper is determined by the immediate superior. Such observations undermine the independent voice of woman in a work context.

Richey (2008) makes the point that women were at the bottom of the Confucian hierarchy. Exemplary behaviour and uncomplaining obedience was expected of them. As Richey (2008) observes in the ideal Confucian home – a microcosm of the state – women were expected to demonstrate obedience. Huang (2010) points out that that a famous proverb in China was – a woman without knowledge is a woman of virtue. Reinforcing the concept of male ownership, Huang (2010) goes on to add that traditionally a woman should be held under the dominance of a man – her father
before marriage, her husband after marriage and her son after her husband’s death. The relevance of
the Confucian ideal is that women defer to me. Nonetheless in common with the Christian tradition
accusation implies guilt.

Today most work places construct performance standards, which make visible the individual. These
cannot be protested and physical punishments have been replaced by a sense of guilt. Worker
efficiency is now the product of self-discipline but examination by performance reviews can require
confessions that elicit responses to do better. Even in universities discipline by performance reviews
of research outputs are common, managers may invite staff to describe how they can improve their
performance and may require promises to do better.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The article has to some extent followed the work of Leslie et al (2015) by considering academic
gender distributions in New Zealand. Except this article includes Accounting because it appears to be
a gender balanced discipline. Interestingly, the “hard” subjects with a female lecturer distribution of
31% have a female distribution of professors of 12%. The “Soft” subjects also reflect a gender
imbalance where a junior staff which is 62% female correspond to a senior staff which is 41% female,
while Accounting with 49% female lecturing staff has a distribution of female professors amounting
to 17%. These figures match Leslie et al (2015) findings and that of Broadbent & Kirkham’s (2008)
reporting of gender distribution in accounting. They also roughly coincide with Smith’s (2017)
reporting of female participation in corporate governance in New Zealand (82% male and 18%
female). Such close parallels with respect to accounting support that Haynes (2017) is correct to
conclude a gendering of disciplines with unchanging values and practices. What might be called a
“Brotopia” prevails (Chang, 2018) as in every case senior staff are dominated by males.

However, the article argues that while there obtains a social construction around the gendering of
academia, corporate governance and within the accounting profession, these practices and values do
not in themselves constitute a sufficient explanation. This article seeks to identify the internal
obstacles that seem to be intrinsic to women such as a self-effacing modesty, which among men appears less prevalent. A further concern is the plight of working mothers. Women are faced with making continuous compromises between their career and their family. Either choice engenders guilt for the option foregone. Family becomes a decision priority for women in their thirties who have completed their PhDs and begun an academic career.

The “Mommy track” choice offers guilt as one reason why women with bright career prospects surrender their futures to raise their families. Academic women with young children are torn between two demanding schedules that their male counterparts seldom face. Research expectations are for females with families the easiest to displace but there is a cost in terms of guilt and anxiety about meeting performance standards. Males may protest heavier teaching workloads but, as shown, females harbouring feelings of guilt and anxiety seek relief in the passive penance of an increased teaching load. The problem with taking the consolation prize of a teaching path is that a future career opportunities are jeopardised.

Another contributing aspect as to why change with regard to equal gender opportunity may be at best slow or unchanging is due to the deterministic behaviour of male managers. Leslie et al (2017) reports that women underrepresented in success because they are stereotyped as not possessing innate talent. The stereotyping of women may be considered a feature of the male brain, which has evolved over thousands of years. Women working with men and competing with males in the work force is a comparatively new phenomenon in evolutionary terms. The eminent scientist, Francis Crick observes that what we think of as free will and personal responsibility are, in fact, no more than the patterns of behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their attendant molecules (Crick, 1994). Such patterns produced in the brain by nerve cells were formed over millennia. Blakemore (1990) considers the human brain a machine, which alone accounts for all our actions. In a ground breaking experiment that has been repeated and confirmed many times, Libet (1985) found that our brains make decisions to act before our conscious mind is aware of them. As our brains evolved over our primate and semi-primate existence it can be concluded that dominant males evolved to see females as ownership opportunities, explained by Dawkins (1976) in terms of a selfish gene. Socially constructed
employment relationships reflect unconscious male prejudices about the roles of women as found by Leslie et al (2015). An interesting finding with regard to role and to female academic success is that attractive young women may more easily get junior positions but there is no later promotional benefit to be had from attractiveness (Liu et al, 2018). Given the findings present by neuro-science research it makes sense to follow Scandinavian models of mandatory gender equality and impose professorial quotas rather than rely on changing male mind patterns over the short term.

The article dismisses the argument that change with respect to gender equality is in progress, and that in time such disparities will disappear, citing that such a claim had been around for several decades. With regard to equality, Rousseau (1992) is pessimistic and argues that society is corrupt and so far from a state of nature that equality has to be enforced to be achieved. Enforcement would seem to be necessary given that inequality has not disappeared.

The problem of inequality may be that as Broadbent & Kirkham (2008) found with respect to Accounting much of academia may be gendered especially to disadvantage females with families. Leslie et al (2015) found that academic beliefs that women lack innate talent to be flawed, but they also found that the expression of such beliefs are entrenched and “may activate negative stereotypes in women’s own minds making them vulnerable to stereotype threat” (p. 262). It is this imposition of self-doubt coupled with guilt and self-effacement that motivates women to be more compliant and to accept the consolation teaching prize for coming second. This article’s contribution is to show how negative emotions are imposed and become career negating obstacles.
References


The Economist (7 April, 2018). The gender pay gap. The Economist, p, 50.


Table 1 Summary statistics for the overall sample from the hard, soft, and accounting disciplines within universities in New Zealand in 2018

This table presents the cross tabulated results from the individuals counted in our gender sample from the hard, soft and accounting disciplines within universities in New Zealand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Professors</th>
<th>Lecturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender balance</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hard Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths (Head Count)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths (Percentage)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics (Head Count)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics (Percentage)</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy (Head Count)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy (Percentage)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total for Hard subjects</strong></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Percentage</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication (incl. English and Media) (Head Count)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication (incl. English and Media) (Percentage)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology (Head Count)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology (Percentage)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (incl. Edu- Pedagogy) (Head Count)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (incl. Edu- Pedagogy) (Percentage)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total for Soft subjects</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Percentage</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Accounting Subject                           |
| Account (Head Count)                         | 46   | 26   | 72   | 24   | 5    | 22   | 21   |
| Account (Percentage)                         | 64%  | 36%  | 100% | 83%  | 17%  | 51%  | 49%  |
| Total                                        | 266  | 161  | 427  | 149  | 47   | 117  | 114  |