

# 'The Gender Politics of European Universities: Women Academics in the UK and Portugal'



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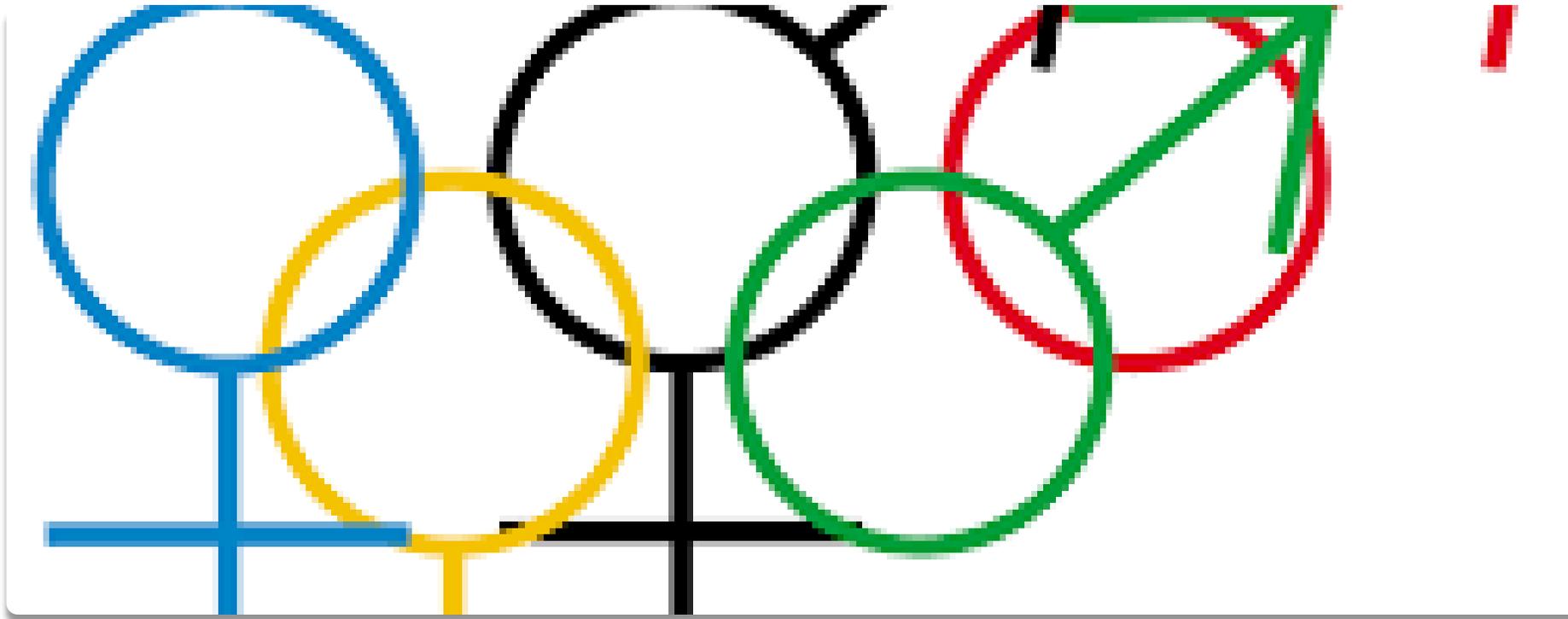
A UK/Portugal comparison

# Overview

- ▶ Introduction to gender politics and how it is changing under the influence of new managerialism (Deem et al 2007) and *boardism* (Veiga et al 2015)
- ▶ Explanation of theoretical framework including intersectionality (Acker 2006) and how organisation policies actually constitute gender identities (Bacchi 2017)
- ▶ Description of the two countries & autobiographical reflections by both authors
- ▶ Challenges for women academics and women & leadership explored in Portugal & the UK
- ▶ What can be done or could be done to improve gender equality in both countries

# What is gender politics?

- ▶ Gender politics refers particularly to debates about gender roles and relations shaped by beliefs about gender-based values and practices; long standing feature of European HE
- ▶ Despite attempts at eradicating gender equality in these systems, as She Figures (2015) shows, many inequalities persist, often linked to other characteristics too
- ▶ Our contention here is two-fold:
  - ▶ i. that there is complacency about gender change having been 'achieved' (Deem, Morley, Tlili 2005), whereas in reality aspects of gender politics have just become more subtle and increasingly complex
  - ▶ li. that changes to HEI systems & organisations (Bruckman & Carvalho 2014b) , especially new managerialism and 'boardism' (Deem 2017, Veiga et al 2015), have led to managers and external board members prioritising effectiveness and efficiency over equality (the ungendered worker), seeking mere legal compliance and mistaking merit as a proxy for dealing with inequality (Deem 2007a)



Gender is more complex now we realise there are several genders

# Theoretical framework

- ▶ Emphasis on importance of intersectionality of gender with other characteristics e.g ethnicity, sexual orientation, 'race', disability (Acker 2006) which affects strategies used to overcome inequalities (isn't 'one size fits all')
- ▶ Acker notes that so called 'family friendly' policies may end up disadvantaging women if men don't also make use of them
- ▶ Also draws on Bacchi (2017) who suggests any organizational policies can act as gendering practices which don't just affect people but also help *constitute* gender categories and identities in the first place
- ▶ Emphasis on how recent management and governance changes (Deem et al 2007, Veiga et al 2015) aimed at efficiency/effectivity may have notion of 'careless workers' (Grummell et al 2009b)

# Contextualisation

- ▶ Compares UK: long established Western European democracy (65.64 million population) with large HE system (over 140 universities, most are public, polytechnics became universities in 1992) which has been front runner in HE reforms WITH
- ▶ Portugal, small Southern European country, which became a democracy only in 1974 after 48 years of dictatorship, with a current population of 10.3 million and 14 public universities & 20 polytechnics, 32 private universities and 56 private polytechnics, has tended to borrow policies from other countries
- ▶ Both countries have moved to modernise HEIs by introducing elements of new managerialism around senior management teams, enhanced role of external board members, independent QA systems, research evaluation etc

# Personal narratives

- ▶ Rosemary Deem: 40 years researching gender in education & history of feminist activism. Worked in 7 UK universities, currently Vice Principal. Has experienced gender politics & discrimination from research degree onwards, succeeded only with support of other women. Moved from thinking books & workshops enough to trying to embed equality along lines set out by Morley (2013), dealing with knowledge, organisation & people
- ▶ Maria de Lourdes Machado Taylor's career began as university administrator, later acquiring PhD & moving into research, whilst coping as parent of 2 daughters, worked in US as well as Portugal, currently works for Portugal's HE Quality Assessment body & as researcher for CIPES. In contrast to Rosemary, Maria de Lourdes' academic career benefited from support of powerful men but also needed long hours, very hard work & little sleep.

# HE Gender politics issues in UK

- ▶ Despite national pay systems at lecturer, senior lecturer, reader level, a gender and ethnicity pay gap persists in UK HE (Baker 2017) as well as equal pay problems
- ▶ 39% of all academics are women but only 21.7% of professors (Macfarlane & Burg 2016); women tend to be clustered in humanities, social sciences
- ▶ VCs & PVCs usually external appointments: 33/130 women Vice Chancellors in August 2017 (UUK members list 2017); many female PVCs often occupy teaching & student experience portfolios, not research or resources
- ▶ Intersectionality – tiny number of black women professors & none in top leadership roles (Elmes 2017, Morgan 2016, Adams 2017); struggle for transgender academics to gain promotion and may develop different writing practices (Thieme and Saunders 2018)
- ▶ As in other countries a majority of female undergraduates but declining numbers at postdoc level and in permanent posts

# HE Gender politics issues in UK (2)

- ▶ Precarity – very hard to get permanent academic posts (over 50% all academic jobs temporary), women less likely to progress from post-doc to lectureships (Ingram 2017, Thwaites & Pressland 2016)
- ▶ Women academics tend to do more teaching & pastoral care but these count less for promotion than research (MacFarlane and Burg 2016)
- ▶ Teaching evaluations/ student surveys prominent in performance management but may be gender-biased (MacNeill et al 2014)
- ▶ Overt sexism less in evidence but survives underground
- ▶ Prevalence of Laddism amongst students, (Jackson, Dempster, Pollard 2015), sexual harassment, gender violence,

# HE Gender Politics Issues in Portugal

- ▶ 65% of academics are women but few ever reach leadership positions & many very dissatisfied (Machado-Taylor, White, Gouveia 2014); are clustered in humanities/social sciences (Carvalho & Machado-Taylor 2010)
- ▶ Still very hierarchical HE system, rectors elected by representative university bodies & choose own team; deans elected by faculty boards
- ▶ Legislation on equality not enforced & still some hostility to women and minorities
- ▶ Career mobility in Portugal across HEIs unusual & can be more difficult for women with caring responsibilities (Machado-Taylor & White 2014)
- ▶ Variants of laddism evident, gender dating violence (Neves, McCosta, Pereira Vieira 2018), sexual harassment (Torres, Coelho, Maciel 2018)

## HE Gender politics issues in Portugal (2)

- ▶ Perception that HEIs gender neutral and meritocratic (Carvalho, Machado Taylor, Ozkanli 2012) but the former is untrue & latter problematic
- ▶ Very hard to get associate & full professorships; few advertised, public university hiring ban until recently plus pay & pension cuts after Eurozone crisis
- ▶ New Managerialism & neo-liberalism have heightened role of managers & external board members (Carvalho & Bruckman 2014, Bruckman 2015) though softer version perceived in some HEIs (Magalhães, Veiga & Videira 2017)
- ▶ Gender studies underrated as academic subject but if gets big grants can't be ignored; women encouraged to over-produce academic outputs (Pereira 2012, 2015, 2017)

# Are accreditation schemes the answer?

Or do they just end up being orchestrated by women and minority groups?



# What can be done? UK

- ▶ In the UK, many mechanisms in addition to 2010 Equality Act public duty:
- ▶ Athena Swan accreditation process for academic departments & whole universities; some research funding bodies require it at silver level for applicants to be eligible
- ▶ Aurora programme run by Leadership Foundation for early career women academics with senior women as mentors
- ▶ Internal programmes supporting women at mid-career stage to apply for promotion earlier than they might otherwise have done
- ▶ Anonymisation of internal promotion applications
- ▶ Equality Challenge Unit (now Advance HE) supports universities on equality & diversity matters
- ▶ TEF monitoring some limited equality data in relation to student progression
- ▶ Large EU funded change programmes like TRIGGER at Birkbeck and 4 other European countries (Deem 2016) but questions about sustainability of measures taken



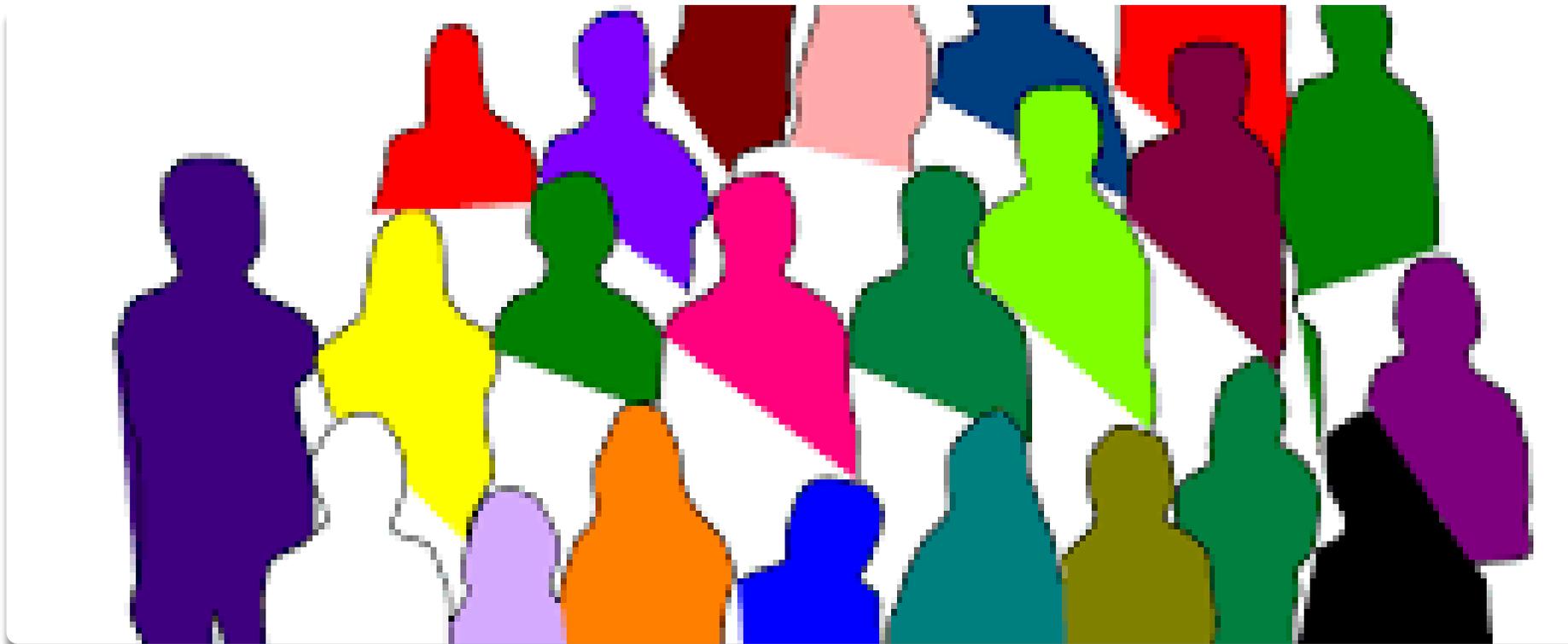
Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality Caterina Marcelino with Professor Analia Torres, director of O Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos de Género (CIEG) at CIEG's annual conference at Lisbon University's Ajuda campus in May 2017

# What can be done: Portugal

- ▶ Huge body of research documenting the problems (see work by Machado-Taylor, Carvalho, Dias, do Mar Pereira etc)
- ▶ But lack of appetite for affirmative action (Carvalho, White & Machado-Taylor 2013)?
- ▶ Some legislation supports idea of equality but doesn't seem to be implemented
- ▶ Intersectionality not addressed at all
- ▶ A3ES accreditation of programmes/HEIs doesn't include equality but some A3ES researchers investigate gender issues including Machado-Taylor
- ▶ No equivalent course for HE staff or one on equalities run by CIEG at ISCSP, Lisbon university, for staff from municipalities etc
- ▶ Have been two excellent government Equalities Ministers Catarina Marcelino 2015-2017 and Rosa Monteiro 2017 – present
- ▶ Still a small public HE sector that is marked by patriarchal sponsorship of male dynasties in rector posts, with an old fashioned view of what science is and how far feminist work departs from this

# Some conclusions

- ▶ Gender politics persist in HE in both countries but are becoming more subtle
- ▶ New managerialism & *boardism* can distract attention from gender & other inequality concerns (just want efficient workers) or focus on minimal compliance with law
- ▶ Subject/discipline segregation by gender still evident in both countries
- ▶ As Bacchi (2017) notes, organisational policies can *constitute* gender identities as well as affecting individuals
- ▶ Portuguese system less awareness intersectionality (not even social class?)
- ▶ Portuguese system far fewer mechanisms than UK for tackling gender inequality and very limited promotion prospects
- ▶ UK a raft of measures but aren't always successful – need embedded change that is difficult to unpick
- ▶ Whilst England is a big HE system, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland are small and mirror the clientelistic politics of Portugal and Ireland, where HE and politicians are heavily intertwined. These types of HE systems may need different change mechanisms to UK



Equality and diversity are still at the mercy of organisational politics

Igualdade e diversidade ainda estão à mercê das políticas organizacionais