

Managerialism and gender inequality in higher education

A case study of performance criteria and career perspectives of female academics in the Netherlands

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New Public Management reforms in higher education

- ❖ European higher education institutions have undergone significant reforms starting from the 1980s, mainly due to the New Public Management (NPM) inspired governmental policies (De Boer, Enders & Leisyte 2007)
 - Strengthened university autonomy and management → Universities as 'corporate organizations' → Increasing managerialism & competition for resources
- ❖ Consequences for academic personnel → Changes in the work conditions of individual academics (Leisyte & Dee 2012)
 - Increasing workload, temporary and part-time contracts, differentiation of academic work roles, performance monitoring based on meritocratic principles

Implications for gender inequality

- ❖ Two possible scenarios on implications of quantification and standardization of performance criteria for gender inequality among academics:
 - (+) Quantification and standardization of evaluation criteria are gender neutral in their effects and can even decrease existing gender inequalities (e.g. Deem 2003)
 - (-) NPM reforms are “carriers of masculine discourses” by emphasizing efficiency, effectiveness and competition (Thomas & Davies 2002; Carvalho & Machado 2010; Barry, Berg & Chandler 2012) and are thus likely to fuel gender inequality in academic career development.

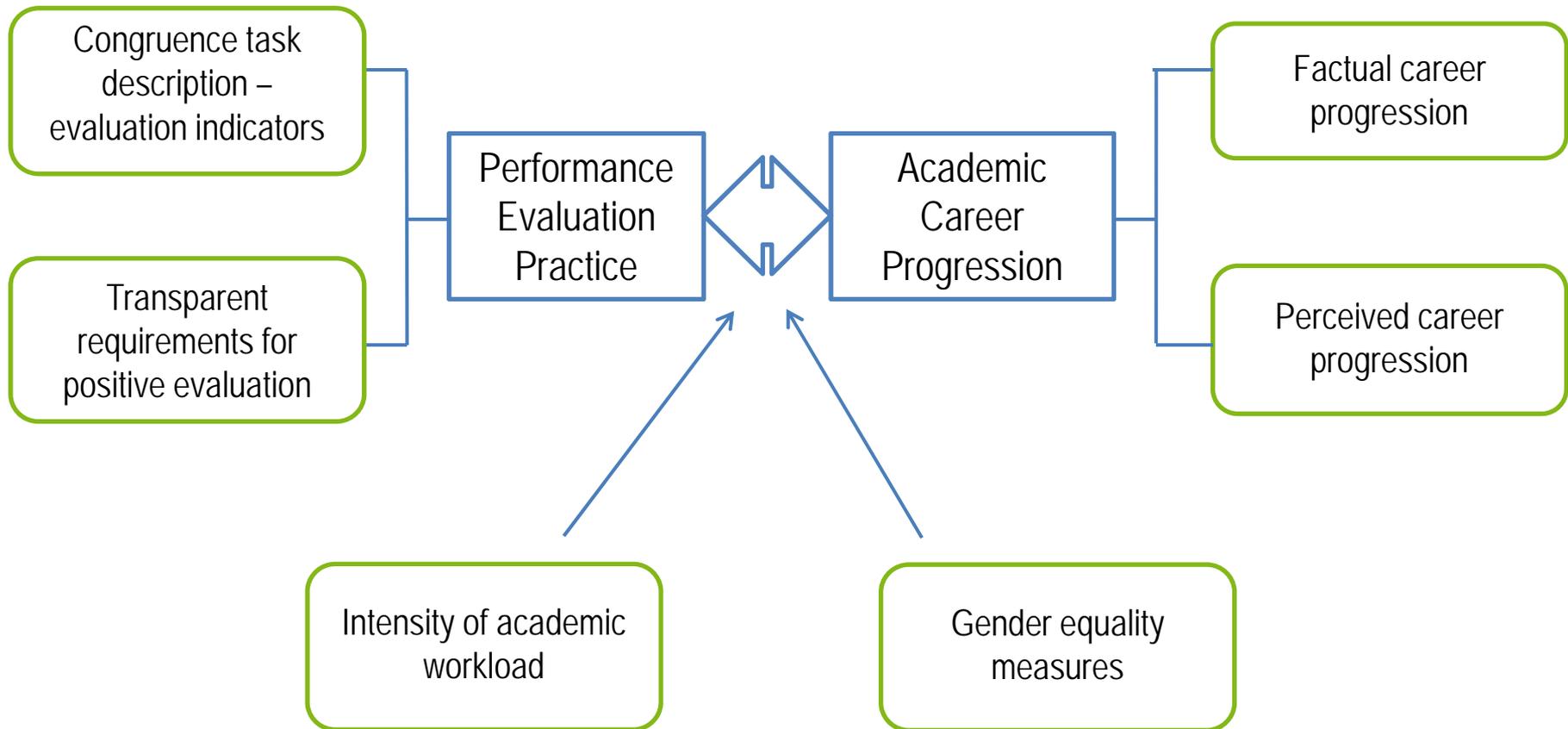
Research question

How does managerialism at universities influence career prospects for female academics?

Data & Methods

- ❖ Selection of the Dutch case based on gendered practices: Academic glass ceiling / Leaky pipeline, Part-time and fixed-term contracts, Cultural stereotypes of gender roles
- ❖ The case study university: Typical example of a managerial university, One of the lowest performers in gender equality at top positions, Practice of continuous monitoring of academic staff performance using regular job evaluation talks, electronic forms
- ❖ Online survey conducted among female academics of the case university (N=129, response rate 25%)

Operationalizations



Bivariate correlations

	Academic Career Progression	Performance Evaluation Practice	Intensity of academic workload	Parental leave considered in measuring output	Equal opportunities in department	Gender balanced policies at university
Academic Career Progression	1					
Performance Evaluation Practice	0.459*** (47)	1				
Intensity of academic workload	0.026 (28)	0.012 (66)	1			
Parental leave considered in measuring output	0.409* (28)	0.229 (36)	0.180 (35)	1		
Equal opportunities in department	0.425** (47)	0.078 (62)	-0.082 (59)	0.456** (36)	1	
Gender balanced policies at university	0.425** (47)	0.470*** (62)	-0.193 (59)	0.211 (36)	0.309* (62)	1

Regression models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Performance Evaluation Practice	0.451*** (0.13)	0.458** (0.14)	0.429* (0.20)	0.456* (0.20)
Intensity of academic workload	--	0.106 (0.17)	0.179 (0.28)	0.147 (0.28)
Parental leave considered in measuring output	--	--	0.755* (0.33)	0.250 (0.36)
Equal opportunities in department	--	--	--	0.107 (0.21)
Gender balanced policies at university	--	--	--	0.470* (0.19)
Constant	1.511** (0.18)	1.092 (0.85)	-0.533** (1.42)	-1.455 (1.46)
Adjusted R ²	0.193	0.169	0.236	0.371
N	47	44	27	27

Conclusions

- ❖ The NPM inspired reforms in Dutch universities emphasize the practice of performance monitoring in terms of standardized and quantified scientific outputs
- ❖ The study of the managerial case university has shown that this development is likely to have constraining effects on career progression prospects of female academics
- ❖ Further studies are needed which:
 - Compare male and female academics with respect to the relationship between career advancement and changing balance of academic work;
 - Compare this relationship among universities with different managerial practices

Thank you for your attention!

