CHAPTER 12

Gender and the Marketisation of Higher Education: A Nordic Tale

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1 Introduction

Policy reforms in the last two decades have significantly impacted the context in which universities around the world operate. The Nordic countries have all adopted elements of new public management, placing

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emphasis on accountability, performance, and evaluations—aspects which are intrinsically associated with the marketisation of higher education. Some people see the introduction of new management techniques, funding instruments, and a rising competitive ethos within universities as a threat to traditional academic norms and identities, leading to resistance from parts of the academic profession. Even though literature on the influence of managerial policies on academic work is abundant, little is yet known regarding the role which demographic factors like gender play in academics' perceptions of their changing work environments and roles.

This chapter addresses this knowledge gap by shedding light on academics' attitudes towards managerial reforms and the rise of higher education markets in three Nordic countries: Finland, Norway, and Sweden. All three countries have experienced considerable reforms in recent years, inspired by new public management. Finland has adopted drastic reforms by separating universities and academics from the state, and by exercising acute changes in funding. Norway's approach has been more gradual, but still focuses on aspects of new public management, including performance-based funding, bibliometrics, and centralised authority for both efficiency and accountability purposes. Finally, Sweden has also introduced similar changes to its higher education system, such as performance-based funding, national evaluation systems, and more formal autonomy. In all three cases, there was a clear move towards the adoption of market-based mechanisms and the infusion of a competitive ethos into what were traditionally egalitarian higher education systems, which advocated horizontal rather than vertical differentiation on the one hand, and collaboration rather than competition on the other hand (Pinheiro et al., 2019).

In this chapter we compare the attitudes and behaviours of university staff members towards current trends (global and regional) in higher education. More specifically, we investigate different interpretations of the effects of the marketisation of higher education along the gender divide. Empirically, the marketisation of higher education is operationalised in the form of three distinct yet interrelated elements: (1) managerial practices, (2) perceptions regarding competition, and (3) motivations for undertaking academic work.

The chapter begins by discussing the shift towards markets and managerialism in Nordic higher education, and outlining the gender issue in higher education on five different levels. It then turns to the issue

of gender in the context of the marketisation of higher education by outlining the main ideas from the literature, which also serves as the basis for deriving our six hypotheses. The chapter continues by detailing the data and analytical method. Finally, it presents the main findings, a discussion of the findings, and a short conclusion.

2 The Rise of Markets and Managerialism in Nordic Higher Education

In the last three decades, administrative reforms across the whole of the Nordic region have been characterised by the prevalence of new public management and post-new public management imperatives. New public management has focused on efficiency and accountability in the form of outsourced contracting, privatisation, autonomy, and managerialism; post-new public management has stressed the importance of horizontal and vertical collaboration and coordination (Greve et al., 2016). Despite similarities across countries, most notably in convergence at the reform initiative level (Geschwind et al., 2019), studies have not found evidence of convergence towards a single model for organising public services (Christensen & Lægreid, 2011; Gornitzka & Maassen, 2011). That said, most countries across the Nordic region have wholeheartedly adopted competition and marketisation strategies, falling short of privatisation mechanisms, as is the case elsewhere, most notably Anglo-Saxon countries (Hansen, 2011, as cited in Greve et al., 2016).

Since the mid-1990s, the Nordic countries have been the targets of far-reaching government-led reforms which are aimed at making the higher education sector more efficient, accountable, and responsive to societal dynamics (Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004; Pinheiro et al., 2019). As a result of new public management-inspired reforms, universities have been given more autonomy to go about their business. Schmidtlein and Berdahl (2005) distinguished between substantive and procedural autonomy. Substantive autonomy relates to the *what*, or the goals to be achieved, whereas procedural autonomy pertains to the *how*, or means to achieve these goals. As a direct result of reform processes, the traditional social contract, or 'pact', between society and higher education, brokered via the state, was altered from one which is based on trust (institutional) to one which is based on contracts (transactional), with the ex-post forms of managerial control (Gornitzka et al., 2004). Enhanced institutional autonomy has resulted in increased oversight, leading to the rise of a

new governance regime which is characterised by an emphasis on quality, performance, and accountability (Hazelkorn, Coates, & McCormick, 2018). As observed in other sectors such as health care (Lægreid et al., 2005), the prevalence of this new governance regime, while fostering the procedural autonomy of universities, has, as a side effect, reduced their substantive autonomy (Bleiklie et al., 2017; Stensaker, 2014).

As a means of ensuring that universities make better use of their strengthened (procedural) autonomy, governments across the Nordic region have embarked on a revamping of governance and leadership structures. The traditional professional logic of delegation and *primus inter pares* (first among equals) management was thought to be inadequate to handle the new accountability demands which emerged from this renewed social contract which is based on performance management and measurement (Berg & Pinheiro, 2016). In line with new public management (Christensen & Lægreid, 2011), managerialism emerged as the natural solution, manifesting as the rationalisation of internal governance structure, the standardisation of roles and procedures, and the centralisation of decision-making authority (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013). Metrics, management by objectives, and other forms of performance management mechanisms have also been implemented (Hansen et al., 2019). Benchmarking, for example, has become an intrinsic feature of managerialism approaches in higher education, with global rankings of all types and shapes pervading the inner workings of universities (Hazelkorn, 2009).

3 Gender in Higher Education

There are two sets of literature which deal with gender in the context of the governance and management of higher education systems and institutions. One set centres on the role of gender at different levels of analysis, while the other privileges the relationship between marketisation practices and gender roles in academia. Given the scope of this chapter and its research topic, we rely here on the second set to generate hypotheses.

3.1 Gender Issues in Academia: Five Levels

Gender differences and imbalances have been discussed in the literature and analysed from several angles. From this plentiful and rich literature, five levels of analysis have been identified: (1) individual, (2) interactional, (3) organisational, (4) systemic, and (5) cultural (O'Connor et al., 2015).

Each of these levels presents a different set of issues for female academics on their scholarly journeys.

At the individual level, studies have suggested that males are more likely to start their academic careers at a higher level (Probert, 2005), receive higher salaries at each academic level (Curtis & Thornton, 2014), and reach senior academic posts or hold senior management positions (Johnson et al., 2015). Population studies revealed that female students tend to enrol in academic disciplines considered to be 'soft', such as education or welfare, while males are over-represented in STEM disciplines (White et al., 2011; Wilson et al., 2010). Unsurprisingly, in many national contexts, university leaders and managers (rectors, vice-rectors or presidents) emanate predominantly from the STEM fields, where males dominate (O'Connor et al., 2015). Even though this image is gradually changing, it still illustrates that horizontal segregation is alive and well (Blackmore, 2014).

Additionally, there is the problem of male and female academics' life choices. In highly stratified higher education systems, such as in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia, men tend to enrol in more prestigious institutions, and consequently have better career prospects later in life (Ceci & Williams, 2011; Leathwood & Read, 2009). Defenders have argued that female academics are poor at career planning, have low self-esteem, and lack adequate political and/or self-promotion skills, all of which are thought necessary for engaging more effectively within existing academic structures. In short, "blaming the victim" (O'Connor et al., 2015, p. 527) lies at the heart of individual-level arguments which explain academic gender differences.

At the interactional (or relational) level, the extant literature suggests that female academics face another set of problems. They tend to have a 'negative coefficient' attached to them, which is visible in publication and research funding data, where men dominate (Benschop & Brouns, 2003). Van den Brink and Benschop (2012) argued that it is not impossible for female academics to reach the same level as men in terms of certain performance indicators, such as number of publications. Due to other commitments, however, female academics are usually older when they manage to catch up. In practice, 'catching up' often also means that women have to work twice as hard as men to achieve the same results (O'Connor et al., 2015). Those women who do manage to attain leading positions tend to be seen as disruptive, challenging, and irritating by their male colleagues. Finally, there is evidence of male academics exercising

heroic masculinity and patronising sexism, sometimes neglecting women's right to be part of managing structures 'for their own good', thereby promoting the view that new public management and the marketisation of higher education are underpinned by a male-dominated ideology (O'Connor et al., 2015; Grummell et al., 2009).

Turning now to the organisational level, studies have shown a tendency for those people in charge of employment to see males as more employable than females, even when the objective level of performance is the same (O'Connor et al., 2015). Other studies centred on issues such as the glass ceiling (Morley, 2013; Pell, 1996; Teelken & Deem, 2013), leaky pipeline (Bailyn, 2003; Blackmore, 2014), and other concepts as explanatory factors for the difficulties which women face in reaching top positions. Some also argued that culture and the criteria of excellence in higher education are implicitly based on a male model, making it difficult for women to access power other than as 'pseudo males', where their position is essentially fragile. Several universities, most notably in the Nordic countries, have introduced affirmative action models to achieve greater gender balance (Pinheiro et al., 2015). To date, however, these actions have achieved rather little, with seemingly no significant correlation between policies and observed outcomes (O'Connor et al., 2015).

At the systemic level, the position of women in society has been found to have an impact on their academic roles and positions. Having to take care of children and other family responsibilities implies that strategic tasks like international collaborations and publishing, and access to prestigious and competitive research grants, might be mission impossible for some female academics (Blickenstaff, 2005; Ceci et al., 2014). Recent studies show that, even in the gender-friendly Nordic countries, female academics disproportionally sacrifice their professional careers in cases where the family needs home support (for child-rearing, for example). In some countries such as Austria and throughout the Nordic countries, however, the introduction of quotas for women in decision-making positions in universities (or in the general public sector) was found to have a positive effect nationally (Mctavish & Miller, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2015), and helped to change the image of male leadership.

Finally, studies at the wider cultural level have mostly found that well-established stereotypes legitimise men's access to senior leadership positions (Grummell et al., 2009). Leadership and managerial positions

are seen as 'unnatural' for women, because peoples' beliefs about leadership align with their views on gender roles in society at large (Piterman, 2008; O'Connor et al., 2015).

3.2 Gender and the Marketisation of Higher Education

The literature which is situated at the confluence of gender and the marketisation of higher education (Hansen, 2011) is also significant, but reveals rather ambiguous results. Studies have found that those people with a more optimistic attitude believe that managerialism, with its focus on performance indicators, offers hope that procedure formalisation might increase women's access to senior positions (Deem et al., 2008), as empirically demonstrated by Sang (2018). According to Mctavish and Miller (2009),

> [t]he decline of older collegiate male based "club" cultures, a greater social and gender composition of university staff and students and the growth of managerial and functional hierarchies in teaching, learning and student support have all increased opportunities from which women have benefited. (p. 189)

Lamont's (2009) arguments which focus on the subjective character of peer evaluations underlined the limitations of such strategies, although there is evidence from experimental studies that accountability reduces gender bias in academia (O'Connor et al., 2015). Other studies are less conclusive. Some literature even favours a more negative view of female standing in academia, after new public management principles are introduced to universities. Saunderson (2002), for example, suggested that, in the UK context, 'macho managerialism' presents an opportunity but also a threat to female academics who aspire to senior positions.

In the context of neoliberalism, research activities with the potential for commercialisation, particularly in specific areas of biosciences and information technology, have been prioritised globally (Rasmussen et al., 2006). In the USA, publicly funded universities use some of their resources to generate private profits, while at the same time reducing expenditures on front-line teaching (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2010). These policies have gender implications, because the areas which are being targeted (and where both the privately- and state-funded professorial chairs are most likely to be located) are predominantly

male. Cuts to front-line teaching can disproportionately affect areas where female academics are most likely to be located (the humanities and parts of the social sciences, for example). This might affect female academics' perceptions of such reforms.

Studies on academic identity found that being an academic has different meanings, depending on national and institutional context (Martin et al., 2018). To be a proper academic, one needs to do more research and minimise teaching, or leave it to others (Leisyte & Dee, 2012). Being a 'proper' academic is much more difficult to achieve for women compared to men (given the aforementioned factors). Consequently, after this goal has been accomplished, it leads to a situation where female academics see their positions as more than a job, while for males it is just employment (Rosewell & Ashwin, 2018; Tsaousi, 2019). One conclusion, therefore, is that at the individual organisation level, and especially within sub-units such as departments or institutes, gender (im)balances which result from marketisation reforms are perceived more negatively by female academics compared to their male counterparts. Accordingly, it would be expected that organisational factors are of greater importance to female academics than male academics, because the female academics tend to be more locally embedded. Given this stance, our first two hypotheses are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Female academics perceive the gender balance at the unit level more negatively than male academics.
- Hypothesis 2: Female academics are more motivated by organisational factors than male academics.

Studies on gender and shifts in managerial regimes in Portugal and Turkey found several important aspects of male and female conceptions of the marketisation of higher education in academia (Carvalho & Machado, 2010; Carvalho et al., 2012). The first and most important aspect is that universities are normally considered neutral organisational arenas, where merit and equity principles are of utmost significance. Research which was conducted at universities and colleges in the UK showed that promotional practices were not perceived as gendered but as neutral, and that, interestingly, female academics hold more neutral attitudes towards these

practices compared to male academics (Mctavish & Miller, 2009). Nevertheless, many scholars advocate against such a 'neutral' view of academic practices. Brink and Benschop (2011), for example, suggested that…

> [t]he ideology of the meritocracy conceals practices of inequality that have nothing to do with merit… [it] implies that merit is individualized, that people bear the sole responsibility for the development of their merits, and that success is the product of their own doing. With regard to academic excellence, the claim of neutral, objective and precise measurement does not hold. (p. 518)

Following the same line of thought, Carvalho and Machado (2010) warned that market principles which stress such values as competition, performance, and meritocracy might reinforce gender-free notions in higher education—values which are not present in practice. Consequently, new public management can be perceived as a threat to women's progress in the field. Based on this evidence, we argue that when it comes to academics in the Nordic countries, the situation is quite similar, and that both male and female academics are likely to perceive academia as a neutral ground, where everyone has equal opportunities for advancement. Our third hypothesis, therefore, reads as follows:

- Hypothesis 3: There are no gender differences in academics' views on acknowledgement from peers.

Carvalho and Machado's (2010) findings also suggest that actors perceive men and women as having different managerial styles. Women, who are considered to be more pragmatic, organised, and persevering, are often connected to 'soft' management. Trowler (2001) argued that new public management, which is based mainly on 'hard' management notions, favours men for leadership and management positions. There is also a third view on this issue which claims that the idea of an 'ideal manager' is based on masculinity, and that women who have aspirations to reach top positions must embrace the very same (male-established) culture. In other words, female academics must adapt and, by doing so, redefine themselves. If they decide to emphasise the differences between managerial styles, however, female academics are in danger of being accused of 'doing gender' themselves, thereby strengthening well-established stereotypes (Carvalho & Machado, 2010).

The aforementioned aspects might affect both women's career choices and the decisions made by other managers in selecting and promoting women who show the requisite levels of masculinity (Korabik & Ayman, 1989, as cited in Priola, 2007). As White et al. (2011) showed, "While women as senior managers had an increased capacity to impact on decision-making in managerialist universities, this mainly related to 'soft' management skills which were not valued in the new dominant managerial culture that is strongly focused on research output. It therefore takes a courageous and resilient woman to decide to apply for a senior management position" (p. 187). Sang (2018) claimed that managerialism and marketisation reforms might have allowed more women to reach senior positions. Even when senior managers (predominantly male) invite female academics to be part of their managerial team, however, it can be regarded as a strategic move to win more votes from other female academics. Another instrumental use of gender could be found in a university's strategies, where leaders try to promote a modern and progressive institutional image (Carvalho & Machado, 2010), by playing the gender equality card. We assume, therefore, that female academics in the Nordic countries have more negative views when it comes to organisational aspects like decision-making and strategy. Hypothesis 4 reads as follows:

- Hypothesis 4: Female academics have more negative perceptions of their participation in strategy development than their male counterparts.

Studies have shown that managerial reforms and emphasis on performativity are not favourably viewed in academia (Pinheiro et al., 2019). Carvalho and Machado (2010) found that men and women are equally resistant to changes at universities, and have negative views of managerial reforms in general. But even if we can conclude with some certainty that both female and male academics have predominantly negative feelings towards these new trends, it is not difficult to see why female academics have more reasons than men to oppose new managerial structures and market logics. At first, managerial reforms which emphasise accountability and performance were seen as something beneficial for female academics, as gender issues were set aside. Wilson et al. (2010), however,

argued that "despite apparent reforms over the past decade, the situation for women has improved little in practical terms" (p. 534). One of the reasons for this could be found in the notion that new public management is predominantly a masculine tradition. The different types of performance measurements which are introduced at universities are favourable towards men. Grummell et al. (2009) claimed that the new entrepreneurial spirit in universities is capitalist in nature, favouring men more than women. The increased demand for performativity can only be met by a worker with no interest outside of work, or as Blackmore (2014) argued, by those who are "mobile, flexible, adaptable, not place-bound and unhindered by domestic connections, that is, 'transnational masculinities'" (p. 95). The data which support these claims are ambiguous, however. Angervall's (2018) study revealed that most top performers in academia are men who predominantly work in research, while teaching is left to female academics. Men are likely to attain career advancements faster than women, often do more research and much less teaching, and tend to work in international networks. Women, by contrast, were found to spend more time than men in tasks like teaching and administration (Angervall, 2018). Similarly, Morley (2016) found that women are less likely to be journal editors or cited in top-rated academic journals, act as principal investigators, and to sit on research boards and peer review structures which allocate funding. Finally, Wilson et al. (2010), citing several other studies, showed that, contrary to the popular view, workloads for female academics are not higher compared to men, at least when it comes to teaching. More data, therefore, are needed to generalise popular claims on gender influence on workloads. That said, the majority of studies support the notion that performance indicators and measurements benefit male academics more than female academics, which is much more in line with 'masculine' new public management culture. Two additional hypotheses, therefore, read as follows:

- Hypothesis 5: Male academics have more positive views towards performance measurements than female academics.
- Hypothesis 6: Male academics consider performance measurements more important than female academics.

4 Data and Method

The empirical dataset which was used to test our hypotheses is based on national surveys of senior academic staff (professors, associate professors, and academic leaders) which were conducted in Finland, Norway, and Sweden in 2015 and 2016. The surveys investigated the perceptions of recent government-led reforms, with a focus on performance management and managerial practices (For more details on the study and its methods, consult Pinheiro et al. [2019].). The data ($N = 2293$) provide an exceptional opportunity to study the role of gender in the perception of the marketisation of higher education, because the academic career stage of the respondents is standardised. The data are normally

Table 1 Number of respondents by country, position, and gender

		Finland		*Sweden*		*Norway*		
		N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*Total*
Gender	Female	354	38.9	217	43.6	307	35.9	
	Male	556	61.1	281	56.4	548	64.1	
	Total	**910**		**498**		**855**		**2263**
Title	Professor (career stage IV)	460	49.8	234	46.4	441	50.9	
	Associate professor (career stage III)	463	50.2	270	53.6	425	49.1	
	Total	**923**		**504**		**866**		**2293**
Science field	Natural sciences	242	26.2	84	16.7	194	22.4	
	Engineering and technology	121	13.1	57	11.3	122	14.1	
	Medical and health sciences	117	12.7	106	21.0	145	16.7	
	Agricultural sciences	17	1.8	13	2.6	11	1.3	
	Social sciences	224	24.3	151	30.0	229	26.4	
	Humanities	169	18.3	73	14.5	131	15.1	
	Other	33	3.6	20	4.0	34	3.9	
	Total	**923**		**504**		**866**		**2293**

distributed and include professors and associate professors in the 25–78 age group (mean: 49; SD: 11.3). Gender-wise, the data are representative of the national levels of the Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The sample is described in Table 1. We analysed the data by using a χ^2-test for frequencies; in the case of means, we used the Mann-Whitney U-test.

5 Findings

The findings of the analysis are presented according to each of the six hypotheses in turn.

H1: Female academics perceive the gender balance at the unit level more negatively than male academics.

We measured attitude towards the recognition of gender balance with a single item indicator. The gender differences are statistically significant in all countries (Finland and Sweden, $p < .001$; Norway, $p < .01$). There are also statistically significant differences between countries ($p < \chi^2$). In all three countries, the share of female respondents who disagree with the statement "in my academic unit, gender balance is recognised" is more than double when compared to males. Female academics in Finland were the most critical overall: 31% of female academics, most of whom have a permanent position, disagree with the recognition of gender balance, compared to 10% of males. Across the sample, the percentage of males agreeing with the statement varies only slightly, between 68 and 70%, with Norwegians being the most positive overall (Fig. 1).

H2: Female academics are more motivated by organisational factors than male academics.

In the survey, we measured the motivation of academics along seven items, by inquiring about the motivational impact with regard to acknowledgement in different instances, the motivational impact of financial incentives, and media attention. Three of these statements were categorised as pertaining to organisational factors, namely acknowledgement from a second-tier manager, acknowledgement from a manager, and acknowledgement from students. These types of feedback are often

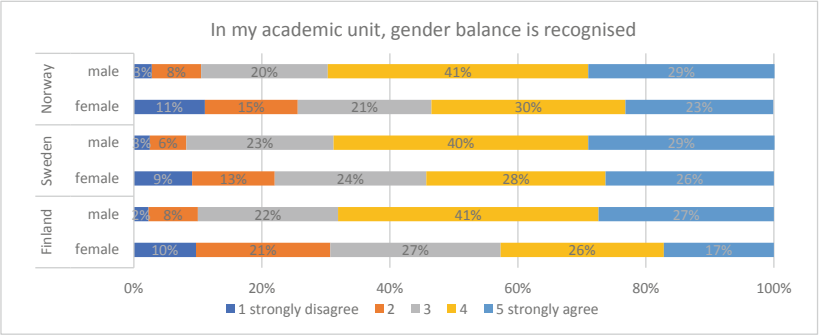

Fig. 1 Recognition of gender balance by gender and country (frequencies)

formalised and are part and parcel of official, organisational management systems.

The assumption that female academics are more motivated by organisational factors seems to hold true in each of the three countries. In Finland, differences between gender groups are statistically significant regarding acknowledgement from a unit manager ($p < .01$) and from students ($p < .001$). In both Sweden and Norway, this is so for all statements (students and unit managers $p < .001$, second-tier manager $p < .01$). The data show that acknowledgement from students has a much higher impact (motivational effect) than that from managers. Most probably this is an indication that feedback from students is not associated with organisational aspects per se, but more with the academic community. Differences among gender groups with respect to the motivational impact of managerial acknowledgement are highest in Sweden. Overall, female academics report higher motivational effects compared to male academics, across the sample (Fig. 2).

H3: There are no gender differences in academics' views on acknowledgement from peers.

We measured acknowledgement from peers with two questions: one question regarding the motivational impact of external colleagues, and another question regarding the acknowledgement of colleagues from

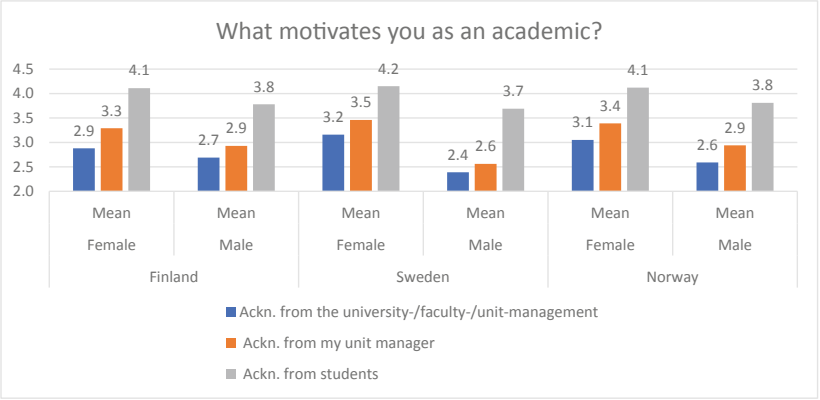

Fig. 2 Motivational factors by gender and country (mean)

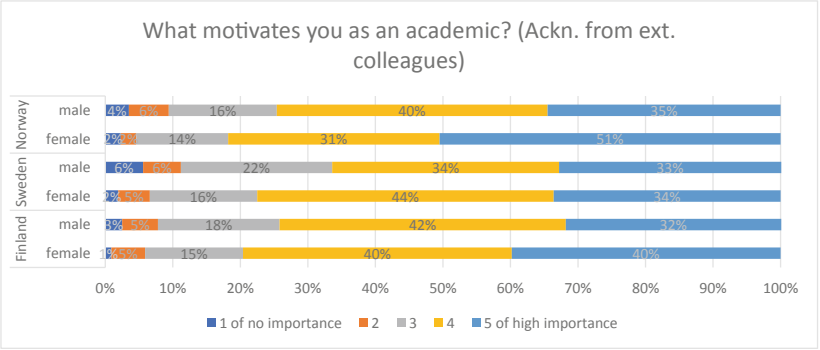

Fig. 3 Acknowledgement from peers by gender and country (frequencies)

one's own unit. We decided to only analyse the effects which are associated with external colleagues, because it is clearly associated with the academic discipline, and because it can be considered unconnected from organisational hierarchies or politics. The only country in which there are statistically significant differences is Norway ($p < .01$). Norwegian female academics are more motivated by acknowledgement from external peers compared to their male counterparts (82% vs. 75%, respectively) (Fig. 3).

H4: Female academics have more negative perceptions towards their participation in strategy development than their male counterparts.

Earlier studies revealed that academics have the most influence on the strategy formulation of their own sub-units, and that influence decreases quite sharply when referring to faculty- and institutional-level strategies. For this reason, we studied only participation at the unit level. The data show that participation in the strategy process in Norway is well institutionalised, with no significant gender differences. The differences between gender groups are statistically significant in Sweden ($p < .05$) and Finland ($p < .05$). In both Sweden and Finland, the share of participating males is also higher than their female counterparts. That said, whereas 70% of male academics in Sweden report having participated in strategic processes at the unit level (vs. 54% for female academics), the male figures are much lower (55% and 48%, respectively) in Finland (Fig. 4).

H5: Male academics have more positive views towards performance measurements than female academics.

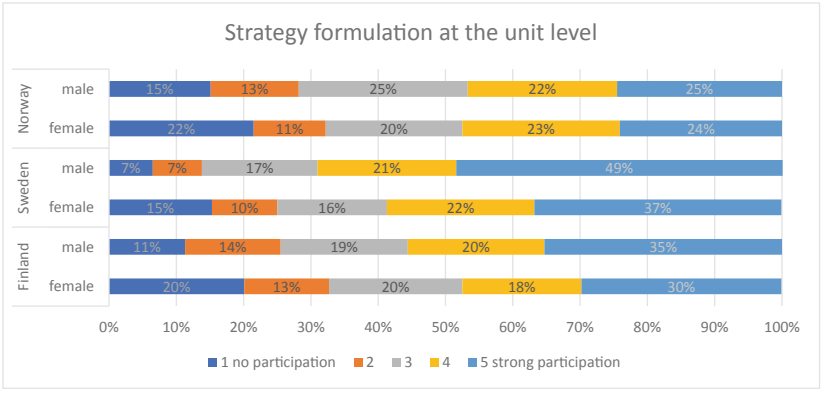

Fig. 4 Participation in strategy formulation by gender and country (frequencies)

In all countries, male academics consider performance measurement more important with respect to equity-related dimensions (transparency and fairness). That said, the gender differences are not that large, and relate mainly to those academics who have a positive view, but who do not strongly agree with the statement which was posed (score = 4, in yellow, in Fig. 5). Note that gender differences are not statistically significant. Differences between countries among male academics ($p < .001$) and female academics (< .01), however, are statistically significant. In Finland, the overall attitude across gender groups towards performance measurement is more positive than in both Norway and Sweden. Norwegian academics are the most negative overall—68% scored their views at 1 or 2 (Fig. 5).

H6: Male academics consider performance measurements more important than female academics.

We estimated the importance of performance measurement with four items. First, we asked about the motivational impact of financial incentives. Second, we assessed the degree of performance measurement institutionalisation with an item which focused on the alignment between performance measurement and academic behaviour. Finally, we examined the subjective estimation on the impacts of performance measurement

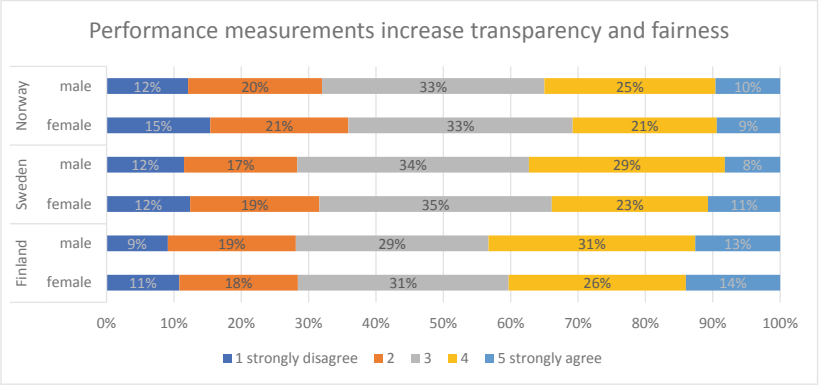

Fig. 5 Views on performance measurement by gender and country (frequencies)

for teaching (third) and for research (fourth). The data show little or no gender differences in all of these items. In Finland, none of the differences is statistically significant. In Sweden, the only statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) relates to financial incentives. In Norway, the impacts of performance measurement on research ($p < .05$) and teaching ($p < .05$) are statistically significant. Where gender differences are found, they suggest that female academics consider performance measurement more important than male academics. The only difference worth mentioning relates to the importance of financial incentives as a source of motivation in Sweden (Fig. 6).

Table 2 below provides a brief summary of the main findings for each of the six hypotheses which were posed in this chapter.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

This study supports previous research on gender differences in academic settings. We found that male academics across the three Nordic countries hold more positive views than female academics on progress regarding gender balance. This is not surprising, because males are not the primary targets of measures which attempt to tackle gender inequalities in what has traditionally been a male-dominated field and profession (Blackmore, 2014; Morley, 2013). The study also confirms previous studies regarding motivation (Curtis & Thornton, 2014; Johnson, Warr, Hegarty, & Guillemin, 2015). The motivational impact of organisational factors was considered much higher by female academics than male academics. Save Norway, we detected no significant differences regarding the importance of acknowledgement from external colleagues. This could arguably be the result of 'gender neutrality' of the disciplinary community (Shaw & Stanton, 2012). Overall, our findings support the consensus in the literature (Rosewell & Ashwin, 2018; Santoro & Snead, 2013) that female academics are more motivated than male academics by both organisational factors and direct feedback from (internal and external) peers. A novel contribution from this study, however, is the importance (motivational terms) which was attributed to acknowledgement from students, an aspect which is largely neglected in the extant literature.

This study also lends partial support to previous findings on male dominance in leadership and strategy-related issues within universities (O'Connor et al., 2015). In contrast to Sweden and Finland, there were no gender differences regarding participation in strategy processes

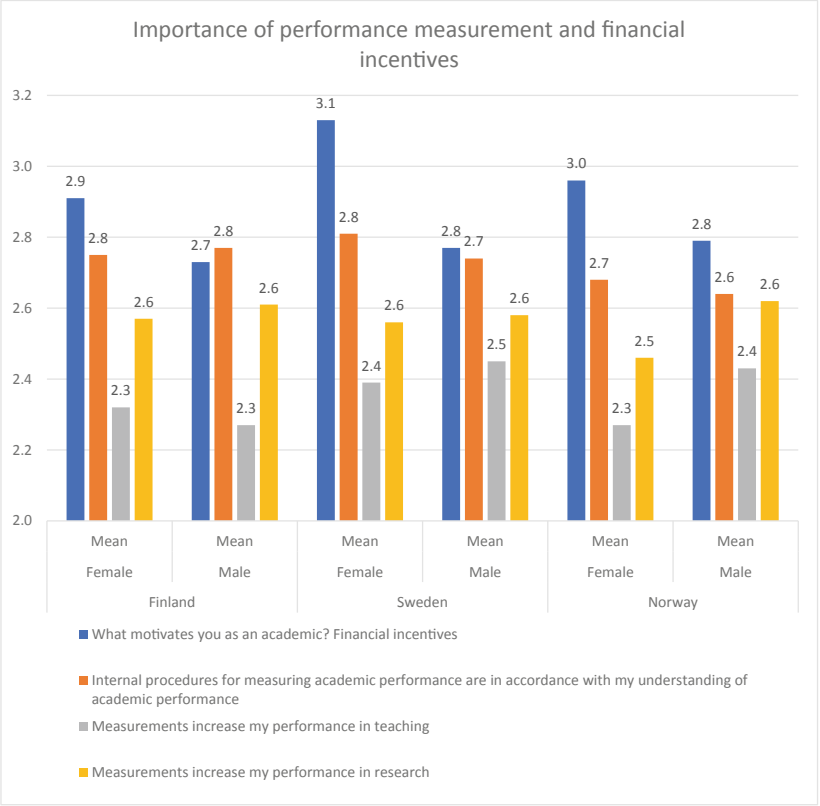

Fig. 6 Importance of performance measurement and incentives by gender and country (mean)

in Norway. This aligns with earlier studies which show the prominent role which Norwegian female academics have in the highest leadership positions within universities, in comparison to their Nordic counterparts (Pinheiro et al., 2015).

The findings of prior studies showed that managerial reforms have not improved female working conditions (Wilson et al., 2010). Performance measurements also encourage a mobile and flexible work force (Blackmore, 2014), and emphasise research activities and external funding success, both of which are favourable to men (Angervall, 2018; Morley,

Table 2 Summary of main findings

		Reject/Support	*Comparative notes*
H1	Female academics perceive the gender balance at the unit level more negatively compared to male academics	Support: All countries	The differences between genders are largest in Finland
H2	Female academics are more motivated by organisational factors compared to male academics	Support: All countries	The differences between genders are largest in Sweden In Finland, there are no gender differences regarding the motivational importance of acknowledgement from second-tier managers
H3	There are no gender differences in academics' views on acknowledgement from peers	Support: Finland and Sweden Reject: Norway	There are differences by gender in Norway
H4	Female academics have more negative perceptions towards their participation in strategy development compared to their male counterparts	Support: Finland and Sweden Reject: Norway	The gender differences are not statistically significant in Norway
H5	Male academics have more positive views towards performance measurements compared to female academics	Reject: All countries	Both genders have more positive views on performance measurement in Finland
H6	Males consider performance measurements more important than female academics	Reject: All countries	No major differences

2016). Some of the critical literature supports the view that new public management is considered a masculine tradition, and consequently is viewed more positively by males (Grummell et al., 2009). Contrary to these studies, our findings support Carvalho and Machado (2010), who found that men and women share similar attitudes towards managerial practices. Likewise, we did not find significant gender differences in attitudes towards performance measurement in general, or in the level of

importance attributed to them. We noted some country differences with respect to general attitudes, however, with respondents from Finland being the most positive overall (See Hansen et al. [2019].).

Our study provides new empirical insights into academic attitudes towards performance management and measurement in higher education, in light of recent reform processes (Pinheiro et al., 2019). Contrary to earlier studies from other parts of the world (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2010; Saunderson, 2002), our empirical findings do not support the claim that female academics have more negative views, or that they are less likely to adjust their academic behaviour in accordance with the quasi-market steering system. Earlier studies (Blackmore, 2014; Carvalho & Machado, 2010) have demonstrated that female academics often work in softer fields, teach more than males, are generally not so well recognised by performance measurements systems (horizontal segregations), and are also less likely to be heads of research groups and full professors (vertical segregations)… in short, that they have fewer possibilities to influence their performance. Additionally, it is said that female academics carry a negative coefficient regarding self-esteem, political skills, and so on (O'Connor et al., 2015), which leads to lower performance, publications, and competitive funds than male academics. Our findings, therefore, could indicate that pressures which are related to the adoption of new public management-inspired dimensions, such as performance measurements, might be higher among female academics (when compared to male academics) in their attempt to prove their worth to line managers and academic peers (both male and female). Future studies, both within and beyond the Nordic countries, ought to provide more clarity on gender and the marketisation of higher education.

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