

Collaborating with men

Changing workplace culture to be more inclusive for women



FOREWORD

Why collaborate with men?



Dame Barbara Stocking

As a College for women in Cambridge, you might well ask why Murray Edwards is involved in a research project on men. The answer is that we are concerned about the workplace cultures where our smart, aspiring young women are heading. Two years ago a survey was sent out to all alumnae in the 60th anniversary year of the College. The standout finding was that for all ages, including young women too, impediments to career progress caused by workplace culture were given more weight than barriers presented by balancing work and family.

The business case that it is beneficial to include a diverse group of people at the top of careers is now well accepted. For many years now the emphasis in initiatives to achieve gender parity in careers has been on 'fixing the women'. Of course, we can build up women's skills and resilience in dealing with workplace environments and that is part of what we are doing in Cambridge through initiatives such as Murray Edwards' Gateway Programme. But the point is that we are not going to achieve the change by 'improving' women, but by a more fundamental change in these all too common workplace cultures. This is what this research on 'collaborating with men' aims to stimulate.



Dr Jill Armstrong

The view of Murray Edwards' alumnae that workplace culture presents the most significant barrier to career progress prompted us to dig deeper into existing research. Workplaces have made progress towards gender equality but it is clear that progress has stalled. Women are still under-represented in senior positions across the private and public sectors. Whilst legislation has tackled discrimination, more subtle gender bias is particularly persistent. Debates about gender inclusion have recently put the spotlight on men to be champions for change as exemplified by the UN's 'HeforShe' campaign. However, very little has been written about men's view of the workplace culture problems that women describe.

If you believe, as we do, that the problem of gender inequality is only going to be solved by men and women working together, this lack of knowledge about what men think is a yawning gap. We are making our contribution through this research that has sought the views of men in their early careers, in middle management and those who are senior in their careers. We have worked with men and women to suggest changes to everyday, individual behaviours in order to find solutions to the problems that persist for women. We aim to suggest solutions that will benefit men too.

We hope you find the report of practical use and invite you to participate in workplace trials of the ideas offered here.



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Two page briefing: The Challenge

There are more similarities than gender differences between men and women at work and yet men and women working beside each other can experience very different workplaces. Women report behaviour and assumptions arising from a man-made workplace culture that makes them feel they do not fit in and are not being assessed on merit.

Many workplaces have leaders who are committed to gender parity in careers. Diversity and Inclusion policies have changed systems in many workplaces. Unconscious bias training has opened many minds. Yet many report that there is a gap between intention and implementation of change². Our diagnosis of the stalled progress for women is that it is time to tackle workplace culture.

It's not easy to change the established, if unwritten, rules of the way power is wielded in the workplace. Change also needs to happen from the bottom up. We have been working beside men to suggest what we, as individuals, can do to transform workplace culture to address women's problems and to benefit men too.

"I think the bottom up thing is really important... we all have responsibility to, in a sense, be the change, (even though I hate that expression). If we lead by example, try to think twice and try and exemplify the behaviours that we want to see around equality then that can make a big difference." (Early career male)

"You need a relationship to take a view about the capabilities and potential of an individual to match them with an opportunity." (Senior male leader)

5 key ways to transform workplace culture

Seeking to understand women's (and some men's) issues with workplace culture

Making visible how things get done in practice

> **Building closer** relationships between men and women

Individual Interventions to tackle gender biased behaviour

Actions for leaders to reward and support male role models of gender inclusive behaviour

Small, incremental changes in individual behaviour will add up to big changes for women's advancement into the top levels of careers.

Ideas suggested by the research participants about how to deliver these themes can be found on pages 17-21.

The key insight from Murray
Edwards' research is that
committing to gender equality
means men actively working
to change workplace culture.

Building understanding, respect and stronger relationships between male and female colleagues will improve working lives, outputs, access to sponsorship and women's progress to the top of careers.

Workplace culture inhibits women's careers

42%

of women aged 18-25 are confident that their gender will have no bearing on their career progression versus 72% of men

Think Future 2016

43%

of women aged 28-40 do not feel that opportunities to progress are equal between men and women

Opportunity Now 2014[®]

42%

of women aged 28-40 believe it is hard for women at their level to network with most senior staff in their organisation

Opportunity Now 2014

Workplace culture is defined here as a set of assumptions, values and beliefs that govern how people behave in organisations. These can be myths or everyday practices that are rarely questioned and affect how people work, how they progress and how they feel about work.

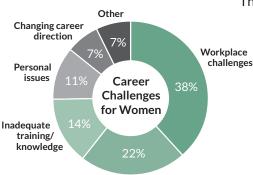
- Murray Edwards conducted a survey amongst their alumnae in 2014. (Women Today, Women Tomorrow Survey)³
- Whilst 824 separate career challenges were mentioned in the survey the most common were those found in the workplace. (38% of total mentions – see pie chart)
- By contrast, the more commonly discussed difficulties of combining work and family life were a lesser 22%.
- The specific issues most mentioned relating to workplace culture are:
 - gender inequality and discrimination,
 - non-supportive and difficult colleagues and managers,
 - bullying,
 - feeling that their work is undervalued; and,
 - feeling that they have to over-perform simply because they are female.

- One argument that is often advanced is that gender equality will naturally arrive given time. However, the fact that a large cohort of women have occupied professional or managerial positions in the workforce since the 1970s and are now reaching retirement age, reveals this view to be a myth.⁴
- The 50:30:10 rule characterises the numerical representation of women in organisations, commonly called 'the leaky pipeline'.

That is, the tendency towards 50% representation at entry level,

30% in middle management and 10% in senior management.⁵

• Cracking the Code shows that men are 4.5 times more likely to make it on to an executive committee role than a woman starting out on her career at the same time.⁶



Balancing family & work

• The *Think Future* study undertaken with university students who have yet to enter the workforce also shows that women are still nervous that their gender will impact their career progression.⁷

"It was a surprise to me how male dominated the workplace was. Designed by men, for men, with a dominant male culture and set of values." (Woman aged 30-39)

And here's how it happens

A large body of research reveals the problems that many women experience with workplace culture.

ISSUES



Men benefit from association between stereotypical male values and leadership

Catalyst (2005) / Eagly and Karau (2002) / Williams & Dempsey (2014) / Eagly and Carli (2007)

ABILITY BIAS

Men tend to be promoted based on potential whereas women are promoted based on experience

McKinsey (2015) / Kay and Shipman (2014) / Sandberg (2013)

BENEVOLENT SEXISM

Well motivated men make decisions for women that may 'kill careers with kindness'

Glick and Fiske (1997) / Becker and Wright (2011)

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION BIAS

Double standards in the way men and women's performance & potential is assessed

Rudman & Glick (1999) / Biernat, Tocci, Williams (2012) / Foschi (1996) / Rutherford (2001)

LANGUAGE BIAS

Men talk over or don't hear what women say

McKinsey (2015) / Kay and Shipman (2014) / Sandberg (2013)

NETWORKING BIAS
Men's networks sideline women

Williams & Dempsey (2014) / Simpson & Lewis (2007) / Tannen (1994) / Catalyst (2009)

The implications of all these biases are that women are:

LESS LIKELY TO BE

- Recruited into stereotypically male fields
- Given high profile assignments
- Promoted into leadership roles

There is an impression of roles being ear-marked for certain individuals who are felt to have shown particular commitment. That commitment is often measured in ways that favour men or people without children – long hours, more assertive forceful styles, etc. (Women in Whitehall Study: Grades 5-7 n. 791)?

MORE LIKELY TO BE

- Sidelined into roles that are not client-facing or critical to the profit and loss of an organisation
- Negatively judged in performance reviews
- Leave the organisation or stay in mid-level roles

I would not want to join the culture... I have seen too many women fail... women who have succeeded previously. All torn apart. All gone. It's a hideous male macho culture at the top. (Women in Whitehall Study: Grades 5-7 n. 791)

Some of these biases are attributed to socialised masculine behaviour and some to more unconscious bias. 10



Gender equality matters to men too

Some argue that a component of male privilege is that men do not have to think about how their behaviour affects women. However, a growing body of research shows that achieving gender parity in careers is important to many men too.



Gender inequality in the workplace is men's work too

The facts are daunting and it is tempting to think that the gender divide is too deeply rooted for you to make any difference, but it is not that hard to help.



Now the spotlight is on men to work beside women to champion change.

MEC 2016 RESEARCH

Sample and methodology



Given that many of the problems women report are caused by unconscious behaviours, we shared a summary of research on women's perspectives prior to meeting the men who participated in our research. In turn, many consulted their female colleagues or family. In this way we made the unconscious, conscious.

WHO 40 men working in a range of medium sized to large organisations from the private and public sectors	HOW
6 x gender champions (senior in career stage)	½ day workshop to help frame the research
28 men: Early career stage to middle management	4 x 2 hour focus groups
6 x individual interviews (senior in career stage)	1 hour interviews

The research took place in May and June 2016. Research participants views are their own. We would like to thank everyone who participated in this project from The Civil Service, BBC Wales, Royal Mail, Aviva, University of Cambridge, University of Leeds, Cardiff County Council, Marks and Spencer, The DMW group, Happy Company, McKinsey and Company, Wedlake Bell, Blueprint for Better Business and many others.

MFC 2016 RESEARCH

What motivates men

EARLY CAREER MEN

- Tend to be most open to changing their behaviour
- More strongly individually motivated
- Arguably Millennial men (born 1980-2000) have different attitudes to gender equality born from:
 - growing up with multiculturalism,
 - the likelihood of having working mothers; and,
 - experience of 50:50 workplaces at their level
- But many think that the job is already done.

"Gender equality is important to me because it makes sense, if you're excluding fifty percent of the population from achieving their potential then you're ending up with a significantly less effective, significantly less efficient and significantly less happy population. For me personally, I can't see why gender equality wouldn't be what you'd be aiming for... The idea that women wouldn't be respected and treated and paid and everything else the same as men is just almost impossible to fathom so I think we should be working hard to stop that." (Early career male)

> "I guess there's still some of those gender prejudices hanging around amongst those born in the 1990s but so much less than older generations carry around." (Early career male)

"I like working with women." (Early career male) "It's the right thing to do." (Early career male) "It reflects normal life." (Early career male)

MID CAREER MEN

- Tend to be more strongly motivated by corporate objectives
- Have more experience of the impact of having families, primarily on women's careers
- Yet, for men as well as women, this is a period of intense work and management loads often at a time when they have young children. Gender diversity objectives can feel like just another thing to do.

"I can't fix the other 12 people in the room when we've got a project to deliver in 3 weeks." (Mid career male)

"Diverse teams make better decisions." (Mid career male)

"Customers expect it." (Mid career male)

"Gives us a competitive advantage." (Mid career male)

> "You need to represent the community you are serving from a public sector perspective." (Mid career male)

"What's important is that we get the best talent we can to drive the business forward." (Mid career male)

> "If you actually dig deep around the numbers on gender balance and what happens over time it's a lot more negative than people have been prepared to admit. Difficult decisions need to be made and they never are." (Mid career male)

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Recognition of gender issues

Most men interviewed recognised some specific gender problems – but in a patchy way based on individual experience. Examples are comments about double standards, including men noticing senior women who behave like men, women not being heard in meetings and women being sidelined from networking opportunities. We also heard reports about men complaining about women being promoted sooner than them because they are female - which is a hard stigma for women to live down.

Women not being heard

"I have seen women make comments or suggestions in meetings and them being glossed over until a man says exactly the same thing and then everyone says 'oh yes, good idea.'" (Early career male)

Double standards

"There is a difference in the way male and female presenters are treated. With men you ask questions. Whereas with women it's more like 'let me offer you a point of clarification.' The implication is that I know more than you." (Early career male)

Double standards

"Men get away with being angry. Like, the boss had a right go today because someone wasn't performing. If a woman does that people say she's having a hissy fit or it's her time of the month." (Early career male)

Women being excluded from networks

"We play five a side football and it's a very effective bonding tool with people I don't really work with that much. I definitely feel I've got to know people a whole lot better than through working relationships. I don't think anybody shows any encouragement to get women to play." (Mid career male)

Double standards

"One of my team got some feedback that she was scatty. She said, 'if I was a bloke they'd have said I'm unorganised. That's something I can work on. Scatty is an insult to my personality." (Mid career male)

Double standards

"In academia there's an undercurrent that still exists that sometimes we pretend is not there. There's an element of ticking the boxes and not everything is being done as it should be. In exam setting and in textbooks every example given is always 'he'. And there's the completely bizarre thing you see of poorer exam results for females that's very clear but nothing ever seems to be done about it." (Early career male)

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Awareness of gender bias

Some of aspects gender bias proved to be more unconscious than others. We also saw differences between organisations based on how leaders had actively embedded gender diversity in the culture. Men explain much of this bias as derived from the way society sees men and women. Sociologists call this 'cultural scripts'. 13

LEAST RECOGNISED

MOST RECOGNISED

Women's voice

When confident women talk they are often not heard

Double standards

Women not credited as much as men for their skills & performance

Double standards

Women's potential for promotion undervalued in relation to men

Double standards

Women are either seen as likeable or competent but not both

Networks

Women often sidelined from networking opportunities/ sponsorship

Women's voice

Women can be more reticent in meetings



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Men on why women's voices aren't heard

It was often surprising to men that many women, including those in senior positions, feel that they are often not heard and often interrupted. When men are told they don't hear women their first assumption is that those women aren't speaking up.

When asked to consider why many women don't feel heard. men said:

- Men's lower voices are associated with authority
- Men tend to talk more directly whereas women tend to politely phrase their points as questions. This also carries less authority
- Some men shout louder and compete more
- Men find it easier to form, often unspoken, alliances with other men
- Men fear engaging in similar non-verbal communication with women may be misunderstood.

"That surprises me. In our office men bang on the table and the language is all 'smash it', 'hit it' and it's all testosterone and 'fighting for it'. And the women are just as bad. They are all hardcore." (Mid career male)

"It's a case of someone speaking slowly with a deeper voice. It's authoritative because it sounds like they've thought through what they're saying, they're not in a rush, they're not uncertain of themselves, and that's what lends them the authority... Whereas if you speak quickly and shrill, it sounds like you're nervous, you're not confident of what you're saying, you just want to get out of that situation as quickly as possible. And it's that that loses them their credibility." (Early career male)



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Men on why women are sidelined from networking

Men have a different view of networking to that of women. Women think it helpful to join formal women's networks to discuss issues particularly important to women. Women also tend only to make connections with those they don't know when they have a specific, work-related reason to contact them.

Men think:

- That they prioritise making connections as an end in itself and do so informally around many interactions
- Men tend to more naturally gravitate to other men to chat
- This results in judgments about who is 'a good guy' - which brings them to mind when an opportunity arises
- Only a small part of this is about meeting on the golf course or in the bar
- It's not as 'natural' for men and women to merge professional and personal connection
- It's not as safe for a woman to invite a male client to something or meet informally
- Measures to address sexual harassment have left a legacy of fear of misinterpretation of motives for men interacting with women.

"Male networks are not caused by the goal of networking. They are the by-products of lots of interactions over time which forge a personal connection. This makes them stronger. So when we organise sponsorship for women that is something less strong, less natural than that which happens for men." (Senior male leader)

> "I like my sport, I do like a drink and I hate formal networking so I do none of it because I don't need to. The informal stuff just suits my lifestyle." (Mid career male)

"It's not a focused transaction. It's just constantly talking and drinking coffee, tea and beer." (Mid career male)

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Men on taking individual responsibility

Pooling their experiences connected many men with the limitations of the unconscious bias training that many had experienced or their exposure to initiatives to meet gender targets or recruit in a more unbiased way. Many also reflected upon how difficult it is for men to challenge workplace culture problems that are experienced by women.

"If you don't deconstruct the stuff that's already causing you trouble, albeit in a background way, then you can do as many active things as you want but the underlying culture will still be there." (Mid career male)

"I think it's very sensible to think twice before you default into assuming that everyone will like what you like... You need to listen to yourself." (Early career male)

"I guess part of the problem is making sure that individuals feel like it is in some way their responsibility. But it's not for them. It's almost like the climate change problem. Everyone understands it's important and needs to be solved and I can recycle a bit but it's really the government that needs to pull the levers and sort it out." (Early career male)

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Key observations

- Interventions are needed to help women be heard in meetings
- However what happens outside and between the meetings is just as important
- Many decisions get made and career opportunities are born in informal conversations in the canteen, the café, the corridor, the carpark and so on. These informal conversations build strong networks
- Women are more likely to be excluded from these conversations, and therefore from power, because:
 - Women tend to work fewer hours in the office than men
 - There are more men than women higher up the organisational hierarchy
 - Men tend to gravitate to other men to talk informally

- This is why we are arguing for:
 - Seeking to understand women's (and some men's) issues with workplace culture
 - Making visible how things get done in each workplace

Feedback needs to be followed up with interventions that happen in sequence for a set period of time so their individual effect can be monitored.

People in middle and early career stage have a lot to get done. The best ideas will be those that adapt easily around the normal working day.

MEC 2016 RESEARCH - RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations

Seeking to understand women's (and some men's) issues with workplace culture

'JUST ASK'

- Facilitated meetings that are safe spaces for men and women to bring gender related specific workplace culture issues to light
- Ask if women feel that expectations of their role are different because of their gender, if they are being judged by a different standard to men, are they being given the same opportunities as men?

'WALK IN MY SHOES'

 Reverse mentoring – junior women mentoring senior men or middle manager to senior manager.

'EARLY INTERVENTIONS'

- Coach new employees on research on women's workplace culture issues and ideas on what can be done to change things
- Raise issues in business school and university.

The benefit will be to enable individuals to listen and understand the impact of the expectations we have of men and women and set an agenda to act on problems that pose barriers to careers and how we feel about work.



MEC 2016 RESEARCH - RECOMMENDATIONS

Making visible how things get done in practice

'ACTIVE REVIEW'

- Team review after a project led by a gender mixed team to make visible how decisions were made and by whom
- Use as a springboard for more inclusive practice so all voices can contribute to decision making – not just in formal meetings
- Workplace culture issues to be included in 'how are we doing' regular agenda items in management meetings.

The benefit will be to create opportunities to challenge and improve the way diverse groups work together.



MFC 2016 RESEARCH - RECOMMENDATIONS

Building closer relationships between men and women

INFORMAL RELATIONSHIP **BUILDING**

- 'Wednesday walkabouts' expected to meet someone new for coffee
- 'Hot desk Friday' sit next to someone new
- New joiners charged with meeting say 10 new people in the first month
- Walk the floor instead of messaging
- 'Take two' pair up with someone who can cover your work for 2 hours whilst you do something outside work.

MIX UP THE MENTORING

- Peer co-mentoring and skill swaps in mixed gender pairs, e.g. pair working on the same project to meet regularly and learn from each other's strengths
- Team co-coaching in purposeful networking.

ATTRACTIVE SOCIAL SPACES

- Create social spaces that give people a reason to want to be there, e.g. lunch and learns on topics of broad interest
- No lunching at your desk to encourage use of the social spaces.

BEING INCLUSIVE IN FORMAL NETWORKING

- Senior men to extend contacts with women
- Social activities that create shared experiences organised by gender mixed teams
- Formal networking ideally held in work hours, Mon-Wed.

The benefit of building good working relationships is that they are pivotal to outputs, satisfaction with work and access to opportunities.

As well as asking things of busy people, it is important for leaders to give something, using the physical environment, that will help build closer relationships.

MFC 2016 RESEARCH - RECOMMENDATIONS

Individual interventions to tackle gender biased behaviour

'BYSTANDERS BE AWARE'

- Ask why fewer men than women have applied for the job in your team and set back the deadline until more are found
- Ask how many women are also speaking at the conference to which you have been invited
- Ask why a gender mixed team is not being fielded to clients or by suppliers or taken to client entertainment.

'BYSTANDERS AMPLIFY'

- Amplify women's voices to help them be heard in meetings:
 - Amplify what a woman has said giving her credit
 - Restate ideas that have been misunderstood or appropriated
- Review and repeat key contributions at the end of the meeting
- · Credit originators with ideas in emails after the meeting.

CHANGE THE WAY MEETINGS ARE RUN

PROCESS/TRAINING

- Change the time of daily management meetings to avoid clashes with school pick up/drop off
- Question what type of meeting/in what location is necessary to match the objectives
- Set clear objectives and timescale for the meeting
- Train more people in how to chair or facilitate a meeting
- Occasionally seek feedback from independent observers and meeting participants.

CHAIR/FACILITATOR BEHAVIOUR

- Invite people to speak (tacitly or overtly)
- Challenge and stop interruptions
- Check that the speaker has made their point before moving on
- Rotate chair where possible
- · Facilitate next day contributions and defer big decisions where possible until after this.

These are ways individuals can act on their awareness of gendered workplace culture issues.

MEC 2016 RESEARCH - RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions for Leaders

Individual actions need to be facilitated and authorised by a clear stance being taken on the culture of an organisation by its leaders - and carried through into systems. Male role models are needed to transform workplace culture, yet men often face backlash for taking on this role. Leaders can help by rewarding and supporting male role models.

> "It's complicated. Not all women work in a gender inclusive way, let alone men. So you need leaders to take a stand." (Early career male)

> > "It's the environment that dictates the way people behave." (Mid career male)

"You have to have a system where you call out people's behaviour. Gender equality can't be something that you get training on, on a Thursday afternoon. It should be absolutely foundational to the whole culture." (Mid career male)

The research participants stressed that it is important to:

SEND CLEAR SIGNALS

- Embed understanding that everyone is safe and free to respectfully question those in authority
- Fix the gender pay gap for men and women in the same roles.

REWARD AND SUPPORT MALE ROLE MODELS

- Reward inclusive behaviour and interventions
- Measure and make public the effect of workplace culture initiatives
- Ideas that have worked to be broadcast using data and engaging tools that tell people's stories.



Footnotes:

- For discussion see Burke and Major 2014; Vinnicombe et al.
- http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/organization/ latest thinking/women matter; https://www.gov.uk/ government/publications/women-on-boards-5-year-summary-
- 3 Survey results based on 954 responses. For further detail see: http://issuu.com/murrayedwardscollege/docs/140227_ women_today_survey_final_ver_2435ce7a5d1be5)
- 4 In 1981 23.5% of working women were in occupations classified as Managerial, Professional and Associate Professional. Dex et al. 2006
- 5 Gratton, Kelan and Walker 2007
- Cracking the Code. YCS and KPMG 2014. Large scale, cross industry study of women's progress. http://30percentclub. org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/YSC-Cracking-the-Code-
- Think Future. KPMG and 30% Club 2016. Survey of 20,652 students aged 18-25 from 21 universities in the UK and Ireland. n.13,082 female and 7,570 men. http://30percentclub. $org/assets/uploads/UK/Research/Think_Future_Study_Final.pdf$
- Opportunity Now Project 28-40 2014 Interviews with over 20,000 working women aged 28-40. http://www.bitc.org.uk/ system/files/project_28-40_the_report.pdf
- 9 Women in Whitehall 2014https://www.gov.uk/government/ publications/women-in-whitehall-culture-leadership-talent
- 10 e.g. Collinson and Hearn 1996; Bohnet 2016
- 11 Tarrant 2008
- 12 http://survation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Fawcett-Tables-MF-s5611.pdf
- 13 Miller 2005, p.11

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An invitation to get involved

A number of workplaces are actively involved in our joint endeavor to change and mould the culture in their workplaces to be more inclusive, for women in particular.

We invite you to join these companies and try out some of the solutions contained in this report.

Jill Armstrong, Research Associate at Murray

Edwards College can help in explaining these ideas in more detail, establishing a programme of ideas for your workplace that can be tried sequentially and in monitoring the effect of the trials.

Jill will be delighted to hear from you.

Jill Armstrong

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