

<b>Institution: University of Wolverhampton</b>		
<b>Unit of Assessment: 17 Business and Management</b>		
<b>Title of case study: Increasing gender diversity in leadership positions</b>		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-2019</b>		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Silke Machold	Professor of Corporate Governance	1995 to the present
Dr Jenni Jones	Associate Professor	2004 to the present
Dr Stuart Farquhar	Senior Lecturer	01 Sept 1992 – 31 July 2018
Dr Wen Wang	Senior Lecturer	2011 to the present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020</b>		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>  <p>Research conducted at the University of Wolverhampton has addressed widespread concern about gender imbalances in leadership positions. As a result of our research evidence and recommendations, UK and international companies and organisations have changed practices leading to increasing gender balance within boards of directors in South East (S/E) Europe, in the West Midlands, and in leadership positions in the police. Through partnership working with employers' associations, facilitating workshops for professional bodies, designing influential mentoring programmes and contributing to policy debates, this research has led new thinking and subsequent changes in how participating organisations support and promote women into leadership positions.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>  <p>The underpinning research developed over the last decade has given rise to five Findings [F], which are grouped together under the headings below:</p> <p>Analysing board diversity and developing a number of approaches to change</p> <p>Machold, together with Farquhar and Wang, conducted research on corporate governance and board effectiveness and, within this context, investigated different dimensions of women on boards, both within the UK and internationally. Early research [R1] focused on normative dimensions of corporate governance and later work, in collaboration with academic colleagues from Norway, Germany, and Italy, investigated how the Norwegian gender quota law was conceived, and the mechanisms by which it gained currency internationally [R2]. In relation to their work on behavioural dynamics in boards, Machold and colleagues studied how board gender diversity interacts with deeper-level diversity, specifically personality trait diversity, to affect different types of conflict within boards [R3].</p> <p>The Findings showed that:</p>		

F1. an overarching feminist ethics perspective enables us to reconceptualise corporate governance and develop new approaches to the roles and behaviours of those who direct organisations;

F2. different institutional contexts require both different and differentiated policy approaches to promoting board gender diversity, for example quota regimes in laissez faire economies are less likely to be acceptable or accepted than elsewhere; and

F3. gender diversity is linked to board behavioural changes, specifically positive team interactions leading to improved board effectiveness.

Clarifying the effects of mentoring to support future (women) leaders

Jones' research has generated evidence towards a better understanding of the effectiveness of mentoring and its impact on potential and current leaders within the public sector [R4]. In overcoming the barriers known to exist for women, Jones' research findings showed how mentoring can be used as an effective intervention, leading to a better understanding of mentoring in the workplace and informing recommendations for future practice [R5, R6]. Through an investigation within two large public sector organisations, employing over 3,000 employees, the overall findings showed that:

F4. mentoring positively impacts current and future leadership roles, in terms of how the role is carried out, its efficacy and general accessibility within the organisation and beyond [R4]; and

F5. mentoring is an effective intervention to support continuing personal and professional development towards leadership progression, especially for women [R5, R6].

In recognition of the significance of her research and its impact on women in the police, Jones received the prestigious Regional Special Recognition Award from the West Midlands Association for Women in Policing in 2010 and the National Special Recognition Award from the British Association for Women in Policing in 2011.

### 3. References to the research

The following references have been assessed by peer review. R1 was included in an assessment of the 'state of art' research in business ethics (Calabretta et al. 2011). R2 has received endorsements for its significance by the former Prime Minister of Norway (Bondevik) and the CEO and President of *Catalyst* (Lang).

R1. Machold, S., Ahmed, P.K., Farquhar, S. (2008) Corporate governance and ethics: a feminist perspective, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 81(3): pp. 665-678. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9539-5>

R2. Machold, S., Huse, M., Hansen, K., Brogi, M. (eds.) (2013) *Women on Corporate Boards: A Snowball Starting in Norway*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, (peer-reviewed edited book) ISBN: 978 1 78254 792 1

R3. Walker, A., Machold, S., Ahmed, P.K. (2015) Diversity and conflict in boards of directors: an exploratory study of personality traits, *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 45(1): pp. 25-42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2015.1005995> (REF 2 Output)

R4. Jones, J. (2013) Factors influencing mentees' and mentors' learning throughout formal mentoring relationships, *Human Resource Development International*, 16 (4) pp. 390-408 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13678868.2013.810478>

R5. Jones, J. (2017) How can mentoring support women in a male-dominated work place? A case study of the UK Police force, *Palgrave Communications Special Issue on Women in Management*, Number 3: pp. 1-11, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.103>

R6. Jones, J (2018) How can leaders and managers in the Police support the learning of others and at the same time, support their own? *International Journal of Emergency Services*, 7 (3), pp. 228-247, <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/IJES-04-2017-0026>

#### Grant

Professor Silke Machold and Dr Wen Wang were awarded GBP301,724 (Eur380,000) project entitled Gender Equality Management Action (GEMA) by the EU's Justice Department (JUST/2013/PROG/AG/4923/GE).

#### **4. Details of the impact**

Our research findings have led to impact through real change in leadership and diversity practices in organisations and contexts that have historically been neglected. We focus on four impact areas: 1) boards in S/E Europe; 2) boards in West Midlands companies; 3) British police forces; and 4) with private sector companies, changing practice in the West Midlands.

##### 11. International Impact by Changing Practice in S/E Europe: Professional bodies and learned societies using research to define best practice, formulate policy, and to lobby government and other stakeholders

Machold and Wang have led the way in raising awareness, influencing professional bodies to develop training materials and best practice guidelines, and changing organisational practice to promote more women onto boards in S/E Europe. The national employers' associations of Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia joined the project consortium, under the lead of the latter [Corroborating evidence C1-2]. The team was awarded a grant (GEMA) by the EU's Justice Department to research gender balance on boards in the four participating countries and design interventions to raise awareness among companies, the public, and social partners, and to change organisational practices to enable women to reach board positions. Machold and Wang produced a handbook, designed training materials for companies and social partners, and co-designed a voluntary Code of Conduct that identified a series of principles to enhance gender diversity on boards [F1, F3, and C3]. The project produced the following outputs and impacts:

- Three publicity campaigns, comprising 83 newsletters and articles and 5 conferences, reached an audience of 66,604 persons in companies and social partners and 42,011 members of the general public;
- Over the course of 124 training events, 96 persons representing social partners and 378 company representatives (including HR managers) were upskilled, illustrating strong impact through capacity building; and
- The Code of Conduct was signed by 43 companies as a commitment to change their practices [C3].

##### 12. Changing practices in the West Midlands: Professional standards, guidelines and training have been influenced by research

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), set up a Leadership Commission to redress the lack of diversity in different leadership positions. Machold, due to research on board diversity [R1-R3], was asked by the Commission to investigate board diversity and she compiled a report on gender, nationality and age diversity of the 1,000 largest West Midlands companies by turnover (WM1000). The results clearly showed that gender diversity in the WM1000 was significantly lagging behind the national headline figure of 30% in the FTSE100,

with a mean of 13.1% women on boards, and 55.9% of companies having male-only boards [C4]. The final report of the Commission derived a number of recommendations from Machold, which shaped the political debate on how to dismantle barriers and initiatives to promote leadership diversity [F2, C4]. Commission Chair Anita Bhalla, Andy Street, and former Prime Minister Theresa May endorsed the findings in June 2018 and called for leaders to action the recommendations [C5]. Leading companies have taken heed and publically signed the Leadership Pledge, including for example KPMG and Wesleyan. The work also inspired the Black Country Consortium Ltd. to include board diversity in their Strategic Companies Barometer in 2019. This has demonstrated strong significance and reach in the region as well as nationally.

### 13. Changing practices in the British Police: Professionals and organisations adapting and changing cultural values as a result of research

Two different Police forces were advised by and had mentoring programmes designed by Jones to increase the presence of women in leadership positions. This work also benefitted Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

a) Staffordshire Police (SP) – Resulting from Jones' research on the impact of mentoring [R4], and informed by the impact of her West Midlands Police (WMP) women-only mentoring programme involving 50 mentoring pairs over an 18 month period [R5], SP asked Jones to design and deliver a mentoring programme for their talented future leaders. Following the success of the first cohort, four other mentoring programmes were developed, supporting over 100 pairs of employees. All reported that higher levels of learning, confidence, self-esteem, motivation and commitment to the job put mentees in a better position for promotion [F4, F5].

b) West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) – The WMP and SP research was published [R5, R6] and, as a result, WMCTU requested similar support for the design and delivery of their mentoring scheme, for aspiring leaders and employees in transition. There have been four cohorts, covering 80 pairs of employees, which improved development, retention and progression [F4, C6].

As a result of these organisations creating a more supportive and developmentally inclusive environments, they have seen improvements in retention and progression rates [C6]. The research from these interventions was shared with the Home Office and the College of Policing (2016), which led to an introduction to share best practice insights towards shaping a nationwide women-only [F5] mentoring programme.

### 14. Changing practices in the West Midlands: company policy and practice have been influenced by research

Following publication of her research-based critical insights into women and their progression within the workplace [F4, F5, R5], Jones was invited to share the outcomes of her research with the Institute of Directors [C7] at their joint 'Women as Leaders' panel debate with Irwin Mitchell. This was then followed up by two organisations in the West Midlands; BHSF (originally established as the Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund) and Irwin Mitchell. As a direct result of focus groups and a Diversity event that Jones led for BHSF, they now have a senior manager leading diversity in the organisation and have an active Women's Development Group that has pledged that 33% of senior management will be female by 2023 and that mentoring and coaching will be implemented to progress women's careers [C8]. Irwin Mitchell used Jones's research findings to create an Inclusive Leadership development programme aimed at under-represented groups and asked Jones to evaluate this and write their impact report. In short, this programme resulted in 9 out of 22 participants being promoted, with 6 of them being women [C9-10].

The cumulative significance of the four impacts discussed above is reflected in the change they have brought about; decision making has developed, standards have improved, and training and practice have been enhanced. Significance, too, has resulted from the extension of opportunity and the concomitant enhancement of livelihoods and prospects. Reach is also in evidence, not

just from the regional, national and international contexts but also from the thematic and sectoral diversity of the impacts that our research findings have underpinned.

In summary, our collective underpinning research analysed determinants and consequences of board diversity, and clarified the effectiveness of mentoring as a tool to support the progression of future women leaders. It has directly and indirectly created impact through increased understanding of the barriers that create and reinforce gender imbalances on boards of directors in S/E Europe and the West Midlands, and in leadership positions in the Britain's Police. These organisations benefitted from capacity-building through research-informed training and development and bespoke mentoring programmes. Public commitments to increase diversity were made through pledges and Codes of Conduct.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

C1. Testimonial from Slovenian Employers' Association, Združenje delodajalcev Slovenije, 28 October 2020.

C2. Testimonial from Bulgarian Industrial Association: Union of Bulgarian Business, 29 October 2020.

C3. GEMA Final Narrative Report – Quantitative reporting on policy-related outputs and deliverables with Annex.

C4. WMCA and Mayor of the West Midlands 'Leaders Like You' <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/leadership-commission/> and Report [https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/2218/leadership-diversity-in-the-west-midlands\\_-002.pdf](https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/2218/leadership-diversity-in-the-west-midlands_-002.pdf)

C5. Leadership Commission Launch Event <https://gbslep.co.uk/news-and-events/news/west-midlands-leadership-commission-chaired-gbslep-board-director-anita-bhalla-launches-leaders-like-report>

C6. Testimonial from West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit.

C7. Testimonial from Retired Regional Director of the Institute of Directors.

C8. Testimonial on behalf of BHSF.

C9. Impact at Irwin Mitchell 1 - <https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/newsandmedia/2019/june/irwin-mitchell-launches-inclusive-leadership-programme-with-business-psychologists#:~:text=Law%20Firm's%20New%20Initiative%20With,within%20the%20UK%20legal%20industry.>

C10. Impact at Irwin Mitchell 2 - <https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/newsandmedia/2020/february/five-reasons-national-law-firm-dominates-diversity-debate>