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THE GENDER GAP AMONG ELITE PROFESSIONALS: EXPLORING THE FAULTLINES

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Abstract: How to narrow the gender gap between men and women is the subject of competing popular and academic prescriptions, including “leaning in” and executive leadership talent-spotting, coaching, and development programmes. This research examined the educational and career patterns of male and female Rhodes Scholars, using published archival data such as the Register of Rhodes Scholars, in order to understand where the gender gap originates and where it begins to widen. Preliminary analysis suggests that the gender gap in professional attainment may be exposed by reactions to work-family conflict (e.g., “opting out”), but is actually created by the creation of gendered hierarchies in higher education by processes of social and cultural reproduction. These findings have been linked to other research on elite women, and draw out some general conclusions for analysing and narrowing the gender gap.

Bio: Kate Blackmon is an Associate Professor of Operations Management at Said Business School and Tutor and Fellow at Merton College, at the University of Oxford. She currently teaches General Management and Research Methods in addition to core operations. The second edition of *Researching Business and Management* (with Dr Harvey Maylor) is currently in preparation for printing. Having been Senior Proctor during 2014-15, Kate is also involved in administration at departmental, college, and university levels. She received her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and has also worked at the University of Bath, London Business School, and IMD (Lausanne).