
Literature and insights Editorial

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Nothing to hide?

Something is missing. My editorials in this esteemed journal move between subjects of varying playfulness or seriousness, though always with some kind of meditative intent. There is one area that is overdue for attention, as I was strongly reminded when talking with the author of this issue's creative work. For some readers it will be confronting. I make no apologies.

The missing element involves a particular focus on women. Nothing new, you might say. But then, women are often treated equitably as members of the broader community of accounting practitioners and scholars, so why would I decide to write about them any more than of men? I know there is research about how women's position in managing careers is frequently harder than for men, and I am not buying into that argument here, partly because in my experience it is true. No, this is different.

The topic I have neglected is a prejudice based on sexism. I am not leaning on the #metoo movement in this case but drawing attention to double-standards in a field close to home, as they say, and I mean in relation to our own working environments. Colleen Flaherty's article about women in higher education (Flaherty, 2019, online) reflects the results of a survey with 9,200 respondents that was conducted by the American Economic Association and released in March 2019. It reveals, for example, that women were much more likely than men to claim that their work was undervalued; 69 vs 40 percent. Discrimination and harassment often seemed associated with race, gender, disability or sexual orientation. Sexual advances, sometimes with threats of professional damage, were also reported. I urge you to read Flaherty's article (see the reference below).

The particular double-standards I have in mind are those triggered when women have jobs in both a profession and the sex industry. How unusual is that? Not very. I can recall my illusions being shattered when I discovered how many young women at university were earning money in sex-shops or as prostitutes in order to cover their living costs and university fees. The girl sitting next to me in one of my Economics subjects did so for three years.

Inez Marrasso, our contributing Author in this issue, is a qualified accountant who worked in a professional office, so she understands the culture there. She is currently completing a PhD examining the lives of women involved in one part of what we still refer to as "the sex industry," night clubs where (predominantly) men go to watch women performing as strippers. The consequences of these women having both an accounting job and one as a night club dancer can be fraught. This is what she depicts in her poem where the men involved suffer no real consequences for their harassment of a colleague they



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encounter in her night-job. It is a brave and timely piece of writing, and I look forward to reading Inez's thesis and book in due course.

Did I say "language warning"? Well, I have now.

Your own contributions can be submitted via ScholarOne (see below), and your e-mail correspondence is always welcome at: steve.evans@flinders.edu.au.

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Steve Evans

School of Humanities & Creative Arts, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

Reference

Flaherty, C. (2019), *Half of the Women in the Field*, Inside Higher Ed, March 19, available at: www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/03/19/survey-economics-association-members-finds-48-percent-women-have-been-discriminated