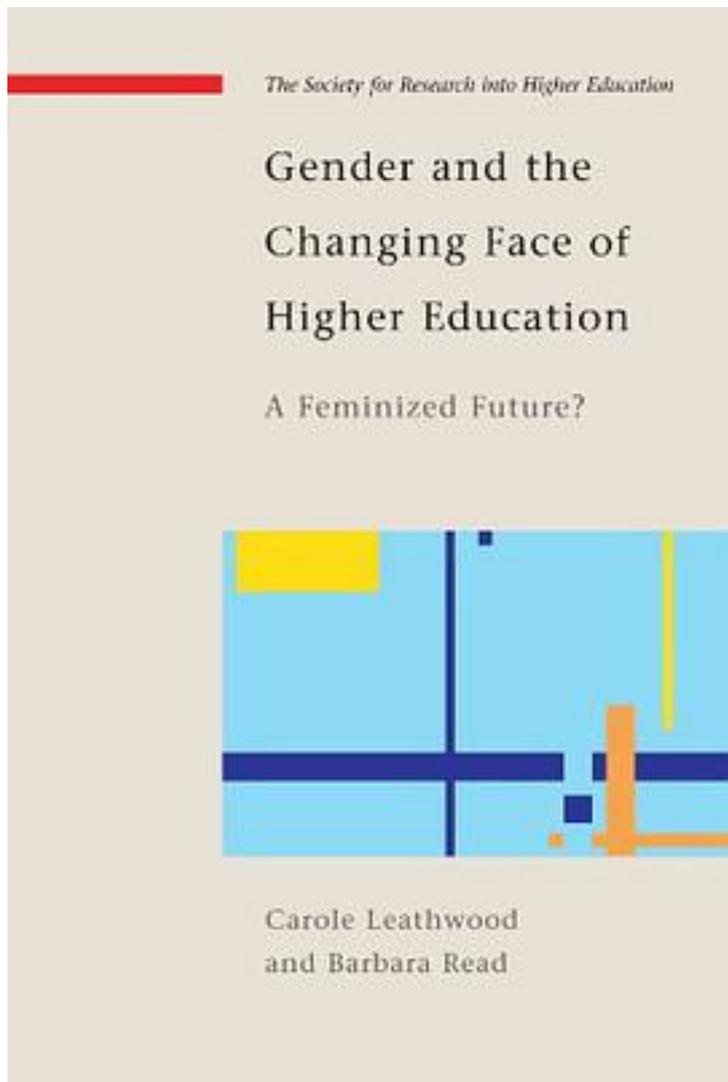


Gender and the Changing Face of Higher Education



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A notable feature of higher education in many countries over the last few decades has been the dramatic rise in the proportion of women students. Women now outnumber men as undergraduate students in the majority of OECD countries, fuelling concerns that men are deserting degree-level study as women overtake them both numerically and in terms of levels of achievement. The assertion is that higher education is becoming increasingly 'feminized' - paralleling similar claims in relation to schooling and the labour market. At the same time, and perhaps not unrelatedly, there are persistent concerns about degree standards, with allegations of 'dumbing down'. This raises questions about whether the higher education system to which more women have gained access is now of less value, both intrinsically and in terms of labour market outcomes, than previously. This ground-breaking book will examine these issues in relation to higher education in the UK and globally. It provides a thorough feminist analysis of debates about 'feminization', asking: to what extent do patterns of participation continue to reflect and (re)construct wider social inequalities of gender, social class and ethnicity; how far has a numerical increase in women students challenged the cultures, curriculum and practices of the university; and, what are the implications for women, men and the future of HE. Drawing on international and national data, theory and research, the book provides an accessible but nuanced discussion of the 'feminization' of higher education for postgraduates, policy-makers and academics working in the field.

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目录:

[Gender and the Changing Face of Higher Education_ 下载链接1](#)

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