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Introduction

Can Massey's concept of space as the product of social relations shaped by power bring new insights to questions of gendered employment experiences and career trajectories in UK higher education (HE)? Massey conceptualises 'space' as inherently temporal and brings space-time and place together in 'activity space', a device which challenges the idea of place as stable and coherent and captures 'the spatial network of links and activities, of spatial connections and of locations, within which a particular agent operates ... within each activity space is a geography of power' (2005, p55).

Massey imagines the HE sector as part of 'an emerging, violently unequal, twenty-first century geography of knowledge' (*ibid*, p.143) and universities as part of 'a network of specialised places of knowledge production (elite; historically largely male) which gained (and continues to gain) at least a part of its prestige from the cachet and exclusivity of its spatiality' (*ibid* p.75). Gender is a key strand of the geography of power within the activity space of each university.

The Literature

Why might new insights be desirable when a substantial literature already addresses the impact of gender inequalities on women in the HE sector? Female undergraduate participation in HE is at an all-time high with the 'gender gap' in British universities almost doubling in size since 2007 (Guardian Education 2016), yet women remain under-represented in senior academic and leadership positions (Jarboe 2016, Doherty & Manfredi 2005, *inter alia*). The gender pay gap across the sector (Grove 2016) reflects the national pay gap for full time workers of 13.9% (Fawcett Society, 2016). Furthermore, in a performance-centred culture driven by national and international university ranking systems (Blackmore 2014), research is the most valuable currency in HE's 'prestige economy' (Morley 2014, Coate, Kandiko-Howson and de St Croix 2015) and submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) has become a crucial determinant of success in an academic career. Yet Doherty and Manfredi (2005, 2009) document a significant gender gap in research activity across disciplines, with female academics more likely to have less developed research profiles. Studies (HEFCE 2009, 2015) show that ethnicity, disability age intersect with gender to exacerbate differential rates of REF selection and submission. Morley argues that the REF and other practices of the academy, including publication, reflect masculine norms and structures (2011, 2014, 2016) favouring a mobile and 'care-less' academic (Lynch 2010). However, women are more likely than men to follow diverse routes into the academy and atypical career patterns, to pick up emotional labour eg: teaching and pastoral duties (Blackmore 2014) and institutional housekeeping eg: committee work and administration, further depleting time available for research.

Moving Beyond Binary

This paper and the research it introduces build on the literature but also reflect the recent expansion of the Athena SWAN Charter for gender equality in HE. Having focused for a decade on female academics in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine) disciplines, Athena SWAN now encompasses 'progression, advancement and success for all ... and recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women (Equality Challenge Unit, 2016). The expanded Charter explicitly includes transgender staff and students in its remit and calls for greater institutional understanding of the ways in which

ethnicity, social class, age, disability and sexual orientation interact with gender (and each other) as intersecting oppressions which cannot be considered separately.

A broader intersectional 'gender' perspective not only avoids classification of female or male staff as homogenous categories essentially sharing the same life experiences, but also reduces the risk of marginalising the experiences of individuals who do not fit neatly within those categories. A new institutional research project: *Genders at Work* (2016-2018) aims to move beyond the female/male binary to draw attention to multiple voices and narratives within the contested space of a single post-1992 university. The project utilises narrative enquiry and visual mapping to capture qualitative data on gendered and intersectional employment experiences and career trajectories across the organisational hierarchy from academic and professional staff. Pairs (or trios) of participants of different genders occupying comparable grades/career stages at the start of the project will be interviewed twice, a calendar year apart, on employment experiences past and present, key career transition points (eg: promotion, REF submission); career aspirations and barriers. This is an adaptation of a pairing mechanism previously used to explore the influence and impact of class on undergraduates studying the same degree subject at pre- and post-1992 universities in the same UK city (Paired Peers 2010-2013). Here it is utilised to explore the influence and impact of gender as a 'geography of power' within the university.

Space and Narrative

'Space is a simultaneity of stories-so-far and ... places are collections of those stories' (Massey 2005, p.130). Narrative enquiry is 'intended to reveal ambiguity rather than tidy it away (Bathmaker 2010, p.2), a fitting methodology for Massey's complex spatial lens. Interviewees will also map themselves within the organisational geography, using bespoke participatory diagramming techniques which are:

particularly helpful in exploring the taken-for-granted things in ... research participants' lives ... it gives them distance from what they are usually immersed in and allows them to articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain implicit.

(Rose 2014, p.27)

Such attention to multiple and complex lived experiences troubles the normative and apparently gender-neutral metaphors of 'pipeline' and 'trajectory' which, 'aligned to male-defined constructions of work and career success ... continue to dominate organisational research and practice' (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilmoria 2008, p.727). This is no less the case in studies of gendered careers, for example: Athena SWAN award applications must articulate institutional commitment to address the 'leaky pipeline' of women's career progression and Fyfe, De Moortel and Ashbrook (2016) illustrate the career histories of mid-career Scottish female academics with a series of poker straight, unbroken arrows with upward trajectories despite their intention to 'compare the varied experiences and trajectories of ... academic women' (p.3).

The conference presentation will share findings from the first phase of interviews and delegates will be invited to discuss emerging themes.

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