Gender as a geography of power? Emerging findings from university spaces.

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Massey (1998) argues that the overwhelmingly male-dominated space of the science park reflects and provides a material basis for a particular form of masculinity and for the production of knowledge abstracted from the real world. This paper draws on Massey's analysis of the construction of gender within 'the workplace constructed as a highly specialised envelope of space-time' (*ibid*.) to consider emerging findings of *Gender(s) At Work*, contemporary research investigating how gender and intersectional factors shape employment experiences and career trajectories within a post-1992 UK university and in the academy more widely. Findings are revealing multiple ways in which academics negotiate relationships with the workplace, academic culture and career trajectory; negotiations shaped by gender as a 'geography of power' operating within and beyond the university.

Massey draws parallels between the science park and the academy, both 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' (Massey 2005 p.75). The two sectors share a lineage: enclosed masculine societies such as monasteries and early universities, engaged in 'the kind of knowledge production which was to receive the highest social valuation' (Massey 1998 p.161); 'a world without women' (Noble 1992). Both are competitive, knowledge-based markets in which employees must 'continue to reproduce and enhance the value of their own labour power by keeping up with the literature, going to conferences, maintaining the performance of networking' (Massey 1998 p.158).

Today's universities are worlds **with** women; albeit under-represented in particular disciplinary spaces and in the higher echelons of management (ECU 2017, Jarboe 2016). Technological advances, the marketisation of the sector, research and performance metrics and rankings have significantly intensified pressure on all academics in the last two decades. The success of Massey's late twentieth century research participants, overwhelmingly male scientists, in the work sphere is facilitated by the role of female partners in the domestic sphere, who tolerate an elastic boundary between the two (in favour of work). Contemporary academics negotiate paid workload and career within the continuing constraints of social roles constructed 'masculine' and 'feminine'; female academics frequently combine academic work within the masculinised environment of the university with responsibility for domestic management and care. Daily experiences of working in the academy therefore, continue to play out in complex border territory between polarised structures of 'work' and 'home'.

The scope of *Gender(s) At Work* reflects the extended (post-May 2015) framework of the UK HE sector's charter mark for gender equality, Athena SWAN (ECU 2017) which having previously focused exclusively on barriers to career progression for female academic staff in

STEMM disciplines, now has a gender equality remit for all staff: female, male, transgender; academic and professional, across all disciplines. The qualitative character of the research complements Athena SWAN's quantitative and policy-oriented emphasis and *Gender(s) At Work* also aims to extend the literature on careers, gender and HE, currently weighted towards female academics (Acker 2006; Bagilhole 2007, 2002; Coate et al 2015; Morley 2014; Doherty and Manfredi 2009 *inter alia*) and more recently, although to a lesser extent, Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) academic staff (Tate and Bagguley 2017; Bhopal 2016; Bhopal and Brown 2016). *Gender(s) At Work* aims to challenge the gender binary and avoid classification of female and male staff as homogenous categories essentially sharing the same life experiences. An intersectional perspective highlights interactions of ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and faith with gender. The research also seeks to trouble normative and gender-neutral career metaphors such as pipeline, trajectory which, 'aligned to male-defined constructions of work and career success … continue to dominate organisational research and practice' (Bilimoria et al. 20108, p.727).

This paper considers findings emerging from the first phase of data collection (November 2016-May 2017) comprising 45 narrative interviews with self-selecting participants identifying as male, female and gender non-binary (a second phase takes place September – December 2017). The normative linear notion of 'career' is tested through participants' potted histories of their employment to date and gender as a geography of power operating in the activity space of the university is explored through reflections on gendered experiences at the university and in the academy more generally. Narrative enquiry, relating the singular and particular within a social context 'accommodates complexity: good narratives … reveal ambiguity rather than tidy it away' (Bathmaker 2010, p.2). This aligns with Massey's understanding of space as 'a simultanaeity of stories-so-far … place is a collection of those stories' (Massey 2005, p9).

Massey's device of activity space: 'the spatial network of links and activities, of spatial connections and of locations, within which a particular agent operates' (2005 p.55) frames the university as a diverse and complex space, itself positioned within the wider activity space of a stratified UK HE sector. This is methodologically reflected in the use of an exercise based on a participatory diagramming technique, in which participants map their perception of the university as a working space and their perceived place in it. The visual and tactile nature of the exercise explores 'the taken-for-granted things … allowing them to articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain implicit' (Rose 2014, p.27).

Massey's work on the Cambridge science park focused on 'how particular dualisms … both support and problematise certain forms of social organisation'. This discussion of emerging findings from a contemporary university will reflect on ways in which these dualisms are being experienced, sustained – and resisted.

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