Gender and Mobility in Academic Careers. Preliminary results from the DISCONEX project

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The DISCONEX project

Comparative investigation of academics
- UK, F, Germany (USA)
- Linguists, sociologists and semioticians
Qualitative and quantifying methods
- CV Database of 3000 full professors
- Interviews with 200 academics
- Qualitative (case) studies
### Academic discourse as a social and linguistic practice

**Valuation of academics and their positions**

**Discursive positioning practices**

**Subject positions and social categorizations**

**Academia as ‘discursive capitalism’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic categories (requirement for all researchers)</th>
<th>Non-academic categories (all researchers and no requirement)</th>
<th>Non-academic categories (some researchers and no requirement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(organized) power</td>
<td>(specialized) knowledge</td>
<td>Everyday life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional status (titles)</td>
<td>Discipline (diplomas)</td>
<td>Activities in civil society and professional life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High formality</td>
<td>Institutional status (titles)</td>
<td>Intersectional (race, gender, citizenship…)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low formality</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>‘Private life’</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Social movements, government, media, business…</td>
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“Webbie”: gendered careers

French linguistics: 152 female and 190 male full professors
French sociology: 87 female and 195 male full professors
German linguistics: 210 female and 349 male full professors
German sociology: 125 female and 280 male full professors
UK linguistics: 65 female and 88 male full professors
UK sociology: 95 female and 168 male full professors
Gender and academic careers

Education-driven rise of women within academia and outside

Generational experiences

Tiered academic job markets

Institutional constraints in academic systems

• Bottlenecks for permanent recruitment
• ‘Professional oligarchy’ vs. ‘interinstitutional market’
Moving across institutional, geographical, disciplinary spaces

Academic careers in complex social space
- Geographical spaces: regional, national, international
- Institutional spaces: research, administration, teaching
- Disciplinary spaces

The ambivalent value of gender/mobility
- Occupying a recognized subject positions in the academic population
- Enunciative pragmatics, deictic space theory, sociology of academics
AND AGAIN, it was economic really in those days. I mean, now going, you know- um, but I was- you know, I’ve gone straight from school at 18, I was still only 18, and um, didn't want to leave the network I was just starting within Leeds. So, I look around for what else I could do, and I did a Literature degree. And some cross modules like one called Language and Power that we taught in the final year that introduce me to Foucault. And, and ( ) people like, like him, and at that time I was still completing my PhD. SO, I WAS VERY LUCKY REALLY because I started my PhD, and started working at Midlands 1 Uni, then went to Midlands 2 Uni. Then Midlands 3 Uni.
I was lecturer, and then senior lecturer, then I decided to leave regular academic work and took up a job with the WERHR which was managing a set of adult training projects in Kenya. That was 100% management role, but it involved academic issues that I was involved in. Also it was British and Brazilian universities working together in teams. It gave me the possibility to do in practice the things that I had been lecturing on. Very commonly in the academic world if you want to go up you need to take management roles.