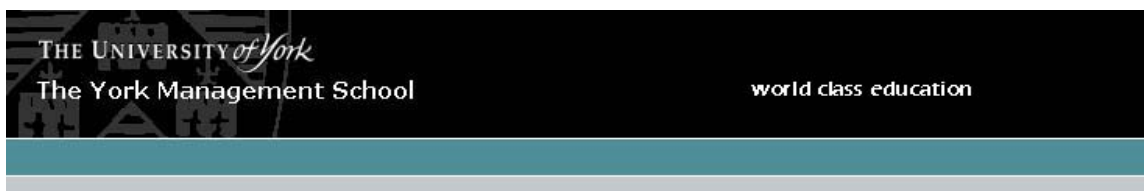


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'Real Business'?:
Gendered Identities in Accounting and Management Academia

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This paper is circulated for discussion purposes only and its contents should be considered preliminary.

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**‘Real Business’?:
Gendered Identities in Accounting and Management Academia**

Abstract

This paper explores the gendered identities of women academics in accounting and management academia. Drawing upon autoethnographical detail, we reflect upon the complexities of identities as they are constructed, developed, experienced and understood both by ourselves and others. By presenting several short autobiographical vignettes, we examine perceptions of the gendered identity of women in academia as caring, ‘motherly’ and nurturing, and we demonstrate attempts to exploit so-called ‘natural’ feminine, mothering traits as a means of fulfilling the pastoral and administrative components of universities. In considering such stereotypes, we address examples of their self-fulfilment, whilst considering how academic structures and practices also impose such distinctions. We consider negative implications for the career success of women academics in the ‘real business’ of academia, typified by research, publications and academic networking, arguing that until these stereotypes are challenged, women academics will continue to be disadvantaged within academic institutions.

Keywords: academia, accounting, identity, gender, career, university, management school.

Introduction

Organizations have long been regarded as reproducing inequalities through a gendered subtext of power-based gendering processes (Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998). Feminist literature has critically analysed the dual impact of capitalism and patriarchy on identities, and life and work patterns within societies, and the consequent impact of these upon home and work lives (Walby, 1986, 1990). Over the past two decades and more, academics have addressed the dominance of inequality, discrimination, masculinity, and male working patterns and technologies within organizations (see, for example, Adkins, 1995; Cockburn, 1991; Collinson, Knights, *et al.*, 1990; Fearfull, 1995, 1996; Fearfull and Kamenou, 2006; Hochschild, 2003; Jacobs, 1995; Kamenou and Fearfull, 2006; McNeill, 1987; Westwood, 1984). They have considered potential solutions around issues such as changes in behaviours and attitudes (Collier, 1995), organizational structures and cultures (Mills, 2002), equal opportunities (Shaw and Perrons, 1995; Webb, 1997), and employment policies and practices (Dickens, 1998; Lewis, 1997; Wilson and Nutley, 2003).

In the last few years, this academic focus on the gendering of organizations has begun to turn inwards towards academia itself, on how academia is organised, how academics work and the roles that academics undertake within the workplace. Academia reflects wider gendered organizational structures (Finch, 2003) with the structural, cultural and procedural arrangements of academic organising constituting gender relations (Benschop and Brouns, 2003). Academic identities have themselves been argued to be gendered (Barry, Berg, *et al.*, 2006), and the expectations and perceptions of female academics and

women's management practices held by others in academia are marked by gender (Deem, 2003).

Despite increasing interest in the institution of academia, however, there has been a relative absence of studies considering gender relations or examining gendered identities within accounting academia or Business and Management Schools. The aim of this paper is to explore the interplay and exploitation of internal and external, personal and academic, identities, and their effects on career trajectories. It also considers the institutional arrangements of teaching, research and administration within our experience of accounting and business academia, to consider their effects on the production and reproduction of gendered roles and relationships, and the implications for accounting and management academia.

The paper takes an auto-ethnographical approach. As both the authors are academics within UK Management Schools, and one of us is specifically an accounting academic, we reflect upon the complexities of identities as they are constructed, developed, experienced and understood both by others and ourselves, in this context. As accounting as an academic discipline is invariably located within Business and Management Schools, we find significant commonalities between us as academics, in terms of how we experience academic organising and practice. In common with many institutions in the UK, our schools offer a range of teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate courses. They also regard research as a high priority activity and are subject to the Research Assessment Exercise. However, we do not claim that they are representative of all

Business or Management Schools or that the circumstances and experiences analysed are necessarily generalisable to all schools. Rather, the paper's interpretive understanding of the practices and experiences of gendered identity in the academic workplace, offers insights, which may be relevant to others.

Drawing primarily upon autobiographical detail, we explore our somewhat contradictory identity positions as, variously, women, accountants, academics, and mothers. We believe that such introspection provides a valuable resource for understanding the identities and experiences of others. As Ribbens (1993: 88) has suggested:

A critical and reflexive form of autobiography has the sociological potential for considering the extent to which our subjectivity is not something that gets in the way of our social analysis but is itself social.

Hence, using our own experiences and examples taken from within academia, we examine the stereotypical and gendered representation of women as caring and nurturing, and we demonstrate attempts to exploit so-called 'natural' feminine, mothering traits as a means of fulfilling the pastoral/nurturing components of higher education quality assurance requirements. In engaging with such socially-constructed stereotypes, we also address examples of their potential self-fulfilment through our own complicit behaviour, considering the negative implications for our careers, particularly in terms of research. By exploring our conflicting identities as women in accounting and management academia, we extend our analysis to discuss how our identities are potentially exploited within academic institutions.

The structure of the paper is as follows: we firstly locate the paper within the existing literature on women in the Academy. Secondly, we outline the autobiographical/autoethnographical methodological approach. Using several short autobiographical vignettes to generate insights into the experience of accounting and management academia, we discuss our identities as women, mothers, and academics. We argue that whilst we bring our identities as mothers into the academic workplace, they are also exploited by our institutions. We examine gendered stereotypes of women academics as nurturing and caring, identities which are embedded in gendered structures and roles within the Academy, before exploring our own complicity in, and contradictions within, these gendered identities. Finally, we draw some conclusions on their effects on women's career trajectories within accounting and management academia, and the implications for Business and Management Schools.

Women in Academia

Historically, from their inception, universities were bastions of male learning. It was not until the nineteenth century that women were admitted as students to British universities, with Oxford admitting women as members, rather than simply allowing them to attend lectures and undertake some examinations, as late as 1920 (Howarth, 1994; Sheavyn, 1921). An insight into the more recent context of women working in UK academia is provided by the Association of University Teacher's (AUT) report, *The Unequal Academy* (AUT, 2004), which summarises the Higher Education Statistics Agency's statistics between 1995-6 to 2002-3. While in 2003-3 nearly 40% of UK academics were women, there were lower proportions of women in higher grades; the gap between

average salaries of full-time male and female academics was 15%; women were more likely to hold fixed term contracts and were disproportionately represented in casualised teaching-only and research-only employment functions; and males were 1.6 times more likely to be than their female colleagues to be counted as research active in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (AUT, 2004). In the subject area of Business and Management Studies, of which accounting forms a part, women, at 34% of employees, were lower than the average across the university sector. Thus, women in academia may find themselves marginalised and in the minority (AUT, 2004; Brooks and Mackinnon, 2001; Hearn, 2001; Malina and Maslin-Prothero, 1998; Morley and Walsh, 1995).

The figures for Business and Management Studies within academia mirror the wider social position of women within the broad discipline of management and the profession of accounting. A recent Equal Opportunities Commission report finds a significant absence of women within business and public life, particularly at higher levels, suggesting that women's average representation within business is only 14% (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007). The lack of flexibility within many forms of employment results in increasing numbers of women setting up their own businesses, enabling them to combine caring responsibilities with work, with up to one million women estimated as self-employed in 2006 (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007). In the accounting profession, gender conflicts restricting women's access to the profession persisted since the early 1900s (Lehman, 1992). The professional echelons of accounting were a male preserve (Westcott and Seiler, 1986) until the latter half of the twentieth century, with women being confined to the clerical and secretarial functions (Kirkham

and Loft, 1993). Recent figures from the Financial Reporting Council (Professional Oversight Board for Accountancy, 2003, 2005) indicate that female members of the accounting professional bodies in the UK comprised 20% in 1997 and 21% in 1998, and the vast majority of members were aged over 35 and were male, although student members tended to be younger and on average comprised 45% women. Moreover, women have found the profession difficult to negotiate and progress within particularly when they combine a career in accounting with motherhood (Gammie and Gammie, 1997; Haynes, 2007a, b; Smithson, Lewis, *et al.*, 2004; Whiting and Wright, 2001; Windsor and Auyeung, 2006).

The context of business and management, and accounting, within wider society may well influence academia within Management Schools. Many academics in the discipline of business and management have been drawn from, or have experienced, the actual practice of business. In Kathryn's school, for example, all the accounting staff are professionally qualified accountants who have trained and worked in practice, and a substantial proportion of other academic staff have been practitioners in disciplines such as Human Resource Management, Information Systems or Public Sector Management. Although some staff, like ourselves, may have left the practice of accounting and management to enter what is hoped to be a more liberal, egalitarian working environment, the male-dominated social norms within business and accounting may be reflected within academia. Moreover, management and accounting as actual disciplines are also regarded by many as masculine in nature (see, for example, Brewis and Linstead, 2004; Broadbent, 1998; Halford and Leonard, 2001; Wajcman, 1998).

Women academics, therefore, particularly within accounting, business and management, are in a double bind. They work in a sector in which women are under-represented, in a field which is inherently masculine in nature, with masculine social norms which may be imported into, or reflected by, their school and discipline. Moreover, the discourse of academic meritocracy may also be masculine and reproduce masculine practices, as the typical career path in academia is structured according to a male perception of success, which involves being research active, submitted for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and having an uninterrupted career history (Knights and Richards, 2003). The 'successful academic' is one who engages in networking both during and outside of normal working hours; is devoted to their reputation and their university; seeks to secure these reputations through publications (in the right journals); and focuses on research rather than teaching, administration and pastoral care (Raddon, 2002). This is what might be referred to as the 'real business' of academia, typified by research and publication, supported by conference attendance and networking.

For women academics, some of these facets of academic business and success may be more difficult to achieve, as women may bear a disproportionate burden of caring responsibilities outside the work environment. For women who are mothers, as well as academics, several authors have noted the problems of combining motherhood and an academic career in which women appear to be disadvantaged (Forster, 2000; Leonard and Malina, 1994; Munn-Giddings, 1998; Raddon, 2002), while fatherhood does not appear to harm academic careers (Deem, 2003). Probert (2005) considers the impact of being a

mother, among a range of variables leading to women's sense of 'not fitting in' in academia. Although, achieving a work-life balance in universities relates to both men and women, it appears to be particularly problematic for academic roles (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006) and particularly for women who may play a larger role in household tasks and childcare.

We shall develop and discuss our own experiences of these issues in the remainder of the paper after outlining our methodological approach.

Methodology

The methodological approach used in this paper is auto-ethnographical. Auto-ethnography is a genre of reflexive autobiographical writing which connects the personal to the cultural by analysing the self within a social context (Reed-Danahay, 1997). A reflexive use of autobiographical material provides a valuable resource for understanding our own identities and those of others (Haynes, 2006). It is through the stories we tell both to ourselves and to others that we make sense of our selves, of the world, and of our relationships (Lawler, 2000). Chamberlayne *et al* (2000: 7) argue that:

To understand oneself and others, we need to understand our own histories and how we have come to be what we are. We make our own history but not under conditions of our own choosing, and we need to understand these conditions of action more, if our future making of our own history is to produce outcomes closer to our intentions and projects.

Knowledge about our identities is not wholly derived from within ourselves, as the narratives that we tell, and through which we make sense of our lives, are linked to broader social narratives (Somers and Gibson, 1994). Narrative renders individual lives

intelligible both by linking together disparate elements, and by connecting individual lives to broader aspects of humanity. Autobiography exists in the private intentions of the autobiographer, but also exists within a public dimension, as part of a general and perpetual dialogue about life possibilities (Bruner, 1995). We cannot reflect on our selves without an accompanying reflection on the nature of the world in which we exist.

As Ribbens (1993: 88) suggests:

A critical and reflexive form of autobiography has the sociological potential for considering the extent to which our subjectivity is not something that gets in the way of our social analysis but is itself social...I would suggest that the key point is that 'society' can be seen to be, not 'out there', but precisely located '*inside our heads*', that is socially located and structured understandings of 'my-self', 'my-life', 'me-as-a-person' and so forth.

Our subjectivities, therefore, allow for a form of conversation through which we come to know others and ourselves, the positions from which we speak, and the political and social context in which the conversations take place.

Both of us have engaged in autobiographical writing over a period of time to reflect on our experiences, both personal and professional. This has enabled us to explore aspects of ourselves, as well as being a research resource, in which we have explored the effects of research on researchers and processes of identity construction and management (*we will insert references here but to do so now would compromise anonymity*). In this paper we draw from our autobiographical narratives, in order to construct and critique our contradictory and inter-related identity positions, as academics, accountants, women and mothers. We present a number of short autobiographical narratives, or vignettes, which illustrate our personal struggles with managing our own identities and roles within the

context of academia and provide insight into our difficulties in combining and managing our academic and personal identities. We do not claim that what we have experienced all women academics will have experienced; rather that there is some connection between our own experiences and those of other women (and perhaps some men). While our accounts, and indeed our analyses, are highly personal, they illustrate a reflexive process of identity construction and the tensions within it, which will also be relevant to others. As Attar (1987: 33) suggests:

A... problem of purely personal accounts is that they can be used in a token way, meaning that a one-off story implies a one-off experience and an exceptional woman. Sometimes the point we want to make may indeed be that our experiences differ, and that no one woman can represent another. But this should not be taken to mean that we have wholly different concerns – as if racism, violence, sexuality, could be issues for some women but not others. When a woman writes about experiences which have not been shared by most of her readers – describing a specific religious upbringing perhaps, or writing as an incest survivor – there will still be connections between the readers' experiences and the writer's.

In purposely exploring our autobiographies, we give voice to experiences which have previously been silent in the accounting context. We have also confronted, and been confronted by, the constructions of our identities and aspects of our selves that have clear implications for the way in which we manage our own academic activities and behaviours within accounting and management academia, and our personal activities outside it. The following discussion serves to illustrate our experiences and the interplay of our personal and academic identities, with analysis of how the institutional features of academia, interacting with our personal lives, have affected our career trajectories.

‘Motherly’ Identities

Both of us happen to be mothers, and we regard this as an important and integral part of our lives and our identities. Motherhood provides a central cultural motif that structures female adult biography (McMahon, 1995). Motherhood is also subject to an ideology of what it means to be a mother, a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mother within our societal and cultural norms as maternal identity is constructed within a moral discourse (Gieve, 1989; Woodward, 2003).

“A young woman’s experience of motherhood and her taking on the role of, or an identity as, ‘mother’...though a unique event for her as an individual, is also one which reflects and reproduces the symbolic meanings and practical realities through which other births and the making of mothers has taken place within her culture”.

(Hockey and James, 2003: 10)

Although a woman is the subject of her own life, she is also in a sense ‘simultaneously the object of her culture’s script’ (O’Barr, Pope, *et al.*, 1990: 3). In other words, whether women do or do not become mothers, or mother in ways that veer away from the dominant mothering norms, cultural images of motherhood provide coercive prescriptions of gender behaviour that influence most women’s lives. Woodward (1997) describes how the ‘ideal mother’ and the self-effacing Madonna are inscribed within western culture, constructed within a moral context, and yet also somehow assumed as biological products, as if giving birth transforms a woman into the ideal mother.

Of course, in practice, no-one is a perfect parent, and both of us have struggled with the realities and practicalities of motherhood, and its relationship with work, as these autobiographical extracts show:

Anne:

I will never forget my first day back at work after maternity leave. I had bought a new dress and scarf and made an attempt to appear 'professional' and not as a 'mummy'. My husband dropped our son off at nursery. I didn't want to do that, I was concerned that if he cried I would not be able to leave him. However, my first day was better than I'd expected. I'd thought about my son but knew that I would be seeing him before long. The drive to and from work took at least an hour in light traffic and up to two hours during 'rush hour'. I wanted to collect him at 5pm, I felt he would have had a long enough day there by then. This meant that I would have to leave work by 4pm at the very latest, much earlier than I had been accustomed to doing, and, while no-one commented, I felt uncomfortable about doing this. I could hardly wait to pick him up and it was fantastic to see him; he was happy and he hadn't forgotten me. I put him in his seat in the car and we went home¹.

In the routine that we had carved for ourselves over the past 6 months, around 5pm was the time that my son had his tea. So, when we got home, I prepared his food, one of the mashed vegetable meals that I'd been in the habit of making and freezing for him. Alasdair had, and still does have, a reputation as a 'good eater'. Not this time. As I started to feed him, he began to cry, the cry steadily rising to a scream. I had no idea what was wrong. Was it too hot? Too cold? Too lumpy? Not lumpy enough?

¹ Over the subsequent years, this journey became increasingly distressing for me since leaving early became less possible as I took on different roles within the School. Leaving later ran the risk of hitting the traffic and arriving at nursery after official closing time.

Worse than any of these, was he ‘punishing’ me because I ‘abandoned’ him? By this time I felt wretched and we were both crying.

As I type I am reflecting, as I have done many times, on this incident. What was the cause of the wretchedness? Was it because I felt I didn’t know my son as well as I thought, after all I hadn’t recognised the ‘type’ of cry he was making. Was it because I felt that someone else had taken my role as food provider away from me? Was it because I felt that I had given away my role as nurturer, in all senses: carer, provider of comfort, food, love? I was simply heartbroken. I rang nursery and discovered that he’d already had his tea there. It was as simple as that.

Feminist theory has identified that the role of ‘mother’ itself is a social creation, a power relationship within patriarchal structures, deriving from biologically determinist assumptions about women’s position as subordinate within the family (Campbell, 2003; Woodward, 1997). Anne’s story illustrates the tensions inherent within the moral discourse of motherhood between motherhood as an institution of social control over women (Millett, 1971), on the one hand, and as a celebration of essential womanhood on the other (Rich, 1977). We strive to fulfil the nurturing and caring duties of the role to the best of our abilities, and when we appear to ‘fail’, or perceive we have not performed as well as our expectations, this can have a profound effect on our sense of well-being. Anne was left feeling that she had not successfully managed the balance between her maternal and academic identity because *‘clearly I wasn’t professional enough to overcome the misgivings that I’d had about returning to work’*.

For Kathryn, the tensions arose in balancing time and energy devoted to both parenting and academic work.

I trained as a chartered accountant and worked in practice for 8 years, during which time my two children were born. This career was difficult to negotiate with young children, in that the hours were long, the culture was very male dominated, and progression up the firm's hierarchy required more time commitment than I could, or wished, to give, whilst simultaneously wanting to be an active carer for my children. As I also had a teaching qualification, I obtained a lectureship within higher education, to provide a career which I believed at that time would enable me to balance my working and home life, allow some flexibility in working hours and, hopefully, allow me to spend school holidays with my children. However, despite my hopes for an improved work-life balance in academia, working full-time and also doing a part-time PhD was intensive. My children's constant refrain when I was doing my PhD, mainly in my own time, and hence in time I could have been spending with them, was 'Mum's working...you're working too hard...you're always working'.

Being a working mother is a politically contested identity and subject to tensions between ideologies of good motherhood and working practices. The ideal mother of young children is still frequently represented as one who does not work outside the home (Blumenthal, 1999; Lewis, 1991). There are contradictions between women's idealisation of motherhood and actual practice. Women's identification of themselves as

mothers often involves looking back to their own upbringing, childhood memories and the experience of being mothered to define how they themselves want to mother, whilst also incorporating awareness of more recent societal changes that make it more socially acceptable for women to pursue careers (Haynes, 2007b). Both of us, having worked hard to achieve our qualifications, were keen to maintain our career development, but for us, as for many women (and indeed some men) the practice of being a working parent is problematic.

Gendered Academic Identities

Discourses of motherhood, of nurturing and femininity, influence the way women are perceived and may perceive themselves within the working environment. The ideology of motherhood permeates into the academic workplace to influence our behaviour as academics.

Women academics have been known to use the discourse of femininity to define their own work (Priola, 2004). It is all too easy to become known as the person to whom students can turn when they have a problem, someone approachable and available when other colleagues may be away or unavailable pursuing the real business of academia. We bring the caring, nurturing components of our mothering identities into our academic identities, such that our own behaviour may reproduce stereotypical views of nurturing femininity. It is very difficult to turn away those needing help when we have been socially conditioned, as women, and possibly as mothers, to give it. We act as the handmaidens of the institution, as this extract demonstrates:

Kathryn

I have been referred to many times as a 'safe pair of hands', a phrase I hate. What people mean is that I am someone who will sort out the curriculum problems, mop the fevered brows of colleagues and students, stand in for absent colleagues, fire fight the glitches in the first weeks of term, as if offering soothing words and sticking plasters to the wounded knees of my children.

A pastoral element has been inherent to the roles that we have both occupied within our respective Management Schools. Pastoral duties may include welfare support of students, personal tutoring, cohort tutoring or year directorships, which often require a caring element as well as organizational skills. They are not designated exclusively to female academics, indeed growing student numbers render that impossible, but to both sexes. Nevertheless, it is the case that such roles, tend either to be fulfilled by women despite their being fewer in number amongst academic staff, or perceived as suitable to be carried out by women because of their 'nurturing' qualities and assumed experiences.

These social norms apply to women who are not mothers as well as women who are. For example, in Anne's case, an attempt was being made to address a personal problem being experienced by one male student, which was having a significant effect on his degree performance. A relatively junior male colleague suggested that a specific, and senior, female colleague be involved in the meeting proposed between staff and the student to provide a motherly air of gentleness and concern, in essence, a shoulder to cry on. This

(childless) female did not know the student, had not taught him and, we should not be surprised to learn, took exception to being cast in this role.

In Kathryn's case, more than one male colleague has asked her to write the academic and personal references for his students because she 'knows the students far better' and he 'doesn't really get involved', despite it being part of his duties, as he has not had time to get to know the students, being too busy undertaking research. This illustrates a typical example of attempts to capitalise upon female traits and notions of femininity. Patriarchal relationships extend into the academic workplace such that organising processes are subject to a gendered hegemony. Hence, management structures and student expectations are gendered such that they are more inclined to make demands on women academics that are of a nurturing nature whereas expectations of men are often restricted to academic advice (Knights and Richards, 2003). Also, professional academic characteristics privilege masculine competitive behaviours, with men tending to display masculinity by being public, visible and aggressive whereas women tend to adopt a more feminine position by being more private, invisible and submissive (Katila and Merilainen, 1999). Women academics are expected to extend their mothering capacity, whether mothers or not, to students, colleagues and the institution (Ramsay and Letherby, 2006). The essentialism of women as '...perfect mothers may not correspond to the experience of most women, but [it does] define femininity in ways that are perceived as actually existing' (Betterton, 1987: 22 as cited by Coppock, Haydon, *et al.*, 1995: 111). Women academics, according to Lord (2006: 14) suffer from the expectation that they will be:

...'good girls'...that the organization will turn to in times of crisis to 'fix' unfixable problems and to sort out longstanding issues...provide the social and organizational glue that supports students and staff within an organizational expectation that it will be done willingly and graciously.

It is difficult for women to resist these notions, as we have found, although we will discuss some forms of resistance later in this paper. This is because patriarchal dominance over women is deeply institutionalised and regarded as 'natural' within organizational bureaucracies (see, for example, Ashcraft and Mumby, 2007; Brooks and Mackinnon, 2001; Crompton, 1987; Lerner, 1986; Walby, 1986). Hence, we are subjected to discourses of stereotypical femininity, including expected behaviours of multi-tasking, supporting and nurturing colleagues and students, organising and dealing with people and we tend to be regarded as caring, nurturing, gentle, understanding, patient, tolerant, and all manner of other feminine descriptors. The motherly, feminine, touch of the woman is expected to smooth the path for any number of pastoral or procedural matters. As such we are asked, if not required, to undertake activities or duties beyond, but not considered to be a component of, the real business activities of academia.

Gendered Academic Structures

The extension of the ideology of the mother into academic activities may detract from academics' capability to spend time on the real business of academia. It may also be structurally embedded into the kinds of roles and responsibilities given to women academics. In Anne's School, for example, the 'Sub-Honours' year directorships, dealing with 1st and 2nd year students from across the University, have been held by women over

the past six years; indeed, for two of those years Anne had the role of 1st year director. Despite the Sub-Honours years being those which importantly nurture students towards undertaking honours programmes, the directorships appear to be regarded as having less status than those associated with the honours elements of the degree programmes, as it is the honours elements, the 3rd and 4th year of programmes, from which the School are able to declare actual degree results. While the Sub-Honours directorships have changed hands between women during the past six years, the Honours directorships have been held by the same two people, both of them men. Given that, within the Scottish system of Higher Education, Scottish students may commence University at the age of 16 years, following successful performance in their Highers, the pastoral nature of the Sub-Honours directors' roles can be significant, since such students are technically children, having not yet reached age of majority. Again we see that considerable demands are placed on the motherly, feminine identities of women academics, whether or not the incumbents are in fact mothers, biological or otherwise

There is also evidence that, in many academic contexts, quality assurance in relation to teaching and student experience is female-dominated whereas research quality is male-dominated (Morley, 2005). Certainly, in Kathryn's case, all the research related roles in the School are undertaken by men, whilst the teaching quality and pastoral roles are mostly undertaken by women.

The increasing tendency towards the Equal Opportunities rationale for including women on various academic-related committees may also compound the position of women

academics. Under the auspices of extending Equal Opportunities, it seems now to be the practice that women must form part of committees and panels across Universities, including those convened for recruitment and selection, promotions and appeals procedures, academic integrity reviews, etc. At one level this might be regarded as the incorporation of women into the process of University governance. On the other hand, however, because there are considerably fewer women academics, this can be interpreted as yet another disproportionate drain on the time available to them to engage in research.

Another important factor that we have experienced personally, have seen others experience, and have seen reported by others such as Lord (2006), is that the roles that women undertake often have a management, rather than an administrative, focus. They go beyond administration to involve leadership, managing activities or programmes and sometimes staff. Furthermore, there is a tendency for such engagements to be presented as 'beneficial' to their careers, demonstrating competence in managing and forming a component part of a rounded academic portfolio, in other words, a valued, valuable and important component of the academic triumvirate of research, teaching and administration. Nevertheless, when they are measured against other aspects of this portfolio, they are almost invariably regarded as administrative, as the least important part of academic activity, or, as has been remarked to one of us, as a 'displacement activity'. Women academics are caught in ambivalence by the fact that they are expected to be conscientious about teaching students and their welfare, whilst being aware of the precedence of research over these issues (Wilson, 2005). Utilization of women academics' so-called feminine traits lends added value to the management of an academic

School, releasing others for the real business. However, it also means that, at times when the School needs to demonstrate full staff engagement with research, for example when gathering and expressing performance data for the RAE, many women are found to be lacking. To some considerable extent, the gendered structures of academia may typify elements of institutional sexism through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping.

Contradiction and Resistance Within Gendered Identities

However, the exploitation of individuals within institutions and contexts such as accounting and management academia is not without its contradictions. A difficult question we should also ask ourselves is whether we, as women academics, partly co-construct our degraded positions within the academy, by engaging with roles of stereotypical femininity; by failing to engage sufficiently with what increasingly seems to be regarded as the 'real business', the research agenda; or by failing to challenge the notion of the supremacy of research over other issues. The way in which women position themselves may serve to strengthen traditional perceptions of femininity and womanhood.

Anne:

On my return to work after maternity leave I threw myself into the types of jobs that, though vital to academic departments, many academics do not like to do. This saw me making my greatest contributions to development and management of undergraduate and research postgraduate programmes with a remit to secure external accreditation (with

both professional and funding bodies). Through these roles I learned a lot and, in part as a result of that, the School within which I worked gained a lot, including such accreditation. All this without my having to spend days at a time away from my baby.

As seen in this example, Anne chose to undertake roles within the School that avoided extensive travel, networking and conference attendance, to prevent her from having to be apart from her child. Similarly, Kathryn considered these issues in relation to her career plans:

Whilst I valued my career, wished to pursue it, and became increasingly interested in research, I tried not to undertake activities that detracted from my children. Consequently, I did not wish to move around the country from one institution to another in pursuit of promotion, preferring to stay in one place close to home while my children are still in school. I have attended conferences in (some) far-flung as well as local places, whilst my children were looked after by their dad, but have often found this requires meticulous planning and execution, and remains disruptive to their needs and routine. Sometimes I have wondered if the effort has been worth it.

Both of us have made choices in relation to the interaction of our personal and academic lives that have had implications for our careers, whether it is by limiting our roles and opportunities, or by pursuing an activity because it fits with our caring responsibilities that may not have the gravitas of the real business of academia, of publishing, networking, and researching. The identity of an academic is bound up with intellectual

endeavour and scholarly pursuit, historically often set apart from others in communities of scholars, in the stereotypical 'ivory tower'. Whilst this model may no longer exist, the identity of an academic remains an all consuming one. The thinker or scholar does not work set hours; reading and writing is done at any time; and increasingly students demand fast responses and interventions. While academics may have some work flexibility, a sustainable work-life-balance is difficult to achieve because of the commitment to and intensity of work required for career progression (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006). The role is less of a job than an identity which is difficult to balance with other demanding identities, requiring caring for dependents. The 'greedy institution' (Currie, Harris, *et al.*, 2000; Ramsay and Letherby, 2006: 40) of the university is expected to be at the centre of academics' emotional life, rather than anything centred outside it, such as family responsibilities. Hence, we are constantly grappling with the contradictory tensions within our own identities as women, mothers and academics, within an ongoing struggle over meaning, identity and difference, and the construction and reconstruction of gender.

There are some models of resistance available to women. We may resist by deliberately marginalising ourselves and pursuing a separate agenda, whether that is motherhood or some other form of identity. We may find the culture so difficult to work within that we decide to leave it, as Kathryn did in the context of the accounting profession. These options clearly have implications for individual career progression and gender equality within academia. Some women, aware of the interplay of research and other responsibilities within the School, attempt to manoeuvre their way around it or resist

apparently gendered roles. For example, when Kathryn asked a female colleague for a teaching contribution, ironically on a course on gender, the response was refused. The reasoning behind this was that it was an example of the extra labour imposed on women, while male colleagues were elsewhere furthering their careers. In such a way, women are also complicit in 'playing the game' of the real business of academia, that is, those directly research-orientated activities that will have a positive impact on their academic careers, whilst being aware that other women will have to fill the gaps. By intending to gain legitimacy by adopting the discourse and practices of the dominant identity within the organization, there is also a risk that power relations, which create and sustain gendered identities, are simply reproduced. A more constructive approach would be to call into question gendered social practices, structures and identities, to problematise existing models of patriarchal organising as a step to creating some alternatives.

Conclusion

Our intention in this paper was to explore the interplay and exploitation of internal and external, personal and academic, identities, and their effects on career trajectories. We also considered the institutional arrangements of teaching, research and administration within our experience of accounting and business academia. By exploring our experiences autoethnographically we are able to generate insights into the production and reproduction of gendered identities, roles and relationships.

Our identities as mothers are influenced by the ideology of motherhood and the social construction of mothers in society. We, like many women, strive to be 'good' mothers,

with all the conflicting notions of what that means, while balancing the competing demands of motherhood with other factors of personal and working life. We have argued that we bring our identities as mothers into our academic lives, both in terms of the skills and experiences that we offer, but also in terms of how we may be perceived by colleagues and managers in the institution. Our identities as academics are gendered and inter-linked with our personal identities, as we are drawn into stereotypical 'mothering' nurturing, pastoral and administrative roles. We have considered how we ourselves may be complicit in the gendered roles which we occupy. We have potentially limited our academic opportunities on occasions through our status as mothers of young children whom we wished and were needed to care for. At times, we have chosen to engage with tasks within our respective schools which draw on our organizational and pastoral skills, rather than in the type of networking and research activity that may take us away from our family.

Yet, we have also had our gendered roles sanctioned or imposed upon us by the organising practices and hierarchies of our academic schools. Our experiences, and those of other women academics with whom we have worked, suggest that women's academic identities are subject to stereotypical notions of femininity, and this is the case whether or not women have children. Thus, 'the devaluing of women has become a normalised social relation in the academy' (Morley, 2003 cited in Lord, 2006: 5). Our evidence illuminates managerialist capitalisation upon and exploitation of real or perceived gendered identities, traits or stereotypes. Whether or not they have experienced motherhood in some form, women academics may still find themselves cast in a

mothering, nurturing role due to gendered stereotyping, with the potential for negative outcomes. One such is that women are disproportionately tied down, or tied up, in administrative and bureaucratic engagements. It is to some extent a self-fulfilling prophesy, or, perhaps more appropriately, a vicious circle that the more one is perceived as nurturing or competent, the more one is given to nurture or to manage. Whereas, the 'successful academic' (Raddon, 2002) is one who focuses on research, rather than on teaching, administration and pastoral care, who seeks to secure their reputation through networking and publication, particularly within the metrics and measurements of the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK. In other words, the successful academic is one who engages with the 'real business' of academia.

Hence, in the context of our own identities, we are forced to grapple with increasingly complex and conflicting priorities. Our identities are torn between intellectual scholarship, research and inquiry, and the nurturing and teaching components of the academic role. This has significant implications for our career trajectories, or the 'project of the self', a notion which, in the context of career and career development, has been an important one in professional areas of work (Grey, 1994). It also has significant implications for our personal identities, as we struggle to fulfil our caring responsibilities, and enjoy our personal identities as mothers, both in the face of increasing professional academic pressures and also the ideologies of motherhood. We become frustrated, fragmented and potentially exploited.

The notions of gendered academic identities which we have discussed in this paper have implications not only for our personal career success but on the future of accounting and management education and research in the Academy. If significant parts of the academic triumvirate of teaching, administration and research, are valued less than others, students, as well as staff, may be caused to suffer as a result. A notion of success, which is based exclusively upon publication is exclusionary and inappropriate for the purpose of Universities which, 'since they were established...have had two main "missions" - to teach students and to create new knowledge' (Universities-Scotland, 2006: 1). Without good quality teaching, supporting pastoral care, and efficient administration, knowledge will not be advanced and the student experience will be devalued. Our contention in this paper is not in defiance of the need for high quality work performance across all areas of academic life; rather it is to problematise gendered identities, roles and structures within academic institutions. In the field of accounting and Management, in which women academics are still a significant minority, unless such gendered perceptions are challenged, women academics will continue to be stereotyped as supportive and nurturing to the exclusion of other aspects of their identity, and patriarchal organising will perpetuate gendered identities. Only by confronting ourselves, and exposing and challenging such tendencies within institutions, deliberately and explicitly, are we likely ever to effect change and bring about a more equal Academy.

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