

Researching gender within the institution: diversity and reach.

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Genders At Work (2016-2018)

- How does gender shape employment experience and career trajectory in HE?
- How does gender intersect with ethnicity, age, faith, disability, sexual orientation to impact on career aspirations and progression?
- institutional research
 - 50 self-selecting staff participants:
 - identifying as female, male, gender non-binary
 - academic, professional services and support roles
 - Representing all grade families
- qualitative research – complementing Athena SWAN agenda
- underpinned by theoretical concepts of feminist social geography :

space and gender

- **Doreen Massey** (1944-2016)
 - **space:** the product of social relations shaped by power ... a confluence and product of histories, relationships ... the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist' (Massey 2005, p.9)
 - **universities:** 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)
 - **activity space:** 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 (*ibid.* p55).

role of the researcher?

*It is by trying reflexively to understand what happens when, as an inevitable consequence of being there, she **disturbs the surface of the culture she is investigating**, that the researcher is in a position to dig deeper and reveal the hidden and the counter.*

(Holliday 2004, p.278)

research design

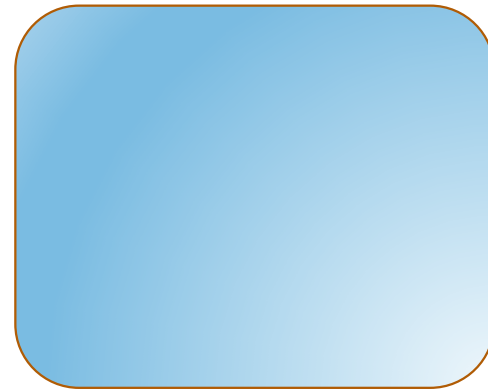
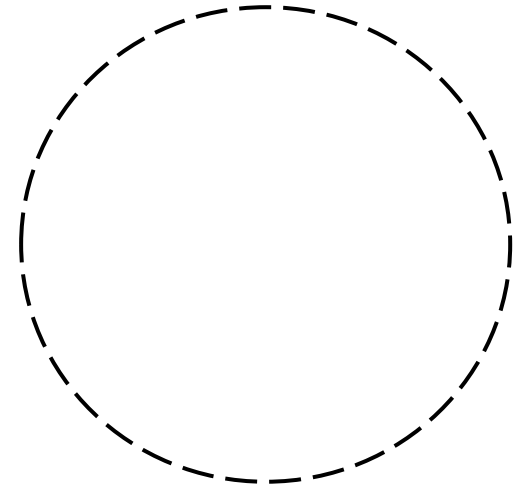
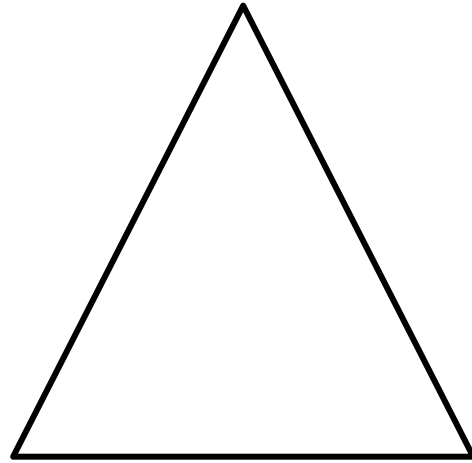
- **narrative enquiry**
 - foregrounds the way(s) people create meaning of their lives as narratives...
 - relating to the singular and particular within a social context
 - allows for complexity, inconsistency, silences
- **visual mapping**
 - organisational geographies; potted career histories
 - *Participant-generated visual materials are particularly helpful in exploring the taken-for-granted things in their research participants' lives ... [it] involves the participants reflecting on their activities in a way that is not usually done; 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)

work in progress: data collection

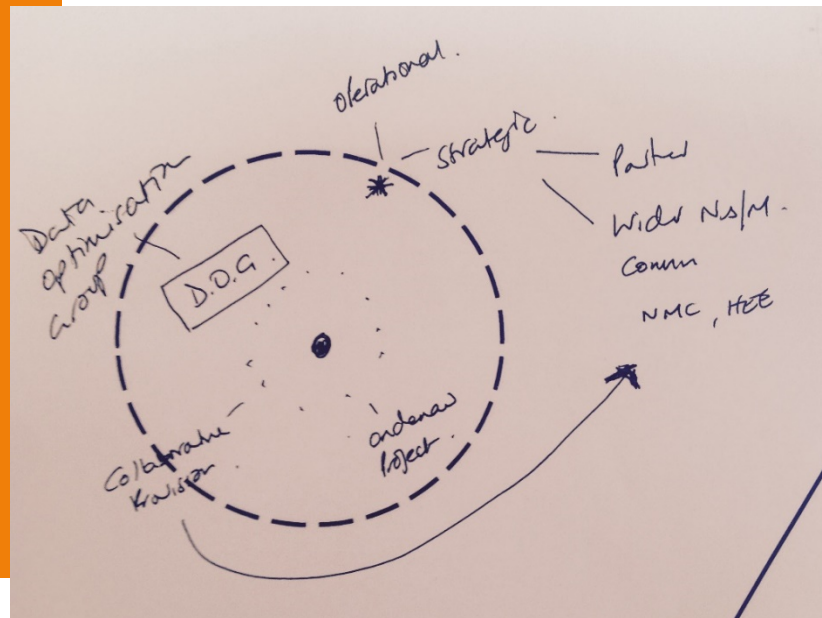
- **Phase 1 (November 2016-June 2017)**
 - individual interviews (45min) covering potted career history; career aspirations; experiences within the work environment; visual mapping
 - 2 group workshops: discussion and visual mapping of potted career histories
 - online prompts – 1 and 2
- **Phase 3 (November 2017-February 2018)**
 - trios – mixed gender, comparable grades/career stage – interview/mapping
 - online prompt 3
 - 5 x Key Respondent interviews

mapping:
organisational
geographies

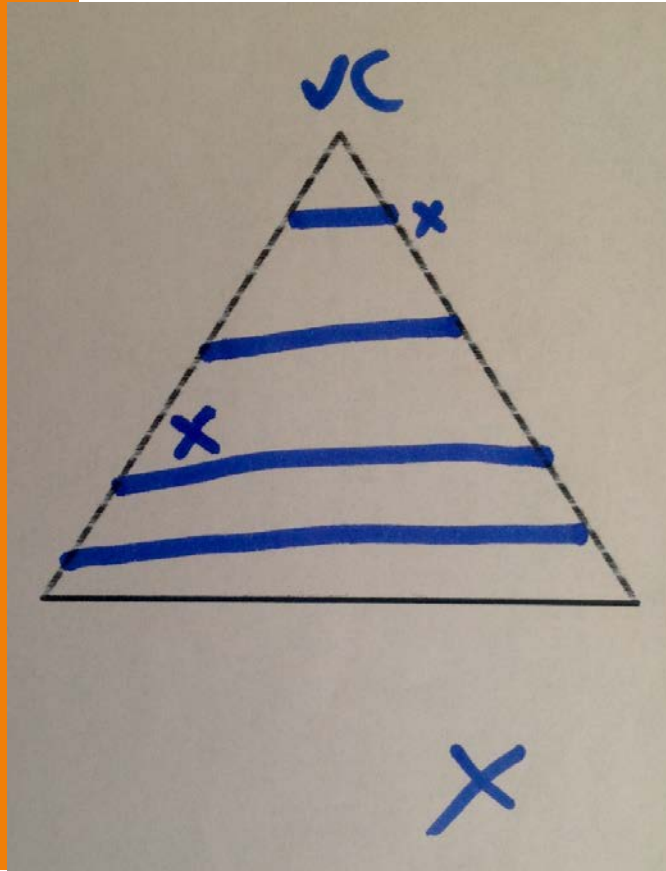


example 1

This is not a triangular organisation, I think it's a University that tries to encompass people but doesn't always manage it ... I would see myself being **out here** somewhere because I think part of my problem is, I'm very operational. I'm trying to be more strategic and probably am out when I'm **out in partner organisations**

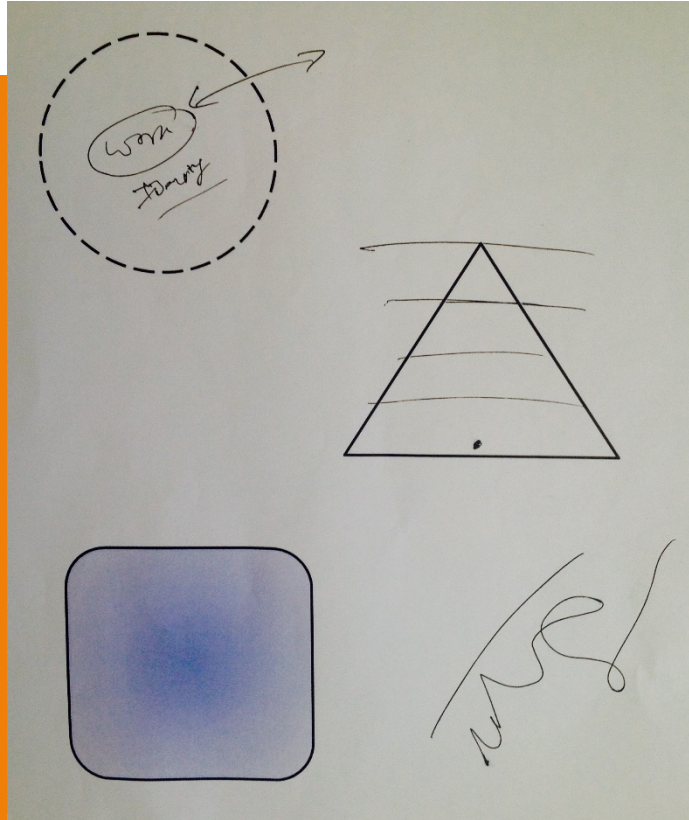


example 2



I don't feel hindered as a young woman in academia from what I've seen. I think the dynamic of most universities, is that it is a triangle shape ... you have a select few senior people at the very top with a lot of power. **I have put myself on the periphery** ... my job is to learn how to be a good academic. So long as I can see a pathway to progressing, I feel ok. But I feel like it's very much stumbling around in the dark. How do you become a professor? I don't see myself as a VC, hopefully somewhere **here**.

example 3



I am seeing this permeable circle ...that is how I think of the academic process ...a crossover between your work and your identity ... There is a bit of a to and a fro. So organisational structure, break it down into a hierarchy. I think in my career I would probably say somewhere down here. But I don't know, I still don't like the idea that it would be coming to some kind of pinnacle. I am like ... this is the line of success, it is actually like this, I am very much more like that. I don't think there is one linear way to do things, I don't think it is very straightforward how you get to a point.

diversity and reach

- engaging **diverse institutional and external audiences** in the research process and dissemination of findings – going beyond conventional confines of institutional research
- offering multiple opportunities for engagement over a 2 yr period
- moving **beyond gender binary** and dominance of female experience and 'disadvantage'- gender as structural and performed - a geography of power; impact of intersectionality
- capturing **complexity** of lived experience of gender in working environment of HE
- **troubling normative**, gender-neutral metaphors of career 'pipeline' and 'trajectory'
- informing, complementing, **enhancing institutional intelligence:** quantitative data and policy agendas (eg: Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter)

thank you

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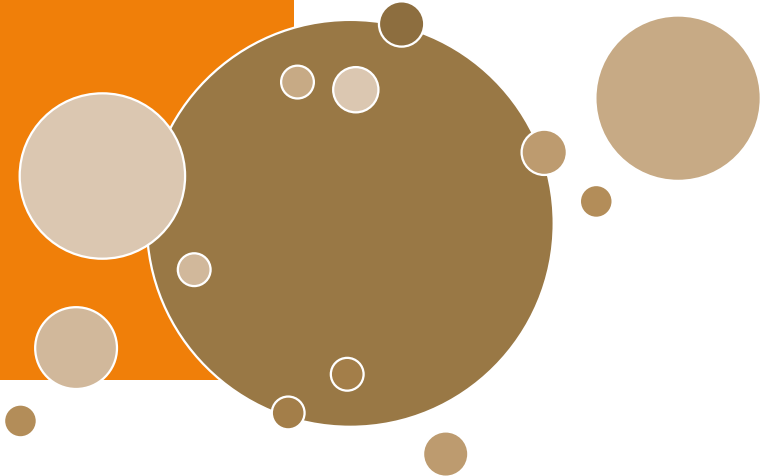
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Doreen Massey:

'a simultaneity of stories so far'

- space – the product of social relations shaped by power
- plurality and flux - space is the product of interrelations on **multiple** scales; that distinct and heterogeneous trajectories **co-exist** in space; and that space is always **under construction**
- HE - one 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' (2005).
- space and place – **activity space** – shaped by a geography of power – who or what is peripheral?



mapping: potted career histories

You will need a sheet of paper and a pen/pencil

1. Turn to person next to you
2. One of you gives a **1minute** potted history of their 'career'
3. Swop
4. The other person gives a **1minute** potted history of their 'career'
5. Working separately, each of you has **1 minute** to represent the other person's potted history in a **visual form** (you can use words as well)
6. Show your partner what you have drawn