

**‘Who is actually working in the
contemporary university and who values
that work?’**

**A rethinking of the new meanings of
valuable work in the academy’**

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WORK 2015
NEW MEANINGS OF WORK



ROYAL
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Introduction

- ◆ In the last 2-3 decades it has become commonplace for academics to complain about non-academics working in universities, particularly managers; they also complain about bureaucracy and administrative spend (Collini 2012, Lorenz 2012) & stress how valuable their own work is
- ◆ At the same time, both academic work and universities have also changed significantly; the notion of academic work itself is being reworked (Musselin 2009, 2013, Nyhagen and Baschung 2013)
- ◆ In this presentation I want to look at what has been happening to academic work and but then to examine what that means for the idea of who really 'works' in a university and whose work is valued or valuable.

How I got interested in this theme

- ♦ I did a project 2004 on staff equality in UK HE where we interviewed staff from different socio-cultural groups *and* jobs – cleaners, administrators, library assistants (Deem, Morley, Tlili 2005, Deem 2007)
- ♦ Much of my other research has been on the growth of new managerialism in universities (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007) & rise of public service leaders (Wallace, O'Reilly, Deem 2011). A project 1996-9 did ethnographic case studies of 4 universities' staff response to managerialism
- ♦ As an editor for the journal *Higher Education*, I note we get lots of papers on academics & students but not many on anyone else who works in HE



But which men and why do they matter?

Sign placed in my corridor at work recently by a (male) cleaner; all the offices in the background belong to men, women are at the end furthest away from the Principal's office

What triggers the development of new meanings of work?

- ◆ Organisational change (NyHagen & Baschung 2013)
- ◆ New Technologies (Price & Kirkwood 2014)
- ◆ Labour market changes: a change in who is recruited to do the work &/or their status/ scarcity (Musselin 2009)
- ◆ A change in the nature of the work: how, what, when, how fast (YliJoki 2013)
- ◆ Changes to practices in the home & at work (Torres 2011, 2012)
- ◆ Money & funding regimes



The university as a place of work

But not all higher education is located in a physical place anymore

Recent changes to universities

- ◆ Greater marketisation & emphasis on students as consumers (Naidoo et al 2011)
- ◆ In some countries, more autonomy (Musselin 2013)
- ◆ More internal labour markets (Musselin 201, Waring 2010)
- ◆ A more global context (Nelson and Wei 2012, King et al 2013)
- ◆ Mass participation, complex HEIs & learning modes (Baker 2015, Kaiser 2014)

Recent changes to universities (2)

- ◆ Funding cuts for public universities, more private HE
- ◆ A loss of collegiality (how collegial was it though? Bensimon 1995)
- ◆ An infection of new managerialism (Deem 2007) & changes to governance (Bruckmann & Carvalho)
- ◆ A shift from largely national & campus-based to transnational campuses and and virtual learning

Academic work: some recent changes

- ◆ Casualisation (Lama and Joullié 2015, Courtouis & O'Keefe 2015)
- ◆ Collectivisation (Nyhagen & Baschung 2013)
- ◆ Specialisation (Nyhagen & Baschung 2013; MacFarlane 2012)
- ◆ Mobility/virtualisation (Kenway & Fahey 2008)
- ◆ Speed- up (Ylijoki 2013)

How do changes to academic work affect its meanings?

- ♦ Casualisation: work is precarious, even those in permanent posts more performance managed, may be 'let go' if don't perform, women and ethnic minorities may be more affected by casualisation than others
- ♦ Collectivisation; more interdisciplinary & other research centres/teams, doctoral schools (Nyhagen & Baschung 2013)
- ♦ Specialisation e.g teaching-only, research-only, management- only MacFarlane (2012) notes managerial careers start earlier
- ♦ Mobility/virtualisation: high academic turnover, academic travel, being on-line but out-of-office, distance learning, MOOCS
- ♦ Speed-up: three responses: work and non-work blurred; distinguish between real work and no- real work; work and personal life clearly demarcated (Ylijoki 2013)

An example of how external policy may change the meaning of work

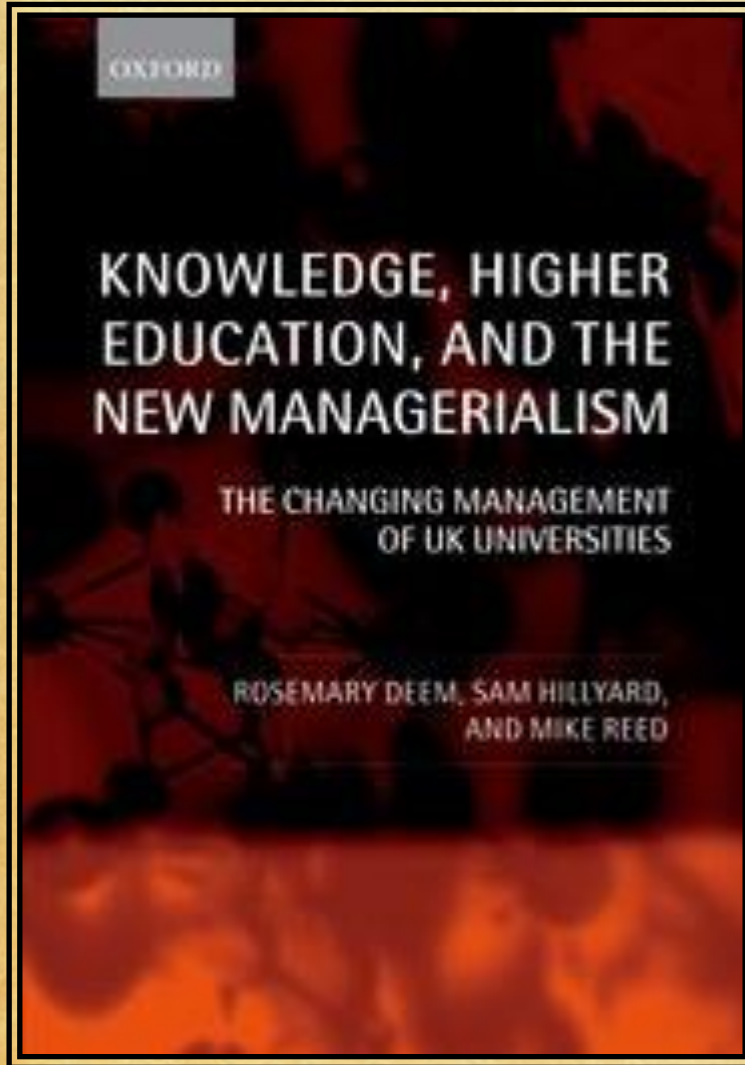
- ◆ Following 30 years of a Research Excellence Exercise, the UK is to have a Teaching Excellence Exercise
- ◆ No-one quite knows what this means (Land and Gordon 2015, Deem 2015, Tsui 2015) or why we need it ('coasting students', high fees, addressing imbalance created by REF)
- ◆ It will be metrics based (despite the 2015 Wilsdon report recommending we don't just use metrics for the REF)
- ◆ When the TEF arrives, it is certain to give new meanings to how, why & whether people teach and what they bring to it (training, CPD, scholarship related to teaching etc); a new definition of 'valuable' academic work

What are the effects of changes to & meaning of academic work?

- ♦ Academics often in a hurry; less interactions & perhaps impatient
- ♦ Some star academics see themselves as a 'brand' & don't identify with their institution
- ♦ Academics make use of administrators but don't always treat them well (Collinson 2007) or value them highly
- ♦ They may not even 'see' or value ordinary university workers eg cleaners, groundstaff, carpenters, porters, library shelf fillers
- ♦ Managers/management cultures are regarded as a nuisance & distraction (Fredman and Doughney 2011) & academics operate with stereotypes of leaders/managers
- ♦ Academics are often away; who deals with their students and work that can't be done on-line then?

Other work in the academy

- ◆ I'm now going to show you a series of images about academic work & other university workers
- ◆ Two questions to bear in mind
 - ◆ i) Is academic work really as autonomous as we think? Or is there an interdependence?
 - ◆ ii) What value do we attach to others who work in universities? If we don't value some of this, why?



The manager-academic; an
evil species?

A move to the
'managed' academic?

Are manager
academics 'worse'
than other
managers?

What happens to
temporary managers
who re-enter their
academic life?



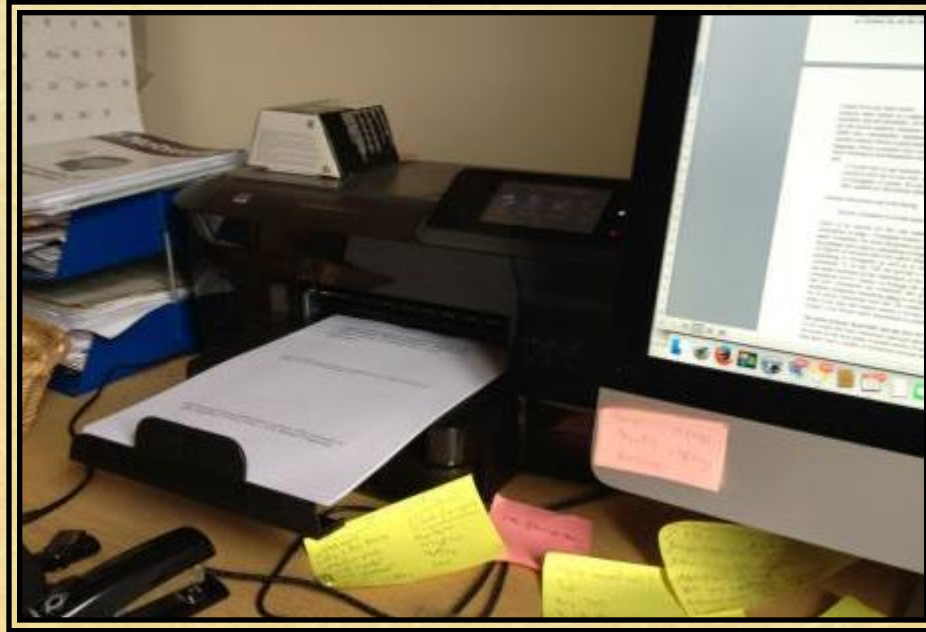
Teaching – an academic preserve?

Cleaners, IT technicians, Audio-visual officers,
Timetablers, admissions & recruitment, Dept &
Student administration , quality assurance officers,
counsellor, cleaners ?



Laboratory Research: non-academics keep out?

Lab technicians, PhD students, administrators, health & safety practitioners, IT staff?



Academic writing; the lone scholar?

Librarians, IT specialists, administrators holding
the fort whilst academics write

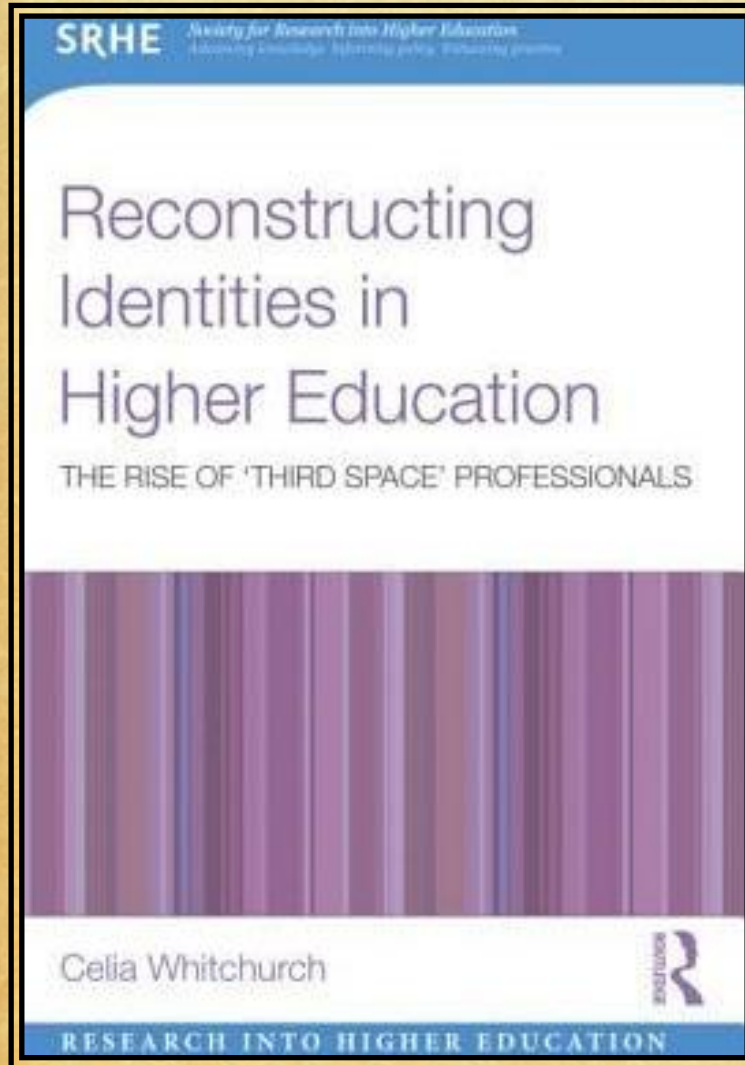


**Graduation; is it 'real work' & if so for whom?
Administrators academics, alumni development,
caterers, events organisers?**



HR – a problematic service or vital part of a university?

Personnel departments are increasingly morphing into Human Resource Divisions and may want to take over the Academy (Waring 2010). Should we let them? What meanings does academic work have for them? What meanings do their work have for academics?



The third space of the university administrator (Whitchurch 2012)

Who are they and what do they do?

Do academics value their work or not?

Many are now hybrids between academics and administrators & have PhDs

Without them e.g in research support, knowledge exchange, community outreach, a lot might not get done

But their work is probably undervalued & under-researched



Marketing; universities teach it and they pay people to market the university BUT

Has marketing taken over the university?

There's even a journal called the Journal of Marketing in Higher Education

Gibbs (2008) argues marketing can invoke a value clash between academics, universities and marketing practitioners (if it aims to exploit applicants)

Students at work in the academy

- ◆ Most research on students and work looks at students' preparation for entering full time work e.g employability debates(Tymon 2013)
- ◆ There is some research on students and part-time work whilst studying (Moreau & Leathwood 2006)
- ◆ There is little research on the paid work students do at university – except if they teach
- ◆ But students also work in catering, halls of residence, cleaning, libraries ...
- ◆ Do academics value the work students do in universities??
- ◆ Does such student work have meaning for academics?



**Mondragon, a Spanish Basque
country co-operative university**

**We know academic work is valuable though
its meanings are changing; what about other
higher education workers?**

- ◆ Could we go back to universities just being run by academics? Mondragon? (Wright, Greenwood, Boden 2011)
- ◆ What would they look like? Would they work?
- ◆ Could we exclude most other kinds of university workers if we organised HE work in different ways?
- ◆ Or if this isn't practical on a large scale, it might help to do more research on 'other university workers' so we know who we value and who we don't

Towards new meanings of valuable work for all university workers?

- ◆ Most research is on academics & academics do not necessarily value all the other workers in their institutions
- ◆ If we want to explore new meanings of university more widely we need to start researching some other workers too
- ◆ It might also require a new name for 'other' workers; would academics like to be called 'non-administrators'?
- ◆ Lorenz (2012) declares : ' Support for NPM in higher education is based on an unholy alliance between the neoliberal political class and the NPM managers on one side and aligned faculty and students on the other' (p 624). But maybe not all 'other' staff are new managerialists & some students are also staff?