

Becoming an academic: intersections of gender, class, and race

Presenters: Prof Marie-Pierre Moreau, Anglia Ruskin University; Dr Kate Hoskins, Brunel University; Dr Ellen McHugh, Brunel University

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Abstract

With higher education expanding and academic careers becoming increasingly precarious, the returns of a doctoral degree, once a guarantee of an academic career, are uncertain. This presentation draws on a research project on the transition from PhD student to academic in the UK (British Academy-Leverhulme research grant, 2020-2022). Thirty-five semi structured interviews were conducted with PhD students who had graduated less than 18 months ago and with PhD supervisors. The fieldwork was complemented by the analysis of social media material addressing the PhD postdoc transition. Drawing on feminist post-structuralist theories articulated with Bourdieu's concept of capital, this article focuses on the role of supervisors and institutions as gatekeepers, able to give and withdraw opportunities. In doing so, it sheds light on an under-researched topic: how equity and privilege related to gender, social class and ethnicity play out and are mediated by doctoral supervisors in access to academic positions.

Marie-Pierre Moreau is Professor in Sociology of Education, Work and Inequalities and Education Research Lead at Anglia Ruskin University. She is the Director of the Cluster for Education Research on Identities and Inequalities, also at ARU. She is the editor of the journal *Access: Critical explorations of equity in higher education*, and of the *Gender and Education* Bloomsbury book series.

Dr Kate Hoskins is a Reader in Education at Brunel University. Her research interests rest on the intersections between education policy, social identity and social mobility.

Dr Ellen McHugh is a Lecturer in Education at Brunel University. Her research interests lie in transnationalism, migration, notions of home and belonging, welfare and young people.