Manchester Metropolitan University

e-space

Manchester Metropolitan University's Research Repository

Please cite the Published Version

Seymour, Kate (2022) Circling the divide: gendered invisibility, precarity and professional service work in a UK Business School. Gender, Work and Organization. ISSN 0968-6673

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12933

Publisher: Wiley

Version: Published Version

Downloaded from: https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/630456/

Usage rights: Creative Commons: Attribution 4.0

Additional Information: This is an Open Access article which appeared in Gender, Work and Organization, published by Wiley

Enquiries:
If you have questions about this document, contact openresearch@mmu.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines)

Check for updates

Received: 3 May 2021 | Revised: 17 June 2022 | Accepted: 18 August 2022

DOI: 10.1111/gwao.12933

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

WILEY

Sexism in Business Schools: Structural Inequalities, Systemic Failures and Individual Experiences of Sexism

Circling the divide: Gendered invisibility, precarity, and professional service work in a UK business school

Kate Seymour

Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

Correspondence
Kate Seymour, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.
Email: k.seymour@mmu.ac.uk

Abstract

Within UK business schools, there are large numbers of female and feminized white-collar professional service (PS) employees in disproportionately low-paid, low-status roles, but surprisingly, they are largely invisible within the literature on sexism and gender inequalities in academia. This paper conceptualizes PS experiences by examining how forms of gendered invisibility affect professional staff working in the hybrid "third" space between academic and administrative realms. I develop a conceptual analysis of invisibility—of invisible work and as invisible worker—arising from the performance of professional and academic work. This allows me to analyze and distinguish forms of what I call *service, professional and professional-academic housework*, demonstrating how these are thoroughly imbricated in dominant patriarchal cultural ideologies of gender. In developing this schema, I draw self-reflexively on my own experiences of "circling the divide" within a UK business school, developing a rich, multi-perspectival account of the ways visibility and invisibility were experienced in the role of a particular third space professional and "academic-in-waiting." This paper therefore contributes a systematic conceptualization of gendered invisible housework performed by PS staff within a politicized third space of UK business schools. It

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2022 The Authors. Gender, Work & Organization published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

also brings often hidden PS "academics-in-waiting" into the literature on feminized precarity in the academy.

KEYWORDS
academic housework, business schools, gendered invisibility, invisible work, precarity, professional housework, professional services, professional-academic housework, self-reflexivity, service housework

1 | INTRODUCTION

The extensive effects of marketization, managerialism (Klikauer, 2013), and audit (Hazelkorn, 2017; Lynch, 2014) on universities in general (Bailey & Freedman, 2011; Docherty, 2015; Giroux, 2020) and business schools in particular (De Vita & Case, 2016; Jabbar et al., 2018; Johansson & Sliwa, 2014) have been well documented. In the United Kingdom and other Anglophone countries, this included a transformation of the former civil service model of administration, bringing a whole new nomenclature of white-collar nonacademic staff into being: professional services (PS) (Whitchurch, 2006). In UK business schools today, PS staff may work in areas as diverse as operations, student services, employability, apprenticeships, learning support, knowledge exchange, marketing, recruitment, business development, partnerships, research support, accreditation, compliance, alumni relations, or as officers on any number of other projects.[1] Many of these employees work in a hybrid "third space" between formerly distinct academic and administrative realms, where boundaries have become blurred and "the concept of administrative service has been reoriented towards one of partnership with academic colleagues" (Whitchurch, 2008, p. 378).

What is now called PS work has long been segregated: women accounted for 93% of "clerks" in education in 1981 (Crompton & Sanderson, 1990, p. 122), and HESA (2021) data today shows that PS is still disproportionately female. Indeed, despite an increase in the number of PS roles at middle and senior levels (Szekeres, 2011), PS remains *more* disproportionately female in lower-paid, part-time, and junior roles (HESA, 2021), a trend replicated in the United States (Frye & Fulton, 2020), Australia (Gander, 2018), and New Zealand (Reilly et al., 2016).[2] Yet this sizeable "underclass" (Szekeres, 2011, p. 684) of female and feminized employees in disproportionately low-paid, low-status roles are largely invisible within literatures examining sexism and gender inequalities within academia (cf. Arnold et al., 2019; Currie & Hill, 2013; Eveline & Booth, 2004; Reilly et al., 2016; Thomas Carruthers, 2019). Meanwhile, within a growing literature focusing specifically on PS staff, there is a strong tendency to *render invisible* questions of gender (Frye & Fulton, 2020; Wallace & Marchant, 2011). These absences are especially surprising since research on academics consistently shows that the same neoliberalizing processes that brought PS into being have disproportionately *harmed women* (e.g., Currie & Thiele, 2001; Teelken & Deem, 2013) and certain groups of women in particular (e.g., Johansson & Sliwa, 2014; Stockfelt, 2018; Strauß and Boncori, 2020).

This paper examines how gendered invisibility affects third space professional staff. Often presented as a neutral, collaborative realm of partnership, this paper contributes a re-politicized understanding of third space, examining the effects of gendered power relations between academic and professional staff on PS visibility. Building on analysis of invisibility in service work (Hochschild, 2012; Poster et al., 2016) and invisible "academic housework" (Heijstra, Einarsdóttir, et al., 2017; Heijstra, Steinthorsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2017; Macfarlane & Burg, 2019; Periera, 2021; Steinþórsdóttir et al., 2021), I develop a conceptual analysis of invisibility—of invisible work and as invisible worker—arising from hybrid belonging across PS and academic realms. I ask how invisibilities frequently associated with service work play out in the context of a politicized, gendered third space of a neoliberal UK business school. At the same time, I explore the particular invisibilities involved when professional staff perform *academic* housework. This allows me to analyze and distinguish forms of what I call *service*, *professional and professional-academic housework*, demonstrating how these are thoroughly imbricated in dominant patriarchal ideologies of gender. The structural

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

rendering-invisible of feminized work and workers not only enables sexism, but these experiences of invisibility are themselves one aspect of the "very ordinary" way women experience sexism: "the 'drip drip drip' of daily experiences, which serve to marginalize, silence, damage self-confidence, and destroy belief" (Savigny, 2019, p. 663).

In developing this schema, I draw self-reflexively (Cunliffe, 2016; Hibbert, 2021) on my own experiences of "crossing the divide" when, shortly after completing my Ph.D., I spent a year working in a PS role in a UK business school. As a critical theorist with a longstanding practical and theoretical interest in feminism, it is perhaps no surprise that I was struck by the gendered power relations of the academic PS divide (McDonald, 2016). Yet whilst gendered and explicitly sexist experiences were "some tangible thing… something we come up against, repeatedly," they were also "remarkably difficult to pin down" (Ahmed, 2015, p. 5). This research thus arose initially out of retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 1995). However, inspired by autoethnographic approaches, I located this self-reflexivity explicitly in broader, social phenomena. Taking inspiration from McDonald's (2013, 2016) concept of queer reflexivity, I also reflected on the ways my social position had shifted during the research: moving from PS employee to fixed-term teacher within the same school, via an interlude as a "double outsider" during the pandemic. I increasingly came to see the relevance of bringing these other *precarious* experiences into my account: to *circle* and not merely cross the divide.

This enabled me to support the development of my conceptual schema with a richer, multi-perspectival account of the ways visibility and invisibility were experienced in the role of a third space professional. It also prompted me to place greater emphasis on my identity as what might be called an "academic-in-waiting" (Allen Collinson, 2006, p. 275). Clearly, this is not the identity of many third space PS employees, and it is important not to over-generalize, since this risks rendering invisible PS as a "career of choice" in its own right (Lewis, 2014). Nevertheless, this understudied position is far from unique in a context characterized by dual processes of third space growth and academic precarization.

There are two key contributions of this work. Firstly, I introduce a systematic conceptualization of forms of gendered invisible housework performed by PS staff within the politicized third space of UK business schools. Secondly, by examining the specific invisibilities of PS "academics-in-waiting," I bring these often hidden "ivory basement" workers into the literature on feminized precarity in the academy (Cardozo, 2017; Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; Ivancheva et al., 2019; O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019). But beyond highlighting and addressing an important gap in the literature, this paper is also inspired by calls for engaged scholarship and intellectual activism (Contu, 2018). In recognizing that a wide variety of different staff perform distinct yet related forms of invisible, gendered housework, and that the tentacles of feminized precarity spread wider than is often supposed, it is hoped that those of us working within these institutions might also come to see greater possibilities for building solidarity and enacting resistance.

2 | INVISIBILITY, HOUSEWORK, AND THE NEOLIBERAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

2.1 | Invisibility in/of the PS literature

Scholars have long noted the relative invisibility of PS in the literature (Frye & Fulton, 2020; Gander, 2018; Szekeres, 2004). In recent years, a literature focusing specifically on PS employees has begun to address this, often authored by professionals and associated with specialist journals such as *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*. However, within this body of work, there is a tendency to *render invisible* questions of gender (Frye & Fulton, 2020; Wallace & Marchant, 2011). Akerman (2020, p. 127) recounts how women PS staff reported feeling "discriminated against not due to their gender, but due to their role as administrators." This narrative is repeated elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Allen Collinson, 2007, p. 297; Dobson, 2000), but it misses the significance of the *feminization* of PS. Where gender is explicitly thematized, it tends to examine the experiences of senior female managers (Gander, 2019; Mabokela, 2003; Shepherd, 2017). Interestingly, recent research has examined forms of masculinity performed by male administrative assistant "tokens" (Lotus Seeley, 2018). But so far, we have not sufficiently investigated the distinct experiences of PS employees who are "not male, not academic" (Wallace & Marchant, 2011) to which we might add "not (senior) manager."

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Meanwhile, despite extensive discussion of sexism and gender inequality in academia, few interventions consider PS in any substantial way. Reilly et al. (2016, p. 1027) explicitly note that "inequality regime" analyses of university settings focus on academics and rarely consider "inequality in the whole site." A few recent projects have examined academic and PS women in HE (e.g., Arnold et al., 2019; Thomas Carruthers, 2019) whilst Currie and Hill (2013) included PS in their pay equity audit at an Australian university—although conducting separate audits meant that discrepancies between the groups were unaddressed. Perhaps of most relevance for this paper, Eveline and Booth (2004) explicitly researched academic and nonacademic women in lower-level university work in what they called the "ivory basement." Yet there remains considerable work to be done.

One of the most common themes noted in the growing PS literature is the general condition of "invisibility" experienced by PS staff (e.g., Akerman, 2020; Coomber, 2019; Eveline & Booth, 2004; Gander, 2018; Graham, 2013; Gray, 2015; Szekeres, 2004, 2011). Nevertheless, the concept of invisibility is used very broadly and often somewhat imprecisely across these studies. In some instances, PS practitioners examine the collective invisibility of PS as a professional group. This includes the invisibility of PS as a career of choice (Langley, 2012; Lewis, 2014) with consequences for training opportunities (Holmes, 2020) and career progression (Duncan, 2014); the lack of PS staff at the most senior university levels (Gander, 2019; Shepherd, 2017); and the absence of PS in government reporting (Dobson, 2000)[3] and university policies (Reilly et al., 2016). Theorists also refer frequently to the invisibilities perceived by PS staff in their day-to-day work (Allen Collinson, 2006, 2007) including a lack of acknowledgment of skills (McInnes in Dobson, 2000), a lack of recognition and appreciation of their efforts (Gillespie, 2018; Ryttberg & Geschwind, 2017), and the way PS job titles cause their work to be misunderstood, unrecognized, or devalued (Melling, 2019). Meanwhile, the failure to recognize that critical functions of "core business" are increasingly performed by professionals leads to specific invisibilities in third space. Researchers have highlighted, for example, the un(der)acknowledged contribution of student services to student outcomes (Graham, 2013) and research specialists, such as grant managers, to successful research grant applications (Langley, 2012; Vidal et al., 2015).

Yet whilst this literature helpfully draws our attention to the invisibilities of PS staff, and third space professionals in particular, there remain a number of limitations. Firstly, there is a need for greater conceptual clarity regarding the forms invisibility takes and the mechanisms through which they arise. This includes an explicit focus on gender, as well as the way that gender intersects with other inequalities such as race and class. Secondly, this work needs to engage more deeply with the ways in which certain PS invisibilities *and visibilities* are implicated in harmful processes of neoliberalization. It is important to reject a simplistic view that identifies PS staff as agents and beneficiaries of neoliberalization and instead attend to the specific harms done to PS employees by these same processes. At the same time, we should think critically about proposals for counteracting invisibility. What, for example, does it mean to properly recognize the work of student service employees whilst also problematizing "customer service" and the creation of student consumers (Molesworth et al., 2009; Nixon et al., 2018) whose very capabilities for critical thinking have been undermined (Danvers, 2019)?

Thirdly, there is a need for greater critical interrogation of power dynamics, particularly in third space. How is "collaboration and partnership" experienced in a hybrid space crossed by gendered power relations? How do invisibilities arise in this particular constellation? A greater appreciation of power should lead us to question the extent to which we have really overcome "the oversimplified and often contentious binaries, which have been populating higher education research for decades" (Veles et al., 2019, p. 78), as some third space theorists propose. In purely contractual terms, the binary divide in the United Kingdom is still firmly in place, even for "blended professionals" whose appointments explicitly span academic and professional domains, but who are often on PS contracts (Akerman, 2020; Graham, 2013). This makes a considerable material difference in terms of pay, conditions, and flexibility and contributes to sustaining status and power differentials (Allen Collinson, 2006). Tension across the academic-PS binary divide remains a consistent theme (Ginsberg, 2011), and although there is some variation, with local PS staff typically more highly valued by academics than centrally located colleagues (Gibbs & Kharouf, 2020; Gray, 2015), even the former report being seen as "minions of university management" (Allen Collinson, 2006, p. 281) or "lesser beings" (Reilly et al., 2016, p. 1035).

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

To move beyond these limitations and provide a more adequate theoretical framework for my own analysis, I turn next to examine the concept of invisible work, followed by a discussion of recent research on invisible "housework" within the academy.

2.2 | Conceptualizing invisible work

No work is inherently invisible but stems from judgments about *what counts as economically valuable work* (Allen, 2014; Hatton, 2017; Star & Strauss, 1999). Poster et al. (2016, p. 6) define invisible labor as follows:

> activities that occur within the context of paid employment that workers perform in response to requirements (either implicit or explicit) from employers and that are crucial for workers to generate income, to obtain or retain their jobs, and to further their careers, yet are often overlooked, ignored and/or devalued by employers, consumers, workers, and ultimately the legal system itself.

Invisibility is not always problematic and may indeed be desirable to avoid the reification, surveillance, or intensification of work (Eveline & Booth, 2004; Suchman, 1995). Nevertheless, since "the rewards and compensation for labor are typically dependent upon the visibility of the worker, the work process, or the worker's visible output" (Poster et al., 2016, p. 9), invisible work is often un(der)paid and can result in disempowerment. As such, a first step in improving working conditions is often to render work *visible*.

Analytically, we can distinguish the invisibility of work and the invisibility of the worker. Cases where *work is visible but the worker is invisible* typically result from a difference in power status between employer and employee (Star & Strauss, 1999). In not being afforded the recognition of full personhood, black domestic servants became "unseeable non-persons" to their white employees (Rollins, 1985), whilst migrant domestic workers report being treated as "ghosts" (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010). Nonperson status may only be partial (Star & Strauss, 1999) and is experienced to varying degrees by other groups, such as cleaners or technicians.

In other cases, *the worker is visible but the work they perform is invisible*. The routine nature of the work means that it is taken for granted and becomes functionally invisible as part of the background (Star & Strauss, 1999). For example, the "organizing" work of nurses includes a multitude of crucial tasks, accounting for up to 70% of their work but is commonly seen as a "distraction" from patient care (Allen, 2014). But this makes it possible for others, particularly male executives, to present themselves as solely responsible for collaborative work outcomes (Devault, 2014, p. 778). Importantly, this is not a gender-neutral process. Sociocultural mechanisms operating through hegemonic cultural ideologies of gender "naturalizes" this feminized labor and leads to the devaluation of workers' skills (Hatton, 2017).

Invisible background labor has also been studied in relation to ostensibly highly visible workers (Hochschild, 2012). Here, the "blood, sweat and tears" of backstage effort is hidden *behind a highly visible front stage performance* (Star & Strauss, 1999, p. 21). Whilst this can also be seen in the invisible work of athletes, musicians, actors, or scientists, in many cases, it is directly implicated in sociocultural mechanisms. For example, the well-known case of emotional labor involves aligning emotions with the normative expectations of a role or bringing about a particular emotional state in others (Hochschild, 2012). This is thoroughly gendered insofar as it reflects deep rooted stereotypes about role expectations, including the creation of well-being in others (Wharton, 2009). But the resulting cognitive dissonance can lead to exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Wharton, 2009). Other examples include the aesthetic labor of highly visible female employees working in chains, such as Hooters, to "achieve visibility *in the right way*" (Poster et al., 2016, p. 10), the "racial tasks" of minority workers that construct whiteness as normative and standard (Harvey Wingfield & Skeete, 2016), and the effort to eradicate working class speech to "sound right" (Warhurst, 2016). The growth of the service sector, and the widespread reclassification of public service users as customers (e.g., Glisner et al., 2019), has increased the demand for such invisible background labor.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Alongside sociocultural mechanisms, Hatton (2017) identifies two further analytically distinct but often practically entangled mechanisms that affect the relative visibility of work and workers. These are sociolegal mechanisms, which render work less visible if it is excluded from official legal definitions of "employment," and sociospatial mechanisms, which affect the perception of work outside the socially constructed workplace, for example, in domestic or digital space. Since remote working has become increasingly common following the Covid-19 pandemic, this latter feature may be of greater concern in our more flexible but perhaps less visible "new normal."

2.3 | Housework, gender, and the neoliberal academy

From the beginning, the theorization of invisible work has been linked to the unpaid social reproductive work of women, including housework, which had been naturalized as a "labor of love" (Daniels, 1987). But social reproductive "housework" is not limited to unpaid domestic work; rather, it includes a wide range of (under)paid social reproductive jobs as well as "the complex of activities and relations by which our life and labor are daily reconstituted" (Federici, 2020, p. 1). Whilst not all invisible labor is housework, devalued social reproductive work accounts for one important form of invisible work. It may be objected that extending the term "housework" seems to imply a normative judgment about these forms of work; but this results from the way reproductive labor is already devalued within our current value system. Whilst there is very often a clear need to redistribute this work, I follow Cardozo (2017) in emphasizing the importance of *revaluing* housework. As such, housework in this broader sense should not be understood as a pejorative term.

Like other institutions, the academy relies extensively on different forms of housework. This includes (under) paid forms of social reproduction, such as cleaning, emotional labor, and education, as well as the work of reproducing the academy itself (Henry, 2018). There is also a growing literature on *academic housework*, defined as the invisible administrative, service, teaching, and citizenship work, which receives little recognition in a culture focused on research productivity (Heijstra, Einarsdóttir, et al., 2017; Heijstra, Steinthorsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2017). This research builds explicitly on the analysis of "institutional housework" used to describe the gender equality work performed by women, for which they receive little credit or recognition (Bird et al., 2004). Macfarlane and Burg (2019) found that women tended to identify with academic citizenship more strongly than men, and this work was directly linked to women being promoted later to professorships than their male counterparts. More is asked of women in performing caring or "mothering" pastoral duties (Ashencaen Crabtree & Shiel, 2019; Ivancheva et al., 2019) but devalued housework typically receives less credit in workload allocation models, adding to the workload of women and delaying career progression (Steinþórsdóttir et al., 2021). This trend is likely to have been reinforced during the pandemic, as women have disproportionately taken on the material and emotional labor of caring for students and colleagues (Periera, 2021).

Research has shown that "academics with well-established symbolic capital outsource time-consuming and under-valued tasks [and] feel less obliged to take on such chores" (Heijstra, Steinthorsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2017, p. 776). As such, academic housework particularly falls on newcomers least able to resist it, such as early career staff and even Ph.D. students (Henry, 2018). Whilst many early career staff accept this work as part of the academic work package or even welcome it as a development opportunity (Heijstra, Einarsdóttir, et al., 2017), research also shows that the disproportionate burden helps keep insecure early-career staff on the "hamster wheel of precarity" (Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015). Cardozo (2017) argues that the increasing number of untenured, teaching-only staff has contributed to the "unbundling" of research and teaching responsibilities, which had previously protected academic teaching from the devaluation associated with other more "caring" forms of teaching. This has created a growing divide between productive and reproductive activities within the academy "where some tend to the (college) kids and maintain the (department or campus) home, whilst others engage in more 'productive' work that circulates on the market," significantly increasing the vulnerability of the former (Cardozo, 2017, p. 409).

Whilst precarious teaching staff free up established academics for more valuable pursuits, contract researchers contribute more directly to the production of highly prized research outputs. This is potentially valuable experience

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

for early career academics, but principle investigators typically retain ownership over and credit for this work. For O'Keefe and Courtois, this is a "distinctively exploitative relationship, in which the contract researcher works to advance the career of the grant-holder, while her position is in itself antithetic to the idea of a career…" (2019, p. 466; Reay, 2000). By propping up successful, often male, academic careers, "more and more impassable barriers [are set up] between the 'stars,' on the one hand, and the growing number of marginalized, invisible workers directly and indirectly exploited by them" (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019, p. 466). The authors theorize precarious academic staff as the "domestic workers of the academy," arguing they have "non-citizenship" status across five dimensions: staff, decision-making, social, work, and legal non-status (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019).

Significantly, this research also shows that "women experience precarity in particularly gendered ways and that precarious academic work is feminized" (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019, p. 464). This is compounded by the culture of "carelessness" typified by a "24/7 culture of availability, and migratory and transnational lifestyles" such that successful academics today are seen to be "unencumbered by caring" (Lynch, 2010, p. 63). Women who opt out of care-free masculinized norms are over-represented in fixed-term positions (Ivancheva et al., 2019). But these structural causes are disguised by "myths about ability, merit, and work" through which the blame for precarity is attributed to precarious staff who don't want it enough, haven't worked hard enough, or aren't good enough (Zheng, 2018).

3 | METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The approach taken in this paper is primarily conceptual. Building on the existing literature on invisible work, I develop a structured framework for understanding PS invisibilities in third space. Focusing on housework in the broader sense of social reproductive labor (Federici, 2020), I develop a systematic grid across two axes: distinguishing analytically between cases where the work and the worker are invisible, and between cases where the work is regarded as professional or academic. This allows me to analyze forms of *service*, *professional and professional-academic* housework. But rather than remaining at a level of conceptual abstraction, I then explicitly and deliberately insert my body back in, drawing on my experiences as a white middle-class woman, recent Ph.D. graduate, mother, and feminist, who has worked on both sides of the "divide" in a UK business school. Engaged in a process of self-reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2016; Hibbert, 2021), I move beyond retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 1995) insofar that this self-reflexivity is explicitly located within broader social phenomena. In this sense, the paper is inspired by autoethnographic approaches that seek to "describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experiences (ethno)" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). Nevertheless, this is not a straightforward autoethnography, instead taking an abductive approach, circling between conceptual analysis of the literature and recollections of my own experiences.

Highly self-reflexive approaches, such as autoethnography, "remove the risks inherent in the representation of others [and] allow for the production of new knowledge by a unique and uniquely situated researcher" (Wall, 2008, p. 149). Ph.D. students and early career researchers have experimented widely with autoethnography (Cortes Santiago et al., 2017; Forber-Pratt, 2015; Leach, 2021; O'Shea, 2020; Prasad, 2013; Weatherall, 2019), as have apparently more secure academics to reflect on their experiences within an increasingly precarious, neoliberalized academy (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2011; McCann et al., 2020; Nordbäck et al., 2021; Tienari, 2019; Zawadzki & Jensen, 2020). These self-reflexive methodologies are part of wider efforts to move beyond masculine forms of writing and embrace "writing differently" (Gilmore et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2014; Pullen, 2018) and have been extensively used to examine experiences of women in academic organizational life including motherhood (Huopalainen & Satama, 2019; Katila, 2019; Riad, 2007; van Amsterdam, 2015), miscarriage (Boncori & Smith, 2019; Porschitz & Siler, 2017), and sexism (Edwards, 2017).

Yet using self-reflexive approaches can entail personal and professional risks including charges of indulgence (Winkler, 2018) and whining (Edwards, 2017; Savigny, 2019), the "freezing" of the text in time (Tienari, 2019), and the status of autoethnographic research in the neoliberal academy (Sparkes, 2018). Indeed, there are specific pragmatic

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

and ethical risks in using an exposing, highly self-reflexive method when discussing phenomena, such as sexism. How do we do the important feminist work of making the invisible visible, without causing harm to others or ourselves? The intent of the paper was to strenuously avoid both of these scenarios, but this involved striking a tricky balance: deciding what and whom to keep "invisible" in the process of giving adequate visibility to phenomena I believe need to be brought to light. Indeed, the alternative—of *not* writing the paper—would also have been an ethical decision and one I ultimately rejected: staying silent about under-acknowledged forms of sexism in academia which affect professional staff.

Shortly after my PS contract ended, I produced a series of vignettes reflecting on my experiences of crossing the divide, from which I later produced a narrative account. Inspired by McDonald's (2013, 2016) emphasis on the shifting identity of the researcher in the field, the original account was supplemented by a further text, written explicitly from the perspective of a fixed-term academic who had gone "full circle" around the divide, without of course returning to the position from which they started. This enabled me to reflect on PS work from a number of positions *around* the "ivory basement": as a Ph.D. student and graduate teaching assistant, PS third space professional and academic-in-waiting, fixed-term teacher (with responsibilities that included academic skills teaching), research officer, and as a "double outsider": of being forced out of the university during the pandemic and looking back in as an employee at a private provider. The analyses were developed by circling between these varied experiences, and in the circular, abductive movement between these recollections and the (silences of the) literature. But this is not all: the text also reflects a further pass of the hermeneutic circle, where questions of self-reflexivity and the implications of making the invisible visible were explored from a feminist perspective. It was going full circle twice that led me, for example, away from interpersonal examples of sexism to focus instead on broader power structures that render PS work and workers invisible.[4]

By circling the divide in these multiple senses, the text became a richer, more balanced account of invisibility *and visibility*; of precarity *and security*. The following account has gone through several drafts, benefitting from reflections over time, discussions with academic and PS colleagues, and member-checking (Forber-Pratt, 2015).[5]

4 | CIRCLING THE DIVIDE

4.1 | Crossing the divide

Crossing the divide was quite disorientating at first—and not just because of the sleep deprivation. I was extremely conscious I was not employed as an academic, but I had no background in professional services either. In the early weeks, I spent a lot of time worrying about whether it was pretentious to use my newly acquired doctor title in my email signature. I remember attending a breakfast for all PS colleagues where I felt awkward and out of place. My partner is a senior PS employee in the School and I worried people thought I had been nepotistically given the job. I felt strongly I had to prove myself and worked hard to do so. In the end, it didn't take long to accept—and feel accepted in—my new role, but for me, it was always a temporary arrangement.

I'd had a vicarious insight into PS work through my partner's experiences over several years, but it was different to live it myself. One of the first things that really struck me is the sheer amount of work that goes into simply keeping going. Academic "breadwinners" seemed to float in and out, dropping in for a few hours or days before disappearing again. In the meantime, PS "homemakers" kept the cogs of the very many processes demanded by the complex modern university ticking: fixing problems, managing resources, and providing a significant proportion of the care and support needed by the School and its citizens. This is no small feat. Universities and their very many projects seem to be a step or two away from disaster far more often than one might imagine. And it is getting harder. New in post, I watched in horror as Welcome Week seemed to destroy the morale of already struggling PS colleagues, unsure how they would cope with another huge increase in student numbers. This was before they were hit by the extra workload that followed Covid. And yet, the responsibility for running whole departments is, in many instances, remunerated at my university at a level lower than the most junior permanent academic.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

There are also very real personal risks when such work goes wrong. On one occasion, my team organized an important event that ran without a hitch until it transpired at the very end that our VIP's taxi had not been booked for their desired time. As the celebrations we had played no small role in bringing about started, we ran around, trying unsuccessfully to rearrange and placate. It was significant insofar as our VIP risked missing their flight. Yet it also felt thoroughly insignificant amongst the vast number of other seamless details that had held the event together, as if all that other work no longer mattered. To be sure, no blame was leveled. There was never a blame culture in the School, though of course, this was at least in part the arbitrary result of the personalities involved. But by the time the taxi finally sped away, what should have been a celebration felt irreparably soured.

The implications of the erroneous taxi booking show the importance of small, often informal, and frequently invisible processes for the smooth functioning of the School-household. I have lost count of the number of times I have seen academics—particularly, white male academics—disappearing out of the door of catered departmental events, deep in (lofty?) conversation, operating under the unspoken assumption that (usually female) professional service will sweep away the crumbs of the catering the latter have already been responsible for organizing. When challenged that this wasn't in the job description of professional service colleagues either, a senior male academic colleague located the problem in the need to find another even more junior group of feminized colleagues whose work this would legitimately become, rather than the need to democratize responsibility for this necessary work equally amongst all staff. I found such conversations intensely irritating: reducing concerns about the (gendered) division of labor to the level of who should order the coffee.

I also began to question the power structures in the School. In all areas, PS leads are lower paid and have lower status than the equivalent academic "director," regardless of levels of expertise. It became increasingly clear to me that this structure meant that my PS colleagues and I were sometimes not recognized for the work we did. This was epitomized for me toward the end of my tenure, in the middle of the first Covid lockdown. Like so many other working parents, work was done in snatched moments during the day or late at night, when the kids were finally asleep. I had put together a diagram for an external report, explaining the development of a new quality control mechanism and the member of staff responsible for each stage. I had been responsible for coordinating the entire process. But this, I knew, is not what the recipient of the report would want to hear. It needed *gravitas*. So, at each stage, I falsely attributed my own work to a different senior academic colleague. When I was finished, I looked back at my work: first pleased and then troubled. I had just convincingly written myself out of the entire process. I willingly and intentionally misattributed my work to others—not for the first or the last time—in a report that would not even bear my name as author.

Still, what would it mean to get rid of this structure? I have a strong sense of sharing academic values and the importance of collegial governance. I tried to resolve misgivings about my work by consciously minimizing any negative disruption to the School and its many citizens. If I'm very honest, I saw this as key to why I was good at the job. Did I think I was good at this PS job precisely because I, too, was *really* an academic? Is that why I remain ambivalent about changing the structure despite the inequalities it causes?

And yet despite this explicit identification with academic values, I still experienced moments where it went wrong. Early on in my tenure, we had an angry male academic in our office, shouting in a manner that could be taken as threatening, extremely unhappy with a decision for which my team had been responsible. His displeasure was not without reason, and I later worked to reverse the policy, but I often wondered about the power and gender dynamics of the manifestation of that anger.

Somewhat absurdly, I was maybe most annoyed by an angry email from an academic, furious that I had not consulted their individual timetable when scheduling a large meeting. I left it a few hours whilst I seethed, then penned an undeservedly polite response, apologizing and proposing a practical solution. That is ultimately what it means to do *service* work *professionally*. It would have been strategically unwise to respond in kind. But why, I wondered much later, had I been so incensed? I was certainly angry at the implication that was I was "serving" them badly, implicitly presenting me as inferior. But what was perhaps most hurtful, with hindsight, was the failure to acknowledge my best efforts to accommodate others and minimize the harms of the project, threatening important

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

aspects of my identity. Was it less that I thought no one in PS should be spoken to like that, and more that it was *me* being spoken to like that?

4.2 | Interlude

I have made no secret of the fact I wanted a temporary contract. I was not ready to sign up as a permanent member of PS staff: I was a few months out of my Ph.D. and harbored ill-defined academic dreams. I probably wouldn't even have applied had I not had two children aged under 3. I couldn't commute or move for a temporary role; and the fixed-term teaching positions in my old department would unlikely pay enough, or last long enough, to cover the substantial nursery fees.

But months before the end of my temporary contract, Covid-19 hit. Despite having worked almost continuously at the university for 6 years, I was invisible to management as a member of the community. Shedding all non-permanent jobs and implementing a recruitment freeze were key measures to protect the "real" university community in those difficult financial times. Fixed-term staff were no longer of any value. No one even bothered to address us in university communication. Colleagues in the School wrung their hands. How many times, I heard a senior HR member of staff ask rhetorically, must we explain that fixed-term contracts end? How much clearer can we be? And so, my contract came to an end—as it always would have—but suddenly, it was the middle of a pandemic.

This was the most significant and difficult instance of invisibility I have experienced. And the divide didn't make a scrap of difference. It was permanent contractual status, nothing else, that mattered at that moment.

I found work during the following months at two private HE providers. One of them actively made space for me at a time when my employer of many years had no qualms at all about cutting me loose. I was not invisible to them: I was grateful for that. But I was also a freelancer, like all their teaching staff, lacking the most basic of employment rights. And whilst I liked my colleagues, I feel deeply troubled not only by its "business model" but by its very presence in the HE sector. When a temporary teaching role opened up back in the Business School, I jumped at it.

4.3 | Going full circle

I was brought in to teach academic skills on two modules for the new January start cohort, created in a panicked response to a reduced September intake. One was normally delivered by academics, the other by colleagues on PS contracts. There was little substantive difference between them.

For me, it was a distinct advantage to be on an academic contract. I was quickly given additional teaching, welcomed as a member of an academic group, invited to seminars, received academic emails, and slowly became involved in the research life of the School. I no longer had much to do with "admin" at all. Suddenly I was the one who could ignore emails and check in only when I had a problem that needed a resolution. I developed a deeper appreciation of the difficulties of thinking my way into unfamiliar administrative processes when I had a to-do list of qualitatively very different tasks the length of my arm. I felt like I was progressing, finally. I was happy even in the midst of the deep, dark winter lockdown.

Yet in many ways, I am more invisible as a fixed-term teacher and researcher than I ever was in PS. I am a far tinier cog in a bigger wheel. Who knows what I do and whether I do it well? As long as I perform my core tasks, no one chases me. I am welcome at academic events but don't feel I have really earned my place. I have ideas and enthusiasm to work on initiatives in the School, but neither status nor salary. Besides, I am mostly too busy with the vast unpaid labor that goes into, hopefully, making me a plausible candidate for a permanent position. I am thanked for the work I do and asked to take on more; and still I think, overall, that academic culture isn't very good at explicitly recognizing work.

After 15 months working exclusively from home, I requested, and was given, temporary space in an academic office. There was rarely anyone else around, but I enjoyed the separation between work and home. At the end of

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

the summer, my academic office was repossessed for *real* members of staff and I was found space in a PS office in a different part of the building. It was a pragmatic solution that I understood, but I couldn't help feeling hurt. When the door signs were eventually updated, my name was not included, despite having months remaining on my contract. In PS, at least until Covid, I had had my own *proper* space. In fact, in a world that has perhaps disappeared forever, I was a permanent "fixture" of the School with tangible, real presence. I built friendships while we made tea in the kitchen. My work benefitted enormously from spontaneous, unplanned, and in/significant knowledge sharing. I built networks and gained some influence. It greatly improved my ability to do my job well, though I wasn't student-facing and my presence was not strictly required to do my job. But space is at an ever-increasing premium in ever-growing UK universities. Whose space will they come for next?

Ironically, in a text about the invisibility of PS, I must conclude by acknowledging that most of my current visibility results from my former PS role. I have contacts and knowledge that help me navigate the School and take on opportunities that might be less accessible to other fixed-term staff. But I still don't know where I belong. Having circled the divide, I am not back where I started, but I am perhaps as disoriented as when I began.

5 | TOWARD A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INVISIBLE PS WORK IN THIRD SPACE

Research has shown that precarious academics experience non-citizenship across five dimensions: as staff, in decision-making, socially, legally, and in relation to work (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019). Some of these were evident as non-citizenship status in the account of experiences as a fixed-term academic; for instance, the account of space suggests that I had (partial) staff non-status. By contrast, PS employees, on the whole, do not experience non-status across all of these dimensions, as the space discussion also makes clear. Yet neither do they appear to have full citizenship. For instance, the design of power structures, with academic leads across all areas, points toward (partial) decision-making non-status.

In what follows, I investigate forms of *PS work non-status*. To do so, I develop a conceptual schema of invisible housework performed by third space PS staff, represented in Figure 1. I analyze across two axes: the invisible object (work or worker) and the nature of the work (PS or academic). To clarify, I do not suggest that clear distinctions between academic and PS labor can be drawn objectively. Analysis of third space shows there has been a blurring of roles and realms: academics are extensively involved in management and administration and PS play increasingly important roles in research and teaching. Indeed, the blurring may be even starker in business schools compared to other disciplinary areas, since PS colleagues perform functions—and have *expertise*—in areas such as management, marketing, or HRM, which are the subject matter of the teaching and research of academic colleagues. Yet the divide is *both constructed and has real effects*, and definitions are the preserve of the powerful. Indeed, part of the purpose here is precisely to interrogate current, contingent classifications. I argue below that one way of countering invisibility, for certain third space PS workers, is making the case for recognition of *academic* aspects of their work.

The conceptual schema focuses particularly on PS employees within a repoliticized third space, taking into account the gendered power relations between academic and PS staff. Throughout my conceptual analysis, I identify

	Invisible Work	**Invisible Worker**
Professional Work	1. Service Housework	2. Professional Housework
Academic Work	3. Professional-Academic Housework: Non-Academic Work	4. Professional-Academic Housework: Academic Non-Status

FIGURE 1 Schema of invisible PS housework in third space.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

four analytically distinct, but in practice, sometimes overlapping, forms of invisible labor, elaborated through discussion of the account above. In all cases, and particularly for the final category, further empirical research is required to test and further develop the schema.

5.1 | Service housework

Service housework is a form of professional labor where the worker is visible but the work is rendered invisible or relegated to a background expectation, often as a result of sociocultural mechanisms. At least two forms of this background invisible work, widely associated with service work, are evident in the account above. Firstly, PS employees frequently perform "glue work" (Szekeres, 2011, p. 687), which, like the organizing labor of nurses (Allen, 2014), just "keeps things going." It is a typical feature of such work that "the better [it] is done, the less visible it is to those who benefit from it" (Suchman, 1995, p. 58). Not only does this mean that well-performed work is devalued, but when things go wrong—a missed taxi or an angry email, often just "one tiny detail"—the employee becomes hyper-visible and exposed (Allen Collinson, 2006). Secondly, in the account, we saw the labor of emotion management in the face of (academic) anger and potential (VIP) anger to conform to role expectations and respond appropriately to a higher-status other. These can be mutually reinforcing: for example, as failures resulting in hypervisibility trigger the need to perform additional invisible emotional labor.

We can understand both forms of this invisible background labor as "housework" in Federici's (2020) broader sense. PS staff "who keep departments running" are inherently engaged in socially reproducing the institution of the academy itself (Henry, 2018, p. 1370). Similar to Cardozo's (2017, p. 409) precarious teaching staff, PS "homemakers" are responsible for "tend[ing] to the (college) kids and maintain[ing] the (department or campus) home," though here, in ways understood as distinctively "professional." Not only, as we have seen, is this work devalued, but interestingly, one of the few studies to consider the inequality regime of a business school in its totality found that the lower wages and status of PS staff were widely considered legitimate (Reilly et al., 2016, p. 1030). Service work, then, is devalued feminized housework, which does not become valued in itself, even if performed by a higher-status other. It is presumably for this reason that the senior male academic in my account was motivated to identify the appropriate group of feminized workers to perform it, rather than consider sharing it across all "citizens" of the School.

Whilst "service housework" is not new, this account sheds further light on the specific ways it is experienced within a neoliberal business school. In the context of increasing workloads, greater financial pressures, growing student numbers, external governance requirements, and a marketized system that foresees failure as a possibility, there is both more to do and more at stake. Under such conditions, competent work seems more likely to be taken for granted, whilst failures become both more likely and more costly. The need to perform emotional labor is exacerbated by the perception of PS staff as "agents" of an unpopular "neoliberal agenda," witnessed in narratives of angry academics. As in the case of Allen Collinson's (2006, p. 280) research administrators, bureaucratic processes had become "embodied within the form of the [PS employee] who then is defined as the problem." There could be an additional need to perform emotional labor for departmental professional staff who have reported feeling "caught in the middle" between the conflicting agendas of central PS colleagues and academic colleagues (Gibbs & Kharouf, 2020, p. 7).

Whilst these examples suggest that service work takes specific forms in third space, it is not unique to this realm. For example, PS staff also manage the hostility, fears, and emotions of anxious consumer-students, and the demands of important senior PS managers or external stakeholders, who are often male (Frye & Fulton, 2020). As such, further empirical work is needed to investigate how service work is differentially experienced across PS.

5.2 | Professional housework

In contrast to devalued feminized service housework, professional housework describes the way in which the *lower status of PS workers* reflects upon otherwise valued work. The type of professional work involved is typically viewed

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

as having greater value than service housework, for instance, in building careers in academic management. In some cases of professional housework, *valuable* outputs of PS work may not be attributed to the worker. In other cases, work that would be considered valuable when performed by others is seen as less valuable *because it is performed by them*. This is analogous to common anecdotes of women academics' ideas being ignored until put forward by a male colleague (e.g., Savigny, 2017, p. 649).

This can be seen in the striking example of the self-invisibilization of the work involved in producing a new quality control mechanism. Through the internalization and anticipation of different organizational demands, not to mention the desire to just get the work done, there arises a motivation to attribute work to certain senior academic colleagues. Both the report and what is being reported—in this case, the overall achievement of aligning with external expectations—become officially an output of senior academic management rather than the PS author.

Similar to invisible contract researchers (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019), professional housework "frees up" the time of established academics to pursue activities more valuable to career-building. Yet it also enables the latter to retain ownership of projects and their valuable outputs, which also provides the work its gravitas. Just as research can be devalued when embodied by contract researchers (Reay, 2000), certain work output may have lower worth and legitimacy when attributed to lower status PS staff. This may not be as detrimental to the career progression of relatively secure PS employees as for contract researchers, though it could be considered even more detrimental for a PS "academic-in-waiting" for whom skilled support work adds little value to job applications highly focused on research output. But in either case, self-invisibilization can be a dangerous game when rewards and compensation typically depend on the visibility of the worker and her output. Indeed, being cast as just another "output" of the successful academic may further obscure the extent of the work or the specialist nature of the skills involved.

In many instances, professional housework is tied up with more familiar service housework. In the same example, the less glamorous, less valuable *academic* administrative (house)work required at each stage of the process (and often factored into workload allocations) is performed here by an invisible PS employee. This is strategically sensible for academics in a system where they are incentivized to minimize their administrative housework burden, to the potential detriment of professional third space "collaborators." Meanwhile, focusing on outputs means that the vital "glue work" of organizing and coordinating these stages—also performed by the PS employee—vanishes entirely. In these cases, we see a double invisibility: the invisible (unvalued) work of an invisible worker.

What counts as professional housework lies, then, not in a qualitative feature of the work itself but directly in who performs it. In other words, the work becomes seen (or rather unseen) as "housework" as a direct result of the worker's identity. As this increasingly becomes part of the unwritten rules of the game, the beneficiary (and indeed the PS worker herself) may scarcely notice it has happened or consider it morally problematic. Performing professional housework, then, also contributes to the reproduction of the hierarchies of the academy. Insofar as PS workers are disproportionately female and feminized—and academics remain disproportionately male, particularly at senior levels—we can locate an important gender dimension in this dynamic. This is likely compounded for female academics-in-waiting located at the intersection of feminized precarity and feminized PS work.

5.3 | Professional–academic housework: Nonacademic work

Academic housework is the reproductive labor of academic workers: the necessary but devalued research, teaching, administrative, and service activities that are disproportionately borne by women, newcomers, and minority groups (Heijstra, Steinthorsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2017). But how do we understand the performance of academic housework in the context of third space? When academics take on increasing administrative burdens, particularly in the context of high workloads, I have suggested that this can result in unrecognized professional housework. By contrast, professional–academic housework concerns the invisibilities involved when professional staff perform distinctively *academic* housework.

But how do we define *academic work* within the blurred context of neoliberalized HE? Take the example of academic skill teaching. In my account, comparable academic skills modules are taught by academic and professional

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

staff. Are these staff seen to be performing academic work? Whilst the status of the teacher may (probably unfairly) reflect on the work they perform, overall, the work of academic skills teaching seems to be perceived as nonacademic in the institution examined in my account, since it is frequently the specialization of professionals and performed on a more ad-hoc basis by often junior academics. Still, amongst the multitude of teaching activities in HEIs, what singles out *academic* skills as specifically non*academic*? To be sure, no one applies to "major" in academic skills, yet almost all students need assistance in developing the general and subject-specific skills that are essential to succeed. Can we distinguish courses in academic writing or plagiarism avoidance from, say, research methodology? In practice, these distinctions are murky and inconsistently applied. This is to argue that what counts as academic is an ill-defined, contestable, and shifting boundary, which nonetheless has real material and status consequences.

When delivered by academics, academic skills teaching may be an exemplary form of academic housework. It is no coincidence that this is a particularly "caring" (feminized) form of teaching (Cardozo, 2017), reproducing the academy by nurturing relatively inexperienced students and preparing them for full "mature" entry. Internationalization and broadening participation at home have considerably increased the need for this work. Indeed, academic skills are often intertwined with English language tuition and/or other guidance for cultural and class adaption into the UK academic system. As such, the ways in which academic skills teaching and students are viewed is likely to be refracted through gender, race, and class lenses, with implications for the ways in which both are valued.

But what additional forms of invisibility are involved when *professional staff teach academic skills?* One way to conceptualize this is as "embedded background work" (Star & Strauss, 1999, p. 21) where arduous *academic* preparation is hidden behind the scenes, rendering invisible the extent of the work that goes into successfully performing as an academic skills teacher. This may contribute to the further devaluation of already devalued academic housework and help justify the coexistence of staff with different pay, conditions, and flexibility performing very similar work within the same School. There may also be serious long-term effects of rendering invisible the academic nature of work, including supplying justifications for outsourcing such "non-academic provision" as *not properly belonging within the academy*. This may have further consequences for the visibility of "tutors"; for example, the private provider in the account operated a freelance model, which rendered workers legally invisible as employees (Hatton, 2017). It would be interesting to investigate which forms of teaching provision are most often outsourced, and whether prior "invisibilization" of academic labor played a role in justifying the process.

It is therefore extremely important to understand the motivations of HEIs in constructing and maintaining the academic-PS divide, as well as the effects these boundaries have. Whilst institutional priorities, such as staff-student ratios, could pull toward academic contracts at certain points in the cycle, overall, there is an obvious motivation to shift staff onto cheaper, less prestigious PS contracts. Similarly, the growing literature on academic housework needs to examine the implications of "non-academics" performing academic housework. Within this constellation, making work visible *as academic* may be part of a process of contesting some forms of invisibility within third space.

5.4 | Professional–academic housework: Academic non-status

The final category concerns the effect of a worker's "academic non-status," particularly on (unrecognized) academic work. Are there cases of professionals performing more highly valued academic work than academic skills teaching, such as research? In this case, would academic non-status affect the value placed upon their outputs, a position potentially even more exploitative than the contract researcher (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019)? There is no example of such a role in the account, but there is no reason to rule it out, since blended professionals explicitly span administrative and academic appointments (Whitchurch, 2008). Indeed, Allen Collinson's research administrators reported the drafting of articles amongst their many "blended" activities (Allen Collinson, 2006, p. 275). Might professionals be producing recognizably valuable *academic* outputs, in contrast to the outputs of professional housework, which are either devalued due to their supposedly nonacademic authorship, or misattributed to a higher-status academic other? And if so, what does the specific effect of *academic non-status* invisibility add to their precarity?

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

We can begin to approach these questions by considering the specific case of PS "academics-in-waiting." Whilst PS roles may (still) offer certain visibilities and securities, the account demonstrates the considerable advantages of being (taken to be) an explicit part of the research community. Social non-citizenship (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019) seems even more likely to affect PS academics-in-waiting than precarious academics and may make it harder to escape from the "hamster wheel." Indeed, non-citizenship status within a school may be compounded by an unconsidered, distinct sixth dimension: academic non-status, leading academic colleagues to negatively perceive their work. If so, this category may need to be included in O'Keefe and Courtois' (2019) schema of non-citizenship status to fully incorporate the precarious experiences of PS academics-in-waiting.

Women, particularly those with caring responsibilities, may be particularly liable to such a position. When I crossed the divide, a sleep-deprived mother of two preschool children, I embodied anything other than the "masculinist care-free norms of geographic mobility and 24/7 availability of the ideal academic" (Ivancheva et al., 2019, p. 449; Lynch, 2010). We may also postulate that the perception of women and men's work could make it even harder for women academics-in-waiting to escape from, even once they circle back across the divide.

6 | GENDERED INVISIBILITY, FEMINIZED PRECARITY AND SOLIDARITY IN THE IVORY BASEMENT

In this paper, I have offered a conceptual schema of gendered invisibility. This has provided conceptual clarity to the often imprecise use of "invisible work" in the PS literature, whilst also demonstrating how this invisibility is gendered. Further empirical research is needed to test and develop this framework. There is also a need for ongoing conceptual work to examine broad, related concepts, such as "academic housework," to ensure that they retain conceptual purchase and to analyze their implications.

Whilst the analysis pointed toward multiple, overlapping invisibilities within third space, the account also clearly indicates the ways in which third space enabled *visibilities* as well as invisibilities. As an academic-in-waiting, I was privileged in possessing relatively high levels of social and academic capital, which helped me mitigate invisibilities associated with service housework. Similarly, some of the worst examples of sexism I witnessed were experienced by female PS colleagues in more traditional administrative roles. This paper therefore points toward the need for further research to understand the experiences of differently located PS staff to understand how gendered inequality, invisibility, and sexism operate across the full inequality regime of business schools. Since this paper is limited by its narrow focus on UK business schools, there is also the need to examine the particular situation of professional, administrative, managerial, and support staff in other cultural contexts. But at the very least, the paper clearly demonstrates that sexism in academia can no longer be simplistically equated with the sexism experienced by academics.

By circling the divide in the "ivory basement" (Eveline & Booth, 2004), this paper also contributes a more developed articulation of the complex interconnections between invisible work and insecure work within the third space realm of a neoliberal business school (Hatton, 2017). Although PS staff are normally considered less precarious than academics, with 83%–84% of administrative staff on open-ended contracts in 2014 (Hogan, 2014, p. 82), this is not the full picture. PS academics-in-waiting—who may perhaps even be on reasonably secure contracts—experience invisibility, vulnerability, and the tentacles of academic precarity in particular ways rarely acknowledged in the literature. There is also a real danger that the increasingly virtual context of our "new normal" might increase PS invisibility and precarity more generally. There were already calls for "leaner business models" including "[o]utsourc[ing] students services [and] their full suite of back-office functions" (Ernst and Young, 2012, p. 20), not to mention the considerable risk automation poses to administrative jobs (ONS, 2019). Indeed, with HESA no longer collecting compulsory data on PS staff, might a creeping precarization of PS in the United Kingdom go unnoticed? As such, further research is needed to integrate particularly PS academics-in-waiting, but also PS employees more broadly, into discussions of precarity in academia.

However, to end more optimistically, the analysis points not only to future risks but also toward possibilities for resistance. Reilly et al. (2016) noted that building solidarity amongst "ivory basement" employees is difficult since

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

they face different challenges. The analysis here, however, demonstrates how a wide variety of staff perform *distinct but related* forms of gendered housework: from established women academics to early career newcomers and from bounded PS staff to third space PS academics-in-waiting. All have an interest in the redistribution and *revaluation* of housework. Coming to see these commonalities could, just maybe, form the basis for solidarity and resistance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the constructive feedback of the guest editors and three anonymous referees in the development of this paper. It has also benefitted greatly from conversations with, and comments from, colleagues and friends working on both sides of the divide, particularly Rosie Worsdale, Sue Hearsum and James Norman. Finally, I am indebted to Martyna Śliwa not only for her generous support, guidance and encouragement but also for providing an inspiring example of courageous engaged feminism in practice.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest declared.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no data sets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

ORCID

Kate Seymour https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6783-1093

ENDNOTES

[1] Unlike Gander (2019), for whom PS workers must be graded at UK spinal point 30 or above, I do not include a minimum grade threshold in my definition of PS. This follows on-the-ground usage of the term in many UK universities. Indeed, such a categorization would in fact exclude the vast majority of the PS employees in the UK business school discussed in this paper.

[2] This paper focuses on the United Kingdom and builds on a literature that is heavily focused on the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. This narrow geographical and cultural focus is a limitation of this paper.

[3] Despite improvements since 2000, a recent decision by the UK government means that HESA no longer collect compulsory data on nonacademic staff, in a regressive move for PS visibility in the United Kingdom.

[4] Whilst this was an important decision, I do not claim to have resolved all the tensions involved in making the visible invisible. A full consideration is beyond the scope of this paper, but reflecting on these questions from a feminist perspective could be the subject of a further paper.

[5] In the final editing process, I resisted the temptation to make temporal adjustments to the text which would reflect changes in my affiliation and employment status which have occurred since it was written. In this way, it continues to reflect the lived experiences of an 'ivory basement' employee. But this also means I am already experiencing greater distance from a text 'frozen in time' and anticipate further changes in my relationship to it in the months and years ahead.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, Sara. 2015. "Introduction: Sexism – A Problem with a Name." *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 86: 5–13. https://doi.org/10.3898/newf.86.introduction.2015.

Akerman, Katie. 2020. "Invisible Imposter: Identity in Institutions." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 24(4): 126–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2020.1734683.

Allen, Davina. 2014. *The Invisible Work of Nurses: Hospitals, Organisations and Healthcare*. London: Routledge.

Allen Collinson, Jacquelyn. 2006. "Just 'Non-Academics'? Research Administrators and Contested Occupational Identity." *Work, Employment and Society* 20(2): 267–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017006064114.

Allen Collinson, Jacquelyn. 2007. "'Get Yourself Some Nice, Neat, Matching Box Files!' Research Administrators and Occupational Identity Work." *Studies in Higher Education* 32(3): 295–309. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701346832.

Arnold, John, Sarah Barnard, Sara Bosley, and Fehmidah Munir. 2019. "Onwards and Upwards? Tracking Women's Work Experiences in Higher Education. Year 3 Report." *Advance HE*. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

onwards-and-upwards-tracking-womens-work-experiences-higher-education-year-3-report. Accessed 22 December 2021.

Ashencaen Crabtree, Sara, and Chris Shiel. 2019. "'Playing Mother': Channeled Careers and the Construction of Gender in Academia." *SAGE Open* 9(July–September): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019876285.

Bailey, Michael, and Des Freedman, eds. 2011. *The Assault on Universities. A Manifesto for Resistance*. London: Pluto Press.

Bird, Sharon, Jacquelyn Litt, and Yong Wang. 2004. "Creating Status of Women Reports: Institutional Housekeeping as "Women's Work"." *NWSA Journal* 16(1): 194–206. https://doi.org/10.2979/nws.2004.16.1.194.

Boncori, Ilaria, and Charlotte Smith. 2019. "I Lost My Baby Today: Embodied Writing and Learning in Organizations." *Management Learning* 50(1): 74–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618784555.

Cardozo, Karen M. 2017. "Academic Labor: Who Cares?" *Critical Sociology* 43(3): 405–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516641733.

Carruthers Thomas, Kate. 2019. "Genders at Work: Gender as a Geography of Power in the Academy." In *Strategies for Resisting Sexism in the Academy. Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education*, edited by Crimmins Gail, 187–206. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Contu, Alessia. 2018. "'… The Point it to Change it' – Yes, But in What Direction and How? Intellectual Activism as a Way of 'Walking the Talk' of Critical Work in Business Schools." *Organization* 25(2): 282–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508417740589.

Coomber, Ruth. 2019. "How Do Professional Service Staff Perceive and Engage with Professional Development Programmes Within Higher Education Institutions?" *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 23(2–3): 61–9. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2018.1543216.

Cortes Santiago, Ileana, Nastaran Karimi, and Zaira R. Arvelo Alicea. 2017. "Neoliberalism and Higher Education: A Collective Autoethnography of Brown Women Teaching Assistants." *Gender and Education* 29(1): 48–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1197383.

Courtois, Aline, and Theresa O'Keefe. 2015. "Precarity in the Ivory Cage: Neoliberalism and Casualisation of Work in the Irish Higher Education Sector." *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 13(1): 43–66.

Crompton, Rosemary, and Kay Sanderson. 1990. *Gendered Jobs and Social Change*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Cunliffe, Ann L. 2016. ""On Becoming a Critically Reflexive Practitioner" Redux: What Does it Mean to Be Reflexive?" *Journal of Management Education* 40(6): 740–6. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562916668919.

Currie, Jan, and Beverley Hill. 2013. "Gendered Universities and the Wage Gap: Case Study of a Pay Equity Audit in an Australian University." *Higher Education Policy* 26(1): 65–82. https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2012.19.

Currie, Jan, and Bev Thiele. 2001. "Globalization and Gendered Work Culture in Universities." In *Gender and the Restructured University*, edited by Ann Brooks and Alison Mackinnon, 90–115. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Daniels, Arlene Kaplan. 1987. "Invisible Work." *Social Problems* 34(5): 403–15. https://doi.org/10.2307/800538.

Danvers, Emily. 2019. "Individualised and Instrumentalised? Critical Thinking, Students and the Optics of Possibility within Neoliberal Higher Education." *Critical Studies in Education* 62(5): 641–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2019.1592003.

Devault, Marjorie L. 2014. "Mapping Invisible Work: Conceptual Tools for Social Justice Projects." *Sociological Forum* 29(4): 775–90. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12119.

De Vita, Glauco, and Peter Case. 2016. "'The Smell of the Place': Managerialist Culture in Contemporary UK Business Schools." *Culture and Organization* 22(4): 348–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2014.971122.

Dobson, Ian R. 2000. "'Them and Us' – General and Non-General Staff in Higher Education." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22(2): 203–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/713678142.

Docherty, Thomas. 2015. *Universities at War*. Los Angegles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: Sage.

Duncan, David. 2014. "Valuing Professional, Managerial and Administrative Staff in HE." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18(2): 38–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.882427.

Edwards, Jane. 2017. "Narrating Experiences of Sexism in Higher Education: A Critical Feminist Autoethnography to Make Meaning of the Past, Challenge the Status Quo and Consider the Future." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 30(7): 621–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1286405.

Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner. 2011. "Autoethnography. An Overview." *Historical Social Research* 36(4): 273–90.

Ernst and Young. 2012. "University of the Future: A Thousand Year Old Industry on the Cusp of Profound Change." http://www.bu.edu/edtechcouncil/files/2012/10/Ernst-Young-Higher-University-of-the-Future-2012.pdf. Accessed 3 March 2021.

Eveline, Joan, and Michael Booth. 2004. "'Don't Write about it.' Writing 'The Other' for the Ivory Basement." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 17(3): 243–55. https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810410538306.

Federici, Silvia. 2020. *Revolution at Point Zero. Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle*. 2nd ed. Oakland, CA and Brooklyn, NY: PM Press.

Forber-Pratt, Anjali J. 2015. ""You're Going to Do What?" Challenges of Autoethnography in the Academy." *Qualitative Inquiry* 21(9): 821–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800415574908.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Frye, Joanna R., and Amy P. Fulton. 2020. "Mapping the Growth and Demographics of Managerial and Professional Staff in Higher Education." *New Directions for Higher Education* 189: 7–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20352.

Gander, Michelle. 2018. "A Descriptive Study of Professional Staff, and Their Careers, in Australian and UK Universities." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 22(1): 19–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2017.1307876.

Gander, Michelle. 2019. "Let the Right One in: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Gender Inequality in Universities' Senior Management." *Gender, Work and Organization* 26(2): 107–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12327.

Gibbs, Thea, and Husni Kharouf. 2020. "The Value of Co-operation: An Examination of the Work Relationships of University Professional Services Staff and Consequences for Service Quality." *Studies in Higher Education* 47(1): 38–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1725878.

Gillespie, Michelle. 2018. "The Motivations, Attitudes, Perceptions and Skills of Customer Service Staff Working in Australian University Student Administration." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 40(5): 501–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2018.1507178.

Gilmore, Sarah, Nancy Harding, Jenny Helin, and Alison Pullen. 2019. "Writing Differently." *Management Learning* 50(1): 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618811027.

Ginsberg, Benjamin. 2011. *The Fall of the Faculty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Giroux, Henry A. 2020. *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*. 2nd ed. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books.

Glisner, Barbara, Birgit Sauer, Myriam Gaitsch, Otto Penz, and Johanna Hofbauer. 2019. "Doing Gender in Public Services: Affective Labour of Employment Agents." *Gender, Work and Organization* 26(7): 983–99. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12263.

Graham, Carroll. 2013. "Changing Technologies, Changing Identities." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 17(2): 62–70.

Gray, Stephen. 2015. "Culture Clash or Ties that Bind? What Australian Academics Think of Professional Staff." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 37(5): 545–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2015.1079397.

Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, Encarnacion. 2010. *Migration, Domestic Work and Affect. A Decolonial Approach on Value and the Feminization of Labor*. New York and London: Routledge.

Harvey Wingfield, Adia, and Renée Skeete. 2016. "Maintaining Hierarchies in Predominantly White Organizations: A Theory of Racial Tasks as Invisible Labor." In *Invisible Labor. Hidden Work in the Contemporary World*, edited by Marion G. Crain, Winifred R. Poster, and Miriam A. Cherry, 28–46. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Hatton, Erin. 2017. "Mechanisms of Invisibility: Rethinking the Concept of Invisible Work." *Work, Employment and Society* 31(2): 336–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017016674894.

Hazelkorn, Ellen, ed. 2017. *Global Rankings and the Geopolitics of Higher Education. Understanding the Influence and Impact of Rankings on Higher Education, Policy and Society*. London and New York: Routledge.

Heijstra, Thamar M., Þorgerður Einarsdóttir, Gyða M. Pétursdóttir, and Finnborg S. Steinþórsdóttir. 2017. "Testing the Concept of Academic Housework in a European Setting: Part of Academic Career-Making or Gendered Barrier to the Top?" *European Educational Research Journal* 16(2–3): 200–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904116668884.

Heijstra, Thamar Melanie, Finnborg Salome Steinthorsdóttir, and Thorgerdur Einarsdóttir. 2017. "Academic Career Making and the Double-Edged Role of Academic Housework." *Gender and Education* 29(6): 764–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1171825.

Henry, Caitlin. 2018. "Three Reflections on Revolution at Point Zero for (Re)producing an Alternative Academy." *Gender, Place and Culture* 25(9): 1365–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2018.1462771.

HESA. 2021. Figure 1 – All Staff (Excluding Non-academic Atypical) by Activity Standard Occupational Classification 2015/16 to 2019/20. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb259/figure-1. Accessed 15 January 2022.

Hibbert, Paul. 2021. *How to be a Reflexive Researcher*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hochschild, Arlie R. 2012. *The Managed Heart. Commercialization of Human Feeling*. 2012 ed. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Hogan, John. 2014. "Administrators in UK Higher Education: Who, Where, What and How Much?" *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18(3): 76–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.930073.

Holmes, Alex. 2020. "What Are the Barriers and Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development for Professional Services Staff in UK HE?" *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 24(3): 79–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2020.1750501.

Huopalainen, Astrid S., and Suvi T. Satama. 2019. "Mothers and Researchers in the Making: Negotiating 'New' Motherhood Within the 'New' Academia." *Human Relations* 72(1): 98–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718764571.

Ivancheva, Mariya, Kathleen Lynch, and Kathryn Keating. 2019. "Precarity, Gender and Care in the Neoliberal Academy." *Gender, Work and Organisation* 26(4): 448–62. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12350.

Jabbar, Abdul, Bejan Analoui, Kai Kong, and Mohammed Mirza. 2018. "Consumerism in UK Higher Education Business Schools: Higher Fees, Greater Stress and Debatable Outcomes." *Higher Education* 76(1): 85–100. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0196-z.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Johansson, Marjana, and Martina Sliwa. 2014. "Gender, Foreignness and Academia: An Intersectional Analysis of the Experiences of Foreign Women Academics in UK Business Schools." *Gender, Work and Organization* 21(1): 18–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12009.

Katila, Saija. 2019. "The Mothers in Me." *Management Learning* 50(1): 129–40. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618780653.

Klikauer, Thomas. 2013. *Managerialism. A Critique of an Ideology*. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Langley, David. 2012. "Research Management and Administration. A Reflection on Where We Are and Where We Need to Go as a Profession." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 16(3): 71–6.

Leach, Erin. 2021. "The Fractured "I": An Autoethnographic Account of a Part-Time Doctoral Student's Experience With Scholarly Identity Formation." *Qualitative Inquiry* 27(3–4): 381–4. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420918895.

Learmonth, Mark, and Michael Humphreys. 2011. "Autoethnography and Academic Identity: Glimpsing Business School Doppelgängers." *Organization* 19(1): 99–117. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508411398056.

Lewis, Kenton. 2014. "Constructions of Professional Identity in a Dynamic Higher Education Sector." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18(2): 43–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.914107.

Lotus Seeley, J. 2018. "'Show Us Your Frilly, Pink Underbelly': Men Administrative Assistants Doing Masculinities and Femininity." *Gender, Work and Organization* 25(4): 418–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12202.

Lynch, Kathleen. 2010. "Carelessness: A Hidden Doxa of Higher Education. Arts and Humanities in." *Higher Education* 9: 54–67.

Lynch, Kathleen. 2014. "New Managerialism, Neoliberalism and Ranking." *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics* 13(2): 141–53. https://doi.org/10.3354/esep00137.

Mabokela, Reitumetse Obakeng. 2003. "'Donkey's of the University': Organisational Culture and its Impact on South African Women Administrators." *Higher Education* 46(2): 129–45. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1024754819125.

Macfarlane, Bruce, and Damon Burg. 2019. "Women Professors and the Academic Housework Trap." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 41(3): 262–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2019.1589682.

McCann, Leo, Edward Granter, Paula Hyde, and Jeremy Aroles. 2020. "'Upon the Gears and Upon the Wheels': Terror Convergence and Total Administration in the Neoliberal University." *Management Learning* 51(4): 431–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507620924162.

McDonald, James. 2013. "Coming Out in the Field: A Queer Reflexive Account of Shifting Researcher Identity." *Management Learning* 44(2): 127–143. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507612473711.

McDonald, James. 2016. "Expanding Queer Reflexivity: The Closet as a Guiding Metaphor for Reflexive Practice." *Management Learning* 47(4): 391–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507615610029.

Melling, Lindsay. 2019. "What's in a Name? Job Title and Working Identity in Professional Services Staff in Higher Education." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 23(2–3): 48–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2018.1535459.

Molesworth, Mike, Elizabeth Nixon, and Richard Scullion. 2009. "Having, Being and Higher Education: The Marketisation of the University and the Transformation of the Student into Consumer." *Teaching in Higher Education* 14(3): 277–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510902898841.

Nixon, Elizabeth, Richard Scullion, and Robert Hearn. 2018. "Her Majesty the Student: Marketized Higher Education and the Narcissistic (Dis)satisfactions of the Student-Consumer." *Studies in Higher Education* 43(6): 927–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1196353.

Nordbäck, Emma, Marko Hakonen, and Janne Tienari. 2021. "Academic Identities and Sense of Place: A Collaborative Autoethnography in the Neoliberal University." *Management Learning* 53(2): 331–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076211006543.

Office for National Statistics (ONS). 2019. "Which Occupations Are at Highest Risk of Being Automated?" https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/whichoccupationsareathighestriskofbeingautomated/2019-03-25. Accessed 24 April 2021.

O'Keefe, Theresa, and Aline Courtois. 2019. "'Not One of the Family': Gender and Precarious Work in the Neoliberal University." *Gender, Work and Organisation* 26(4): 463–79. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12346.

O'Shea, Saoirse Caitlin. 2020. "Working at Gender? An Autoethnography." *Gender, Work and Organization* 27(6): 1438–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12513.

Pereira, Maria do Mar. 2021. "Researching Gender Inequalities in Academic Labor During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Avoiding Common Problems and Asking Different Questions." *Gender, Work and Organization* 28(S2): 498–509. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12618.

Phillips, Mary, Alison Pullen, and Carl Rhodes. 2014. "Writing Organization as Gendered Practice: Interrupting the Libidinal Economy." *Organization Studies* 35(3): 313–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613483656.

Porschitz, Emily T., and Elizabeth A. Siler. 2017. "Miscarriage in the Workplace: An Autoethnography." *Work, Gender and Organization* 24(6): 565–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12181.

Poster, Winifred R., Marion G. Crain, and Miriam A. Cherry. 2016. "Introduction. Conceptualising Invisible Labor." In *Invisible Labor. Hidden Work in the Contemporary World*, edited by Marion G. Crain, Winifred R. Poster, and Miriam A. Cherry, 3–27. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Prasad, Ajnesh. 2013. "Playing the Game and Trying Not to Lose Myself: A Doctoral Student's Perspective on the Institutional Pressures for Research Output." *Organization* 20(6): 936–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508413486274.

Pullen, Alison. 2018. "Writing as Labiaplasty." *Organization* 25(1): 123–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508417735537.

Reay, Diane. 2000. "'Dim Dross': Marginalised Women Both Inside and Outside the Academy." *Women's Studies International Forum* 23(1): 13–21. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-5395(99)00092-8.

Reilly, Amanda, Deborah Jones, Carla Rey Vasquez, and Jayne Krisjanous. 2016. "Confronting Gender Inequality in a Business School." *Higher Education Research and Development* 35(5): 1025–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1138453.

Riad, Sally. 2007. "Under the Desk: On Becoming a Mother in the Workplace." *Culture and Organization* 13(3): 205–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759550701486522.

Rollins, Judith. 1985. *Between Women*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ryttberg, Malin, and Lars Geschwind. 2017. "Professional Support Staff at Higher Education Institutions in Sweden: Roles and Success Factors for the Job." *Tertiary Education and Management* 23(4): 334–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/13583883.2017.1322631.

Savigny, Heather. 2017. "Cultural Sexism Is Ordinary: Writing and Re-writing Women in Academia." *Gender, Work and Organization* 24(6): 643–55. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12190.

Savigny, Heather. 2019. "Cultural Sexism and the UK Higher Education Sector." *Journal of Gender Studies* 28(6): 661–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2019.1597689.

Shepherd, Sue. 2017. "No Room at the Top? The Glass Wall for Professional Services Managers in Pre-1992 English Universities." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 21(4): 129–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2016.1256844.

Sparkes, Andrew C. 2018. "Autoethnography Comes of Age: Consequences, Comforts, and Concerns." In *The Wiley Handbook of Ethnography of Education*, edited by Dennis Beach, Carl Bagley, and Sofia Marques da Silva, 479–500. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell.

Star, Susan Leigh, and Anselm Strauss. 1999. "Layers of Silence, Arenas of Voice: The Ecology of Visible and Invisible Work." *Computer Supported Cooperative Work* 8(1–2): 9–30. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1008651105359.

Steinþórsdóttir, Finnborg S., Fiona Carmichael, and Scott Taylor. 2021. "Gendered Workload Allocation in Universities: A Feminist Analysis of Practices and Possibilities in a European University." *Gender, Work and Organization* 28(5): 1859–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12709.

Stockfelt, Shawanda. 2018. "We the Minority-of-Minorities: A Narrative Inquiry of Black Female Academics in the United Kingdom." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 39(7): 1012–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1454297.

Strauβ, Anke, and Ilaria Boncori. 2020. "Foreign Women in Academia: Double-Strangers Between Productivity, Marginalisation and Resistance." *Gender, Work and Organization* 27(6): 1004–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12432.

Suchman, Lucy. 1995. "Making Work Visible." *Communications of the ACM* 38(9): 56–64. https://doi.org/10.1145/223248.223263.

Szekeres, Judy. 2004. "The Invisible Workers." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26(1): 7–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080042000182500.

Szekeres, Judy. 2011. "Professional Staff Carve Out a New Space." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33(6): 679–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2011.621193.

Teelken, Christine, and Rosemary Deem. 2013. "All Are Equal, But Some Are More Equal Than Others: Managerialism and Gender Equality in Higher Education in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Education* 49(4): 520–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2013.807642.

Tienari, Janne. 2019. "One Flew over the Duck Pond: Autoethnography, Academic Identity, and Language." *Management Learning* 50(5): 576–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507619875887.

Van Amsterdam, Noortje. 2015. "Othering the 'Leaky Body'. An Autoethnographic Story about Expressing Breast Milk in the Workplace." *Culture and Organization* 21(3): 269–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2014.887081.

Veles, Natalia, Margaret-Anne Carter, and Helen Boon. 2019. "Complex Collaboration Champions: University *Third Space Professionals* Working Together across Borders." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 23(2–3): 75–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2018.1428694.

Vidal, Sheila, Raul Laureano, and Margarida Trindade. 2015. "Assessing the Impact of Grant Managers on the Success of Grant Applications." *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 19(3): 84–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2015.1019948.

Wall, Sarah. 2008. "Easier Said Than Done: Writing an Autoethnography." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 7(1): 38–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690800700103.

Wallace, Michelle, and Teresa Marchant. 2011. "Female Administrative Managers in Australian Universities: Not Male and Not Academic." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33(6): 567–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2011.621184.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Warhurst, Chris. 2016. "From Invisible Work to Invisible Workers: The Impact of Service Employers' Speech Demands on the Working Class." In *Invisible Labor. Hidden Work in the Contemporary World*, edited by Marion G. Crain, Winifred R. Poster, and Miriam A. Cherry, 214–36. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Weatherall, Ruth. 2019. "Writing the Doctoral Thesis Differently." *Management Learning* 50(1): 100–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618799867.

Weick, Karl E. 1995. *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Wharton, Amy S. 2009. "The Sociology of Emotional Labour." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35(1): 147–65. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115944.

Whitchurch, Celia. 2006. "Who Do They Think They Are? The Changing Identities of Professional Administrators and Managers in UK Higher Education." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 28(2): 159–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800600751002.

Whitchurch, Celia. 2008. "Shifting Identities and Blurring Boundaries: The Emergency of *Third Space* Professionals in UK Higher Education." *Higher Education Quarterly* 62(4): 377–96. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x.

Winkler, Ingo. 2018. "Doing Autoethnography: Facing Challenges, Taking Choices, Accepting Responsibilities." *Qualitative Inquiry* 24(4): 236–247. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417728956.

Zawadzki, Michał, and Tommy Jensen. 2020. "Bullying and the Neoliberal University: A Co-authored Autoethnography." *Management Learning* 51(4): 398–413. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507620920532.

Zheng, Robin. 2018. "Precarity Is a Feminist Issue: Gender and Contingent Labor in the Academy." *Hypatia* 33(2): 235–55. https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12401.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Kate Seymour is a Lecturer in Sustainability at Manchester Metropolitan Business School. Her research examines democratic organizing within organizations in contesting unsustainable practices and building solidarities. She is interested in using interdisciplinary feminist and ecofeminist perspectives to explicitly consider inequalities, care, and precarity within the context of sustainability practices, policies, and governance.

How to cite this article: Seymour, Kate. 2022. "Circling the Divide: Gendered Invisibility, Precarity, and Professional Service Work in a UK Business School." *Gender, Work & Organization*: 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12933.

14680432, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12933 by Manchester Metropolitan University, Wiley Online Library on [01/12/2022]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License