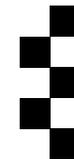


**ESSEX  
BUSINESS  
SCHOOL**

# **Careers, mobility and belonging: The ascent of foreign women academics in UK business schools?**

**Martyna Śliwa  
CYGNA Meeting  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

---



University of Essex

# Outline

---

- Institutional and broader societal context
- Contemporary academic careers
- Empirical insights into the experiences of and challenges faced by foreign women academics working in UK business schools
- Individual and collective strategies and approaches to address potential obstacles

# Institutional context

---

- Development of mass education
- Changes in HE funding landscape
  - Rise in student fees and debt
  - Internationalisation of HE as a means of generating income for universities
- Trend towards gaining international accreditation
- Increase in the number of non-British born academic staff at UK universities

## Broader societal context

---

- Economic downturn as a result of global financial crisis
- Political disenfranchisement of sections of UK population
- Deep societal divisions along age, class, education, regional differences, race and nationality
- Brexit referendum outcome
  - Crisis of education, criticisms of 'experts', anti-intellectualism
  - Rise in instances of racism and xenophobia as well as anti-racist and anti-hatred campaigns

# Contemporary academic careers

---

- Mobility as an integral aspect of (professional) lives of academics
- Orientation towards performance measurement and output control
- Multiple expectations placed upon academics: production of research outputs, delivery of excellent teaching, securing external funding
- Increasing uncertainty of academic careers
- Engagement, investment and 'mobilisation' beyond the organisational context, in-between privilege and disadvantage
- High risks coupled with unprecedented opportunities

# Experiences of foreign women academics

---

- Different experiences and views of the role of one's agency in shaping one's own career and position in the workplace
- Complexities of fitting and not fitting in
- Challenges arising as consequences of mobility
- Obstacles stemming from external constraints and limiting self-beliefs
- Multiple professional progression opportunities, in many cases exceeding those available to women academics in countries of origin

## **Strategies for counteracting possible obstacles**

---

- Develop self-knowledge:
  - Can you recognise your own patterns of thoughts and actions?
  - Do you know what you would like to accomplish?
- Understand the system:
  - Macro-level trends and possible future developments
  - Meso-level conditions and norms
  - Micro-level politics and expectations
- Refuse to internalise or be defined by systemic constraints

## **Strategies for counteracting possible obstacles**

---

- Seek advice from and connection with like-minded people, mentors and peers
- Actively look for opportunities
- Contribute to building the community: care and collaborate
- Be a good organisational citizen but set boundaries
- Become part of a broader network, organise!
- Take on positions of responsibility and authority
- 'Go for it' yourself, and help others!