

Mobilities, Gender and Time
A Case Study of Researcher Careers in the
Social Sciences and Humanities.

Conference on the Critical Analysis of Migration, Labour Markets
and Gender
Peripherie, October 30th, Graz, Austria

Professor Louise Ackers
University of Liverpool, UK



Why Researcher Mobility?

Intra-EU mobility is predominantly the mobility of [highly] skilled people

Significance of researcher mobility to the knowledge economy (and economic growth)

Area of employment/career where the gender pay gap has failed to narrow and where the 'mobility imperative' has increased

Are these facts linked (mobility, career progression and the pay gap)?

Experiences of researchers will be similar to other 'knowledge workers'

Is there a [Gender] Problem?

The under-representation of women threatens the goals of science in achieving excellence, as well as being wasteful and unjust

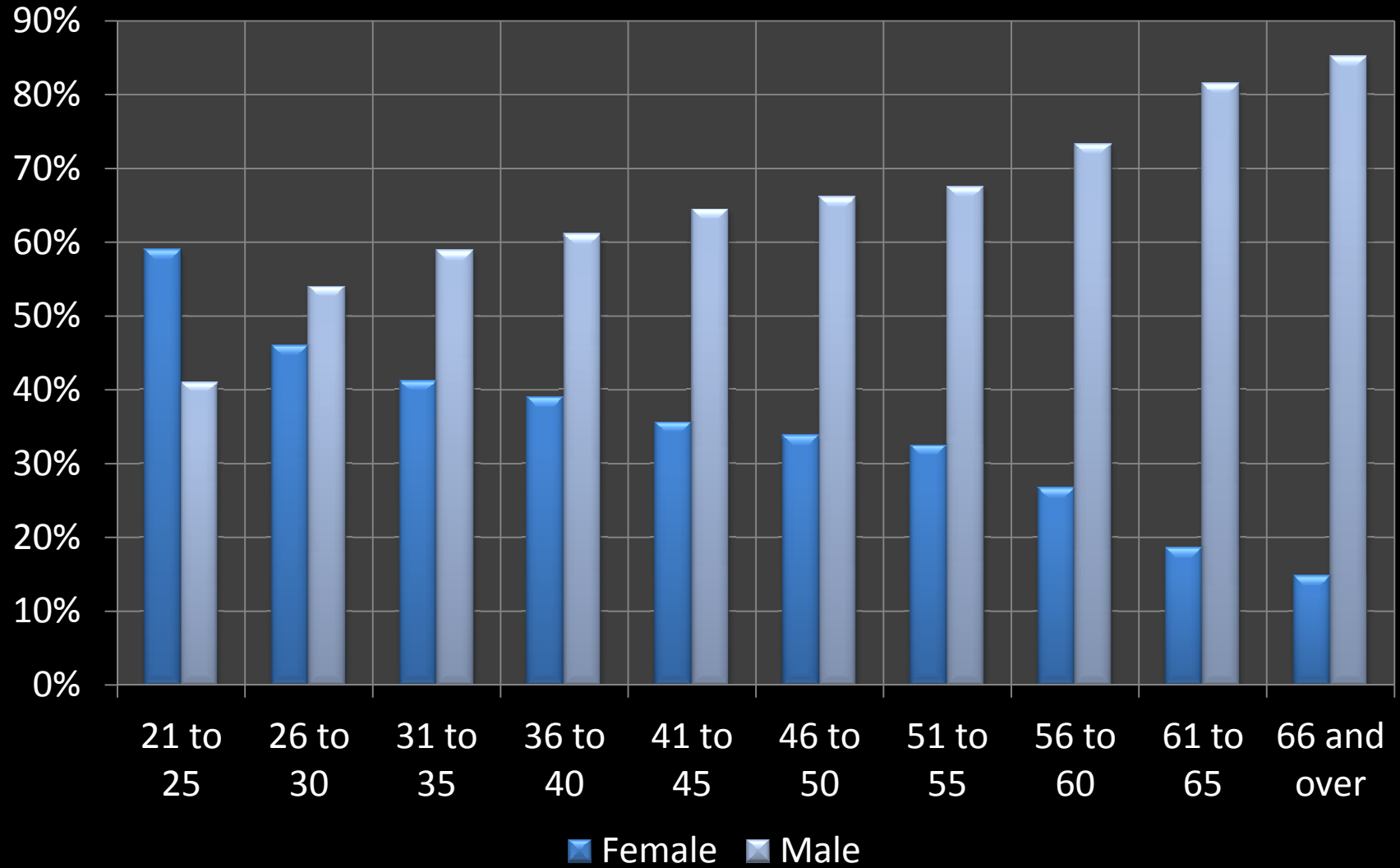
(CEC, 2000 ETAN Report).

The gender imbalance in science, engineering and technology threatens to weaken the country's competitive economic position.

We must ensure that every woman scientist has the same career opportunities and rewards as her male counterparts.

(UK Greenfield Report 2002)

Non-UK Research Only /Research and Teaching Staff in Russell Group HEIs by Age and Gender 2008-09





WHAT DO SOCIAL SCIENTISTS DO?

MAPPING CAREERS, MOBILITIES AND IMPACTS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES.

March 2012-August 2014

Lead investigator: Professor Louise Ackers of the University of Liverpool
with Chris Coey



- Population/capacity in Social Sciences and Humanities
- Mobilities and Career Paths
- Contributions/Impacts

Methods (13 countries)

- Policy Analysis
- Research Review
- Secondary Analysis
- On-Line Survey (n=2724)
- In-depth qualitative Interviews (n=350)

Today's Presentation (empirical base)

- Based on the qualitative interviews
- Rough coded into broad categories
- 'Gender Node' – everything respondents said about gender
- Read through all the text and re-coded this
- Results: analysis grounded entirely in respondents' comments – inductive (grounded theory) approach (NOT hypothesis testing)
- Then I looked for other research/literature to substantiate empirical material

The Importance of Time

Overwhelming majority of interviewees responding to questions concerning gender, mobility and career framed their responses around 'time'.

Time or temporality emerges in complex and multi-faceted ways in the interviews.

[It was NOT specifically asked about in this study – was in MOBISC]

The results confirm previous findings underlining the importance of working hours in research both to the attractiveness of science careers (and the ability to recruit and retain men and women) and to their progression.

(Ackers 2003; Ackers, 2007; Perista;2008)

This work identified long and unpredictable (unplannable) working hours as a key factor resulting in the attrition of women.

Daily Routines and 'Flexibility and Availability'

- Long working schedules – over-hours/anti-social working/ lack of paid overtime
- Common concern - work may continue into the early evening/early morning *and* the nature of the work commitments at that time of day may be of particular significance
(participatory rights and the functional use of time).

*I have constraints related to timing, the fact that I am a mum. I have to pick up my son from the nursery. That sometimes bothers me because I would like to stay longer and **participate in certain meetings.***

One of the problems for women who had children was that the department meeting started at 5pm and went on until 9pm. This is the worst time for people with children. So why not move meetings like that?

Indirect Discrimination: Presenteeism and 'Invisibility'

Refers to time and the impact that having maternity leave and subsequently working part-time has on her productivity:

Objectively there are obvious inequalities [limiting] your chances. I didn't have disadvantages specifically from maternity leave ... my adviser [she] was very understanding .

*The problems are that if you want to take time precisely to the minimum of what's permitted, in effect you **disappear**, and in my department if you're not there then you **don't exist**. You don't get into projects, you don't figure in the research groups, you **don't get in**.*

Italian mother of two children.

A Broader Approach to Performance Metrics? Valuing Multi-tasking and Organisational Skills

*I am sitting on the selection committee, I think it is very positive when people have a family and children. Because it really demonstrates that they are **able to do everything**.*

*To manage family plus career. It is also an issue of whether you are a **stable** or **reliable** person, so there is a signalling from being a family, which is positive.*

In my environment there are a lot of divorces and no children but successful careers.

German Male

The Working Week – Workload Management

Expectation of very long and anti-social working hours and weekend working

Serious concerns about the impacts of part-time working (perceptions of **'commitment'**)

Do you not think it would be possible to become a professor **and** have children?

No because I have a 20-hour week and I work about 33. Overtime is not paid. There is no time for anything (French woman)

Interviewer: Is that a difficult sacrifice to make?

Yes, I am not very happy but I think it is the only way. Because if I don't work I think my supervisor next time there is a question about my contract or whether to prolong my contract I need his support and if he thinks I am lazy or whatever he will not support me with my contract. [German Woman]

Buchinger, Gödl and Gschwandtner coin the phrase '**Working Time without Borders**' to describe typical working hours in an Austrian study on the reconciliation of work and family in science careers (2002).

According to their research, typical working hours range from 50 hours for more junior lecturers to 80 hours for professors with evening or night work very widespread.

Conceptions of 'Flexibility' and 'Choice' in Research

In universities working hours are generally quite flexible .. provided that you **work hard** and get things done...research is not a nine-to-five activity.

(Rothwell 2002 Advice to new researchers)

Academics work very long hours but can **choose** them – there's less clocking in and out ... Despite the intensity of the work, people go into academia because they are **passionate** about it.

(UK Union Leader)

Concepts of 'Commitment' and 'Availability'

It's a practical issue in the sense that, 'as soon as you have a child and I can't call on you', with good reason because you have hours and responsibilities that are for a while going to be different.

It's seen as no good because you're not at 100% availability. So I said to myself that I couldn't do the career that I might have done, not any more.

[Italian Mother]

'Testing' Commitment (Bullying?)

It's never, 'because you've had a child'. The excuses go from 'because I don't like the way work is being done'.

*A kind of psychological pressure starts that I experienced too. 'This job isn't done right, this isn't good' a kind of **continual, constant discouraging.***

[They may say] 'look in your place I'm going to bring ahead someone who maybe is behind you.'

*It's as if to say 'I'm getting rid of this one, I'm going to make her go... so that I can make room for this one here who'll **always tell me "yes"** and keep going on his job.*

If he's a man he wouldn't cause this issue about being away for three, four or five months were he ever to have kids in the family'.

Temporality and Life Course

Time emerges in other ways in the context of broader life course issues:

- Holidays (and school holidays)
- Time for periods of mobility (from short to long stays)
- Time for maternity/ parental leave/ caring
- Time Poverty/ pressures (life course) – have to ‘choose’ professional career or family (link to commitment)

*The problem is the **'rushhour' of life courses***

Especially women experience the gap between professional and family life.

Motherhood, if ever possible, [will take place] in the mid to late thirties or even early forties. There is time and personal support missing.

I had an offer for a professorship in Switzerland last year. I was pregnant [so] I decided not to handle both.

Interviewer: Was that a difficult decision?

Of course it was. But it has nothing to do with leaving comfort zones or whatever is said about the glass-ceiling phenomenon.

*It's more the **practical lack of time** and support. And probably an infrastructure to raise a child with a challenging new post on the top.*

'Low-hanging fruits' and Career Progression

*I am emphasising this period just after finishing PHD and going forward. That was a **critical junction** and it is even more complicated for women.*

As a male researcher I am in a much better position to manage this period. There is another layer of complexity for female researchers.

*I would like you to take really seriously the gender dimension. Many researchers are married, so the career path for women in the early post doc period I think is something that you can easily find [women grasping] **low hanging fruits**.*

Norwegian Male working in Czech republic

Time for Child Bearing and Child Care

Inadequacy of (paid) Maternity Leave:

I was a single mother and maternity provisions (in the UK) were not very good, especially compared to the German system. I had 4 months maternity leave and then went right back to full time work.

(Cultural) Concepts of 'Good Mothering' – Competing Time Pressures

I am a mum who is a 'sitting hen'. I never wanted to work immediately... For me personally, that's the most important. My priority is looking after my children.

*What **children want and need is time**. And when you do not have this time by yourself, you hand them over to someone else. And each woman has to deal with it. With the time she spends with her children she may not be able to proceed with the next step in her career.*

Guilt and Time

*Mothers often give [professional life] up for the family. It is never easy to get back on track after being home for a year or two. You have to function differently. I was really worried that **my children suffer** because of it. It was really hard and even though I try to balance it out as well as possible, I still feel I could **give my kids more**.*

Swedish Mother who returned to work

The Impact on Fertility

The thing was to have children as late as possible, that was common knowledge and we even joked about it among ourselves (Italian woman)

We are not planning any kind of family because I want to do my professorship and I think there is no time for children (laughs). (German woman)

VIENNA INSTITUTE OF DEMOGRAPHY

Working Papers 1 / 2011

Isabella Buber, Caroline Berghammer, and Alexia Prskawetz

Doing Science, Forgoing Childbearing? Evidence from a Sample of Female Scientists in Austria

‘Female scientists aged 40-45 have 0.9 children on average and 44% remain childless’.

‘Several obstacles which impede childbearing were identified:

- Strong work commitment of the female scientists,
- **Need to be geographically mobile**
- High **prevalence of living apart together relationships.**

[Positive/Normal] Role Models

The climate I found in Germany [was] not very welcoming to women. The one factor that strongly spoke against Germany it's definitely that I have the feeling that I have a better chance in the US to be a female faculty member and to have a kid.

[There are] a lot of females in the department I joined and most of them have kids or want to have kids. It's definitely encouraged and supported [in the US]. In Germany the percentage of female professors is still super low.

In the US I just saw many role models - many more females living this life.

Dimensions of Time and Relationships between Geography (Distance) and Temporality

- ***Time***

From daily schedules, weekly, annual through to 'life course'

- ***Mobility – Migration Continuum***

From daily commuting through short stay international mobility, shuttle migrations, seasonal migrations to labour 'migrations' (settlement migration)

- Intersections of these

Time and Mobility

- Length of stay (temporal quality of mobility) presents different challenges
- Effect of 'immobility' on career choices and progression (exit academic research or fail to progress within it)
- Effect of partnering (marriage) and/or parenting on mobility and career
- Managing professional life with children in a LATs situation (when husband lives abroad)

Partnering and Mobility

'The strongest negative effect of marriage on scientific attainment is the constraint on mobility that it imposes. Since scientific promotions and pay increases are often tied to a change in employment, women's limited geographic mobility may, in part, account for gender differences in career attainments' (Kidd and Green, 2006)

'The tendency for women to have a partner who is older (and hence likely to be more advanced in their career) and from the same or similar discipline means a woman is more likely to follow her partner to a new location, to the detriment of her career' (Greenfield, 2002)

Planning for Mobility: Ubiquitous Careers?

Many women enter into such careers as nursing and primary education in anticipation of their future gender roles as mothers who need flexible work hours and as trailing wives who need to have a job that is in demand in any locality (Cooke, 2003) .

It is now much more likely (although still less common) that the woman will have a more prestigious and financially more rewarding job than her partner and one might therefore expect more households to move on behalf of the woman's, rather than the man's, job; the trailing spouse could be a man. In fact, this seems to remain a relatively uncommon practice even when the female partner has a higher-ranking occupation than the male partner (Boyle, Cooke et al, 1999).

'Trailing Wives' - Choice or Constraint?

I wanted to be recognized professionally but at the same time my wife was not that keen to live abroad (in Ethiopia)

She said, 'no way I don't want to move' but then when the guy in Germany said it's take it or leave it she said 'let's give it a try'.

I would say it has shaped my professional career. If I was not married I would have gone to one of the universities where research was also part of my responsibilities.

[German married male living in Ethiopia]

Immobility?

I hoped that I would be able to [work in] an international organisation and that my PhD would help me to get a career in this field.

But then I got married and my husband refused to leave so I had to stay here and I didn't get a proper job in the field I wanted.

Now it is quite helpful for me being a lawyer but it was not perfect when I was starting. [The decision to become self-employed] was pure necessity.

It was because my husband refused to move. I had to give up on this because I would not have a chance.

'Partial Migrations: 'Living Apart Together'

My husband worked abroad and we were commuting between [Italy] and England. It was extremely difficult. It takes a lot of determination, a trial...

Does this stop a lot of colleagues from trying to have experience abroad?

Yes, I think [it affects] primarily women more than male colleagues because, for our culture it's not well accepted [for men to follow women]. Generally 'the woman should follow' is the way it is.

This is a general societal problem [which] turns up too in academia - if a man doesn't have a job it seems a scandal whereas if a woman doesn't have one that's quite accepted. The question is why?

Partial Migrations/ Transnationalism?

- Laura is British and aged 35.
- First degree, Masters and Doctorate in history at same British University (in-breeding/"immobility?)
- One year before submitting PhD she moved to Germany to take up a (6 year) fellowship. Her researcher husband (Dave) joined her.
- In the first year she married and had a baby.
- Dave returned to the UK to take up a lectureship visiting her at weekends.
- Laura left her position in Germany after 4 years to take up a permanent lectureship in the UK, concerned at the limited prospects of obtaining secure employment in Germany.
- She works in a British city some 400km distant from where Dave is living and working.
- Pregnant with her second child.
- Dave now seeking to return to Germany on a fellowship
- Both doing habilitation.

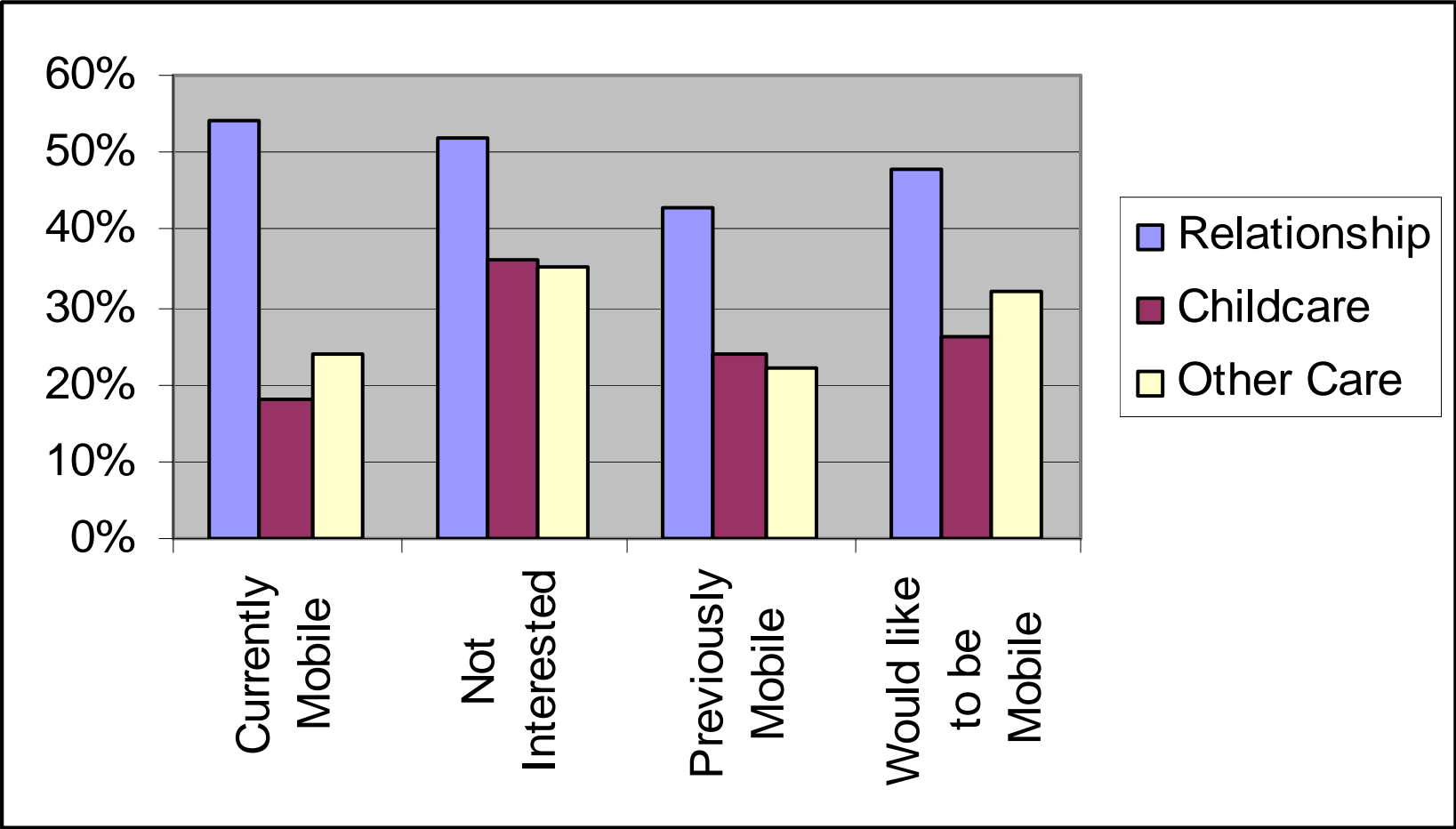
Cox (2008):

‘There was a view among some of the highly mobile researchers profiled that **mobility makes family life extremely difficult.**

The increasing necessity for dual income families, the difficulties in maintaining two careers and the problems encountered in moving families and partners abroad have emerged as clear inhibiting factors.

The problem of **having to “choose” between a research career and family or relationship** was frequently mentioned

Researcher's Mobility Status by Experienced or Anticipated Difficulties (Cox, 2008)



Business Transnationalism and Work-Life Balance

Contemporary mobilities of highly skilled best characterised as a form of **business transnationalism**
– doesn't recognise borders or distance as a barrier to communication and collaboration.

Places a high expectation on **fluid** and **reactive** forms of on-going (unpredictable) travel at national and international level.

Gender Implications?

Peter – historian

18 months of his PhD in Spain.

Since then 10-12 visits per year (using Easy jet) – for the last 10 years

Would NOT show up in migration/mobility statistics?

But is he international?

Repeat/shuttle mobility – highly place-oriented/contextualised

'Virtual Migrations'

'In particle physics, it doesn't make that much of a difference (where we live). We always joke at the conferences that we bump into the same people and they say, 'I've changed jobs but all that's changed is my email address. You're still working with the same people'.

'Some people do [re-locate] some people don't. One of the students who finished his PhD here moved to a [position]. It is still based at CERN so he was going to move. His home institute was actually a Canadian institute but he never goes there. He works at CERN so it didn't really make much of a difference to him'. [...]

It doesn't necessarily matter where your home institute is. **You have to be prepared to travel all the time but the pressure to live abroad is declining** as the opportunities for remote access and shorter meeting-related trips increase'.

Conferences and Critical Relationships

- Knowledge Transfer/ Dissemination
- 'Peacocking'
- Accessing information about jobs (to apply)
- Direct access to positions
- Building project teams
- Finding hosts to place grants
- Accessing publication opportunities
- Achieving impact

Conclusions?

- Relationship between time and mobilities is critical to understanding career progression of women – in research but more broadly.
- The mobility imperative – whether conceptualised in terms of long term migrations or short term ‘business travel’ generates unintended consequences that impact disproportionately on women.

Policy Options?

More evidence-based approach to metrics (measure what is of value – outcomes not processes).

Support those processes – esp opportunities for short stays/conferences and esp at early career level

Change attitudes – of employers/managers, male partners/fathers and ourselves as ‘good enough’ mothers, employees and role models