In this paper, I explore the policy discourses of teaching which have unfolded under the New Labour and Coalition governments. In particular, I look at how education policies regulate entry in the teaching profession and shape who can(not) be a teacher, with particular attention to how such discourses are gendered. It is argued that many policy texts are based on the problematic assumption that the normative and statistical feminisation of teaching is to be resisted and that, on the contrary, the masculinisation of the profession is a desirable aim. However, it is also argued that, according to these discourses, all types of masculinities are not desirable in education and that the way gender plays out in these discourses interacts with other identity markers such as social class.

This paper is informed by feminist theories of work and education which have looked at the reproduction of gender patterns, as well as to their variability across time and space (e.g. Connell, 1987; Crompton, 1999; Skelton, 2002, 2007; Skelton et al, 2006). A range of governmental reports and other policy texts will be subjected to a discourse analysis, ranging from the 1998 Green paper calling for a reprofessionalisation of the teaching profession (DfEE, 1998) to the more recent 2010 White paper (DfE, 2010) announcing, among other things, the launch of the Troops to Teachers programme.

References:


