

**ACADEMIC IDENTITY IN A PERFORMATIVE AND MARKETISED
ENVIRONMENT: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

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Abstract

This thesis reports a study of academic identity in two English universities of different type and status during the period 2012 to 2013. It explores the effects on academic identity of policy developments which have reconfigured the relationship between academics, students and government since the late 1970s. These developments have resulted in a change to the university working environment from one in which academics enjoyed relative autonomy in their academic practice, to one in which work is increasingly directed by externally imposed performative and marketised priorities. The most recent policy developments were introduced by the 2010 UK Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition Government and included major changes to the funding of university education in England. This has resulted in the withdrawal of government funding for non-laboratory based disciplines, the tripling of tuition fees to £9,000 per annum, and the transferal of the burden of funding from the state to students.

Within this context this thesis aims to provide insights into the impact of performative and marketised policies on academic identity. In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty academics in the arts and humanities disciplines at two contrasting English universities: a 'new' university, which was a teaching-intensive and locally focussed Post-1992 institution; and an 'old' university, which was a research-intensive and globally focussed Pre-1992 institution. These universities

were chosen because they represented contrasting types of English university in a stratified system.

Anthony Giddens' theories of structuration and identity formation have been adopted as a theoretical framework to underpin the research design and subsequent analysis. His theory of structuration has been used because it allows investigation of the relationship between structure and agency in academic identity formation in the contemporary university.

Several themes emerged from the interview data, highlighting common threads as well as divergences between the academics in the two different universities. It was found that all the academics are able to construct positive narratives of academic identity within the performative and marketised environment. These findings challenge a body of literature which presents a pessimistic view of the opportunities for academic identity formation in the contemporary environment. However, this positive identity is sensitive to environmental influences, with a key point of divergence for the two groups of academics being the freedom and opportunity to engage in scholarly research at their respective universities. Within this policy environment some academics in the teaching-intensive university were therefore faced with the choice of adapting their academic identity or of fostering a feeling of inauthenticity. These findings have important implications for universities and government in terms of the implications for academic practice, the relationship between academics and students, and conceptions of the purposes of higher education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: English University Policy Reform

Introduction

This thesis reports a study of academic identity in two English universities of different type and status during the period 2012 to 2013. It explores the effects on academic identity of policy developments which have reconfigured the relationship between academics, students and government since the late 1970s. These developments have resulted in a change to the university working environment from one in which academics enjoyed relative autonomy in their academic practice, to one which is increasingly directed by externally imposed performative and marketised priorities.

Throughout the thesis I use the term ‘academic identity’ as Anthony Giddens (1991, p.53) does: “as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography.” From this perspective, what must be investigated are backgrounds and motivations of individual academics and their experiences and perceptions of their working lives. The concept of working lives encompasses the idea that academic work is a social practice. For Giddens (1984) recurrent social practices form social institutions such as family groups, nation states, or in the case under consideration here, English universities. My research consisted of semi-structured interviews with 20 academics in two different English universities during 2012 and 2013: a teaching-intensive and locally focussed Post-92 institution and a research-intensive and globally focussed Pre-92 institution. My goal was to understand academic identity and practice in a working environment in which priorities and rewards are focussed toward outward measures, rather than inward satisfactions.

Across the globe, engagement in higher education contributes significant economic, social and health benefits to individuals and to the society they live in (OECD, 2013). Within the UK, higher education is a large undertaking: during the academic year 2012/13 there were 162 higher education institutions (HEIs) in operation, a UK student population of 2.3 million, and the sector had total income of £29.1 billion and a total expenditure of £27.9 billion (UUK, 2014a). Key to the success of HEIs are the academics who teach, research and manage the institutions. In 2012/13 HEIs employed 382,515 staff, of whom 122,500 were full-time academic members of staff and 63,085 were part-time (UUK, 2014a). In the UK, HEIs are under pressure from the government for the sector to be financially more efficient (BIS, 2014). The higher education environment is also becoming increasingly more competitive, with competition between institutions and between HEI systems in different countries for student and research income (Amsler, 2011). In such an environment research into academic identity is important for institutions and government as they seek to gain advantage; and, it is important for academics who might want to articulate and defend what they view as the purpose of their role and of their academic practice.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide context for this research and justify the research problem. I chart how policy changes since the 1970s have culminated in a mass higher education sector in which academic practice is under increased scrutiny, subject to the pressures of marketisation, and most recently within England has witnessed the reframing of students as consumers. Having made the argument for a specific performative and marketised working environment, I identify the research problem this thesis seeks to address and explain my own position in the research. I

end by providing an overview of the structure and the content of each chapter of the thesis.

The performative working environment

The categorisation of the intellectual and physical development of societies into distinct eras has been a concern of social theorists. Anthony Giddens (1991), whose theories underpin my research, argues that since the late nineteenth century the developed world has been in the age of modernity, which is characterised by the loss of ritual and tradition and by nation states and capitalist economies. While post-modernists such as Jean Lyotard (1984) and Jean-Francois Baudrillard (1994) argue that universal social theories or ‘meta-narratives’ about society are no longer relevant, Giddens (ibid) contends that we are a particular period of modernity which he calls late or high modernity in which ‘globalisation’ has impacted on social and political life. For Giddens, the term ‘globalisation’ refers to technological developments that have removed barriers of time and space across the globe, breaking down local and national communication and trade boundaries, resulting in a fundamental change in economic and social conditions across the world:

Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. (Giddens, 1991, p64)

Globalisation has accelerated the internationalisation of production and trade at an unprecedented speed (Enders, 2004; Scott, 2005). In the latter half of the twentieth

century a specific set of political and economic policies and principles known as ‘neoliberalism’ (in Europe) have prevailed alongside globalisation, characterised by the deregulation, privatisation and freedom of markets in goods and services (Davies et al. 2006). Within this environment, the state’s role is to provide economic incentives and managerial techniques to create optimum conditions for competition and entrepreneurial activity (Duncan, 2007). A prominent critic of neoliberalism is David Harvey (2005) who states that:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (Harvey, 2005, p2)

In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), Harvey outlines how neoliberalism has become the dominant organising principle in modern society. Harvey identifies the period 1978-80 as the years that neoliberal policies became politically and culturally acceptable with the election of ‘right-wing’ governments in the UK and USA. It was during this period that the dominant global economic discourse of Keynesian policies (whereby the state and public sector had a significant role in financial and political life) was replaced by neoliberal policies (Olssen and Peters, 2005).

Audit and performance management mechanisms characterise neoliberal policies, and have gradually effected fundamental changes in the management of all

workplaces, including universities. They are perceived as a form of detailed control, whereby the performance of individuals and institutions is monitored and subjected to 'quality control' and the 'measurement of outcomes', with funding and pay often reliant on successful performance (O'Neill, 2002). The impact of these controls is described by Michael Power (2003) as an 'audit explosion'.

The benefits of the practices of audit and performance monitoring are contested, with critics arguing that claims to objectivity and rationality are assumed rather than proven (Power, 1994, 2014; Inglis, 2000; Ball, 2010). Lyotard (1984) argued for a 'law of contradiction' in what he called 'performativity': that is, energies invested in performance monitoring reduce energies for improving processes. Moreover, critics of its modes of regulation see professional autonomy and expertise undermined, which they describe as 'de-professionalisation' (Ball, 2000; Avis, 2003; Powers, 2003; Gleeson and Knights, 2006). Rose (1990) proposes that the 'neoliberal professional' in competitive, 'target-driven' working environments thinks as an individual, rather than as in a collective with fellow professionals, and that work identity is formed by a success in performance measures. In such an environment, workers can be subject to stress and dissatisfaction and become ontologically insecure (Giddens, 1991; Elizabeth and Grant, 2013), unsure whether they are doing enough, or doing the right thing, always under pressure to improve and be 'excellent' (Green, 2006; Ball, 2010). Nevertheless, the audit culture is evident in most professions (Nixon, Marks, Rowland and Walker, 2001; O'Neill, 2002; Gleeson and Knights, 2006).

In many ways, the academic workplace has not been immune to the audit culture, the pressures of which have been evident for several decades. I will here begin to use the term 'performative' to denote working conditions in which work is subject to audit, measurement and pressures to meet targets. Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion (2011) argue that the state is a prime agent in establishing and perpetuating the predominance of performativity in higher education. This type of control is achieved by the strategic use of finances, policy and the language used to describe the purposes of modern universities. It is argued widely that performativity challenges traditional conceptions of academic work as the various roles of the academic are placed in competition with each other, and as a consequence some academics have reported a sense of anomie and isolation in the workplace as academic collegiality is undermined (Nixon et al. 2001; Beck and Young, 2005; Schulz, 2013; Power, 2014). There is evidence of these detrimental effects in empirical research into academic perceptions across the globe. For example, Becher and Trowler (2001), who researched across the UK and North America; Davies, Gottsche and Bansel (2006) in Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and the US; and Churchman and King (2009) in Australia present evidence that academics believe that their work is restricted and controlled by performative practices, which privilege and reward activities which are perceived to have an economic use value. Olssen and Peters (2005, p313) summarise the modern university workplace:

The traditional professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate has been replaced with an institutional stress on performativity, as evidenced by the emergence of an emphasis on measured outputs: on strategic planning, performance indicators, quality assurance measures and academic audits.

However, Strathern (2000) identifies a potential conflict for the academic community if they critique audit as a principle. This is because transparency and widening access, which are cited as an intended outcome audit, are in accord with values which academics generally value.

The context of performative working conditions therefore motivated my research: I wanted to explore, on the one hand, whether I could discern detrimental effects suggested by literature or, on the other, whether academics had adapted to being ‘transparent’ in the sense proposed by Strathern. I was aware, though, that the UK higher education sector has also been subject to specific changes would have contextual implications for this research, as explored in the next sections.

Loss of autonomy within a mass higher education sector

Within this performative environment, the UK higher education sector has undergone significant changes which have resulted in a loss of academic autonomy alongside a growth in size. During the twentieth and twenty first centuries, higher education in the UK grew from a small sector, with relatively few institutions and small student numbers, to a large scale undertaking known as ‘mass’ higher education (Trow, 1973; Clark, 1983; Scott, 1995; UUK, 2014b). This expansion began with the recommendations of what is known as the Robbins Report (1963) which was a response to an increased population of young people in the post-war years and pressure to improve economic productivity from the workforce (Maclure, 1965; Statham, Mckinnon, Cathcart and Hales, 1991). The Robbins Report explicitly recommended that expansion should be without the loss either of academic freedom

or academic excellence. At that time the government funded higher education but it was accepted that it had no legitimate right to dictate the work of universities and the expertise of academics was unchallengeable.

Traditionally, academics have enjoyed a high degree of self-regulation over their time and the content of their work (McInnes, 1992). Halsey (1992) refers to the post-war years as a golden age due to the apparently ready supply of funding and lack of government interference. In 1976 this 'golden age' was challenged by the Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan in a speech at Ruskin College, Oxford, which began a 'great debate' on the future of education at the heart of which was a question about the extent to which schools should be accountable to the state and to the public (Callaghan, 1976). Some commentators argue that this was the beginning of the performative culture and the adoption of the view that government had a legitimate right to have a say over the direction of the education system, whatever the sector (see, for example, Doherty, 1997; Farrell and Law, 1999). While Callaghan's speech and the subsequent debate was focused on compulsory education, it established the terms of debates about the purpose and autonomy of higher education institutions in the 1980s. In that decade a radical restructuring of higher education and its funding began with the privatisation policy operated by a Conservative government (Miller, 1995; Woods, 2002). The 1985 *Jarratt Report* introduced the language of managerialism into the higher education sector, arguing that universities should be viewed, and managed, as corporate enterprises (Shore and Wright, 2000). The 1988 *Education Reform Act* removed the security of tenure for many academic staff in traditional universities, which Shore and Wright (2000) argue was a guarantee of freedom of speech, as well as of job security.

These developments culminated in *The Further and Higher Education Act 1992* which ended the 'binary divide', with polytechnics becoming universities,¹ which homogenised the higher education sector because universities, polytechnics and some colleges of higher education became subject to the same regulatory regime. The polytechnics, created in the mid-1960s had been subject to close control through the allocation of funding and controls over the courses they ran, while the university sector remained largely autonomous. The removal of the binary divide in 1992 removed polytechnics from local authority control, but subjected the sector as a whole to a quality assurance regime under the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. It also introduced greater financial accountability to central government, leading in a reduction in the autonomy of the Pre-92 universities (Kogan and Hanney, 2000). Now all higher education institutions were competing for the same limited pool of resources (Scott, 1997; Kogan and Hanney, 2000; Bryson, 2004).

The loss of autonomy for universities during this period was reinforced in government-led reviews² which argued that they should be increasingly accountable to various stakeholders, including government, but also the public (Evans, 1999). These stakeholders, it is argued, both contribute to and benefit from higher education. David Blunkett (2000), when Secretary of State for Education and Employment, identified the following stakeholders: students (who benefit from higher learning), government (in pursuit of social justice and meaningful social inclusion), and business and commerce (gaining economic benefit through a skilled workforce or through research). General consensus at the time was that the primary stakeholder

¹ The terms Pre-92 and Post-92 are commonly used to identify when individual HEIs became universities in respect of the 1992 Act.

² The 1996 report of the Nolan Committee and the 1997 Dearing Report.

was the government, with funding and an associated pressure to demonstrate value for money appearing to be the main driver behind the need for the sector to be accountable (Green, 1994; Pounder, 1999; O'Neill, 2002). However, since the late 1990s in the UK, with the introduction of undergraduate tuition fees and the prominence of the National Student Survey³, students have become more visible and powerful stakeholders. This period of time has also seen the growth of newspaper league tables and global rankings which has caught universities in a 'status-incentive trap', where the desire for status is of primary importance as it is seen as a means to enhance their ability to recruit students and attract research funding (Olssen and Peters, 2005; Marginson, 2011). Post-92 universities in particular have been forced to justify their status by engagement and compliance with league tables (Jones-Devitt and Samiei, 2011). However, due to the prominence of research in league tables, teaching focussed Post-92 institutions are at a disadvantage to research-focussed Pre-92 universities (Marginson and van der Wende, 2007; Amsler and Bolsmann, 2012). Scott (1997) and Bryson (2004) argue that the removal of the binary divide has not homogenised the sector but simply resulted in increased diversity of the institutions that are classified as universities, and diversified the role of academics. They argue that although the UK has a unified system, there still exists a level of stratification within it based on the Pre and Post-92 divide. Research intensive Pre-92 universities are considered more prestigious, perform better in league tables due to the weight accorded to research in these mechanisms, and generally have received greater public funding as they have larger research income streams than their Post-92 compatriots. Post-92 institutions are perceived as less prestigious and find themselves at a disadvantage when competing for student and research income.

³ A survey of student satisfaction among final year undergraduate students, introduced in 2005.

The movement to a mass system of higher education in the UK has led to a homogenisation of the academic workplace in respect to accountability to external stakeholders, which has eroded the traditional autonomy of universities. While the 1992 Act aimed to produce a more egalitarian higher education system, it has been argued above that there remains stratification across the sector, focussing on the differentiation in status between Pre and Post-92 institutions. Hence, to be an academic in the UK is to work in an environment which may appear to be homogenous, but in practice is diverse. More recently, within the UK devolution has led to differentiation in university policy between the countries of the UK, as will be discussed in the next section.

The devolved nature of UK higher education responsibility

In this section I explore how a higher education sector which has been subject to homogenisation and the erosion of autonomy has in recent decades also experienced a diverging of higher education policy across the four countries of the UK. Since the 1990s the UK government has approved constitutional changes which have resulted in the devolution of power from Westminster to new legislatures and executives in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Court, 2004; Bruce, 2012). Higher education is a devolved policy area, with public funds distributed by independent funding councils in the four countries, which each stipulate their own conditions and regulatory controls. These funding councils have existed since 1993, and were formed following the removal of the binary divide in order to integrate government funding for universities and the former polytechnics and colleges of higher education. They gained greater powers following the formation of the devolved parliaments in

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1999 (Court, 2004). The three devolved countries have similar legislative powers enabling them to make decisions on the use of resources and the direction of their higher education systems according to their own national priorities (Bruce, 2012).

The funding of higher education has seen a clear divergence between the different countries in regard to how much to allocate to higher education from their devolved budgets and subsequently how to allocate this funding between different higher education activities. Court (2004) highlights how the funding formulas for teaching and research have differed, with Scotland allocating greater resources for teaching per student than the other countries, and how the weightings in the funding formulae which are attached to each rating in the UK-wide Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) have differed. In England there has been a tendency to make the funding of research more selective by focussing funding on higher ratings, while the other countries have adopted a more egalitarian distribution of research funding across all ratings.

Divergence between the different countries is also evident in different perspectives on the purposes of higher education. Within England there has latterly been an emphasis on the role of higher education in developing and maintaining the skills base of the workforce, while in the devolved countries there has been less emphasis on the economic benefits, with as much weight given to its social benefits, such as social inclusion and active citizenship (Bruce, 2012; UUK, 2008).

Devolution has had a particular impact on the higher education sector as it has coincided with government led drivers to increase the financial income of the sector by charging tuition fees for undergraduate students (Court, 2004). The countries have taken different approaches to student financial contributions. Proposals to allow universities to charge up-front top-up fees in the 2003 White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DES, 2003) were only adopted in England. The Scottish Parliament decided to abolish up-front fees and reintroduce the maintenance grant for Scottish-domiciled students, while Wales and Northern Ireland approved up-front fees, which would not be variable, and the introduction of favourable maintenance grants for home domiciled students (Court, 2004; Bruce, 2012; Paton and Stubbins, 2013).

The 2011 white paper *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011) was a white Paper for English institutions. It included a commitment to open up the higher education market to private providers who had not traditionally received public funding for teaching or research. This was a policy move which Woodfield (2014) claims forms part of the wider privatization and marketisation of English higher education, focussing on increasing competition between institutions by increasing access to the sector while reducing public funding. Bruce (2012) claims that the White Paper marked a decisive shift in favour of a demand-led, market based system for England. The other devolved governments in the United Kingdom did not share this policy direction, focussing instead on the role of the state, not the market, in driving change (Bruce, 2012; Woodfield, 2014). Devolution has therefore served to create different models of the university, and the academic work environment, across the four countries of the UK. It has led, in England, to the

redefinition of the student as consumer, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

The student as consumer

The immediate background to this thesis is the financial crisis that has affected many parts of the world since 2007. In response, many western countries rapidly contracted state expenditure and raised taxes in an attempt to reduce their large budget deficits (Kitromilides, 2011; Chan, 2012). In the UK, following the General Election in May 2010, the new UK Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition Government immediately raised taxes and froze state benefits (BBC, 2010a). It undertook a Comprehensive Spending Review (H.M.Treasury, 2010) which reported in the following October and led to £81 billion cuts in public spending over four years (BBC, 2010b). The 2010 Review resulted in cuts to the English university teaching budget of 40% by 2014, from £7.1bn to £4.2bn. Consequently, the teaching grant was withdrawn for all courses except for laboratory-based disciplines (Vasager, 2010; Morgan, 2010; HEFCE, 2013). The shortfall would be made up by students taking out loans (provided by a government loan company), at the same time a 'cap' on tuition fees was raised from just over £3000 to £9000 per course year.

Although the 2010 changes to the financing of higher education were significant, the principle of students contributing towards the cost of their tuition had first been introduced in the UK a decade earlier. Tuition fees were first introduced by a Labour government in 1998 with a means-tested charge of up to £1000 per annum for a full-time undergraduate degree course. This fee did not cover the cost of provision, but it marked a change in the relationship between the state, students and the funding of

higher education because it introduced the principle of students paying for their education. This change was prompted by Dearing (NCIHE, 1997), in a government commissioned review of higher education funding, who recommended that students should pay a deferred contribution toward the cost of their tuition fees, recoverable through loans to be repaid by graduates after they started working. A further government commissioned review of higher education funding, *The Browne Review* (Browne, 2010), was published in October 2010 and argued that students should make increased contributions towards the cost of their education. Whereas Robbins (1963) argued that there were significant public goods secured by higher education, and hence public funding was appropriate, both Dearing and Browne argued that it was justifiable to ask students to contribute towards the costs of their education because of the private benefits that accrued to graduates. Browne (2010) acknowledged that the public also received a benefit from an educated workforce, but argued that this public benefit was less than the private benefit accrued in the earnings uplift received by graduates. He also argued that, unlike primary and secondary education, higher education was neither compulsory nor universal, with access determined by aptitude and choice. Therefore, because individuals chose to participate in higher education and thereby gained private benefits, Browne argued that it was reasonable to ask those individuals to help fund it rather than rely solely on the public purse.

The 2011 White Paper (BIS, 2011) argued that although the cost of higher education would increasingly be borne by the students, they were actually being empowered because changes were being introduced which would enable them to make informed market choices on where to study. David Willetts, the then Coalition Government

Minister for Universities and Science, argued that the reforms would result in, “universities and colleges being more accountable to their students than ever before.” (Willetts, 2011, 530, col 769). Institutions were to be accountable to the ‘market’ by providing greater information in the form of a ‘Key Information Set’ for each undergraduate course, published on an external Unistats website (Unistats, 2014). This included information about course content, the time spent in direct contact with lecturers, student satisfaction scores and graduates’ employment prospects. David Willetts argued that such information put students, “in the driving seat” and would enable them to exercise “power” (Willetts, 2011, 530, col 770). These policies were focused on, in Willet’s terms, making student choice ‘real’. The promotion on choice constructed the students as customers and in the market ideology of the government this would improve the quality of the service. In a House of Commons debate Willetts classified students as consumers, saying, “recognising that the student is in many respects a consumer will not destroy the traditional values of higher education,” (Willetts 2011, 530, col 778). I will here begin to use the term ‘marketisation’ to denote working conditions in which institutions are in competition with each other for income from student enrolments and, as noted in the previous section, in competition for research income.

The policies of the 2010 Coalition Government were a continuation of the performative and marketised policies that had been transforming higher education since the 1970s. Beck (1999) argued that the policy developments since the 1970s had gradually challenged academic authority as the independence of judgement and the ‘dignity’ traditionally accorded to the profession was diminished as higher education was increasingly directed by the priorities of private profit and corporate

interests. Some commentators argued that the increase in tuition fees and cuts to funding implemented by the 2010 Coalition Government was not only a continuation of these policies, but had accelerated the marketisation of higher education and the transformation of students into consumers (Molesworth, et al., 2011; Marginson, 2012; Bruce, 2012; Matthews, 2013). A body of literature was published in the period around the publication of the Browne report and the announcement of Coalition Government policies which interpreted this as a period of “crisis” (Holmwood, 2011, p1) for the sector. For Miller and Sabaphy (2011) the changes were the final blow in a series of changes which had undermined academic freedom and intellectual creativity in UK universities. Amsler (2011, p64) argued that the impact of the 2010 changes were pivotal because they reframed the purpose of higher education, “subordinating all knowledge and educational relationships to crude market ideologies and mechanisms of economic exchange” and “denying [sic] the very possibility of the public university.” McGettighan (2013) argued that the market discourse of the 2010 changes had clearly signalled a movement of university priorities to managing finances, to the detriment of their traditional communities (students, staff and society). For Vernon (2010) the funding changes were a clear statement that university degrees were no longer considered a public good but a private investment.

In anticipation of the consequences of the 2010 funding model, Holmwood (2011), Reay (2011) and Collini (2012) argued that social inequalities and hierarchies within the higher education system would be exacerbated as the model was designed to reward research-intensive elite institutions. The increased fees would deter working-class young people, growing the gap between students (and their parents) who were

able to subsidise the cost of their education and those who could not. The marketisation of higher education would undermine well-established values, such as social justice, as the market would “reproduce and solidify inequalities.” (Holmwood, 2011, p13) in both the higher education system and in society.

The financial implications of the requirement for students to pay for their education also led to concerns that the funding model was not sustainable, due to the inability of many students to pay back their student debt. This created great uncertainty about the ability of the system to fund itself and hence whether further policy developments would be necessary, such as raising fees higher, or reducing student numbers (McGettighan, 2013; Thompson and Bekhrandia, 2013). Pointing to experience in the United States, Hotson (2011) challenged the government assumption that private sector competition drove up academic standards. He argued that in the US it had served to drive up tuition fees and thereby reduced the resources needed to sustain good public universities.

The 2010 changes have particular implications for the arts and humanities as the reduction of funding for these disciplines not only appears to threaten their existence, but also the market ideology is at odds with the values of the disciplines (Amsler, 2011). For Collini (2012) the retention of some element of the teaching grant for laboratory based subjects aggravated the perception of a deliberate assault on the arts and humanities. While Vernon (2010) argued that the funding cuts to the arts and humanities confirmed that the government believed that these disciplines had no public utility.

Within this environment there have been alternative voices which challenge commentators for being protective and conservative in the face of change. Evans (2013, para.2) characterises the defensive responses of some commentators as being constructed with, “A whiff of nostalgia over the departure from a state that, if not quite a golden age, was at least a more [to the commentators] acceptable past”. As well as seeking to protect positions of power, and being conservative in the face of change, it is also charged that some of the commentary on the perceived negative impact of recent funding policies is too politically biased, with neoliberal policy simply presented as an unquestionably bad thing in itself (Williams, 2013). An alternative opinion on the impact of the changes is put forward by Steve Smith (2011), former President of Universities UK, who argued that the changes would strengthen universities. While acknowledging that the new funding arrangements would create a different higher education environment which was market driven, he argued that students would ultimately get a better experience and better value for money. He argued that there had been myths and untruths propagated about the levels of funding reduction in the new system and that the changes would not put impenetrable barriers in the way of students from poorer backgrounds. However, he acknowledged the impact of the changes, both financially and psychologically, would be unsettling to many working in the sector:

The creation of a real market in home undergraduate students, in terms of price and numbers, would rely on student choice to drive quality and efficiency, and will remove the predictability of the current state funding system at a stroke. This is an uncomfortable place for many of us in higher

education. But it's happening. This new landscape is coming up on the horizon and there is no turning back. (Smith, 2011, p134).

In this section I have identified funding policy developments introduced by the 2010 Coalition Government which have provided immediate context for the research I have undertaken. The changes introduced during this time were a continuation of policies introduced by successive governments over many decades. However, it has been claimed that the transferral of the costs of higher education to the student and the withdrawal of funding from non-laboratory based subjects will significantly change the higher education work environment and reframe the purposes of higher education. This has led me to clarify the research problem that my thesis has sought to address.

The research problem

I have presented evidence above that since the 1970s the dual pressures of performativity and marketisation have resulted in a decline in the status and power of academics as the traditional 'inward looking' professional culture within academia of autonomy and open intellectual enquiry and debate has been replaced by homogenisation of the academic workplace and external performative and marketised pressures (Trowler, 1998; Davies et al., 2006; Jones, 2007; Churchman and King, 2009; Beck, 2011; Power, 2014). Most recently, it has been argued that the increased marketisation of English universities as a consequence of actions of the 2010 Coalition Government will damage the values and leading position of the English higher education sector and increase social inequality (Vernon, 2010; Amsler, 2011; Collini, 2012, 2013; Holmwood, 2011; Hotson, 2011; Reay, 2011; Thompson

and Bekhradnia, 2012, 2013; McGettigan, 2013). My research is on the implications for academic identity of this changing work environment. It concerns debates about the purposes of the university and the ability and opportunities for academics to engage in different academic practices. Scholarly literature related to these debates will be reviewed in the next chapter, which will conclude with specific research questions arising from the review. I will then progress to identify the research sites and subjects in chapter three. However, to conclude this introductory chapter, in the next sections I clarify my position as a researcher and provide an overview of the structure and content of the thesis.

My position as a researcher in higher education

I have conducted my research on a part-time basis while I have been in full-time employment as an administrative manager within a Pre-92 English university. I have been continuously employed in a variety of positions at four UK universities since graduating with a Bachelor's degree in 1995, two which were Post-92 and two which were Pre-92 universities. My professional role has predominantly involved engagement with and implementation of external mechanisms for both the assessment of teaching quality⁴ and the assessment of research quality⁵.

Performance in external assessment in research is explicitly linked to government allocation of funding, while performance in external assessment of teaching has implicit links to funding as it is intended to provide an assurance to stakeholders of the quality and standards of provision.

⁴ In the UK the quality and standards have been subject to external audit conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education since 1997.

⁵ In the UK the external assessment of research quality was formerly conducted through the Research Assessment Exercise, which has latterly been reformulated as the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

From this professional interest in the relationship between government, funding and performance in external assessment, I chose to explore the perceptions and experiences of academics because I wanted to know how they mediated these pressures in the academic practice and how this influenced who academics think they are and the purposes of their role. In this way, I wanted to understand better the influences of national educational policy initiatives on academic practice. My interest also arises from my engagement with local politics (which will be discussed further in chapter three) and a desire to understand how policies are designed, implemented, and then ‘lived’ by those that they effect.

Professionally, the research has enhanced my relationships with academics because I understand more fully the demands of their work. The development of research and scholarly skills will enhance my ability to develop policy and practice within the university setting. Personally, I anticipate that the critical thinking I have developed will have positive implications for all aspects of my life.

The structure and content of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter I have provided a context and rationale for the thesis. I have discussed how the academic work environment has been influenced by the conditions of performativity and marketisation since the 1970s onwards. I have identified how the 2007 financial crisis has impacted on the UK Higher Education sector in the form of cuts to direct government funding, the raising of student tuition fees and transferal of the burden of funding from the state onto students. I have also introduced myself as a researcher.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Academic Identity in a Marketised and Performative Environment

In this chapter a literature review develops an argument about the formation of academic identity in the context of a performative and marketised working environment. I take a thematic approach by first discussing literature about the purposes of higher education, which shows that arguments about the public and private benefits of higher education raise fundamental questions about what it means to be an academic within the current policy environment. Leading on from this, I review theoretical and empirical studies on academic identity to investigate the impact of the current working environment on academic practice. This includes reviews of literature on the discipline, teaching, research and working conditions. This culminates in the identification of a lack of empirical research about the impact of these policy developments within a stratified English higher education sector on academic identity. I conclude the chapter by demonstrating how the theories of Anthony Giddens provide a sound theoretical framework from which to answer the research questions arising from this review.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

In this chapter I outline the methodological considerations that informed the design and execution of the research project, providing a transparent account of the research process in order to demonstrate the rigour of the research undertaken. I discuss the specific research methods in my research and introduce the research sites and subjects. I outline how I conducted in-depth interviews with twenty predominantly early to mid-career academics in the Art and Humanities at two contrasting English

universities: a Pre-92 research intensive university and a Post-92 teaching intensive university. I describe how I anticipated a rich source of research data because these subjects were wholly subject to market forces as a consequence of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. I detail how the interviews were transcribed and coded with reference to themes identified in the literature review and to the theoretical framework. The chapter concludes with a reflection on how the research was conducted in practice, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken.

Chapter 4: Constructing and Reconstructing an Academic Identity in Contemporary Working Conditions

This is the first of four chapters presenting the analysis and interpretation of the interviews with reference to the literature and the theoretical framework. In this chapter I focus on how the narratives created by individuals have a role in the development of a meaningful academic identity, and highlight the agency of individuals in creating an academic identity in contemporary working conditions. I identify the importance of the local environment on academic identity, reflecting on the academics' perceptions of how the 2010 Coalition Government viewed the role of their disciplines and universities in society. The conclusion proposes that the process of constructing and reconstructing an academic identity is an ongoing process, and includes a conflict between traditional 'inward' values and the lived experience of externally driven pressures.

Chapter 5: Constructing and Reconstructing the Relationship with Students

This chapter analyses how the power and esteem of the academics was affected by their perceptions of how student expectations and behaviour have been shaped by current policies. It concludes that the change of the fee regime introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 has impacted both positively and negatively on the relationship between academics and students. While identifying a positive narrative of academic authority and esteem arising from this relationship, I also identify environmental sensitivity in the responses of academics to the construction of students as consumers. This arises due to the different opportunities to construct positive relationships available in the two universities.

Chapter 6: Construction and Reconstruction of the Discipline Through Teaching

This chapter considers the influence of performativity and marketisation on the teaching role, reflecting on external pressures on curriculum content and the impact of mechanisms, such as the National Student Survey, that evaluate teaching. I identify common perceptions across academics in both universities about the impact on their academic identity, highlighting shared values associated with teaching critical thinking. The academics also share beliefs on how they and their institutions should prioritise certain teaching practices and prioritise curriculum knowledge, which is contrary to the external direction from government.

Chapter 7: Construction and Reconstruction of the Discipline Through Research

This chapter analyses the role of research in the identities of the academics. It considers the initial research apprenticeship, the values that they assign to research, and the constraints and enablers within their work environments. I identify the high

value that academics in both universities assign to research and its role in creating a rounded academic identity. However, I reveal a wide disparity between the experiences of the academics at the two institutions, with the academics at NewU being provided with very limited opportunities to undertake research, which has significant implications for their conception of academic identity.

Chapter 8: Conclusion: Academic Identity in the Current Policy Environment

The concluding chapter positions my research into the area of academic identity and identifies implications for academics and policy makers. I identify the contributions to knowledge that this thesis makes to research in this area, by undertaking empirical research into an under-researched area from the perspective of the theoretical framework of Anthony Giddens, and why it matters to the wider world. I argue that academics are able to construct positive narratives of academic identity within an environment in which external policies would appear to threaten the status of the academic profession. Within this environment an underlying satisfaction with, and resilience of, many core aspects of academic practice is demonstrated, alongside the possibility for traditional and performative identities to coexist in a positive and meaningful way in respect to many, but not all, aspects of practice. These conclusions are in contrast to a more pessimistic view of the impact of the current environment presented in much of the theoretical and empirical literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Academic Identity in a Performative and Marketised Working Environment

Introduction

In this chapter I intend, first, to use literature to develop an argument that justifies my exploration of the formation of academic identity in the context of a performative and marketised working environment. Secondly, identify a gap in the empirical research about the impact of policy developments within a stratified English higher education sector on academic identity. Thirdly, to show how the gap I have identified can be addressed by taking the theoretical lens offered by Anthony Giddens and developing research questions which reflect his concepts.

I take a thematic approach by first discussing literature about the purposes of higher education, which shows that arguments about the public and private benefits of higher education raise fundamental questions about what it means to be an academic within the current policy environment. Leading on from this, I review theoretical and empirical studies on academic identity to investigate what is already known about the impact of the current working environment on academic practice. This includes literature on the discipline, teaching practice, research practice, the relationship between teaching and research, and working conditions. This culminates in the identification of an absence of empirical research about the impact of these policy developments within a stratified English higher education sector on academic identity. I conclude the chapter by discussing how the theories of Anthony Giddens provide a sound theoretical framework from which to answer the research questions arising from this review.

The purposes of the university in the twenty first century

In chapter one, I characterised the contemporary higher education working environment as one that was subject to performativity and marketisation. This environment raises questions about the fundamental purpose of the university in the twenty first century, and the academic practice undertaken within. In this section I discuss three theoretical debates about the purposes of the university, concluding that there is a contemporary anxiety about the purposes of the university which results in an identity conflict between the inward looking values of academics and external pressures and direction on academic practice.

Independence of universities to enlighten society

Theoretical argument arising from the Age of Enlightenment from the eighteenth century onwards positioned the university as an independent environment for the development of reason and culture. Kant (1798) argued for freedom of expression within the university, arguing for an independence of the university from the interference of government. Humboldt argued for academic freedom to advance knowledge by original and critical investigation. He advocated the ideal of the union of teaching and research in the scholar, and the university as a community of scholars and students (Delanty, 2001). Writing in the 1850s, Newman (1976) argued that university education should seek to develop intellectual culture, educating students to apply their intellect to reason well in all matters and to expand their knowledge.

The Enlightenment ideals continue to be promoted by the academic community. For example, Nussbaum (1997) argued that universities should seek to cultivate humanity by developing the following capabilities in their students: critical self-

examination, narrative imagination, and global citizenship. Similar arguments are made that universities should be moral and political spaces which allow for critical public debate, helping to overcome prejudice and social injustice (Giroux, 1995; Bynner and Egerton, 2001; Booth, McLean and Walker, 2009; Rowland, 2006; Marginson, 2011). Kezar (2004) argues that this a notion of higher education as public good which is a historically important component of the reciprocal relationship between higher education and society, and is embedded in the missions and values of institutions and their staff. However, these conceptions of the public good of higher education can be seen to be under threat when the argument is made, not least by governments (for example, BIS, 2014) that universities are funded by public and private finances and so should legitimately be directed by the economic priorities of those providing the funding.

Universities for the economic well-being of society

Within the current environment there is concern that the traditional notion of teaching for the sake for transmitting disciplinary knowledge and developing the critical capabilities of students is being displaced in favour of teaching to serve the needs of the economy. Barnett et al. (2001), Henkel (2007), Ward (2007) and Jones (2007) argue that the economic needs of society and consequent demand for graduates with specific vocational skills are shaping curriculum content, with the traditional values of higher education, such as critical thinking, displaced by purely utilitarian motives. In this respect, there is a weakening of the power of the academic as the economy becomes the focus of the curriculum. David Willetts, Minister for Universities from 2010 to 2014, argued that the government had a legitimate role to play in directing the content of the curriculum, arguing, “We also want our

universities to work with business to improve the job prospects of their graduates by providing the knowledge and skills employers value.” (Willets, 2011, 530, col 770).

Scott (1998) argues that if we consider the history of many universities around the world, we can see that many (excepting those with origins in the middle ages) were established with the intention of serving the economic needs of the nation state. In the UK many universities were established with the aim of developing industrial and urban society. In the US the Morrill Act of 1862 established land grant institutions of higher education, with the intention of developing agricultural technology in order to exploit the wealth of the land. More recently, Scott (ibid) argues that knowledge has become a resource, and hence politicians across the globe have believed that investment in higher education will result in greater international competitiveness. For Scott, the majority of higher education institutions across the world have therefore been created by governments with the purpose of serving the public economic good.

Universities for private financial gain

As discussed in chapter one, Browne (2010) was conscious of the public economic benefits of higher education, but argued that the private benefit to the student outweighed the public benefit and hence the cost should be borne by the student who receives that benefit. Collini (2011), Holmwood (2011) and Reau (2011) argue that the logic of the UK Coalition Government’s reforms to funding of English universities, which followed on from Browne’s report, was that the value of a university education was the private financial benefit accrued to the individual. However, the OECD (2013) suggests that regardless of the type of degree course, the

economic benefits for society exceed the private benefits. It estimates that the net public return on investment for a man and a woman in tertiary education is almost three and two times respectively than the amount of public investment in their education. The debate about the private and public benefits of higher education has come under increased focus during the recent economic downturn as many governments around the world have shifted the cost of higher education from the state to the student. The pragmatic response has been that many governments have positioned higher education as a private, rather than a public good, with an emphasis on personal financial gain (Marginson, 2011; Morley, 2012; McLean, Abbas and Ashwin, 2013). The change from state to market dependence has led to what Delanty (2001) calls new modes of knowledge production: the user is more important the producer in determining the nature of knowledge.

In summary, the themes discussed above highlight a contemporary anxiety about the purposes of universities. Traditional notions of the academic who can pursue knowledge in an environment that is free from external direction are challenged by successive governments, who have positioned higher education as a public good in respect of its economic use-value to society and more recently as a private good for the student. This leads to an identity conflict between inward looking values of academics and external pressures and direction on academic practice. It is argued that loss of academic authority and control can be seen in regard to self-governance.

There is now a higher degree of control and regulation from external stakeholders, and most members of academic staff are excluded from decision making within their institutions (McGettighan, 2013). Ball and Exley (2010) suggest there is a clear ambivalence towards academia, with academics being seen as out of touch, cynical,

and more concerned with thinking than doing. As a consequence, it is claimed that higher education policy is largely influenced by unelected think-tanks or policy networks, rather than being informed by academic research findings (Ball and Exley, 2010; Morley, 2012).

In this environment, Morley (2012) suggests that academics are caught between pressure to be a global, entrepreneurial and corporate phenomenon, while at the same time seeking to preserve the value system that has served it so well. This is a challenge to academic identity, and it is perhaps unsurprising that commentators such as Holmwood (2011) and Collini (2012) have argued for a return to traditional notions of the purpose of the university as they have perceived that their work and identity have come under threat. This is particularly true of disciplines such as the arts and humanities, which have lost public funding and been marginalised in the drive to demonstrate the use-value to society of university education. Collini (2012) believes that an alternative argument needs to be established which does not start from the economic use value of the university, but which argues for the use value of universities in richer and more nuanced ways, such as its use for extending human understanding through open ended enquiry. This is an argument which echoes the conceptions of the university advocated by Kant, Humboldt and Newman. Collini (ibid) argues that until there is a coherent view on what universities are for, the argument that universities are for aiding the economy and for producing employable graduates will continue to pervade. In the next section I will review the theoretical and empirical literature to understand how this identity conflict is experienced in the academic role in practice.

Contemporary research about the effects on academic practice of performativity and marketisation

The purpose of this section is to explore what has been researched and written about the effects on academics' professional practice in contemporary times when universities' policies, governance and management, as discussed in chapter one, can be characterised by the concepts 'performativity' and 'marketisation'. I have sought to thematically explore the literature from the view of academic identity as something which individuals develop through reflexion on their experiences of recurrent social practices (Giddens, 1984; 1991). Arising from this perspective, the following five themes arise as a focus of the literature: the discipline, teaching practice, research practice, the relationship between teaching and research, and working conditions.

The literature I have reviewed focusses on academic practice and the impact of the performative and marketised environment over the past decade. The focus of the literature is predominantly UK based. However, where appropriate, research from across the globe is reviewed in order to demonstrate similarities and differences in academic practice across different communities. This includes country or region specific research, or global research where the experiences of academics across several countries are researched.

In concluding the review I identify the gaps in the literature that I will address in my thesis. Following on from this review, in the final section of this chapter I make a case for using the social theories of Anthony Giddens to shed light on the research problem.

The impact of performativity and marketisation on academic disciplines

This first sub-section focusses on the discipline, which alongside conceptions of the purposes of higher education, discussed at the start of this chapter, is considered by theoretical literature to be a key component of academic identity. This is because the discipline is a primary driver for the academic: from their initial interest in it and engagement with it as a student, to their subsequent employment as an academic. As an academic the discipline is the focus of teaching practice, which reproduces the discipline, and research practice, which produces it. It is argued by Becher (1994) and Nuemann, Parry and Becher (2002), following on from the work Biglan (1973) and Kolb (1981), that disciplines can be separated into the following four main categories: pure sciences; humanities and pure social sciences; technologies; and applied social sciences. Others have adopted even broader categories. For example, Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead and Mayes (2005) identify three broad academic discipline categories: arts, science and social science, while Barnett, Parry and Coate (2001) split the disciplines into science/technology, arts and humanities, and professional subject areas. It is clear that although these authors agree that there are such things as disciplines, which in turn have distinct characteristics, reaching consensus on common categories is far from simple.

In the first section of this chapter I identified pressure on universities to meet the economic demands of government and employers, creating graduates with specific skills and attributes. Barnett (2000) theorises that as a consequence the discipline is losing its epistemological qualities as it is pressurised to demonstrate its use value for society. The centrality of the discipline to academic life may therefore be under

threat, and this may be evidenced in official discourse which favours categorisation of the 'subject' over the discipline. In contrast to the discipline, Parker (2002) argues that there are commonly accepted boundaries which make the subject relatively easy to define. These boundaries are identified by the names given to academic programmes offered by universities and are reinforced by managerial structures, with departments or divisions taking on subject names. Subject boundaries are further reinforced by externally imposed quality assurance practices such as the external assessment of research (Henkel, 2005) and QAA Subject-level audit and Subject Benchmark Statements (Canning, 2005). Parker (2002) argues that the subject has for government become the key component of its management of education. It is easier to define and serves the needs of government for an outcomes based model in post-compulsory education. Trowler, Saunders and Bamber (2012) argue that academic life is increasingly driven by non-disciplinary drivers and forces, such as quality assurance, personnel management and income generation. While the discipline remains highly important for many aspects of academic life, such as a shared understanding of research practice, they argue that academic life is increasingly based on clusters of practice within which the discipline is no longer a primary driver.

Several large scale empirical research projects have demonstrated that the discipline has traditionally played a central role in academic identity, with acceptance into the disciplinary community a crucial part of the process of becoming an academic. This includes research by Becher and Trowler (2001), who conducted over 200 interviews with academics in 12 disciplines, in multiple research-intensive universities in the UK and USA, and by Henkel (2000) across 11 English higher education institutions and 7 disciplines. Becher (1994), in 350 in-depth, semi structured interviews with

academics and research students across twelve disciplines in UK universities, reported that the discipline was esoteric in nature and was comprised of common epistemological and cultural characteristics which transcend institutional and international boundaries. For Becher the discipline had important cultural implications, as it was seen as a key organising force for the academic ‘tribes’ within which academic identities lay. The importance of the discipline in academic identity is supported by more recent research into teaching and research practice. Clegg (2003) in research within a single Post-92 English university identified the role that the discipline retained in organising academic life, reporting how innovations within learning and teaching were rooted in disciplinary practice. Luedekke (2003) in a survey of 152 academics across a range of disciplines within two UK universities, and Norton et al. (2005) in a survey of 638 academics across 4 UK universities, found that the discipline was a key factor in approaches of academics to teaching practice. In research by Abbas and McLean (2009) into the experiences of 8 sociology academics across both Pre and Post-92 universities, this manifested itself in a common disciplinary aspiration to transform students and society through, for example, developing student understanding of societal injustices and the workings of power. Ylijoki (2000) researched the disciplinary culture across a small sample in a Finnish university and identified similar disciplinary specific traditions and categories of thought, and social and cultural characteristics. Research into the experiences of 54 bioscientists across 17 European universities by Henkel (2005) identified the significance of the discipline for research, helping academics identify priorities and enabling them to give meaning to their research and establish self-esteem amongst peers and the external environment.

In summary, theoretical literature argues that the discipline has traditionally been played a key role in academic identity, as it underpins the key aspects of academic practice: teaching and research. It has been theorised that its organisational function in academic life has been displaced by subject boundaries, which have become a part of the formal discourse within higher education. However, empirical research has suggested that discipline retains an influence on academic practice, in particular in regard to approaches to teaching and research practice. In the next section I review the literature on teaching, before discussing research, and then the interaction between teaching and research.

The impact of performativity and marketisation on teaching practice

Teaching is core academic work. Ramsden (2003) writes that is an educative professional practice whereby the academic transmits knowledge of and develops an understanding other/his own discipline to students. It is a practice that is distinct from, but interrelated with, student learning as it can direct student learning activity. For Brown and Atkins (2002) teaching is about providing opportunities for students to learn. They highlight that academics may have different goals in their teaching, which reflect disciplinary and personal priorities. These goals include seeking to improve student knowledge and skills, and changing student perceptions, values, attitudes and behaviour. Within the literature about the effects of the performative and marketised environment on teaching, two sub-themes have emerged: the measurement and evaluation of teaching, and professionalisation of the teaching role.

The measurement and evaluation of teaching

In the UK the teaching role has been subject to mechanisms which seek to measure and evaluate teaching for several decades. This has traditionally been through internally led processes which are intended to monitor the quality of teaching, such as the external examiner system and professional accreditation of courses (Morley, 2003). However, since the 1990s universities have also been subject to externally led monitoring and audit by the HEFCE-led Teaching Quality Assessment, which was superseded by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject and Institutional Review (QAA, 2004). QAA reviews had three main purposes: accountability for public funding, enhancing the quality of education, and providing effective and accessible public information on the quality of provision (QAA, 2004). Subject Review was discontinued in 2005 and replaced in its role in providing public assurance of the quality of provision by the National Student Survey, which is an annual survey of final year undergraduate students at all publicly funded UK higher education institutions (HEFCE, 2001). It is a short questionnaire which asks students to provide feedback on their experiences of studying on their course, with the outcomes published nationally on a Unistats website (Unistats, 2014) and used in national league tables, both to rank institutions and subject areas. Most recently, the UK government has proposed developing a Teaching Excellence Framework as a mechanism to monitor and evaluate teaching in English universities. It would combine metrics on the outputs of teaching with an element of external assessment of teaching, with the intention of providing greater information for applicants and of raising the quality of teaching (BIS, 2015).

In the 1990s and early 2000s a literature grew about the validity of the mechanisms adopted by the QAA for measuring and evaluating teaching. Theoretical commentary included doubt about the expertise of the auditors (Clark, 1997); to the usefulness of the reports from the reviews (Yorke, 1997); to the perception that universities were learning to ‘play the game’ (Moran, 2000; Cook, Butcher and Raeside, 2006). It was also seen as a burden financially, in time, and in behavioural costs such as stress in academic staff and the growth of unwarranted internal quality regimes which were predominantly designed to direct academic behaviours to ensure success in reviews (NCIHE, 1997; Laughton, 2003). More recently, the National Student Survey has been subject to criticism from commentators that its methodology is flawed, that the impact is detrimental to the quality of the student educational experience, and that it is damaging to academic morale as it is used as a performative measure which directs academic practice (Grove, 2012; Copeland, 2014).

There has also been a body of theoretical literature which argues that processes which monitor and evaluate teaching are ideologically motivated mechanisms through which universities and government can exercise control and power over academics (Barnett, 2003; Morley, 2003; Shore and Wright 1999). It is argued that these mechanisms direct academic conceptions of teaching as academics are driven to monitor their own performance in relation to readily identifiable and measurable norms and that they limit the autonomy of academics to develop their own conceptions of good teaching (Ball, 2003; Barnett, 2003; Morley, 2003).

Alongside the theoretical literature, empirical research undertaken in the UK has identified the impact of these monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on teaching.

An empirical study of staff in 12 UK universities (Pritchard, 2011), reported that 72% of UK academics surveyed agreed that measurement of university teacher performance was likely to be superficial, with 56% agreeing that evaluation of teaching would not necessarily improve the quality of teaching. Similarly, a study on the impact of quality mechanisms based on interviews with 64 academics at a research intensive UK institution (Cheng, 2010), found that only a minority believed that such mechanisms helped to raise the profile of teaching by raising awareness of the importance of good teaching, while many claimed to have resisted or adopted game playing practices to give the pretence of compliance as they sought to maintain their autonomy and professional status. Yet, Skelton's (2011) research into the perceptions of 11 staff at a research intensive UK university found that while these academics believed that quality mechanisms had not led to an enhancement in teaching practice, one positive outcome was that they raised the profile of teaching.

Professionalisation of teaching

Alongside the implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the sector has also experienced a growing 'professionalisation' of the teaching role, as government and institutions have introduced training and national standards to improve the quality of teaching. Traditionally there has been a lack of formal training for teaching, with many academics, as discussed later in this section, 'thrown in at the deep end' with little or no guidance or support. This situation has changed since the 1990s with the introduction of training courses for new lecturers in universities and the creation of a national standards framework for teaching (HEA, 2011), albeit that a universally accepted teaching qualification for new lecturers has yet to be introduced in the UK (Gibbs, 2014). The increasing professionalisation of

teaching has seen the growth of staff development departments in most higher education institutions across the world and the development of staff development as a field of research itself, with the publication of a considerable volume of journal papers on the topic (Shay, 2012).

In a theoretical paper on the professionalisation of teaching and the creation of staff development departments, Nixon et al., (2001) argue that increased training has in part been a pragmatic response to the expansion of the sector since the 1960s, which has led to an increase in student numbers without a proportional increase in academic staff. Hence, it has meant that new ways of teaching have had to be developed and propagated to deliver provision to a larger and more diverse student body. However, they argue that there is resistance by many academics as professionalisation is perceived as undermining their autonomy and status. Empirical research by Quinn (2011) in to the perceptions of 112 academics at a South African university supports this view and highlights that this is a global phenomenon. It was reported that staff sought to resist participation in training activities because of a fear of losing intellectual freedom and autonomy, and because engagement with these activities was perceived to be to the detriment of time available for other activities such as research.

While the growing professionalisation of teaching is intended to enhance teaching practice, empirical research indicates that discipline and time-served is of greater influence over teaching practice. Lueddeke (2003) researched the relationship between the working environment and academic approaches to the scholarship of teaching by way of a questionnaire survey of 152 respondents from a range of

disciplines in two UK universities. He found that while academics with teaching qualifications appeared to be more open to investigating alternative approaches to teaching, discipline was the main influence on how academics conceptualised teaching. Academics from the science and engineering disciplines conceptualised the teaching role as transmitting knowledge, while academics from the arts and humanities saw it as helping students to develop or change conceptions. A similar conclusion was drawn by Norton et al. (2005) whose questionnaire survey of 638 academic staff across 4 UK universities identified two groups: those who sought to transmit knowledge and those who sought to facilitate learning, with a similar discipline related approach to teaching. They also identified the influence of teaching experience and subject mix on teaching practice. In contrast, in qualitative research into the experiences of 9 academic staff in a research intensive UK university, Kreber (2009) did not identify discipline as a strong influence on teaching identity. While finding that engagement in professional development activities had only a minor influence on approaches to the teaching role, the ability to be critically reflective on their teaching practice, alongside time served in the role, had a greater influence on their teaching.

In summary, teaching in UK universities has been subject to measurement and evaluation, alongside increased professionalisation since the 1990s onwards. The stated aims of these mechanisms are to provide accountability for the use of public funds; to improve the quality of teaching; and to provide information for applicants. The methodologies and effectiveness of these mechanisms has been challenged by academics, and it has been claimed that they have had a negative impact on academic morale and have negatively directed teaching practice. However, neither theoretical

nor empirical research provide comparative analysis of whether the experiences of scrutiny and increased professionalisation are different in different types of universities. Within the UK, many Post-92 institutions were predominantly teaching polytechnics, with academics primarily contracted to teach, and hence historically there would be greater institutional focus on teaching within these institutions. Scott (2012) highlights how the difference between institutions can manifest itself in styles of teaching, the size of class sizes, the prior attainment levels of students, and the class and ethnicity of students and staff. It may therefore be reasonable to hypothesise that the impact of scrutiny and professionalism on teaching identity will vary between different institutions.

There is also little empirical research into the impact of measurement and evaluation on the power relations between academics and students. One exception is Cheng (2010), who in research into the perceptions of 64 academics at a single institution found differing views of the impact of scrutiny on power relations. While some academics thought that power relations were not affected because academics still held power over students in regard to discipline expertise and power over the assessment process, others thought that students were gaining more power. This mainly manifested itself in pressure on academics to be more responsive to student views and demands because of the pressure to perform well in student evaluations, such as the NSS. However, Cheng's research was conducted within a research intensive institution, so there remains the absence of comparative empirical research between Pre and Post-92 institutions.

The impact of performativity and marketisation on research practice

Conducting research plays a key role in academic identity as it is through this practice that the discipline is constructed and reconstructed. Engagement with research practice is usually the way into an academic career, with empirical research from across the globe demonstrating that many academics make a progression from research student or research assistant into an academic career, and it is a way of building a reputation and enhancing one's career in academia (Henkel, 2000; Bryson, 2004; Elen, Lindblom-Ylänne, and Clement, 2007; Hemmings, 2012). Two sub-themes have arisen from the literature in this area: the external direction of research priorities, and the measurement and evaluation of research

The external direction of research priorities

Freedom in research has traditionally been seen as one of the rights of academia, with the expectation that academics should be free to pursue areas of research to contribute to knowledge (DE, 1988, section 202.2.a; Rowland 2006). However, commentators have argued that from the 1980s onwards, research funding in the UK and across many other countries has increasingly been directed by economic drivers, as governments and their funding bodies have set the research agenda and directed academic work (Brew, 2001; Duncan, 2007; Head, 2011; Hambleton, 2009). Nixon et al. (2001) claim that the competitive funding environment has led to a premium being placed on the identity of those academics who are able to attract external research funding. Research success is therefore measured by productivity, with academics set targets to publish and to gain external grants, and as a consequence it is increasingly difficult for academics to pursue independent or 'blue skies' research (Macfarlane, 2005; Brown, 2009; Brew, 2010).

Empirical research has highlighted that external pressure on research priorities appears to be a global phenomenon. Gendron (2008) argues that the requirement to perform in research, typified through the expectation on academics to publish their research and to be ranked, is shaping how academics and funders alike view academia. In research into the experiences of academics in accounting in North America, he claims that the requirement to publish and meet performance targets means that certain rules and conventions are followed. This restrains academics from innovating or stepping outside of established boundaries, and in doing so restrains academic freedom. Likewise, in wide ranging interviews with academics in Australian universities, Tierney (2001) identifies the belief of many academics that prioritisation of fiscal survival by institutions (and the associated need to engage with market forces) has been to the detriment of academic freedom. While not finding explicit examples of academics being told not to engage with particular research topics, Tierney did find evidence of the need to produce good work, implicit in which was the need to undertake research that would bring in money. In contrast to the empirical research and commentary cited above, Henkel (2005) in research into the experiences of 54 bioscientists from 17 European universities reported how academics are still able to retain and exercise academic autonomy in this environment. She identified academic freedom as a core value of academic identity, which the academics in her research were able to exercise, albeit that the academics acknowledged that the right to determine their own agendas must be set against competing demands from their institutions and funders.

The measurement and evaluation of research

Closely associated with the external direction of research have been mechanisms which seek to measure and evaluate research, such as the UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), now the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Commentators have argued that the existence of the external assessment of research has in part been an effort to rationalise the distribution of government resources, while making research more responsive to commercial and political needs (Willmott, 2003; Brown, 2009; Head, 2011). However, Collini (2013) argues that pressure to perform well in external research assessment has resulted in a preoccupation with research rankings which have come to dominate academic life. As a consequence staff recruitment and promotion, the strategic direction of research, and university marketing and publicity strategies are all influenced by the prioritisation of research ranking by institutions.

Empirical research in the UK has suggested that the RAE, and its successor the REF, in which research performance has a direct impact on funding, has had a profound effect in directing and curbing academic behaviour. Research across 2 disciplines in 11 English higher education institutions found that research reputation arising out of this assessment has both a private and public face: reputation amongst peers both serves to inform an individual's sense of self-esteem and to provide public 'confirmation' of an individual's research credibility (Henkel, 2000). It appears that the pressure is universal across the sector. In large scale research into the perceptions of academics in Pre and Post-92 universities (450 academics in social sciences, 376 academics in marketing, finance and accounting), Harley (2002) reported that 75% of respondents believed that there had been changes in recruitment within their institutions brought about by a desire to perform well in external assessment. The

same was found in Holligan's (2011) small-scale research into the views of five academics at a research intensive UK university, who claimed it was difficult to pursue research interests that did not meet RAE-related performance criteria.

However, there is also a body of empirical research that identifies positive aspects of the performative research agenda. Harley (2002) identified staff who approved of external research assessment because they thought it had a positive impact on research and publication. In Post-92 universities this was because of a positive impact on research *per se*, and in Pre-92 universities because of the encouragement to target research and publish it in high-status journals. Harley (ibid) also found a high degree of compliance with the external research assessment, partly due to the role it now plays in defining the status and authenticity of academics within their own institutions and in the wider academic community. Similarly, Smith (2012) in research into the perceptions of 61 academics and policy makers across a range of mainly research intensive UK institutions, identified a willingness of academics to compete for a diminishing pot of research funding. It was argued that this demonstrates a high degree of compliance of the academics with the performative research agenda, with many academics willingly acting as entrepreneurs as they market ideas to the funders of research. Research also demonstrates the resilience of aspects of identity to this agenda. The resilience of the discipline to the impact of external assessment on organisational structures and priorities within institutions has been identified by Henkel (2005) in research into the experiences of 54 bioscientists from 17 European universities. The research demonstrated that the discipline remains a core focus of academic identity in this environment, helping academics identify what is important and what gives meaning and self-esteem.

In summary, empirical research identifies how research practice is directed by pressures from within institutions to perform in external research assessment exercises and to bring in research funding. Arguably this is in conflict with traditional conceptions about the freedom of academics to research without external direction. Yet, there is also a body of empirical research which identifies positive outcomes from the performative agenda, such as the resilience of academic freedom and the discipline, and a high degree of compliance with these mechanisms. This suggests a more nuanced picture than is generally portrayed. Unusually, research by Harley (2002) investigated the experiences of academics at both Pre and Post-92 UK universities, but most of the empirical research is undertaken within research intensive institutions. A particular focus in the light of recent changes to the funding of English universities would be on the relationship between teaching and research, and whether the increased role of the market in student recruitment has impacted on this relationship.

The impact of performativity and marketisation on the relationship between teaching and research

Theoretical commentators have argued that a defining feature of higher education, which distinguishes it from tertiary education, is the interplay, or 'nexus', between teaching and research (Rowland, 2000; Jenkins, 2004). It is perceived that there are benefits for students and for academic staff of the interplay between research into the discipline and teaching. For students, research-informed teaching enhances their learning experience, developing a deep understanding of and enthusiasm of the discipline area, as well as developing research skills (Brew, 2010; Jenkins, 2004).

For academics, it is argued that research improves the quality of teaching as it keeps the academic up to date with the frontiers of disciplinary knowledge and, if research was considered as a 'learning experience', it helps the academic understand the learning experience from the student perspective (Rowland, 1996, 2000). It is also argued that being a research active teacher can also serve to enhance the academic's 'authority' in the classroom as they will be perceived by students and colleagues to be at the cutting edge of their subject (Coate, Barnett and Williams, 2001; Jenkins, 2004).

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 sought to homogenise the UK sector under a single regulatory and funding regime, however commentators have argued that the sector remains stratified, with research and teaching prioritised in different ways across the sector (Scott, 1997; Bryson, 2004). As a consequence opportunities to integrate teaching and research will vary across the sector. It has also been argued that due to its high value in respect of academic career progression, especially in research-intensive universities, research is prioritised by academics at the expense of teaching (Rowland, 1996; Coate, Barnett and Williams, 2001; Gibbs, 2001; Trowler and Wareham, 2007; Brew 2010).

In a review of institutional learning and teaching strategies produced by English universities in 2000, Gibbs (2001), highlighted how potential synergies between research and teaching strategies were largely absent, and if mentioned were in the context of pedagogic research, rather than the nexus between disciplinary research and teaching. As a consequence he argued that although many academics will believe that teaching and research are important parts of their role, research will be

prioritised over teaching, and hence the nexus is not an equal balance. International research has supported the view that research can be prioritised by academics at the expense of teaching. In 30 semi-structured interviews in a single Canadian research-intensive university Iqbal (2013) reported that academic staff believed that reward and promotion was heavily weighted towards research, with teaching perceived as an additional burden with little tangible benefit. This sentiment is echoed by Elen et al. (2007), in interviews with 16 academics across two universities in Finland and the Netherlands, who found that academics believed that undergraduate education is undervalued in research-intensive institutions due to the pressure to meet research priorities.

In summary, while it is argued that there are benefits for academics and students of the relationship between teaching and research, empirical research indicates that performative pressures on academics have resulted in research being prioritised at the expense of teaching. What is not clear from the literature is whether, in the UK, the performative pressures have a similar impact in the teaching and research relationship at Pre and Post-92 institutions. As a consequence, a valuable course of research inquiry would be whether academics at both types of institutions experience the same pressures in regard to the interplay between teaching and research, or have the same opportunities to explore the relationship.

The impact of performativity and marketisation on working conditions

Theoretical debate identified in chapter one argues that neoliberalism has pervaded across professional practice through the pressure to perform, the adoption of the neoliberal discourse, the casualisation of labour and increasing managerialism (Scott,

1995; Harvey, 2005). In this final section I consider the evidence from the theoretical literature and empirical research for the impact of the current policy environment on working conditions. The following sub-themes are discussed in this sector: de-skilling and casualisation of academic work; pressure on academics to perform; adoption of the neoliberal discourse; and managerial and administrative roles.

De-skilling and casualisation of academic work

Theoretical literature has argued that the current policy environment has resulted in a de-skilling and casualisation of academic work, with the employment of people on short-term contracts seen as way of institutions saving money by driving down the unit costs of labour (Harvey, 2005; Brown, Goodman and Yasukawa, 2010; Courtney, 2013). In the UK, the proportion of academics who are employed on part-time contracts rose from 29% to 34% of the workforce between 2003/04 to 2012/13 (UUK, 2014a). Harvey (2005) argues that neoliberalism has promoted the benefits of flexible labour, particularly in the face of heavily unionised environments. It has promoted benefits for individuals as they are able to enter professions that were previously closed to them, and for the employer as it seeks to drive down the cost of labour. However, for the academic it serves to undermine their security within the workplace.

While neoliberalism promotes the benefits of flexibility within the workforce, empirical research by Abbas and McLean (2010) in twelve English universities and by Brown et al. (2010) in an Australian university argues that the benefits of flexibility are questionable. In both studies staff on casual contracts reported that

they believed they were exploited, often working longer than they were contracted for, and had very little job security. The staff thought that they were largely invisible within the university in which they taught, lacking basic facilities such as office space, and were largely isolated and excluded from the intellectual community.

Pressure on academics to perform

The pressure on academics to perform has been identified in research into the experience of new academics. Research by Henkel (2000) across 11 English universities and by Smith (2010), also across 11 UK universities, identifies a common experience that upon appointment there is an expectation to be a fully functioning academic, taking immediate responsibility for a full work load, which results in a sense of being ‘thrown in at the deep end’ which can be disconcerting for some. Smith (ibid) reported that half of the research participants had an untroubled transition to the academic role and reported that their identities were unchallenged; however the remaining participants reported problems with socialisation into the academic sphere and thought their identities were under threat. It was noticeable that these academics thought they worked in departments that did not share a collegial ethos. Within this performative environment, Smith (ibid) suggests three potential reactions of new academics when trying to develop a sense of academic identity in their early years in the profession: those who experience ‘resonance’ with the expectations of the role and are untroubled in their new identities; those who experience ‘dissonance’ and feel their identities are under threat; and those who reject the concept of academic identity, and so depart the profession. Research into the experiences of young academics across a range of UK universities by Archer (2008) confirms the requirement to perform in order to gain what Archer calls

academic 'authenticity'. The key pressures are to publish high quality research articles and to win external research grants. Several of the participants in Archer's study were uncomfortable with this requirement to perform. It would appear that this is a global phenomenon: Hemmings (2012) in interviews with 12 early career academics at a single Australian institution reported a perception that a heavy teaching load early in an academic career hampered getting a research career underway. Participants reported that building a research identity early in their careers can be an uncertain journey as there are not necessarily support mechanisms in place to support new academic researchers, either within departments or within institutions. Fitzmaurice (2010) interviewed 14 early-year academics across a broad range of disciplines in a single Irish university and found that the influence of the institutional setting (in allowing them the space to develop their teaching and research) and their international peers (against whom they judge their own research output) had a critical role to play in the development of an academic identity for new lecturers. The new lecturers had a heavy teaching load and found it difficult to allocate time to research and writing.

However, empirical research into the impact of performativity has not conclusively demonstrated that all academics believe that its impact has been purely negative, thereby demonstrating that there are opportunities within this environment to contest powerful discourses and to realise positive outcomes (Winter, 1995). Pritchard (2011) in an empirical study of staff in twelve predominantly research intensive UK universities found that while academic staff reported being stressed, under-paid and burdened, they did identify freedom and job satisfaction. Pritchard concluded that this suggested a professional ethos, which enabled job satisfaction and dedication in

the face of the pressures brought about by performativity. A large scale survey of over 700 academics across a range of Pre and Post 92 UK universities (Kolsaker, 2008), reported that many academics appeared to accept performativity both as an externally imposed control mechanism, but also as something that served to enhance and protect the professionalism of the role by reassuring the public through accountability. One conclusion from this research was that many new academics may accept these practices because they have not known another way; it is how it has always been for them.

Adoption of the neoliberal discourse

Empirical research has also demonstrated the adoption of the neoliberal discourse by the academic community, both in respect to language and acceptance of the environment. Smith (2012) interviewed 32 academics from a range of UK universities. The academics reported that the language of the market and entrepreneurship was a pervasive part of academic life. This was especially so in regard to research, where they thought they had a responsibility to sell ideas, both in order to secure research funding and also to engage with their peers, policy makers and journalists. Abbas and McLean (2009) in a small scale research into the perceptions of 8 academics across a range of Pre and Post-92 UK universities, also found that the official discourse of employability (for example, transferable skills) had been adopted by their sample. Both Smith (2012) and Abbas and McLean (2009) found that the discourse had been adopted regardless of the type of university. However, in contrast, Bryson (2004) reported on a survey of 1168 staff from across a range of UK universities, in which he found little evidence of staff adopting the discourse of the market.

Managerial and administrative roles

The move to a mass higher education system has necessitated a change in the way that institutions operate: where once management was regarded as a low-key undertaking, in which academics managed relatively small numbers of staff and relatively small budgets, universities are now multi-million pound enterprises with thousands of staff employed within them. This has resulted in a more structured environment and the role of academic as manager and administrator has developed. Commentators have argued that it is an expectation that many academics will take on managerial and leadership responsibilities as they move up the career ladder (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1998). This responsibility, and the associated remuneration, is attractive to some academics (Kreber, 2009), however, there are also negative effects. Commentators have claimed that there has always been an ambivalence among academics towards fellow academics who have assumed management and leadership roles (Peck, 2011), and it is claimed that academic managers can be torn between the role of managing fellow academics, and a desire to protect academic values (Winter, 2009). It is argued that a big concern for many academics is that they perceive they are required to undertake increasing levels of administration, which it is claimed make working lives more difficult (Kreber, 2009).

Empirical literature has also demonstrated that some academics do see the expectation that they will take on management and administrative roles as a negative impact on their working lives. Tight (2010), in a review of research evidence on academic workloads across the UK, identified an increase in the overall administrative workload on academics and that there is often great resentment

towards it: namely that it is perceived to be of little value and to the detriment of time available for research or teaching duties. In a study with similar findings, Pritchard (2011), reporting from an empirical study of staff in 12 UK universities, noted that 51% said they resented the amount of administration they had to do. Floyd and Dimmock (2011), in interviews with 17 heads of department a single Post-92 UK university, found a concern among many academics that if they take on management roles this will be to the detriment of time available for research, and hence will impede their academic career. In similar research into the experience of academic managers in a single UK university, Preston and Price (2012) found that many academics are not keen to take on these roles, and if they do will seek to relinquish them at an early opportunity.

In summary, theoretical literature has identified how the performative and marketised work environment has impacted on academic practice through the pressure to perform, the casualisation of academic work, the adoption of a neoliberal discourse and the increase of administrative and management practices. The evidence from the empirical research demonstrates the uncertainty this environment can create within academics as they seek to create and maintain an academic identity. It has also demonstrated that academics will engage with this environment, some because they agree with its purposes, and some in order to 'get on' with their career.

Gaps in the theoretical and empirical literature

This literature review has identified theoretical analysis which has discussed the perceived impact of the performative and marketised work environment on the direction of academic practice. It has been theorised that the influence of these

external pressures has permeated through to all aspects of academic working conditions. As a consequence, the academic workplace is a source of conflict as traditional notions of academic autonomy are challenged in a working environment in which universities prioritise and reward practice designed to achieve positive outcomes, in particular in the external assessment of teaching and research. These arguments are largely corroborated by empirical research, both in the UK and internationally.

The literature has highlighted how the type of institution at which an academic works can have a major influence on academic practice, and that the sector remains stratified, despite the intentions of the 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act*. However, a key theme arising from the review is the small amount of comparative empirical research in England on the impact of the performative and marketised environment on Pre and Post-92 institutions. Some of the empirical research reviewed in this chapter has been identified as taking part in Pre-92 research-led institutions (Kreber, 2009; Cheng, 2010; Skelton, 2011, 2012; McAlpine, 2012; Preston and Price, 2012; Schulz, 2013; Adcroft and Taylor, 2013), and some in Post-92 teaching-led institutions (Clegg, 2003, 2008; Hanson, 2009; Floyd and Dimmock, 2011; Holligan, 2011). However, in several cases the authors are unclear about the location of the research, implying all environments are much the same (Rowland, 1996; Allen Collinson, 2004; Norton et al., 2005; Griffiths, 2007; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Gleeson and Knights, 2006; Gornall and Salisbury, 2012). This leads to difficulties for the reader in considering the impact of local context on the research outcomes. Similarly, several studies state that research has been conducted in a range of Pre and Post-92 institutions, but these types of institutions are not differentiated in

the analysis (Henkel, 2000; Coate, Barnett and Williams, 2001; Harley, 2002; Silver, 2003; Bryson, 2004; Archer, 2008; Kolsaker, 2008; Pritchard, 2011; Smith, 2010; Smith, 2012). While this does provide a richer sample, it does not aid an understanding of the impact of institutional context on academic identity. There are a smaller number of studies which do clearly compare and contrast the experience at both research-led and teaching-led institutions (Halsey, 1992; Trowler, 1998; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Lueddeke, 2003; Abbas and McLean, 2009, 2010). These latter studies do consider the effect of the changing policy environment, with reference to the impact of performativity and marketisation on the sector, and my research builds upon them within the contemporary environment. In particular, in chapter one I identified commentary on the perceived impact of the 2010 funding changes on the arts and humanities disciplines in the English higher education sector. This thesis, which is a comparative study of academic identity in the arts and humanities in two English Post and a Pre-92 universities will address this gap in the existing scholarly literature. It is anticipated that research into academic perceptions of the impact of the 2010 changes will help to present a better understanding of the impact of performative and marketised policies on academic identity.

This literature review has not analysed the use of theoretical frameworks by researchers to interpret contemporary working conditions. In the next section I will discuss the use of theory in research into academic identity, and discuss how I will use the theories of Anthony Giddens to address the research problem. I will then conclude this chapter by identifying the research questions which my research addresses.

Applying the social theories of Anthony Giddens in research into

Academic Identity

Having considered contemporary research into academic identity in a performative and marketised environment, in this section I make a case for using the social theories of Anthony Giddens to address the research problem. Trowler (2012) argues that theory can ‘offer ways of seeing’ that help us interpret and make statements about phenomenon, it can also help us view phenomenon and dominant discourses differently and critically. Within the literature on academic identity there are many examples of where empirical research has been undertaken, but the author has not used a theoretical lens (for example, Harley, 2002; Allen Collinson, 2004; Bryson, 2004; Churchman and King, 2009; Skelton, 2011; Preston and Price, 2012; Iqbal, 2013). There are equally examples where a theoretical lens has been applied, either through the adoption of major social theorists, as will be discussed shortly, or by the use of concepts which frame academic work as a social practice, but where reference is not made to specific theorists. Becher (1994) argues that the discipline acts as a social framework for academics within higher education, while Kamler and Thomson (2007) argue that scholarship is a social practice which has an important role in academic identity formation. For Gendron (2008) identity plays a key role in human sense-making, providing us with an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world, and how we create a social identity by identifying similarities with others. For Clegg (2008) and Adcroft and Taylor (2013), the formation of an academic identity is a social process, with consideration given to the motivations, expectations, attitudes, beliefs and values of the academics, and how they are influenced and shaped by other actors they come into contact with. Several authors take the concept of academic work as a social process further, by researching

the relationship between structure and agency within the academic workplace. Silver (2003), for example, considers the structure and agency debate from research into organisational culture. He investigates whether universities have a culture which organises their day-to-day identity, or whether identity is more closely aligned with non-organisational agentic culture, such as the discipline.

Where authors have adopted social theorists the main theorists adopted are Margaret Archer, Basil Bernstein, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens and Jean-Francois Lyotard. They are used for two main reasons. The first is to understand why academics display negative responses to neoliberal policies through the prism of power and control. Barnett (2000), Barnett, Parry and Coate (2001) and Duncan (2007) use Lyotard's concept of a 'performative shift' to characterise the impact of performative pressures on academia in terms of control over the curriculum and requirements to meet targets and exhibiting specified dispositions. Bourdieu (2001) analysed the French HE system and argued that the academic 'field' was characterised by a hierarchical system in which academics predominantly conformed to university norms. Bourdieu's concept of social capital is adopted by Archer (2008), Clegg (2011), Harris (2012) and Ingleby (2013) to illuminate the conflict between different groups of stakeholders in higher education as they seek to control social capital. This often manifests itself around debates about the purposes of education and they found academics holding positions of power dominating others. Ingleby (2013), Ball (2003) and Kolsaker (2008) use Foucault to show how managerialist discourses change the power dynamics between academics, universities and the state, by shifting from internal to external mechanisms of accountability. Finally, Beck (1999), Beck and Young (2005) adopt Bernstein to

consider the erosion of educational autonomy in Britain as the boundaries between the educational and the economic/political spheres weakened.

The second reason for using social theorists is to understand academic identity formation. Most used are Archer and Giddens who both cast identify formation as a reflexive project through the lifespan of individuals. Archer's concept of the 'internal conversation' which mediates between an individual and the social structures that s/he find him/herself in is adopted by Clegg (2008, 2012) and Dyke, Johnson and Fuller (2012). For Bendle (2002), Avis (2003), Henkel (2005) and Floyd and Dimmock (2011), Giddens is adopted to understand how academic develops an identity within specific contexts and through the processes of socialisation.

McAlpine (2012) makes use of both Archer and Giddens, emphasising the agency that individuals bring to negotiating the shape of their academic identity within social, personal and physical constraints.

Arising from the two themes discussed above are issues of agency and structure.

Several authors adopt Giddens theories of structuration as a framework from which to engage with and understand the possibilities for identity formation within a neoliberal environment. For example, Trowler and Knight (2000), Gleeson and Knights (2006), Fanghanel and Trowler (2008), Fanghanel (2012) and Hanson (2009) use Giddens to investigate how academics are able to mediate and negotiate the tensions and contradictions between structure and agency in their working lives, and how they produce and reproduce the social system. Giddens' notion of the duality of structure and agency has been used by Trowler et al. (2012) and Saarinen and Ursin (2012) as a theoretical position that highlights how change within higher

education occurs within social systems, and how policy change is facilitated, adopted and resisted by academics. In my research I build on these works that use Giddens, adopting his theoretical framework to understand how academic identity is formed and enacted within the performative and marketised working environment. Where Giddens has not been utilised by these authors is in respect to his concept of how power is discharged within a social system. His notion of the use of power is, I argue, a valuable perspective from which to address the research problem. In the next section I therefore outline Giddens' theories and discuss how they can be used to understand academic identity at this moment in time.

Anthony Giddens: structure and agency, social system, power and academic identity as social practice

A key concept in social theory is ontology: our conception of the reality of our existence in the world. The ontological battle in social science can crudely be described as a distinction between those who believe in underlying objective structures which determine human agency, and those who believe in subjectivity and the exercise of self-determination by individual human beings. Giddens sought to move away from a traditional notion of structure as a given form and of agency as something that is contained within an individual. For him, society is not located within a structure or within the individual, but rather should be conceived as an ongoing series of peoples' practices and activities (Giddens and Pierson, 1998). In *The Constitution of Society* (1984) Giddens argues that structure and agency are not polar opposites but that they exist as a duality whereby structure cannot operate without agency and vice versa. It is through agency that structure is produced and reproduced, that is, people actively make and remake social structure through their

everyday activities. On one level, this is a truism, because if the agents involved in a society disappear then society would disappear. On another level, day-to-day activity draws upon and reproduces social structures which have been produced over time by human agents and hence acquired an independent existence. Giddens illustrates this point through an analogy with grammar: when speaking, the agent draws upon grammatical rules, and in doing so reproduces them (Giddens, 1984, p24). He does not claim that society is like a language, but that language gives the social scientist a clue to how recurrent social practices form social institutions (Giddens and Pierson, 1998).

For Giddens (1984) structure and agency come together in social systems. Structure is composed of rules and resources set outside of time and space. On the other hand, social systems-such as family groups, nation states, or in the case under consideration here, English higher education institutions, are situated in time and space and involve the situated activities of human agents. Through the application of the rules and resources of structure, individuals have the agency to reproduce, challenge and change social systems over time and space. This ontology is structuration theory and underpins this thesis which conceptualises the English higher education system as a series of recurrent social practices in which structure and agency exist in duality.

To consider academic identity from this perspective raises valuable research questions about the ability of agents to influence and interact with structural constraints, questions which go to the heart of our ontological existence. It is from this perspective that I wanted to gain an understanding of the factors that constitute

academic identity and of the perceived impact of the performative agenda on academic identity. The role of the academic in producing and reproducing the academic social system can be seen in research by Trowler and Knight (2000), Allen Collinson (2004) and Smith (2010) who identify the importance of the academic community in socialising new academics. A supportive and collegial ethos amongst colleagues can help to create a shared identity between new and established academics. Established colleagues can help induct new colleagues into the academic community and help them learn the characteristics and behaviours required of them, such as how to get things done within the institution. The importance of the reproduction of previous experiences is also evident in research by Skelton (2011), who argues that new academics bring values in regard to teaching that are based on previous experience, most notably of being taught, and that they then encounter a variety of influencing factors that may change their values when they start teaching themselves. These include factors such as the physical environment for teaching, the experience of teaching itself (which may include weaknesses or strengths), the values of colleagues and the institution itself, and the influence of government policies. Indeed, Becher and Trowler (2001) identified the strong influence of disciplinary teaching traditions, which may either support or restrict the new academic in the development of a teaching identity.

Arising from the concept of structuration is the role of power within social systems. For Giddens, power is discharged within structured social systems through the utilisation of resources. Resources are of two kinds: authoritative resources, which allow agents to control the activity other agents, and allocative resources, which allow agents to control material objects (Giddens, 1984). In both cases, resources are

utilised as a source of power through human action; therefore having control over these resources results in individuals being able to dominate others. Power, for Giddens, is related to social control: that is the ability of actors or groups to influence the action of others. Within the academic social system, for example, power is displayed in the lecture theatre, as the academic is able to exert authoritative control over the student as they are positioned as the disciplinary 'expert'. Power is also utilised by a senior academic who is able to control and direct the activities of an apprentice academic through exercising power over both authoritative and allocative resources. Access to higher education itself is also a power situation as 'life chances' can influence the likelihood of individuals to progress into high education study. For Giddens life chances are authoritative resources which reflect, "the chances an individual has of sharing in the socially created economic or cultural 'goods' which typically exist in any given society" (Giddens, 1973, p130-1). In the literature review earlier in this chapter I identified how there was little empirical research into the impact of measurement and evaluation of teaching practice on the power relations between academics and students. One exception is Cheng (2010), who researched the perceptions of 64 academics at a single research intensive institution. He reported that some academics thought that they still held power over students in regard to subject expertise and power over the assessment process, while others thought that students were gaining more power in the contemporary policy environment. However, Cheng's research was conducted within a research intensive institution, so this thesis will address an absence of comparative empirical research between Pre and Post-92 institutions.

While structuration theory provides a framework upon which to build an understanding of how social systems operate over space and time, an understanding of the characteristics of the era which we inhabit is necessary to develop an understanding of how individuals develop and maintain an academic identity. Giddens (1991) argues that we are in a particular period of modernity which he calls late or high modernity in which there is greater uncertainty and more choice for individuals. He argues that human beings are knowledgeable agents, having: “as an inherent aspect of what they do, the capacity to understand what they do while they do it” (Giddens, 1984, p xxii). So, self-reflexivity is, for Giddens, a key component of high modernity when we are faced with increased decision making. Reflexivity allows invention of the self in the face of risk and the breakdown of traditional or fixed certainties, such as in employment or religion. Identity is no longer formed by traditional social systems such as class or family, rather, it is formed through reflexivity in which individuals are required to develop their own identity by constructing their own biography, or ‘narrative’ (Giddens, 1984, 1991). The narrative is of importance both for the individual in developing a sense of self identity, and also for how that identity is considered by others. A key to it is the process of continual reflexion which gives rise to a self- identity that is meaningful for the individual: “Self identity [...] is not something that is just given [...] but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual” (Giddens, 1991, p243). This ‘meaningfulness’ manifests itself in two priorities: firstly, to gain freedom of dependencies, that is to exercise agency, and secondly to achieve fulfilment. This is fulfilment through “fostering a sense that one is ‘good’, a ‘worthy person’.” (Giddens, 1991, p79) and through the development and preservation of a sense of self-esteem, which protects against anxiety that

threatens the ontological security of individuals. Within this ‘reflexive project’ individuals build ontological security through the continuity and order of events, and create a protective cocoon which acts as a barrier against threats.

Academic identity, therefore, can be conceived as social practice, constructed during the day-to-day actions of the individual academic (Giddens often favours the term ‘action’ over ‘practice’) on which the academic reflects. The constructing and reconstructing of a narrative of identity is a key idea for my research and as I listened to what the academics said, I looked for evidence of meaningfulness and fulfilment.

Criticisms of Giddens

Three key areas of criticism of Giddens have implications for the use of his theories in this thesis. First, Giddens’ concept of structure and agency as a duality (that structure cannot operate without agency and vice versa) has been criticised.

Margaret Archer (1996) for example argues that while there is an inter-play between structure and agency, in many instances structure will have an independence that historically pre-dates agents. She therefore argues that both elements have relative autonomy. Conversley, Bertilsson (1984) and Callinicos (1985) argue for greater primacy being afforded to the agent over structure (the agent can ultimately exercise free will). However, Giddens considered the relationship between the individual and society from the starting point of recurrent social practices, rather than starting from the individual or society (Giddens and Pierson, 1998). The strength of his position is that it is not deterministic, but that it demonstrates both the agency that individuals exercise but also how structure, with its rules and resources, also has a role in directing social systems. Giddens’ lens allows me to show how academics are

involved in the production and reproduction of social practice and how by their actions they can change structures. Simultaneously, it demonstrates how the academics as agents are effected by structure, such as the rules on 'how to get on' within universities.

Secondly, the generality of Giddens' theories and definitions have been criticised with calls for greater detail to be given about concepts such as 'rules' and 'resources' (Thompson, 1984; Sewell, 1992; Stones, 2005). In particular, his analogy with language for understanding of social practice, (Thompson, 1984; Callinicos, 1985), not least because in contrast to human practice, linguistic structures change slowly and are not subject to constraints of natural scarcity (Anderson, 1983). However, Giddens has appeared untroubled by such criticisms, arguing that they do not detract from the overall theory. He makes use of language, "to show something" (Giddens and Pierson, 1998, p76), about what the relationship between structure and agency may be, but he does not claim that society is like a language. Rather, he argues that language gives us clues to how structure and agency interact. Giddens therefore does not seek to provide a clear and unambiguous description of society, but to provide us with indicators and guidance against which to frame and better understand social activity.

The final set of criticisms concern Giddens' conception of the reflective project of the individual in high modernity. Clegg and David (2006) challenge as 'sweeping' the hypothesis that traditional society has been replaced, pointing out that categories such as class and family still resonate for many people. Similarly, Garrett (2003) challenges the notion that we are living in a post-traditional order, arguing that many

of the key historical forms of regulation and control still persist. There is a further criticism that Giddens is himself isolated from the reality of wider society, with his worldview being more reflective of the specific experiences of himself, being part of: “an elite group which is male, metropolitan, mobile, Euro- or Ameri-centric, professorial and likely to be affluent.” (Garrett, 2003, p390). The possibilities of individualisation and mobility may therefore be no more than the projection onto the rest of society of the possibilities for a select group of people (Clegg and David, 2006). It would be naive to claim that Giddens is unaware of the continued influence of class, family, race and religion for many in society, so a more realistic view of high modernity may be that Giddens believes that people have the ability to make more life-style choices than in the past. However, some people are more bound by limiting structures than others. Just as the self is not a passive identity, for Giddens high modernity is dynamic and ever changing, and he stresses that he does not intend to explain how things are, but to, “provide a conceptual vocabulary for thinking” (Giddens, 1994, p1), about how individuals and social systems interact.

The value of using Giddens to address the research problem

In chapter one I presented evidence that since the 1970s the dual pressures of performativity and marketisation have resulted in a decline in the status and power of academics. Most recently, it has been argued that the funding policies of the 2010 Coalition Government will increasingly damage the values and leading position of the English higher education sector. My research is on the implications for academic identity of this changing work environment. This has implications of debates about the purpose of the university and the ability and opportunities for academics to engage in different academic practices.

The literature review undertaken in this chapter identified the impact of performativity and marketisation on the agency of academics within the academic social system. Giddens' theories of structuration and identity formation in the era of high modernity provide a critical perspective from which to approach the academic work environment. As a starting perspective, it positions the academic in a 'recurrent social system' in which structure and agency exist in duality, and in which identity is realised in the day-to-day practices of academics about which they reflect and talk. Reflexivity provides a focus from which to consider how individual academics and the social structures they inhabit interact, and how academics discharge (or do not) agency within the academic social system.

The debate about the purposes of the university discussed at the start of this chapter highlighted fundamental questions about what it means to be an academic within the current policy environment. From a Giddensian perspective, debates about the purpose of the university and funding policies are debates centering on control over resources, and hence contestations about power. This is power over both allocative and authoritative resources: allocative because decisions on the use of public and private funding for higher education arise from this debate; and authoritative because it raises questions about academic status and authenticity. There is a battle for social control, with government and academics seeking control over these resources and hence control over, and the ability to influence the actions of, each other. The changes to the funding for higher education in England introduced by the 2010 Coalition Government have potentially altered the power dynamic. Where once the UK government could argue that the majority of funding for teaching and research

was public money, and hence the government had the right to dictate the direction of higher education, teaching is now privately funded by students. This has transferred power over allocative resources to the students, with as yet unknown consequences for arguments about the purposes of higher education. This thesis therefore addresses this issue and considers from the perspective of academics whether they anticipate a change to the relationship with students and arguments about the purposes of the university.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that some aspects of academic practice are becoming more contested and fragmented in the age of high modernity, where performativity and marketisation is becoming the predominant organising force for the academic social system. Within this environment the concepts of academic freedom and autonomy are increasingly under pressure from market forces, as sources of funding influence the direction of academic work. These pressures raise fundamental questions about the purposes of higher education, which leads both to existential questions about the worth of academic practice, and to debates about the accountability of higher education to external stakeholders and the right of government, employers and students to direct practice.

In chapter one, it was argued by several authors that recent changes to the funding of English higher education have accelerated the marketisation of the sector and increased the pressures on academics to perform. This has given rise to much negative commentary on the anticipated negative impact for the academy, in particular for the arts and humanities disciplines. However, the review of the

literature in this chapter has identified a lack of research into the contrasting experiences of academics at Pre and Post-92 institutions and, with the exception of Cheng (2010), an absence of analysis of the implications for power relationships between academics and students. It is anticipated that research into this area will help to present a better understanding of the impact of performativity and marketisation on academics working within English universities. As a consequence, the key research questions which will be addressed in this thesis are:

1. What are the key practices and values that constitute the academic identity of academics in the arts and humanities disciplines working in two contrasting types of English university in the twenty first century?
2. Do academics in the arts and humanities disciplines believe that the contemporary performative and marketised work environment has impacted on the practices and values that constitute their academic identity? If so, does institutional context influence the impact?
3. How do the theories of Anthony Giddens help us address the question of academic identity formation in different institutional contexts in the contemporary performative and marketised work environment?

Following on from this discussion of the literature and the theoretical framework which has informed my research, in the next chapter I outline the methodological considerations which informed my research design, and detail and critically reflect on the methods used.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

Having reached a point where I have developed an argument about the formation of academic identity in the context of a performative and marketised working environment, in this chapter I outline the methodological considerations that informed the design and execution of the research project. The intention is to provide a transparent account of the research process in order to demonstrate the rigour of the research undertaken (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Welch, 2004; Silverman, 2010; Creswell, 2012). I discuss the methodology (the epistemological and ontological considerations) and the methods (the specific techniques used) of my research project. I introduce the research sites and subjects, providing a rationale for the decision to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 early to mid-career academics in the arts and humanities at two contrasting HEIs. The process for transcribing and coding the interviews is outlined, with reference to the themes identified in the literature review and to the theoretical framework. The chapter concludes with a reflection on how the research was conducted in practice, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken and affirming the development of my researcher identity.

Methodological considerations: the nature of knowledge produced through qualitative research

In this section I discuss the epistemological considerations of undertaking research into higher education, and the ontological questions that were addressed during the process of developing an identity as a researcher. The discussion of these issues and

the development of my position is vital to the success of the research project. It is intended to persuade the reader of the validity of the research process, removing ambiguity about my position in my research and about the nature of the knowledge claims that I will make, thereby establishing its trustworthiness, its propriety and its position within epistemological / philosophical and methodological traditions (Furlong and Oancea, 2005).

My position as an educational researcher

A key area of concern for the educational researcher, especially those like myself using the ubiquitous semi-structured qualitative research interview, is the epistemological nature of the claims and conclusions arising from research (Potter and Hepburn, 2012; Clegg and Stevenson, 2013). In particular, I considered how to produce defensible and trustworthy knowledge claims using qualitative research methods. Therefore in this section I outline my basic epistemological position: identifying how it was possible for me as a qualitative researcher in the field of higher education to make defensible knowledge claims.

As a researcher adopting a social science methodology I studied a social phenomenon (academic identity) within a particular context (the impact of performativity and marketisation within two English HEIs), and have sought to determine the meanings that the academics have assigned to their experiences of the interaction between the social phenomenon and context. The approach of studying social phenomenon is in contrast to that of the natural scientist, who studies physical phenomena and operates on the assumption that research can be value-free and objective, transcending opinion and bias, with rigorous and clinical experimentation

leading to results which can be proven or disproven (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In contrast, social scientists can find themselves in a much more uncertain place, with their research dismissed by some as unscientific, personal and full of bias (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin, 2009). However, it is important to note that the social scientist should not make the same epistemological claims as the natural scientist. Whereas the natural scientist is concerned with discovering universal laws, the social scientist is more concerned with understanding social phenomenon within particular contexts (Hammersley, 2007). Where the natural scientist is focussed on observation of the physical world, social scientists believe that techniques of observation alone are insufficient to enable them to understand social phenomenon, and in particular the meanings that individuals give to actions. Geertz (1973, cited in Hammersley, 2007), illustrates this perspective through the example of an individual winking. Observation alone will not determine whether an individual is winking, pretending to wink or practicing winking. Therefore an alternative methodology to that of pure and objective observation is often required if the social scientist is to determine the cultural meanings that informed that behaviour, and hence to describe and explain it.

The natural and social scientist are both concerned with producing knowledge through their research. In broad terms it is argued that natural scientists adopt a 'positivist' perspective in regard to knowledge production, believing that there is an existing reality that can be uncovered using objective research methods. In contrast, the social scientist adopts a 'constructionist' perspective, believing that social phenomena are the creation of members of society and are historically located (Giddens, 1976; Burr, 1995). The positivist and constructionist perspectives are polar

opposites, and there are many perspectives in between and many alternative labels for these perspectives. However, while I do not deny the existence of an objective world, independent of our perceptions, I believe that meaning is only given to them through the use of the social construction of language which gives meaning to the labels assigned to those objects. This is because language is itself a social activity (Giddens, 1976), hence meaning is only possible through human activity and as such there does not exist an independent and objective reality. I therefore believe that knowledge is a social construction and as a social scientist have taken a constructionist perspective to knowledge production in this thesis.

It should be noted that the constructionist perspective is not without its criticisms. It has been argued that the physical environment does have an impact on knowledge creation (Elder-Vass, 2012). For example, if we think of a phenomenon such as academic identity, physical factors such as the institution at which an individual is employed will inform a characteristic of their identity, such as being a Pre or Post-92 employed academic. However, the counter argument is that physical factors are only assigned a meaning because they have been assigned this meaning through social activity. For example, the concepts of 'Pre-92' and 'Post-92' are themselves a social construction, and hence assigning a meaning to physical phenomenon is only possible because social activity has enabled us to do so.

In order to provide validity to the knowledge claims arising from my research it is therefore necessary for me to acknowledge that knowledge of a social phenomena (academic identity) is a social construction which will be party to values, bias, misunderstandings and misinterpretation. In this respect, as a researcher I am no

different from any other member of society and hence agree that the researcher: “cannot make social life available as a ‘phenomenon’ for observation independently of drawing upon his knowledge of it as a resource whereby he constitutes it as a ‘topic for investigation’ .” (Giddens, 1976, p161). The knowledge claims arising from the research I have undertaken in this thesis are therefore ‘socially constructed’ (Burr, 1995; Scheurich, 1997; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Hammersey, 2007). This is not to say that the knowledge claims have no value, but I have sought to qualify the nature of the claims made in contrast to the ‘positivist’ claims of the natural scientist.

The validity of data produced from the research methods

Having established my position as an educational researcher, in this section I address the validity of the knowledge claims arising from qualitative research. As an educational researcher there were two broad approaches to research methods available to me: quantitative and qualitative methods. They are often presented as two opposing approaches, but there is permeability across this boundary, and researchers do use both qualitative and quantitative research methods in ‘mixed methods’ research projects (Bryman, 2006; Madill and Gough, 2008). However, in this research project I have used qualitative methods due to the nature of the research aims and questions, seeking to understand the meaning that my participants gave to social phenomenon.

Quantitative research is data led, using a statistical analysis of numerical data, often using large data-sets in order to ‘quantify’ phenomena. In contrast, qualitative research is usually ‘word’ led, seeking to understand attitudes, motivations and

behaviour in respect of phenomena. Until the 1990s there was a bias towards the use of quantitative research methods in the social sciences. Quantitative research was considered more 'scientific' and valid due to the use of 'hard' numbers (Hakim, 2000). However, qualitative research has become much more common in recent decades due to a growing realisation that the validity of knowledge claims arising from quantitative research is now more contested (Hammersley, 2000) and due to a recognition of the limitations of statistical analysis in dealing with complex phenomenon at a time of rapid social change (Hakim, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p2) state that: "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." This definition provides an insight into the context and purpose of qualitative research, but it also highlights potential weaknesses. Firstly: natural settings. We can 'attempt' to study things in their natural settings, but it is questionable how natural the settings are. Secondly: the meanings the participants give to the phenomenon. Here we can see that the qualitative researcher strives to "shed light on questions that simply cannot be answered by surface observation alone" (Cousin, 2009, p35). However, it is contestable whether an 'accurate' portrayal of the meanings is attainable. In my case, as will be discussed later, there was the potential for unreliability in the responses of the academics and a misinterpretation by myself of the outcomes.

In regard to the first of these points, the natural settings, there are two settings to consider: the physical and the historical. In regard to the physical, an immediate challenge that I faced was that I may have been 'invading' the natural physical setting of my participants, with my presence in their workplace creating an

‘unnatural’ situation. I have therefore had to acknowledge and consider this potential impact when analysing the interview transcripts. The ‘historical location’ of the participants also plays an important role in the research process. McArthur (2012) cautions against attempts to simplify or pigeon-hole the social world as part of the research process, and in particular the influence of historical factors on the phenomena. To do so can provide a false clarity by ignoring the complexity of the world we are researching. In this regard, when making knowledge claims I have had to consider whether knowledge of a given situation, such as the type of institution at which my academics were employed, makes sense in other locations, or whether it is specific to a certain location (Law, 2004). When considering the data, it is also inevitable that the researcher has to be selective in choosing some sources over others, and that sample sizes will vary, due to resource constraints and personal preferences (Cousin, 2009; Silverman, 2010). Context setting, as I have sought to do in this chapter, has therefore been vital in assisting me to establish the validity of the process, enabling me to defend my knowledge claims by positioning them within a specified location (Kvale, 1996).

The second issue to consider is the meanings that individuals give to phenomena. Hakim (2000) states that the great strength of the interview is that we can make claims to the validity of the data because the results can be taken to be true and believable accounts of the experiences and views of individuals. However, it is debatable whether the data is really a valid account of the experiences and meanings individuals give to phenomenon. The perceptions of individuals may be uncertain and changeable (Inglis, 1985), their responses may not be accurate or trustworthy (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985; Walford, 2007; Roulston, 2010; Silverman, 2010) or

they may adopt multiple positions and identities (Fine, 1994). As a researcher I have also been at risk of being influenced by the tacit theories held by participants (Trowler, 2012). Therefore in my analysis of the interview data I have been aware that there is a risk that I have failed to interpret the true meanings that my participants gave to phenomenon, and that there is a possibility that my personal bias or preconceptions may have influenced the analysis (Antaki, Billing, Edwards and Potter, 2003; Potter and Hepburn, 2012).

There have been occasions during the design and execution of my research at which these concerns have led me to be sufficiently sceptical about the validity of the knowledge claims I sought to make, to the extent that I questioned whether this type of research should be undertaken at all. However, qualitative research is concerned with understanding the world around us and in this regard I have concluded that it is important to at least attempt to come to an understanding of the motives and actions of actors within it, albeit acknowledging that the validity of the knowledge claims will be open to question. Giddens' structuration theory helped me to understand the necessity of this type of research, in particular that there is always an agent involved in the production and reproduction of social systems and institutions (Giddens, 1984). Agents are not passive, they have a responsibility and culpability for the social world they inhabit, and therefore it is important to strive to understand the meanings they assign to phenomenon and the implications for their agency. However, structuration theory also highlights a potential weakness of my attempt to understand, particularly when it comes to the use of first person testimony from interview data. Giddens argues that while agents are able to articulate their reasons for many of their actions due to 'discursive consciousness', they also have a degree of 'practical consciousness'

by which they know, but can't put into words, about how to 'go on' within the context in which they are operating. Heavy reliance on interview data, as is the case for a large proportion of the research into higher education, can mean that the 'attempt' to understand only touches the surface of the meanings that an individual assigns to certain phenomenon.

In light of the definition of qualitative research provided by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) earlier in this section, I have determined that as a qualitative researcher I have 'attempted' to make sense, and it has therefore been important in writing up my thesis for me to be clear that this is an 'attempt' that will be influenced by context (such as the university within which my participants work) and subjective perspectives (both of myself and my participants). As part of the process of becoming a qualitative researcher in the social sciences it has therefore been important for me to acknowledge that it may never be possible to determine with perfect clarity the meanings that individuals give to phenomenon. This is particularly true in the era of high modernity when the social world isn't always coherent to participants: it can be unpredictable and chaotic (Giddens, 1991). Therefore it would be unrealistic for me to assume that my participants would be clear and definite in their descriptions of the social world. It is more likely that it is so complex that they, and I, lack the capacity to comprehend it fully. Law (2004) argues that in this environment researchers should not strive for certainty and stability, but at the same time should not be defeatist. They should not feel that their research is futile. I have therefore concluded that through embracing the uncertainty of the world in which they live, and being explicit in their research methodology, qualitative researchers can develop creative and informed responses to the world they are researching.

Ontological considerations: my position as a researcher

As well as developing an understanding of the nature of the knowledge produced, it has been important for me to develop an awareness of my ontological position as a researcher. In particular, whether I can, or should, take a political or value-neutral position. Giddens (1991) identifies both a narrow and a broad definition of politics.

The narrow definition refers to decision-making within state governmental institutions. The broad definition refers to decision-making in any areas of life where there are opposing interests or values that lead to debates or conflicts. If research in the social sciences is political in any way, many would consider the broader definition to be more relevant to the majority of research. However, Giddens argues that due to the central position of the nation state in our lives, being the ultimate arbiter of laws, we cannot deny that the narrow definition is equally applicable. Those taking a political position are sometimes defined as taking a 'critical' stance. Hammersley (2007) argues that the adoption of a critical stance leaves researchers open to criticism over the validity of their research as, in many cases, political or practical goals are considered of more importance than purely epistemic goals, in which knowledge is pursued for knowledge's sake.

Hammersley's concerns seem particularly directed at those pursuing what Giddens would call 'emancipatory politics', which is concerned with, "liberating individuals and groups from constraints which adversely affect their life chances" (Giddens 1991, p210). Hammersley is concerned that the emancipatory goal may become all dominant and that research that is 'critical' is at risk of impeding the validity of the knowledge claims which arise. He argues that researchers should aim to be, "as neutral as they can towards other values and interests in their work, in an attempt to

maximise the chances of producing sound knowledge of the social world.”

(Hammersley, 2000, p12). He argues that it is accepted without question by many researchers that the social science researcher cannot but help be value laden. Indeed, he suggests that many see partisanship as a necessity for research as the aim should not be knowledge-for-knowledge’s-sake, the aim should be knowledge for social transformation, equality and justice.

There may certainly be some truth in the charge that partisanship introduces elements such as bias into research, a charge that would lead to questions about validity.

However, it would seem odd to deny those with strong moral values the opportunity to engage in research, making it the reserve of the purely apolitical. Furthermore, if we consider Giddens’ broader definition of the political, it seems that the majority, if not all, research into the social sciences considers matters of debate and contestation, and hence falls into the political sphere. I argue, therefore, that all research and all researchers in the social sciences are political. The key point is that researchers should acknowledge this fact and ensure transparency of their position when making any knowledge claims. When considering their position, researchers therefore have to acknowledge and understand that they have no independent or pure objective position outside the observed world (Bakhtin, Holquist and Emerson, 1986). With respect to my own position as a researcher, I acknowledge that I have strong left-of centre political views. Since May 2011 I have represented the Labour Party as a District Councillor on South Derbyshire District Council, and therefore am aware that many observers would not perceive me to be predisposed to be sympathetic to the 2010 Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, the effect of whose policies on academic identity I am researching. However, regardless of this public

political affiliation, I have sought to conduct my research in as value neutral a manner as I can. For example, I sought in the interview process not to ask leading questions and have been careful not to inflict my political views on participants prior to or during the interviews. I have also sought during the subsequent analysis of the interviews to be open to all themes arising, and not to be selective in order to fulfil any preconceived political notions.

Political affiliations aside, I have also been aware during my research that my presence in the field may raise issues in regard to the power relation between the researcher and the researched (Scheurich, 1997; Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003; O'Leary, 2004). This has both epistemological and ethical implications; however as O'Leary argues, those in positions of power and privilege may not necessarily be aware of their position. At the outset of my PhD I had assumed I may be in a less powerful position than my participants, assuming the traditional position of the administrator who is subservient to the academic. However, O'Leary identifies several traits of power and privilege which I possess, but had not, up until that point, considered would affect my status as a researcher in this project. In particular, I am: white; from a developed country; have post-graduate qualifications; middle class; midlife; male; have English as first language (O'Leary, 2004, p44). I have therefore reflected on the potential power conflicts which may have arisen during the research process and considered the consequent ethical implications. An awareness of this potential power also means that the researcher needs to take care to balance the contribution of the research against harm to participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). It is increasingly expected that researchers check their analysis of interview data with participants, and afford them the right to respond. This is

especially important in view of the potential consequences of publishing research, as it may be used and misinterpreted by others, causing harm to the participants (Pring, 2000). Therefore, to be an ethical researcher, it is clear that one has to be aware of the position of power of the researcher, and also to be aware of the responsibility that comes with it (Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003; O'Leary, 2004).

Mitigating actions can be taken by the researcher, including precision and honesty in the reporting of research findings. In this respect, as a researcher I sought to attend to Dewey's account of the virtues that should be inherent in any democratic process of enquiry: integrity, curiosity, objectivity, honesty, open-mindedness and responsibility for one's own actions (Dewey, 1916).

The consideration of ethical responsibilities demonstrates the need to be reflexive as a researcher. It is clear that many authors (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Scheurich, 1997; Pendlebury and Enslin, 2001; Mason, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2002; Scott and Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2012) believe that researchers can provide a sense of validity to the project by being reflexive about their own personal position as a researcher and to detail this in writing up the project. This should involve acknowledging researcher positionality in relation to the project, which includes reflections on power relationships, a description of the personal context of the researcher and a reflection on experiences as a researcher, acknowledging that the analysis is affected by a personal standpoint. In reflecting on my position prior to undertaking the empirical element of this PhD one of my first concerns about undertaking research into the agency of academics was my own professional role as an administrator responsible for policy development. A question I had to ask was whether knowledge of my professional role would significantly affect the responses

made by the research subjects. For example, in my professional role, if a government policy had a potentially negative impact on academic workload, I would see myself as part of the solution, working on behalf of (and in the best interests of) the institution to broker between government and the institution. However, I am aware that academics can see me in my professional role as part of the problem, either as a puppet of government or because they believe that the institution's best interests do not accord with their own. One option would therefore have been for me to avoid disclosing information about my professional role. In this regard, Eley, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and McCormack-Steinmentz (1991) identify circumstances in which participants should be kept in the dark to avoid affecting the research outcome. However, I felt that this would not be acceptable behaviour because as a researcher, and a private individual, I value honesty and integrity. Similarly, not offering the information may not address the issue as a situation might have arisen when a participant enquired after my professional role, requiring me to disclose my professional responsibility. Another option would be to employ an impartial research assistant to undertake the interviews on my behalf. However, this would not have been desirable as an important part of the apprenticeship of the PhD is to undertake the research oneself, and it is important to engage with and understand the 'messiness' (Law, 2004) of research first hand. In my apprenticeship I should learn from experience, reflecting on my role as a researcher, laying the foundations for being a 'good' researcher in the future. Simply reading how to do something is no substitute for hands-on practical experience. Therefore, it was clear to me that I had to be honest with my participants about my role and accept the consequences. During the interview process I gave careful consideration to the question of how much of myself to reveal, and one mitigating step I took was to refrain from

discussing my personal opinion about the relationship between government and the sector to avoid influencing their responses.

Another issue that I took into consideration during the research project has been the impact of insider research. Although I am not an academic, I work within a university and have worked in the sector for nearly twenty years. It is therefore necessary for me to acknowledge that I am part of the world I am researching and to recognise that the knowledge I produce will not be totally value free (McArthur, 2012). I have extensive knowledge of the area of study, my own preconceptions and values, all of which I cannot erase from my mind. However, as I have reflected on my position as an insider researcher I have come to agree with those, for example Brookfield (1995) and McArthur (2012), who assert that it is far better to acknowledge and constantly reflect on your existing knowledge and values, than try and deny them for the duration of the research exercise. To this end I kept a research journal to aid reflection. This helped me not only to be aware of my position as an insider researcher, but has also helped me to challenge my preconceptions and assumptions. For example, as I made notes in my journal as I sought to make sense of the literature and the outcomes of the interviews, I was prompted to reflect on my own professional role within higher education and my actions in response to performativity and marketisation: Have I resisted? Have I been culpable? Have I been able to demonstrate agency in the face of the external direction of my work? However, I am also aware that a potential pitfall in being reflexive, especially in my written thesis, is that I could take it too far and become the centre of attention, creating an 'indulgent' piece of work (Cousin, 2009). I have therefore adopted a

relatively impersonal style throughout the majority of the thesis in which, the methodology chapter aside, the 'I' is largely absent.

One final point for reflection when considering my ontology as a researcher is the nature of, and development of, my identity as a researcher. While there appears to be an assumption that research students are young and enrolled full-time (Neumann and Rodwell, 2009), in reality the majority of research students in the social sciences are part-time and many of these are in full-time employment. In UK institutions in the academic year 2013/14, part-time postgraduate research students outnumbered full-time postgraduate research students in most non-STEM subjects, with the largest proportion in education, where part-time students outnumbered full-time students by over 8:1 (HESA, 2015). Within the field of education the growth of educational doctoral programmes aimed at the professional practitioner (the EdD), has led to a growth of researchers who have come into research via professional practice rather than from the traditional linear transition from full-time undergraduate and taught postgraduate study. These programmes are designed to develop 'researching professionals' (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001). This raises particular challenges for the student, and indeed supervisors, in how to create a researcher identity that can be accommodated within an established professional identity. Taylor (2007) points to the dissonance between, on the one hand, being an expert (in the workplace), and on the other being a novice (as a researcher student). Professional doctorate students tend to hold relatively senior positions in the workplace, as I do, and they can feel exposed as a novice in the research environment, as I did. Another challenge that these students face is gaining access to the academic culture. The part-time doctoral student can become 'invisible' and experience difficulties in accessing infrastructure

and the research culture (Neumann and Rodwell, 2009). They can come to regard the higher degree as, “a hobby, a credential and an individual pursuit” (Murakami-Ramalho, Militello and Piert, 2013, p260). I feel I have faced these challenges in developing a researcher identity, not least with work and family commitments resulting in periods of time at which I have not been able to dedicate as much time as I would have liked to my research and I have not been able to fully engage in the research environment in the University of Nottingham School of Education. This has led to occasional doubts of researcher authenticity and prolonged periods of isolation from fellow researchers. However the support of my supervisor and an engagement in activities such as the School of Education Student Research Conference have provided me with both encouragement and the ability to develop my own conception of a researcher identity. This is an identity which for me is of a researcher who is part-student and part-professional, who has occasional regrets about the lack of time to dedicate to research, but who ultimately enjoys and gains great personal satisfaction from engaging in the research process.

Concluding methodological considerations

In this section I have reflected on both the nature of knowledge produced through qualitative research and the role of the researcher. I have outlined how, while the nature of any knowledge claims will need to be carefully described, as a researcher I can make defensible knowledge claims through being reflexive about my position as a researcher and exercising integrity in the conduct and writing up of my research. I can also legitimately be political and value-laden, providing I recognise this and am explicit in my thesis.

The knowledge claims arising from my research will therefore have value as they will be an attempt to understand the impact and meaning of performativity and marketisation on, and for, my participants. As such they will potentially have the ability to enhance and change our understanding of an important social phenomenon. I believe this is a core purpose of qualitative research into higher education and is summarised by Giddens thus:

The social sciences necessarily draw upon a great deal that is already known to the members of the societies they investigate, and supply theories, concepts and findings which become thrust back into the world they describe. [...]

Viewed from a 'technological' [natural sciences] standpoint, the practical contributions of the social sciences seem, and are, restricted. However, seen in terms of being filtered into the world they analyse, the practical ramifications of the social sciences have been, and are, very profound indeed.

(Giddens, 1984, p 354)

The research design

So far in this chapter I have outlined the value and validity of the knowledge produced in social science research and developed an understanding of the position of myself as a reflexive researcher. I now introduce the research sites and discuss the methods of data generation and analysis used in my research.

The research sites and subjects

In light of the impact of performativity and marketisation on the sector, as discussed in chapters one and two, the research sites that I chose were two contrasting English

universities: ‘NewU’⁶, a teaching-intensive and locally focussed Post-92 institution; and OldU, a research-intensive and globally focussed Pre-92 institution. I chose these institutions as I believed that they would enable a comparison of the impact of performativity and marketisation across the spectrum of English higher education provision. One assumption I made at this point was that the type of university would significantly shape academic identities, and therefore these universities were chosen because they represented contrasting types of English university in a stratified higher education system.

Both institutions offer undergraduate and postgraduate provision in the arts and humanities, alongside the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, with OldU also hosting a large medical school. Table 1 below provides an overview of the student population at both institutions in the academic session 2012/13. It demonstrates how OldU had a significantly larger student population in every category, with the small number of postgraduate research students at NewU demonstrating how the research environment was much smaller than at OldU.

Table 1: Student population at NewU and OldU: 2012/13

Student type (numbers studying at UK campus in the academic year 2012/13)	NewU*	OldU*
Undergraduate	13,600	24,400
Postgraduate Taught	2,600	4,900

⁶ The labels NewU and OldU have been adopted from terminology used in research by Trowler (1998) as they are considered to be a succinct and illustrative method of distinguishing between the two types of institutions with respect to when they assumed university status.

Postgraduate Research	100	3,000

* Student numbers have been taken from information provided on the institution's own websites and rounded to the nearest 100 to preserve the anonymity of participants and their institutions.

Table 2 below outlines the position of both institutions in relation to several indicators taken from the Complete University Guide 2015 League Table of all UK HEIs (CUG, 2014), which pertain to be measures of the quality of provision at institutions. It demonstrates that for the majority of measures OldU was above the UK mean score and NewU was below the UK mean score.

Table 2: Position of NewU and OldU in relation to indicators taken from the Complete University Guide 2015 League Table of all UK HEIs

Information from the Complete University Guide 2015 League Table of all UK HEIs (CUG, 2014)	UK Mean score	NewU**	OldU**
Overall league table position	-	Top 90	Top 25
Student-Staff ratio (a measure of the average staffing level in the university)	17.5	17	14
Average UCAS tariff score for new students entering the university	358	299	439
Average research quality of research undertaken in the university (range of 1 to 4, with 4 being strongest)	2.2	2	3

Percentage of graduates who take up employment or further study	64.7	55	77
Percentage of graduates achieving a 1 st or 2:1 honours degree	67.5	60	78
Proportion of students who successfully complete their studies	85.3	83	94

** The results for NewU and OldU have been rounded to the closest percentage point

Further information that provides an indication of the relative distinctiveness of NewU and OldU is available in the mission statements of both institutions. Mission statements are near universal for HEIs. Although they have existed for a long time in commerce as, “an important first step in the strategic planning process.” (Pearce and David, 1987, p109), they were largely unknown within the higher education sector until the late 1980s (Sauntson and Morrish, 2010). A key role of the mission statement is to define to internal and external audiences the uniqueness of an organisation that sets it apart from similar organisations, identifying its purpose, priorities and markets (Pearce and David, 1987). In higher education, mission statements have a key role in creating and promoting the university ‘brand’, which in itself is often a claim for distinctiveness and uniqueness (Sauntson and Morrish, 2010). OldU’s (2013) mission statement firmly positions itself as a global university, providing an “international education” and “producing world-leading research” that will benefit individuals and societies “worldwide”. In contrast, NewU’s (2013) mission statement positions itself within the local community, offering “a good value UK education” and detailing its “role in the city and county”, and how it supports the “the local community and [...] the local economy.”

The distinctions between the two institutions were also apparent in a review of job specifications for academic vacancies in the arts and humanities disciplines at the two institutions during the period 2012 to 2013. A review of six job specifications from NewU and six from OldU demonstrated institutional differences in their expectations of the research profile of the academics that they sought to employ. This included the level of academic qualification held by applicants: for OldU a PhD was essential, whereas for NewU a masters degree was essential, and a PhD desirable. The particulars for the roles at OldU included expectations that successful applicants would undertake original research and publish in peer reviewed journals; develop personal and Departmental research, including the generation of research grant income; and that they would participate in conferences and external meetings to disseminate research outcomes. In contrast, the particulars for the roles at NewU focussed on the teaching element of the role, usually only including a single bullet point in relation to research which stated that the successful applicants should engage in scholarship, research, consultancy and income generation.

The comparative case study

This thesis is a case study of the effects of performativity and marketization on academic identity in two contrasting universities. Time limitations prevented me from undertaking a longitudinal study, so I conducted one-off interviews with twenty academics in total: ten at each university. In situations where the researcher may only have access to a limited number of participants, which in my research was due to time and resource constraints, a case study approach can be the most appropriate option for the researcher (McQueen and Knussen, 2002). An advantage of the case

study is that research can be more detailed than possible if studying a large sample, providing a richer portrait of a social phenomenon (Hakim, 2000; Gilbert, 2008). It is also a way of initially exploring issues and developing hypotheses upon which further, large scale research can be undertaken (McQueen and Knussen, 2002).

I have classified the thesis as a comparative case study because I consider my two groups of academics to be similar enough, but separate enough, to be comparable instances of the same social phenomenon: namely the academic social system. The comparative case study allows for the effects of various factors to be assessed, looking for similarities and differences which may lead to a greater understanding of social phenomena within different contexts (Bryman, 2008; Byrne, 2010; Hammersley, Gomm and Foster, 2000; Patton, 2002). The main contextual difference between my two institutions is that they are Pre and Post-92 institutions. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrates that not only do they have different histories and missions, they differ in regard to student population and their standing in various 'quality' measures. My two institutions are not intended to be purposely representative of the sector, but to represent two extremes from which lessons may be learned that are relevant to more typical universities. As such my study may be considered to be an example of an extreme case study, which are considered to be information rich due to their relative success or failure in respect to various criteria (Patton, 2002). In deciding to undertake this comparative case study I hypothesised that there would or could be differences between the two universities.

In calling this thesis a case study I am aware that the definition of a case is a matter for contestation (Ragin and Becker, 1992). A case can be the study of an individual,

a group, a community, or an institution (Gilham, 2000). It can take several forms, ranging from longitudinal studies stretched across time to short snap-shot studies, and can seek to explain or to theorise (Hammersley, 2012). A case is more than just an instance or an event, it is something which relates to categories in the social world, being the study of human activity, or phenomenon, in a real-life context (Gilham, 2000; Walton, 1992; Yin, 2003). When using a case, the social scientist believes that a subset is representative of groups in the broader population (Hakim, 2000; Carter and Sealey, 2010). However, cases are a construction of the researcher, so when defining a case the social scientist needs to be aware that by their actions they may be creating samples, or groups of people, which did not exist before (Carter and Sealey, 2010; Hammersley and Gomm, 2000). Cases should not be considered as static entities, but as complex social systems which are in constant interaction with their material and social environment, hence precise boundaries can be difficult to draw because the case will merge with its context (Gilham, 2000; Harvey, 2010). In my research I was conscious of the constantly evolving external and internal policy environment, and the potential implications this had on my sample during the period in which I undertook my research.

A key question for me in undertaking a case study is the defensibility of the knowledge claims arising from the research. Walton (1992) claims that the logic of the case study approach is to demonstrate a causal argument between a specific phenomenon and society in general. However, it is argued that due to the uniqueness of the phenomenon and the complexity of the social world it is difficult to make the claim that observations from a case study are generalizable to a wider population (Donmoyer, 2000; Gilbert, 2008; McQueen and Knussen, 2002). This would suggest

that the case study approach will lead to limited knowledge claims. However, Byrne (2010), Mjoset (2010) and Yin (2003) make a distinction between theoretical generalizations and causal universalisations which allows me to make broader knowledge claims from my case study. They propose that generalisations are claims that instances are more likely, and so serve to illustrate how society might work, while universalities are claims that instances will happen, i.e. that these are universal laws. They argue that it is defensible to claim that the outcomes from case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions, but not to universal populations, acting as a basis from which to expand or generalise theories. In adopting this position I agree with Walton (1992) that justification can be made by arguing that the case belongs to a specific family of phenomenon which is relevant to general social scientific theory. In my research I sought to both explain the perceptions of my participants, providing a narrative of their lived experiences, and also to theorise in order to develop a deeper understanding of the factors that influenced these narratives. The latter attempt was guided by the application of Giddens' (1984, 1991) theories of structuration and identity formation in high modernity, where the academic social group is an instance of a social system. As a basis from which to make generalizable knowledge claims, the case study is therefore, "The foundation for useful theoretical descriptions of the social world." (Byrne, 2010, p3).

Selection and access to the interview sample

As I intended to undertake a comparative analysis I originally decided on the following interview sample:

- 6 to 12 mid-career academics in the arts and humanities from NewU

- 6 to 12 mid-career academics in the arts and humanities from OldU

I decided to interview academics from the arts and humanities because, as discussed in chapter one, these disciplines have been particularly effected by the funding policies of the 2010 Coalition Government, with public funding wholly withdrawn, while STEM disciplines have retained some public funding due to their perceived economic benefits. An alternative approach would have been to interview academics across both the arts and humanities and the STEM disciplines as this would have provided a comparative account both across and within institutions. However, I decided against this as I believed that this would have necessitated a larger sample size than I had ability to practically interview in this thesis and I was anticipated that, although the sample was relatively small, the contrasting types of institutions would provide valuable insights into the effect of performativity and marketisation on academic identity across the sector. Another, more practical, reason for choosing the specific HEIs within these two categories was due to resource limitations of myself as a researcher: they were both geographically accessible and I had established contacts at the proposed institutions; therefore I anticipated that I would be able to gain access to the academics.

I intended to interview no fewer than six academics from each type of institution, but ideally twelve. I identified these upper and lower limits as research suggests that data saturation occurs within the first twelve qualitative interviews, and may be present as early as six (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006). In practice I interviewed ten academics at each institution, twenty in total. That number was arrived at because during the interview process I believed that I was reaching saturation point

at between six to eight interviews. I therefore decided to stop at ten as I thought that additional interviews would not add anything significantly more to the research analysis. An overview of the research participants, including the pseudonyms, discipline and date of interview is provided in Table 3.

I had considered to what extent the sample should be 'purposive' (Cousin, 2009), focussing on a specific group of academics such as those new to the role, in mid-career or who are more senior. I decided to focus on mid-career academics as I believed they would have sufficient experience of 'the way things are', and would still have significant interest in developing and maintaining a career in higher education. Although I had intended to study mid-career academics, I found in practice that I was interviewing academics with a wide range of experience. This was due to the fact that I identified potential interviewees from biographies on the websites of their respective institutions, and while from this information all appeared mid-career, in practice some were either early or late career. I also intended to ensure a good gender balance as research suggests that the academic experience, and by inference identity, of men and women can vary significantly (Morley, 2003), although once again the balance was not equal as not all potential participants accepted an invitation to take part in my research.

Once I had identified potential interviewees I made an enquiry to each by email, using contact details obtained from their institutions' websites, and briefly outlined my research project and asked if they would be willing to participate. In the email I clarified that I was both a part-time research student and that I was a full-time university administrator. Where positive responses were received the enquiry was

followed up by further details via email, which included a more detailed overview of the research project, contact details for my supervisors, and a copy of a participant consent form which I would be asking them to sign before commencement of the interview (see Appendix 1). There was a large variation in the 'success rate' of the initial email to potential participants. In total 48 enquiries were sent to academics at NewU and 18 to academics at OldU, resulting in 10 interviews at each institution. The approach method was exactly the same at both institutions but the success rate was much lower at NewU: of the 38 unsuccessful contacts, 21 made no response at all, 15 reported that they would be too busy to participate and 2 reported that due to the part-time nature of their work they would not be appropriate participants for my research project. Of the 8 unsuccessful contacts at OldU, 4 did not respond, 2 responded that they were too busy and 2 responded that they were on sabbatical, and hence would not be available for interview at the university. In reflecting on the different success rates between the two institutions I consider that there are two plausible explanations: firstly, that there was a correlation between the heavy teaching loads experienced by academics at NewU, which was identified during the research, and a genuine inability to find spare time to be interviewed. Secondly, I had previously made professional contact with 2 of the academics at NewU and 7 of the academics at OldU through my work as a university administrator, where I had worked in the same institutions as them (but not within their academic departments) and hence had contact through formal university mechanisms, such as committees and administrative processes. Both of these academics at NewU and 5 of the 7 academics at OldU responded positively to my request to participate. Hence my success rate was also influenced by prior contact with the academics.

That I had previously had professional contact with 7 of the eventual participants does give rise to the potential for this to have affected the responses that the respondents gave during the interview process. I had not had contact with any of the academics in either institution for over three years, and in some cases nearly ten years, so there was a distance in time in our contact, and although it was easy to build a rapport with these participants I did not believe either during the interview or upon analysis that prior engagement with the academics unduly influenced their responses. I found that all of the academics appeared extremely open during the interview process and that the confidential nature of the interview served to initiate open discussion as much as did prior professional engagement. However, I am aware that to an external observer the existence of prior professional engagement with several of the participants does provide a potential criticism that this may have had an influence on the responses given during the interview process. There was also the potential that it may have had an effect on my analysis of the interview data, as there was the potential for me to apply prior knowledge of the participants to the analysis. However, in reality I found that once I had applied pseudonyms to the participants I largely forgot their real identities when conducting my analysis.

Table 3: Overview of the research participants

HEI	Pseudonym	Discipline	Interview date	Age	Length of service	Level*	Office Accommodation	Highest qualification	Place where highest qual studied
NewU	Ben	Sociology	March 2012	20s	<10	Lecturer	Shared	PhD	Pre-92
	Chris	Arts	January 2013	30s	<10	Lecturer	Shared	MA	Post-92
	Finlay	History	November 2012	30s	<10	Lecturer	Shared	PhD	Pre-92
	Jean	Business	January 2013	50s	10-20	Lecturer	Shared	MA	Post-92
	Karen	Business	January 2013	20s	<10	Lecturer	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Kay	Business	February 2013	50s	>20	Senior Lecturer	Own room	MA	Post-92
	Ken	English	December 2012	50s	10-20	Professor	Shared	PhD	Pre-92
	Norma	English	April 2012	40s	10-20	Associate Professor	Shared	MA	Post-92
	Peter	Law	November 2012	20s	<10	Senior Lecturer	Shared	MA	Post-92
	Sarah	History	December 2012	30s	<10	Lecturer	Shared	PhD	Pre-92
OldU	David	Business	May 2013	50s	>20	Lecturer	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Douglas	Humanities	May 2013	30s	10-20	Associate Professor	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Jenny	English	May 2013	40s	10-20	Lecturer	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Judith	Law	November 2013	40s	10-20	Associate Professor	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Mark	History	December 2012	30s	<10	Associate Professor	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Martin	Humanities	May 2013	30s	10-20	Associate Professor	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Nick	Business	July 2013	50s	>20	Associate Professor	Own room	MA	Pre-92
	Richard	Business	December 2012	30s	<10	Professor	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Sylvia	Sociology	July 2013	20s	<10	Lecturer	Own room	PhD	Pre-92
	Zoe	History	May 2013	50s	10-20	Associate Professor	Own room	PhD	Pre-92

* Level types:

- Lecturer
- Senior Lecturer / Associate Professor
- Reader
- Professor

The methods of data collection

As Merriam (1988) guides us, research methods can be shaped by the purpose of the study and the nature of the sample. For example, a very large sample may favour an online survey, while a small sample may favour face-to-face interviews. However, I was also wary that research design can have a direct impact on the conclusions that can be drawn, helping to produce the reality that it seeks to describe (Law, 2004; Hodkinson and Macleod, 2010). I was also aware that research is a messy process (Law, 2004): there is no clear cut way of doing research and the practical realities of the research project often impact on the process. It is also apparent, with validity in mind, that the use of multiple research methods within a single project is often preferable as the methods will have different strengths and limitations which may complement each other (Hodkinson and Macleod, 2010). So while acknowledging my constructionist perspective, I can as a researcher, through the use of a combination of methods, ensure a sense of rigor, depth and breadth in my research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). I therefore chose to combine interview data with a limited amount of documentary analysis, the aim of the latter being to provide context for the interviews.

One concern I had about the methods I chose was the predictability of my approach, with much of research into higher education, which was reviewed in chapter two, based on semi-structured interviews with small samples of academics. Law (2004) argues that research methods need to adapt to and be responsive to the irregular and ephemeral world that we live in. Denzin (2009) argues that social scientists should resist efforts to impose one-size-fits all research models. Therefore we should seek to break away from the normative response to methodology, where certain methods are

used time and time again. However, I am aware that I do appear to be following the 'rules' of research in higher education, not least in the apprenticeship of a PhD. While Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that qualitative research does not have a distinct set of methods or techniques that are its own, it is apparent that many researchers rely on interview data as one of their main sources of data (Tight, 2003). However, in light of my constructionist methodological stance, I believe that in most cases interviews are the most appropriate methods to try and develop an understanding of the meaning that an individual gives to an event or circumstance.

Interviews

There are three general categories of interview: structured, in which mainly closed questions are asked; unstructured, which are more akin to free flowing conversations; and semi-structured, which follow themes, but allow in-depth discussion. The latter is the most commonly used type of interview in qualitative research (Cousin, 2009) and was the method I used. An alternative approach would be to undertake focus groups, exploring a topic in-depth with a small group of people. This would have potential benefits for my study as it would be a way of eliciting a group response to a situation and assessing how individuals discuss an issue as members of a group (Bryman, 2008). It may therefore have been a useful method of collecting the views of a group of academics, establishing whether there were shared perceptions and values which could constitute a shared social identity. However, practical and political considerations led me to believe that it would have been extremely difficult for me, as an external researcher, to have arranged for a group of academics to come together in a focus group.

The purpose of the interview, “is to explicitly explore the understandings, reflexivity and potential agency that participants experience in relation to the practice under question” (Clegg and Stevenson, 2013, p12). The interview is an opportunity to try getting to the heart of the perceptions of individuals, asking questions in a ‘safe’ environment. As noted earlier, the interview scenario raises potential problems in regard to the power or political relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Scheurich, 1997; Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003; O’Leary, 2004). I therefore tried to counter any difficulties that may have arisen by adopting an interviewing style that reflected the status of the participants. I dressed semi-smartly and sought to draw out and probe the narratives they produced, rather than interrogating them with a barrage of questions. In doing so I sought to adopt a style that would respect the autonomy of the participants and put them at ease (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001).

When preparing for the interview I thought of it as a social event (Baker, 2004) in which both the interviewer and interviewee are engaged in a process of knowledge construction (Mason, 2002). In this regard it was important to avoid ‘mining’ for information to back up any pre-conceived notions I may have had (Kvale, 1996), and to avoid a circular rediscovery of pre-existing ideas and assumptions (Potter and Hepburn, 2012). Therefore, I needed to give careful consideration to the composition and structuring of my questions (which were be informed by my literature review and my theoretical framework) in order to understand the worldview of the participant (Merriam, 1988). I used the interview schedule in Appendix 2, which was structured to allow me the freedom to identify points for further discussion but also allowed the participants to focus on what they felt was

important. I attempted to combine straightforward factual questions with more open-ended questions which would encourage my participants to elaborate on their answers (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Silverman, 2010). Adopting a flexible semi-structured interview technique countered the potential pitfalls of structured interviews, which by nature create a rigid experience with specific non-negotiable research questions. While structured interviews lend themselves to easy analysis, they may not necessarily elicit the point of view of the participant and may not provide particularly detailed answers (Bryman, 2008).

Welch (2004) and Silverman (2010) identify the daunting nature of the research process, especially for new researchers, with the need to be comfortable in the face of much uncertainty and ambiguity. I felt that I had prepared myself as much as possible for the interviews through my familiarity with the literature and theoretical framework, and through research into research methods and methodology. I had refined my interview questions through discussion with my supervisor and before embarking on the interviews I had also undertaken a pilot interview with a friend who is an academic at another institution. While the pilot exercise helped me to reflect on the interview questions and on my interview techniques, it was largely a theoretical exercise which I didn't feel helped me develop an authentic researcher identity before I conducted the first interviews. I found that undertaking the research in practice was daunting at first and I was incredibly nervous at the start of the first few interviews. This was predominantly due to a feeling of 'unfamiliarness' with the role of the researcher. I was confident in the university environment, and confident in engaging with academics through my role as a professional administrator, but the process of adopting or creating a researcher identity did, to use Giddens (1991),

challenge my ontological security. I believe that this reflected itself in the quality of the transcripts from these first few interviews, which included both sparse answers which were not followed up and long, wandering answers which I could have cut short earlier. These problems were identified in a review of one of my initial transcripts with my supervisor, during which we discussed techniques to keep the interview flowing and how to follow-up lines of enquiry as they arose, not to stick rigidly to my interview schedule. As the interview process went on I developed confidence as an interviewer and believe that I was able to develop authenticity and credibility in the eyes of the participants. I had scheduled an hour for each interview and on average they lasted that amount of time, with several extending over the hour, and in one case extending to one hour forty minutes. The shortest interview was fifty minutes. All interviewees signed a consent form (see Appendix 1), and the interviews were recorded on a digital data recorder in MP3 format. I asked the interviewees if they would like to see a copy of the interview transcript once produced, but none did, with several only seeking assurances that the interview data would be anonymised in the thesis. I supplemented the data recording with brief notes taken during the interview and a brief synopsis of the interview written immediately following completion, usually in my car.

Documentary analysis

Alongside the interview data I also looked at a limited amount of documents produced by the HEIs: namely their mission statements and the details of academic job vacancies in both institutions. As Atkinson and Coffey (2004) note, documents are often overlooked as a source of research data. The documentation provided me with valuable background information, such as biographies of the participants'

institutions, but also provided information on how institutions have engaged with national policy initiatives. It also enabled me to identify what the policy makers and institutions had reason to value, and to ask the interviewees for their responses. The documentary analysis was undertaken with the intention that it was supplementary to the primary data realised from the interviews and in the analysis was therefore utilised as supporting evidence, rather than primary evidence.

In analysing the documents I sought to draw out both how the institutions presented themselves publicly, for example as a global or locally orientated institution, and to consider how themes from the literature came through, for example whether students were positioned as consumers. A great deal more documentary analysis could have been undertaken, including analysis of minutes of relevant university committees and local and national press on the two institutions. However, as the focus of my research was on the responses of individual academics I did not feel it was appropriate to focus the research on this aspect of the documentary analysis; rather it was appropriate to undertake a limited analysis to provide contextual background to the main research data.

Ethical conduct of the research

Throughout the research process I followed nationally agreed ethical standards as set out by the British Educational Research Organisation Association's *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (BERA, 2004, 2011) and internally agreed standards in the University of Nottingham *Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics* (UoN, 2013). Ethical approval to undertake the research project was obtained from the University of Nottingham, School of Education Research Ethics Committee.

Protocols for data storage were followed to store electronic and paper based data in a secure environment (password protected and under lock and key respectively), mindful of the 1998 Data Protection Act.

I was aware that it was particularly important to gain informed consent and to both maintain privacy and confidentiality and to assure the participants that this would be maintained (Seymour and Ingleton, 1999; Siebold, 2000; Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003; Creswell, 2012). This was both to protect the participants from potential harm, but also to facilitate open discourse during the interviews. The participants therefore received an information sheet about the aims of the project in advance of the interview and were asked to sign a participant consent form (see Appendix 1). I also sought to 'reaffirm' how privacy and confidentiality would be maintained at the interview, so I discussed the research process with all participants at the start of the meetings, once again seeking consent for recording the interviews and informing them how I would respect and maintain confidentiality in writing up the thesis. I was particularly concerned about how to maintain confidentiality when presenting quotations in the thesis, and had detailed discussions with my supervisor about how this could be maintained (see below for an explanation of how quotations are presented the thesis). The practice of assigning pseudonyms to participants and their institutions was used to maintain confidentiality, but I was aware that there was the potential for participants to be identifiable to colleagues who were either involved in the study or were aware of their participation (Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003). I therefore took the additional step of not using quotations that I believed would potentially be harmful to an individual, for example if they were

critical of an individual colleague, and of not including other identifiable details, for example details of an event that only they could have been involved in.

As discussed earlier, my presence in the field may have raised issues in regard to the power relation between myself as the researcher and my participants, not least as I had power over the direction of the interview and the potential to raise issues which participants may not have wished to discuss (Scheurich, 1997; Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003; O'Leary, 2004). I also had to be aware that, even though I perceived the interview process to be a low risk event, there was the potential for ethical issues to arise, for example if the participants revealed information that may have caused me to consider whether I had a legal or moral responsibility to report, such as sexual harassment in the workplace (Allmark et al., 2009; Creswell, 2012). To my knowledge no such issues arose in practice, but if they had I would have discussed them immediately with my supervisor.

The data analysis

Throughout the research process I kept a research journal, which I carried with me or had to hand at most times. The journal served a number of purposes, from recording of thoughts about my position as a researcher to more detailed analysis, recording of meeting dates and times, to helping to give me inspiration in times of need. Keeping the research diary has been an invaluable part of the research process, and while it is structured in an apparently haphazard manner, this structure helps to demonstrate the 'messiness' of research and in itself has been more of a help than a hindrance as it has helped me to keep track of my thoughts throughout the research project.

As I outlined above, the primary focus of my research was interview data, supplemented by a limited amount of documentary analysis, which was undertaken by reviewing mission statements and job particulars. This was undertaken prior to the first interviews in order to provide myself with context for the interviews, and was repeated alongside the analysis of the interview data in order to confirm or revise themes arising. However, the primary focus of this section is on the analysis of the interview data. I transcribed the interview data in the immediate days following the interviews, normally no later than three weeks following an interview. Transcription was a painful, if rewarding, process. It was rewarding because listening to the interviews helped me to develop my comprehension of the responses and to start the coding process. It was painful because of the length of time that it took to transcribe and hence I found it to be one of the least fulfilling parts of the research process. Each interview was downloaded in MP3 format onto my laptop and I then used a foot pedal to control the playback as I typed up the transcript into Word. The foot pedal was a great aid as I was able to play, stop and rewind the playback using my foot, freeing up my hands to type. However, although I consider myself to be a quick typist it typically took four hours to transcribe each hour of interview. I found this length of time extremely frustrating as I was transcribing in the evenings and typically only had an hour available for transcription each night. At one stage I was worried that I was building up too large a backlog. After much investigation on the internet I hit on the idea of using Dragon dictation software to transcribe the audio for me. The software available has to be trained to the voice of the individual operator, so it was not possible to simply play the transcript into the software, and therefore I had to listen to the transcript and then speak the words aloud for the software to transcribe my voice. Once up and running, the process worked relatively

smoothly and the software transcribed my voice much quicker than I could have typed it. However, I had to be careful not to confuse the software by playing the transcript aloud in the room; therefore I had to listen to the transcript via headphones. This resulted in the following setup for transcription: me sitting at my kitchen table with my laptop, on which I held the interview in MP3 and had the Dragon dictation software open to transcribe my words into Word. I had a foot pedal to control playback, headphones through which to listen to the playback and a microphone into which to speak the words. This also meant my hands were free to write notes as I went along. This set up was, I reflected at times, either a work of genius or a rather ludicrous Heath Robinson approach. I was certainly relieved when the transcription process was over and do not look forward to any future transcription work. An alternative would have been to send the scripts to be transcribed by a professional transcription service; however expense forbade this as it would have cost several thousand pounds. I also believe that transcription was an important part of the analytical process as it helped to bring me closer to the data and I was able to make notes as I transcribed.

The transcripts that I produced were presented in a conventional 'play script' style, with the questions and answers reproduced as faithfully as possible, but with pauses, prompts, 'ums' and 'yeahs' removed to produce an intelligible script that could then be analysed. When I have reproduced quotations in the thesis I have used square-bracketed text in order to provide clarity or to protect the anonymity of respondents, as follows:

[...] denotes where I have removed text that is superfluous to the point being made

[normal case] a word or phrase is inserted to provide clarity to a quotation.

[*italics*] a word or phrase is substituted with a word or phrase in italics to protect the anonymity of the academics or their institutions

I was aware during the transcription process that by choosing to reproduce the interview in this format I was producing a sanitised account of the interview, removing the ‘embodied and voiced nature’ of the interview (Potter and Hepburn, 2012). An alternative method of transcription would have been a more detailed representation of the interview, such as that developed by Jefferson (1984), which would capture pauses, prompts and acknowledgement tokens. However, I chose not to take this route due to limitations of time and the limitations in my own expertise in this format of transcription, acknowledging that I was forgoing the chance to undertake an analysis that would have, amongst other things, provided a rich source of information on the role of myself as an interviewer in shaping and influencing the responses of the interviewee (Potter and Hepburn, 2012). I have sought to mitigate against this weakness in the thesis by being explicit about my position as a researcher and by not using quotations out of context, and providing context for quotations if appropriate.

As I became immersed in the data during the process of transcription it quickly became apparent that it was a key phase of data analysis as I started to mentally code

and identify themes as I typed, occasionally pausing to make notes in my research diary or on the transcript. In this regard transcription is an interpretative act where meanings are created, influenced by the epistemological and theoretical position of the researcher (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999; Bird, 2005). Following the transcription I began the process of coding the data following accepted conventions, such as those described by Cousin (2009). This involved looking for themes and for metaphors, with regard to my theoretical framework and the literature review. In identifying themes I was looking for repetition of concepts across the sample that would enable me to capture the essence of the phenomenon under investigation (Madill and Gough, 2008). There are two primary ways of identifying the themes: an inductive or 'bottom up' approach (as in grounded theory) or a theoretical or deductive or 'top down' approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I opted for a combination of both, looking with an 'objective eye' for common themes occurring within the data, but also purposely looking for themes in relation to my theoretical framework. This approach was taken because I wanted to accurately reflect the data, but also, as noted earlier, I believe that researchers cannot fully divorce themselves from their theoretical or epistemological values. In this regard one of the most important considerations when undertaking the analysis was to pay due consideration to my theoretical framework, looking at the relationship between agency and structure, and the process of identity formation in the era of high modernity.

The initial coding was conducted using hard copies of the transcript, and this was largely an iterative process which I repeated on several transcripts until I was satisfied with the general coding that I was producing. I then proceeded to code the transcripts in soft copy, using the NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. I

anticipated that this would enable me to quickly sort and represent the coded sections in a manner that would help with the subsequent analysis of the coded text. However, in practice I found that I was ‘over coding’ the transcripts by this method and it became extremely difficult to keep on top of all the themes I was identifying and to arrange them in a manageable and constructive order. Therefore I eventually stopped using NVIVO and reverted to transcription using hard copies. This method proved much more manageable and I felt much more comfortable in engaging with the data in this format and was able to pursue the following 16 themes in coding the data:

1. Rules – evidence of the application of
2. Resources – the use of authoritative and allocative resources
3. Agency of academics
4. Marketisation
5. Managerialism
6. View of their institution
7. Government Expectations
8. Fees – view of and impact
9. Student Expectations
10. What academics want students to develop
11. Relationship with colleagues
12. External links
13. Teaching – what it entails, what they do and don’t like
14. Research – what it entails, what they do and don’t like
15. Administration – what it entails, what they do and don’t like
16. Ambitions of the academics

A potential weakness of the approach I took was that, in common with many other researchers, I may have under-analysed the data and hence missed relevant themes. Antaki et al., (2003) identify six common forms of under-analysis, where analysis displays tendencies towards summary; taking sides; over or isolated quotation; the circular discovery of discourses or mental constructs (i.e. presenting phrases such as 'I think' or 'I feel' as if they are providing direct access to the person's inner thoughts or feelings); over-generalising claims; and *ad hoc* feature spotting. In common with many researchers I was no doubt guilty of one or all of these tendencies at some point or other, not least as it is easy to get carried away by isolated observations from the interviewees which appear particularly insightful. However, I was mindful of these potential weaknesses during the analysis and took steps to mitigate them by ensuring that I didn't draw generalisations from isolated observations and by analysing 'below the surface' of the interviews. This included looking at the relationship between what appears in the transcripts and what is hidden, i.e. what is said and what is unsaid (Grumet, 1987) and by applying concepts from my theoretical framework, such as the use of authoritative and allocative resources (Giddens, 1984) within the academic social system, to develop an alternative understanding of the observations. I also looked for a plurality of interpretations (Kvale, 1996) and took care not to make unjustifiable inferences by considering and clarifying in the thesis whether the participants were responding in a personal capacity, or in an institutional capacity on behalf of the academic body (Potter and Hepburn, 2012).

In writing up the analysis I was also mindful about the use made of verbatim quotations. They are particularly valuable in helping to explain or illustrate a point, to deepen understanding and give participants a voice (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006). However, I took care to consider the credibility of quotations when using them as evidence: reflecting on whether I was being truly representative of the participants, or being selective in order to support a preference for a theory or theme. I was also aware that an important part of the interview was interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Richards and Schwartz, 2002; Shaw, 2003; Potter and Hepburn, 2012), and in this regard I have taken care where possible to provide context for the quotations, and on one occasion to reproduce the question asked.

The coding and subsequent analysis produced a significant amount of text under the sixteen coded headings detailed above, with many of the themes having sub-themes within them. While the findings were interesting, I was aware that I needed to develop a coherent narrative in the thesis, linking the literature review, my theoretical framework and my analysis. I therefore sought to draw out the strongest and most relevant themes from the analysis and relate this to the concept of identity as a process of construction and reconstruction. This resulted in the formation of analytical chapters four to seven, which were related as follows to the themes from the coding exercise:

Chapter 4, Constructing and reconstructing an academic identity:

Themes 1, 2, 3, 15

Chapter 5, Constructing and reconstructing the relationship with students:

Theme 9,10

Chapter 6, Constructing and reconstructing the discipline through teaching:

Theme 13

Chapter 7, Constructing and reconstructing the discipline through research:

Theme 14

Cross-cutting across all four chapters were themes 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

While the organisation of the themes into these chapters served to produce a strong narrative in the thesis, it was with regret that I had to ‘discard’ some of the themes, such as ‘the ambitions of the academics’, or to pay fleeting reference to them, such as ‘external links’. There were many sub-themes which also suffered this fate.

However, I recognised that a key part of the research process is that the researcher has to make hard decisions, and although much time was dedicated to producing an analysis of these themes, their inclusion in the thesis would have detracted from the overall argument. The time spent undertaking this analysis was therefore not wasted, but was a key part of the overall research process and was first hand evidence of the disorderly nature of some aspects of research (Law, 2004; Ashwin, 2012).

I am aware that this is a traditional approach to structuring and presenting a thesis, and during my consideration of how to present my thesis I did consider for a time whether to present in a literary format, as an ethnographic account (Denzin, 1997;

Creswell, 2012). In this approach the data could have been presented as cameos, stories or poems, using literary devices such as metaphors, analysis and plot to present a persuasive account (for example, Elizabeth and Grant, 2013; MacAlpine, 2014). I recognised that this was potentially a powerful way of relaying the perceptions and feelings of my participants, but I was sufficiently uncertain about own literacy capabilities to rule this approach out.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the methodological considerations that I took into account in undertaking this research project. I have discussed two areas that were of particular concern to me as I developed an understanding of my research project: the nature of knowledge in the social sciences and the ontology of the researcher. I have introduced the research sites and subjects, and discussed the rationale for choosing them. I have also outlined in detail the execution of the research in order to produce a clear and explicit account of the research process and the trials and tribulations I experienced. A key concern that I had throughout the research process was whether I was an 'authentic' researcher. I believe that this chapter has demonstrated that I have developed a researcher identity and was credible in the field when undertaking the research.

The process of undertaking this thesis was very much a research apprenticeship as I learned and refined the techniques of qualitative research in the process of executing what has been my first major research project. The thesis is a demonstration of a meaningful narrative that I have developed as I have constructed and reconstructed an authentic researcher identity. In this chapter I discussed how engagement with the

theoretical framework and the analysis of the interviews has caused me to reflect on my own professional role within higher education and my actions in response to performativity and marketisation. This has underlined for me that the researcher is not a passive observer and that research projects can affect them personally. I found it particularly noticeable that the process of being an educational researcher, of observing and analysing others and considering the relevance to practice and policy, has developed my capacity to reflect on and engage with my conceptions of self, others and society. I also discussed how the transcription process was a lengthy and occasionally painful process, but it was invaluable in making me realise that I was engaging with an individual with a life, wishes, desires, whose opinion was just as important as my own. This need to let the participants have a voice made me aware of the responsibility of the researcher in being true to the interviewees, dedicating time to the analysis to ensure that I accurately reflected their responses, rather than only selecting quotations that met my own hypotheses.

Following this review of the methodology and methods which informed the research process, in the next four chapters I will present the analysis of the data I produced during the empirical phase of my research, using the theoretical framework and the literature review from chapter two to provide structure and context to the discussion. In the final chapter I will bring the research project to a conclusion.

Chapter 4. Constructing and Reconstructing an Academic Identity in Contemporary Working Conditions

Introduction

In the preceding three chapters I have sought to position my thesis both within current research into academic identity and within the UK higher education system in performative and marketised environment. Within this environment I have proposed that academic life has become more contested and fragmented, with the implementation of the funding policies of the 2010 UK Coalition Government accelerating the impact of performativity and marketisation on English universities. I have also outlined how Giddens's theories of structuration and identity formation will be used to develop an understanding of how academics construct and reconstruct their identity within these conditions.

In this, the first analytical chapter, I examine how the academics in my study developed a narrative of academic identity in order to address my first research question, which is to determine the key factors that constitute the academic identity of academics in the arts and humanities disciplines working in English universities in the twenty first century. As discussed in chapter two, identity is not a fixed trait that is possessed by an individual or group of individuals, it is a concept of identity, "as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography." (Giddens, 1991, p53). The experiences that an individual goes through, and the meanings that they give to them, during the process of becoming and being an academic are therefore an important part of the narrative of academic identity. This narrative is, therefore, a reflexive process in which academics construct and reconstruct an

academic identity as they actively engage with the academic environment. This includes their experiences as a student at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and their experiences as they begin a career and engage with teaching and research activities, interacting with fellow academics and learning the unwritten 'rules' of how to get on. In this chapter I focus on the development of an academic narrative from the formative stages of an academic career onwards, before considering how the academics I spoke to perceived the impact of performativity and marketisation on the sector. Their perceptions of the latter were sought to answer my second research question, which is whether the academics believe that the contemporary performative and marketised work environment has impacted on the practices and values that constitute their academic identity.

Throughout this chapter I highlight the importance of the narrative created by the individual in the development of a meaningful academic identity and identify the agency that academics are able to discharge within their work environment. While there are similarities in the identity formation process between the academics at NewU and OldU, I also discuss how the place of employment has an important role to play in shaping academic identity, providing both constraints and opportunities for the academics. The location of their employment is particularly important for the academics as they seek to understand the actual or potential impact of performativity and marketisation on the sector and on their academic identity. I reflect in the conclusion to this chapter on the significance of an awareness of the experiences and motivations involved in the process of constructing and reconstructing an academic identity in the twenty first century.

The motivation to become an academic

In this section I analyse the reflections of the academics I interviewed on the experiences they went through as they effected the transition from student to academic. There is a body of literature on the experiences of the PhD student (for example, Deem and Brehony, 2000; Park and Ramos, 2002; Leonard, Metcalfe, Becker and Evans, 2005; Hockey and Allen-Collinson, 2005) and on the experiences of academics in the early years of their careers (for example, Archer, 2008; Fitzmaurice, 2011; Hemmings, 2012; Adcroft and Taylor, 2013). However, as Leonard et al. (2006) identify, there is a gap in the literature in regard to the transition from the doctorate to work. In this section I will attempt to bridge the gap between research into the doctoral experience and research into the academic experience, analysing the motivations and experiences which culminated in my sample securing permanent positions in academia and developing an academic identity.

Becoming an academic is a process of transition from student to academic (Blaxter et al., 1998; Trowler and Knight, 2000). Henkel (2000) conceives the creation of academic identity as a dynamic process: from an initial desire to enter academia; to appointment; and to the development of teaching, research and management roles and abilities. Taylor (2008) suggests that most academics have at some stage shared an aspiration to become academics, rather than it being an accidental or serendipitous career path. This aspiration arises at differing times: for some during their undergraduate studies, and others not until they are undertaking postgraduate study and research. Taylor suggests that the aspiration is based around a conception of

academic identity that the individual has built up based on their experiences as students, with a resonance with the discipline and positive engagement with academics featuring strongly in their conception of the academic role. Many of the academics in my sample had developed an aspiration to become academics following similar routes to those identified by Taylor (2008), but there was variation from Taylor's routes in that some had developed this aspiration before studying at university, and hence before coming into contact with the university environment. There were also several who, in contradiction to Taylor, appeared 'accidentally' to enter into academia. Although the process of studying for and achieving qualifications, and then applying for jobs in academia is ultimately an individual endeavour, it was clear for many of the individuals in my sample that guidance from others had played an important part of their narrative of academic identity. An alternative approach to understanding the process of becoming an academic is therefore to consider the influence of social factors on the journey to becoming an academic. As discussed in chapter two, Giddens (1973) adopts the Weberian concept of 'life chances' to consider how social factors influence the ability, or inability, of individuals to access socially created economic or cultural resources within a society. Some individuals or groups will possess greater access than others to these resources, both actual and virtual, which will provide greater chances of accessing social systems, such as academia. Typically this is in the form of social networks with individuals, groups and institutions. In regard to academia, this would include relationships with individuals such as those who have studied at university, with academics, or guidance from teachers who recommended the pursuit of a university education, all of whom could provide individuals with knowledge of, and access to, academia. Life chances are therefore both an enabler and a barrier: for those who

possess them, entry into a career such as academia is seen as an achievable aspiration, as they possess the knowledge of 'how to get on'; while for those who do not possess them, it can be seen as a barrier as they lack the knowledge of 'how to get on'.

A small number of the academics from my sample (NewU=1, OldU=1) related experiences and aspirations which suggested that at an early stage in their lives they possessed the life chances that would make an academic career a realisable aim. For Martin from OldU and Finlay from NewU, becoming an academic was an achievable aspiration at an early stage in their A-Level and undergraduate study respectively, driven in the first instance by a passion for the subject, but also due to the influence of teachers who encouraged them to pursue their interests:

I did philosophy [at A-level], that caught my imagination, it caught my passion. I thought right, I want to do philosophy as long as I possibly can, and someone said well, lecturing, being an academic, is somewhere you can do it, do it all the time. So that's a decision [I] made, to do that at university. [...] I had no doubt in my mind that I was going to get a first and become a lecturer. [Martin, OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

From the beginning of the second year onwards [at university], a lot of my lecturers were pushing me and saying well you must do a masters, you must do a PhD, you're really good, you're a really good historian and that kind of stuff. I think from then onwards I'd always sort of thought about, yeah, that would be the natural progression. I suppose actually in a way I'd thought about progression earlier on, at school when we did the sort of careers

planning and things, being an academic was something I'd considered.

[Finlay, NewU, History, November 2012]

Both Martin and Nick provided 'strong' evidence in regard to social networks, specifically the influence of teachers, and an ambition to enter academia which appeared to them to be natural to have and not in any way unattainable. However, there were several (NewU=4, OldU=4) for whom entering academia did not seem attainable as they did not have a network of family, friends and other contacts through which academia would appear attainable, as illustrated by the quotations below:

I left school with A-levels, and had no history of higher education in the family and it wasn't something that I ever even really thought about, and did what school leavers with A-levels did around here, which was you go and work at [*large local employer*] [Judith, OldU, Law, November 2013]

I went to comprehensive school in a working-class city, I am not trying to romanticise that, but it wasn't part of my upbringing to think that I would be an academic. [Douglas OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

None of my family had ever been to university. The idea of university hadn't really occurred to me much at all, and the idea of being a university lecturer hadn't occurred to me much at all. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

A wholly deterministic view of the concept of life chances would be likely to result in assumptions that people such as Judith, Douglas and Sarah would have little possibility of progressing to study at university and would not enter into careers as academics. However, the fact that they did progress suggests that a more nuanced understanding of life chances is necessary, conceiving it as a means of providing choices and aspirations, rather than determining them. Other academics in my sample demonstrated slightly alternative aspects of life chances which played an important role in their becoming a university student. Nick from OldU had his heart set on a career in the creative industries, and had taken a more traditional academic degree as a ‘plan B’, in reflection of what he believed to be social norms at the time.

In many respects my degree worked, as a Plan B and I did capitalise on it. But I think it really reflects, particularly at that time, there was a lot less people going to university, there was a view that if you were going to go to university and you had the academic ability to do an academic subject then you should do the academic subject [Nick OldU, Business, July 2013]

For Zoe from OldU, who had initially moved away from her family home and followed an alternative career, her mother was instrumental in pushing her forward, both in providing accommodation for her and in contacting a university for her:

So I phoned my mum up and said, “I’ve had enough of this and I need more qualifications,” and she said, “Why don’t you just come back and go to college? You know we will help to support you,” and again purely by chance

she just phoned up [the university], and said, “What courses do you do?”

[Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

The examples from Nick and Zoe demonstrate the role of life chances in the choices that the individuals make, which ultimately form part of the narrative around which they form their academic identity. Nick had been brought up in an environment in which studying for a university degree was valuable and worthwhile in itself, while Zoe had come to a career crossroads and her family had played an important role in confirming the value of university study and providing the financial support to enable her to do so.

For the majority of the academics (NewU=7, OldU=8), it would appear from the narratives they provided during the interviews that they developed the life chances to become an academic during their studies at university due to the resonance of the academic role with their strengths and interests. Typically this was a process of enlightenment, with a growing realisation, often during their undergraduate studies, that to become an academic was a desirable and achievable goal. Chris from NewU had progressed to a masters degree with the intention to pursue a career in the private sector, but had a moment of enlightenment during his studies: “When I was on my masters I really enjoyed taking part in seminars and tutorials, and I thought it was something I would like to do”. [Chris, NewU, Arts, January 2013]. For Douglas from Old U, the route into academia was a ‘serendipitous’ one, driven primarily by intellectual curiosity:

I think I had an aptitude for academic study and loved writing. It was an accidental route into academia, things just seemed to serendipitously just follow each other quite naturally [...] I suppose what I'm trying to say is that I didn't have a strategy to become an academic from the beginning of my BA. [...] it was really just an intellectual curiosity that kept me going on to further degrees, and certainly when I did the Ph.D. [...] I think at that point I realised that I did have a real aptitude for it, because I did manage to publish two articles in the leading journals of the field before I finished my Ph.D., so I think at that point I realised that academia was something that would be good for me. [Douglas, OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

Ben from NewU described how the university environment was attractive to him, having both an aptitude for and strong interest in the discipline, and enjoying the working environment:

[I] just liked going into the library and liked having access to all these journal articles and so on, and when I finished my undergrad I was slightly anxious that I wouldn't have access to any of those things any more and so decided I wanted to stay on, so it was partly just liking the environment so much that it motivated me to do the masters and then further study after that. [...] there must be other routes and other careers available but I just quite liked the environment [pause] addicted to the university environment, library access and these types of things. [Ben, NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

Another motivator was the research element of the role. Judith from OldU started her undergraduate degree as a mature student. She quickly fell in love with Law and after only a few months as an undergraduate had set her sights on a career in academia.

I went into it thinking I would get a nice little job as a solicitor somewhere, you know writing rules and that, but after three months I appreciated that there was something else you could do with a law degree and it was the idea of research and just poking around in cases, sort of undirected learning if you like and that appealed to me, and I started making enquiries then I was very strongly encouraged, it was just terrific, I didn't know what an academic career involved at that time, but I figured out that it must involve the stuff that I'm really going to enjoy and having decided that I just followed it up with various members of staff here and that's how I walked into that, it was a complete fluke really [...] The subject has a whole just grabbed me and I figured out reasonably early on that I could do it. [Judith, OldU, Law, November 2013]

Douglas, Ben and Judith's descriptions of their journey into academia is supportive of the findings of Elizabeth and Grant (2013), who report that many academics choose the profession because of a strong sense of its 'fittingness' to them. For Douglas, Ben and Judith, the profession was attractive due to an aptitude for, and like of, academic study and of their discipline, and also from feeling comfortable within a university environment. Jenny from OldU, related a similar experience, with a career in academia pursued in part because other career options were less palatable:

I didn't really want that sense of working for a business where I really didn't understand what the core business was. So I thought that perhaps archives or libraries would suit me better [...] I guess was more what I was thinking about, rather than necessarily being an academic, until I had my Ph.D., until I had that sense of actually I could do this, it's what I want to do. [Jenny, OldU, English, May 2013]

The academics above had not experienced a career in adult life outside of academia, so although they perceived the academic environment to be one that would suit them, they did not have experience of other work environments against which to make a comparison. However, others (NewU=3, OldU=1), did enter into academia later in life following an alternative career, and so were able to make a comparative judgement of the attractiveness of academia for them over an alternative work environment. Zoe from OldU began her undergraduate studies as a mature student in her 30s, having become dissatisfied in her career in the public sector. She gradually began to enjoy her studies and the academic environment and was encouraged to continue her studies, but as the comments below demonstrate, entering into academia was far from her mind at that stage:

I came out of that [the bachelors degree] with a first, [I] really enjoyed the history side, and because I got a first somebody said, "Well look, you know, you should really go on and do a Ph.D." and I said, "Well, what's one of those?" Because I didn't know what was, and they said, "Well, why not just research something you're really interested in." [...] I had no idea what I

want to do for a career and I certainly hadn't thought of academia, I never thought I could achieve that. [Zoe, OldU, History, May 2013]

Zoe then received funding to do a PhD and started to teach, and it was then that entering academia became an achievable goal: "It just seemed that it was going that way once I got the funding to do my Ph.D." [Zoe, OldU, History, May 2013] Jean from NewU also entered academia after an alternative career in the private sector, and described the moment she realised that she wanted to become an academic as a 'lightbulb moment'. She had been pursuing a successful career in the private sector, during which time she studied for qualifications as a part-time student in order to further her career. It was during the induction for one of these qualifications that she had the career changing experience:

I went to study that [the qualification] on a blended learning route and was asked at the induction for that, why I was there? And suddenly had a lightbulb moment, and said, "I want your job." And within three years I was working for the organisation. They offered me a role when I had been on the course for six months, so I then went on teaching. [Jean, NewU, Business, January 2013]

She explained that the reason for wanting to be an academic was that in her private sector employment part of her role was delivering in-house training sessions, and although she enjoyed delivering them she believed that she was just telling people what to think, and not helping them to develop critical thinking skills, which she believed was a key component of good teaching. When she had tried to get her

trainees to read around the subject and develop a greater understanding this had been frowned upon:

I was doing things in learning and development where I said, “Go away and read this before you come to us,” and I was getting called in by the chief exec saying, “What are you expecting managers to read for? I want them to know how to do the job”, and I had this big thing in my head thinking it would be so much better if they did more. [Jean, New U, Business, January 2013]

This was why, when she started the higher education course, she suddenly realised that what she would really enjoy would be to teach in a higher education setting. She therefore completed her studies up to masters level and started applying for work as a university lecturer, and her first permanent role was at NewU. For Jean a primary motivation was the teaching part of the role, and the attraction of teaching was a motivator that had been identified by several of the academics (NewU=4, OldU=5). However, as demonstrated by the quotations below, early in their lives several did not believe that teaching in a university was a realisable ambition.

Originally what I wanted to do was to become a teacher, but I never thought of lecturing to be honest. When you're young you don't think like that, it's kinda pie in the sky. So I always wanted to be a teacher. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

I think teaching's always been something that I've wanted to do, from actually quite a young age, but I always realised that I didn't want to do it at

school because I didn't like either the idea of primary school or secondary school teaching, even when I was twelve I thought I don't like these people I don't want to teach them [laughs]. But my teachers always encouraged me to go into teaching [...] it was actually when I was starting the PhD that I thought, "Oh my God, I could do their job that would be quite fun wouldn't it?", and it was then that I began to realise that these two things, my fascination for the past and also teaching, those two things could come together. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

The academics above identified a resonance of the profession with themselves as individuals due to a combination of aptitudes and motivations, and in the process they developed and enhanced their life chances through their networks with individuals, social groups and institutions. However, there was a smaller number of academics (NewU=2, OldU=1), for whom the route into academia had not been their primary aim. These individuals could have taken, or actually did take at some stage, an alternative career path but had now 'ended up' in academia. In contrast to those for whom the career had resonance, there was little sense of 'enlightenment' for these individuals. Through various circumstances in their lives they found they would be in a position to become an academic and had circumstances been different they would have happily taken a different career route. Kay from NewU was one example of this. She studied for an undergraduate degree at a traditional redbrick university and began a career in human resources (HR) upon graduation. She had progressed up the career ladder to various management positions and was enjoying her career, but was forced to change her employer as she had to relocate with her husband's job. She did not find her new employer as rewarding, having "none of the

cut and thrust” of her former employer. She decided then to take a career break to bring up a young family, but due to financial pressures she was soon forced to return to the job market. A former colleague had recently taken a HR course at NewU and suggested that, due to her experience in HR, she should teach on the course. As she described, there was no vacancy, but she put herself forward:

I applied, for no vacancy whatsoever, but I just applied. I said that I could do this for you and within four weeks I was appointed as a part-time lecturer here. This is over 20 years ago. So I started lecturing on the evenings and I enjoyed it. I was then offered a full-time role lecturing [...] and I decided that I would take the role for five years until my second child could go to school and then I would go back into HR. I never went back into HR. [Kay, NewU, Business, February 2013]

Ken from NewU became an academic because he had not been able to support himself financially in his primary goal, which was to be a writer.

You can't make a living as a writer, nobody can unless, you know, you're one of the two or three people, the J.K. Rowlings of this world who strike it lucky [...] Writing is poor. You wed yourself to a life of poverty when you become a writer. There's no money in it basically, apart from two or three people in the country. [...] When I left university I went to work in Eastern Europe and I was lecturing there, partly as a way of just getting more experience in the world and finding something to write about. [Ken, NewU, English, December 2012]

He then came back to the UK and spent nearly ten years trying to support himself by writing, and although he successfully published, he couldn't support himself financially and, as he stated, "Decided that really I ought to do something about getting university work." [Ken, NewU, English, December 2012]. The need for financial security was also an important consideration in the eventual career route of Nick from OldU, who had attempted to start a creative career as an animator following his undergraduate degree, but had to juggle that with being support himself financially, and this led him to register for a PhD:

It gets to the point where you have to move on, so I at that point I registered to a Ph.D. because I was also doing a lot of temporary work, largely accounting based stuff because I had to, you know, bring money in. It certainly was a strange mix of drawing animation for children's BBC one day and going to be an accounts temp the next day and I added a Ph.D. into the mix, as a full-time Ph.D. student, but I never got that because I got employed as a full-time member of staff. [Nick OldU, Business, July 2013]

Earlier in this section I considered the concept of life chances as a theoretical standpoint from which to consider the process of becoming an academic. It is particularly apparent in the testimonies of the academics, from both institutions, who had or developed the relevant life chances that they had a passion for their discipline areas and wanted to pursue teaching and research, and therefore they were very motivated to seek employment as an academic. The passion for the subject area, the "fittingness" of the work and the role of life chances all played an important role in

their development of a narrative of academic identity. In contrast, those academics for whom academia had not been a primary aim displayed a more muted or nuanced appreciation of their discipline area and of academic practice because their desires, aims and ultimately their preferred identities lay elsewhere. They believed it was something they were good at, but there was also for some individuals a lack of passion for the discipline area and a lack of resonance of the role with their personal aims and desires. It appeared for some to be ‘just’ a job which they were currently employed in, not least as they needed to support themselves financially.

As a comparative analysis of the impact of motivation and desires on the process of becoming an academic, this section has identified several common narratives of academic identity formation, with no discernible difference between the narratives of the academics at NewU and OldU. Table 3 establishes that all of the academics at OldU and (n=5) of the academics at NewU studied for their highest qualification at a Pre-92 institution. It may have been expected that because half of the academics at NewU studied for their highest qualification at a Post-92 institution that their narrative of becoming an academic may have been different, but there was no discernible differences. It may therefore be concluded that, from my sample of academics, the place of study and place of employment did not have a discernible impact on the narratives of becoming an academic. Of far greater importance for the academics was the impact of life chances, both inherited and assumed, and the “fittingness” of the role, in which an engagement with the discipline had a key role as a motivator to teach and to research.

The apprenticeship to the rules and resources of academia

For Giddens, fundamental components of social systems, such as academia, are rules (how to act) and resources through which power is discharged. Resources are of two kinds: authoritative resources, which allow agents to control the activity other agents, and allocative resources, which allow agents to control material objects (Giddens, 1984). In both cases, resources are utilised as a source of power through human action, therefore having control over these resources results in individuals being able to dominate others. For many of the academics the journey to becoming an academic was regarded as an ‘apprenticeship’ of two parts: the research apprenticeship of studying for a PhD and the teaching apprenticeship, where experience of teaching is built up during the PhD or masters qualification. Many, such as Jenny from OldU were aware that if they wanted to become an academic they had to combine both the research and teaching apprenticeships if they wished to develop the skills necessary for employment as an academic: “[there is a] professionalisation, in the case of the Ph.D., where you have to do various things before you finish because it makes you a better, more employable figure.” [Jenny OldU, English, May 2013] During their postgraduate studies many of the academics, like Jenny, developed an understanding of what academia was about and an understanding of the rules of the academic social system in advance of entering the profession. For example, Peter demonstrated awareness of certain ‘rules’, regardless of whether they actually followed them when they took the route to becoming an academic:

The best way of becoming a researcher traditionally has been to get a doctorate, I think that’s still true, that’s why I wanted to do one in as much as being a passionate researcher. So you look at the people whose careers you’d

like to follow the most, what do they all do? They get a doctorate at some point. That's part of the decision to take it on. [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]

It was also apparent that established academics had a role in helping the new academics develop an understanding of the academic social system. For example, through the processes of induction to the department for those undertaking teaching during their doctoral studies, established academics were demonstrating rules and the use of authoritative resources. We can also see in the format of the teaching experience the role of 'space' on the exercise of power in the academic social system. For Michel Foucault (1977), a feature of modernity is the creation of 'analytical space', in which individuals are subject to surveillance: being watched, assessed and their qualities measured. Foucault explored the design of monasteries, factories and prisons in this regard, and the concept can be extended to the modern university: novice academics are positioned in the lecture theatre or classroom before students and their peers and subject to judgement by both groups. The apprentice academics were conscious of the need to be successful in the eyes of both groups, but as Douglas from OldU discovered, the approval of both groups was not necessarily mutually exclusive.

I developed a rapport with the students that clearly worked [...] one of the professors, he was walking past the class once and noticed the class were laughing in my seminar, and he said, "You're not supposed to be amusing", and he was kind of envious of the rapport. [Douglas, OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

For Foucault surveillance was a condition of modernity that serves to direct and keep the activities of the observed under control. However, for Giddens observation alone does not act as a form of control, its ability to control, “depends on the more or less continuous compliance of those who are its ‘subjects’.” (Giddens, 1984, p136). Therefore, for Giddens compliance is made possible by social structures, which ‘direct’ human action. The interaction cited by Douglas provides a demonstration of structuration in practice: the utilisation of rules and resources to produce and reproduce the structures within the academic social system. While Douglas interpreted the actions of the senior academic professor as envy, it may have been a tongue-in-cheek comment and actually intended as a form of complement and encouragement, or it may have been an attempt to perpetuate a ‘rule’ (whereby friendly rapport between the academic and students was supposed to be absent) via the ‘authoritative’ (and hence controlling) resource of being a senior academic. The rules that constitute social structures are not necessarily written down, but more commonly exist as, “memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable agents” (Giddens, 1984, p17). If these rules exist in the minds of individuals they possess a latent reality, regardless of whether they are actually utilised in practice or not. Instances such as this, where rules utilised by senior academics exist as ‘memory traces’ within the apprentice academic, help form their conception of academic identity. The senior academic did not need to take any further action to exercise his control over the ‘authoritative resource’ of being a senior academic. Having the potential to take action was sufficient to exercise control.

This incident also demonstrates the potential for unintended consequences from the action of the individual, and the potential for the apprentice academic to exercise agency in this situation (Giddens calls this the dialectic of control). The professor may have meant several things in saying, “You’re not supposed to be amusing”, not least being an ironic form of encouragement, but it does have the potential to be interpreted as a negative and controlling statement in the form of, “I don’t do it this way”. The statement was recited by Douglas for the purposes of the interview, and may have been repeated to colleagues in other fora. The fact that Douglas considered it important enough to reflect on during the interview demonstrates that it was an important component in his narrative of becoming an academic and that he may have interpreted it as one of the ‘rules’ that constitute academic identity.

These examples of the apprentice academic’s engagement with rules and resources demonstrates the importance of the academic community in the process of forming both individual and collective academic identity. Agents have the power to both produce and reproduce social systems (the actions of the professor acting to reproduce established social practices), and the exercise of control over allocative resources within the academic social system. A single example of this type may have affected the actions of Douglas, but is probably unlikely to change the structure of academic identity within Douglas’s university, let alone spread wider. However, repeated experiences of this kind may over time affect a wider change.

The ‘fittingness’ of the institution to individuals

While Elizabeth and Grant (2013) argued that many academics chose the profession because of a strong sense of its ‘fittingness’ to them, and it was demonstrated earlier

that academics such as Ben from NewU and Douglas from OldU were attracted to the university environment *per se*, it appeared from my sample that there was for some of the academics a specific ‘fittingness’ with the specific institution at which they worked. It was apparent from the interviews that some of the academics at NewU (n=3) that the university did have an influence on their academic identity in the formative stages of their career. Of particular relevance to the narrative that they created was a reflection on the experience of the job application and interview process, identifying how they were drawn to the institution during this process.

I remember when I saw the job advert for [NewU], I thought, “Oh my God, this is perfect,” because it was a mixture of some practical family things, my partner’s family are sort of vaguely local, so it would work with that, but also it would be the very strong teaching focus element to the role here. While I enjoy research a great deal, I didn’t want to be at one of these institutions where the main part of your job was meeting RAE, REF headlines, doing all of those types of things. I wanted it to be about the teaching, the dissemination as well. And also because I’m from a background again which higher education isn’t a natural part I’m quite passionate about teaching people for whom higher education is a new experience or a different experience and supporting them. I suspected that was where my talents lie and wanted to explore to see whether that was the case. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

Finlay [NewU] had been applying for jobs across a range of institutions and wasn't particularly keen on the job at NewU, but this was changed by the interview experience:

By the time I got here I thought I really don't care, I just want to go home, but then throughout the morning when I did the interviews and also when I did my presentation in front of a panel that included quite a lot of students, also had a tour with the students around the campus and things, I actually went, "Oh, this looks better than I thought it would, actually it's quite attractive, the campus looks fine and the students all seem very nice and friendly, the staff all seem to be friendly" [...] So in that sense, on leaving I thought, "That went well, actually if I do get the job I'd actually quite like it." [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

Karen from NewU also reflected on how the interview experience influenced her.

I was sitting in reception and I remember the day I did the interview, thought "there's a nice buzz around here, it's very relaxed," and in the interview process I met the other people in my department and kinda clicked with them, got on with them, and I recognise [NewU] isn't one of the top tier universities, and with all my previous experience I could have gone for another university if I'd chosen to, but for me I liked, when I was speaking with the Head and there was talk about change and moving in the right direction, I thought "it's nice to be starting something and work with them to achieve that stage," and based on that and based on meeting my colleagues and stuff, it would be one

of the main reasons I actually came here. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

These were strong accounts of how these academics from NewU were ‘won over’ by the institution during the application and interview process due to the welcoming and vibrant environment they encountered during the process, and also due to a vision of the academic role at NewU. It was noticeable that none of the academics from OldU articulated a similar account, even though they were asked to reflect on the application and interview process during the interviews. It may have been that it was taken without question that working for a prestigious institution such as OldU was something that was naturally an aspiration of many academics, and as such was unquestionable. It may also have been that academics at NewU, several of whom (n=5) had achieved their first degrees at Pre-92 institutions, felt the need to justify to themselves and the interviewer why they did not follow what they perceived as a ‘rule’ of being a successful academic, in working at an institution of a ‘lower’ status. However, it was apparent that they believed that this was an important part of their narrative of creating an academic identity, and hence for them the university itself had a role to play in academic identity formation. It demonstrated that not all academics are solely focussed on working at ‘top tier’ institutions, and in this regard it was noticeable that all three of the academics at NewU who reflected on this had achieved their highest qualification at a Pre-92 institution. They were not creating a narrative which ‘defended’ their own educational background, but one that ‘justified’ their employment at NewU and to them, and external audiences, provided a rationale for working at an institution that was not ‘top-tier’.

The commitment required to undertake the academic role

A common belief of both sets of academics was that academic practice required dedication and commitment in time in order to achieve success. While this was in one respect a convergence between the two groups of academics, there was also a clear divergence that was associated with the types of institutions at which the academics were employed. For the teaching-intensive NewU the commitment was more strongly focussed on the teaching role, while for the research-intensive OldU the commitment was more strongly focussed on the research role. The majority of the academics at NewU (n=7) reported what they perceived to be a heavy teaching load, averaging 16 hours a week, in comparison to less than 10 hours a week at OldU (n=7) (see Table 3). The academics at NewU highlighted how this created a busy working week for them, with the time outside of teaching consumed with preparation for teaching, marking or administration. However, it was also apparent that several of the academics were highly committed to their teaching and to making the effort to provide a quality experience for their students, albeit within the limitations of a busy workload, as illustrated by the following quotation from Chris:

I guess the priority is that the students feel they are supported and you care about what they are doing, and for me the most important thing when I was a student is a sense that the staff team had a personal level of investment in what I was doing and what I was trying to achieve, and that was understood and acknowledged, so I guess what's crucial to that is an appropriate amount of contact with the students where you get to know them and understand what their needs are and what they are trying to achieve in some detail. And then being given enough time and opportunity to plan appropriately so that you

feel that what you are doing is not undermined because you feel confident that you are going into every session knowing that you have planned as well as you possibly could have. [Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

Similarly, Peter from NewU prided himself on the preparation for teaching and the reward from the experience: “I think I put a lot of thought into my sessions, and I love teaching and I do find that in every session on a bigger scale, if it’s two or three hours and it’s in front of 100 or more you do get a buzz out of it” [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]. In contrast, the academics at OldU did not refer to teaching in respect of commitment or dedication, although many did gain a great deal of satisfaction and reward from the teaching role, as will be considered in further detail in chapter six.

The area of the academic role that several of the academics at OldU believed required commitment and effort in order to be successful was the research element of the role. As a consequence, as Nick conceived it, being an academic was therefore more a lifestyle than a job:

I suppose I think that academia is a lifestyle, I think that if you don’t see it like that then you are always going to struggle with it, because there are always going to be times early in people’s careers when they are going to have to invest a sheer slog of the time. To me it was a run of five books earlier in my career and that gives you a platform. [Nick OldU, Business, May 2013]

I'm not a get by researcher at all. If something really needs to be done I will do it. Now what that probably means is that I am working 19 or 20 hour days, and as I say I have no problem with that, I'm exhausted at the end of it but I have no problem with it, but think that is just the nature of it. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

I think in terms of a research career path, for most people if they want to progress up the career ladder, most people unless there high flyers have got to work pretty hard and put in a lot of hours and it is going to affect your whole life, and know a lot of colleagues who've seen it like that and think if I want to make a career of this well that's what I've got to do and it's involved sacrifices elsewhere in one's life. [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

A clear area of divergence between the academics at both institutions was that many of the academics at OldU referred to the role as a vocation or lifestyle which extended beyond 9-5 responsibilities, while the academics at NewU did not. The NewU academics were undoubtedly busy during the working day but, with the exception of Chris, they did not produce narratives which described this work extending into the evenings and weekends. They were not explicitly asked about the hours they worked outside of work, and many may well have worked beyond 9-5, but neither were the academics at OldU asked, and they were forthcoming in the commitment in the interviews. Research in the UK has found that many academics report there is no upper limit on the working week: Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper and Ricketts (2005) found that 38% of academics typically worked 41-51 hours a week, with 40% working 51-61 or more hours; Enders and Teichler (1997) found that

professors in English universities worked on average 51 hours a week; while Kinman and Jones (2004) reported that 59% of staff were working more than 45 hours a week, with 21% working in excess of 55 hours. Many academics work long hours both within the institution and when at home, for much of which they are not compensated (Fredman and Doughney, 2011; Gornall and Salisbury, 2012), and this would appear to be the case for the academics at OldU. However, the academics at OldU reported that this commitment was partly driven by a perception of what was required in order to be successful, and also as Judith indicated this was not necessarily viewed in a negative light. There is a clear distinction between the work commitments of the academics at both institutions which may explain this difference in time commitment: the academics at OldU were all research-active, while the academics at NewU were mainly research-inactive. The implications for their academic identity of the ability, or inability, to fulfil the research element of the role will be discussed in further detail in chapter seven.

Agency in their day-to-day activities

A further area where there was convergence between the academics at both institutions was the degree of agency that the academics felt that they had over the direction of their day-to-day activities. With the high teaching load of the academics at NewU, which consumed most of their working week, it may have been reasonable to expect that the academics felt that they had little agency. In addition, as demonstrated in Table 3, the majority of the academics at NewU worked in shared office accommodation, which may have led to a feeling of being under continual surveillance. However, while there were some concerns, such as from Ben from NewU who said, “There is more and more dictats coming doing from above about

when and where you should do certain things and how you should do them and so on” [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012], on the whole the academics at NewU reported that they had a considerable amount of agency in their teaching activities, as illustrated by several of the academics, including Ben:

[Am I dictated to] In teaching? No, not really. There’s a recommended, sort of suggested that you do at least an hour or two lecture and then seminars after that. But actually what happens in those sessions is quite flexible. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

I think in terms of how I do teaching [...], yes, I do feel I have a fair amount of freedom. That’s partly what I like about higher education, in that you can run a module in the way that you like, that you can focus on the things that you do, bring your own curriculum development, so I do appreciate that freedom. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

[With respect to programme content] Senior management are completely open to suggestions, to where we should be going, where I want to go. I’ve seen a very positive change and I’m very confident in terms that we’re all singing from the one hymn sheet. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

The responses from the academics at NewU about their freedom on a day-to-day basis reflected very similar comments from academics from OldU, as illustrated below:

Yeah that's one of the best things about the job. Within my modules, unless there is an issue which has to be addressed by my programme leader or further up, I'm pretty much left to my own devices, and trusted to get on with it. [Mark OldU, History, December 2012]

[Being an academic has] more than met my expectations. It's brilliant, it's the best job in the world. I could do other things but I wouldn't be as happy as I wouldn't have as much freedom to do what I'm interested in. I think that anyone who says that the academic job is awful and whinge about it, I would have no time for to be honest, I want them to go on a factory floor for 14 hours a day for six days a week and have less money and less time to do research and things and less flexibility. Yeah, of course, there are some pressures but they are not going to pay you to sit around and do nothing. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

Douglas at OldU gave a detailed example of how he and colleagues had shaped the direction of research within his Department at OldU, shifting the emphasis and recruiting new staff, creating a new research focus, which was purely academic-led. There was conflict with colleagues in doing this, but overall they felt empowered to do this because they felt they could justify their actions as they were still able to meet the university's strategic aims. Likewise, Zoe from OldU cited the ability to effect change to teaching practice, identifying the role of a colleague in changing teaching practice in her Department as a 'ground up' exercise which demonstrated the agency that academics could have.

However, several of the academics indicated that freedom, especially in the classroom did come with some limitations. The comments from Jean from NewU below reflected comments from academics from both institutions on how the NSS, and hence student satisfaction, was a driver to deliver a high quality experience to students:

Yes [I have freedom] within reason, I suppose if the students don't like it then I suppose I have to change it around, so it is not total freedom. I think of the days when I was at university, where we would go into the lecture theatre, 200+, and the lecturer didn't have all these fancy things, just stand and read his notes, and we accepted that in those days. [...] I think of some of those lectures, where we were bored out of our brains, we wouldn't be able to get away with that nowadays, so I don't know that I have the total freedom, there are always parameters by which people shape what I do in the classroom.

[Jean NewU, Business, February 2013]

The responses of the academics at both institutions demonstrated that they did feel that, within certain limitations, they were able to exercise agency in their academic practice. The freedom that this entailed formed an important part of the narrative of being an academic, being someone who is able to direct their own work on a day to day basis.

One component of academic practice which may be perceived as limiting the agency of the academics is the administrative role. The literature reviewed in chapter two suggested that administration was a major burden for academics in the modern

university and was disliked by many (Kreber, 2009; Tight, 2010). There was acknowledgement from many of the academics that administration was not necessarily a well-liked part of the role. Douglas at OldU felt that administration was always perceived as time consuming by colleagues, partly because some were not very good at it.

It's always been perceived as a headache and a problem and you get academics who are good administrators and you've got ones who drop the ball routinely and create quite a lot of work for everyone else in trying to save things [Douglas OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

Likewise, David from OldU was comfortable with administration, so didn't begrudge doing it, unlike some of his colleagues.

My observation is that doing the administration is something that a lot of academic colleagues really dislike and so that's an extra stress because they have got to do and they don't want to do it, naturally because I've been reasonably comfortable doing that kind of stuff that's been less of a stressor for me. [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

Ben from NewU was concerned that there was little administrative support for the academic staff, and that as a result he was spending his time doing tasks that were not a valuable use of his time.

I did recently find myself doing two hour's worth of photocopying and I thought to myself this is one way for me to spend my time, I could be using that time to work with students or to do lecture prep or to do something meaningful related to the modules I teaching, where actually I was leaning over the photocopier for the whole two hours, a glorified admin support. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

However, Ben was a lone voice of dissent about administration. The administration that Ben described can be categorised as clerical administration, while the majority of academics referred to academic administration which involved responsibility for decision making in areas such as student admissions and examinations, but also in regard to management roles, such as programme leadership. The academics described how these duties were focussed on certain times of the year, resulting on a workload that overall was manageable across the whole year.

I'm programme leader as well, but I found it was ok. It got very busy certain times of the year, for instance September, preparing for the arrival of new students, but then it died down quite quickly and there were weeks when I really didn't have that much to do in admin terms. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

I'm academic liaison manager for an international partnership, so there's a good bit of paperwork to do with that, just in pockets, certain weeks, times in the year. I do go to China with that as well, just once a year, but that takes up a week, ten days. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

To my mind of all the admin positions in the school being on an exams committee is where I think, “Well I can do this quite well, and I do quite enjoy doing it.” [...] I think the balance between research teaching and admin work is pretty much okay with me, the administrative stuff tends to come at little blocks during the year, is about seven or eight [weeks] when you are intensely busy and we’ve got to make sure everyone gets their marking done, all the marks get in and we’ve got to make sure that stuff goes out to the external [...] there is a little team that does that and I think that we sync very well now it’s just nice and it’s quite friendly and the exam boards go quite well now. You just get a sense of satisfaction out of that. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

For the academics at both institutions there was a clear perception that the academic administration that they were required to undertake was not an unnecessarily large burden. That is not to say that they would not have welcomed relinquishing these duties, and it was apparent that there was an appreciation that many of their colleagues did not like to take on these duties and in some cases were not very successful in discharging them. However, there was a convergent narrative which indicated that for both sets of academics the administrative part of the academic role, in contrast to the literature identified in chapter two, was not overly burdensome and did not negatively impact on their agency in their day-to-day activities.

Funding policies: threats to the discipline and the sector

In this chapter I have mapped out a general overview of academic identity from initial formation through to continual construction and reconstruction. I will reflect on the themes arising in the conclusion to this chapter before considering in greater detail the relationship with students and the teaching and research roles in the following chapters. However, in the final section to this chapter I will consider the impact of the funding policies of the 2010 Coalition Government on academic identity. The UK government plays a key role in the life of higher education, with the power to effect change through direct and indirect methods of funding, both in regard to the teaching and in regard to research. As discussed in chapter two, government reviews and policies have formed the shape of the sector over many decades. The Robbins Report (1963) led to an expansion of the sector and an increase in funding; the ‘Great Debate’ of the late 1970s (Callaghan, 1976) heralded the ‘right’ of government to have a say in the direction and purpose of education; the removal of the binary divide in 1992 removed the distinction between universities and polytechnics; and the Dearing Report (1997) heralded the introduction of top-up fees and sector-wide quality assurance mechanisms.

The most recent significant report, the Browne Review (2010), preceded the raising of the fee cap by the 2010-2015 Coalition Government. It was the thoughts and perceptions of my academics about the impact of this decision, and the direction that they perceived the Coalition Government wanted the sector to follow, that I was particularly keen to elicit as I sought to understand their views on the future of the sector, and thus how their academic identity was being constructed and reconstructed in a performative and marketised environment. While the academics from both

institutions held a variety of views as to the severity of the threats and opportunities afforded by the new funding regime, it was clear that there was a clear distinction in their beliefs and dispositions towards the future which will be discussed in this section: with NewU academics feeling under threat and OldU academics feeling relatively secure.

The perceived threat to the future of NewU

Many of the academics from NewU (n=8) appeared to feel that both their institution and their disciplines were, at best, a low priority for the Coalition Government, and, at worst, were being positively discriminated against. Ben from NewU, for example, felt that the actions of the Coalition Government to withdraw direct public funding from the arts subjects and to direct the remaining public funding towards the STEM subjects was a clear indication that the government was concerned with the economic benefits from education.

I imagine they want to develop skills and contribute to what they see as this knowledge economy, so they are interested in building science and technology and profiting from that and making the UK a centre for science and technology and therefore that's why they're pumping lots of money into the STEM subjects and they are not going to be funding humanities or the social sciences. So the government, I think, is treating higher education as an opportunity to create the skills base and the knowledge base to make money to ensure that the rate of profit is maintained and ensure that Britain is an attractive place for high end commercial operations which need those skills,

so I think it's about business rather than education. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

While Ben was clear that he felt that the government sought to build economic prosperity through the higher education system, Sarah from NewU was less certain, believing that there still existed in government policy a tension between the economic and public benefits of education. This may have been because she herself felt there that there was a place for graduates who provided public benefits through their work.

I actually think that they are not sure, because I think that they are drawn between it being a mixture of either a 'training for business' set of institutions where we put people in and then they'll come out the other end and they'll help UK PLC be fabulous, but also I think that there is still around it the language of the old, the university being somewhere where ideas grow and the place to grow intellectually and all of those things exist over here as well, and I think there's a bit of tension between the two. I don't think there necessarily should be actually, but I think there is a bit of tension between those two. I think that there is increasingly a selfish idea around universities which is that students go in order so that that they themselves can be higher earners, I think that relationship is there, which is extremely concerning to me because a lot of the places where we need good graduates are in places where the pay is not very good. It's not so much teaching that I'm thinking about, but social work and community work and charitable work and all of those types of things and that where it worries me. I think that there needs to be

more recognition of the fact that having the right people in those places is very important as well. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

For several of the academics from NewU (n=5), not only were the arts and humanities disciplines under threat, but the very existence of institutions such as NewU were under threat from the government. Both Chris and Finlay believed that the government had an agenda to close down universities such as NewU.

The ideological mission is probably to get rid of new universities like this one altogether. I think ideally they would like to see the back of the Post-92 universities, it is an ideological mission happening, that's what it is. Cameron and Osborne they've lived their privileged lives they went to Eton and Cambridge, they've never had to apply for a job and I think they look after the interests of that political and business elite, and for them ideally there would only be the Oxbridges and Cambridges and the Russell group and the red bricks because those are the universities that people from that class access. [Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

I feel the current government doesn't actually care very much. The main aim of the current government is to make sure that places like [NewU] get closed down, and that some of the higher ranked universities develop as research institutions. Actually they don't really care about the Post-92 element of the sector really. Interestingly enough, I thought, relating back to the employability point as well, I always thought it's quite interesting that the way employability and employment seems to work is that the people who get

the decent graduate jobs come from the Russell Group universities, the Oxbridge universities, where actually employability doesn't feature at all really. Yes, they do a bit of employability because they have to, but really they don't, the students don't care much about it, the staff don't care much about it, but they get the jobs. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

However, in contrast to some of their colleagues, Kay and Sarah felt that institutions such as NewU had a future, albeit in a reconfigured sector.

I don't think we will go to the wall. I think we have to build our profile in a different way to the Russell group. It will be a different profile that we have to create, which will be what the old polytechnics used to do, because they were perfectly respectable and had degree awarding powers, postgraduate awarding powers. [Kay NewU, Business, February 2013]

I think we are in the middle of a conversation about what we want our universities to be and I fear that what's going to happen is that some universities are going to be allowed to remain to be the places where intellectualism is allowed to grow and ideas are allowed to grow, and other universities are going to be about training people to do business jobs but that will very much become an elitist type, this type of university [NewU] might end up being seen purely in terms of its ability to create high earning graduates and if it doesn't do that it's not succeeding [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

While Kay saw the possibility of NewU being “respectable” in a reconfigured sector, Sarah approached the future with “fear” as, in her conception of a dystopic future, institutions such as NewU would not be places where academics would be able to pursue “intellectualism” and “ideas”. It was clear from the interviews that several of the academics at NewU (n=6) were in the midst of great uncertainty which raised existential questions about their identity as an academic. This was both in regard to their future career prospects and their ability to draw a wage, but also in regard to the perceived lack of respect for their discipline areas. This must have been particularly challenging to their sense of ontological security as the discipline which they valued and invested many years of the life, and upon which they had built their academic identity, was having its prestige and value challenged in public. For academics such as Ben, Chris, Finlay and Sarah, their interpretation of government actions and rhetoric had resulted in the construction of a negative and pessimistic narrative.

The perceived security of the future at OldU

In contrast to the academics at NewU, the academics at OldU were much less concerned about the Coalition Government’s intentions for the sector, although they did have forceful opinions on the impact of government-related initiatives on their academic practice. While they were very engaged with latest developments, such as the rise in tuition fees, several of the academics at OldU (n=3), such as Martin, felt that it was difficult to discern any clear messages as to government intentions:

“Absolutely no idea what the government wants. I’ve absolutely no idea what they value what they don’t value. I feel very disconnected from that sort of stuff.” [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]. Martin explained that he wasn’t disconnected because he wasn’t interested, but that to a certain extent he felt that the messages

coming out of government were contradictory, which created uncertainty in his mind about the government's intentions. His concerns were shared by David from OldU who believed that the government wasn't particularly clear about what it wanted from higher education and was sending out contradictory messages. Alluding to Coalition Government policy on immigration control that had negatively impacted on international student recruitment⁷, he said:

It is not at all clear what the government, the current government, want from higher education. They probably don't know. They want it to be internationally competitive, but parts of the government put barriers in the way of international students getting here. [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

Douglas from OldU felt he was comfortable with some of the government rhetoric about engagement with business, but agreed with the concerns of the academics from NewU that the contribution of the arts and humanities wasn't appreciated and had been fully opened up to the market, concerns which were also raised by Jenny.

If you look at the discourse around government, there are a lot of ways in which the language used by BIS⁸ or Vince Cable⁹ actually does connect with things that I could quite happily believe in actually, in terms of business engagement and the collaboration between industry and academia, all of those things I think we can actually sign up to and actually do something with. I don't know whether that means that the government is supportive of the arts,

⁷ In 2011 the UK Coalition Government announced plans to impose controls on the student immigration system as part of a wider national debate on immigration (UUK 2011).

⁸ The Government Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS).

⁹ Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills and President of the Board of Trade.

I think that is a much harder question, there is clearly evidence that the arts have taken a big hit at the moment, and arts is quite vulnerable I think in terms of the next five years at a national and institutional level, so there is great uncertainty around arts and I don't really feel that the government is particularly supportive of arts, or even particularly aware of our discipline if you are talking about arts, well not a lot of money has been ring fenced and it is pretty much open market. [Douglas OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

I think that the way that they have funded it that the way they have chosen STEM and modern languages suggest that the rest of us can sink or swim. I think it is interesting that there is no person with a science degree in the Cabinet, I think there is a sense that they are running scared of the guys who are in the corner doing the science stuff that they can't understand.[Jenny OldU, English, May 2013]

It was noted in the previous section that several of the academics at NewU were of the belief that the sector would return to a more highly demarcated two-tier system, and several of the academics from Old U (n=4), such as Martin, concurred with this view, believing that the sector would both contract and differentiate in the future:

I think a lot of the new institutions will fold or become more vocational, or something like that, so they will shrink in size [...] I think there will be much more of the pay differential between the Russell group and Post-92 views, I think there will be a much more marked difference in terms of the offering, so I think if you were going to look for a philosophy degree in 10 years I think

you're just be presented with a few, much smaller set of universities. I think the Post-92s will shrink in terms of the portfolio that they can offer and I think there will be more distance between the Russell group and the other universities. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

While the academics at OldU were both aware of the influence of government over their work, and several did raise concerns over funding for the arts and humanities, as a group they were much less concerned about the current or future potential 'threat' to their work from the government than the academics at NewU. Their sense of security was predominantly related to the status of OldU as an institution in the UK higher education sector. In contrast the academics at NewU felt a greater sense of insecurity due to the status of NewU and how they perceived the government intentions for institutions such as NewU. For Martin from OldU for example, reversion to the binary divide was not particularly problematic as he didn't envisage that his job would be under threat, but it was apparent that several of the academics at NewU held a very uncertain view of the future, believing that there was government pressure to either close down their type of institution or to rebrand it. We can see here how the workforce in the two different types of institutions can have very different conceptions of the intrinsic 'value' or 'worth' of their jobs in the eyes of an external audience, and two different conceptions about their job security. We can potentially see here two polarised conceptions of academic identity: the academics at OldU feeling they are valued and secure, while the academics at NewU feel they are not valued and feel insecure.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the narratives that the academics I interviewed developed in the process of, firstly, becoming and being an academic, and secondly, as they have responded to the funding policies of the Coalition Government. The intention was to address my first research question, which is to determine the key factors that constitute the academic identity of academics working in English universities in the twenty first century, and my second research question, which is whether the academics believe that performativity and marketisation have impacted on the factors that constitute their academic identity.

A key point that has arisen through the analysis is that there is such a thing as a collective academic identity. In addition to the roles of teaching, researching and administration, and the importance of the discipline, it appears that there are values and experiences which are shared by the academics at both NewU and OldU. In particular, four common themes have emerged in this chapter as the academics have reflected on the process of becoming and being an academic: a narrative of agency; a narrative of success; a narrative over space and time; and a narrative of an environmentally sensitive academic identity.

A narrative of agency

It was demonstrated throughout this chapter, as they were asked to reflect on their motivations for entering academia and reflected on the commitment and dedication required in order to develop an identity as an academic, that there is a process of academic identity formation through which all the academics have gone. Using Giddens (1984) concept of the social system, we can see that they encountered the

rules and experienced the utilisation of authoritative resources, which constitute the structural properties of the academic social system. For example, through the processes of induction to the academic role for those undertaking teaching during their postgraduate studies, established academics utilise rules and exhibit power through the use of authoritative resources. This could be interpreted as a deterministic view of academic identity formation, whereby the apprentice academics are simply reproducing the existing structures. However, the academics also demonstrated the ability to affect change, producing new rules that could alter structure. They also demonstrated that they did feel that, within certain limitations, they were able to exercise agency in their academic practice, for example within the lecture theatre. The freedom that this entailed formed an important part of the narrative of being an academic, not least being someone who is able to direct their own work on a day to day basis.

For Giddens (1973), the concept of life chances demonstrates how power is discharged in social systems as it is related to access to, or lack of access to, authoritative resources. The concept of life chances may be considered deterministic and offer little hope for the possibility of social change, focussing on structural constraints on the individual and accentuating a lack of individual agency (Jenkins, 1996; Gauntlett, 2011). However, the entry into academia by the academics in my sample who did not possess life chances is a more positive demonstration of individual agency: highlighting the role of individuals in the production and reproduction of social systems (Giddens, 1984). This agency is also demonstrated in the ability of individuals, over time, to have the ability to change social systems: the more that individuals 'break out' of structural constraints, and the more that they

build a meaningful narrative of change, as my academics have done, the greater potential there is for a social system to change over time. The need to build a meaningful narrative therefore has important implications for identity, but also for changing social structures. Giddens also offers an alternative view on why individuals may be unable to break with convention, and also why 'fittingness' of a role is important in the narrative of identity. He argues that one reason that individuals are reluctant to break with convention is due to a need for 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1984). Although individuals have freedom of action, the need for ontological security leads them to follow routine patterns of behaviour rather than taking uncharted routes, and by this action they reproduce the social structures of their worlds. However, by developing a narrative of change and articulating that narrative (for example, to the interviewer), my academics are routinising the narrative and reducing the ontological barriers to change. The experience of my academics therefore demonstrates both structural constraints, but also the ability of agents, by their actions, to alter social systems.

A narrative of success

Becoming an academic is a competitive journey in which the individuals have had to prove themselves through their studies and to compete against others for academic positions. All of the academics described, in some form or other, struggles on their way to becoming an academic. This included overcoming adversity (including, for some, poor life chances) and the competition with others for posts. Many combined PhD study with teaching and held down multiple temporary jobs in the period between completion of the PhD and their first permanent academic position. It has been argued that there is an expectation that new academics will 'hit the ground

running', and so this is a period of anxiety and uncertainty for many as they face new environments and challenges (Henkel, 2000; Kreber, 2009, Smith 2010). However, it was noticeable that the academics in my study did not retrospectively view this period in their life as one of stress and anxiety. If anything, the hard work they had to do to get where they were, and their success in getting their positions, was something they were keen to reflect on as it identified them as an academic who had successfully 'passed' the academic apprenticeship. This was a narrative of success, and one that was common to the academics I interviewed at both NewU and OldU. However, in coming to this conclusion it must be acknowledged that this narrative may not be universal across the sector: my academics were successful, and there will have been many for whom the process of becoming an academic was a time of great uncertainty and who ultimately were not successful in affecting the transition from student to academic.

A narrative over time and space

The journey to academia described by the academics were journeys over time and space. In regard to time, this was a journey which took many years to complete, in which the academics invested a considerable proportion of their lives. In regard to space, this was both physically, with many of the academics relocating many miles across the UK to study and work, but also in regard to an 'analytical space' (Foucault, 1977) in which they are subject to surveillance by students and established academics. For Giddens (1991) a discomfoting feature of high modernity is what he terms the space-time distanciation, whereby globalisation has altered the relationship of space and time to the operation of social systems, with the traditional boundaries of space removed and barriers of time contracted. As a consequence the traditional

boundaries and certainties of social systems are challenged, creating a sense of uncertainty and ontological insecurity for the individual. However, the process of becoming an academic, and of creating an academic identity, remains a process in which there is less distancing than may be apparent in other social systems. This is because it takes time to gain academic qualifications, and while communication and transport has sped up, the apprentice academics are also located within permanent physical settings while they are gaining their qualifications and the experience necessary to gain a permanent position. It was also noticeable that for most of my academics there was a lack of mobility once they were appointed to their first permanent position, with only one of the academics having held a permanent position at another university. This may have been due to a desire for permanence after a sustained period of uncertainty.

A narrative of an environmentally sensitive academic identity

The views of the respondents on the past and potential future intentions of government for higher education, and particularly for their discipline areas and types of institutions, produced a common response from the academics from both institutions. Both sets of academics felt that their disciplines were at best not valued, and at worst under existential threat from the funding policies of the Coalition Government. However, the location of their employment did result in divergent views about their future job security, with the academics at OldU believing they were relatively secure, and the academics at NewU believing that, due to the perceived low status of their institution and the composition of the student body, they were not valued and were insecure. While the academics at both institutions were potentially facing an existential crisis as the traditionally accepted ways of doing things have

been called into question by the pressures of performativity and marketisation, the potential impact was magnified for the academics at NewU due to the type of institution at which they were employed. The academics at NewU believed that the relatively low status of NewU compared to OldU, and its focus on teaching rather than research, left it exposed to Coalition Government funding policies which favoured elite institutions such as OldU.

In seeking to address my first research question, which is to determine the key factors that constitute the academic identity of academics in the arts and humanities working in English universities in the twenty first century, it has been argued in this chapter that there is a relatively common academic identity shared by my respondents, regardless of the institution at which they work. This includes a set of common values and experiences about the roles of teaching, research and administration. In seeking to address my second research question, the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity, it has also been identified that they perceive that this identity may be under threat, a threat which is magnified by the environment in which some of the academics work. It was clear that both groups of academics perceived that the Coalition Government held a negative view of the worth of the arts and humanities disciplines, regardless of institution, but that the government also had a negative view of the status of institutions such as NewU. For the academics at OldU this meant that the threat from recent funding policies was largely theoretical, but for the academics at NewU these policies were perceived to be a very real threat to their employment and their academic identity. In the next three chapters I will explore in further detail the relationship between environmental sensitivity and performativity and marketisation

with respect to three key constituents of academic identity: students, teaching and research.

Chapter 5: Constructing and Reconstructing the Relationship with Students

Introduction

In chapter four I argued that the academics at NewU and OldU shared a relatively similar and stable underlying academic identity, but that environmental factors had an impact on this identity, either supporting or threatening it. In this chapter I focus on the position of the student in academic identity, an analysis which is important because students have been a focal point of the 2010 changes to the funding of higher education, with the reforms intended to make institutions, and hence their staff, “more accountable to their students than ever before” (Willetts, 2011, 530, col 769). Students also have, I will argue, a pivotal role in determining the self-esteem of the academics because the academic /student teaching relationship is a core feature of academic identity. This analysis contributes to my understanding of the factors that constitute academic identity, which is the first research question of this thesis, and my understanding of the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity, which is the second research question of this thesis.

As discussed in chapter two, in the age of high modernity, identity construction is an ongoing project in which individuals and groups reflect on a range of experiences and factors, including the perceptions of others, and in the process construct a meaningful narrative of identity. Giddens argues that two priorities during this process of identity construction are to gain freedom of dependencies, that is to exercise agency, and to achieve fulfilment, which in this respect, “means fostering a sense that one is ‘good’, a ‘worthy person’.” (Giddens, 1991, p79). Fulfilment is

possible through the development and preservation of a sense of self-esteem. It plays a pivotal role in identity formation because it helps to protect against anxiety that threatens the ontological security of individuals and groups in society. Therefore, for Giddens, in the age of high modernity, “The furthering of [...] self-esteem in everyday life should be regarded as just as important a political task as legal and other freedoms in the public sphere.” (Giddens, 1998, p135).

For the academics in my study, their sense of self-esteem was informed by how the various stakeholders within higher education interacted with them and by their own perceptions of the worth and status of the academic profession. In chapter four I considered the academics’ perceptions of how the Coalition Government viewed the role of higher education in society and the status accorded to their institutions and their disciplines. While the government is an important and influential stakeholder, the position of students in academic life, being the most visible day-to-day stakeholder for the academics, suggests that they would also play a pivotal role in determining the self-esteem of the academics as they engage with the reflexive project of identity construction. Therefore, in this chapter I consider the perceptions of the academics on the relationship with students and the esteem that they provide to the academic profession. I examine their perceptions of how performativity and marketisation has affected student expectations and behaviours; how students are approaching their education; and, of how students are being constructed as consumers. As a consequence of this analysis I identify a positive narrative of academic authority and esteem, which is common to the academics at both NewU and OldU. However, I also identify environmental sensitivity in the responses of the academics with respect to the construction of students as consumers.

Perceptions of student expectations and behaviours

The interviews with the academics were conducted at a point at which the first students had entered higher education who were paying increased tuition fees as a result of the changes to the fees regime introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010, with fees raising from a maximum of £3290 in 2011/12 to a maximum of £9000 in 2012/13. Some commentators argued that policies of the 2010 Coalition Government had accelerated the marketisation of higher education and the transformation of students into consumers (Molesworth, et al., 2011; Marginson, 2012; Matthews, 2013). Many of the academics from both NewU and OldU (NewU=6, OldU=5) reported that they believed that student expectations had altered as a result of the change in the fee regime, with students increasingly acting like consumers who demanded or expected more from the academics and from the institutions than previous cohorts of students. This had manifested itself both in students demanding justification for the expense they were incurring and in demanding more from academics. For example:

What it has changed I think is expectations, they are expecting more. We had a bit of an interesting moment at the programme committee recently with the first years. [...] The library representative was there and outlined the budget for the year which actually isn't very much, and then said, "Oh we're really very happy that the budget is the same as last year and hasn't been cut", and the first years were just very confused by that, saying why would it be cut because we're paying three times as much? And what they don't know essentially is that they are paying more to make up for cuts that are happening

elsewhere. That we are not actually getting any more money than we did previously. So they are expecting a better service when actually we don't have the money to provide a better service. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

They expect replies to emails in seconds. [...] we have turnaround protocols for email, 48 hours [...] but if you don't turn an email round in 24 hours they are back at you. And our turnaround time is actually 48 hours because of other commitments, whatever. So they can send you an email on Friday, because it's 48 working hours, and they don't really need to get an email response until the Tuesday, but they want to reply by Sunday night. They are very much more demanding. [Mark OldU, History, December 2012]

We are hearing more and more often, "I don't think this is worth it", and often it is when you've told the student, "You must do this", and we do have a real problem with students who think that the tutors are going to do everything for them and the idea that the student is [...] actually going to be involved in a practical seminar where they produce some writing, read it out, get criticism and then rewrite it, come to some of them as a dreadful shock. [Norma NewU, English, April 2012]

Yes, because they pay. They are expecting to be entertained. One person said, "Why have we got to listen to this shit, why can't we have a video?" That's very clear, and I'm not saying they're all like this. [Ken NewU, English, December 2012]

It is noticeable from the quotations above that the academics perceived the students to hold unrealistic expectations about what the academics will do (Mark OldU, Norma NewU) or be ill-informed about the impact of the new fee regime on university finances (Finlay NewU). Irrespective of these perceptions, it is evident that a possible consequence of the marketisation agenda is that students have become more empowered and emboldened to make requests of academics. However, conversely several of the academics reported that the students had become more demanding of themselves, rather than of the academics. Jean from NewU reported that she had noticed a change in student expectations with the impact of the economic recession on employment prospects, with the need to get a 'good' degree classification high in many students' priorities.

I've never had so many students knock on my door and say, "Can you help me work out my degree classification, I need a first, and this term I can really jump up to the first if I work at it." I've never had that many. I've even got second years coming in at the moment saying, "If I got this in this module I get this," and whatever, as they are really noticing the impact of having to get a first. [Jean NewU, Business, January 2013]

For Nick from OldU, this manifested itself in improved academic performance by his students:

We've seen them work harder, there is no doubt, we've got good evidence of that. Semester one exams this year were significantly up from previous years

which we were quite surprised about. There is still the tail, the group who do sod all, and still the top is still the top end, but the middle group has definitely pushed up. [Nick OldU, Business, May 2013]

However, while the above quotations suggest changes in student attitudes and behaviour towards the academics and towards their own studies, several academics (NewU=3, OldU=4) reported that contrary to their expectations, in practice the change in fee regime and the repositioning of students as consumers had not resulted in a change in student attitudes or behaviour in the manner that they had expected.

I thought there would be much more of a, “Well we’re paying for this” [...] Yes, the students are demanding, they know what they want and it’s a case of you need to provide it. Now I thought they would have become much more, “Look we’re in class and one lecture’s worth x amount and pounds”, if they were to break it down like that, but I haven’t found that anyway. I suppose if you think about it, if they’re that focussed on [their studies], they shouldn’t be missing class or missing seminars or missing something they’re paying for, but I think they still miss class and they still miss seminars. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

After the fees regime was introduced we were all very concerned about the impact that would have on students’ attitudes and the relationship we have with them, but it hasn’t been as bad or as pronounced as we thought it might have been yet. [...] Maybe it’s because the students see the money they’re

spending on the fees as an unreal sort of deferred or abstract amount. [Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

One thing that struck me as really odd, and we noted this across the department and in other departments and we can't work out why, is that attendance is atrocious. It is really bad. And that is very interesting. It isn't just mapping onto 9 o'clock or Friday at five, it is across the board. So for example in my lectures I've got 16 students but I have about eight students on average. Attainment is normal, the same as it has been. It may be something to do with the type of students, the Chelsea set, but I don't know. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

An underlying concern of many of the academics was that, irrespective of the increase in fees, students increasingly found it difficult to make the transition from A-level to degree and were unprepared for the work required to successfully engage with their studies. The academics were concerned that the education system was failing to prepare students for the scholarly requirements of higher education due to the instrumental nature of the A-level curriculum, which was 'teaching to the test'. This was a view shared by the Coalition Government Education Secretary, who announced in January 2013 that from 2015 there would be revisions to the A-level curriculum away from a modular structure, as it hindered a deep understanding of subjects, towards exams at the end of two year courses (BBC, 2013).

I think the jump from A-level to degree level study is difficult for a lot of them. I think that it's maybe more pronounced over the last few years. I get

the sense that A-levels increasingly maybe encourage a jumping through hoops approach, whereby the expectations are so clear that there is no ambiguity, a healthy ambiguity and what might be expected from the students in terms of what they learn and how they apply that learning independently. I think it's based on the modularisation of A-levels. [Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

I think if they come with an attitude of, "Just tell me what to do," I don't think their learning will be as good. There has to be a willingness on their part, because you can't force things. If they're not willing to engage then you can only give students so much. It's surprising [...] that there are students who will take that attitude. But, they are here, almost like an empty beaker to be filled up, and that's surprising given that they are 18 and they are three-A students generally speaking, but that's partly a reflection of how they've got here. So in a sense you can't blame them, but in another sense you feel it's a little frustrating that they're not saying, "Well, let's push at the edges, let's see what's out there, let's question a bit more." [Richard, OldU, Business, December 2012]

Our schools drive students so hard towards assessment that they never have the time to stop and go, "Actually what is this, who am I and where am I going?" They come to us quite tired. [Jenny OldU, English, November 2013]

With the introduction £3000 fees there was a huge amount of discussion about the student as consumer if you like, and what expectations will be, and

I genuinely did notice the difference in expectations and in some respects you have to resist what they expect because, it's not their fault, they have been coached, most of our students I think come from a good education background where a lot of time and effort is put into coaching them to pass an exam and I think that's probably the worst thing you could possibly do, there is no focus on critical thinking at all, you know it's all you well you've got these A-levels coming up and here's a bunch of past papers and what we are going to look at is how you would answer this, I tend to not want to do that. [...] we have to kick out of the students the fact that they are not little sponges any more. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

I don't think some of them realise [the hard work required]. When I go through with my programme, when I go through the levels and explain to them what they need to do, some of them don't even understand the old adage of reading for a degree. [Mark OldU, History, December 2012]

The academics at both institutions reported similar student expectations and behaviours, and in this respect it was not possible to identify any significant differences between NewU and OldU. The academics reported that some, but not all, students were perceived as being more demanding of the academics, acting more like consumers. It was noticeable that there were equally students who were more demanding on themselves, becoming more studious and hence reconfirming to the academics the value of the higher education experience. This suggested, for the academics in my study, that although the marketisation of higher education was having an impact on students, it was not as strong an impact as had been expected by

some of the academics themselves and from some of the literature (for example, Holmwood, 2011; Reay, 2011; Collini, 2012). The perceptions of student responses to the marketisation agenda had an important impact on the narrative of academic identity that my academics were able to construct and reconstruct. The academics were able to construct positive narratives which demonstrated the relatively stable nature of student expectations and behaviours. It also reaffirmed the value of the academic role as it was not necessarily intrinsically bound to a commodified sector. They were also able to construct a positive narrative of the value of the higher education experience by identifying deficiencies in the A-level system and the role that the academic had in addressing these deficiencies by instilling in students the work ethic and scholarly skills required in order to be successful. It could therefore be argued that this narrative served to confirm the worth of the academic position as it reaffirmed the positive role that the academics discharged in enabling students to successfully engage with and complete their studies.

Academic perceptions of student approaches to curriculum content

The approach that students took towards their engagement with the curriculum was another factor that played a significant role in the narrative that the academics were able to construct about the position of the academic role in the current environment. In chapter two, I discussed how curriculum content was increasingly the focus for national debate, with a 'performative shift' (Barnett et al., 2001) occurring as the curriculum has become orientated towards its use-value to society. In particular, that the need of the economy for a workforce with a certain skill-set was replacing traditional higher education curriculum content, deprioritising the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake as it did not develop an economically relevant skill

(Ward, 2007). It was evident from my research that a possible consequence of the economic recession and the difficulties of finding employment, rather than the fact that they were paying for their studies, was that several academics from both institutions (NewU=2, OldU=4) felt that students were taking an instrumental approach to the curriculum. They saw it as a means to an end, which was to get a good job upon graduation.

The key word from them now, is it's all about employability. And I think at the end of the day given current economic conditions, students are very concerned about well, one, they're paying fees now so they're thinking, 'Well, what am I getting for my money?', and I suppose at the end of the day, if you're thinking about it, why are students coming to university, they're coming to get educated, and they have a bit of fun, meet new friends, but at the end of the day the sole reason is for them to get a degree, to get a masters, is to get a job. So I think then if you mention the word employability, what you're getting, I think that's the one thing that the student is mainly focussed on. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

I've had a colleague this year almost crying because they were saying, "Why did you make us read ten texts and you are only going to assess us on two?" And that very instrumental approach is that what they want is the degree, to go on, and in many ways it is encouraged by the institution because they have forced the employability agenda, and most academics are actually lousy careers advisers, because we haven't been out of education since we were

five. That is the instrumentality we get, fathers who come and say, “Well, what will they get a job as?” [Jenny OldU, English, November 2013]

In terms of employment prospects many are looking for a 2:1, but some of them are looking for something more [...] So the bottom-line for students is in this day and age, particularly in these times, if you want to work in law which a lot of them will be aiming for, the talisman standard is a 2:1. I don't know how true it is to say that you won't get employed without one, but that is their goal and they are startlingly aware of this from a very early stage.

Back in the day I wasn't even aware of what you needed to get into practice at all, and we have more careers advice coming in as well, so that's changed.

[Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

Nick from OldU had similar concerns to Judith that students didn't want to read for a degree as they once did, being more 'instrumental' about the final outcome because they primarily saw the aim of the degree being to enhance their employability prospects. He believed that pressure from students to graduate quickly, combined with changes in technology which facilitated the rapid accumulation of knowledge, would lead to institutions delivering degrees over shorter lengths of time:

We have a lot of people now who clearly don't want to do a degree, they want to have a degree, and that is the problem, and I think that the way it will evolve is that we will have to change the model, in that the three-year degree model I think is doomed longer term, people will be paying a lot of money, and would you get a worse maturing experience in two years? If it took you

three years to learn a degree 20 years ago it can't possibly take you three years to do it today, I know that from writing books that you can get information and put it together in 10% of the time that you could 10 years ago.

[Nick OldU, Business, May 2013]

The views cited above suggest, from the academic's perspective, a student body that is focussed on employability and taking an instrumental approach to the curriculum, and therefore is in accord with the conception of education as a commodity.

However, several of the academics (NewU=3, OldU=4) believed that there were still students whose primary interest was in developing their knowledge of the discipline area, rather than taking an instrumental approach.

I think they, they want to be engaged and interested. [...] They do want you to be enthusiastic, they do want you to be committed. I've actually experimented with designing modules about what they want, so I called a meeting with my second year and said, "Right, these are the possible options for the third year, what would you like?", and they say, "Well, we want lectures because we want the information, we are happy with lectures we don't want too many, we enjoy the small groups and were also quite happily in large groups as long as we doing things like posters and engaging." [Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

I think students in history coming here, because this is what we sell to them, is that they want a challenging but supportive degree. So they want History, and they want History to be taught by people who are knowledgeable, but

they want History to be taught by people who can support them as well.

Many of our students are students who've not got the best A-level grades, and often they've got A-level grades where they have, there's often an element to the work that they've done previously which means that they have either gaps in their knowledge or gaps in their skills or expertise, and part of what we do is help them to overcome that, whether it's around writing or researching or whatever. Some of our students come in amazing, but some of our students come in with quite a weak skillset, but we encourage them through the three years. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

They want a degree, and they want, I think a lot of them do want a chance to sit around with coffee and talk about politics and, a lot of students do have a sense of what a student is and how different it is from A-level. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

The experiences of the academics at both institutions suggests that students are taking a variety of positions on the curriculum. While some are focussed on employability, which may be a consequence of the marketisation of higher education, there are equally others who are studying in order to satisfy a personal curiosity about the subject area. This therefore suggests a varied picture of student expectations which may either challenge or reconfirm academic views about the status of the academic profession in the current time. For those who are concerned about the effect of the market agenda on their profession there is evidence that students are becoming more instrumental in their approach to their studies, which would support arguments that the needs of the market and consequent demand for

graduates for specific outcomes are shaping curriculum (Barnett et al. 2001, Ward 2007). However, for those who believe in the value of learning for learning's sake, and the pursuit of disciplinary knowledge, there is evidence of students also valuing this highly.

The academic construction of the student as consumer

So far in this chapter I have considered how the academics have perceived marketisation to have impacted on student attitudes and behaviours. In this section I progress to consider the implications for the academics' conception of their academic identity. Many of the academics at both NewU and OldU (NewU=6, OldU=6) who had been employed in higher education for five years or more felt that the sector and their working conditions had changed over the years that they had been teaching. Of particular concern was a change in the relationship with students, which they believed had changed as a consequence of policies which had marketised higher education, as discussed in chapters one and two of this thesis, with higher education being reconceptualised as a commodity, and students transformed into consumers (Molesworth et al., 2011; Matthews, 2013; Woodall, Hiller and Resnick, 2014). In this regard, the academics from NewU were more vocal about the impact of the changes on the sector and the impact on what it meant to be an academic than the academics from OldU. Of particular importance was a concern that the consumer discourse was shaping and orientating their students in a manner that was causing conflict with the core values that the academics held, in doing so presenting a challenge to the 'authoritative power' (Giddens, 1984) of the academics.

Jean from NewU, from her experiences both within NewU and in other similar institutions when acting as an external examiner, linked the rise of the consumer discourse with a change in student recruitment across the sector. She believed that over the past decade all institutions, even those which had previously attracted students with relative ease, had recognised that they were in a competitive market for student recruitment and that they needed to effectively market their programmes to both students and parents in order to attract students.

You know the differences, you can see the differences in the universities who've woken up and can smell the coffee, it's a competitive market now. It's a very changing market, we've got different customers. We've got parents as well. Parents didn't mind which university students went to as long as they got their washing done, but now parents are noticing, they're paying, so they come along to the open days and you have to look at the fact that you say this is our client, the student, and this is our client, the parent. You got a different market there. [Jean NewU, Business, January 2013]

It is noticeable that Jean referred to the 'market' and conceptualised students both as 'customers' and as 'clients'. The latter definition suggests a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit between the university and the student, but several of the academics from NewU (n=6) referred to the student as a 'consumer' or 'customer', using terminology which suggests that higher education is a market in which the students make a purchase. Only one of the academics at OldU, Judith, used the term 'consumer', referring to it as 'creeping in' within the context of a discussion of audit mechanisms such as the National Student Survey:

Obviously we got a lot of input from different forums such as the University Learning and Teaching Committee and the National Student Survey and every year to sit and wring our hands and tear our hair out about it because students are investing so much more money now, or at least potentially investing some more money, there is an element of consumerism creeping in. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

However, neither Judith nor any of the academics at OldU used this terminology to refer to the students as 'consumers'. The use of the terminology by the academics at NewU suggested that the consumer discourse had permeated through into everyday language within NewU, and that even though the academics may have seen it as a negative development, it was for them a part of their narrative of academic identity. In contrast, for the academics at OldU discussion of the student as a 'consumer' was absent, suggesting that for them it had a less significant impact on their narrative of academic identity.

The academics at NewU identified the role of both NewU and the government in facilitating the consumer discourse within the institution. In regard to NewU, Norma believed that it delivered an unambiguous message to academics that the student was a consumer. "The message coming down from the Vice Chancellor that, the customer experience is important, the student experience is important, the whole package everything" [Norma NewU, English, April 2012]. Similarly, Kay cited the messages transmitted by her institution through official literature and the way that it engaged with students.

The push several years ago was that students were customers [...] In all our literature the student was regarded as a customer, and they are told even now that they are a customer[...] the whole emphasis of our literature is that if you pay for it then you have the right to [complain]. [Kay NewU, Business, February 2013]

In addition to the messages aimed at staff and students originating from NewU, several of the academics at NewU explained that they believed the government also bore responsibility for the promotion of the consumer discourse. Chris from NewU, identified the messages he had inferred from the Coalition Government's 2011 White Paper, *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS 2011), which he believed had positioned students as consumers of the higher education product.

They produced that White Paper couple of years ago, 'Putting students at the centre of learning,' but I think that's based on the students seeing themselves just as consumers of a product rather than valuing that product for what it used to be valued as, not just having a kind of monetary value, but for the sake of the learning itself. It never really divorced entirely the academic agenda from the business of vocational agenda, but now the business agenda is far too dominant. The students seeing themselves as consumers in some sort of marketised service provider, and consumer relationship isn't healthy at all. [Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

Ben from NewU had similar concerns, and like Chris was concerned that what he considered to be a key purpose of higher education was being undermined.

The changes that this coalition government is pushing through in other public services, it seems as though it's coming to university as well. The ideal that I have and that I had when I started working in universities was that this is a public service, that this is about encouraging people to think critically, getting them to engage with ideas and so on, but unfortunately the imperatives of the market seem to be more persuasive ultimately. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

The concern of Chris and Ben was that the consumerisation of students was having a negative impact on what the academics considered to be the core values of higher education. Chris believed this would result in an 'unhealthy' relationship with students, and both were concerned that it sent a message to students that the aim of higher education was to study for a vocationally-orientated qualification, which was contrary to their desire to develop critically engaged students. A key concern here is that the consumer discourse is shaping students in a way that is contrary to the values that the academics hold, and hence is shaping students in a way that challenges their academic identity. As Norma described it, there would be a 'clash of perspectives' as she did not believe that students should be conceived as consumers in the classroom:

As this fees hike works its way through I think we're going to see more and more students saying, "I want to be entertained, you're not entertaining me. I

want quality entertainment for every module, otherwise I'll give you a bad NSS." And it's that basic, it's that clear. In a way that's the culture that's out there. It is a consumer culture. You have your consumer rights, and I think if students come in, I don't have consumers in the classroom, I have students, if they think they are consumers we will immediately have a clash of perspectives. [Norma NewU, English, April 2012]

Norma, Chris and Ben all identified concerns that the academic authority to direct the curriculum in the classroom was being undermined by vocational drivers or short-term responses to student demand. Jenny and David from OldU held similar concerns that there was too great an emphasis on short-term responses to student expectations, at the expense of what was actually educationally beneficial for students. David discussed how the marketisation of higher education, and the consumer culture, had potentially changed the relationship between the academic and the student, and these concerns echoed the concerns of academics from NewU such as Norma.

Student impressions are important, but frankly they don't know what is good educationally for them. Quite often we'll have a module that is really difficult, then they're not necessarily going to enjoy it, but when we have contact with students in later years they come back and say, "Actually, that was the most important and useful module that I did, even though at the time we hated it." [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

The above quotations demonstrate that the academics from NewU were forthcoming about their concerns about the construction of the student as consumer and it appeared that this perceived 'threat' to their identity was of much more concern for the academics at NewU than the academics at OldU. The NewU academics raised concerns about the negative impact on the educational experience, in particular the promotion of a vocational curriculum and the perceived need to 'entertain' students in the classroom. They believed that their academic identity was under threat as the consumer agenda potentially challenged the authoritative power (Giddens 1984) of the academics in regard to their position in the classroom and their ability to direct the curriculum. The academics at NewU may have felt particularly under threat due to the type of institution at which they were employed, being of a lower status, and their experiences of the competitive side of student recruitment. This had resulted in pressure from their institution to market themselves and their courses in order to attract students. The relative recruitment 'security' of the academics at OldU may have meant that OldU was not promoting the same consumer discourse, hence the consumer terminology had not appeared in their narratives.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was the position of the student, both in regard to their role in determining the self-esteem of the academics and in regard to their construction as a consumer. The aim was to help my understanding of the factors that constitute academic identity, which is the first research question of this thesis, and my understanding of the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity, which is the second research question of this thesis. Two themes have emerged through the narratives provided by the individual academics as they

have reflected on the impact of the relationship with students on their academic identity: a narrative of academic authority and esteem, and a narrative of an environmentally-sensitive response to marketisation.

A narrative of academic authority and esteem

In this chapter, I considered the perceptions of the academics about the impact of the fee regime introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 on student expectations and behaviour. As a comparative study it identified relatively little difference between the perceptions of the academics at NewU and OldU. Both groups of academics were concerned about the impact of the changes to the fee regime on student attitudes and that there would be a potentially negative impact on the relationship between academics and students. This concern was corroborated with instances identified, firstly, of students becoming more demanding, which suggested that (at least in the eyes of the academics that I spoke to) attitudes towards academics may have changed; and secondly, of students taking a much more instrumental approach to the curriculum, which potentially challenged academic authority. However, this chapter also identified areas which served to reinforce academic authority and self-esteem: many students were no more demanding of academics than expected, and if anything were more demanding of themselves. Furthermore, instances were cited where students were unprepared for the depth of study required in higher education and where students were not taking an instrumental approach to their education. This suggested that the consumer agenda pushed by government and institutions was not in accord with student behaviour. It therefore provided academics with opportunities to form positive narratives of student attitudes and behaviour that challenged the rhetoric from government and institutions and

reinforced the esteem of academic practice. The academics were therefore able to construct positive narratives which demonstrated the relatively stable nature of student expectations and behaviour.

The findings in this chapter also reaffirmed the value of the academic role as the evidence suggested that it was not necessarily intrinsically bound to a commodified sector. The experiences of the academics at both institutions suggested that students were taking a variety of positions on their studies. While some were perceived to be focussed on employability, there were equally others who it was perceived were studying largely in order to satisfy a personal curiosity about the discipline. This therefore suggested a varied picture of student expectations which may either challenge or reconfirm academic views about the status of the academic profession in the current time. For those who are concerned about the effect of the marketisation agenda on their profession there is evidence that students are becoming instrumental in their approach to their studies, while for those who believe in the value of learning for learning's sake there is evidence of student demand for this in their studies.

A narrative of an environmentally sensitive response to marketisation

This chapter also considered the responses of the academics to the 'official' construction of students as consumers, and in this respect identified a difference between the academics at NewU and OldU. The adoption of a consumer discourse by the academics at NewU suggested that the consumer terminology had permeated through into everyday language, while at OldU it was a largely absent discourse. Of particular significance was an anxiety shared by some of the academics at NewU that the consumer discourse was shaping and orientating their students in a manner that

was causing conflict with the core values that the academics held, such as the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake. In doing so it presented a challenge to the authoritative power of the academics. The academics from OldU were forthcoming about their concerns about the construction of the student as consumer, but it appeared that this perceived 'threat' to academic identity was a much more pressing issue for the academics at NewU. The latter may have felt particularly under threat due to the type of institution at which they were employed and their experiences of the competitive side of student recruitment, which had resulted in pressure from their institution to market themselves and their courses in order to attract students. The relative recruitment 'security' of the academics at OldU may have meant that OldU was not promoting the same consumer discourse, and hence this may have been why the consumer terminology had not appeared in the narrative of the academics at OldU.

The findings of this chapter support the conclusions in chapter four, that there is a relatively similar and stable academic identity that is common to both groups of academics, but that this is an identity that is threatened by the conditions in which some academics work. However, the findings of this chapter provide a more sophisticated understanding of the impact of environment and of performativity and marketisation than in chapter four. While chapter four highlighted how many of the academics held a pessimistic view of the impact of performativity and marketisation on their work and identity, an impact which is magnified by environmental factors, the findings of this chapter demonstrated the resilience of the respect and autonomy accorded to academics by students. The relationship between academics and students, and in particular the response (or lack of response) of students to

marketisation, has served to reinforce the self-esteem of the academics, sustaining a narrative of academic authority and worth. Furthermore, the adoption of consumer discourse by some of the academics at NewU also presents an alternative response to the consumer agenda, suggesting that while it is perceived to challenge academic identity, an academic identity can be sustained alongside the consumer discourse.

Chapter 6: Constructing and Reconstructing the Discipline Through Teaching

Introduction

In chapter four I identified the premise that there was a relatively similar and stable academic identity that was common to the academics I interviewed working both in OldU and in NewU. However, for the academics at NewU this was an identity under threat by the conditions in which they worked. In chapter five I developed a more sophisticated understanding of the impact of performativity and marketisation on environment, considering the role of students in academic identity formation. In this chapter I explore this understanding further through an analysis of the role of teaching in academic identity formation and link this to an exploration of how the discipline is reproduced through the teaching process. This will contribute to answering the first two research questions of this thesis: developing our understanding of the factors that constitute academic identity and our understanding of the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity.

If we consider the discipline within which the academic works as a core organising principle of the academic role (Becher and Trowler, 2001; Trower et al., 2012), teaching practice is a key process in the construction and reconstruction of the discipline. It is through teaching that the academic transmits disciplinary knowledge to generation after generation of students. In this chapter I consider the impact of performative pressures on the teaching role, in particular the external direction of curriculum content and the impact of mechanisms that evaluate teaching such as the NSS. In this regard there are common perceptions across both groups of academics

about the impact on their academic identity. This is of significance in regard to shared values that both groups of academics associate with teaching and shared beliefs on how they and their institutions should prioritise certain teaching practices and prioritise curriculum content. An understanding of these values and priorities is necessary if we are to understand the impact of performativity and marketisation on the narrative of academic identity as the academics seek to reproduce their discipline through the teaching role.

The academics perceptions of the personal satisfaction and reward from teaching

As a comparative study this thesis has sought to determine convergences and divergences in the experiences and perceptions of the academics at NewU and OldU. In this section, in which I analyse the perceptions of the academics on the personal reward from teaching, it was clear that there was a clear convergence of views between both institutions, and as such is an account of a common set of values that transcends the location of institutional employment.

The ‘fittingness’ of teaching with the academics

For many of my academics the teaching role was one they appeared to have a ‘fittingness’ with (Elizabeth and Grant, 2013). There is little, if any, gap between the private self and the academic self, so they are able to gain both personal and professional reward and satisfaction from teaching. The first experience of teaching for most of the academics in my study was while undertaking postgraduate study, either during their studies for their masters or their PhDs. Kreber (2009) argues that it is only after building up sufficient practical experience that many academics feel

comfortable, or authentic, in their role. However, many of my academic respondents did not report any concerns about authenticity in their role as teachers during their formative experiences as postgraduate students. In this regard it was particularly noticeable that several (NewU=3, OldU=3) reported that they got great enjoyment from the experience of teaching: “I tried it out [teaching] and realised that I loved it” [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]; “I loved it, absolutely loved it and so I asked to do more” [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]; “I loved it. I never had any problem with the teaching to be honest. I suppose when it’s something that you love doing, I dunno, I do believe you are either a natural teacher or not.” [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]. For Judith, Douglas and Richard teaching was something which did not appear to create any sense of anxiety:

Teaching was actually a bit of a breeze, because I had undergone it fairly early, fairly quickly beforehand, so I always knew what to expect and it wasn’t just my experience of it. I was watching people within my tutorial groups when I was being taught and thinking, it was odd because even at the time I was undergoing tutorials in my second and final year I was almost trying to watch and learn from that with a view to doing this at some time. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

I did one semester teaching and found that, you know, I also enjoyed that part of things, because it’s all very well being able to write and publish, but obviously it is a job in three parts, you know academic administrator, researcher and teacher, and the teaching part I liked [...] I was pretty comfortable in a classroom situation. [Douglas, OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

That was small group teaching, groups of 6 [during his PhD], and that's where I thought, "I want to be an academic because I like the teaching."

[Richard OldU, Business, December 2012]

Their reasons for 'loving' teaching were related to a satisfaction gained from being able to transmit knowledge and transform students, which will be explored further below, but in some cases also due to an element of showmanship: "You tend to like to show off a bit, you are talking about something that is interesting to you for a start, ideally you are, I think there is a bit of a performer in most of us." [Judith, OldU, Law, November 2013]

Several of the academics moved directly from their postgraduate studies to their first permanent position, while several took a series of temporary contracts while they searched for a permanent position. It was apparent that several of my academics undertook a wide range of teaching activities both during and following their postgraduate studies. This is sometimes across several institutions, in order to get the experience that they perceived they needed to enhance their employment prospects:

I did my four years at [*university 1*] as a PhD student while doing associate lecturing at the same time and also quite a lot of administrative work as well [...] I also taught at [*university 2*] as an associate lecturer and I was an associate lecturer at [*university 3*], I did the odd guest session at [*university 4*] on one of their MA courses, I also taught at [*university 5*] as well. [Sarah, NewU, History, December 2012]

I taught at [*university 1*], when I started my Ph.D., I taught at [*university 2*], and in the history department at [*university 3*], and in my post doc I taught at [*university 4*], so I've had quite a wide experience in very different organisations. [Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

One thing I did do strategically is that I made sure that I taught lots of different subjects. It would be easy to have just done one subject area per year but I thought no, challenge myself and do different subjects and get a massive spectrum, and I would just go on any course I could because I wanted to just maximise my chances of employability. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

However, Jenny [OldU] was an exception in that she did not teach during her PhD and had been actively discouraged from doing so by her PhD supervisor: "He said, "Look just finish it, that's what matters, that's what we'll get you a job, don't spend time teaching because you will spend so much time preparing the material [...] so you will struggle"." [Jenny OldU, English, May 2013]

All of the academics (NewU=10, OldU=10) reported that they essentially were 'thrown in at the deep end' when they began teaching, with no formal training in advance. Typically this was teaching to small groups in lectures or seminars, but in some cases they were lecturing to large classes. Where training was available it was

typically seen as largely irrelevant by the academics, being no substitute for hands-on experience of teaching and the guidance of experienced colleagues.

The first bit of teaching I did I co-taught with an experienced member of staff, which was very useful, there were some [training] sessions which were put on, I took them up because I'm always one of these people who will take training sessions up. But that's just my nature. I'm not sure whether they were necessarily compulsory. We were very closely mentored, it was much more done on a mentoring rather than a central training scheme. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

I don't think there was any formal training to be honest. I suppose when you start as a teaching assistant the lecturer you would be working with would manage you, but there was no such thing as this is what you need to do. You are within a ring though when you are a teaching assistant because the lecturer provides the questions and stuff like that and you are just working to their guidelines. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

The department [...] did have a couple of days where they do things that we do now actually, which is to I suppose give some sense of how you might think about your seminar class, what it is to be a facilitator, you know rather than a mini lecturer, and certainly we had training in terms of marking, to see if, you know where we should put people on the academic marking spectrum, so it was a couple of days. [Douglas OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

It was very much that you got on with it and if there was a problem you asked. [...] I think probably people said, “You getting on okay?” But not much beyond that. Certainly no formal mentoring, which even now I think I probably would have benefited from it, but I obviously managed. [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

As a PhD student at that time, and I’ve got to stress this is at that time, I had no training at all. I went straight into a classroom with students. First thing I had was 6 students in a room for a tutorial. So what did I do? I just based it on what experience I’d had as a student, because I think that’s all you can do, so it wasn’t particularly good I don’t think, but that all I could do. [Richard OldU, Business, December 2012]

One may expect the formative teaching experience to be very disconcerting and one fraught with many anxieties as the academics’ ontological security (Giddens, 1984) is challenged as they are put in a potentially stressful and unfamiliar role, but it was noticeable that many of the academics perceived this as a natural part of the apprenticeship of becoming an academic and did not report any major issues or concerns. The role of the academic community was evident in respect both to mentoring new teachers and, as Richard from OldU noted, he based his early teaching techniques on his own experiences as a student. We can see here, to use Giddens terminology, how the actions of the apprentice academics and their mentors are reproducing the rules of the academic social system. While the institutions are providing formal training sessions, these are largely ignored and the existing academic way of ‘getting on’ is adopted and reproduced.

Nick from OldU was the only one who identified teaching as a ‘daunting experience’, while the rest of the academics, although pushed during the interview, did not recall their formative teaching sessions as being a negative experience. However, it should be noted that these were ‘successful’ academics, and many other postgraduate students will have had much less successful apprenticeships. Smith (2010) suggests three potential reactions of new academics when trying to develop a sense of academic identity in their early years: those who experience ‘resonance’ with the expectations of the role and are untroubled in their new identities; those who experience ‘dissonance’ and feel their identities are under threat; and those who reject the concept of academic identity, and so depart the profession. It seems that all those I interviewed experienced ‘resonance’ or a ‘fittingness’ during their formative teaching experiences.

The personal satisfaction and reward from teaching

It was apparent that many of the academics from both institutions gained considerable enjoyment and satisfaction from the teaching element of the academic role. Several of the academics referred to teaching as a performance, with the most immediate reward from having a positive response from students, as illustrated by the quotations below:

The lecture is a kind of performance, and when that goes well that is good fun, for a couple of years they have been in the habit of applauding which is very disconcerting when it first happened. I didn’t know what to do, do you leave,

do you do an encore? [laughs], but they stopped doing that now. [Jenny OldU, English, November 2013]

When you get student emails saying, “Thanks you really helped me,” that’s great, that’s enough praise, that’s really important. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

I think I put a lot of thought into my sessions, and I love teaching and I do find that in every session on a bigger scale, if it’s two or three hours and it’s in front of 100 or more you do get a buzz out of it, and weirdly I plan for that. I always make sure that I give myself some time, I know that sounds very selfish, but I give myself some time in every session that I do. Even if its 10 minutes in an hour tutorial or 40 minutes in a three hour lecture, there will be my voice alone, and I plan for that, and that’s the bit, you know selfishly, that’s the bit I look forward because it’s the performance bit that I enjoy giving the most. [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]

The academics also reported other rewards from teaching, as illustrated below, which included being able to develop a rapport with students and enabling the academics to develop a better understanding of their subject area:

It’s a rounded experience, that’s one of the reasons why I really love it because it isn’t just standing up spouting stuff and having students open their head and put it in, it’s relationships that you build with them that makes a difference to my job. [Jean NewU, Business, January 2013]

It was working with students, both, this makes me sound really mean, both helping them understand things, but also helping to confuse them as well and make them realise that stuff isn't as straightforward as, and those penny dropping moments, and those conversations, and I also, and this was something that was very important for me to do as a PhD student but also to realise, that its only once you have to start explaining stuff to other people that you really understand it yourself. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

I suppose the other thing I enjoy is that it makes me think differently about history, my subject, as well. There's a lot of things that I approach differently now and I make different connections in my head because of modules that I've taught. Sometimes it draws attention to where there's a gap in the literature, which might be quite interesting when students ask you why are we not doing anything on this I go, "Well there's no research on this", or sometimes it's doing exactly what we tell the students to do, applying something that you've done with them on one module and applying it to what I'm doing. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

Several of the academics also identified the value that they brought to the teaching experience, which for David from OldU meant delivering the subject matter in a way that was an improvement on the students just reading from a book: "I want to communicate material in a way that will hopefully help them understand it which is more than just telling them something that they could read about." [David OldU,

Business, May 2013]. For Peter from NewU, a driver was to ensure that his teaching sessions were an engaging experience for his students, both because he was competitive and because he wanted them to be excited about the subject:

There's a competitive element in me, I want them to think that my module's every bit as engaging and as useful for them as any other module that they study, even years down the line. [...] I want to make them excited about the subject that I'm excited about, because I don't want them to see my module as the boring one. I've been in those modules as a student, I've been able to go, "Right these are the four modules I'm doing at the moment, that's my favourite, I don't mind that one, that one's alright, and I hate that one." I don't want to be, "I hate that one." [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]

Peter's comments also served to highlight a concern of several of the academics about the quality of the teaching being undertaken by their colleagues. Nick from OldU, for example, raised concerns that he held that some colleagues did not appear to desire to get the best out of students through their teaching:

I think there are colleagues who basically read out the slides, and want students just to regurgitate it [...] I suppose I am trying to keep up-to-date with something that is contemporary that matters, and trying to make them think about that bit so that they don't just spot questions, and I think the problem is that that's what most people do, they tell you that they don't but most people expect that the students really don't think that much, they just have to do what they are told. [Nick OldU, Business, May 2013]

The academics from both institutions were able to construct positive narratives around the teaching experience which identified the personal reward they received from the role and how the teaching experience was something which they as individuals had agency to deliver in a variety of ways. For the academics the predominant reward was from realising personal satisfaction from their teaching, which arose from a positive response from students in the classroom and from providing a good teaching experience which satisfied their own 'performance' standards.

The satisfaction from developing student enthusiasm for the discipline

A further area in which there was convergence in the narratives of the academics from both institutions was a shared a sense of satisfaction gained from their teaching role due to the ability of the academics to generate student enthusiasm and engagement in their subject area. Particularly satisfying scenarios for the academics were when they were teaching difficult or unpopular subjects and were witnessing student transformation as a result of their teaching, as illustrated by the following quotations:

I love my subject, which obviously helps, and I love the attraction of the students and I love the light bulb moment, where, you know you're teaching them something. Economics students really don't like it. They think of economics and they think, "Yeah business, oh no there's a bit of maths in it, oh no there's lots of graphs in it, what's going on?" And then it just takes time and you kind have to be a bit patient with it and eventually, and it could

be by week 11 or 12 at the end of the semester, and you've struggled with them for the entire semester, and then they eventually go, "Ah", the penny drops. And I really love that and I love getting back their work and they've put work into it, and you meet them 12 months down the line and it's all worthwhile. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

One of the things that I get out is when you see people have the light switched on, when you can manage that. [...] in one of the areas that I teach there is a module that is the first module for business people that come in. [...] you know these practitioners may or may not have been at university previously, so what we are trying to say is that there is a whole raft of academic material behind business and what you do, and it's trying to get these people who are in silos in their practice to actually say, "What you are doing is actually very strategically aimed and the whole point is the business or manoeuvring the people towards the business," and they often see their role as almost transactional, some have moved on a bit but they are still a bit reluctant to see the full picture, so it's trying to get them to understand that there is the full picture, and to look at the role that they are actually supposed to be doing in professional practice, so there is a link. So I actually get a real thrill out of that. [Richard OldU, Business, December 2012]

Hopefully I'm instilling the love of the subject above all else and enthusiasm and passion for the subject and its practice. That is the root of all of the learning that will take place [...] so that is my first objective that they are fully engaged with the subject, and then hopefully they develop a kind of level of

independence and autonomy which pays them for practising in the discipline in the creative industries, so it's very much got a vocational slant in that.[Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

As Richard from OldU and Chris from NewU both identified, there was also a close link between engagement with the discipline and the subsequent employment prospects of the students. However, for these academics this enthusiasm for the discipline was a good thing in itself, and they gained a sense of personal satisfaction that they were facilitating a positive transformation in student understanding and engagement with the discipline area. For the academics there was tangible evidence in these experiences of the value that they brought through facilitating student engagement in and understanding of their discipline area.

Summary: the reward from teaching

This section has identified a number of ways in which there is a clear convergence in the teaching values and experiences of the academics at NewU and OldU. Both sets of academics reported how they were 'thrown in at the deep-end' during their academic apprenticeship, and while it may have been anticipated that this would have been a stressful and unsettling occasion, they predominantly saw this as a positive experience as the role had a 'resonance' or 'fittingness' with them. Both sets of academics also reported that they gained personal satisfaction and reward from the teaching role as they were able to positively engage with students and to foster and develop student enthusiasm for their discipline. As the academics constructed and reconstructed their narrative of academic identity around the teaching role, this provided a positive narrative which maintained the esteem of the

teaching role. It also provided a positive narrative which demonstrated for them the power that the academics had over authoritative resources, as disciplinary experts, within their institutions.

Control over pedagogical framing

In the section above I identified the satisfaction and reward that the academics received from teaching, and the role it plays in reproducing the discipline by both educating and enthusing students. In this section I consider the performative pressures that the academics were experiencing in regard to curriculum content and the conflict with their own preferences for pedagogical approaches to the curriculum, wherein I identify divergences in the perceptions and experiences of the academics at NewU and OldU.

The employability agenda

Where there was clear divergence between the academics at the two institutions was in respect to their engagement with the government and institutional employability agenda. In chapter two I reflected on how successive governments have sought to direct higher education to produce an educated workforce with skills for the workplace, and that this direction of curriculum content has become a particular priority for the Coalition Government (BIS, 2011). For many of the academics at both institutions there appeared to be a tension about the types of skills that they wanted their students to develop during their studies. There was recognition from both groups that they wanted their students to successfully progress to employment, but the priority of the academics from OldU was the acquisition of discipline-specific

skills, rather than explicitly employability skills. David from OldU, for example, preferred to develop the critical faculties of his students:

I don't think that it is all about employability. My somewhat old-fashioned view is that higher education isn't meant to be about preparing for a job, it is meant to be about developing the person. Obviously employability is important, but I think critical thinking is part of it. [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

Nevertheless, several of the academics from OldU did cite examples of developing skills that would be useful in employment. Zoe from OldU, for example, described small group seminars which students were required to lead for two hours:

They give the presentations and they think of exercises for the other students to do, and they would get feedback, and although they find it difficult at the time, a bit terrifying, they will come back and say that is the most useful thing we have ever done because I had an interview at such a such a company and I was given this group and told I had to complete this task and they say to me that it was easy, but they say that for students from other universities it was clearly difficult because they didn't know what to do, they haven't got any imagination. So that is what we try to do, not spoonfeed, it is all about giving them that independence, giving them the tools to equip them to [...] be able to organise a time and be confident. [Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

The majority of the academics at NewU (n=7) were conscious of the need, as they saw it, to ensure that their students had the opportunity to develop employability skills, and in some instances (n=4) believed that it was a primary purpose of their programmes. Both Peter and Karen at NewU, for example, readily identified the workplace skills that their students were being provided with the opportunities to develop.

We have a really huge employability focus, a massive careers focus, as we're a professionally accredited degree [...] we all work in a synchronised manner and so therefore by about this time in their first semester our first year students have got to grips after about 9 or 10 weeks of learning here with the idea that there's a purpose behind their enrolment on their degree in law at [NewU] and it's to get them a job in the legal sector, and that's what we're trying to help them with. We don't have much [student] dissatisfaction with the emphasis we put on careers and employability and the skills needed for legal professionals. [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]

To be honest, it's something I keep talking about as well, it's employability. As simple as having a deadline for a report, they come in asking for extensions and I'm like, "Well, if you're given a report on a Thursday and you're told to have it done for Monday morning you need to have it done?", so these are the types of things that we try to keep reminding them of and instil into them that you need to be professional at all times, you're developing skills, you're not only learning and expanding your knowledge, you're developing different skills as you progress through university. And I

think we're very focussed on that. All the revalidation as well, when we had new modules, every single programme I think is focussed on what skills we are giving students, yeah for the end result of getting a job. [...] I think the whole idea of being employable at the end of the day, it encompasses an awful lot of different skills, them being independent learners, developing practical skills, critical thinking, there's an array of skills there that they need to be key targets for employers. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

Karen identified the competitive market for student recruitment as a driver for the emphasis on employability skills:

If you listen to the ads from all the universities as to what they're about, it's all about well 80% of our graduates are in graduate employment within 12 months of leaving. I think it's because we're hitting a time when people are spending a lot of money and they want to get a return as quickly as possible, so you're telling them, "Look [...] come to [NewU], we give you practical skills, built on theory and what have you, and get you linked into industry, industry contacts, you have the chance to get work experience in the middle, make links with employers, bringing in external speakers to give them that extra bit of knowledge, help with CV building." So, yeah, I do think its employability. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

In their comments both Karen and Peter reflected the institutional prioritisation of employability skills at NewU, as outlined in the NewU (2013) mission statement.

However, Finlay from NewU was concerned that there was a tension between what

the university wished to provide, and the reality of the employment market that his students faced upon graduation. He obviously wanted his students to be successful and there was a sense of disappointment that perhaps NewU was giving its students unrealistic expectations.

I think there is also a large cohort within the university who see it as being all about employability, basically, and I think that's a bit of a thorny issue for us basically, because even though we are building a reputation about being all about good teaching and having very satisfied students, our employability statistics are quite horrific really. Most of them get jobs, but they don't get sort of graduate jobs of any great description. [...] It's frustrating to see students coming out of university and not getting anywhere and actually becoming quite depressed, last year's third years seem quite depressed because they are not getting anywhere. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

There was a clear divergence in the views of the academics at NewU and OldU in regard to the position of the employability agenda in the curriculum. Both sets of academics were asked for their views on the value of students studying for a degree and the skills they wanted to develop, and the majority of academics at NewU (n=7) identified developing employability skills, while in contrast employability was very low on the agenda of many of the academics at OldU. This divergence was closely reflected in the mission statements of the two institutions and raised a number of possibilities in regard to the academic identity of my academics: for example, that the academics at NewU were reflecting institutional priorities, either because they

strongly believed in them; because they did not have the opportunities to counteract these priorities; or because they realised that their students were at a disadvantage in the labour market due to the status of NewU.

The desire to develop critical thinking faculties in students

Despite the differences in attitude to teaching employability skills, there was a convergence between the academics at NewU and OldU in a desire to use their teaching to develop critical thinking faculties in their students. They perceived a contradiction between what government and their institutions wanted to promote as the primary purpose of education and what appeared to satisfy their academic values. The majority of the academics from both institutions were more comfortable with the concept of developing the critical thinking skills of students, which would enable them to be questioning, enlightened and rounded citizens upon graduation, than with developing their employability skills.

I want them to ask themselves the question primarily. I don't want them to be just blown along, I want them to stop and think for themselves. [...] I just want them to think for themselves. What I mean by that is when they leave and someone says, "Vote X", or they say, "Choose this religion", or they say, "Relationships of this type are wrong," I want them to go, "Well, actually let's think about what the reasons are." I think that will make individuals and society better, because you are making critical people, I don't necessarily mean politically, but I mean thinking and rationalising and I think that is primarily what I want out of it. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

I kind of want them to become critical, to become critical thinkers basically, because as a subject I think that history teaches them not to take things at face value, basically, not to buy the story that you are told, and I think that's the main thing that I want them to take away, to be able to recognise when they are being mis-sold stuff, and to be able to respond to that and to criticise it within reason. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

I want them to think about the importance of paying attention to detail, of thinking about what the text might mean in a number of ways, so that sense of being able to read a newspaper article and think what are actually this isn't fact, and in some ways trying to think, trying to imagine a different mind set.[...] that sense of imagining yourself into the mind set of someone who has faith, the mind set of someone who can imagine an entirely different world and the real changes that sense of being able to imagine how someone else might think, and the sense that you might be moved to violence because someone has insulted your faith, or that your value system might not actually be the Western value system, and that is perfectly okay. [Jenny OldU, English, November 2013]

In addition to enabling the students to critically engage with the world around them, several of the academics from both institutions identified a correlation between critical thinking skills and the potential for success in the workplace.

Obviously the transferable skills you know, we want them to be able to do good presentations, we want them to be able to organise their time, we want

independent critical thinkers, and we do want them to be useful to employers
[...] Not spoon feed, it is all about giving them that independence, giving
them the tools to equip them to be independent critical thinkers and to be able
to organise their time and be confident. [Sylvia OldU, Sociology, July 2013]

It brings a sense of the critically engaged populace such that we can make
better democratic decisions. So, we are better at testing out the truth and
getting away from dogma in everything, to see that sometimes we should
question things, reflect on it and own your own ideas. I think all subjects
should do that. I think a university education should be that, should be
developing that criticality. You know when you are building a bridge, in
engineering, sort of stepping back [...], and that's what the university brings,
values and installs [...] I think that criticality is about flourishing in lots of
areas, so making the most out of relationships, making the most out of your
life. [Richard OldU, Business, December 2012]

They get challenged [in seminars] which they don't particularly in lectures
[...] the most important thing is to understand actually people don't agree
with you, when you would thought it was obvious, then someone argues the
opposite in a very convincing way then that's a really powerful lesson
because in the future as well they could be in meetings, or whatever when the
person next to them or their boss is going to disagree with them, so you can
throw your toys out of the pram or try and understand and reason and argue.
[Jean NewU, Business, January 2013]

I suppose it is about developing and communicating the knowledge, and hopefully knowledge that has value in terms of going ahead for business but also for the wider society, and it's to do with an opportunity for people to mature in a certain environment and become useful in the workplace, I think that's it. [...] I still strongly believe in the value of people going into university for that life thing. [Nick OldU, Business, May 2013]

We have to get across them, in law in particular, that there is no right answer here, there is no formula here that you can apply, the law isn't certain, it is fluidity, is flexible, there is no point in us coaching them towards passing an exam, because as they go into practice the first morning they will be forced into areas of law that they have never even studied before, and [...] even if they're working in an area with which they are familiar there is a good chance at some stage though it could change, and they have to be able to deal with that change. They can't ring up a lecturer and say, "Can you talk me you through what's happened last six months?" and so on, they have to be equipped to deal with themselves and I think my focus is on getting them to do that. I am trying to get them to focus on generic critical skills that then have to be applied. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

The desire to develop critical thinking skills was almost universal amongst the academics from both institutions. It was notable that the academics also believed that they had the freedom to deliver these skills in the classroom. However, Ben from NewU was a lone voice in arguing that his institution, because it prioritised the

employability agenda, was putting barriers in the way of academics developing critical thinking skills in their students:

I would prefer that we would focus on developing critical skills and developing engagement with sociological theories and how that fits in the world in practice and so on, but increasingly our practice is orientated towards employability [...] there is an emphasis on training the next generation of workers, where I would much rather prefer that we encourage critical thinking skills, engagement with politics, engagement with philosophy, that they came to [NewU] to do sociology in order to do sociology, not to work for free in various jobs in the outside world [...] So yeah, we're training the next generation of docile workers rather than encouraging critical thinking skills at the moment. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

With the exception of Ben, the academics from both institutions had developed positive narratives of the value that they brought to the educational experience through the development of critical thinking skills in their students. This demonstrated for them the value of the academic role because through their work they were able to transform students into engaged citizens, giving them the critical skills that would enable them to make better life choices, for the benefit of the individual student and for the wider society. This also highlighted that they were able to demonstrate agency because they were able to either openly contradict, or to make their own interpretation of how to deliver the government and institutional employability agendas. They were able to realise this through control over what was

delivered in the classroom and hence were able to demonstrate that they had control over authoritative resources within their universities.

Summary: Pedagogical framing

The academics at both institutions demonstrated both divergences and convergences in regard to their perceptions of their control over pedagogical approaches to the curriculum. There was a clear divergence about the position of the employability agenda in the curriculum, which reflected the different mission statements of the two institutions, with the academics at NewU recognising a need to develop employability skills in their students, while employability was a low priority for the academics at OldU. Where there was a convergence between the academics at NewU and OldU was in a desire to use their teaching to develop critical thinking faculties in their students. There was a contradiction here between what government and the institutions wanted to promote as the primary purpose of education and what appeared to satisfy the values and beliefs of the academics that I interviewed. Nevertheless, the majority of the academics from both institutions desired to develop the critical thinking skills of students, with the primary aim of giving them critical skills which would enable them to be questioning, enlightened and rounded citizens. Many also reported that the development of critical thinking skills would have great benefits for the students in the workplace, albeit that it was not recognised in official discourses, particularly mission statements or marketing material, as an 'employability skill'.

The measurement and surveillance of teaching practice

The literature reviewed in chapter two outlined how commentators have raised concerns that the performative agenda has led to the introduction of various mechanisms which have resulted in the measurement and surveillance of teaching. For Giddens surveillance is the, “co-ordination of information and the direct supervision of some individuals or groups by others, [and] is the prime generator of administrative power in modern societies.” (Giddens, 1995, pxvii). For Giddens surveillance is a combination of two connected phenomena which give rise to administrative power over individuals: firstly, the accumulation and storing of information by groups or organisations, and secondly, the supervision of subordinates within these groups or organisations. We can see within the higher education sector how information gathering on academic activities pervades into every aspect of academic practice, with the measurement of teaching through mechanisms such as internal teaching observation and the externally operated National Student Survey.

The use of these surveillance mechanisms has been legitimised by successive government reports and white papers, which have identified a correlation between the marketisation of higher education and the need to be transparent about the provision that is provided by institutions. The importance of transparency in how higher education operated was a key recommendation of Dearing (1997), who stated that if students were to pay fees then the sector had to be more transparent about what it offered. Successive governments have reinforced this message, with the 2003 White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003) and the 2011 White Paper *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011) arguing

that transparency of information provided by institutions about the provision they offered would help inform student choice. However, it was clear that several of the academics at both universities (NewU=7, OldU=4) felt that the pressure to be transparent about teaching had resulted in the intrusive monitoring and surveillance of academic practice. Kay from NewU, for example, listed a range of internal mechanisms which she considered were designed to monitor and control the teaching element of academic practice.

There is no doubt about the control side. [...] we now have module reports, and not only at the end of the module but we now have to get feedback from students and evidence that feedback, probably on a weekly or fortnightly basis, about how we're going up, and we have module reports, second marking reports, you can put nothing through an exam board has not been cleared by an external examiner.[...] We have [*academic workload planners*], so for each member of staff we have to calculate how many hours they are doing teaching, for research, for additional duties, so that that every member of staff is supposed to cover 1600 hours, the fact that you are not allowed to go to the loo in there is quite amazing. We've also got surveillance in terms of the students if they don't like something can go over the module leaders head, over the subject managers head straight to the assistant deans and deans to make complaints quite easily, there is surveillance in some staff who are on courses and if they don't like anything they will tell so and so they don't like it. [Kay NewU, Business, February 2013]

The observation of teaching sessions was a common cause for concern for many of the academics at NewU. Observation of teaching can be used for two main purposes: development or performance management (Peel, 2005), but Ken from NewU shared the concerns of several of the NewU academics that although it was being presented as a developmental process, in reality it was being used a performance management tool.

We have [*lesson observation*], where somebody comes into the class, sits in and makes notes, and I think the university is actually going to get much more involved and directive about that next semester. But I don't really know how that will work, and I think that having people from other subjects coming to [English] could be a terrible clash of culture or it could be really exciting. We're always told its going to be really exciting and it always results in a dreadful clash of cultures. [...] We would like to think that it's just a nice way of us observing each other and swapping good practice, but we always suspect, because there's a written report that has to be monitored, that this actually contributes towards big brother. [...] and there will be an element of bonus involved, I'm sure, how can it not be. [Ken NewU, English, December 2012]

Staff can feel threatened by the observation of their teaching by their peers as it can be perceived to undermine trust and support amongst colleagues if they are required to sit in judgement on each other (Cosh, 2006). One concern is that observers may not objective (Lomas and Nicholls, 2005), and this was a concern of Jean from

NewU who was concerned that her methods of teaching may not be acceptable to all colleagues.

We have a [*lesson observation*] process, and I think there are some flaws in the [*lesson observation*] process in this university because you get a bit of a cultural ego, and I get good results depending on who does it and whether they have preferences for being heavily academic or practical. I tend to get towards the practical, I can do the academic stuff, I do the academic stuff, but I'm not really the most academic, so if there is someone who is really academic who is reviewing me I may get criticised. [Jean NewU, Business, January 2013]

The academics at OldU were not subject to a continual process of lesson observation, but they did perceive a pressure to perform well in certain measures. Judith from OldU, for example, cited the pressures on the department to have good student outcomes:

Certainly there is pressure, for example, to achieve results in terms of the number of classifications at 2:1 and 1st standard that are at least similar institutions, and the question is how do we do that, and I think we have managed to do it without dumbing down. I think that is something that we are actually very keen on here, employers are very savvy and will figure out whether a student for a particular institution has had an easy ride, so that a 2:1 from that institution is probably comparable to 2:2 from an institution where the ride is a little bit more rocky and a little bit more in-depth and they will

certainly make a judgement call themselves, so we could very, very easily dumb down to be more generous marking, we could teach less competent bits of the subject, but in the law school anyway there has been a choice not to do that. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013].

Martin from OldU discussed the pressure his colleagues sometimes felt under, particularly in regard being seen to perform well in student evaluations. However, he also suggested that some staff over-exaggerated the pressure.

There are pressures, people do feel pressure [...]. the pressure comes from Teaching and Learning Board, the PVC, and that gets trickled down and people at the water cooler make it sound worse than it actually is and all that stuff, and people feel pressure in meetings when they get an email with a memorandum or summary about what is good that has to be done by yesterday. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

Mark from OldU reported that his style of teaching was affected by the presence of student evaluation of teaching. He reported that he would prefer not to use Microsoft PowerPoint to present visual prompts in his teaching, but he believed that his students expected that all teaching would be supported by PowerPoint. He was sufficiently concerned about potentially negative student feedback in module evaluations that he felt 'obliged' to use PowerPoint, even though he would prefer not to and did not think that it improved the quality of the lectures. Mark's response to concerns about a negative student evaluation highlighted the power and influence that students, either directly or indirectly, can have over academic practice. Similarly,

Ken from NewU reported how some of his students preferred to mess around in class rather than study. He believed this was a strange attitude to take for students who were paying for the experience, but he was reluctant to point this out to them, partly because he didn't want to create a bad atmosphere: "Why would you pay a fee and then waste the money? But I'm reluctant to put this to them in quite such blunt terms because I know that would make them very angry. Not with themselves, but with me for pointing it out." [Ken NewU , English, December 2012]

The perceptions of the academics considered in this section has demonstrated that academics at both universities felt that externally imposed pressure to be transparent about teaching had resulted in what they believed to be the intrusive monitoring and surveillance of teaching. The monitoring mechanisms had varied at each institution, with the academics at NewU all being subject to compulsory peer observation of teaching, while OldU did not have a peer observation process in place. However, academics at both institutions reported common concerns about how these surveillance mechanisms were driving them to be 'safe' and to teach in ways that would be likely to result in positive evaluations (either by students or peers). This suggested that their agency was being constrained by the surveillance and measurement mechanisms and that their authoritative power over the teaching element of their role was being challenged. One driver behind these internal mechanisms was an institutional desire to perform well in externally operated mechanisms, in particular the National Student Survey, as will be discussed in the next section.

The National Student Survey (NSS)

The NSS is an annual survey of final year undergraduate students at all publicly funded UK HEIs, and has been conducted annually since 2005 by Ipsos Mori on behalf of the UK higher education funding bodies. It asks students to feedback in their experiences of studying on their course, with the intention that it will benefit current students, providing institutions with feedback to be acted upon, and will benefit prospective students, as it can be used to make informed decisions about where and what to study. The NSS web portal describes it as, “An influential source of public information about higher education which gives students a powerful collective voice to help shape the future of their course and their university or college.” (NSS, 2014).

The NSS is highly influential in league table positions of institutions and subjects, and as a consequence Kay from NewU felt that senior management had developed the monitoring and surveillance mechanisms discussed in the section above with one aim in mind: “An outstanding student experience linked to the NSS” [Kay NewU, Business, February 2013]. The NSS was cited by all the academics at both NewU and OldU as a key externally imposed surveillance instrument which had affected academic practice, with many of them believing that the primary reason why their institutions sought to perform well in the NSS was to present a good image of teaching for external league table performance, rather than to develop good teaching practice *per se*:

The NSS is one such example where it is about measuring teaching and not about teaching itself. So it is about presenting a good view of teaching, but not really about the actual practice. [Norma NewU, English, April 2012]

I am very cynical about the NSS, partly because methodologically I think it is very weak. You hear about institutions trying to get the students to give good responses, which we know is game playing, and the response is very subjective but for some reason it seems to be very important and as an academic on the receiving end if a subject gets a particularly bad score then that is a big pressure and you are told you need to do something about it. The league tables are the drivers and in terms of marketing is a way of saying that the university is doing well. [David OldU, Business, May 2013]

The NSS [...] seems to be more about the appearance of being a good teacher than actually being a good teacher, so there's a lot of emphasis from management on, you know, ensure that this survey is completed, ensure that you give them a certain percentage of your time. In the module handbooks we've got to make it appear as though we're doing really good teaching for the official documentation and all of the boxes that we've got to tick to send to quality assurance. There's a lot of emphasis on getting all of that perfect, while what actually happens in the classroom seems to almost not matter. [...]

It's not actually measuring the quality of the product that is being delivered. It's like marketing, ensuring the course is marketed properly rather than making sure that teaching occurs to the best quality. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

We get pushed on the NSS [...] And the way that they [the university] would like us to teach. [...] So there are problematic areas about how we teach and how we are being asked to teach which then affect the way that the subject is being delivered and the student experience. [Jenny OldU, English, May 2013]

I think there are extra burdens if I'm to be honest. In the sense that we are becoming a little reactive, so there is the National Student Survey and last year we did very, very well and this year we didn't do as well, and that requires a response and it's not good enough to say that they just didn't like us as much, which I think is probably the case. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

The academics perceived that the primary driver behind the pressure that their institutions were putting on them to perform well in the NSS was for reputation and prestige, supporting the literature (Bowden, 2000; Dill and Soo, 2005; Marginson, 2013) which argues that institutions seek good NSS scores because league table position has an important influence over student choice about where to study. It has been argued that the desire to attain high league table performance has caught universities in a 'status-incentive trap', where the desire for status is primary (Olssen and Peters, 2005; Marginson, 2011). The institutional desire for a good NSS performance has manifested itself in pressure to 'perform' in the classroom, but as Jenny from OldU commented above, several academics believed that it had resulted in academics being pressurised by their institutions to alter the way that they taught.

Ken from NewU was particularly negative in this respect, perceiving this as a mechanism through which the university management could control academics:

It's a wonderful stick for university management to beat up teachers with.

That's all. The survey itself is so poor as a survey, and so open to abuse by students that really I can't see the use of it except as a stick for management to beat up the staff with. [Ken NewU, English, December 2012]

Ken's negative attitude could partly be explained by his frustration with how he believed the survey wasn't accurately reflecting the experience that he was delivering to students. Ken was also frustrated because he felt that he was providing students with the support that he was told students needed, but it wasn't clear to him whether the students either wanted or needed it, or that they were reliable witnesses when completing the NSS. As an example, he cited how he believed that he provided students with good contact time and detailed feedback, but this wasn't acknowledged by students:

We do a module questionnaire which comes back for every module and the odd thing is, and I do find this bizarre, you're sat in a classroom when they're doing the questionnaires and you call out individual students and you're doing a mini tutorial with them, preparation for hand in, "Have you got this? Have you prepared that? Have you looked at the style sheet? Do you have this piece of work? Have you got the supporting evidence? Have you checked how to do the footnotes? Have you given me a bibliography?", and you're going through this and one of the questions is, "Did you have enough access

to the teacher?” and the answer comes back, “No, there were no tutorials.”

And you’re sat there doing tutorials for every single person in the class, and you think, “What does this mean?” [Ken NewU, English, December 2012]

While Ken reported that NewU sought to deliver good NSS scores through the threat of punishment, there were examples of positive rewards associated with the NSS. At NewU both Sarah and Finlay cited how those in departments with good NSS scores were financially rewarded by their institution. In Sarah’s case, the Department was using the award to ‘enhance’ the student experience.

We’ve been given a lump of money [for doing well in the NSS], so we’re taking our third years this year down to London so that they can go to archives to do research, because we thought well actually that probably is the kind of thing they want more than anything because they find getting down to London a bit costly, and also it’s our way of encouraging them to do better independent study work as well, because one of the things that we ask them to do as far as possible is primary source research. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

However, Finlay felt that the support provided by NewU was fickle and could easily change.

I think if we did slightly less well in one or two things, if we dropped in the league tables we’d have slightly less of a reputation within the university and

then I think that would go very quickly and we'd be suddenly seen as very dispensable. [Finlay NewU, History, December 2012]

The academics perceived the NSS as a powerful mechanism that influenced their work practice and the relationship both between the academics and their institutions, and between the academics and the students. Several saw this as a highly negative relationship as the academics were losing power and agency over the teaching role, while both institutions and students were able to exercise authoritative power, using the NSS as a mechanism by which to affect teaching practice. From the point of view of many academics the NSS was something that was imposed on them by government and they were under pressure from their institutions to perform well. They were also at the mercy of students marking their performance, sometimes to the consternation of academics such as Ken from NewU who believed they were delivering the classroom experience demanded by the institution and students, but found to that this wasn't reflected in positive NSS scores.

While the predominant attitude of the academics to the NSS was negative, and as argued above they appeared to have little incentive to embrace it, there were a few voices who were supportive of the changes it had brought about. Sarah and Finlay from NewU had identified the financial reward to their Department which they had appreciated because they believed it had made a positive impact on the educational experience, and Martin from OldU believed that a key benefit of the NSS had resulted in a noticeable, and positive, change in staff attitudes towards teaching.

Well I've seen a notable shift in the culture in the Department in terms of the priority of teaching in recent years [...] Perhaps six years ago if I mentioned teaching and stuff they wouldn't shout me down, they would be absolutely fine, but perhaps it wouldn't be as taken that central stage. But I think people are a lot more willing to listen and talk about teaching ideas, absolutely.

Interviewer: So what has changed them?

I think, I think the prominence of the NSS, and the fees, and I think those things have shone a light on teaching and that is really valuable I think. And while they are not discussing it primarily because of getting better results, they use it as a sort of catalyst, but it's not that it is purely a means to an end, it is these things, "Oh gosh yes, we've sort of forgotten about the students and teaching people, so let's sort of think about what teaching is and why we do it and what is important, and different teaching methods." [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

Unusually, for Martin, a positive effect of the NSS was that teaching in itself was becoming a focus of attention, which for a research intensive institution such as OldU was challenging preconceived notions about the priorities of academic practice. In this respect it could be argued that the NSS is democratising the academic workplace, raising the status of teaching and providing a voice to students.

The direction of academic labour: contact hours

One of the key reforms to the sector introduced following the Coalition Government's 2011 White Paper *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS 2011) was the introduction of the Key Information Set (KIS). The KIS is a set of information about every undergraduate degree course at every UK institution. It was intended that this would provide potential students with an informative range of indicators about courses which would enable them to make 'market choices' when deciding on where to study. The information provided for each course includes costs of study and accommodation, NSS scores, graduate prospects, course content, types of assessment and the proportion of time a typical student spends in private study and in the classroom. Of particular concern for the government was that the UK higher education sector appeared to be providing less academic 'contact' time for students than European Counterparts: in 2009 the average UK undergraduate received 30 hours of lectures or tutorials per week, compared with 42 hours in France and 36 hours in Germany (Paton, 2011). It was perceived by David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, that more contact was a mark of a better quality of education and he argued that in order to get 'value for money' following the raising of tuition fees then contact time should rise (Paton, 2011). Academics at both NewU and OldU had commented on how their institutions had raised the minimum contact hours on all courses, with courses in the arts and humanities being most effected, as courses in STEM subjects typically provided greater contact hours due to the lab-based nature of the disciplines. Sarah from NewU identified how her university had increased contact hours on all its courses, raising them from 8 to 12 hours a week since she had started employment there. She

indicated that this had been a burden and that the academics had been required to add additional teaching hours to the curriculum.

The way that it has happened is that there aren't many more modules, in fact there are actually less modules than there used to be, there's just more teaching time for those modules, so in some senses it's not as much, it's much easier to teach two four-hours a week than three two-hours a week, just in terms of different, having to think about preparation and all those types of things, so sort of a shift in that sense, but yes, for some subjects and some topics it is quite a burden. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

How to use the additional teaching time was a matter for course teams to decide, and Sarah noted that, although the increase was in perceived response to student demand, the students did not notice the additional contact hours, and if anything found them too much.

We discussed that in our programme teams and the manager part of me was sort of thinking about what are the different ways you can do this, thinking you don't want to be talking at them for four hours, four hour lectures would be deadly, and also thinking about how we can make the teaching more innovative and those types of things as well. [...] Interestingly the student response is that they haven't noticed, and that's really interesting, they say they are just lectures, we used to come and it was three hours and now its four hours. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

Similar experiences and concerns were raised by the academics at OldU. Zoe, for example, felt that the increase in contact hours was in response to perceived rather than actual student demand. She interpreted it as a 'top-down' imposition which was intended to enhance the quality of provision, but in practice she believed it to have negatively impacted on the quality of provision:

Certainly things like contact hours, we weren't aware that there was such a big issue with students but it's coming from the centre [that] students really want quality and I feel that when you get this sort of centralised reform, you know like you have to give so many contact hours, it has forced us to ditch some very valuable teaching. So, for example, the module on exploring historiography [where students each had an hour's one-to-one supervision], which was a second-year module, the students really enjoyed that and we think that pedagogically it is excellent because it really made them engage with the core of our discipline, but because we have got to find seminar teaching hours, and one-to-one supervision is [...] if you look at it purely in the terms of bean counting, not good value of an academic's time because students are only getting one hour tuition each [...] so we've ditched that and we are putting on taught modules, so I think that pedagogically we were moving towards students taking responsibility [...] [we expect our students] to go away and have to spend hours and hours in the library, and we are finding that with the increased hours, already first and second year students are coming to us and saying we don't have time now, you know they've got to attend all these lecturers, and they can't find time [...] that's one reform that I really dislike and I think that, I don't think that's come from the

students, when they talk about contact time what they are really talking about is quality of contact time, and all the time that we are teaching more and more formally that means that there is less time to see students individually and it just puts pressures elsewhere. [Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

Sylvia at OldU indicated that the need to meet the university imposed contact hour requirements had created resentment within her department towards their institution and, in a similar sentiment to Zoe, felt it was not in the best interests of students.

We feel that there is a real conflict between the centre and the discipline [...] given the timings which have been imposed, like 10 hours in the second year, when we have three modules of three hours each, so where are you going to find that? And this has been a huge headache. [...] so we spent hours and hours in meetings trying to find this extra hour and now we've got this ridiculous situation where it's sort of tagged on our second year lectures, it's a sort of odd thing that is tagged on and that is peculiarly bureaucratic, it has got nothing to do with rationale, with pedagogy, it is completely arbitrary and it doesn't fit, this has caused a lot of resentment. One of the most cost effective ways of producing these hours is lectures, but we can't get them to turn up. Can't get them to turn up to lectures at the best of times, let alone putting extra on, and they are not stupid. They want quality rather than quantity, they are quite discerning about what is quality. [Sylvia OldU, Sociology, July 2013]

Nick from OldU shared Sylvia's concerns that the increase in contact hours was not in response to student demand, citing as evidence the fact that students were not turning up for the lectures: "The other big thing happening is the increase in teaching hours for the old KIS data stuff I think. Whether that is a good idea is highly debatable thing because students don't come to lectures anyway" [Nick OldU, Business, July 2013].

At both OldU and NewU the academics had come under pressure from their university to teach in certain ways in response to perceived student demand, predominantly so that contact hours could be counted, and the academics felt this was damaging to the quality of education. There was a contradiction here between academics being told to work in a certain way because it was seen by the government and the university as what students wanted, and what the academics believed was in the best interests of the students' education. The academics thought that what students actually wanted was a good quality of contact, not contact *per se*, and while research has indicated a link between very low levels of scheduled teaching and high levels of dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching (Bekhradnia, Whitball and Sastry, 2006), the link between high contact hours and quality of teaching is much less certain. For example, Ramsden (2011) criticised the Coalition Government for linking contact time to the quality of provision and for expecting that students who pay higher fees would expect and benefit from more contact time. Gibbs (2010) also identified contact time with academics as just one component of a high quality learning experience, and in a view that would appear to mirror the concerns of the academics in my study, he argued that contact time in itself was a poor indicator of quality, of greater relevance was how that contact time was delivered.

Summary: measurement and surveillance

The perceptions of the academics considered in this section have demonstrated that at both universities they believed that their freedom and agency in the classroom was being constrained by monitoring and surveillance mechanisms. The externally imposed NSS was seen as a key driver, with both institutions directing academic labour in order to receive positive evaluations and hence to ensure positive positions in the 'marketplace'. A concern of the academics was that it was having the effect of 'regularising' the teaching experience and that academics were 'playing safe' as they were afraid of the potential negative impact on student satisfaction of challenging students and experimenting in classroom delivery. The push to increase contact hours was a direct result of the intervention of the Coalition Government as it promoted the marketisation of higher education. The academics believed that although an increase in contact hours would not necessarily improve the educational experience, they were powerless to prevent an increase in teaching hours.

The academics perceived the NSS to be a powerful mechanism that influenced their work practice, influenced the relationship between the academics and their institutions, and influenced the relationship between the academics and the students. Through the mechanism of the NSS the institutions and the students were predominantly exercising power over authoritative resources (Giddens, 1994) to influence academic behaviour. They also exercised power over allocative resources (Giddens, 1994), either directly through financial reward for good performance, such as at NewU, or indirectly through the influence of the NSS on league table positions and hence on student recruitment. If we consider the three-way relationship between

the academics, the students and the institutions, it appears that the student is most powerful in regard to the NSS. The academics appear to be the least powerful partner, exercising little or no agency over allocative or authoritative resources.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been the reproduction of the discipline through the teaching process. The intention has been to develop an understanding of the underlying values and priorities associated with teaching that form part of academic identity and to examine the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation associated with teaching. Three themes have emerged through the narratives provided by the academics as they have reflected on the position of teaching in their academic identity:

A narrative of the fittingness of the teaching role

It was noticeable that although NewU and OldU are very different institutions, there were many clear convergences in the values and experiences of the academics at both institutions in regard to teaching. Both groups of academics reported a 'fittingness' of the teaching role for them and how they gained personal satisfaction and reward from teaching as they were able to positively engage with students and were able to foster and develop student enthusiasm for their discipline.

A narrative of surveillance and agency

There was also a convergence in the perceptions of both sets of academics in their beliefs about the negative impact of performative mechanisms of surveillance and measurement on their teaching identity. The academics at both universities believed

that their freedom and agency in the classroom was being constrained by surveillance and measurement, which included mechanisms such as the NSS and the Coalition Government's drive to increase contact hours between academics and students. The academics were concerned that this was altering their pedagogic behaviour as they were driven to 'play safe' in the classroom out of fear of upsetting perceived (real or imagined) student expectations. A consequence of these mechanisms was that the academics believed that their freedom and power over allocative and authoritative resources was being curtailed, with power transferring to their institutions and to students. However, as Giddens (1984) reminds us, the individual always has the option to act otherwise and this was demonstrated in the desire of the majority of the academics from both institutions to develop the critical thinking skills of students, with the primary aim of enabling them to become enlightened and rounded citizens. This suggests that while some of the academic influence and power has been subjugated by externally imposed mechanisms of surveillance and measurement, they are still able to exercise some authoritative power over curriculum content within their institutions.

A narrative of an environmentally sensitive teacher identity

Where there was divergence between the two groups of academics was in their engagement with the 'employability' agenda, which in part may have reflected the different missions of the institutions. Many of the academics at NewU articulated a need to develop employability skills within their students, while in contrast employability was not a priority for the academics at OldU. There was also divergence in the proportion of time that the academics were expected to dedicate to teaching activity, with the academics at the teaching-intensive NewU spending a

greater proportion of their time in the classroom. It was particularly noticeable that many of the academics at NewU referred to themselves as teachers, demonstrating the prominence of the teaching role in their academic identity.

The findings in this chapter have corroborated the premise identified in chapter four, and further developed in chapter five, that there is a common academic identity which is shared by the academics, regardless of their place of employment. In this chapter it was highlighted how both groups shared a similar narrative of the fittingness of the teaching role, but also of the perceived negative impact of mechanisms of surveillance and measurement. In chapter five I identified the resilience of traditional conceptions of academic authority in the face of performativity and marketisation, and in this chapter I have identified further resilience of traditional academic values in respect to the purposes of higher education. While both groups related a common narrative of the negative impact of the performative mechanisms of surveillance and measurement of teaching on their identity, perceiving it as constraining and directing teaching practice and content, they also demonstrated resistance. Within this environment they were able to exercise agency and satisfy their desire to develop the critical thinking capacities of their students, in resistance to the pressures from government and their institutions to focus on employability skills. However, teaching identity was also sensitive to environmental factors and, as in chapter five, this did not manifest itself as a totally negative reaction. In chapter five some of the academics at NewU had adopted the consumer discourse, suggesting that while it is perceived to challenge academic identity, an academic identity can be sustained alongside the consumer discourse. In a similar manner, in this chapter several of the academics at NewU appeared to

embrace the employability agenda, suggesting that once again a traditional academic identity can coexist alongside a discourse which is seen by some academics as a threat to academic identity.

Chapter 7: Constructing and Reconstructing the Discipline Through Research

Introduction

In the previous chapters I identified a common academic identity, but one which was in some circumstances environmentally sensitive. This sensitivity was not totally negative, suggesting that traditional and performative narratives of academic identity can coexist. In this chapter I examine how the discipline is constructed through the research process with the aim, as in the previous chapters, of developing an understanding of the factors that constitute academic identity and our understanding of the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity.

The undertaking of research is a core academic activity that helps to distinguish higher education from other levels of education and, like identity formation, it is not a static entity: it is an ongoing process and thereby serves to construct and reconstruct the discipline within which the academic resides. In this chapter I consider the role and importance of research in the identities of the academics: reflecting on the values that they assign to research, and the constraints and enablers within their work environment. My research into this element of academic practice revealed a wide disparity between the experiences of the academics at the two institutions, which reflected the contrasting missions of the two institutions: all the academics at the research intensive OldU were practising researchers, whereas few of the academics at the teaching intensive NewU were actively engaged in research. In this chapter I therefore examine separately the research environment at both

institutions, looking at the drivers and rewards for research, the opportunities and restrictions, and the relationship between teaching and research.

Research at OldU and NewU

Research is often the way into an academic career, with many academics making a progression from research student or research assistant into an academic career, and it is a way of building a reputation and enhancing one's career in academia (Blaxter et al., 1998). Table 3 demonstrates how a PhD was the highest level of qualification for the majority of the academics at OldU (n=9) and half of the academics at NewU (n=5). The remaining five academics at NewU had masters degrees as their highest level of qualification, with two of those five engaged in the process of undertaking PhDs while in full time employment at NewU . The PhD thesis can play a key role in forming the tentative scholarly identity of the aspirational academic, during which they negotiate their way around the field and effect a transition from student to scholar, creating a position for themselves in regard to established practices. It is argued that for many, the step to publish out of a PhD is a move to another level of academic identity formation as this is a move to try and establish a public position for themselves within the wider academic community (Kamler and Thompson, 2007). However, only one academic at each institution, Douglas [OldU] and Ben [NewU], had successfully published before they had finished their PhDs.

My inquiry into the research element of the work of my participants revealed a wide disparity between the experiences of the academics at the two institutions, which reflected the contrasting missions and the contrasting research outputs of the two institutions. The outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF)

highlighted a large difference in the research profiles of the two institutions: in the overall ‘table of excellence’, OldU is in the top 30 institutions, while NewU is in the bottom 30 institutions (Jump, 2014).

At the time of the interviews, all ten of the academics at the research intensive OldU were practising researchers, applying for research funding and publishing papers and books. As detailed in Table 3, the teaching loads of the academics at OldU were at least half of the teaching loads of the academics at NewU and they were expected to dedicate a significant amount of time to research activity. Three of the academics at OldU had been on six month or one year sabbaticals within the last five years. In contrast, the engagement in research at the teaching intensive NewU was much less with only two actively engaged in applying for funding and publishing, three not actively researching, and five ‘striving’ to research, but encountering barriers, as will be explored further below. In light of the different levels of engagement with research at each institution, I have considered the drivers and pressures on the two different groups of academics separately below.

The research environment at OldU

Institutional context is highly influential over an individual’s ability to engage with research and build a research identity. Elen et al. (2007) highlight how many academics at research-intensive universities, such as OldU, regard teaching as important, but that many predominantly value research more highly, and this stance was corroborated by the academics at OldU. Of key importance for Elen et al. (2007) was that research values are, on the whole, supported by their institution. This was certainly true for the academics at OldU, with its mission statement asserting that,

“All academic staff [...] should be able to follow their academic interests in order to engage in research [...] of the highest quality.”, and claiming that it provided researchers with, “The best opportunity to make a significant global impact”. Institutions such as OldU are therefore potentially able to provide opportunities for the academics to sustain and enhance their self-esteem and public research identity (Henkel, 2000).

For the majority of the academics at OldU (n=9) the PhD was their highest level of academic qualification. All of those nine had either completed, or were close to completing their PhD, upon appointment to their first permanent academic job. Although asked to reflect on the PhD process, the academics did not discuss in any great detail the experiences of conducting the PhD itself and preferred to discuss the content of the PhD and to provide a timeline narrative, thereby positioning the PhD as a qualification studied for and gained, at a specific point in the narrative of developing an academic identity. Several of the academics at OldU (n=4) mentioned their PhD supervisor by name, which may have been because they were influential either personally or because they were an influential person in their field, they also reflected on the subject matter of their PhD and on their initial engagement with the academic role during studying for their PhD, such as the experience of teaching for the first time. However, some of the academics at OldU (n=3) indicated that the research undertaken in their PhD was still ‘live’ and was being further researched and developed. Jenny, for example, reported that although she had completed her PhD ten years previously she had recently received funding to develop research undertaken in her thesis, which she was looking forward to: “I’ve got a project I need to finish, so I’ve got to go back and rework bits of my thesis and

rework bits of my understanding, so that I'm quite excited about" [Jenny OldU, English, May 2013].

Several of the academics at OldU (n=5) reflected that, although they gained a research qualification and research experience in their PhD, the most significant part of their research apprenticeship and their development as an authentic researcher happened once they were in their first academic positions. It was at this stage that they were inducted into the 'rules' of conducting research by their colleagues, with informal advice imparted on areas of research that should be focussed on and how they should publish in order to gain authenticity and a reputation as a researcher. Judith cited the expectation that an academic at OldU would publish in quality journals and be "REF returnable" as an accepted rule: "We know from the outset that it is publish or die in this respect" [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]. Similarly, Douglas reported that there was an expectation when he started his first academic role that he would publish, and that the best advice he received was informal, such as strategies on how to publish his research.

The assumption was that you would have a research strategy and again I remember informally being taken down for coffee to talk about what you might think to do, and actually now you are asking me I was given advice, good advice actually by various members of staff that you might want to think about doing this edited collection as a way of bouncing out of your Ph.D., getting your Ph.D. published and so on. [...] And I don't think I was given any particular advice about what I should focus on other than, you know, "Get your book out". [Douglas OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

The guidance that Douglas received was on how to publish, not what to publish, and this was an experience shared by Judith:

Absolutely not, no. I don't think anybody is [told what to research]. We may have mentors, particularly the early years researchers, so for example I will have suggestions to one of my research teams who is now working here, and certainly I would have suggestions about what she might want to look at, but you don't say, "Go off and look at X or Y or whatever." [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

For Douglas and Judith, one of the 'rules' of research in OldU appeared to be that researchers would have autonomy over the direction of their research. The process of mentoring and guidance described by Judith could be interpreted as a process of reproducing the unwritten rules of research, passing on the advice she had once received to her less established colleagues, thereby demonstrating the duality of structure and agency.

The academics at OldU had all published from their research, and continued to research and publish. Research was, according to Richard [OldU, Business, December 2012], "Something that we all do." The institutional rewards and benefits from being a successful researcher will be considered shortly, but the academics also reflected on less tangible rewards from engaging in research. Several of the academics from OldU (n=5) focussed on personal fulfilment. Judith for example, enjoyed the never ending quest for knowledge. The reward, she said, was from:

Learning stuff. And it's great, it's never ending, and I love it because you never know what you're going to find [...] hopefully you will produce the paper and the research will give rise to as many questions as you have answered and you are off on the next one. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

When asked whether the endpoint was to satisfy her own curiosity or to try to change people's attitudes, she focussed on the ability to contribute to the debate.

I have no real desire to change the law *per se*. As it stands, there are bits that I don't think work but I would have to investigate further why that is so I don't have a mission to rewrite law or anything like that [...] I might not actually want to change anything but maybe to make some amendments to procedures and so on, so I have no great mission to make a difference as it were, but I do like to be able to contribute to a debate that may arise in an area in which I am interested. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

Several of the academics at OldU (n=5) also identified the external links that they had established from their research and the rewards they gained from them. Jenny, for example, discussed how her research area was a small field and so she knew most of the academics working in the area and enjoyed the conferences she attended. Conference attendance was identified by Mark as an opportunity to, "Share and get ideas [...] to really enjoy talking about the discipline and try not to worry about work for a few days" [Mark, OldU, History, December 2012]. The suggestion from Mark

was that research did not feel like work, even though it formed a core part of his role at OldU.

Rewards and drivers for research at OldU

The academics at OldU were, as discussed in the previous section, motivated to engage in research by the pursuit of intellectual inquiry and the personal fulfilment from it. However, it was apparent that the academics at OldU were also subject to pressures to perform, both against external research assessment, as discussed in chapter two, and internally against targets for the academics to gain funding for their research. Freedom in research has traditionally been seen as one of the rights of academia, with the expectation that academics should be free to pursue areas of research for its ability to contribute to knowledge alone (DE, 1988, section 202.2.a; Rowland 2006). However, in recent decades research has increasingly been directed by pressure from institutions on academics to gain external funding for their research, and hence the research agenda is set by government and research councils as they seek to address national priorities (Brew, 2001; Head, 2011). As a consequence of the external direction of research funding, it is argued that there now exists a ‘publish or perish’ culture (Elizabeth and Grant, 2013). The need to publish was a particularly high driver for the academics at the OldU, something which Nick felt was pressure that the academics were as culpable for as their institution: “I think the pressure is something you almost put on yourself isn’t it, there is no doubt that people do get caught with that, and that there is a publication pressure” [Nick OldU, Business, July 2013].

The opportunity to publish and be entered into external research assessment was considered very important for the academics at OldU, and the comments of Judith and Jenny demonstrated an awareness of the negative implications of not being entered:

There are implications for the career. Now how widely that is known I do not know, but if you ever wanted to progress and progress quickly I think internally it is not a black mark against your name, but if you want to go say from lecturer to Prof or whatever, if you wanted to do it in-house, failure to be entered into the REF would make it very, very difficult. [Judith OldU, Law, November 2013]

We are expected to turn in a REF submission, which is four items of three or four stars [...] I think that in the performance review process, if you didn't publish, some would sit down and say that you are not performing to expectations, and sometimes the trade-off, if you have been doing a lot of teaching or you have picked up a lot of administrative responsibility, then that can be weighed against what your output, but if there is no reason for it then there are, I understand difficult discussions are had. I have not, I am not aware of this institution operating as I have heard of other institutions where people who do not publish are put onto teaching only contracts, but I have been aware of that. [Jenny OldU, English, May 2013]

The examples above suggest that the 'risk' to career of not publishing is implicit, if not explicit, and it was apparent that there was a culture within the academics at

OldU which reinforced the importance of research and publication. Douglas, for example, described the advice he had received from colleagues, rather than the institution itself:

I think that the advice I was given, that I was sort of presented with was that you get your book out quickly with the press that, you know isn't like a high-level university press, and get the book out then you just move onto your next project, or you could spend numbers of years trying to work your Ph.D. into a respected university press publication. And I went with the former strategy, I just got the book out quickly, with a good press, and then moved quickly into I think another project. [Douglas OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

There currently exists a dual funding mechanism for research within England, with funding split between research councils and institutions, with universities who perform well in external research assessment receiving public funding. The funding councils allocate funds through competitive bidding, and it has been argued that increased research incomes and a competitive funding environment have led to the 'capitalisation' of research, with a premium on the identity of the academic as researcher (Nixon et al., 2001; Blum & Ullman, 2012). Morley (2003) refers to it as a coercive environment, where academics sacrifice scholarly ideals in search of funding. Several of the academics from OldU (n=4) identified the need to gain external sources of funding a key driver to the direction of their research. They felt that as long as they received funding then they were relatively free to research in whatever area interested them, for example: "If you get the funding and you do get the freedom" [Nick OldU, Business, July 2013]. The importance that the institution

assigned to the academic receiving research funding, was apparent for Zoe from OldU who had recently received a large research grant that had resulted in a reputation boost within the department. She was disappointed that prestige appeared to be linked to funding alone, whereas for her, she felt that her previous research, which had not resulted in funding, was of greater importance as she felt it pushed the boundaries of knowledge in the area.

Getting the funding gave me enormous kudos that I had never had before, actually invited to do a paper at the research away day. You know funding was the only thing that was important [...] my previous research wasn't valued even though I think it was one of my greatest achievements. [Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

However, Zoe also alluded to a hierarchy within the institution based on the size of research grants, with grants in the arts and humanities typically being smaller than for the STEM disciplines, and hence being perceived to be of less prestige within the institution. She recalled how a senior institutional-level manager had reacted when her department had proudly informed him of successfully attaining a research grant for £11,000: "He said, "Well I'm sorry, but £11,000 that is just rounding up", and we thought, "Thanks, you know, we really know where we stand now don't we"." [Zoe OldU, History, May 2013]

However, it is worth noting that there was one voice of dissent at OldU. Jenny from OldU was aggrieved that her research was not understood by her department and,

due to a focus on teaching as a consequence of an expansion in the undergraduate population at OldU, had not been prioritised.

I think that the Department was so concerned with the massive expansion that all it was interested in was teaching and I had, I suppose somebody who is relatively younger and came with all these ideas, I really had a massive teaching and admin load and I felt that I never really succeeded until recently in that there was no understanding of what it was like to research in [her research area] and I felt that in the first three or four years here [...] I did virtually no research [...] I was very angry about that, I thought that had been mishandled, and it wasn't just me there were a couple more sort of new people here who are in the same boat [...] I felt that my research was completely screwed up the first three years here. [Jenny OldU, English, May 2013]

Research at OldU: concluding comments

The reflections of the academics at OldU confirmed findings in the literature (Blaxter et al., 1998; Henkel, 2000; Bryson, 2004; Elen et al., 2007) of the importance of research for building a reputation and self-esteem, and enhancing their career in academia. The two key, and interlinked, drivers in this regard within the current environment were the REF and external funding. It was noticeable that unlike the NSS, as discussed in chapter six, they did not criticise either the methodology or existence of the REF. The reasons for this may be many, for example, research was very much valued as a thing in itself, they were at a successful university, and they were successful researchers, hence it may not have been viewed negatively. An

additional reason may be that the academics believed that they exercised a degree of agency in the peer review process. It is notable in this regard that the academic community plays an important role in the creation of research reputation as it is created and reinforced by the peer review system. The majority of academics at OldU therefore did believe that they had realistic freedom and opportunities to engage with research at OldU, and hence felt able to pursue their values and develop their disciplinary identity, albeit within an environment where they needed to satisfy the requirements of external research assessment and gain research funding.

It can be argued that the UK government has, over several decades, been exercising 'soft power' (Nye 2004) to direct the research agenda and the behaviour of academics through the use of funding mechanisms, such as the research councils, and through the audit of research via the RAE and then the REF (Jenkins, 1995; Man, Weinkauf, Tsang and Sin, 2004; Brew and Lucas, 2009; Holligan, 2011). The academics at OldU appeared to be satisfying government directives via the desire to conduct research that attracted funding, so in this regard their freedom to research was freedom within certain limits. If we seek to understand this through Giddens' conception of how power is exercised in society, we can see here that the government is directing research activity, and hence academic behaviour, through its power over allocative resources, in this instance funding for research. We can also see that OldU is complicit in the exercising of this power by use of its own authoritative resources to influence academics to seek research funding and rewarding them by allowing them freedom to research in areas of personal interest (Nick) and giving them 'kudos' (Zoe). Although concerns may be raised about how the government has been directing research through these mechanisms, the

academics at OldU did not reflect or comment on the direction of research funding. As discussed in chapter six, they were concerned about how the direction of funding for teaching did send a very clear indication of government priorities, but they did not explicitly comment on this in regard to research funding. They were clear that there were certain areas in which research funding was focussed, but they did not explicitly link this with government priorities or conceive of this as unwanted direction of their behaviour.

The research environment at NewU

In contrast to the academics at OldU, the academics at NewU had greatly reduced opportunities for engaging with research and this negatively impacted on their ability to form or develop a research identity. There are a number of factors within the work environment which can negatively affect the ability of academics to develop and sustain confidence as researchers, both in their own minds and also externally, in how others perceive them. This includes a teaching-heavy workload, as detailed in Table 3, which results in research being put on hold; working as a lone scholar, not part of a wider research community; and managerial practices which seek to monitor and control work practices (Bryson, 2004; Fitzmaurice, 2011; Hemmings, 2012). These factors were prevalent for the academics at NewU, with Ken, for example, explaining how his desire to have time to do research was continually under pressure.

Every year I have a tremendous battle, I have a contract that states that I'm allowed about 200 hours, that's about 28 days per year, for scholarly activities, that's in non-teaching weeks. So non-teaching weeks, that's Christmas, Easter and part of the summer, I'm supposed to be at home or in a

library doing scholarly activity, activities. And scholarly activities covers a range of different things, an enormous range of things, but I have a continual battle with this university to get the 200 hours mentioned in my contract. I also have a continual battle with them to get my annual leave. Last year I was told, “You cannot have your annual leave because you’ve had too much research time”.” [Ken NewU, English, December 2012]

The lack of prioritisation of research at NewU manifested itself, to the disappointment of many academics, in a lack of time to dedicate to research. Due to a busy teaching load during the working week several had to find time for research around the periphery, at evenings, weekends and holidays. This was something which several of the academics reflected upon with a tone of disappointment:

I had expected there to be more time for independent study, independent research and so on. At this institution, that is very much a teaching institution, with an emphasis on teaching and therefore there is not a lot of time to do your own sort of reading or your own studies. [...] I’ve been at [New U] for a year and a half now, slightly longer, so I’m still claiming to be a researcher based on that [previous] experience rather than based on my current experience. I do when I have time, I do try to write articles, and I’ve another one coming out in the next issue of a particular journal, but the opportunity to do that is severely restricted. [...] I hope to do more in the summer, potentially in the weeks in the Easter when I don’t have all the emails to respond to, the attendance monitoring to run through, and all of the other mindless bureaucratic procedures that I’ve got to follow. I have a heavy

admin burden, so research is kind of marginalised and I can only really do that in Easter or Summer when there are no classes. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

I get a bit of time over the summer. The summer before last I managed to finish off a book manuscript and I managed to actually take a bit of time off for the first time, and then managed just a few days reading new material, went to a few archives, sort of the odd day here and there, which was helpful, it gave me new ideas which sort of aren't going anywhere at the moment but again I'm hoping, fingers crossed, that this summer I'll have a few more days. [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

Unofficially we're kind of told that our primary business objective is undergraduate teaching and therefore, because that's our primary objective we should focus our energies on that and research, PhD supervision, these types of things take a bit of a back seat. [Norma NewU, English, April 2012]

Time tends to be the issue. There is generally always something else that takes up your time and there are a lot who feel that research is for us to do in our own time [...]. If I have a meeting with my subject advisor and teaching needs covering then research is out of the window, because teaching has to come first, and that's right because teaching has to come first students are clients, however it is one of those things that has taken a backseat. [Jean NewU, Business, January 2013]

I do it [research] at the weekends, when I can be bothered, or at night, when I can be bothered. I actually have quite a busy job so for the last six months actually haven't done anything, I've just started it all off again and this so it's very hit and miss, which isn't very satisfactory [...] and I think for a lot of people that is the situation. [Kay NewU, Business, February2013]

It is clear these academics wanted to be active researchers, but that it was difficult to engineer the time within the working week to dedicate to research, so it became an activity which operated at the periphery of their work. Kay reported how the senior management had made it clear that research was not a priority, and that it had been side-lined into a 'hobby' capacity, with the benefits of bringing research into teaching not recognised.

If I think where our senior management team might have been a few years ago, which was, "We are a teaching university, we are not a research university", it sort of lost the fact that you really have to research to be able to teach. Somehow that seemed to have got lost. We had a Dean of the School who actually then translated that down into the School to say, "You do research in your own time, you are here to teach that is what we are about, if you want to do a Ph.D. or anything you do it entirely in your own time." Which wasn't really very helpful. [Kay NewU, Business, February2013]

Ken reflected that the reason why research wasn't respected by NewU was because student recruitment and performance in the NSS were the main priority.

The Vice Chancellor, when we were hauled over the coals [...] We didn't do so well in the NSS this year, as opposed to last year when we did very well. Last year we got an award for doing so well, from the university. This year we just got hauled over the coals, and the subject leader had to go and explain this, and said, "But look, they are the most productive research team in the whole of the school. There's only 4 or 5 of them but they've produced two books in the last two years, maybe three books even." And he [the Vice Chancellor] said, "That doesn't matter. We don't do research at this university, we don't do research." [Ken NewU, English, December 2012]

Finlay felt that the focus on the recruitment of students was a pragmatic prioritisation of resources to ensure the university continued to operate, against the desire to research, albeit a desire which he felt was shared by immediate colleagues.

Colleagues within the department are very keen on people doing research but this doesn't necessarily seem to tie in very well with what the senior / middle management encourage us, which is to not research. My colleagues, direct line managers and things, do think that research is very worthwhile and want me to do it, or to do it themselves, but also know that just in terms of how we are building our reputation as a department we just pragmatically have to prioritise other things at the moment. History's reputation, if you look at league tables, you look at what people tell us at the open days, look at what our first years tell us, it's all based around teaching and student satisfaction [...] If you go to the Faculty, the staff development days and all that kind of stuff, what the agenda is, well if you're looking at senior management then

they're very much about teaching and student satisfaction and we always get told how great it is that we're doing so well in student satisfaction with teaching, [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012]

It was evident that the academics at NewU believed that they had not been provided with the time or resources with which to develop their research. However, within the constraints of this environment it was clear that some of the academics had been able to engineer some time to devote to research. For example, in the quotation above Finlay discussed how his colleagues were very interested in engaging with research, and he proceeded to describe how as a new academic he was helped in his first year at NewU to make some time to finish off research from his PhD: "In terms of time for research I did make a little bit of time for research, my line manager helped me with that to be fair, in the first year or so, so I could finish off a manuscript based on the PhD" [Finlay NewU, History, November 2012].

The academics at NewU appear to be just as motivated by research as the academics at OldU, but they were not being provided with the opportunity to engage in research during the working day. They felt this was to the detriment of their identity as a researcher, and to the detriment of teaching, which several believed should be research-informed. The academics at NewU are therefore faced with several possibilities: to adapt their identity to adopt NewU priorities, or to work in a state of inauthenticity. For Giddens (1991), authenticity is a state in which an individual has a sense of self-worth and fulfilment, and we could argue that the academics at NewU believe that the barriers to engaging with research mean that they are not able to fully master what they perceive to be the 'traditional' role of the academic.

Institutional re-prioritisation of research at NewU

The academics at NewU were working within an institution which had focussed on teaching and which many of the academics believed had not provided them with opportunities to develop their research. However, it was apparent at the time of the interviews that NewU was taking steps, albeit tentative, to start to develop a researcher identity. Peter described how he had been tasked by his Head of School to, “Try [to research], the target is to merely produce something for publication, not to get it published” [Peter New U, Law, November 2012], and Sarah described how they were being encouraged to research, “I think encourage is the right word, but not have to” [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]. Karen described tentative moves to create what could be considered to be a research culture:

I’m not given them [research targets] to be honest. We discuss them and see. I’m working on a research paper at the moment that’s probably been going for the last year and because it’s been quantitative I’ve been looking for one variable, and I’ve submitted to a four star journal and they say, “Oh you need to change this.” The data isn’t actually available, so you can say, “Yeah, she’s going to have one paper done”, but it’s, personally don’t think, I mean you can obviously set targets, but it’s all dependent on whether everything goes according to plan for you really, if you can get the data, if the models work out, things like that. So yeah, we do discuss targets, conferences and things like that. I’ve done a number of conferences over the last twelve months, submitted papers to journals, so there are, we do discuss targets, but to be

honest it's not a numerical thing, it's more about getting it up from the ground. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

A barrier that the academics at NewU were facing, as Karen stated, was trying to get research “off the ground”, due to the absence of a research culture within NewU. This is a barrier which, it has been argued (Hazelkorn, 2009; Holligan, Wilson, Humes, 2011) , many academics at teaching-led institutions encounter, finding it difficult to compete for funding against the established research-led institutions in which the academics are part of an organised research community with access to the best resources and best advice when competing for funding. However, while welcoming the potential reprioritisation of research, several of the academics at NewU were cynical about the drivers to become research active. They felt that the objective was to improve their performance in the measures used to inform league tables, with the primary aim being to help with student recruitment rather than to gain direct financial reward for research performance.

The rationale is that basically we want to move up in the ranking. [...] We've got the fees now and we depend a lot on international students and how the international students do their research is by word of mouth, and very simply they look at league tables. In league tables they look at research [...] so you're in a very competitive market and when you're in a competitive market you need to be operating at full capacity and hitting all of the recognised targets and stuff. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]]

I think it's actually about league table position. As you'll know a lot of newspaper and other reputable league tables [...] I think that when you look at all those league tables one category as always in your subject area at your university, what's the research culture like, what was it in the RAE result in 2008? Well, our subject area, law at [NewU] did not go in the RAE, so we're nowhere near it, we couldn't have put a submission together, we didn't have four people with any publications. We had two or three people with some publications, but that was it, we had two or three people with any research experience. Now you look and we're preparing a REF submission for the end of 2013 [...] and we're hoping to score, we're hoping to have at least four people in with four decent publications that will get us at least one or two stars in the REF. What that will do is take out the big fat zero in the newspaper league table columns and it will drive you up the league table because you don't have nil result any more. So you don't get money but you get prestige. [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]

Peter identified 'prestige' as a key motivator, and this was also reflected in comments from Kay, who believed public perceptions were a key priority.

[the reason is] I think NSS score strangely enough. I think there's a perception that if you can wheel out to people, Dr Fred, Dr so-and-so and so on it looks better, we have very few doctors in our team in the school. You

can probably count on the fingers of on hand the Drs here¹⁰. That doesn't look good [Kay NewU, Business, February2013]

For the academics at NewU, while the encouragement to research was welcome, their enthusiasm was tempered by a concern that the underlying rationale behind the driver was to improve NewU's standing in league tables, with the primary purpose being to use it as a student recruitment tool, rather than to undertake research as a good thing in itself. Research therefore has an instrumental purpose for NewU as a way of improving prestige. Rowland (1996), in research in a British university, found a similar perception amongst academics that one of the benefits of an improvement in research rating would make the institution more attractive to students. However, this rationale for improving a research profile runs contrary to the intrinsic value of research as a good thing in itself, which is important to the academic sense of self identity. As Chris stated, engaging in research activities was 'essential' for him to be able to be an authentic academic.

I spoke at a symposium last week, that talk is now going to be translated into a peer-reviewed journal article and, yeah, that day was absolutely essential for me to be able to engage in those types of activities. [Chris NewU, Arts, January 2013]

Karen provided an insight into why engaging with research was 'essential', identifying the personal reward of satisfying intellectual curiosity, and of working in collaboration with, and learning from, other academics.

¹⁰ It was noted in Table 3 that five academics at NewU had PhDs as their highest level of qualification and five had masters degrees as their highest qualification, with two of the latter five engaged in the process of undertaking PhDs while in full-time employment at NewU.

I get huge satisfaction out of the me-time of doing research as well, the personal space, “Hey, this is my contribution, this is what I’m looking at.” I love working with other academics, a lot of my work I do in collaboration with other people as well. Because I suppose I’m early career I don’t know everything, I’m far from knowing it, so it’s great to research and you just learn so much from other academics who are an awful lot more skilled than you. [Karen NewU, Business, January 2013]

Karen’s reflections on the personal reward from research were very similar to the reflections of Judith from OldU, quoted earlier, and it would seem that many of the academics at NewU have welcomed moves within the institution to reprioritise research and to realise the opportunities to become a, “rounded academic” [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]. This would appear to satisfy their conception of what academic practice should comprise. However, several were cynical that the motivation behind institutional drivers to increase research activity was to improve league table performance and hence student recruitment.

Research at NewU: concluding comments

Although several of the academics at NewU appeared to share a similar motivation to research with the academics at OldU, the academics at NewU had greatly reduced opportunities for engaging with research due to the prioritisation of teaching activity by their institution and this negatively impacted on their ability to form or develop a research identity. This confirmed the findings of Bryson (2004), Fitzmaurice (2011) and Hemmings (2012) of how managerialist practices in some institutions, which

discouraged research activity, could dampen initial enthusiasm for research and of how time constraints meant that some academics were not able to engage regularly with research activities. At NewU, due to a busy teaching load during the working week, research was a peripheral activity that was undertaken in their spare time in the evenings and at weekends. The academics at NewU were therefore faced with the choice of adapting their identity to adopt NewU priorities, or to work in a state of inauthenticity.

In recent years NewU had started to encourage staff to undertake research, and this was welcomed by many as it offered opportunities to become a ‘rounded’ or ‘authentic’ academic. They recognised, though, that there would still be barriers such as the heavy teaching schedule and that they were starting from a low baseline, facing challenges of getting research ‘off the ground’ and of creating a research culture within their institution. However, their enthusiasm was tempered by a concern that the underlying rationale behind the driver was to improve NewU’s standing in league tables, with the primary purpose being to use it as a student recruitment tool, rather than to engage with research as a good thing in itself. This could potentially lead to a feeling of authenticity as the value assigned to research by their institution was an instrumental economic value, rather than a value of research being a good thing in itself.

The relationship between teaching and research at OldU and NewU

While the opportunities for engaging in research at NewU were severely restricted in comparison to OldU, the academics at both institutions held strong views on the positive relationship between teaching and research, with both sets of academics

sharing a belief in the importance of research informing teaching content. As discussed in chapter two, the literature on the teaching-research nexus highlights how this is a distinguishing feature of higher education, and potentially benefits both academics and students (Rowland, 2000; Jenkins, 2004; Griffiths, 2007). However, during the interview process several of the academics at NewU (n=6) raised concerns that the peripheral position of research at their institution had a detrimental impact on the teaching experience and on the wider student experience. They felt that good university teaching should incorporate the latest research in their discipline area and be delivered by knowledgeable teachers who were actively engaged in research. For example:

If the stratification continues I guess that our students would not be taught by people who are experts in the field, who are not cutting edge in their subject areas. If you're not conducting research, if you're not at the forefront of pushing the discipline then the standard of your teaching will be impacted by that, will deteriorate I imagine. If we are not, you know, pushing sociology and the way it engages with the world then we are not at the forefront of that and we can't be at the forefront of teaching either. [Ben NewU, Sociology, March 2012]

The difficulties are that research is not given any kind of priority and that filters down to undergraduate level in the kind of reaction, that because there are no postgraduates¹¹ here there is no one to look up to, there is no, "Ooh that might be nice," kind of feeling. You talk about research and they all

¹¹ Table 1 demonstrates the small postgraduate population at NewU.

switch off. [...] I imagine it is very different at other universities. [Norma NewU, English, April 2012]

Despite concerns that they had limited opportunities to engage in research, two of the academics at NewU did identify opportunities for making connections between research and teaching, either because they had been encouraged to do research to support their teaching or because they had made the links themselves through the teaching process.

We are encouraged to be proactive as researchers, but primarily to support our teaching rather than for research sake, and a lot of the funding that exists within the university, which it does to support research, is very much about supporting research for teaching purposes. About three, four, probably four years ago I was given some money to help to do some additional research around one of my modules to help bolster that, and that was quite a substantial amount of money which enabled me to go to some archives and do some more original research, to actually visit a number of places which I could then bring into the teaching, and that was very good. I found that very useful as a way of getting more depth because my knowledge in that was quite regional and that helped me make it more national. [Sarah NewU, History, December 2012]

I also think that you can't separate out teaching and research, so I personally feed one into another. Obviously there are, they're not very frequent, they're quite rare, but there have been occasions when I've explained things to

students and a lightbulb moment does occur and you think, “Aha, I definitely need to go and mention that in whatever I’m writing for my PhD at the minute.” [Peter NewU, Law, November 2012]

The quotations above illustrate how several of the academics at NewU had created a narrative which fostered the notion that, because their opportunities for research were limited by the institution at which they were employed, they were unable to fully realise the potential of the teaching part of the role. They believed that both they and their students were not able to fully benefit from the teaching-research nexus due to the restraints on their academic practice within NewU. In contrast, at OldU the academics believed they had ample opportunity to engage in research, but it was notable that the opportunities for research to inform teaching were not necessarily as readily apparent as the academics at NewU may have thought. Zoe and Jenny at OldU, for example, both identified limited opportunities to bring their research into the classroom due to its specialist nature which did not fit easily into the curriculum being taught in their departments. Where the academics at OldU did teach modules that covered their area of interest, several encountered a limit on how much could be brought into the classroom because, as Richard indicated, the level of delivery had to be tailored to the students being taught.

Where you’ve got some choice, then I think it comes down to almost certainly your research interests, because that’s what you’re going to be presenting. But then at an appropriate level, for example I’m involved in a second year optional module in my research area, but of course you can’t go into a first semester year two module and start talking about some of the stuff

we do in our research because it's just far too high a level, so you've got to tailor it, still in the themes of that area, but you've got to tailor it down to them. [Richard OldU, Business, December 2012]

Another area of the academic role in which the academics at NewU were potentially disadvantaged was in relation to how the skills and attributes of the researcher can help the personal development of teaching practice, as identified by Martin from OldU:

I think doing research means you are more critical and more aware of what is going on and therefore they are good qualities to have in teaching, but I don't particularly think that a paper on how x links with y, or some book is good to help teaching. So I think it is a process of being a researcher and training yourself that you are doing that and keeping lively in your mind that that helps you in your teaching, so it's not about bringing stuff from papers and stuff. [Martin OldU, Humanities, May 2013]

Martin offered an appreciation of the positive impact of research on teaching, which didn't necessarily mean bringing research into the classroom, but potentially demonstrated how the one-dimensional teaching role for several of the academics at NewU may have a negative impact on their teaching. It was discussed earlier that NewU was encouraging more staff to become engaged with research, with my respondents perceiving the primary aim being to improve league table performance. However, the perceptions of the staff at OldU about the beneficial link between research and teaching indicated that a potentially unintended benefit to NewU of the

driver to engage in research would be greater staff satisfaction and engagement, and an enhanced student learning experience.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been the research role, with the aim, as in previous chapters, of developing an understanding of the factors that constitute academic identity and an understanding of the perceived impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity. The main theme which has emerged through the narratives provided by the individual academics as they have reflected on the position of research in their academic identity was the environmental sensitivity of the research component of their academic identity. The academics at both institutions had contrasting opportunities to engage with research, which reflected the different missions and priorities of each institution. This confirmed the findings of Hemmings (2012), who identified the impact of environmental factors on the ability of early career academics to develop a researcher identity. Positive factors, which were predominantly experienced by the academics at OldU, included graduate student research experience, effective mentorship from colleagues to help the novice academic understand the unwritten rules of the game, and an early vote of confidence by being included in a research group or gaining a grant. Negative environmental factors, that were predominantly experienced by the academics at NewU, included a teaching-heavy workload that led to research being put on hold and a sense of isolation, where lone scholars had a lack of peer and institutional support. It was particularly noticeable that only half of the academics at NewU were educated to PhD level, while all but one of the academics at OldU were. Hemmings (2012) suggests that this lack of experience of research at the graduate level would have a

negative impact on their ability to build confidence and authenticity as a researcher, and this was evidenced in the narratives of the academics at NewU when they discussed their reaction to moves to reprioritise research at their institution. The academics talked about ‘starting’ to research in tentative terms, which suggested that they were struggling with issues of confidence and authenticity. While their institution had started to encourage staff to undertake research, many were concerned that this was a cynical move with an underlying rationale to improve NewU’s standing in league tables and hence improve student recruitment. It could be argued here that a consequence, intended or unintended, of the Coalition Government’s drive to provide students with information that would allow them to make ‘market choices’ when deciding on where to study (Willetts 2011) has been to raise the profile of research at NewU. Here we have an example of the ‘unintended consequences’ of actions that Giddens (1991) identifies, reflecting the duality of structure and agency within social systems such as higher education. While the academics may believe that they are operating within restrictive structural constraints, the agency of individuals and institutions to interpret and respond to government priorities has served to reconstruct the system in unintended ways.

For the academics at OldU there did not appear to be any issues with confidence or authenticity as researchers. The academics at OldU confirmed the importance of being an active researcher for building a reputation and enhancing their career in academia, confirming previous findings in this area (Blaxter et al., 1998; Henkel, 2000; Bryson, 2004; Elen et al., 2007). The majority of academics at OldU therefore believed that they had freedom and opportunities to engage with research. They felt able to pursue their values and develop their disciplinary identity, albeit within an

environment where they needed to satisfy the requirements of external research assessment and gain research funding. Furthermore, through their actions they reproduced social practices which served to reinforce and legitimise these external requirements. For example, academics were inducted to the 'rules' of research by their colleagues, being guided on what to research and how to publish in order to satisfy internal and external expectations.

Although many of the academics at NewU appeared to hold similar motivations to research to the academics at OldU, they had greatly reduced opportunities for engaging with research due to the prioritisation of teaching activity by their institution and this negatively impacted on their ability to form or develop an 'authentic' academic identity. Particularly relevant to their sense of authenticity was the importance that both sets of academics assigned to the teaching-research nexus, believing that teaching should be research informed. This is a conviction which Halsey (1992) argues has traditionally been strongly held by the UK academic profession. The academics at NewU were therefore concerned that because their opportunities for research were limited by the institution at which they were employed, they were unable to fully realise the potential of the teaching part of the role and hence to become an 'authentic' academic. However, it was noticeable that the academics at OldU reported that the opportunities for research to inform teaching were not necessarily as readily apparent as the academics at NewU may have thought. In this respect many of the academics at NewU did not appear to have the experience or professional links with other institutions that would allow them to make legitimate comparisons of academic workload and opportunities. They may therefore have developed idealised narratives of what it meant to be an academic, which were

different to the lived experiences of the academics at ‘other’ universities such as OldU.

In the previous chapters I identified that, for several of the academics at NewU, the consumer and employability discourse appeared to be able to coexist alongside traditional notions of academic identity. However, when it came to research, the academics encountered difficulties in amalgamating traditional conceptions of the academic role with the conception that academics at some institutions, such as NewU, will not have opportunities to engage in research. Within this environment the academics at institutions such as NewU are faced with the choice of adapting their academic identity or of feeling inauthentic. This has significant implications for academics, their institutions and for government about what it means to be an academic in the twenty first century. I shall explore these conclusions further in the next, and concluding, chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 8: Conclusion: Academic Identity in two English Universities in the Context of a Performative and Marketised Policy Environment

Introduction

This thesis reports a study of academic identity in two contrasting types of English university during the period 2012 to 2013. It has sought to explore the impact on a sample of academics in the arts and humanities disciplines of policy developments which it is widely argued have reconfigured the relationship between academics, students and government since the late 1970s. Specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the key practices and values that constitute the academic identity of academics in the arts and humanities disciplines working in two contrasting types of English university in the twenty first century?
2. Do academics in the arts and humanities disciplines believe that the contemporary performative and marketised work environment has impacted on the practices and values that constitute their academic identity? If so, does institutional context influence the impact?
3. How do the theories of Anthony Giddens help us address the question of academic identity formation in different institutional contexts in the contemporary performative and marketised work environment?

In this concluding chapter I begin by discussing the definition of academic identity which has emerged through the thesis. This is an identity which contains common elements across both institutions, but which is also sensitive to the environment in which they work. I then discuss the impact of performative and marketised policies on academic identity, identifying the resilience of core academic values, but also the importance of environment in academic responses to the impact of these policies. I conclude by discussing how the theories of Anthony Giddens shed light on the question of academic identity formation by providing me with the conceptual tools and language to describe and analyse the academics' narratives of identity in the contemporary work environment.

Academic identity in the twenty first century

Academic identity is a reflexive project of the self (Giddens, 1994), being constructed and reconstructed by individuals via the development of a narrative through which they reflexively monitor both the conduct of themselves and of others, and negotiate structural constraints and enablers. It was evident from the narratives related by the participants in this thesis that the formation of academic identity is an ongoing project across time and space. The majority of the academics formed their identity over many years during the transitions from student, to postgraduate, to apprentice, and then to a formal academic position. As they engaged in academic practice they formed common conceptions of the value and worth of teaching and research, which were either reinforced or challenged through their interactions with fellow academics, students and their place of employment. They were also influenced, both directly and indirectly, by government policies and practice, and by the globalising forces of performativity and marketisation. Taking all these

influencing factors into account, two major themes have emerged throughout this thesis: firstly, shared narratives across both groups of academics, and secondly, the sensitivity of academic identity to certain environmental factors.

The narratives which were shared by both groups of academics were predominantly positive, confirming for the academics the esteem, value and worth of the academic role. Many of the academics had developed a narrative of success as they progressed from student to academic. During this time they had learnt the rules which constituted the academic social system and developed an understanding of how power was discharged through the utilisation of authoritative and allocative resources. They had developed a narrative of the 'fittingness' of the role for them, a role which included responsibilities for teaching, research and administration, and in which the relationship with students played a key role in their ability to develop a sense of academic worth and esteem. The academics did not view any of these responsibilities or relationships as features of the role for which they were unsuited or were unable to gain satisfaction from discharging. A key motivator for them was the discipline which they taught and researched, or sought to research. Both groups of academics reported personal satisfaction and reward from the teaching role as they were able to positively engage with students and to foster and develop student enthusiasm for their discipline. The importance of the academic community in the process of constructing an academic identity was also particularly noticeable. 'Institutional' induction into the academic role was perceived to be of little value, in contrast to the guidance and mentoring received from fellow academics in respect to both teaching and research practice. This demonstrated the collective importance of fellow academics in the process of constructing and reconstructing an academic

identity. This collectivity suggested that they were able to resist pressures to become 'neoliberal professionals' (Rose, 1990), where professionals are encouraged to think of themselves as individuals, with their work identity characterised by success in individual performance measures alone.

The second theme arising from this study was the sensitivity of academic identity to certain environmental factors. Here the influence of performativity and marketisation on academic practice did vary between the two universities in my study. The academics at OldU appeared relatively insulated against these pressures in relation to the academics at NewU who, due to the status of their university, were more exposed to external market influences and the pressure to 'perform'. It was noticeable, however, that several of the academics at NewU were able to amalgamate traditional and performative narratives, for example by incorporating the concepts of marketisation and employability into their discourse. This suggested that it was possible to sustain a traditional and performative academic identity. However, where it proved difficult to reconcile the two was in regard to research. A key point of divergence for my two groups of academics, and a key point of divergence within the sector, is the freedom and opportunity to engage in research as part of the academic role. Universities such as NewU offer academics little opportunity to engage in research: research at NewU was largely a peripheral activity to be undertaken in the academics' own time and at their own expense. While the academics in my study appeared to be able to amalgamate the traditional and performative aspects of the teaching role, the lack of opportunity to engage in research led to feelings of inauthenticity. We arrive here at a potential dichotomy for the academics, their universities and for government about what it means to be an academic in the twenty

first century. NewU as a university has sought to meet the priorities of government in producing graduates with employability skills. NewU has also firmly positioned itself as a teaching-intensive university and has sought to engage with the 'market' for students by seeking to raise its position in league tables. However, the academics at NewU were concerned that environmental factors were limiting their ability to construct and reconstruct an authentic academic identity because they have been unable to construct an 'authentic' researcher identity. This was challenging for the academics at NewU because they perceived that the rewards they received from teaching were much less than the rewards and prestige they perceived were available for academics who are able to conduct research. They were also concerned that if they were not able to research then this would result in a loss of 'authority' within the classroom. Within this environment the academics at NewU are faced with the choice of adapting their academic identity or of fostering a feeling of inauthenticity. The latter feeling may be a consequence of the 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act*, which unified the higher education sector, and may have raised unrealistic aspirations for those working in Post-92 universities. While all universities are under the same funding and regulatory regime, as Bryson (2004) and Scott (1997) argue, the sector remains stratified. As a consequence, academics such as those at NewU find themselves and their universities at a disadvantage when competing with academics from universities such as OldU for research opportunities. This has the potential to result in worker dissatisfaction and disengagement, with potentially negative consequences for academic practice and 'performance'.

The impact of the contemporary performative and marketised working environment on academic identity

Outside of their universities, the most immediate external influence over the practice of my academics came from government, which over several decades had introduced performative and marketised practices into the sector, practices which had been further progressed by the 2010 Coalition Government. My research found that performative mechanisms did play a large role in directing academic practice, with the NSS, measurement of ‘contact hours’ and the REF influencing academic behaviour as they were pressurised to be ‘successful’ under these measures. These performative pressures were predominantly seen negatively, as the academics at both universities believed that their freedom and agency was constrained, and their academic practice directed by them. These perceptions were shared across both NewU and OldU, albeit that the academics at NewU had fewer opportunities for engaging with the REF. This meant that the day-to-day research practice of academics at NewU was not directed by the REF, but that their narrative of what it meant to be an ‘authentic’ academic was influenced by what they perceived to be environmental constraints on their ability to engage with research practice.

The literature on the purposes of the university reviewed in chapter two highlighted a pressure on the sector to demonstrate the use-value of the curriculum, particularly in respect to producing employable graduates. There was a divergence in the academics’ engagement with the employability agenda, which in part may have reflected the different missions of the universities: many of the academics at NewU articulated a need to develop employability skills in the curriculum, while in contrast employability was very low on the agenda of the academics at OldU. It was

noticeable though, that in an act of resistance, or demonstration of resilience, the majority of the academics from both universities sought to use the curriculum to develop the critical thinking skills of students. For them, a primary purpose of education was to develop in students the critical skills which would enable them to be enlightened and rounded citizens. This suggested that while academic influence over the public discourse on the purpose of education has been subjugated by externally imposed directives over their practice, they were still able to exercise a degree of authoritative power over curriculum content within their universities.

There were also different responses from the two groups of academics to the construction of students as consumers, which once again demonstrated the influence of environment in academic identity. The adoption of a consumer discourse by academics at NewU suggested that marketisation had permeated through into everyday academic language, while at OldU it was a largely absent discourse. The academics from NewU were forthcoming about their misgivings about the construction of the student as consumer and it appeared that the perceived threat to their identity that arose was of much more pertinent for the academics at NewU than the academics at OldU. However, in respect to the perceptions of the academics about the impact of the funding changes introduced by the Coalition Government on student expectations and behaviours, as a comparative study this thesis identified relatively little difference between the perceptions of the academics at NewU and OldU. My research identified instances at both universities of students becoming more demanding and instances of students taking an instrumental approach to the curriculum. This suggested that attitudes towards academics may have changed and could potentially challenge academic authority. However, my research also

identified areas which served to reinforce academic authority and self-esteem. Many students were no more demanding of academics than expected, and if anything were more demanding of themselves. Some students were unprepared for the work required at university and not all students were taking an instrumental approach to their studies. That the consumer agenda pushed by the government and universities was not in accord with student behaviour provided academics with opportunities to form positive narratives of student attitudes and behaviour that challenged the official rhetoric and reinforced the esteem of the academic role. David Willetts (2011) argued that the reform of higher education funding would put “power” into the hands of students (this being allocative power) and would result in a high quality education that met student, employer and government needs. However the perceptions of the academics in my research raises questions about whether students actually want this power over allocative resources. I identified in chapter two that there is little empirical research into the impact of performance measures, such as the NSS, on the power relations between academics and students. One exception is Cheng (2010), who in research into the perceptions of 64 academics at a single research intensive institution found that some academics thought that power relations were not affected, with academics retaining power over discipline expertise and the assessment process, while others thought that students were gaining more power. This thesis has added to our knowledge in this area by providing a comparative analysis across a research and a teaching intensive institution. The academics in my research were able to construct positive narratives which demonstrated the relatively stable nature of student expectations and behaviour and indicated a rejection by students of the opportunity to exercise power over allocative resources. The student attitudes and behaviour also reaffirmed the value of the academic role as it was not

necessarily intrinsically bound to a marketised sector, and hence confirmed that the academics were still able to command control over authoritative resources within the university. Thus, this thesis has demonstrated that impact of funding changes has not been as negative my participants originally anticipated and as the commentators identified in chapter one have argued.

In advance of the implementation of the 2010 Coalition Government's funding policies, the academics in my study were concerned about the potentially negative impact of the changes on their disciplines. These concerns echoed concerns raised by commentators such as Collini (2010; 2012; 2013), Holmwood (2011), Ball (2012) and Copeland (2014), who argued that the arts and humanities were under existential threat in the face of performative and marketised policies. It was clear that both groups of academics in my study believed that the Coalition Government did not value and actively discriminated against the arts and humanities disciplines. This was being realised through the withdrawal of teaching funds for their discipline, while funding was retained for the STEM disciplines. They also perceived an official discourse which promoted the use-value of STEM disciplines in contributing to the economic prosperity of the country, while questioning the use-value of the arts and humanities. However, while both sets of academics felt that their disciplines were at best not valued, and at worst under existential threat from the policies of the Coalition Government, there was clear 'environmental' divergence in their views on their future job security. Both sets believed that a likely future scenario for the sector would be closures and mergers, and that the arts and humanities would continue to exist, but in a smaller concentration of 'elite' universities. As a consequence the academics at OldU believed their university and their departments were valued and

secure, while the academics at NewU believed their university and their departments were not valued and were insecure. These findings indicate that the concerns raised by the commentators in chapter one appear to reflect concerns from academics across the sector about the threat to the arts and humanities. However, my findings indicate that the strength of these concerns may vary according to the university at which an academic is employed.

How the theories of Anthony Giddens help to address the question of academic identity formation in different institutional contexts in the contemporary performative and marketised work environment

In this thesis I have built upon a body of research which has adopted Giddens theories of structuration as a framework from which investigate how academics are able to mediate and negotiate the tensions and contradictions between structure and agency in their working environment (in particular, Trowler and Knight, 2000; Gleeson and Knights, 2006; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Hanson, 2009; Fanghanel, 2012, Trowler et al., 2012; and Saarinen and Ursin, 2012). Where Giddens has not been utilised by these authors is in respect to his concept of how power is discharged within a social system through the utilisation of authoritative and allocative resources. To consider academic identity from this perspective provides valuable insights into the agency of academics to influence and interact with the higher education social system, and to interpret the relationships between academics, students, universities and government. This framework is particularly relevant in the context of the 2010 reforms to the funding of higher education, with control over allocative resources (i.e. the funding of teaching) being transferred to students. Contrary to some of the pessimistic commentary discussed in chapter one, I have identified how academics

have retained control over authoritative resources, and contrary to the expectations of government, student behaviour has largely been unaffected by their assumption of power over allocative resources. These findings have important consequences for universities and government as they seek to create greater efficiencies from the academic workforce and seek to direct academic practice to meet the needs of the economy. Within this environment universities and government should be aware that many of the 'traditional' academic values continue to be propagated by the academic workforce, often contrary to expectations. In chapter two it was argued that academics are marginalised when it comes to policy development, at a national level at least: Ball and Exley (2010) suggest there is a clear ambivalence towards academia, with academics seen as out of touch, cynical, more concerned with thinking than doing, while Morley (2012) reports that higher education policy is largely developed without reference to academics as a professional group. While academics have been criticised for conservatively and defensively holding onto tradition, Giddens (1994) argues that a preoccupation with tradition may itself be evidence of repression, and my research has demonstrated that some academics do believe that performative practices have resulted in a repressive environment. However, this thesis has also demonstrated that academics are still able to exercise considerable agency and power within their universities and to resist external direction, particularly over curriculum content. The response of students to the funding changes has also demonstrated that the academics remain able to exercise authority in their academic practice. It would therefore suggest that current methods of policy development and implementation should be reviewed to consider how greater buy-in and adoption by the academic community could be facilitated. Any review should take into account the evidence

that academics continue to exercise agency in the face of repression, in part due to their power over authoritative resources within the university.

As Giddens (1991) argues, high modernity provides increased choices and opportunities, within a fast paced globalised environment. In this environment traditional workplace social systems are either replaced or under threat from, what I have termed, performativity and marketisation. A guiding theme throughout this thesis has been that identity formation in high modernity is a constantly evolving phenomenon, with individuals developing a meaningful narrative as they interpret past events in the light of current and likely future experiences: constructing and reconstructing an academic identity. Two themes emerged as the academics in my study engaged with the contemporary policy environment. Firstly, shared narratives across both groups of academics, which were predominantly positive. Secondly, the sensitivity of academic identity to the place of employment, with the academics at NewU perceiving their values and practice to be more at risk from contemporary policies than the academics at OldU. A key concept for Giddens (1984) is the duality of structure and agency, and it can be seen that academic social system is not solely a deterministically structural system, nor purely the result of individual free-will. The academics were both constrained by rules and resources, but also demonstrated great agency in what they did. This thesis has demonstrated that it is an identity that is continuing to evolve in response to many influencing factors, not least to changes in university and government policy. Instead of simply accepting these structural impositions, it is evident that the academics had a clear sense of academic identity and in some cases sought to reconcile external impositions with the traditional values that they held. This was demonstrated by the academics at NewU, some of whom

had adopted the consumer discourse, and some who appeared to embrace the employability agenda. At the same time they retained and practiced a traditional value by prioritising teaching practices which sought to develop the critical faculties of their students. This indicates that academic professional autonomy and expertise is therefore largely not undermined, with traditional academic values coexisting alongside performative and marketised priorities. Hence, these findings contribute to our knowledge of contemporary working conditions by challenging conceptions of the 'de-professionalisation' (Ball, 2000; Avis, 2003; Powers, 2003; Gleeson and Knights, 2006) of working lives by the mechanisms of performativity and marketisation.

While I consider this thesis to have made contributions to knowledge about the impact of performativity and marketisation on academic identity on the English higher education sector, there are limitations which impact on the ability to make defensible knowledge claims such as the sample size and population studied. This therefore gives rise to recommendations for further research to develop and expand on its findings by researching the perceptions of larger populations of academics, and of academics from other disciplines. From a Giddensian perspective, the findings would be further challenged or confirmed by researching the narratives of identity being produced by other relevant stakeholders in higher education, such as students, university management, or members of government. Student perceptions of how authoritative and allocative resources are utilised within the higher education system would, for example, serve to provide a richer understanding of how students have responded to the performativity and marketisation of English higher education. This research was undertaken at a specific point in time (2012-13), so a greater

understanding of the impact of the most recent funding policies on academic identity would be developed through a longitudinal study over several years at NewU and OldU. A particular area of interest would be to reflect on how the reprioritisation of research at NewU had impacted on teaching practice at the university and the academics' sense of academic authenticity. An understanding of the sensitivity of environmental factors would be further enhanced by a comparative study with other national higher education systems to see if funding policies have had a similar impact on academic identity in different environments.

To conclude, I return to Giddens and argue that this thesis has demonstrated the value of his theoretical framework for those undertaking research into academic identity. Giddens has enabled me to demonstrate that academics do have agency, and that they do have the ability to exercise control over authoritative and allocative resources within the academic social system. The strong desire of academics to develop the critical faculties of their students was an example of the academics demonstrating agency in the face of eternal pressures to produce graduates with employability skills. Combined with the ambivalent response of students to their newfound position of 'power', which confirmed the worth and esteem of traditional academic values, this raises a fundamental question about the purposes of higher education in the twenty first century. In an era in which traditional career routes and lifestyle choices may no longer be open to students, the development of critical faculties, which enables them to engage in 'life politics' (Giddens, 1991), may actually be more important for their future life chances than skills for employability alone. Life politics is a politics of choice in a complex world. It concerns debates and contestations deriving from the reflexive project of the self and provides the

means of giving coherence to changing external circumstances. It may therefore be argued that the purpose of higher education in the twenty first century, and a key value of academic identity, is to enhance the capacities of individuals to practise effective life planning and gain mastery over their lives in a complex time. These are values which resonate with Enlightenment conceptions of the purpose of the university and demonstrate the resilience of these values in a performative and marketised environment.

Appendix 1: Research Information and Consent Form

Overview of the Research Project

Academic Identity in the Age of Austerity: A case study of two English HEIs 2011-2013

Introduction

The aim of this information sheet is to provide prospective participants in this research project with a brief overview of the research project and a summary of the intended role for participants.

The research project

The research is being conducted by Robert Pearson, a part-time PhD student in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham.

In 2010 the UK Government undertook a comprehensive spending review that heralded cuts of 80% of government funding for teaching within universities. The focus of my research is the impact of those cuts on the sector, and more specifically on academic identity. Through in-depth interviews of academics from two case study institutions I will seek to understand the factors that constitute the identity of academics working in 'the age of austerity'.

Using the structuration approach of Anthony Giddens as a sensitising device, I will investigate the relationship between structure and agency in the formation of academic identity within this environment. In particular I will investigate how in contemporary socio-political circumstances academic identity is shaped by policy and by the relationship of academics with mediators of current policy.

It is anticipated that the research outcomes will include implications for how we understand current education policy and its impact on the core work of universities.

Methodology

The primary research will comprise semi-structured interviews with academic members of staff at two case-study higher education institutions.

The interviews will be recorded, transcribed and then coded for analysis in order to pull out themes in relation to the theoretical framework.

Interviewee contributions will be anonymised.

The research will be conducted in line with the Research Guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association, available at <http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> .

Contact details

Researcher: Robert Pearson, email: ttxrp14@nottingham.ac.uk, Tel: 01509 222230

Supervisors: Prof. Monica McLean (monica.mclean@nottingham.ac.uk) and Dr Paul Thompson (paul.thompson@nottingham.ac.uk)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title Academic Identity in the Age of Austerity: A case study of two English HEIs 2012-2013

Researcher's name Robert Pearson

Supervisor's name Prof. Monica McLean and Dr Paul Thompson

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.
- I understand that data will be kept in a safe and secure location and will be used purely for the purposes of the research project
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed (research participant)

Print name **Date**

Contact details

Researcher: Robert Pearson, txrp14@nottingham.ac.uk , Tel: 01509 222230

Supervisors: Prof. Monica McLean (monica.mclean@nottingham.ac.uk) and Dr Paul Thompson (paul.thompson@nottingham.ac.uk)

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

Preamble: Ensure I have:

- Permission to record
- A signed consent form
- Confirmed the confidentiality of the interview
- Confirmed time available for the interview

Section 1 – Being an academic

What would you say was your main motivation to do academic work?

[Supplementary: Do you think of yourself as an academic? What parts of the role do you like the best / most dislike / value?]

How much direction do you receive on how you undertake your work?

[Supplementary: Who directs you? Do you feel you have control over the direction of your work?]

Has your School/Department valued your achievements? Do you think the University values your achievements?

[Supplementary: How has this happened? Why hasn't this happened?]

What do you want from your students? What do students want? What does Government want?

Section 2 - Purpose of HEIs

What do you think is the purpose of UK HEIs in the 21st century?

[Supplementary: 'What are universities for'? What should be the purpose?]

What do you think Government / parents / students see as the purpose of HEIs?

[Supplementary: Why do you think this? How is this communicated to you?]

Section 3 – Funding

How do you envisage forthcoming changes to funding will impact upon your career / your students / your Department / your institution / your discipline?

Section 4 - Conclusion

On a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with being an academic?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Finish with:

Confirm timescale for rest of interviews and thesis.

Ask if they want to see the transcript.

Confirm they have my contact details if they have any concerns following the interview.

Thank participant.

Appendix 3: Abbreviations

BIS The UK Government Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

HEI Higher Education Institution

KIS Key Information Set

NSS National Student Survey

QAA Quality Assurance Agency

RAE Research Assessment Exercise

REF Research Excellence Framework

STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

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