Life Histories of Academics who become

Heads of Department: Socialisation,

Identity and Career Trajectory

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<u>Abstract</u>

Although the role of the academic head of department (HoD) has always been important to university management and performance, an increasing significance given to bureaucracy, academic performance and productivity, and government accountability has greatly elevated the importance of this position. Previous research and anecdotal evidence suggests that as academics move into HoD roles, usually with little or no training, they experience a problem of struggling to adequately manage key aspects of their role. It is this problem – and its manifestations – that forms the research focus of this study. Based on the research question, "What are the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 university?" the study aimed to achieve greater understanding of why academics become HoDs, what it is like being a HoD, and how the experience influences their future career plans.

The study adopts an interpretive approach, in line with social constructivism. Edited topical life history interviews were undertaken with 17 male and female HoDs, from a range of disciplines, in a post-1992 UK university. These data were analysed using coding, categorisation and theme formation techniques and developing profiles of each of the respondents.

The findings from this study suggest that academics who become HoDs not only need the capacity to assume a range of personal and professional identities, but need to regularly adopt and switch between them. Whether individuals can successfully balance and manage these multiple identities, or whether they experience major conflicts and difficulties within or between them, greatly affects their experiences of being a HoD and may influence their subsequent career decisions. It is claimed that the focus, approach and analytical framework - based on the interrelationships between the

concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory - provide a distinct and original contribution to knowledge in this area. Although the results of this study cannot be generalised, the findings may help other individuals and institutions move towards a firmer understanding of the academic who becomes HoD - in relation to theory, practice and future research.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Key questions underlying research into academic work, therefore, include: What do academic careers look like? (Tight, 2003, p. 153)

This thesis investigates the career trajectories of academics who become university Heads of Department (HoD) in a selected post-1992 UK university. It aims to describe, understand and interpret the reasons behind why academics become HoDs, what it is like being a HoD, and how the experience may or may not contribute to their future career plans. In order to meet the aims of the thesis, research was undertaken using an interpretive approach, in line with social constructivism. Life history interviews were undertaken with 17 male and female HoDs, from a range of disciplines, in a post-1992 UK university where the researcher has worked as a lecturer for the last five years. These data were analysed using a conceptual framework based on the interrelationships between the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory.

This chapter justifies the need for research into the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs and presents an overview of the thesis. First, the reasons why this topic is addressed are examined. Second, the research aims and the specific research questions are identified. Third, the study's conceptual framework is introduced. Fourth, the methodology is described. Fifth, the significance and the outcomes of the study are discussed. Sixth, the research setting and the researcher's position in relation to the study are established, and seventh, the overall structure of the thesis is outlined.

1.1 Identifying the Problem

Over the past four decades there have been radical shifts in management practice and culture in higher education as institutions have been subject to modernisation practices enforced by government and university funding bodies (Deem, 2004). Key changes in the sector have converged to bring about these shifts; these include a large increase in student numbers, a more academically diverse student body, an increase in the use of staff on fixed term contracts for both teaching and research, an increase in bureaucracy, and an increase in both market and government accountability (Collinson, 2004; Henkel, 2002; Knight and Trowler, 2000; Nixon, 1996).

Although the role of the academic head of department (HoD) has always been important to university management and performance (Middlehurst, 1993; Smith, 2002), these policy and culture shifts have greatly elevated the importance of this position, with HoDs now taking on much more strategic roles within their organisations (Hancock and Hellawell, 2003). Changes in research funding, the increasing importance of the research assessment exercise (RAE now termed the Research Excellence Framework), and greater accountability for the quality of teaching have all placed the HoD firmly at the centre of university management procedures (Bolton, 2000; Knight and Trowler, 2001).

Previous research has suggested that as academics move into HoD roles they require different sets of skills, values and knowledge (Bolton, 2000; Knight and Trowler, 2001). Issues arise concerning how they manage the dualism of teaching and research and leadership and management (Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005). A key ESRC funded research project (Deem, 2000) found that academics who are managers now experience higher workloads and longer hours than in the past due to the increasing pressures of accountability. Furthermore, only one third of those studied received any

formal training in leadership and management, and few felt they received enough feedback on their management role.

These issues surrounding the HoD role are also framed within a changing notion of what an academic career looks like. Studies reveal that differences in working conditions, such as the increase of fixed term contracts and a perceived lack of loyalty from both institutions and individuals, has meant that the concept of an academic career today is very different to one of 15 or 20 years ago (Deem, 2004). Academic careers are no longer seen as linear (Poole and Bornholt, 1998), a large number of academic staff are now employed on fixed term contracts (Collinson, 2004), more academics choose to, or have to, change research fields mid-career to keep up with rapidly changing research horizons (Gordon, 2005), and the notion of developing a traditional academic identity throughout a career in academia is perceived to be under threat (Beck and Young, 2005; Collinson, 2004; Henkel, 2005; Nixon, 1996). It has been argued that all such changes can combine to produce an erosion of trust within the profession, greater workloads for academics, a decline in collegiality, and a threat to self-identity (Knight and Trowler, 2000).

It is clear that changes to university management practice and culture, changes to the role of the HoD, and changes to academic careers have created a problem within the sector. Academics who become HoDs now find themselves performing increasingly complex management and leadership roles with little or no training (Deem, 2004). It seems that many HoDs are struggling to adequately manage key aspects of their role, as research, teaching and leadership, plus staffing issues take up more and more of their time (Smith, 2002). As a result, research output, seen as a crucial part of an academic's ability to progress (Court, 1999), may suffer. A reduced research profile may have implications for a HoD's ability to make career progress in the future. It is

acknowledged that, at all levels, good academic leadership is essential for an institution to achieve academic excellence (Rowley, 1997), and yet the research evidence suggests that the role of HoD is not being supported enough within the sector.

Personal experience indicates, as a lecturer working in a post-1992 university, that some colleagues feel the pressures associated with being a HoD outweigh the perceived rewards of the position. Recently, a colleague referred to an internally advertised HoD role at Principal Lectureship (PL) level as a "Poor Loser's" role. It is perceived that HoDs are taking on an increasing amount of management and bureaucratic work at the expense of their teaching and research, the outcome of which, for some, is their reduced involvement in the very reasons for entering academia in the first place. A faltering research profile may not only affect further career progression, but may curtail any hope of moving between institutions in the future. Increasingly, there is a perception that taking on a HoD role may not enhance an academic's credibility or future career. If such perceptions are valid, then the supply of candidates into leadership and management roles could be adversely affected as academics choose not to apply for, or take on, these positions. This would then affect leadership and management roles further up the higher education structure, as academic leadership at middle level is seen as an essential criterion for senior appointments (Rowley, 1997).

Paradoxically, while the role of the academic HoD is acknowledged as being complex and difficult, there are academics who seem to enjoy being in this management role. Deem (2000) identifies these individuals as "career-track managers". She found that these academics mainly exist in post-1992 institutions and they have made a deliberate decision, early on in their careers, to become higher education (HE) managers:

This group self-identified as managers. Motivations for becoming a career-track manager included enjoying management, exercising power and institutional politics, becoming dissatisfied with teaching and research, and seeking a higher salary. (Deem, 2000, p. 11)

These findings suggests that some academics may want to deliberately move away from teaching and research, and see taking on a management role as a way of achieving this goal.

Several other reasons have been identified to help explain why academics may want to become HoDs and enjoy being in the position. They may be passionate about being seen as the representative academic, ensuring that the views of their colleagues are heard at senior management level (Smith, 2005). They may also become quite protective of their staff and want to support them and help them develop; Bryman's (2007) review into effective leadership in higher education found that HoDs perceived that securing resources for their department and developing their staff were crucial aspects of their role. In addition, they may be pleased to be in a position where they can do something about the things that they feel are important (Parker, 2004).

There is also evidence to suggest that there is still a demand for these positions. There have been a number of new HoD roles advertised recently, in the researcher's institution, all of which attracted a large number of internal applicants. This anecdotal evidence suggests that, although the role of the HoD is increasingly complex, there is still interest from academics who want to progress to this role and beyond.

Given all the pressures and changes affecting the HoD position, and the possible negative or positive experiences of being a HoD presented above, this thesis aims to investigate this complex phenomenon. It aims to investigate what motivates academics

to become HoDs, what it is like to be a HoD in the current HE climate, and how does being a HoD in the present context affect their career advancement. It is reasonable to expect that substantial changes in academic careers and management culture will affect the reasons why academics become HoDs, their experiences whilst being a HoD, and their career expectations in the future. Key questions include: What motivates an academic to become a HoD? What is it like to be a HoD in the modern HE climate? How does being a HoD affect an academic's career trajectory?

Alongside externally driven changes to the position of the HoD in recent years, such as those influenced by government and university funding bodies, there are internal university forces that affect the career trajectories of academics. These include gender, age, organisational culture, academic discipline and size of department (Deem, 2003a; Deem, 2003b; Karp, 1985; Smith, 2005; Twombly, 1998; Ward, 2001b). These internal factors mean that although one might expect HoDs who work in the same university to have similar experiences and career paths, there may be considerable differences, both within the same school and between schools in the same university. Reasons for becoming a HoD may be diverse, each HoD may encounter very different experiences and problems whilst being a HoD, and each may have very different future career expectations.

Chen (1998) argues that a person's career is determined by a wide range of influences over time and cannot be viewed as separate from a person's life experiences. He explains:

….career is seen as an integral, active and essential component in a person's life. While one's career experiences always intertwine with other experiences in

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life, the person's life experiences can well reflect a general picture of his or her

career development. (p. 439)

The suggestion is that career trajectories cannot be studied in isolation without taking into account key personal and social influences over a person's lifetime such as childhood experiences and self efficacy (Bandura et al., 2001), personality disposition (Bozionelos, 2004), identity and family stressors (Bird and Schnurman-Crook, 2005), work-life balance (Moen and Sweet, 2004) and decisions on parenthood (Kemkes-Grottenthaler, 2003). Further questions arise, such as: What are the personal and academic backgrounds of academics who become HoDs? What are the personal and professional reasons behind an academic's career decisions? Does an academic's identity change once they become a HoD? How does being a HoD affect an academic's professional and personal life? This thesis aims to shed light on some of these complex interactions between life experience and career trajectory for a range of HoDs in a post-1992 UK university.

In summary, this section has identified that changes to higher education policy and management culture, changes to the role of the HoD, and changes to academic careers have all created a number of research problems in the sector relating to academics who take up the position of HoD. This thesis aims to investigate these problems. The next section outlines the main aims of the thesis and identifies the specific research questions posed.

1.2 Research Aims and Questions

This aim of this study is to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university. It aims to

investigate the reasons behind why academics become HoDs, the experiences of academics who become HoDs, and how being a HoD might affect academics' future career plans.

Research Questions

The main research question for this thesis is:

• What are the career trajectories of university academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university?

In order to address this main research question the following specific research questions (RQs) are posed:

RQ1.   What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

RQ2.   How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

RQ3.   Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time.

RQ4.   How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

These research questions are further informed by, and elaborated in, Chapter Two.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

This study is built on the key concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory. Socialisation is how someone learns to be part of a particular society, gaining an awareness of the social norms, values and cultural skills of that society (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Giddens, 2006). Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) argue that in an educational context, socialisation does not entail passive involvement of an individual

within an existing structure, but is an "interpretive and interactive" (p. 106) process between the individual and the structure with both affecting each other.

Identity is how we perceive ourselves, our self-image in relation to specific contexts and roles in life and work (Giddens, 1991). Personal identity relates to how a person sees the private informal self; professional identity derives from their self-perception, their self-image, and their self-efficacy in relation to their work and career (Knight and Trowler, 2001). Identities are a product of both structure and agency and are in a constant state of change over time (Jenkins, 2004). This has added resonance within the higher education sector which has undergone immense restructuring in recent years (Nixon, 1996). Indeed, Henkel (2002) suggests that these changes have intensified the need to examine the relationship between academic and managerial identity for the university HoD.

Career trajectory refers to the historical sequence of past, present, and possible or intended future, roles and positions. Ball and Goodson (1985) distinguish two components of career and career trajectory – an objective, social element, influenced by economic and political conditions, and a subjective element, as seen and influenced by the individual. Svejenova (2005) suggests that whilst historically career research has been focussed on occupations and organisations, human agency and individuals are now seen as the driving force behind career trajectories.

Within the higher education context, Gordon (2003) also discusses the importance of the individual. He suggests that in order for institutions to comprehend the changes and tensions taking place within their academic workforce, they should look to understand the notion of the individual's career path and promote "active and open dialogue about roles and career paths" (p. 101) within their organisation.

The nexus and interrelationships between all three of these concepts provide the analytical framework for this study. It is argued that organisational, professional and personal socialisation experiences help to form our identities and self-images (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Giddens, 2006; Jenkins, 2004). It is further assumed that identity then helps people adopt certain roles within an organisation and influences the job roles they take on, which in turn influences their career trajectory (Chen, 1998). Taking on different roles within an organisation means a person is likely to be subjected to new socialisation experiences that in turn may help form a new professional identity, and they may lose or suppress a former identity whilst in this new role (Henkel, 2002; Parker, 2004). This study aims to investigate the interplay between these three related concepts. This conceptual framework is developed further in Chapter Two.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology and methods for this thesis will be justified and described in Chapter Three, but an introductory overview is provided here. To answer the above research questions, the present study adopts the interpretive paradigm, in line with social constructivism, and uses a life history approach (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). This approach has been adopted because, in order to understand more fully the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs, it is argued that they cannot be explained in isolation but need to be understood with reference to context, temporality and the individual.

In total, life history interviews were undertaken with 17 male and female HoDs, from a range of disciplines, at a post-1992 UK university where the researcher has worked as a lecturer for the last five years. The data from the life history interviews were supplemented with a number of other sources, including insider observations,

knowledge, and experiences of the researcher; the analysis of key strategic documents produced by the institution linked to management culture, working practices and re-focusing the academic offer; and web based profiles of each of the respondents. This supplementary data helped in the analysis of the interview data, particularly in relation to determining the overall culture and working practices of the institution, and the individual school culture within which each participant worked.

1.5 Significance and Outcomes of the Study

While previous research relating to the HoD in higher education management includes, *inter alia*, the implementation of quality management procedures to the higher education sector (Cruickshank, 2003; Mergen et al., 2000; Spencer-Matthews, 2001; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2002), the tension between teaching and research (Drennan, 2001), leadership styles (Davies et al., 2001), the changing role of the manager-academic (Deem, 2004) and collegiality (Hellawell and Hancock, 2001) there has been relatively little research that has looked specifically at career trajectories of HoDs in higher education. Following his extensive review of current areas of research in higher education, Tight (2003) argues that further research is required into the experiences of "specialist academics, such as those pursuing research careers and those exercising managerial or administrative functions" (p. 166). Other authors have identified the need for research into leadership roles in general (Bryman, 2007), and into the role of the academic HoD specifically (Smith, 2005), particularly in post-1992 universities (Smith, 2002). This thesis may thus be seen as contributing to this call.

Key research undertaken by Deem (2000), discussed earlier in this chapter, has helped to highlight a number of important issues linked to how manager academics (the term she uses to describe academics who manage other academics) perceive their roles

and experiences. Deem's large-scale study was undertaken across a range of universities and involved staff at different management levels. This thesis aims to build on Deem's work and extend our knowledge and understanding of the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs. By using a life history approach; focusing solely on career trajectories of academics who become HoDs; investigating one institution in depth; and using an analytical framework based on the concepts of socialisation, identity, and career trajectory, it is hoped that the phenomenon might be better understood.

The concepts of career trajectory, socialisation and identity have previously been applied in various areas such as business (Dobrow and Higgins, 2005), health care (McDonald, 2005), community care (King and Ross, 2004), middle managers in schools (Busher, 2005) and pedagogic aspects of higher education (McWilliam et al., 1999). However, they do not seem to have been applied to studies of leadership in higher education.

It is not the aim of this study to provide findings that can be generalised to all academic HoDs, but to help academics in similar contexts relate to the findings and perhaps gain an understanding of their own and others' situations (Silverman, 2006). By using a life history approach, localised narratives of HoDs within a UK university may be connected to the grand narratives of educational and social change in the UK (Hargreaves, 1999). Individuals' social constructions of their own academic careers can be interpreted and understood in relation to national, social and political contexts. This approach has been advocated and used in relation to schoolteachers' careers (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1992; Goodson, 2003; Hargreaves, 1999) but it has not, so far, been exploited in relation to career trajectories of HoDs in higher education.

A more thorough understanding of HoDs' career trajectories (past, present and future) is important for policy-makers, managers and researchers in the leadership and management of universities. Such research, for example, could help in the potential selection processes of new HoDs, could help predict and address the possible future supply and demand imbalance of academic leaders in the profession, could allow for more informed career advice for HoDs (potential and in post), and could help tailor specific training, development and support for them while in post.

The significance of, and interest in, the phenomenon of academics who become HoDs is unquestionable. For example, the Times Higher Educational Supplement has published an article based on the initial findings of this research (Radnofsky, 2007). See figure 1 for a copy of this article. Further, initial findings from this research have been cited in a recent conference paper discussing changes in academic management and decision making (Hull, 2007). Finally, four papers based on this work have also been accepted and presented at peer reviewed national research conferences (Floyd, 2006; Floyd, 2007; Floyd, 2008a; Floyd, 2008b). There is thus abundant evidence that the research topic is significant and warranted.

Figure 1.1 THES Article on Initial Findings 31st August 2007

Headed for frustration

Louise Radnofsky

Academics agree to become heads of department hoping to gain more time for their own research but find themselves miserable and overworked trying to manage people and timetables, the British Educational Research Association conference will hear next week.

Alan Floyd, who is undertaking a PhD in educational management at Leicester University, has studied the career histories of heads of department at a "fairly big" modern university.

"None of the people I interviewed went into higher education to become a manager," he said of his initial findings.

Many heads of department he spoke with had deliberately taken on a management role to try to dictate their own workloads, such as reducing their teaching load and creating more time for research. "What they then find is that they do not have the time to do what they set out to do," Mr Floyd said.

For some, the costs outweighed the benefits of being a head of department and they were reaching a "crisis point, where people weigh up their personal and professional values and make a decision as to whether it is worthwhile being in the role", he said.

Several of the academics he interviewed, who had perhaps wanted to be able to make a difference in teaching and research practice, found that "they have got responsibility but no real resources". They were tied up with managing conflict, difficult people, timetabling and workload. "They are having to spend more time on the aspects of the job that they least like," he said.

One head told Mr Floyd that he felt he had been "de-skilled" because his time spent in management would make it hard to return to high-level research.

Others described feeling as though they had lost their professional identity as academics and, after being promoted from within their departments, found managing former colleagues difficult. "They can become quite isolated," Mr Floyd said.

There was also some indication of long hours contributing to a decline in work-life balance and increased stress.

None of the heads in the study had made a firm decision to quit their post. Some felt that family commitments were keeping them at the institution, while others felt trapped by expectations. "There is the idea of the expected career path for the academic... the expectation that [management] is the next step up and this is the kind of mapped-out career path that you have to follow," Mr Floyd said.

"Once you move up to that level it probably is. It's almost part of the job role. The benefits presumably are more money, more kudos perhaps. But once you move up to that level, it probably is more difficult to move away."

A spokesperson responding on behalf of Universities UK and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association said: "We encourage all institutions to provide the necessary staff development and training to uphold the high standards of management, teaching and research across the sector."

The next section provides details to help contextualise the thesis.

1.6 The Thesis in Context

Background of the Researcher

In order to inform the reader, and to afford a critical evaluation of this thesis, it is useful to give some details of the researcher's background and highlight the epistemological

and ontological positions that have underpinned this work. This information may then help the reader to appraise the work in a more informed way and may help them detect any of the subjective, value laden assumptions that underpin this study, in keeping with other work of an interpretive nature (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Seidman, 2006). This concept of reflexivity is a key tenet of interpretive research, and is in line with other authors who advocate writing "yourself into your research" (Lichtman, 2006; Wolcott, 1994).

I am a 38-year-old male lecturer in education at an English post-1992 university. I am married with two young children aged four and five. I completed my undergraduate degree in Physical Education, Geography and Education at Exeter University in 1992 and went on to teach in a range of schools and colleges in London over the next few years.

I returned to study in 1998 to undertake an MSc in Exercise and Health sciences at Edinburgh University. Following a detailed course in quantitative research methods, my dissertation was undertaken using a typical scientific approach. I set out my hypothesis then collected and analysed my data using a variety of statistical tools. When discussing my results, I found that my statistics were not telling me the full story: the voice of the participant was missing. This was the first time I had started to identify and question my own epistemological and ontological assumptions, and it became clear to me that in order to understand certain aspects of human behaviour, an interpretive approach was required to give more in-depth analysis to the research problem. My supervisor confirmed this, so I revisited my study and undertook some focus groups and semi-structured interviews to help triangulate my initial statistical data. This was a key turning point in my academic thinking, and one that started me on my journey to undertake this doctoral research.

Following my MSc, I began working as a physical education lecturer at a post-1992 university in the north of England. I enjoyed the work, but I felt I wanted to develop a broader view of education, so I began a part-time MBA in Educational Management at Leicester University. This course helped develop my qualitative research interests and skills. Subsequently, I became interested in how the interaction between people, their personal and professional experiences, and time influenced an individuals' life story.

I was also experiencing great change in my personal life. I had married, moved cities and jobs, and had two young children. Following suggestions from my supervisor, my experiences of trying to juggle my increasingly hectic personal life with my career led me to focus down my PhD research topic to investigate the career trajectories of academics. I became aware that peoples' careers, including my own, could not be viewed in isolation, but needed to be seen in the context of personal, professional and temporal experiences.

Aligned with my own belief systems regarding reality and knowledge, which have been shaped and developed by my own life history, this study is undertaken from an interpretivist's perspective regarding epistemology and a constructionist's perspective regarding ontology (Bryman, 2008). My experiences, perspectives and influences are particularly important in this thesis, not only because I undertook life histories (Goodson and Sikes, 2001), but because I am an insider researcher; I undertook the research in the institution where I work. The issues surrounding the role of the insider researcher will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The Chosen University

In order to investigate the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs, appropriate participants were identified within one UK university. This institution was chosen as it is a post-1992 university and demonstrates features that are typical of its type within the university sector in the current higher education climate:

1. It is a teaching focused university but wants to increase its research capacity and reputation

2. It has a broad range of academic courses on offer, but is attempting to re-focus this academic offer by concentrating on areas of academic excellence

3. It is going through a period of structural re-organisation in order to re-focus its academic provision

4. It has a large and academically diverse student body, which has increased in recent years

5. It has a large number of HoDs in place across a large number of academic schools, each with their own unique working culture and practice

6. Most HoD appointments across the university are permanent, although there are some schools where HoDs are appointed on a rotational basis.

It was felt that these features would produce the data necessary to answer the main research questions of the thesis, and allow the findings to be applied to other similar institutions and situations as appropriate. While it is recognised in section 1.4, and throughout this thesis, that these results cannot be generalised, it is hoped that some of the findings may be transferable to similar situations within the higher education sector. Hereafter, the university will be referred to as the case University.

The above information contextualises this study and provides the reader with appropriate information in order to evaluate the findings from a more informed position. In order for others to compare and use the findings to help understand their own or others' social situations, *thick description* (Geetrz, 1973 cited in Bryman, 2008, p. 378) of the social setting, the participants and the data collected will be provided in subsequent chapters of this thesis. The next section of this chapter outlines the structure of the thesis as a whole.

1.7 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organised over nine chapters. Chapter One identifies the problem, frames the research questions, briefly outlines the methodology, identifies the significance and outcomes of the thesis, and contextualises the study. Chapter Two critically reviews the literature linked to this study based on the research aims and questions. The review is structured around the three concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory. Chapter Three describes and justifies the methodology used in this thesis and provides detailed information on the methods used to collect and analyse the data, as well as the ethical and trustworthiness issues linked to this research. Chapter Four analyses and discusses the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs. Chapter Five investigates the perceptions and experiences of being a HoD. Chapter Six explores HoDs' perceptions of their personal and professional identity and their future career plans. Chapter Seven provides four different profiles of the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs. Chapter Eight provides a theoretical discussion on the findings of the study, bringing in relevant literature. Finally, Chapter Nine offers conclusions, implications and recommendations for further study.

Conclusions

This chapter has identified a research problem within the higher education sector, central to this thesis. Largely due to external political and economic changes in the sector, and to internal organisational changes going on in universities, the role of the academic HoD has become increasingly complex and problematic. This raises questions as to how HoDs react to the prospect of becoming HoDs, how do they perceive the experience of being a HoD, and how do they perceive the experience of being a HoD will affect their future career? Do some find it a negative experience whilst others find it a positive one? For some, the perceived costs of being a HoD may outweigh the perceived rewards of the position, and taking on the role of HoD may not be beneficial for their future career. This could adversely affect the supply of academics into these leadership roles, which could subsequently affect other levels of higher education management. For others, the experience may be different. They might make a deliberate choice to move into a management position because they enjoy managerial work. They may want to move away from teaching and research, or they may want to feel as if they are making a difference to a wide range of staff in their departments. These academics may also want to progress further up the university management hierarchy in the future. This thesis aims to investigate the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs, in order to help us understand the complex issues surrounding this phenomenon, and help move the profession towards an understanding of better practice. The following chapter will provide a critical review of the extant literature related to the research questions and conceptual framework of this thesis, as identified earlier in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This thesis describes and interprets the career trajectories of academics who become university Heads of Department (HoDs) in a selected post-1992 UK university. The main research question for this thesis is:

- What are the career trajectories of university academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university?

In order to address this main research question the following specific research questions (RQs) are posed:

RQ1.   What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

RQ2.   How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

RQ3.   Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time.

RQ4.   How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

This chapter critically examines key literature that links to these research questions. It achieves this by first establishing a conceptual framework that is central to the study, and second, by reviewing literature in relation to this conceptual framework. Most of the material reviewed relates to higher education; however, there is some appreciation and synthesis of research undertaken in schools and colleges, other public sector organisations, and business, when relevant to the discussion.

In order to demonstrate how the main and specific research questions for this thesis were constructed, several questions are identified throughout the review and these, in turn, are mapped to each of the specific research questions of the study at the end of each relevant section. At the end of the chapter, there is a summary table (table 2.1) to demonstrate further how these elicited questions are encapsulated in the specific research questions of the study.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

As identified in Chapter One, the interrelationships between the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory are used in this study to generate new theoretical insights into the career trajectories of university HoDs. It is argued that organisational, professional and personal socialisation experiences help to form our identities and self-images (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Giddens, 2006; Jenkins, 2004). It is further assumed that identity then helps people adopt certain roles within an organisation and influences the job roles they take on, which in turn influences their career trajectory (Chen, 1998). Taking on different roles within an organisation means a person is likely to be subjected to new socialisation experiences that in turn may help form a new professional identity, and they may lose or suppress a former identity whilst in this new role (Henkel, 2002; Parker, 2004). This section develops these concepts in more detail and illustrates the relationships between each one.

Socialisation and Identity

Socialisation is the process of interaction by which an individual learns to behave and act in accepted ways in given situations in order to belong to a particular society (Marsh and Keating, 2006; Turner, 1994). Primary socialisation begins in childhood, with the

first few years of a person's life being the most important in learning fundamental cultural behaviours (Giddens, 2006). This is where key skills of communication and interaction are learned, with the immediate family being the main "agent of socialisation" for the individual (Giddens, 2006, p. 166). As people grow older, they move into secondary socialisation processes and begin to interact with people outside the family. The agencies of socialisation, the social contexts within which significant socialisation occurs, change from the immediate family to include school, peer groups, the mass media, different organisations and the workplace. These socialisation processes continue throughout adult life until death (Fulcher and Scott, 2007).

It is through these socialisation experiences that people begin to develop a sense of self, a sense of identity. Moreover, this identity is never fixed:

One's identity – ones identities, indeed, for who we are is always singular and plural – is never a final or settled matter. Not even death freezes the picture: identity or reputation can be reassessed….(Jenkins, 2004, p. 5)

According to Fulcher and Scott (2007, p. 119), there are two differing concepts of identity: social and personal. Social identity is an individual's sense of the type of person they are, which may determine how they will behave or how others will expect them to behave. This concept is also linked to notions of stereotyping. Social identities are shared with others and examples include being a lecturer or doctor. The authors are careful to point out that people are likely to have multiple identities and may shift between identities in response to the social context in which they find themselves. Someone's personal identity, however, is more linked to a sense of individuality, how people see themselves and how others see them. This sense of self may be developed

when a person reflects on their life history and tries to make sense of this. This is an important concept that will be explored through examining and interpreting the data of this study.

It has been argued by Jenkins (2004) that these ideas of individual and collective identities should not be seen as separate, but instead as heavily interlinked phenomena. He proposes that the social world can best be understood as three distinct but interlinked orders:

- *the individual order* is the human world as made up of embodied individuals, and what-goes-on-in-their-heads;
- *the interaction order* is the human world as constituted in relationships between individuals, in what-goes-on-between-people; and
- *the institutional order* is the human world of pattern and organisation, of established-ways-of-doing-things. (Jenkins, 2004, p. 17)

The assertion is that it is impossible to think about ideas of individual identity without understanding that these are socially constructed through primary and secondary socialisation experiences. This means that, for academics as for others, identities are constructed through experiences of family, schooling, university, and employment and the associated cultural expectations learned through these experiences. Furthermore, academics who become HoDs may experience multiple and changing identities as they move through their career path. A person's core values, cultivated and developed around becoming and being an academic, may be tested as they experience different job roles within one or several different institutions. This may well mean that conflicts

might arise as academics struggle to balance differing identities within and between home and work. This study aims to investigate these conflicts. Erving Goffman heavily influences Jenkins' work, and it is useful to introduce some of Goffman's ideas at this stage of the discussion.

Goffman was fascinated with social interaction and how people interacted differently depending on the social situation they found themselves in. In his seminal book, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Goffman, 1959), he drew heavily on his PhD research into a Shetland Isle Community to argue that social life is like a play and people act out roles of self presentation depending on the situation they find themselves in:

...when an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation which they come to have. Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain. Sometimes the individual will be calculating in his activity but be relatively unaware that this is the case. Sometimes he will intentionally and consciously express himself in a particular way, but chiefly because the tradition of his group or social status require this kind of expression and not because of any particular response (other than vague acceptance or approval) that is likely to be evoked from those impressed by the expression. (Goffman, 1959, p. 17-18)

Goffman's work has been criticised for being too descriptive and too limited in its views of social interaction, but his ideas are still recognised as making an important

contribution to our understanding of complex social interaction (Fincham and Rhodes, 2005; Jenkins, 2004; Marsh and Keating, 2006). This can be demonstrated by investigating Clegg's (2008, p. 329) definition of academic identity:

Identity is understood not as a fixed property, but as a part of the lived complexity of a person's project and their ways of being in those sites which are constituted as being part of the academic…Moreover, in so far as individuals conceptualise themselves as having an identity as an academic, this multiple and shifting term exists alongside other aspects of how people understand their personhood and ways of being in the world.

It has been established that as people move through their life course they will experience different agencies of socialisation, that these experiences will help develop their individual identity, and that people may act out different identities in different situations linked to these experiences. The links between these concepts raise important questions central to this thesis: How do academics develop their individual identity? How do primary and secondary socialisation experiences contribute to this identity formation? Do these identities change once they become HoDs? If so, how? As this study is investigating career trajectories of academics who become HoDs, the focus of this discussion now turns to examine agencies of socialisation in more detail, and relates these to the concept of career trajectory.

Fulcher and Scott (2007) argue that primary and secondary socialisation experiences are central to developing the social worlds in which individuals live, and these social worlds are re-produced from one generation to the next. The notion of social role is key to this argument: "People learn the social roles that comprise their

society and they play these roles out in their interactions with others" (Fulcher and Scott, 2007, p. 140). Thus, the social structures in which people operate are socially constructed realities. Although these may be changed, this would need an appropriate amount of individual or collective effort over time. This concept is important as it helps us understand that peoples' career choices are firmly rooted in the socially constructed realities of their primary and secondary socialisation experiences: family, school and education, peer groups, organisations and work experiences. These include strong cultural expectations related to their individual and social identities. Indeed, Turner (1994, p. 79) suggests that individuals require certain capacities in order to function in a particular society. These include the capacity to:

- acquire motives to play a particular role in society

- be able to accept cultural directives built on shared values and beliefs

- be able to see what type of person they are

- adopt a range of role playing skills to allow us to interact in a range of situations coupled with an ability to display emotions.

These cultural socialisation experiences can be further explored by examining theories proposed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). Bourdieu, who was influenced by Goffman's work introduced above, explained social structure through classification (Jenkins, 2002) and argued that these classifications are characterised by four forms of capital: cultural, social, economic and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital refers to the various cultural advantages, initially experienced and learned in primary socialisation through the family and then developed through secondary socialisation experiences, most notably for Bourdieu through the education system, that help people gain academic and economic success:

The reproduction of the structure of the distribution of cultural capital is achieved in the relation between familial strategies and the specific logic of the school institution. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 19)

Social capital refers to the social networks of friends and contacts that people are a part of and Bourdieu argues that this can only be reproduced "through the reproduction of the primary social unit which is the family" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 107). Economic capital refers to material goods such as money, property and income, whilst symbolic capital refers to reputation or status.

Bourdieu argued that a person's social class position was not just based on economic capital, but on a combination of cultural, social, economic and symbolic capitals. He saw these capitals as relative and understood that they could change depending on social contexts:

Capital is a social relation, i.e. an energy which only exists and only produces its effect in the field in which it is produced and reproduced. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 113)

Bourdieu's work was also linked to notions of field and habitus. He saw habitus as the typical conditions of a situation which were socially reproduced:

The habitus is this generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 8)

Jenkins (2002, p. 84) helps define Bourdieu's understanding of the concept of field:

> *A field, therefore, is a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for the occupants.*

Links to Career Trajectory

Although these concepts of cultural, social, economic and symbolic capitals were developed to help understand and explain social class differences, they may also be useful to help understand career trajectories. They demonstrate that socialisation and identity combine to determine a person's career trajectory, and that as people take on new roles within an organisation, their identity and socialisation experiences may change. This can be illustrated by developing a hypothetical example and following the imaginary career trajectory of Richard.

Richard is born into a middle class family. His parents are both professionals; his mother is a teacher and his father an accountant. Richard's parents' friends are, on the whole, professional people. Richard is educated at an independent school. Richard's parents expect that he will go to university and follow a traditional professional career. These expectations are reinforced at school as, traditionally, the majority of leavers from Richard's school go on to attend university. At school, Richard gains a reputation for being bright and hard working. As he approaches his final years of schooling, Richard's friends start applying to university and have hopes of being professionals such as doctors, lawyers and accountants. Richard does the same and decides to study medicine. While at university, Richard develops a network of friends, most of which come from a similar family background to his own.

Richard begins a career in medicine when he leaves university. He enjoys being a doctor and becomes a successful surgeon. He earns a high salary and lives in a large house in the suburbs. He enjoys the status that his job brings him. As a surgeon, he leads a team of junior doctors. He behaves in very professional manner whenever they are around as he feels a keen sense of duty to ensure that the high standards he learned and developed in his own training are upheld.

Richard experiences some tensions in his senior role, as he was promoted before a friend of his from university and has to manage this person. At times, he also finds that the bureaucratic way in which the hospital is run stops him from doing the job he was trained for. His personal life also goes through changes. He marries a doctor and has two children, both of whom end up going to the same school he went to. And so, the social reproduction goes on.

Is this hypothetical example a true reflection of the links between the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory? What if Richard had decided not to follow his family's expectations? What if Richard decided to rebel against his school's wishes? Perhaps Richard enjoys music and, instead of going on to university, drops out of school to pursue his dream of being a pop star. Perhaps Richard experiments with drugs at school, becomes dependent on these and is not able to hold down a full time job.

This example highlights one of the main criticisms of Bourdieu's work - that it is implicitly structurally deterministic and does not allow for individual choice. Other criticisms include his use of language, that his work overemphasises class, that he sees social class structures as circular, and that his work may be outdated and is context specific (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Jenkins, 2002). Notwithstanding these criticisms, there is no doubt that Bourdieu's ideas have been highly influential in developing our understanding of complex sociological issues and

may provide a powerful lens with which to analyse the career trajectories of academics investigated in this study. Several questions, linked to this study, arise from his work. Can Bourdieu's notions of capital be extended to an academic setting in the UK? In addition, what is perceived to make up academic career capital for the respondents in this study? And finally, how does this academic career capital relate to notions of academic mobility both within and between institutions in relation to an academic's career trajectory?

To counter some of the potential problems of Bourdieu's thinking, Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) propose the theory of careership, based on Bourdieu's work, to explain career decision making. They argue that their theory blends social and cultural factors with personal choices, that it builds in a more sophisticated model of learning and that it merges individual preferences with opportunity structures in a way that incorporates serendipity (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997, p. 32).

Their theory indentifies three concepts: pragmatically rational decision-making, choices as interactions within a field, and choices within a life course consisting of inter-linked routines and turning points. These concepts are heavily interlinked:

The various elements that make up this model cannot be separated except as an analytical device. Everything takes place within a macro-context which has social, political, economic, cultural, geographical and historical dimensions. Within this is the field, with its interactions, power struggles, alliances and negotiations, where the rules of the game are determined by those interactions together with the formal regulations. Within a field people make pragmatically rational decisions within their culturally derived horizons for action, at turning points. (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997, p. 41)

This model develops the notions of Bourdieu and identifies a sociological framework that can be used to explore career decision-making. This thinking recognises that career socialisation is not about the passive involvement of an individual in an existing structure but is an interactive process between structure and agency, which is an important aspect of a person's career trajectory (Gordon, 2003; Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002; Svejenova, 2005). This view is supported by Trowler and Knight (1999, p. 185) when discussing the socialisation of new academics into the profession:

The recognition of the continuing importance of agency, identity and the role of the individual in constructing their social world within certain constraints are the key points we wish to make here.

Hodkinson and Sparkes' work (1997) also helps justify the use of the life history approach undertaken in this study and further strengthens the use of the conceptual framework used:

Career decisions can only be understood in terms of the life histories of those who make them, wherein identity has evolved through interaction with significant others and with the culture in which the subject has lived and is living. (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997, p. 33)

We can now revisit statements made at the beginning of this chapter regarding the conceptual framework for this study with a greater understanding of how these concepts interlink:

It is argued that organisational, professional and personal socialisation experiences help to form our identities and self-images (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Giddens, 2006; Jenkins, 2004). It is further assumed that identity then helps people adopt certain roles within an organisation and influences the job roles they take on, which in turn influences their career trajectory (Chen, 1998). Taking on different roles within an organisation means a person is likely to be subjected to new socialisation experiences that in turn may help form a new professional identity, and they may lose or suppress a former identity whilst in this new role (Henkel, 2002; Parker, 2004).

In summary, this section has explored the conceptual framework used in this study to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected UK university. It has shown that the three concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory are inter-linked and provide a powerful analytical framework to offer new theoretical insights into this phenomenon. Using this framework as the criteria for selecting appropriate research literature to review, the following sections outline key published research on the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory, and provide links to the specific research questions of this study. Although these sections are separated for the ease of organising this review, it is acknowledged that as the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory are interlinked, so is the research literature on these areas. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in order to demonstrate how the overall and specific research questions for this thesis were constructed, several questions are identified in each of the following sections of the review. Then, at the end of each section, these are mapped to the specific

research questions of the study. At the end of the chapter, table 2.1 summarises this process.

2.2 Socialisation

Several researchers have investigated the professional socialisation of teachers in schools (Blaya, 2003; Jones, 2005; Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002; Turner, 2000). This area appears to be less well researched in the higher education sector with relatively few studies attempting to understand the socialisation processes of academics, particularly in relation to those who become HoDs.

In their research looking into the regularities and differences in organisational socialisation experiences of new academic appointees in Canada and England, Trowler and Knight (1999) conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 new appointees in two Canadian and eight English pre and post-1992 universities. They suggest that academic socialisation should not be seen in terms of the values, interests and concerns of the organisation but instead in terms of those of the "individual, the Department or other local unit" (Trowler and Knight, 1999, p. 181). They argue that it is within the academic department where the real socialisation occurs. From their research, they suggest a number of implications for practice which include:

- Socialisation and induction of new staff should be an intertwined process
- Intensive social interactions should be facilitated in the early days to help develop tacit knowledge surrounding assessment, teaching approaches, research paradigms and daily work practices.
- The best sources of the needs of new staff for managers are the new staff themselves.

- New staff should be seen as being actively involved in identity and culture construction rather than passively adopting local culture.

- Responsibility for induction and socialisation is in the hands of local academic leaders more than has been the case hitherto. (p. 192)

The issues raised here are important to this study. What role do HoDs perceive they have in developing a successful academic culture within their department? In addition, how are academics who become HoDs socialised into their roles? This research also demonstrates the importance of the HoD role within a university structure.

Organisational Culture

The findings from Trowler and Knight's work can be interpreted further by exploring the notion of organisational culture. Culture is defined as "the values, ceremonies and ways of life characteristic of a given group" (Giddens, 2006, p. 1012). It is strongly linked to the concept of socialisation in that culture is socially constructed and re-constructed. Fincham and Rhodes (2005, p. 528) suggest that organisational culture can be broken down into evaluative elements, involving social expectations and standards, and material elements, such as signs, language, behaviours, events and people that embody this culture. Importantly for this study, McAleer and McHugh (1994) argue that the organisational culture of a university is customized at the department level. Trowler (2008, p. 15) goes a step further and argues that university cultures are "…*generated* and *sustained* at the level of the workgroup within departments..."

This was found by Becher (1989) who investigated academic cultures and links with academic disciplines. He conducted 221 interviews across 12 disciplines in 18 elite institutions in the UK and the USA. This original work was revisited and developed by

Becher and Trowler (2001) to include a case study of a post-1992 UK university and interviews with 24 newly appointed academics in England and Canada. Becher's original work was revisited in order to take into account some of the major changes in higher education that had occurred since the original work was published and to take into account a theoretical shift in understanding of how social interpretation and construction can help interpret academic work:

This shift has been augmented by the new attention paid to micro-social processes in developing quite localized meaning systems and practices. Viewed from this perspective it becomes quite perilous to make generalizing statements about practices among academics in particular specialisms. (Becher and Trowler, 2001, xiv)

The original work was also revisited to ensure that a wider range of university experiences was included and to try to reflect the modern day higher education climate:

Given that there has been considerable diversification of higher education since the mid-1980s we also wanted to introduce more material from lower status institutions and disciplines than was present in the first edition, no longer relying so heavily on the transferability of conclusions derived from the study of an elite group. (Becher and Trowler, 2001, xiv)

From their combined work, they suggest that academic communities have distinctive cultures, what they term academic tribes, and these link to academic ideas, or 'territories'. They argue that academic culture is inextricably linked to academic

discipline in relation to epistemological and ideological factors. Their work identifies several characteristics that contribute to the formation of academic culture. These include networks, social circles and perceived academic standing linked to research publications. These ideas connect to notions of socialisation, identity and influences on career trajectory, investigated by this study.

Academic departmental culture also appears to be related to university type. In his research reporting on two case studies of departmental leadership and management in a post (statutory) and a pre-1992 (chartered) university, Smith (2005) found that that the two departments had very different cultures and organizational structures:

> *The different emphases on research and teaching in the two departments are reflected in almost every aspect of the way in which they are organized, managed and led. In the chartered university, the focus on research permeates every aspect of the way in which the department operates. The formal research groups are the foci of the organizational structure for the day-to-day running of the department: 'Most of the day-to-day leadership is dispersed to . . . leaders of the research groups' (a professor). Even the organization of teaching is centred on research. According to another professor, 'We could break the curricula into themes and we would find that the groups of people that are in the research groups . . . are responsible for those different themes'. This is very much in contrast with the statutory university where, in describing the way leadership and management responsibilities are distributed, one of the principal lecturers said, 'The course is king in a way', while, according to a programme leader, 'The research groups are very ad hoc' and the research co-ordinator*

acknowledged that, 'The system is still largely based around the teaching culture'. (Smith, 2005, p. 454)

This research suggests that the culture of the department which an academic is leading, and the school within which the department is based, provides important contextual information to help understand the socialisation experiences of this individual, and that these will vary from department to department. In order to determine the overall culture and working practices of the case University, and the individual school culture within which each participant worked, data from the life history interviews are supplemented with a number of other sources. These include insider observations, knowledge, and experiences of the researcher and the analysis of key strategic documents produced by the case University linked to management culture, working practices and re-focusing the academic offer. This allows the data from each participant to be interpreted in context.

Changing Culture

As mentioned in Chapter One, there is evidence to suggest that the case University in the present study is trying to change its overall organisational culture to become more research focused. In relation to this, Grbich (1998) investigated the socialisation experiences of academic staff who had moved from a teaching only to a research and teaching environment in Australia. She interviewed 40 full time academics from two institutions that had recently been integrated into the university system. Her findings suggest that there was resistance to this culture change and that this resistance manifested itself in two main ways:

The move from a collegial to a competitive climate was one that some people actively resisted to the extent of taking a firm position and publicly refusing to be involved in research activities. Others were less adamant and appeared to be experiencing a cargo cult mentality whereby they were patiently waiting for a "leader" or "role model" to take them by the hand and painlessly transport them toward the promised land of research. (Grbich, 1998, p. 80)

Those members of staff who actively resisted acquiring the skills, knowledge and profiles valued by the institutions studied were targeted for possible redundancy or for teaching only positions with limited career pathways. Concurring with the ideas around the respective roles of structure and agency in the socialisation process of academics, discussed earlier in this section, Grbrich (1998) suggests that socialisation can be seen either as imposing an existing culture in a conformist manner to which there is evidence of considerable resistance, or as a negotiated process between individuals and the cultural expectations of the university aiming to benefit all concerned. As an example of how this could be achieved, Katz and Coleman's (2001) research into the induction and mentoring of beginning researchers in Israel found that setting up a supportive central induction programme was helpful in developing a research culture amongst academic teaching staff. The management of this tension between teaching and research, how individual staff are socialised into these roles, and how HoDs are involved in this process are key themes that will be investigated in this study.

Socialisation of Managers

A substantial research project investigating university management issues has been undertaken by Rosemary Deem (Deem, 2000). She headed an ESRC project (R000

237661) that looked at the perceptions of how New Managerialism processes have been adopted into university management in the UK. The study also investigated issues surrounding academic managers. This research, which has been the subject of a variety of published outputs (Deem, 2001; Deem, 2002; Deem, 2003a; Deem, 2003b; Deem, 2004; Deem and Johnson, 2000; Johnson, 2002), identifies data relating to the socialisation of academics who are managers (whom she terms manager academics). The research was conducted in three stages. In stage one, the researchers held focus group discussions with several different learned societies regarding current management issues surrounding UK universities. In stage two, 135 manager academics from a range of positions (HoD to vice chancellor) and 29 senior administrators in 12 pre and post-1992 universities were interviewed. In stage three, four case study universities were used to compare views of manager-academics to that of academics and support staff.

The data revealed that experiences of training for management roles were poor with only one third of the sample receiving any formal training. Although informal support was taking place with more experienced colleagues, this was not being adequately supported. Moreover, few staff felt they received enough feedback on their management role. Johnson (2002) reported on this aspect of the study:

At the time of appointment, the majority of HoDs had received little formal training or preparation, or felt that the training they received was inadequate. (p. 42)

When compared to research undertaken by Eley (1994), these findings suggest that there may not have been much change in the area of leadership development for HoDs in recent years. If anything, things may be worse. Eley conducted a survey of 48

academic HoDs at a pre-1992 university and found that no one held a management qualification and 35% had not received any management training at all. Those surveyed felt they needed training in key areas and that the role of the HoD needed more clarification:

Most thought that personnel and financial management training were important, with requests for specific information on topics such as the legal aspects of equal opportunities and sex discrimination...It was also thought that the job of HoD should be defined more clearly, and that for HoD vacancies, job applicants should have some previous managerial experience which could reduce the amount of basic management training. (Eley, 1994, p. 21)

Although this research was only carried out at one pre-1992 university and data were collected in 1992, it appears that professional development opportunities for academics who become HoDs in today's HE climate may not be much better when compared to more recent findings. This raises additional questions for this study: Have the academics who become HoDs in the case University received any training? How have they learned how to lead or manage? Do they feel equipped to deal with financial and personnel issues?

It has been asserted that one of the key responsibilities of senior academic staff is to "cultivate the academic leadership potential of their subordinates" (Rowley, 1997, p. 78). However, Deem (2000) argues that managing academic knowledge work is unique to HE and can cause problems for blanket management approaches and training due to a prevalent culture of critical thinking and individual work practices. This stance links to issues highlighted by Trowler and Knight (1999), discussed earlier in this

section, who argue that most socialisation and induction occurs at departmental level and suggests that training and development for academics who become HoDs needs to be individualised in relation to the subject area and departmental culture within which they will be working. As an example, someone who is heading a department of teacher trainers with few research publications may need different skills from someone who is heading a history department with a strong tradition of research.

Deem (2000) also found that the changing HE climate meant that academics who had rotating management roles in the past, based on collegiality and discussion, are now in permanent managing positions related to performance based criteria and that these require more rapid decision-making. Devolved budgets for HoDs were seen as limiting because key staffing issues were not devolved, so there was no real ability to be creative within your own department. Overall, the findings identified an audit culture, rising student numbers, tensions between teaching and research, high workloads for all staff, shortage of resources and devolved budgets - as being the important issues faced by HoDs.

The key study by Deem (2000) has helped to highlight a number of important issues linked to how manager academics perceive their roles and the management structures in place in their institution. Although issues regarding each specific job role were highlighted and general comparisons made, there remains a need for a more focused study looking at just one sector of the management structure to unpack some of these issues that surround the career trajectories of university HoDs. This thesis aims to build on Deem's work to extend knowledge and understanding of the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs. It does so by adopting the following: a life history approach; a sole focus on career trajectories of academics who become HoDs; investigation of one institution in depth; and an analytical framework based on the

concepts of socialisation, identity, and career trajectory. It is hoped that these features will enable a better understanding of this complex phenomenon to emerge.

Experiences of being an Academic Leader

A few studies have investigated the experiences of being an academic manager at post-1992 universities. Hellawell and Hancock (2001) investigated perceptions of academic middle managers at a post-1992 university, looking more specifically at perceptions of whether collegiality was still a major contributing factor in the university decision-making process. They undertook semi-structured interviews with 14 academic managers who were all at HoD, associate dean or dean level. The sample consisted of one female and 13 males. The study makes a clear distinction between managing academic staff and managing administrative staff and only claims to investigate collegiality relating to managing academic staff.

The staff interviewed felt that collegiality was apparent and working at the lower levels of the university but became less possible and less popular moving further up the management chain. Geography and size were the key reasons why collegiality was dismissed as a management practice at all levels throughout the university. The respondents identified other problems with collegiality including subversive staff deliberately undermining or swaying decisions their way for their own gain and the time and difficulty linked to making decisions through this process. The data suggested that there are times when the collegiality process is ignored or bypassed and it was felt this was more in evidence the higher up the management tier one went. Despite some of these negative criticisms, collegiality was still seen as the best way of making decisions in HE. The reasons given for this included increased creativity for problem solving and

staff ownership of decisions. This meant that staff were more likely to comply with any changes in working practice.

The paper argues that academic middle managers are in quite a vulnerable position with no real way of managing underperforming staff, while their own position has become more accountable coupled with an increasing lack of financial control. This research identifies issues related to the HoD in a new university, which undoubtedly hold implications for this doctoral study.

In order to investigate whether middle managers in a post-1992 university could be transparent with both superiors and subordinates, Hancock and Hellawell (2003) interviewed 14 academic middle managers at dean or HoD level (three deans, 11 at associate dean or HoD level) in one post-1992 university. Semi-structured interviews were used lasting for one to one and a half hours. Key questions investigated were:

1. Have there ever been occasions when you have felt that what was good for the organisation as a whole was not good for the unit you managed or vice-versa? If so, what did you do in those circumstances?
2. Can you think of any examples of where you felt you had to "hide" what you were doing from senior management? (p. 6)

The main outcomes from this research were that the interviewees felt that at times the SMT were not open when it came to issues such as money, resources and policy decisions although there were systems in place to prove openness such as published minutes from meetings. The interviewees felt that this lack of openness hindered their ability to manage. They also felt that they were urged to be entrepreneurial on the one hand, but were constrained by strict financial guidelines and rules on the other. The

results also demonstrated a perceived lack of trust between the interviewees and senior managers, particularly in relation to staffing problems around performance and behaviour. The results identify times when the HoDs hid information in a positive way in order not to undermine good staff relations or future departmental developments.

In addition to his case-study work on departmental culture referred to earlier, Smith (2002) investigated peoples' perceptions of the HoD role in one pre and one post-1992 university. He surveyed 30 HoDs in an old university and 18 HoDs in a new university. The findings show that there were several similarities between HoDs at both institutions but two main differences were 1) loyalty to the department before the university was more marked in the old university, and 2) the perception of research in relation to their job role was considered more important in the old university. The following is a summary of results from his survey:

- Department sizes were bigger in new universities

- The majority of HoDs were male in both universities

- HoD appointments were all permanent in the new university but mainly fixed term in old universities

- Job descriptions were not always present in both institutions

- All surveyed thought that their role was important, but in the old university several respondents felt their job was primarily academic leadership compared to the new universities where several staff felt their role was more closely linked to line management

- Staff in the old university identified research as a key component of their workload, but this was not the case in the new university

- Paperwork and bureaucracy, personnel issues and meetings were ranked as the most time consuming role for staff in both institutions

- The majority of HoDs in both institutions reported working more than 50 hours a week

- Staffing issues and bureaucracy were ranked as the two most important causes of stress for both institutions

- Interpersonal and communication skills coupled with vision were seen as the most important attributes for a HoD position

- The majority of staff in both institutions had received some management training although the content and nature of this training was different between both institutions.

This last finding appears to contradict other findings, discussed earlier in this chapter, about the lack of leadership training for the HoD role. However, as this research was based on survey data, care needs to be taken when analysing the results, as the author's interpretations of the questionnaire may be different from the person completing it. More triangulation using qualitative techniques is required in order to gain data that are more meaningful. This is something this study hopes to achieve.

This section has highlighted research linked to academic socialisation. It has identified key issues and questions surrounding the role of the HoD that contribute to the formation of one of the specific research questions for this study. These include:

- How are academics who become HoDs socialised into their roles?

- What role do HoDs perceive they have in developing a successful academic culture within their department?

- How do Hods manage the tension between teaching, research and management?

- Have the academics who become HoDs in the case University received any training?

- How have academics who become HoDs learnt how to manage?

- How do they deal with financial and personnel issues?

These questions lead into the following key research question for this study:

- **How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being an HoD?**

The next section reviews and critically examines literature on the concept of academic identity.

2.3 Identity

The recent move towards mass higher education provision has led to an increase in academic positions within the sector which in turn has brought about major changes to the traditional role of an academic and has generated new challenges for academic managers (Gordon, 2003). Hare and Hare (2002) discuss these changes based on their own experiences of being HoDs over two periods of time and suggest that the role of the HoD as an academic leader is changing:

> *promotion of the historic core activities (teaching, research and scholarship) is increasingly being subsumed by a growing managerial dimension.....in terms of their functions within the institution, there is a clear trend away from seeing the Head of Department or School as an academic leader, primus inter pares, within a strongly consultative academic culture, towards seeing them as managers within the established institutional structures and hierarchies.* (Hare and Hare, 2002, p. 36)

This view about changing academic identity is not just linked to the role of HoD. Henkel (2000) suggests that shared values about teaching and research are central to the concept of academic identity in higher education, but Nixon (1996) argues that because of key changes to the sector, including the changing student body, changes in curriculum, teaching and assessment and changing conditions of academic work, the professional identity of being a university teacher is changing and even under threat:

> *...the occupation of university teacher no longer automatically offers autonomy and status. Since autonomy and status have been defining characteristics of occupations that lay claim to be professions, these changes have occasioned a serious debate as to what kind of occupational group, or groups, university teachers now constitute, and have consequently increased many of the tensions inherent in the role of the university teacher.* (Nixon, 1996, p. 7)

He interviewed 15 lecturers from a pre-1992 university and 15 lecturers from a post-1992 university and offered some implications for the sector to consider from his findings. These included:

- Teaching should be an important area of professional expertise in its own right
- The reintegration of teaching and research and the need for structures to facilitate collegiality within and across departments and between individuals with increasingly different workloads and professional commitments
- A need to ensure that all research activity is valued for its contribution to the overall work of the institution. (Nixon, 1996, p. 12)

Other authors develop this theme about the erosion of professional identity in higher education. Beck and Young (2005) argue this is due to an increase in market forces and externally imposed audit criteria. They use Bernstein's analysis of how these changes are:

*a restructuring not merely of the external conditions of academic and professional practice, but even more fundamentally of the core elements of academic and professional **identity**. For generations, such identities had centred, he (Bernstein) suggested, in a particular kind of humane relationship to **knowledge**...* (Beck and Young, 2005, p. 184, emphasis in the original)

They argue that although key changes are affecting the professional identity of the academic, the link between knowledge and professionalism in universities is essential and worth fighting for, whilst taking into account the new circumstances. Additionally, Badley (1998) argues that it is necessary to guard against notions of academic and managerial drift in universities. He defines academic drift as the separation of teaching and research and managerial drift as:

a more or less deliberate move away from the values of collegiality – individual academic freedom, the privacy of the teaching/learning process, soft scholarship rather than hard research, institutional autonomy, and the (mainly) gentlemanly pursuit of college governance – towards those of a contrasting ideology featuring greater efficiency and bureaucratic control. (Badley, 1998, p. 67)

In contrast to this position, Clegg (2008) does not agree that academic identities are under threat across the sector. She interviewed seven male and six female academics at a post-1992 university and argued that the traditional view of what constitutes academic identity is based on a white, male, middle class experience, which is, in part, backed up by Badley's previous quote. She suggests that academic identity is extremely complex and personal and cannot be discussed in simple terms of teaching, management or research:

Academic identities were being actively shaped and developed in response to the changes in university structures and external environments; hybridity in relationship to discipline and place was common. Yet respondents in all roles were able to maintain highly distinctive, strongly framed academic projects of the self. The newer emerging identities, or hybrids, were mostly not shaped by a reference to nostalgia for an elitist past, but were based on different epistemological assumptions derived from other professional and practice based loyalties. (Clegg, 2008, p. 340)

Clegg also suggests that experiences of class, gender and family have helped develop her respondents' identity formation:

Another theme worth remarking is the resilience of the experience of class, gender and family…data from my respondents suggest that for some individuals such locations are deeply felt as part of their ways of experiencing and being in the world. (Clegg, 2008, p. 342)

These concepts link to notions of socialisation and identity formation discussed earlier in this chapter.

Linked to academic identity, Henkel has written extensively about the changing nature of higher education, both nationally and internationally, and how this affects notions of learning, academic values and experiences of academic leadership (Askling et al., 2001; Henkel, 1997; Henkel, 2000; Henkel, 2001; Henkel, 2002; Henkel, 2005). Her early writing reflects Deem's (1998) findings, discussed in section 2.2, as she suggests that although higher education institutions are responding to policy and market changes by adopting new managerial approaches, academics are struggling to hold on to traditional notions of academic identity and practice. She draws on data from 105 semi-structured interviews in six English universities with a range of administrators, academics and academic leaders from a range of subject disciplines. Her argument is that in the UK, external auditing procedures have weakened academics' professional autonomy and structural re-organisation is challenging traditional academic values:

> *Traditional modes of academic organisation might seem to epitomise flexibility, notably in the widely held assumption that academics will combine research, teaching and administration in their roles. But this assumption entails others: the security of academic tenure, relatively generous allocations of time, relatively low levels of administration, a common salary structure and a simple career structure, the interdependence of at least teaching and research, an emphasis on equality values in the allocation of work and the idea that academic specialism is discipline rather than functionally based. In combination these assumptions represent deeply help academic values. But many of them are under challenge or no longer apply.* (Henkel, 1997, p. 138)

Although Henkel identifies that notions of the traditional academic identity are under threat, her thinking is in agreement with Clegg. She too argues that these values originate from an elite system and are no longer appropriate for the modern HE system:

> *Academics, for their part, on the face of it accept the necessities of massification and of public accountability but not many of the consequences as they are at present being defined. They are struggling to hold onto the values and modes of working that belonged to an elite system: modes of specialisation, divisions of labour and institutional governance that stem from the dominance of the discipline in concepts of academic identity and professionalism; the kind of ancient Greek city state democracy that values equality and community among academics, not between them and other occupational groups and certainly not consumers; and individual autonomy, albeit with some concessions to collective responsibility.* (Henkel, 1997, p. 142)

Changing Concepts of Knowledge

At the heart of this argument is the complex and changing concept of knowledge, introduced briefly with reference to Beck and Young's paper (2005) earlier in this section. Linked to this argument, Prichard (2000) interviewed 65 senior managers in four universities and four further education colleges and concluded that there is a conflict within the HE sector between managerial knowledge practices, which are viewed as in the ascendancy, and traditional academic knowledge practices, which are viewed as becoming increasingly inferior in status. Changing concepts of knowledge have also been linked to the shift from teaching to learning within the HE sector:

...the shift from teaching to learning entails a shift in curricular objectives towards learning processes and 'learning how to learn' rather than the transmission of facts and knowledge. Content and teaching a subject tend to become secondary, while helping students to enhance their capacity for learning moves into the foreground....If such changes are accepted, they also imply some change in the knowledge and skills required of those who are engaged in teaching in higher education. (Askling et al., 2001, p. 348)

These different concepts of knowledge and their links to academic identity have also been identified by Collinson (2004) who conducted research into the working lives and occupational experiences of 37 female and 24 male contract research staff in England and Wales. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken in ten traditional social science research departments and ten specialist research centres in the fields of sociology, socio-legal studies, social work and policy, politics, psychology, planning and education. The key themes investigated were social relationships, motives, aspirations, coping strategies, learning processes, and conceptions of identity.

The findings suggest that these staff had different biographies. Some had originally commenced work in an administration capacity; others had entered research via a more traditional route with first and higher social science degrees and some had both qualifications and professional experience. These three different routes brought with them different socialisation and identity formation experiences. The staff with professional experience and those who had started out as administrators felt that they were there to do work that had practical application. They perceived their research status in terms of their researching skills, rather than the possession of formal academic research qualifications. The staff who did have the academic qualifications and had

been through a formal socialisation into academia felt a greater identity with a specific subject discipline.

Respondents' perceptions of identity were also related to their temporary status with several staff feeling isolated and marginalised. This brought tensions:

Tension persisted between the researcher's maintenance of a confident occupational-self and her/his position of institutional marginality. Frequently reminded of their inferior position within the hierarchy of the institution, contract researchers found the validation of work identity rested primarily on feedback from peers and research directors, and their own self-evaluation of competence. (Collinson, 2004, p. 322)

These findings are supported by autobiographical research undertaken by Blaxter *et al.* (1997) based on four women's experiences of being contract researchers in the UK higher education system. These academics are "conscious of the need to have a clear academic identity which give cognisance to perceptions that professional academics have specialist knowledge" (Blaxter et al., 1997, p. 507). However, they found this identity was difficult to sustain, particularly if their career history involved temporary and part-time positions:

To be successful in her job applications, she (Lorraine) had recognised both the potentially negative assumptions associated with voluntary and part-time work and the importance of appearing as a natural inhabitant of these paid work domains. (Blaxter et al., 1997, p. 508)

This research raises important issues around academic identity for staff on fixed-term or part-time contracts and for HoDs who are managing these staff.

Balancing Identities

In response to global organisational changes, Henkel (2002) has developed these notions of changing academic values and identity and applied them to academic leadership. She found that academics who became HoDs had different perceptions of their identities. For some, particularly in the more traditional universities, they did not identify themselves as managers. Others, though, felt that being a manager was their key role and this helped them gain a broader institutional profile. Henkel identified that some academic leaders experienced tensions around acquiring their new identity as a manager and being perceived as different by their fellow academics. There was also a perception that HoDs must be both academics and managers and this can create conflicting interests:

> *Conflicting demands were of three main kinds: those of academic and administrative work; the flow of external demands or crises competing with strategic responsibilities; and the desire to nurture individuals as against the need to change their departments.* (Henkel, 2002, p. 37)

These findings link to Deem's (2000) research, discussed in section 2.2, and raise questions for this study: How do HoDs perceive their identity? What do HoDs perceive their main role to be? Do academics perceive that their academic identity changes as they move from being a lecturer or researcher to being a HoD?

In relation to some of the tensions around managerial and academic identity, Parker (2004) wrote a reflexive account of his time as a head of department in a small English university. He identifies key conflicts for the HoD between home and work, management and teaching and how being socialised into the role of HoD erects barriers between the HoD and other academic staff:

Some of my nightmares have come true. My friends and colleagues do treat me differently. I think I can sometimes see the resentment in their eyes. But perhaps I am looking for it, looking for the signs of deference and resistance written on their bodies. Sometimes it is clear enough that it is they that are making me become manager. Certain people expect that of me, and seem fairly disappointed if I do not show the symbols of decisive power. (Parker, 2004, p. 53)

This reflection demonstrates that being socialised into the role of the HoD can affect a person's social identity and expected behaviour at work. Parker also discusses how being socialised into the HoD role affects his home life:

Back home, my children are uninterested in what I have done today, being full of their own lives and demanding fish fingers or a Chinese take-away. Their lack of care for my life as a middle manager sometimes annoys me... (Parker, 2004, p. 54)

This leads to another question to be investigated: Do academics who become HoDs feel their personal identity changes, and if so how?

Other research suggests that in professional occupations where there is a strong sense of professional identity, such as lecturing, there are complex issues at work as people try to balance their family identity and their professional identity (Bird and Schnurman-Crook, 2005). These authors interviewed 15 dual career couples and found that all respondents were keen to maintain their sense of professional identity and that support from their partner was seen as the key to maintaining this. They identified various strategies that the participants used in order to balance their professional identity and the stresses of family life. These included compartmentalising work from family activities, reducing outside commitments, lowering expectations about maintaining household chores, and developing a unified stance on issues such as children's behaviour and other family problems (p. 154-155).

Their findings suggest that gender is still an important factor in balancing professional and personal identity for dual career couples:

Gender also had some influence on strategy choice, perhaps demonstrating that cultural schema continue to operate within dual-career families. For a majority of couples, although shared, family matters remained the primary responsibility of wives. In most cases, both wives and husbands more often referred to husband's family involvement as " helping out," "pitching in," and "covering" for wives rather than the reverse. (Bird and Schnurman-Crook, 2005, p. 156-157)

This research raises further questions for this study: How do academics who become HoDs manage the tensions between professional and home life and are these

experiences gendered? Section 2.4 explores the links between gender and academic careers in more detail.

This section has highlighted research linked to academic identity. It has identified key issues and questions surrounding the role of the HoD that contribute towards another of the study's specific research questions. These include:

- How do HoDs perceive their identity?

- Do academics perceive that their academic identity changes as they move from being a lecturer or researcher to being a HoD?

- What do HoDs perceive their main role to be?

- Do academics who become HoDs feel their personal identity changes and if so how?

- How do academics who become HoDs manage the tensions between professional and home life and are these experiences gendered?

These questions lead into another key research question for this study:

- **Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time?**

The final section of this chapter reviews and critically examines literature related to the concept of academic career trajectories.

2.4 Career Trajectories

Over the last century there has been a marked change in occupational structure in the UK with an increase in professional and managerial positions and a decrease in manual labour (Li, 2002). Research into career trajectories has historically tended to focus on

organisations and occupations but this is now shifting to focus more on the individual and on the idea of human agency: "the career contract is not with an organisation, it is with the self" (Svejenova, 2005, p. 948). Some sociologists believe that it is possible to identify distinct career trajectories and provide information on patterns of progression which could be used to give insights into social structures, social reproduction and social mobility (Pollock et al., 2002). As a result, there is a large body of national and international literature regarding careers, career paths/trajectories and career development linked to business and organisational structure (Bozionelos, 2004; Chen, 1998; Currie et al., 2006; Grimshaw et al., 2002; Hoeksema et al., 1997; Noordin et al., 2002; Valsecchi, 2000; Whitley, 2003). In the field of higher education, there is also a substantial body of literature investigating the careers and professional development of academics (Badley, 1998; Becher, 1999; Court, 1999; Gordon, 2003; Gordon, 2005; Poole and Bornholt, 1998; Roworth-Stokes and Perren, 2000) and the effect of gender on academic careers (Armenti, 2004; Bagihole and Goode, 2001; Currie et al., 2000; Fox, 2001; Karp, 1985; Knights and Richards, 2003; Krais, 2002; Ledwith and Manfedi, 2000; Mavin and Bryans, 2002; Twombly, 1998; Ward, 2001a; Ward, 2001b). However, there appears to be a lack of literature looking specifically at the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs.

This section will review literature linked to career trajectories in four ways. First, it will discuss key aspects of modern career theory. Second, it will discuss literature surrounding early career socialisation experiences. Third, it will examine the literature linked to gender and academic careers and fourth, it will review literature linked to the career trajectories and professional development of academics. Questions for investigation will be identified and these will then form the basis for constructing the two remaining key research questions for this study.

Career Theory

Contemporary career theory questions whether the concept of the traditional hierarchical career structure is still an appropriate framework to help understand modern career trajectories, as people develop more individually focused career paths based on notions of portfolio work and the "boundaryless" career. This term, first coined by Arthur and Rousseau (1996), is used to define careers that move across boundaries of different employers, rather than a career that develops within a single organisational setting. The current literature suggests there has been a paradigm shift from the traditional hierarchical career pattern within one organisation, to one where individuals take charge of their career path and work in a variety of roles within a range of organisations (Becker and Haunschild, 2003; Cohen and Mallon, 1999; Gold and Fraser, 2002; Pringle and Mallon, 2003). Dany (2003, p. 821) states that "firms no longer cause careers, individuals do". In relation to higher education, Roworth-Stokes and Perren (2000) interviewed a small number of research directors and found that they "conceptualise their career beyond the boundaries of their current organisation in the wider academic environment" (p. 140). However, other writers suggest that the concept of the boundaryless career is more complex than it first appears.

When investigating the transition of managers and professionals out of organisational employment into portfolio work, Cohen and Mallon (1999) found that their respondents actively tried to remain within an organisational structure, even when becoming self-employed. These findings suggest that people's socialisation and identity experiences of being part of an organisation may help them to maintain a sense of who they are:

*...the stories we heard were less about breaking free than about **reconstructing** the boundaries: both structural and ideological. Seeking long-term contracts with organisations, they hoped to re-embed themselves within organisational worlds...It appeared that participants were attempting to establish new employment contexts which in some ways approximated those that they had only recently left.* (Cohen and Mallon, 1999, p. 346, emphasis in the original)

This critique of modern career theory is developed by Pringle and Mallon (2003). Drawing on data from New Zealand, they suggest that as the individual agent is central to the idea of the boundaryless career this can prove problematic for ethnic groups and collective societies. They suggest that career theory needs to reflect, in part, Bourdieu's thinking that individuals' lives are constrained by their primary and secondary social experiences:

...to date, boundaryless career theorizing has erred in the direction of privileging individualism and individual choice. We contend that, given the current empirical and theorectical development of boundaryless careers, the assertion of individuals' roles in shaping social processes is over-stated. (Pringle and Mallon, 2003, p. 849)

This argument is supported by Iellatchitch *et al.* (2003), who propose a framework for career research based on Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital and habitus, developing ideas proposed by Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997), discussed in section 2.1 of this chapter. They argue that careers are multi-dimensional:

Cutting across individual, group, organizational and societal levels, careers potentially influence all these levels and, in turn, are influenced by these levels. (Iellatchitch et al., 2003, p. 729)

They suggest that it is within the career field and its associated cultural norms and rules that individuals develop their careers and that each career field values particular sorts of capital. For academics, valued capital might be related to qualifications or research outputs. The more valued capital someone is perceived to have, the more successful his or her career development might be.

Drawing on Luhmann's theory conceptualising organisations as a specific kind of social system, Becker and Haunschild (2003) analyse the effects of boundaryless careers on organisational decision making. They suggest that the notion of a career features a cognitive and normative aspect. Cognitive aspects refer to breaking down a person's life into "discrete events or social positions" (p. 718). Normative aspects refer to values assigned to positions held in the past and "thereby derives expectations about the person's future" (p. 718). They suggest a number of strategies that organisations can adopt in response to these changes in career patterns. One of these includes trying to restrict the spreading of boundaryless careers by improving benefits for staff including providing enhanced professional development opportunities. The authors suggest that in order for organisations to survive, they need to adapt to these new career patterns:

An analysis of the effects of new career patterns, however, has demonstrated that it has become more difficult for organizations to apply the form 'career' successfully in times of boundaryless careers. This is why organizations have to

find mechanisms to compensate for these difficulties in order to ensure their own continuation. (Becker and Haunschild, 2003, p. 725)

It has been argued that this shift in career patterns has meant that it is now up to the individual to clarify their own values and subjective definitions of career success, as opposed to traditional objective measures perhaps denoted by traditional job titles within a static organisational structure (Gold and Fraser, 2002). This stance relates to Clegg's (2008) research around academic identity, discussed in section 2.3. She found that several respondents maintained "highly distinctive, strongly framed academic projects of the self...based on different epistemological assumptions derived from other professional and practice based loyalties" (Clegg, 2008, p. 340). The suggestion is that some academics are developing their own concepts of being an academic, each with their own sets of values derived from their unique socialisation experiences.

The above research raises further questions for investigation: What is valued as academic capital in this study? How does this relate to an academic's career trajectory? Do the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs reflect modern career research theory? How are contemporary notions of the boundaryless career experienced by these academics?

Early Career Socialisation

When investigating the socio-cognitive influences that shape children's career trajectories with 272 children in Italy, Bandura *et al.* (2001) found that it was the children's perceptions of whether they believed they had the capabilities to do a certain occupational role that was most important in determining what career decisions they would make, as opposed to their actual academic achievement. This research suggests

that children's belief in their own ability, shaped by primary and secondary socialisation experiences at home and school, may be an important determinant of their eventual career trajectory, at least in the early stages of their careers.

Determinants of young people's career trajectories have also been investigated extensively internationally, particularly in relation to gender (Aveling, 2002; Correll, 2004; Correll, 2001; Erwin, 1997; Marks and Houston, 2002). The findings from these studies suggest that most young females expect that their career will be affected by motherhood. Marks and Houston (2002) questioned 92 grammar school girls aged 15 to 17 in the UK and found that their career plans were influenced by their anticipated role as a mother and the perception that they will be pressured into giving up work to look after any children they might have. Erwin and Stewart (1997) undertook focus groups with 85 undergraduate women in a Canadian university and found that although the participants all expected to work rather than stay at home, anticipated expectations about raising a family gave cause for concern. One of their respondents stated, "You can't have a career like a man. My plan is to get into law school, graduate by age 27, and then think of marriage and family" (Erwin, 1997, p. 212). The reasons for these perceptions appear to connect to gendered socialisation experiences and gendered assumptions about future societal roles.

Research investigating whether men and women's perceptions of their ability to do certain career-relevant tasks contribute to choosing a particular career path suggest that males assess their task ability higher than females and also have higher career-relevant aspirations (Correll, 2004). Adopting Bourdieu's reasoning, Correll argues that these perceptions are culturally constrained:

However, as I have shown, individuals form aspirations by drawing on perceptions of their own competence at career-relevant tasks, and the perceptions men and women form are differentially biased by cultural beliefs about gender. In this way, macro belief structures constrain emerging preferences and aspirations and, to the extent that individuals act on their aspirations, individual choice. (Correll, 2004, p. 111)

The suggestion that gendered cultural factors determine career choice is also supported by Evetts (2000).

The above findings raise several questions for this study: What is the family background of academics who become HoDs? What is their academic background? Did they think they were going to do well academically? What were their career aspirations when they were younger? What were the reasons behind these career aspirations? Are there differences between male and female respondents?

Gender and Academic Careers

Several researchers have investigated gender in relation to career paths and found that male and female academics have very different career trajectories (Armenti, 2004; Deem, 2003a; Karp, 1985; Poole and Bornholt, 1998; Twombly, 1998; Ward, 2001b). Reasons for this include parenthood (Armenti, 2004; Kemkes-Grottenthaler, 2003), discrimination (Knights and Richards, 2003) and gendered organisational structures of universities (Bagihole and Goode, 2001; Currie et al., 2000; Krais, 2002; Ledwith and Manfedi, 2000).

Linked to notions of balancing family life with professional identity, discussed earlier in this chapter, Kemkes-Grottenthaler (2003) investigated female academics'

attitudes towards children and their job and career satisfaction in a German university. She analysed 196 self-report questionnaires and found that those women who were childless fell into four groups: those who have actively decided not to have children, those who have postponed having children due to socioeconomic constraints, those who are undecided, and those who are too old to have children. All groups agreed that having children would reduce time and thus opportunities for career advancement: "... motherhood was unequivocally perceived as an obstacle to career advancement" (Kemkes-Grottenthaler, 2003, p. 218). Her findings suggest that some female academics are balancing decisions of motherhood with academic career development and that the increase of time involved with this career development reduces the time available for childrearing.

Research by Armenti (2004) concurs with this view. She undertook in-depth interviews with 19 women academics in a Canadian university and found that the respondents perceived that having children was detrimental to their academic career progression. She argues that her findings send strong messages to younger academic women:

...older tenured women send younger tenure-track women several messages about the difficulties of having children before securing their careers: 1) taking time off work for childcare can be harmful to women's career progression; 2) benefits for academic mothers do not address every woman's needs; and 3) having children before tenure can reduce the likelihood of achieving tenure. (Armenti, 2004, p. 77)

When investigating the career development of academics internationally, Poole and Bornholt (1998) used a lifespan perspective to research contributions to academic work in terms of gender, age groups and years of experience in higher education. They analysed data from the International Survey of Academic Profession, which included data from almost 11000 academics in Australia, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Mexico, Sweden, England and America and found that, in general, academic career development was gendered:

> *...it came as no surprise that the results suggest distinct, gendered contexts for academic career development. This is evident in working conditions, in income due to gender imbalance within academic ranks, and in the orientation of women toward teaching and students. It was also evident in an orientation by men toward research in terms of hours and productivity, involvement in governance, and particularly in levels of international activity.* (Poole and Bornholt, 1998, p. 116)

Research has identified that there is a difference between male and female salaries of between 15 and 30% within the UK (Ward, 2001a). The author suggests some reasons for this and argues that this difference causes problems for female academics who wish to have a family:

> *Rank, age, full-time work, time out of the labour market and faculty affiliation are revealed to be the largest contributors to the gender salary gap in the academic profession. This suggests limited room for the combining of an*

academic career and a family for female academics, despite the appearance of a

flexible working environment... (Ward, 2001a, p. 1680)

Moreover, Knights and Richards (2003) argue that the typical academic career trajectory is structured within a masculine discourse, according to male constructed success criteria. They list these as being research active, participating in the Research Assessment Exercise, and having an uninterrupted career history.

Other authors also agree that universities' structures and cultures are gendered (Ledwith and Manfedi, 2000). They undertook a case study of a group of senior academic women at a post-1992 UK university. From their 22 interviewees they found that "almost all women had built their careers in academic and professional disciplines associated with women's work" (Ledwith and Manfedi, 2000, p. 26). They suggest that although more women are taking up more senior positions, changing the underlying gendered structures remains a challenge for the higher education sector:

Even though the numbers of women in the academy and in senior positions looks

set to increase, it will take more to shift gendered traditions, regimes and

cultures. (Ledwith and Manfedi, 2000, p. 29)

These findings are consistent with research undertaken in a pre-1992 university (Bagihole and Goode, 2001). These authors interviewed 37 male and female staff at all levels and across all schools and found that the role of the HoD was crucial in maintaining and reproducing the prevalent masculine culture.

HoDs were seen as key figures in the production and reproduction of the 'culture' of the university as experienced by their staff. (Bagihole and Goode, 2001, p. 164)

The above research reinforces the links between socialisation, identity and career trajectory and suggests that there may be differences in career trajectories between the sexes, particularly for female academics who have had children. These findings emphasise the importance of investigating the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs using a methodology which takes into account key socialisation experiences both internal and external to the workplace. In addition, adopting a qualitative research approach allows "women's voices to be heard" (Bryman, 2008, p. 396).

Academic Career Trajectories and Professional Development

Research into the career development of research centre directors suggests that promotion within higher education is greatly enhanced by research performance over teaching (Roworth-Stokes and Perren, 2000). The importance of research in relation to career progression was also investigated by Court (1999) who used a postal survey to gain the views of UK academics on their career opportunities. He found that respondents perceived that "the emphasis on research in determining career progression had gone too far" (p. 86). From his results, he argues that:

Staff assigned more teaching and administration or other tasks because their research profile is modest or non-existent - as envisaged by the Dearing Report - will find it hard not to feel second-class citizens in the more differentiated

higher education of the future. It is up to institutions to provide opportunities across the range of professional academic tasks which avoid a permanently two-tiered career structure developing in higher education. (Court, 1999, p. 87)

This potentially conflicting relationship between teaching and research has also been identified for staff who take on management roles within a university (Deem, 2000; Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005). These studies have been discussed earlier in this chapter. It appears that as academics become HoDs and assume managerial responsibilities, their ability to produce measurable research outcomes is hindered and so, paradoxically, becoming a HoD could adversely affect their future career, particularly if they were to seek promotion in a different university than the one they currently work in. Consequently, another important question is raised for this study: How does being a HoD affect an academic's future career?

One way of improving the career opportunities for academics might be to develop better professional development programmes than the ones that are currently in place. Becher (1999) argues that few universities offer appropriate learning opportunities for academic staff in mid-career and that, in order for the profession to develop in line with others, this situation needs to improve. He suggests that universities should adopt a policy of professional development for all staff:

In adopting a systematic policy for academic involvement in continuing professional learning, there would be a strong case for 'mainstreaming' courses, consultancies and other activities. That is to say, they need to be regarded as integral rather than a peripheral, 'bolted-on' aspect of academic activity. (Becher, 1999, p. 171)

In agreement, Gordon (2005) also calls for more strategically planned professional development opportunities in higher education. He observes that traditionally, career development for researchers has tended to focus on the start of their career. Although he does recognise that this is slowly changing in response to the recent changes to the profession, he argues strongly that this needs more development and that any programme needs to take account of a person's whole career. He suggests the following areas should be considered when developing a framework for developmental support for academic research staff: support for postgraduate supervisors, support for new researchers, on-going support for researchers, management development, development of writing skills and the development of inter-institutional research strategies and alliances.

From her research into academic values, discussed earlier in section 2.3, Henkel (1997) identified a difficult dilemma for academics in relation to career trajectories. Those interviewed felt that although it was imperative to work collaboratively in order to "survive" the changing HE market and develop their department's reputation, developing their own academic research career was down to them as individuals. Juggling these two commitments, to one's self and to the department or institution, was proving a struggle for a number of respondents. These findings raise further questions: Where do academics who become HoDs feel their loyalties lie? How do they manage the tension between developing their own career and developing the reputation of their department and the staff within their department?

In relation to academic career trajectories, Deem's (2000) study, discussed earlier in this chapter, identified three typical academic routes into management:

1. "Career track" managers – these managers actively searched out promotion to managerial positions and accepted the role of manager. They were in the minority and were found in post-1992 universities.

2. "Reluctant" managers – these managers rejected the role and title of manager and were found in pre-1992 universities.

3. "Good citizen" route – these managers came to their posts late in their career. They were found in both pre and post-1992 universities, and felt they were repaying a perceived debt to institution that had employed them for so long.

Deem's research identifies important findings relating to this study but while contextual factors external to the work place are discussed, these factors, such as how an academic's personal and professional life interact, need more development. These factors could have a large influence on the participant's perceptions of their career. In order to understand the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs more fully, it is important to appreciate that they cannot be explained in isolation but need to be understood with reference to context, temporality and the individual. This technique has been identified as a key approach to career research (Moen and Sweet, 2004) and has been adopted in this study in order to fully understand the complex processes involved.

This section has highlighted research linked to career trajectories. It has identified key issues and questions surrounding the role of the HoD that this study investigates. These include:

- What is valued as academic capital in this study?

- How does this relate to an academic's career trajectory?

- Do the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs reflect modern career research theory?

- How are contemporary notions of the boundaryless career experienced by these academics?

- What is the family background of academics who become HoDs?

- What is their academic background?

- Did they think they were going to do well academically?

- What were their career aspirations when they were younger?

- What were the reasons behind these career aspirations?

- How do they manage the tension between developing their own career and developing the reputation of their department and the staff within their department; where do academics who become HoDs feel their loyalties lie?

- How does being a HoD affect their future career?

These questions contribute to the final key research questions for this study:

- **What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?**

- **How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?**

Conclusions

This review has identified a range of questions that contribute to the construction of the four key research questions that are central to this thesis. These are mapped out in table 2.1 below. In turn, based on this review, these specific research questions all contribute to the main research question of this thesis:

- **What are the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected UK university?**

Table 2.1 Construction of Specific Research Questions

Section of Review	Questions raised by review $\longrightarrow$	Specific Research Questions for Study
2.2 Socialisation	How are academics who become HoDs socialised into their roles? What role do HoDs perceive they have in developing a successful academic culture within their department? How do Hods manage the tension between teaching, research and management? Have the academics who become HoDs in the case University received any training? How have academics who become HoDs learnt how to manage? How do they deal with financial and personnel issues?	• **How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being an HoD?**
2.3 Identity	How do HoDs perceive their identity? Do academics perceive that their academic identity changes as they move from being a lecturer or researcher to being a HoD? What do HoDs perceive their main role to be? Do academics who become HoDs feel their personal identity changes and if so how? How do academics who become HoDs manage the tensions between professional and home life and are these experiences gendered?	• **Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time.**
2.4 Career Trajectory	What is valued as academic capital in this study? How does this relate to an academic's career trajectory? Do the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs reflect modern career research theory? How are contemporary notions of the boundaryless career experienced by these academics? What is the family background of academics who become HoDs? What is their academic background? Did they think they were going to do well academically? What were their career aspirations when they were younger? What were the reasons behind these career aspirations? How do they manage the tension between developing their own career and developing the reputation of their department and the staff within their department; where do academics who become HoDs feel their loyalties lie? How does being a HoD affect their future career?	• **What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?** • **How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?**

The body of research outlined in this chapter demonstrates the difficulty in understanding the multifaceted nature of career trajectories and identifies the diverse and complex influences that are acting upon academics throughout their career. It has been shown that the career trajectories of academics cannot be seen as a separate aspect of their lives, or an area that can be investigated in isolation. There are several complicated social interactions taking place, which have to be understood in terms of context, temporality and the individual.

While this may be so, there appears to be very little current higher education research investigating the HoD using appropriate methodology that recognises that a person's career does not exist in isolation at any one point in time, but is part of a complex social interaction influenced by past and current events. Indeed, Moen and Sweet (2004) argue that, in order to appreciate the dynamics of the work-family interface in career research, an approach is needed that recognises both time and context. The development of an appropriate methodological strategy to ensure that this is achieved and to answer the research questions raised by this review will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter explains and justifies the research paradigm, research approach and research methods that were used in this study. The main aim of the proposed study will be re-emphasised alongside the specific research questions the study addresses. Key methodological issues will then be discussed: the chosen research paradigm within which the study is located, the research approach that was used to answer the research questions, the participants involved with the research, the methods that were used to collect the data, data analysis procedures, the quality criteria for the research, ethical considerations linked to the study and limitations of the chosen methodology and methods.

3.1 Paradigm Rationale

This aim of this study is to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university. It aims to investigate the reasons why academics become HoDs, the experiences of academics who become HoDs, and how being a HoD might affect academics' future career plans. The main research question is:

- What are the career trajectories of university academics who become HoDs in a selected UK university?

In order to address this main research question, the following specific research questions are posed:

RQ1.   What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

RQ2.   How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

RQ3.   Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so what are those changes and how have they evolved over time?

RQ4.   How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

In order to answer the above questions, the study was undertaken from an interpretive perspective, in line with social constructivism. While it is acknowledged that there are a range of differing paradigms or belief systems in modern research inquiry (see Guba and Lincoln (2005) for a comprehensive discussion on this topic), broadly speaking approaches tend to fall between two main, opposing paradigms. These are the scientific paradigm and the interpretive paradigm, each having different ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning them. Ontology refers to the nature of reality or how the world is viewed, while epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and how this knowledge is acquired (Burns, 2000).

The scientific paradigm subscribes to the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of certain phenomena. This approach tends to view reality as objective and something that can be measured and uncovered by a neutral researcher (Gall et al., 2007; Lichtman, 2006). This stance has also been named positivism, a term associated with the French philosopher Auguste Comte in the first half of the nineteenth century and used through to the current day, and has historically been the dominant paradigm in research inquiry (Cohen et al., 2007).

The interpretive paradigm has emerged since the 1960s in response to the problems associated with using a positivist approach to researching social phenomena and from the belief by a large body of researchers that the world cannot be viewed as an objective reality but must be understood in relation to the subjective interpretations of human behaviour and experiences (Bryman, 2008). Gall (2007, p. 21) explains further:

An opposing epistemological position to positivism is based on the assumption that social reality is constructed by the individuals who participate in it. These "constructions" take the form of interpretations, that is, the ascription of meanings to the social environment. Features of the social environment are not considered to have an existence apart from the meanings that individuals construct for them.

There is much debate amongst researchers regarding exact definitions, approaches and philosophical positions linked to the interpretive paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Hughes and Sharrock, 1997; O'Donoghue and Punch, 2003; Pring, 2004). For the purpose of this study, Bryman's (2008) definitions of the following key paradigmatic terms were adopted:

*Interpretivism - An **epistemological** position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action.* (p. 694)

*Constructionism - An **ontological** position (often also referred to as constructivism) that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It is antithetical to **objectivism** and **essentialism.*** (p.692)

Thus, this study was undertaken from an interpretivist perspective regarding epistemology, and a constructionist perspective regarding ontology.

To help justify the use of an interpretive framework, it is important to look at the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions linked to this paradigm and relate these to the main aims and research questions of this study. These have been clearly identified by Guba (1990, p.27) and are shown in the table 3.1 below, mapped to the aims and research questions of this study.

Table 3.1 Paradigm Justification (after Guba, 1990, p.27)

Interpretivism/Constructionism		Links to Research Aims
Ontology	Relativist – realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.	The study investigates career trajectories of individuals by interpreting the subjective experiences of the research participants linked to socialisation and identity.
Epistemology	Subjectivist – inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two.	The specific research questions are all based around perceived (subjective) experiences of the participants and can only be answered by constant interaction between the researcher and the participant.

The aim of this study is to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university. Table 3.1 shows that the interpretive framework within which this study is positioned is appropriate for the research aims and specific research questions of this study. Furthermore, this choice is in line with the researcher's own belief systems regarding reality and knowledge.

3.2 Approach

Defining and developing the exact methodological approach for this study proved difficult because of the differing viewpoints of established researchers on qualitative research traditions:

Traditions tend to blend with or borrow from each other. Some develop many adherents or branch into subspecializations …Over time, traditions change to reflect researchers' embrace of different philosophical and scientific paradigms, along with shifts in the broader context in which scientific endeavour is pursued. Researchers who share adherence to a tradition still may disagree on epistemological assumptions and other matters. (Gall et al., 2007, p. 490)

Five distinct approaches to qualitative inquiry and research design have been identified by Cresswell (2007). These include narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study research. While he identifies the key characteristics of each approach, they all appear to have large amounts of overlap between them. Indeed, he suggests that although they are presented these as "pure approaches" he recognises that authors may "integrate them within a single study" (Cresswell, 2007, p. 10). Other authors agree and suggest that although these approaches provide a guide to qualitative researchers, approaches are often combined or a more generic approach taken (Lichtman, 2006; Silverman, 2006).

After reading about, and reflecting on, which approach to use, the researcher began to be influenced by writers who recognise that in any study of complex social situations, biography, history and contexts are inextricably linked and the interaction between researcher and informant is a crucial part of the research process (Bozionelos,

2004; Chase, 2005; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Goodson and Walker, 1991; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Josselson and Lieblich, 1993; Josselson and Lieblich, 1995; Riessman, 1993; Sparkes, 1994). These writers argue the need for narrative inquiry to help explain the complexities of certain social situations, such as the interaction between career trajectories, socialisation and identity investigated in this study. They suggest that only by using this approach can we really start to understand such phenomena. As Reissman (1993, p. 5) states:

Because the approach gives prominence to human agency and imagination, it is well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity.

Therefore, in order to answer the question, "What are the career trajectories of university academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university?" a narrative inquiry approach was used, as broadly defined by Chase (2005):

Contemporary narrative inquiry can be characterised as an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the ones who lives them. (p.651)

More specifically, a life history approach was used. Life history "emphasises the inner experience of individuals and its connections with changing events and phases throughout the life course" (Bryman, 2008, p. 695). Life histories have a common purpose to tell a story through the oral or written word (Lichtman, 2006). This is normally achieved through a one-to-one interview process (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

Wicks and Whiteford (2006, p.96) explain their usefulness to studies such as the one in this thesis:

> ...*life stories are very appropriate for understanding a lifetime of occupational experiences and for understanding the personal, social, economic, historical, and geographical influences that shape those experiences.*

It has been suggested that researchers use the life history approach for several reasons:

1. *It explicitly recognizes that lives are not hermetically compartmentalized into, for example, the person we are at work (the professional self) and who we are at home (parent/child/partner selves), and that, consequently, anything which happens to us in one area of our lives potentially impacts upon and has implications for other areas too.*

2. *It acknowledges that there is a crucial interactive relationship between individuals' lives, their perceptions and experiences, and historical and social contexts and events.*

3. *It provides evidence to show how individuals negotiate their identities and, consequently, experience, create and make sense of the rules and roles of the social worlds in which they live.* (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p.2)

The above key assumptions tie in very well with the main aim of the proposed study, as, in order to understand the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs more

fully, it is important to appreciate that they cannot be explained in isolation but need to be understood with reference to context, temporality and the individual.

It has also been argued that not only is this an appropriate approach for this type of study, it is the only approach:

I want to suggest boldly, therefore, that the life history approach is probably the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the intimate intersection of institutional and individual experience in the postmodern world. (Dhunpath, 2000, p. 544)

Life history was seen as a suitable approach for this study as "life historians examine how individuals talk about and story their experiences and perceptions of the social contexts they inhabit" (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 2). Therefore, hearing and analysing stories from HoDs allows us to understand the complexities of their experiences. It was also envisaged that, in line with social constructivism, the relationship between the researcher and the participants was going to be an integral part of the research process. This is something that life historians recognise as a key element of the approach (Dhunpath, 2000; Haglund, 2004; Hoggett et al., 2006; Sparkes, 1994; Wedgwood, 2005; Wicks and Whiteford, 2006).

Life history research has been around in sociological research since the turn of the 20th century (Goodson, 2001). The approach experienced a rapid rise in popularity with sociologists in the 1920s and 1930s until around 1940 when it fell from favour as an approach in social sciences as more quantitative, statistical approaches began to dominate (Frazier, 1978; Goodson, 2001). More recently there has been a resurgence in the use of the life history approach (Dhunpath, 2000; Wicks and Whiteford, 2006),

particularly when examining teachers' lives and careers (examples include: Ball and Goodson, 1985; Dimmock and O'Donoghue, 1996; Kelchtermans, 1993; Sparkes, 1994; Wedgwood, 2005; Woods, 1993).

The study used an edited topical life history approach (as opposed to a comprehensive life history approach) in line with other studies that have investigated educational careers (Dimmock and O'Donoghue, 1996; Ward, 2003; Weiland, 1995). This approach focuses on one key aspect of the participant's life, in this case their career, rather than discussing all their life experiences. This helped gain more focused data in relation to the main aim of the study.

Case Study

To investigate the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs, the researcher identified an appropriate case study institution:

> *An essential feature of case study is that sufficient data are collected for researchers to be able to explore significant features of the case and to put forward interpretations of what is involved………*
>
> *………Case study is a study of a singularity conducted in depth in natural settings.* (Bassey, 1999, p. 47)

As discussed in Chapter One, this institution was chosen as it is a post-1992 university and demonstrates features that are typical of its type within the university sector in the current higher education climate:

1. It is a teaching focused university but wants to increase its research capacity and reputation

2. It has a broad range of academic courses on offer, but is attempting to re-focus this academic offer by concentrating on areas of academic excellence

3. It is going through a period of structural re-organisation in order to re-focus its academic provision

4. It has a large and academically diverse student body, which has increased in recent years

5. It has a large number of HoDs in place across a large number of academic schools, each with their own unique working culture and practice

6. Most HoD appointments across the case University are permanent, although there are some schools where HoDs are appointed on a rotational basis.

It was felt that these features would produce the data necessary to answer the main research questions of the thesis, and allow the findings to be applied to other similar institutions and situations as appropriate. While it is recognised that these results cannot be generalised to all universities, it is hoped that some of the findings may be transferable to similar situations within the higher education sector.

The chosen institution is situated in the south of England. It started life as an art school in 1865, became a polytechnic in 1970 and a university in 1992. It has around 15,000 students (71% undergraduates and 29% postgraduates) based at the case University's three campuses, two close to a city centre and the third approximately eight miles away. The case University consists of eight academic schools, each with its own unique culture and working practices, and has approximately 700 full-time and 160 part-time members of teaching staff.

The case University has been going through some major organisational and cultural changes over the last two years, reflecting changes experienced across the

higher education sector nationally, identified in Chapter One. One of the key drivers for these changes in organisation and culture has been the case University's aim to "re-focus" its academic portfolio, and become better known for identified key areas of excellence, rather than having broad subject coverage. This aim was explicitly identified in a position paper circulated to all staff in 2006, and has been the subject of several consultation meetings since, ultimately ending up with all academic schools going through a period of re-structuring and re-focusing. This has led to several academic redundancies across the institution.

In line with the case University's drive to re-focus its academic offer, it has also been going through a major culture change as it tries to become more research focused. There are already schools within the case University that demonstrate research excellence, using indices defined by the Research Assessment Exercise and Research Excellence Framework, but this is by no means the norm across the institution. Consultation documents have stated that the focus to improve the research culture and research capacity of the case University is in order to improve its reputation and league table positions. The drive to increase the research culture and capacity of the case University is the source of some tension amongst staff, with people for and against this culture change.

3.3 Participants

As discussed in section 3.2, the case University is a post-1992 university situated in the south of England. While some information on each individual school's structure was available on the case University website, this was not comprehensive so it was not always possible to identify individual members of staff in HoD roles across the institution. In addition, the case University's Human Resource department did not hold

this information centrally. Therefore, in order to determine the detailed structure of the case University, including the number of HoDs in each school, the researcher sent an email to all school administrators asking for this information. From the responses to this email, the researcher put together an initial HoD structure for each school. It was clear from the data that there were different structures and numbers of HoDs in place throughout each school. Excluding deans and assistant deans, the researcher identified 53 HoDs across the institution. This meant that the case University provided a wide and varied range of potential participants in order to answer the study's research questions.

Purposive sampling, as defined by Bryman (2004, p. 333-334), was then used to identify appropriate participants:

Such sampling is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. In other words, the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions.

More specifically a stratified purposeful sampling approach was used to help illustrate sub groups of HoDs (e.g. female, male, discipline specific) and help facilitate comparisons between these sub groups (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.28). Gall (2007, p. 182) explains:

A stratified purposeful sample includes several cases at defined points of variation with respect to the phenomenon being studied. By including several cases of each type, the researcher can develop insights into each type, as well as insights into the variations that exist across each types.

Using this approach, the researcher identified potential participants from all academic HoDs within the institution.

In order to approach participants, the researcher sent an introductory email to their work email address inviting them to be involved with the study. Their email addresses were accessed from the case University's web site. The email is reproduced in Figure 3.1. It follows guidelines put forward by experienced researchers (Gall et al., 2007; Seidman, 2006) and was approved by the case University's Ethics Committee. It was worded in such a way to ensure that the recipients were not put under any undue pressure to participate. A more detailed discussion on the ethical procedures linked to this study is given in section 3. 8.

Figure 3.1 Email Invitation Sent to Potential Participants

Dear
Research Project: Career Trajectories of Academics who become Heads of Department
You are being invited to take part in the above research study.
What is the purpose of the study?
The aim of this study is to understand and explain the career trajectories of academics who become Heads of Department (HoDs) in a selected UK university. This will be done by undertaking edited topical life history interviews with several male and female academic HoDs, from a variety of disciplines, at XXX University. This research is being undertaken as part of a PhD study based at the University of Leicester's Centre for Educational Leadership and Management under the supervision of Professor Clive Dimmock. It is proposed to submit the final thesis towards the end of 2009.
Why have I been invited to participate?
You have been identified from the University Web Site as someone who is an academic head of department at XXX University, in line with the specific research questions of the study.
Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the attached participant information sheet carefully.
If, after reading the participant information sheet, you are happy to take part in the study could you please reply to this email or phone me on Ext. 8616 and I will arrange a mutually convenient time to meet?
Thank you very much for taking the time to read this email.

The researcher also attached a participant information sheet to each email. This gave more detail on the study and included information on ethical considerations about data handling, anonymity and the right to withdraw. The case University's Ethics Committee also approved this text. This allowed the researcher to outline for participants what Goodson and Sikes term the "research bargain" (2001, p. 26), in other words, what involvement in the research would entail and what both parties could expect from participation. It also allowed the participants to reflect on their career trajectories before the interview process (see appendix 1 for a copy of this document).

Other events also helped identify participants. Following one interview, a respondent said she would talk to one of her colleagues and persuade them to take part in the study. The next day, her colleague sent an email requesting a meeting, even though this person had originally not responded to the initial invitation. On another occasion, an email sent to a HoD was returned to the researcher as the information gained from the school's website had been out of date and the person was no longer a HoD. In fact, they had recently been promoted. Following discussion, the person agreed to be involved in the research to talk retrospectively about their experiences and identified other people in their school who might be interested and encouraged them to take part. At these times, the sampling procedures resembled snowball sampling (Bryman, 2008) although this was not the intended sampling strategy of the researcher at the outset of the study. This reflected the true nonlinear and "messy" research process that was experienced by the researcher throughout the study, as has happened in other qualitative doctoral studies (O'Donoghue and Punch, 2003).

In total, 17 HoDs took part in the study. This number of participants allowed for theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Theoretical saturation is achieved when, in investigating shared patterns of experience, "variation is both accounted for

and understood" (Morse, 1994, p. 230, cited in Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 23). This number also falls within the recommended number of interviewees, from 5 to 25, needed to understand a phenomenon as experienced by individuals, such as the career trajectories of HoDs (Cresswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

A profile of the respondents, using pseudonyms, is presented below in table 3.2. In order to ensure anonymity for respondents, subject areas are grouped under the following three headings:

- **Arts and Humanities** - This group includes classics, ancient history, archaeology, visual arts and media, English language and literature, medieval and modern history, modern languages, music and performing arts, philosophy and religious studies.

- **Natural Sciences** - This group includes biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, information technology, mathematics and physics.

- **Social Sciences** - This group includes anthropology, economics, education, geography, linguistics, law, political science, psychology, social studies and sociology.

These groups do not relate to the academic schools within the case University. To maintain anonymity further, not all subject areas listed above are represented in this study.

Table 3.2 Profile of the Respondents

Name	Gender	Age	Discipline	PhD
Alex	M	53	Social Sciences	No
Harry	M	62	Social Sciences	Yes
Hannah	F	41	Arts and Humanities	No
Garry	M	55	Arts and Humanities	Yes
Maria	F	59	Social Sciences	Yes
Sheila	F	54	Social Sciences	Yes
Donna	F	53	Social Sciences	No
Michael	M	45	Arts and Humanities	Yes
Miranda	F	43	Arts and Humanities	Yes
Helen	F	57	Social Sciences	Yes
Chris	M	61	Natural Sciences	Yes
Clive	M	53	Natural Sciences	Yes
Wendy	F	48	Social Sciences	No
Michelle	F	49	Natural Sciences	Yes
Rebecca	F	40	Natural Sciences	Yes
Elizabeth	F	45	Social Sciences	Yes
David	M	54	Social Sciences	Yes

Table 3.2 shows that there were seven male and ten female HoDs interviewed, with participants' ages ranging from 41 to 62 years. Nine participants were in charge of departments that fell within the social science category, four within the natural sciences and four within arts and humanities. Although these numbers appear to favour social

science subjects, this spread reflects the structural organisation of the case University as these nine participants come from four out of the eight academic schools within the institution. The academic backgrounds of each participant were varied. Thirteen held PhDs and four did not. The sample included one male and two female professors. Regarding the ethnicity of the participants, the pseudonyms chosen reflect the fact that all respondents were white; there were no participants from ethnic minority groups in the study. This is representative of the case University as a whole as there appeared to be very few HoDs from ethnic minority backgrounds within the institution. The researcher contacted three potential participants who were from ethnic minority groups, but they did not respond to the invitation.

3.4 Data Collection

In order to collect the necessary data to answer the research questions developed through the literature review outlined in Chapter Two, this study used semi-structured interviews and documentary study. This section outlines the processes that were involved in these two data collection techniques.

Interview Schedule

The interviews used in this study were semi-structured and based on an interview guide to give direction to the interview (with prompts and probes), but no fixed order of questions. This allowed for more flexibility than a structured interview and enabled appropriate probing to occur when deemed necessary by the researcher:

> *The semi-structured interview has a similar aim (to that of a structured interview) of collecting equivalent information from a number of people, but*

places less emphasis on a standardised approach. A more flexible style is used,

adapted to the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed.

(Johnson, 1994, p.45)

This flexibility in the interviewing process is seen as an essential element of life history research (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Seidman, 2006).

The researcher developed the interview guide in stages, and continued to develop the guide throughout the data collection process. Initially, a draft schedule was drawn up. The researcher based the themes for the interview on the study's specific research questions, which link to the underlying theoretical framework developed through the literature review reported in Chapter Two, namely the interaction between socialisation, identity and career trajectory. The interview schedule used in Deem's (2000) previous study into higher education management, discussed in Chapters One and Two, was also used as a guide. Before the first interview, the researcher contacted Professor Deem who kindly sent a copy of the original interview schedule used in her research. The researcher then mapped some of these questions to the draft schedule. Part of this original schedule, mapped to one of the study's research questions, is shown in table 3.3 below (see appendix 2 for a full copy of this schedule).

Table 3.3 Example of part of Initial Interview Schedule

Research Question	Interview Themes/Questions	Discussed
Introduction	*Study background and aims* *Participant Prerogatives*	
What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?	*General background* Place, date of birth, family background, childhood? Marriage, children? *Academic background* Schools, courses taken, subjects favoured, achievements? Higher Education, courses, subjects, achievements? *Career history* General work history, changes of job, types of job *Reasons for career decisions* What are the reasons behind your career decisions to date – personal and professional? Was it always your ambition to work at management level?	

The research process was "iterative and nonlinear" (Lichtman, 2006, p. 15). In other words, the researcher transcribed and analysed each interview before he undertook the next. This allowed interview questions to change as themes and issues emerged from the data and allowed the researcher to reflect deeply on each respondent's interpretations of their career trajectories (Flick, 2006; Gilbert, 2008). These analytical procedures are discussed in detail in section 3.5. Initially, the researcher interviewed two participants from his school. These interviews enabled him to develop his interview technique and experience with known respondents, which helped build his confidence in the interviewing process. Once these initial participants had agreed to be involved,

been interviewed and their data had been analysed, other HoDs across the case University were contacted. Consequently, some questions were subsequently added to the initial interview schedule. These included:

- Why did you decide to go into HE?

- What do you see as the difficult parts of being a HoD?

- What strategies do you use to manage these difficulties?

- What do you see as the enjoyable parts of being a HoD?

- Why did you become a HoD?

(See appendix 3 for a copy of the revised interview schedule)

Interview Process

The interviews were carried out in three stages. First, the participants received an information sheet, which outlined the aims of the study and gave them an idea of what to expect in their one-to-one interview (see appendix 1 for a copy of this information sheet). This allowed each participant to reflect on his or her career trajectory before meeting with the researcher. All participants said that once they had received this information sheet, they had begun to reflect in some detail on their career and their career decisions to date.

Second, a face-to-face interview was set up. Originally, the researcher proposed undertaking two rounds of interviews with each participant, but following feedback regarding time commitments and a reluctance from some people to take part if this was the case, it was decided to hold one longer single interview and then follow up any outstanding issues and queries through electronic communication. The use of such electronic data collection is increasing and allows people who are busy to fit responses into their own time frame (Bryman, 2008; Lichtman, 2006). To arrange the face-to-face

interview, the researcher emailed the participant and arranged a mutually convenient time to meet. This was normally in the participant's office. This meeting typically lasted between 1 and 2 hours. Prior to each interview, each participant read and signed a consent form, which had been approved by the case University's Research Ethics Committee (see appendix 4 for a copy of this form). This form set out the participant's prerogatives and requested permission for the interview to be recorded and for quotes to be used in future publications. All participants allowed the interview to be recorded but not all gave permission for quotes to be used. Some participants only gave this permission on condition that they could approve which quotes the researcher could use. Each interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder and was subsequently transcribed and analysed.

Third, the researcher sent each participant a copy of the interview transcript electronically and asked them to make comments, additions, clarifications and augmentations. They were also invited to add any further thoughts they had had since the meeting. This respondent validation (Bryman, 2008) ensured that each participant agreed with the researcher's interpretation of their life history story. The method of member checking has been advocated as a way of ensuring quality and rigour in qualitative research (Gall et al., 2007). Further discussion on these issues will follow in section 3.6.

Interview Technique

Several authors suggest different techniques to elicit good quality data when undertaking interviews (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Seidman, 2006; Wolcott, 1994). The researcher attempted to incorporate some of these techniques into the life history interviews undertaken in

this study. The researcher worked on two key aspects of the interviewing process, the way the actual interview was conducted and the conditions under which the interview took place:

> *The way the interviewer acts, questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship and therefore the ways participants respond and give accounts of their experience. The conditions under which the interview takes place also shape the interview; for example, the place, the time of day, and the degree of formality established.* (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 110)

It has been argued that "listening is the most important skill in interviewing" (Seidman, 2006, p. 78). Seidman (2006) suggests that interviewers need to listen on three levels. The first level is to listen to what is actually being said; the second is to listen for their inner voice by listening to the language being used to describe their experiences and work out when some points need more explanation. The third is that interviewers need to be able to listen carefully to ascertain the progress of the interview to ensure all topic areas are covered. Seidman (2006) also suggests that interviewers need to limit their own interaction and tolerate silence.

To elicit the whole of an individual's life story, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue that several techniques are required. These include using open-ended questions, and getting the respondent to tell stories of their experiences. Chase (1995) also highlights this as a key method in interview studies, and stresses the need to follow up themes using the respondent's ordering and phrasing.

In this study, the researcher made a conscious effort to ask one question at a time, used open-ended questions, and tried not to interrupt the respondent. The

researcher took notes when the respondent used different styles of language and when key themes were raised that needed expansion. The researcher followed up these issues at different points of each interview using the respondent's terminology. Additionally, the researcher used a tick box schedule to ensure the interview progressed as required.

The researcher also tried to ensure that the conditions under which each interview took place favoured the interviewee. Each participant was offered a range of possible times and dates for their interview and the researcher always stipulated that these would be conducted in their own offices. The researcher also ensured that Seidman's (2006, p. 97) suggestions regarding what should happen at the beginning of an interviewing relationship were followed:

At the beginning of an interviewing relationship, I recommend erring on the side of formality rather than familiarity. For example, an early step in an interviewing relationship is to ask if the participant minds being called by his or her first name. To do so without asking presumes familiarity, which can be off putting... Common courtesies such as holding a door, not sitting until the person is seated, and introducing yourself again so that you make sure the participant knows to whom he or she is talking are small steps. But they all add up to expressing respect for the participant, which is central to the interview process.

Documentary Study

The semi-structured interview data, gained through the processes described above, were triangulated with a number of other sources including the insider observations, knowledge, and experiences of the researcher; the analysis of key strategic documents produced by the case University linked to management culture, working practices and

re-focusing the academic offer; and individual web-based profiles of each of the participants. This supplementary data helped in the analysis of the interview data, particularly in relation to determining the overall culture and working practices of the case University, and the individual school culture within which each participant worked.

The insider observations, reflections and experiences of the researcher were documented throughout the study in the form of a research diary. This diary began as a small collection of notes and grew to become over four lever-arch files worth of thoughts, reflections, analytical writings and email correspondence. This approach has been identified as a crucial part of qualitative research practice:

Keep a journal. Write early and often. I cannot emphasise this enough. You need to write down your reflections. They can be about the process, they can be about what you are thinking, or they can be about what you found. What is critical is that you write. (Lichtman, 2006, p. 55)

Key strategic documents produced by the case University linked to management culture, working practices and re-focusing the academic offer were also used to help in the analysis of the data. As discussed in section 3.2, the case University has been going through some major organisational and cultural changes over the last two years. One of the key drivers for these changes in organisation and culture has been the case University's aim to "re-focus" its academic provision, and become better known for identified key areas of excellence, rather than having broad subject coverage. This aim was explicitly identified in a position paper circulated to all staff in 2006, and has been the subject of several consultation meetings since, ultimately ending up with all academic schools going through a period of re-structuring and re-focusing. Reports and

correspondence linked to these changes were used to help further understand the life history data. The researcher gleaned all this documentary data from the case University's internal staff publication web site and, as a member of staff of the case University, was also personally involved in these processes.

Before interviews were carried out, the researcher analysed web-based profiles for each participant. This analysis allowed the researcher to have a greater knowledge of the interviewee's past and enabled him to tailor questions for each participant. This also allowed the researcher to establish a positive and trusting relationship with the participant by establishing common ground and demonstrating knowledge of the topic area, both important aspects of qualitative interviewing technique (Bryman, 2008; Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

3.5 Data Analysis

The researcher analysed the data in two main ways, borrowing techniques from a range of reported qualitative analysis techniques deemed appropriate for life history data analysis. First, this included reducing the data by using coding and thematic techniques outlined by Bryman (2008), Charmaz (2006), Lichtman (2006), and Silverman (2006). Second, following Wolcott (1994) who argues that focused description is at the heart of all qualitative research, and a range of other authors who argue for the importance of the individual's narrated life story in life history research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Josselson and Lieblich, 1993; Josselson and Lieblich, 1995), the researcher crafted profiles of each participant in line with guidelines put forward by Seidman (2006). This section outlines the detail of these two techniques.

Coding and Developing Themes

Analysis began from the start of the interview process. During the taped conversation, brief notes were made highlighting any particular interesting details. Notes were also made about how things were being discussed and recounted. This practice recognises that interview talk is not just about the topic being researched but is also about the social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, this approach can help identify some of the wider cultural influences and narratives of the responses (Silverman, 2006).

Following each interview, the researcher downloaded each recording onto computer and then transcribed this into a Microsoft Word document. During transcription, notes were made and cross-referenced to the notes that had been taken during the interview. Figure 3.2 is an example of these notes.

Figure 3.2 Example of Transcription Notes
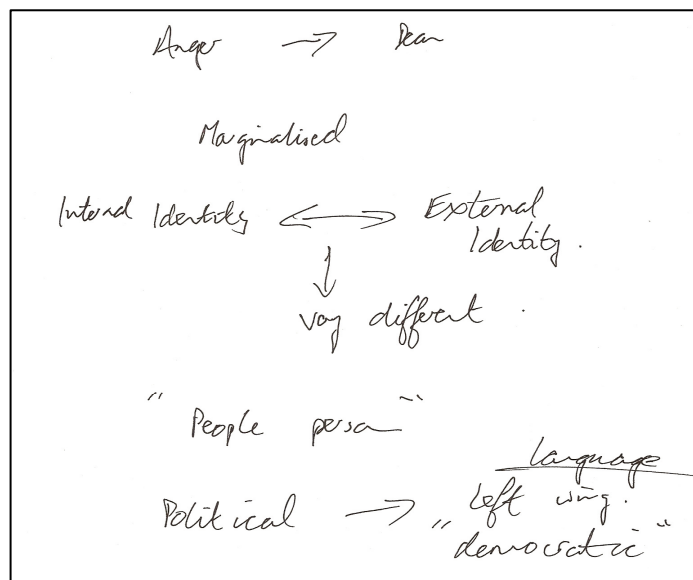
Once the transcription was complete, the researcher sent the transcript back to the participant for member checking and augmentation. Once the necessary changes and

additions had been made to the data, the researcher printed out the whole interview and began to identify codes in a column to the right of the data. This initial coding (Lichtman, 2006) was undertaken by using gerunds and by keeping the codes active and as close to the original statements as possible (Charmaz, 2006). Each transcript was read through twice during this process and different pens were used each time. See figure 3.3 for an example of this initial coding process.

Figure 3.3 Example of Initial Coding
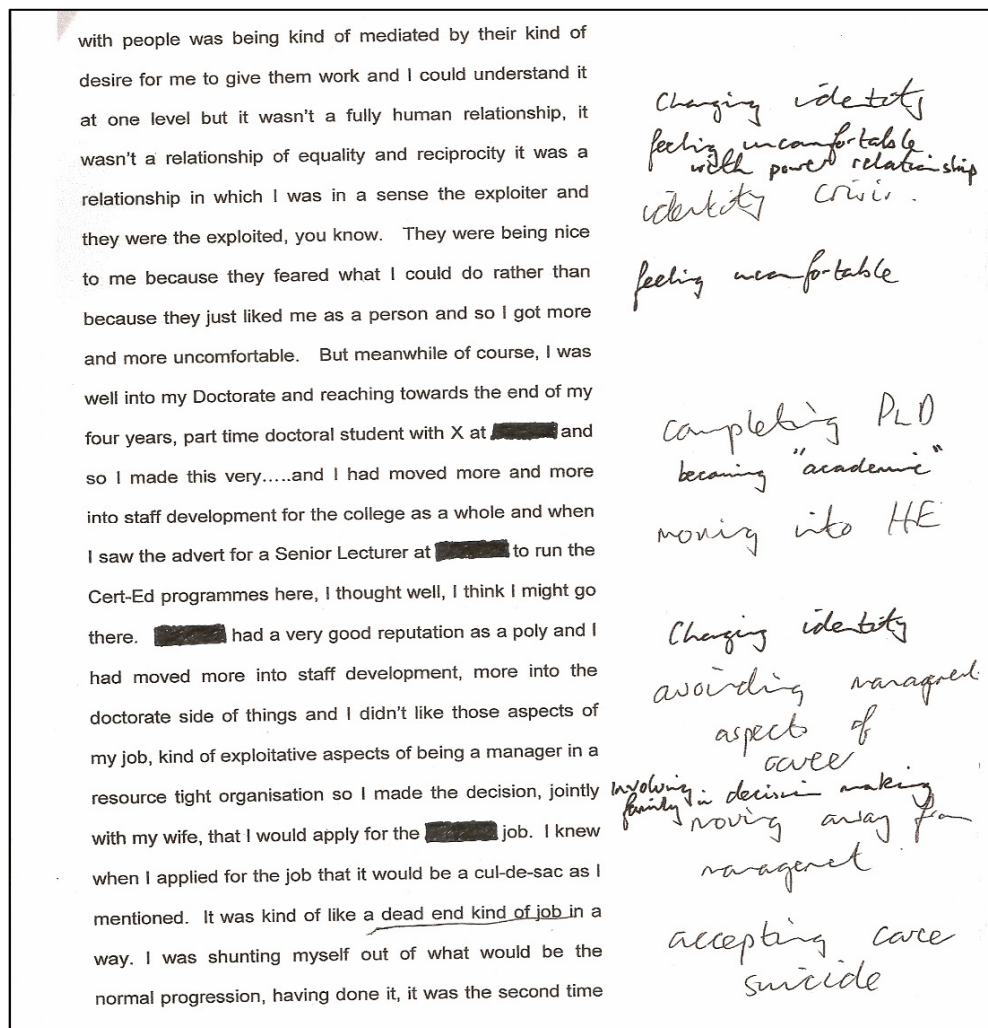
At this stage, all data were entered into NVivo 7, a qualitative data analysis software package. This software was used to help organise the vast amounts of data that had been

generated by the study. Following this process, the researcher revisited the initial codes and began to identify a list of emerging themes by merging and renaming some codes, keeping others and revisiting the literature (Bryman, 2008). Please see figures 3.4 and 3.5 as examples of notes made during this process and table 3.4 for an example of some of the subsequent themes that were formed.

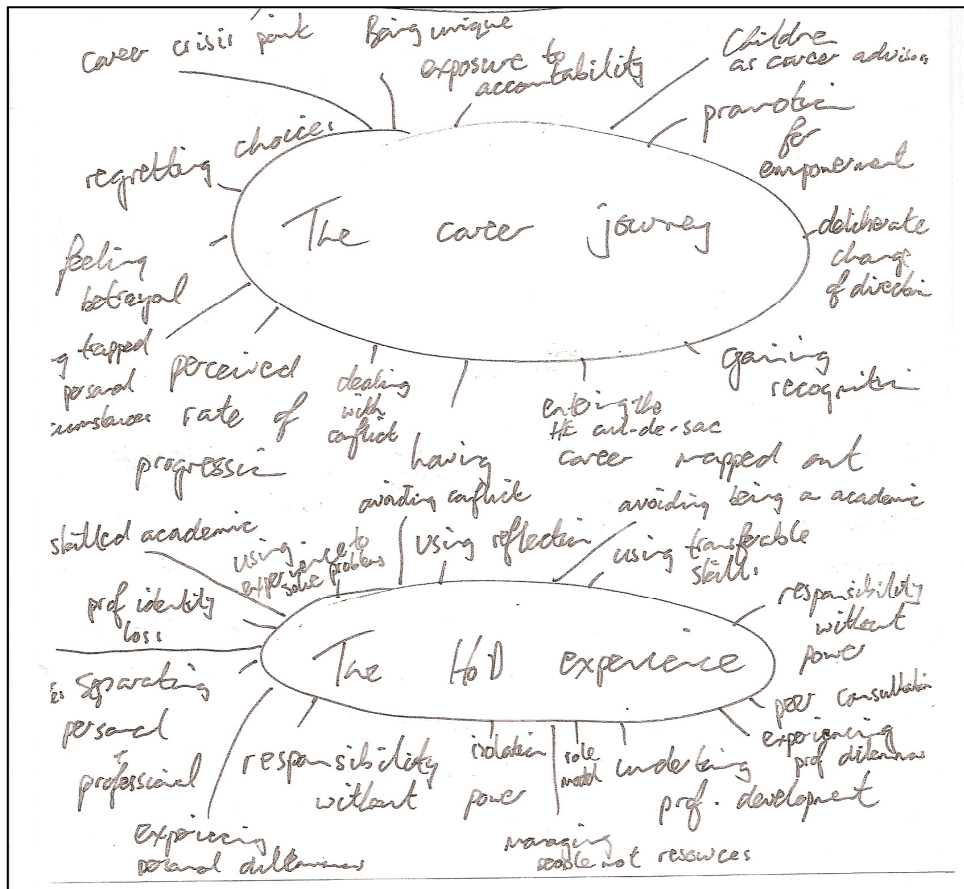**Figure 3.4 Notes used when Developing a List of Initial Themes**

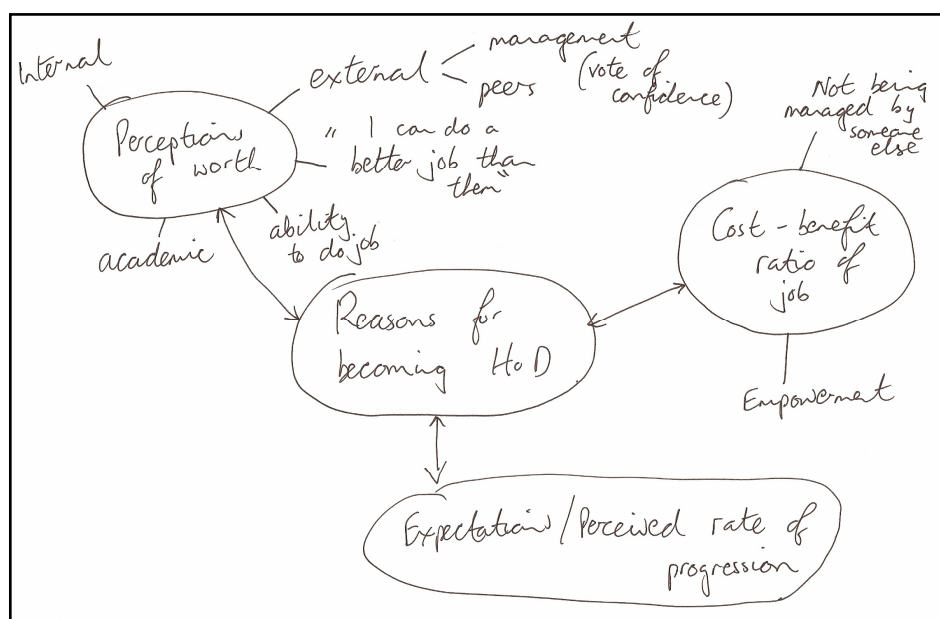**Figure 3.5 Notes used when Developing a List of Initial Themes**

Table 3.4 Example of Initial Themes

Career Stage	Codes	Theme	Description
The Career Journey (Key moments in an academic's career journey) Linked to RQ1: "What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?"	**Gaining prizes/scholarships** **Gaining Degree** **Gaining PhD**	**Becoming an academic - gaining recognition**	How some academics have gained recognition for academic achievement by being awarded prizes, scholarships, PhD attainment etc. Linked to identity formation.
	Going through a divorce **Experiencing family illness/bereavement** **Losing job** **Experiencing major work conflict**	**Career crisis point**	The point at which personal or professional factors, or both, dictate a major change in career trajectory
	Going against people's wishes **Being independent** **Breaking free of constraining influence** **Proving people wrong**	**Deliberate change of direction (act of rebellion?)**	Making a deliberate change in direction from the perceived mapped out career path, often due to family or personal influences
	Gaining control **Being my own boss** **Setting my own targets** **Not letting someone else manage me**	**Promotion for empowerment**	Opting for promoted posts to ensure more flexibility and control in your own work and day-to-day tasks.

These initial themes were then analysed and contextualised in accordance with the analytical framework of the study and further developed by drawing "connections with external authority" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 34). These connections were made with key research and writing discussed in Chapter Two. Examples of the overarching themes that were finally developed, linked to the study's first research question and including the sub themes that contribute to these, are:

- **Family background and schooling** (includes: living up to expectations, school experiences, feeling uncomfortable, critical incidents, being influenced by significant others, and following interests)

- **University and initial career experiences** (includes: living up to expectations, following interests, being influenced by significant others, and the only option)

- **Reasons for entering academia** (includes: the traditional route, the accidental academic, wanting a new challenge, gaining recognition, career crisis points, making a difference, and reflecting on core values)

- **The academic career journey** (includes: forming an academic identity, changing identity, leadership ambitions, avoiding management, and apprenticeships)

- **Reasons for becoming a HoD.** (includes: vote of confidence, promotion for empowerment, making a difference, and career development).

The findings from this analysis are presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six and discussed in the light of published literature in Chapter Eight.

Profiles

As mentioned earlier, in order to maintain the narrative of the individual's life story as constructed by themselves (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Josselson and Lieblich, 1993; Josselson and Lieblich, 1995), the researcher drew on suggestions by Seidman (2006) and constructed profiles of each of the participants:

> *Although there is no right way to share interview data,...I have found that crafting a profile or a vignette of a participant's experience is an effective way of sharing interview data and opening up one's interview material to analysis and interpretation.*
>
> *...It allows us to present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions and to convey a sense of process and time, all central components of qualitative analysis.* (Seidman, 2006, p. 119)

This analytical approach fits in well with the main research question of the study as it allows participants' career trajectories to be viewed as a whole, in narrative form.

The researcher followed Seidman's (2006) sequential method of crafting such profiles. First, following the labelling and coding procedures outlined above, the researcher selected all the passages for each participant that were seen as important and put this into one document. Then, the researcher created a narrative from this data. This was written in the words of the participant and in the first person:

> *One key to the power of the profile is that it is presented in the words of the participant. I cannot stress too much how important it is to use the first person,*

the voice of the participant, rather than a third-person transformation of that voice. (Seidman, 2006, p. 121)

The researcher also eliminated any hesitations and repetitions from each participant's oral speech to allow it to read more freely. Table 3.5 shows an example of a section of a profile. This profile has been constructed from an interview with Michael, a 45-year-old HoD in the Arts and Humanities. Michael is married with children and this particular section tells Michael's story of some of his early career decisions to enter academia, including some early recollection of his aptitude for organisation.

Table 3.5 Example of Part of a Profile

At university it was clear that I was pretty good at the academic stuff, as I got high marks in the exams all the way through. Beyond that, I also started to realise that, compared to people around me, I was quite good at organising things, in a small way at that stage, but that seemed to be something that I was good at. I was secretary of the college cricket team and I was also head of the student reps. These were just little things, but they seemed quite natural to me somehow.

After university, I went for a year to America and did an MA there. The opportunity fell into my lap because the university set up an exchange scheme and a very small number of people applied and they chose me. I was at a bit of a loose end. I didn't know what to do. I had no plans at that stage to go on to an academic career at all, I was quite fed up with it really, but the MA in America kind of re-invigorated my interest.

After that, I decided I wanted to do a PhD. I wasn't entirely sure where it would lead, but I think I probably thought that was the most likely direction of going. Like a lot of people back then, I was short sighted about where it was going in the future. I think if you talk to young people coming through now, they know from the beginning of their PhD where it's going and where it will take them beyond that. I did my PhD because I was interested in it. In fact, it turned into quite an unwieldy topic and as a career move it probably wasn't the most brilliant thing to do. Nevertheless, it was academically very satisfying.

In the last year of finishing up the PhD, I was living on the dole with my wife and baby child, so I had to find a way of making a living. I spent that whole year finishing up the PhD and writing off loads and loads of applications for research fellowships, because that seemed to be the logical next step.

Once these individual profiles had been constructed, they were analysed to identify interconnections within and between them. Four of these profiles were then carefully chosen to demonstrate the variety of different career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in the case University. It is hoped that these localised narratives of HoDs within a UK university may be connected to the grand narratives of educational and social change in the UK (Hargreaves, 1999) and that individuals' social constructions of their own academic careers can be interpreted and understood in relation to national, social and political contexts. These profiles are presented in Chapter Seven. More discussion about the generalisability of the findings of this study follows in section 3. 6.

3.6 Quality Criteria

In scientific research the reliability, validity and generalisability of any collected data are critical features of the research and link to the ontological and epistemological beliefs that underpin the paradigm (Bryman, 2008). Researchers working within the interpretive paradigm have argued that these traditional evaluation criteria do not sit comfortably with their opposing ontological and epistemological beliefs (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Lichtman, 2006; Silverman, 2001). Different criteria that has been put forward to evaluate interpretive research centres around the notion of *trustworthiness* (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). This notion is linked to scientific concepts of reliability, validity and generalisability, but is more in line with the differing ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the interpretive paradigm (Bryman, 2008). Trustworthiness is made up of four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Cresswell (2007, p. 204) explains:

To operationalize these new terms, they propose techniques such as prolonged engagement in the field and the triangulation of data of sources, methods and investigators to establish credibility. To make sure the findings are transferable between the researcher and those being studied, thick description is necessary. Rather than reliability, one seeks dependability that the results will be subject to change and instability. The naturalistic researcher looks for confirmability rather than objectivity in the research process. Both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process.

The following section outlines how the researcher ensured that this notion of trustworthiness was upheld.

Credibility

To enhance the credibility of this study, all interview data was tape recorded, transcribed and subjected to respondent validation (Bryman, 2008) where each participant was provided with the transcription and account of the findings in order to check that they agreed with the researcher's interpretation of their life history. This approach is seen as an important strategy in sound qualitative research design (Gall et al., 2007). Although this technique is not without its critics (Silverman, 2006), it was deemed appropriate for this study particularly given the fact that email correspondence was used to collect additional data during the interview process. To further enhance the credibility of the study, the semi-structured interview data were triangulated with a number of other sources including the insider observations, knowledge, and experiences of the researcher; the analysis of key strategic documents produced by the case University linked to management culture, working practices and re-focusing the

academic offer; and individual web-based profiles of each of the participants. This supplementary data helped in the analysis of the interview data, especially in relation to determining the overall culture and working practices of the case University, and the individual school culture within which each participant worked.

Transferability

The aim of this study was to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academic HoDs for the specific population studied. However, some writers argue that interpretative research findings can help others in similar positions elsewhere to understand their own situations by transferring, applying and comparing findings to their own settings (Bryman, 2008; Silverman, 2006). These generalisations from qualitative research findings have been termed 'naturalistic generalisations' (Schofield, 1993, p. 97). Schofield argues that it is possible to take findings from one study and apply them to help comprehend another similar situation. This study has attempted to provide detailed accounts to allow the reader to draw comparisons to their own experiences.

It has been argued that "any narrative is significant because it embodies – and gives us insight into – what is possible and intelligible within a specific social context" (Chase, 2005, p. 667). In order for others to compare and use the findings to help understand their own or others' social situations *thick description* (Geetrz, 1973 cited in Bryman, 2008, p. 378) of the social setting, the participants and the data collected was provided in this thesis. This also included presenting long extracts of data in the research report, as suggested by Silverman (2001, p. 230). The use of these techniques aims to aid in the transferability of the research findings.

Dependability

In order for other people to follow the train of thought of the researcher and to allow for links and interpretations to be made and challenged, an audit trail (Yin, 2003) has been provided in this thesis, detailing the whole research process. This audit trail includes information on identifying the research problem and the research questions, selecting the participants, administration procedures and data analysis procedures. This is also seen as an important aspect of successful qualitative research design:

> *Build clear, meaningful links between research questions, raw data, and the findings. Make an **audit trail** that documents the research process, covering, for example, source of and method of recording raw data, data reduction and analysis procedures, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, and information about the development of instruments. Include representative samples of materials in the report, and keep study materials for several years to permit inspection by others.* (Gall et al., 2007)

This audit trail is set out in this chapter and in corresponding appendices, which are highlighted throughout the thesis. This aims to enhance the dependability of the research.

Confirmability

As well as providing a detailed audit trail of the research process, in order to afford the reader a critical evaluation of this thesis, to allow them to have a greater understanding of the background and history of the interviewer, and to highlight the epistemological and ontological positions that have underpinned this work, the researcher provided a

short biography in Chapter One. This information helps the reader appraise the work in a more informed way and helps them detect any of the subjective, value laden assumptions that underpin the study (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Lichtman, 2006; Seidman, 2006).

The position of the researcher is especially important in this thesis, as data were collected from the researcher's own institution. Key issues relating to being an insider researcher in a higher education institution have been identified by Labaree (2002) and Mercer (2007). Perceived advantages include ease of access and a thorough understanding of the culture and working practices of the institution being studied. Perceived disadvantages include possible ethical dilemmas surrounding gaining access and the dissemination of findings, the researcher's pre-conceptions of the phenomenon being investigated, and the difficulties of disengagement from the research setting. It is clear, from these authors, that the pros and cons of insider research are not clear-cut, and that the concept of insiderness is fluid and dependent on a range of situational factors. The researcher experienced a number of these issues throughout this study. On the positive side, insiderness did allow the researcher to access participants more easily than if they had been contacted from outside the institution and allowed the data to be analysed in the light of a thorough understanding of the organisational culture of the institution being studied, but it also created ethical dilemmas. These ethical dilemmas, and the steps taken to address them, are discussed in the next two sections.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

There has been a growing awareness in recent years regarding the moral issues surrounding educational research (Cohen et al., 2007). This increase in awareness has given rise to several authors reporting on the key ethical issues that need to be addressed

when undertaking social science research. These issues include minimising potential physiological/psychological/emotional harm to participants, ensuring that informed consent is gained from the participants before embarking on the research and ensuring anonymity of the participants throughout the process (Bryman, 2008; Burns, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Johnson, 1994; Middlewood et al., 1999; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2001; Walford, 2001). For life history research, where the participants are seen very much as co-researchers, where the nature of the data can be very personal and where self reflection is a key feature of involvement, these issues are even more acute.

One of the most important ethical issues that the researcher recognised early on in this study was that each participant's life history was still being lived before and after the interview had taken place. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 63) have termed this as "being in the midst":

As researchers, we come to each new inquiry field living our stories. Our participants also enter the inquiry filed in the midst of living their stories. Their lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue. Furthermore, the places in which they live and work...are also in the midst when we researchers arrive. Their institutions and their communities, their landscapes in the broadest sense, are also in the midst of stories.

These circumstances mean that the researcher has to negotiate potentially difficult situations that may arise when undertaking each interview. In this study, several delicate situations arose during the course of the interviews. These situations included one academic whose husband had died from cancer quite recently, one who had just been

made redundant, one who felt they were being bullied out of their job, one who admitted to almost having a nervous breakdown, several who were having or had experienced relationship breakups, and one who was suffering from cancer. Goodson and Sikes discuss some of these dilemmas:

Engaging in life history work can sometimes be painful in that informants may find themselves revisiting distressing events. Some informants may be quite prepared to do this because remembering such events has become part of their everyday lives; for others the experience may be shocking, disturbing and unexpected. Life historians need to have thought about the potential implications that being involved in their research has for their informants. Although effects cannot be easily predicted, the fact remains that being in life history work can alter lives. (2001, p. 109)

The following section outlines the steps the researcher took to ensure that the research process in this study was ethically sound.

Ethics Committee Approval

Before embarking on data collection, the researcher wrote a comprehensive application for ethics approval to the case University's Research Ethics Committee. This application included details of the proposed research aims and justifications of the research; the proposed method; the investigator's qualifications, experiences and skills; when, how and to whom the results would be disseminated; participant details; means by which participants would be recruited including the wording of the email; potential risks to the participants; how the potential benefits of the research outweighed any risk

to participants; the debriefing and feedback that participants would receive following the study; details of the participant information sheet and consent form that participants would receive; and how the confidentiality of data and anonymity of the participants would be preserved.

Several comments are worth noting about this ethical approval process. The email that was used to recruit participants was worded in such a way that potential participants were asked to contact the researcher, rather than the reverse. Although it was acknowledged that this would probably affect the response rate of participants because they could not be "chased up", it was felt that this would not put them under any undue pressure to participate. This was a condition of ethics approval being granted by the case University. In addition, in the participation sheet and consent form, wording was included highlighting possible anonymity implications because of the small sample size being used in the research. In the participation sheet the wording read "there will be difficulties in preserving complete anonymity due to the small numbers involved" and the consent form read "I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications (as the sample size will be relatively small (12-15) this may have implications for privacy/anonymity)." This wording was also a condition of ethics approval being granted by the case University. (See appendix 1 for a copy of the participation information sheet and appendix 4 for a copy of the consent form.)

An excellent discussion on these ethical issues is given by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), which they link to key aspects of the life history approach namely time, context and the changing individual. They argue that it is not sufficient to assume that an agreement of informed consent reached at the start of the research relationship covers the whole study. As the study progresses and people's understanding of key events and contexts change over time, and the relationship between participant and

researcher changes over time both parties need to be in a constant state of discussion regarding these issues. An example of this is the concept of anonymity:

> *What we are trying to make clear is that anonymity is a concern throughout the inquiry. As researchers, we need to be aware of the possibility that the landscape and the persons with whom we are engaging as participants may be shifting and changing. What once seemed settled and fixed is once again a shifting ground.* (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 175)

In order to meet these challenges a constant narrative was set up between the researcher and the participants regarding key ethical issues. It was acknowledged that these issues could change over time and needed to be addressed over the course of the whole study, not just at the beginning. This was achieved by keeping in email contact with each participant, sending transcripts and asking for comments on the data.

Data Management

To ensure further the confidentiality and anonymity of the data, all information collected was kept strictly confidential. In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms were used to ensure that they cannot be identified. In addition, the case University's name was changed and specific subject areas were grouped under generic discipline names such as Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. All electronic data were held securely in password protected files on a non-shared computer and all paper documentation was held in locked cabinets in a locked office. Data generated by the study has to be retained in accordance with the case

University's policy on academic integrity and therefore will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project.

3.8 Limitations

This chapter has justified the use of life history methodology for this study. In order to provide a critical appraisal of this choice, it is necessary to reflect on some of the limitations of using this approach. Cresswell (2007, p. 57) identifies some of the problems that arise when undertaking life history research:

> *Mutiple issues arise in the collecting, analyzing, and telling of individual stories...Who owns the story? Who can tell it? Who can change it? Whose version is convincing? What happens when narratives compete? As a community, what do stories do among us?*

It has been suggested that this notion of ownership should be re-conceptualised in terms of relational responsibility:

> *...questions of ownership are not as important as are the questions of responsibilities to those with whom we are in relation. As trust develops, participants frequently give researchers carte blanche to say what they wish. Yet researchers, perhaps more aware of how texts may ultimately be read, may find themselves being more cautious about how participants are represented than are the participants themselves.* (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p177)

Other issues have also been highlighted around notions of power and exploitation (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Seidman, 2006). In this study, the researcher dealt with these issues of relational responsibility, power and exploitation by keeping a constant narrative going with each participant at each stage of the research process and following sound ethical procedures, including taking several steps to ensure respondents' anonymity.

There are reported disadvantages of using an interview as a method of data collection. One of the main problems is the influential role of the researcher in guiding the respondents to answer in a certain way (Gall et al., 2007). In this study, the researcher has acknowledged that this is a key feature of this type of research and has tried to highlight the epistemological and ontological positions that have underpinned this work to allow the reader to evaluate the thesis critically. Also, while still recognising that the data from the interviews was co-constructed between the researcher and the interviewer, the researcher tried not to lead the respondent into making certain responses during interviews and used open questioning as much as possible.

Another main disadvantage of using interviews is the time each one takes, particularly in-depth life history interviews as undertaken in this study (Bryman, 2008; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Lichtman, 2006; Seidman, 2006). This became apparent very early on in this study when several potential participants responded that they would like to take part but they felt they did not have enough time. Following discussion, they agreed to take part if the interviews were conducted over one session rather than two, and if any further data collection or corroboration was conducted via email. Thus, the researcher adopted this approach throughout the study. While it could be argued that this approach may have restricted deep reflection from the participants between interviews, it appeared to be successful in persuading people to participate. In order to

compensate for some of this lost reflection time, the participant information sheet contained details of what would be discussed in the interview and, from comments made from all respondents, this allowed them to reflect on their career before their interviews. In addition, the researcher asked each participant to reflect on his or her responses at the end of each interview. The respondent validation procedures, discussed earlier in this chapter, helped this process further.

Conclusions

This chapter has given an overview and justification of the research paradigm, research approach and research methods that were used in this study. The main aim of this study was to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university and so this chapter has justified the use of adopting an interpretive paradigm and life history methodology to meet these aims.

Key methodological issues linked to answering the study's specific research questions have also been discussed including the participants involved with the research, the methods that were used to collect the data, data analysis procedures, the quality criteria for the research, ethical considerations linked to the study and limitations of the chosen methodology. The following chapter will present and analyse the data generated in response to the first specific research question: What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

Chapter Four

Findings 1: The Professional and Personal Circumstances that lead Academics to become HoDs

This chapter presents a summary of the data collected from 17 life history interviews with academics who became HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university and addresses the first research question of this study, namely:

- What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

As discussed in Chapter Three, in order to collect the necessary data to answer the research questions, semi-structured interviews and documentary sources were used. The data were then analysed using coding and thematic techniques outlined by a range of qualitative researchers including Bryman (2008), Charmaz (2006), Lichtman (2006), and Silverman (2006). The themes that emerged from this analysis were then grouped into the following overarching themes, linked to research question one:

- Family background and schooling

- University and initial career experiences

- Reasons for entering academia

- The academic career journey

- Reasons for becoming a HoD.

These overarching themes form the section headings for this chapter. Section 4.1 discusses the participants' family background and schooling. Section 4.2 outlines their university and initial career experiences. Section 4.3 discusses the reasons why they entered academia. Section 4.4 details their subsequent academic career journey and

section 4.5 explores the reasons why the participants became HoDs. In each of these sections, the themes developed from the coding and analysis (which in turn contribute to the overarching themes) presented above, are presented as subheadings.

4.1 Family Background and Schooling

All 17 respondents came from two-parent families. Three were 'only' children and the rest had siblings. Their parents' occupations were mixed, but overall the respondents' family backgrounds fell into two distinct groups: those from a working class background and those from a middle class, professional background. Seven of the interviewees came from working class backgrounds. These included individuals whose parents were coalmen, electricians and factory workers. In contrast, ten of the interviewees came from professional backgrounds, including two whose parents were both teachers and two whose fathers were vicars.

Living up to Expectations

The participants' family background seemed to influence the expectations of the individual concerned. Those from a working class background were expected to better themselves, not end up doing what their parents did, and those from a middle class, professional background were expected to follow their parent's example and go into an appropriate profession, as indicated in the two accounts below:

> *My dad was always working and had no educational aspirations for me really, just didn't want me to do the kind of job that he was doing. He was a metal worker and didn't want me to go into factories and do that.* (Alex)

I think my father always had a vision I was going to be a doctor and I did think about it as I was growing up, but then we started doing dissection at school and I thought, 'I really don't want to do this.' (Helen)

School Experiences

In relation to their primary school experiences, eleven of the respondents went to local state primary schools, while four went to independent primary schools. Clive, who had been brought up in America, went to the local elementary school. Another respondent, Wendy, had gone to a convent school. This was not a positive experience, as she duly expressed:

Primary school was a very strict convent, and in retrospect too strict… I think a lot of the time, actually, I was frightened of the nuns, which I am sure other people that went to convents like that probably were. (Wendy)

Secondary school experiences were varied, with eight respondents going to state comprehensive schools, five going to grammar schools and four going to independent schools. It was clear that some of the respondents who had gone to the local comprehensive school felt proud of this fact, especially in relation to their current academic success. This could be detected from their tone of voice when phrasing their responses. Elizabeth and Rebecca are cases in point:

Well, I went to the local comprehensive. There were two schools, but where I lived you were done by catchment. I went to the High School; it was a school of

about 1800 pupils. It was one of the first comprehensives; I remember it celebrated its 21st birthday while I was there. (Elizabeth)

I then went into the local secondary school. It was a comprehensive. Large, 1800 kids, with a wide catchment area from the local countryside and not particularly an academic school. It was okay but they weren't aiming to be academic. It was in the days before there were targets and league tables. They probably have different aspirations now. So I got through it…I stayed on for sixth form, then went to university. (Rebecca)

Feeling Uncomfortable

Of those who had gone to grammar schools, some respondents recalled how they had felt quite daunted by this and had struggled to keep up. One such case was Alex, who lived on a large urban estate. He was pleased that he had gone to a grammar school as he perceived it to be a better learning environment than going to the secondary modern. However, he felt uncomfortable because it was unusual for anyone from his locality to go to such a school. He explained:

So I ended up going to grammar school, which in a way was fortunate in some respects as secondary moderns were absolutely appalling places of violence and non-learning, and at least there was a chance of doing some learning in the grammar school. But I did struggle; struggle right through my school career to keep up…very few people around where I lived went to grammar school. (Alex)

Another is David, who was the first in his family to go to a grammar school. He felt as if he was entering the unknown, particularly as his older brothers had "just attended the local comp". He recalled:

I went to a grammar school, which was a bit daunting. Nobody in our family had been to a grammar school before. (David)

Critical Incidents

Three respondents recalled family illnesses and bereavements during their childhood that changed their life course in a major way. The first was Harry whose father was very ill when he was young and his younger brother died around the same time:

At that time in Scotland I think there was quite a lot of TB around, big families and so forth, and my father's two sisters had both died of TB in their twenties and one of his brother's had died as well and my dad got TB in something like 1946/47, I mean not long after I was born, and he had to go into a sanatorium. So my mum then decided that she would move. I think it was quite a tough time in Scotland in those days; my younger brother actually died from meningitis. (Harry)

This experience meant that, by the time he was six, Harry had been to three different primary schools which, he felt, had hampered his early education. Harry recalled that his teachers at primary school assumed he would not do very well because he had moved around so much.

The second respondent was Alex, whose mother died when he was twelve. He perceived that this experience had made him more independent:

My mum died when I was twelve and that was very significant in terms of having to be independent in the way that I brought myself up. (Alex)

And third, another respondent, Donna, recalled how the death of her father had affected her O level grades:

My father died in the year that I did my O levels and I did astonishingly badly. (Donna)

Although Donna went on to re-sit her exams, her adverse experience did affect her transition into sixth form. Donna also never managed to pass her maths O level.

Being Influenced by Significant Others

At secondary school, all the respondents began to be interested in specific subject areas - a process largely attributed to either familial or teacher influences. Hannah reflected on how her father had shaped her interest in the subject she now teaches**:**

I was thinking about this recently. It was the one thing I used to do from a very young age. My dad taught me and I remember sitting on his knee and I remember him teaching me how to do it. And I have a very close relationship with my Dad, so I've thought about it recently actually…I have been trying to make connections between why I am here doing this job and interested in this

area and I used to get a lot of praise from my Dad, this person I used to look up to, I would get a lot of praise. So it sort of followed on that it was something that I wanted to do, wanted to engage in. So I used to do it constantly and got better and better at it. So I was sort of seeking praise through this activity and it worked and so then when I went to school I was actually quite good at it so got more praise. So, I was encouraged more and got better at it. I started going in for local competitions, won them. I was just being told that this was something I was really good at all the time. (Hannah)

Linked to this theme, although Sheila felt that her father inspired her interest in music, she felt that the freedom that she was afforded at school fostered her interest in books:

Well, with music, my dad played the piano and so I heard that and was inspired by that. And I think it was being in contact with books, I just loved books. I just liked reading stories, so I had access to that in the school and I was allowed to read the books when I was in the little class for the bigger classes. They just let me find the books that I liked, whichever class it was in. That wonderful freedom to do that I think must have just fed it, definitely. (Sheila)

Similarly, four respondents recalled inspirational teachers who had encouraged them to take a keen interest in a particular subject area. Typical comments included the following from David:

Maths was something that I found difficult until something like the fourth form when I had a really good teacher who cleared away all the kind of nonsense and just made things seem so simple. He made things seem straightforward and after that I gained lots of confidence (David)

Elizabeth also recalled an inspirational teacher:

And then I did fine in my GCSEs and went on into the sixth form and then there was a very inspirational teacher, my sociology teacher. I decided to take sociology. He was head of sixth form and he shaped my views and what I did there. (Elizabeth)

In contrast, Garry recounted the story of how a teacher had influenced his negative perception of the examination system, rather than his interest in a particular subject. This influence is reflected in his current teaching ethos, which he discussed at length, almost forty years after the event:

At which point, and remember this was 1971, so it was shortly after the excitement of the 60s and things, the school managed to find a young, long haired teacher, who I remember had a mini with doors that didn't shut properly. And he came up and we met with him after the Christmas holidays and he said to us, "There are twelve of you in this class. We have fourteen weeks before you're going to take you're A level in economics. If you do exactly what I say, I can guarantee the twelve of you in this class will pass." And essentially, what he did, he wrote twenty questions on the blackboard and he said, "Of these twenty

questions, if you know the answers of these twenty questions, I can guarantee that you will be able to answer the questions that come up." So, we did that. We went through these twenty questions, got the model answers; we learnt them and I think more than eight of us got As. So, I still didn't know anything about economics; he taught me nothing about economics, but what he taught me was that, in a sense, this business of the way that exams and stuff categorise people is a load of nonsense. (Garry)

Following Interests

Towards the end of their secondary schooling, the respondents began to think about going into higher education. For ten of the respondents, these thoughts appeared to be linked to subjects that they had an interest in, as illustrated by the following remarks from Rebecca and Donna:

I was always interested in history and languages, but I decided to do engineering. So, that was why I did all the sciences and then just as I was beginning to apply, I changed my mind. But it was always going to be that kind of science or maths side. Those were my main interests. (Rebecca)

I think music was the big thing. I played to a very high standard and when it came to a career choice that was one. I also thought about…I really enjoyed history and that was a possibility… to take history at university as well. (Donna)

Living up to Expectations

For some, on the other hand, decisions on career paths were driven by expectations from family or school, rather than a particular interest in the subject. Some individuals, like Michelle and David, followed these expectations. Michelle made the following observation:

There was a strong push to go into a career that was useful, that would give employment opportunities, things that were applied in nature. Actually, my best subject at school was history, but the idea of going off and studying history would not have gone down particularly well with my parents, I think. That was my feeling anyway, I should do something that was you know…and my father ended up working, although he was an electrician, he ended up working in the automotive industry so although he never wanted me to have anything to do with that, I could also see that for him he understood the relevance and importance of those things. That was quite a strong influence and bias really. (Michelle)

David described the experience in this way:

I wanted to do something like, I wanted to do something quite fanciful as an A level selection which would have been something like French, archaeology and economics. But the economics teacher wouldn't let me do economics unless I did maths. He looked down his nose a bit at archaeology as an A level subject, he thought it wasn't a real subject, and he wanted to steer me towards maths…I don't think subjects were ever discussed in terms of career options at the school. I think things were different in those days. You were on a kind of academic track

and the likelihood was that, from their perspective, students would go on to university. That was the kind of natural assumption that they were making and that your career would be delayed until after university and may be not even related to your university degree subject. (David)

Others, such as Elizabeth, wanted deliberately to go against these expectations and "prove people wrong":

They weren't very aspirational for me. I find I have almost kind of succeeded despite a very mediocre view of me. There was no real aspiration there… there were kids who did very, very well, but I wasn't seen in that group and I was certainly put into quite low sets for what was known as 'O' levels which are GCSEs now. But I did choose to go on into higher education - I think partly because the buggers didn't think I could. They were pretty good at trying to put you in your slot in society, I think, comprehensive schools. (Elizabeth)

This experience contributed to Elizabeth's decision to undertake her PhD later on in her career, which helped her "gain credibility". It was evident from her responses that she was very keen to prove people that she could be successful academically, even though she had been to a "mediocre comprehensive". This point is discussed further in section 4.3.

4.2 University Experiences and Emerging Career

After school, five interviewees went to polytechnics, ten went to pre-1992 universities (including three who went to Oxbridge) and one went to university in America.

Living up to Expectations

Some of the respondents felt that, in relation to attending university, they had to 'live up to expectations' placed on them by their family or their schools teachers. Examples of this include David, who went into the Army because he felt he did not have the support from his family to enter the higher education system. He explains:

> *Yes, I got my A levels and I was going to go to a place at university, I had a place at university but I didn't take it up. I was a bit confused. It was a difficulty for my family really. It was a difficulty for them that someone wanted to stay on at school after sixteen. They didn't see that as the normal course of events and all my brothers had left at fifteen or sixteen, because fifteen was the legal age for my older brothers. And staying on for my A levels was a further step, a step into the unknown for them, and going to university, particularly to do classics or something like that, they couldn't really see the point of that at all. And I wasn't getting much support from home, so I didn't go on to university. In fact I joined the army, which was a big mistake. However, we all make mistakes and that was one of mine.* (David)

Another example is Alex, who, as reported earlier in section 4.1, had experienced doubts about going to grammar school. He also experienced doubts about his ability to go to university for similar reasons: he doubted his ability because he did not know anybody who had gone to university before. He did, however, end up going to teacher training college:

The last thing that I ever believed I would be able to do was go to university. That just wasn't…I didn't know anybody who had gone off to university and when it came to that kind of careers advice at sixth form…I remember my first career advice was - what do you want to do? Work with people, put something back into society - I was advised to be a fireman. I would probably have done better in that job! What happened was I didn't apply for university because I didn't think I would get in, although I was bright enough. Somebody said, "What about going to college?" And even although I didn't know what going to college meant, I finished up tumbling into college without very much idea about what I was doing. Turned up for an interview, had a good interview, and was given a place. (Alex)

Donna also spoke of having to 'live up to expectations' in relation to the type of university she wanted to attend. Her schoolteachers expected her to go to a 'proper' university, even though she wanted to go to a polytechnic. She recalled how, with support from her mother, she resisted this expectation:

I had the opportunity to go to university proper, as they then were, but in those days, you also had insurance offers and I went to a number of interviews, for three or four polytechnics. Bristol, Manchester and another one and I really liked this other one. I liked what they offered. They did a very full on interview, presentation, which was amazing looking back and I essentially decided that I would like to go there. My headmaster had other ideas because this was bringing shame on the school, because I should really be going to a proper university. And I turned down a place to go to a proper university, so he had my

mother in and said, "Get her to go to a proper university." To my mother's

immense credit she said, "Well if that is where she is going to be happy, she'll

do well and forcing her to go somewhere else is fine, but for the benefit of the

school may not be the way forward." So, I was actually left with a free choice

and the choice was to go to the polytechnic, as it then was, and I had three very

good years. (Donna)

As reported earlier, Donna's father had died while she was sitting her O levels so this support from her mother had meant a great deal to her.

Following Interests

When at university or college, nine respondents, including Rebecca and David, did not appear to have any strong career aspirations, but were just happy to be able to study a subject they were interested in. Rebecca commented:

I don't think I thought about my career then, no. I mean it's hard to remember. I

enjoyed the subject. I made the decision to do the subject that I enjoyed most

and worry about the consequence later on. So no, I think at that stage it was just

I knew it was my favourite subject and I didn't want to not do it. So, I decided

that I would pursue that and see what happens. (Rebecca)

Similarly, David said:

I didn't think about a career then. Absolutely not, no. It wasn't like that. There

was a kind of thought at the back of my mind, you know, 'what am I going to do

with this?' Apart from anything, I really appreciated the opportunity to do it. And it was just such a privilege, I felt, to be in this environment where people asked my opinion. "Read this interesting stuff and tell us what you think about it." And stuff like that. It was like dying and going to heaven, it was fantastic. (David)

Being Influenced by Significant Others

In the same way as respondents had identified schoolteachers as being influential during their secondary school experiences, reported above, seven respondents identified university tutors who had been influential during their undergraduate study. These influential lecturers did not just inspire a love of the subject area, they also helped guide some individuals into academic career paths. In fact, during their undergraduate courses, five respondents were encouraged to undertake a PhD by their university tutors. One such example is Helen, who had decided that she enjoyed research and was encouraged by her lecturer to work with someone who was an expert in her chosen field. She described the experience in the following way:

However I became more and more engaged with the subject and in particular with research so when I talked to him about it and I said I had been thinking about doing some research, he told me about PhDs and PhD funding and he directed me towards an institution where he knew somebody who was an expert in the field I had decided I wanted to do my thesis on and things just fell into place. So, I had already by the end of I guess by the second year got a very clear idea that I wanted to stay in my subject. (Helen)

Rebecca was also encouraged to undertake a PhD by one of her lecturers. Significantly, this lecturer was the only female tutor in the department and so provided Rebecca with a role model:

Well I began to think about what I would like to do…possibly going on to further study. I decided in my second year that I would quite like to continue studying and another influential lecturer on my course…my mentor, he was very supportive, but he was away for a year, I think he was doing a year sabbatical…I had another tutor and she was the only women in the department and she encouraged me and I was thinking of applying to do a Master's course and she said, "You don't want to do that. Apply for a PhD and then if you don't like it, do the Master's because you can drop down and do an MPhil." So, she encouraged me to go and apply for a PhD. I then passed it by my family to do another three years of studying and they were ok about it. (Rebecca)

Garry was also encouraged to undertake a PhD by his university lecturers. In fact, even though he had left his undergraduate institution, he was still sent information by the departmental secretary to help him pursue a research degree. He commented:

In the third year or so, I had been doing sufficiently well, I was sufficiently interested, that I decided that I wanted to do research and do a PhD. Plan A was to do it where I was, but it wasn't entirely clear how this would be funded or whatever and in the course of my fourth year, so before I had taken my finals, a scholarship to study for a year in America came up and basically the university people said they would nominate me for that and so what happened was that,

since I didn't know how I would do in my finals and whether I was going to get

funding for my PhD, I said yes to this scholarship…whilst I was in America, the

people at my old university were very, very helpful. The departmental secretary

kept on sending me scholarships that could fund PhD work, and one scholarship

she sent me was for a scholarship at Oxbridge, so I applied for that from

America. (Garry)

The Only Option

In contrast to the examples given above, Sheila undertook a PhD not because she had

been encouraged to, but because she felt her other options were limited:

Yes, I did my first degree. I applied to loads of places but I wanted to do, I'd

done student radio and student journalism so I applied to do something

connected with radio and journalism and I just didn't get anywhere, I just didn't

get interviews, there was just nothing happening. So then I got a scholarship to

do a PhD and I began to do that. (Sheila)

Sheila did not go on to complete her PhD at that point. Sheila's career trajectory is

documented in detail in Chapter Seven.

4.3 Reasons for Entering Academia and Initial Experiences

The Traditional Route

Four respondents who earned their PhDs in the years immediately following

undergraduate study went straight into research or academic positions in universities.

Three went into post-doc. research posts and two of these ended up quite early on in

their academic careers at the case University. Chris talked about how he had been taken on as a temporary lecturer, but in time had gained a permanent post:

Once I had done my PhD I got a fellowship to go to France, Paris, and was there for two years. And then I was going to come back to carry on the post-doc, develop what I had done in Paris with my supervisor, but he was killed in a plane crash and that fell through. I spent two years or 18 months I suppose out of work, then I got a two-year research position at a pre-1992 university and then as that money was running out, a temporary lectureship came up here covering a sabbatical. When the person came back, they managed to find a permanent post for me and kept me on here. (Chris)

Michael also began his career at the case University on a temporary contract. He discussed how hard it had been trying to enter academia, especially with the added pressures of trying to support a young family:

In the last year of finishing up the PhD, I was living on the dole with my wife and baby child. I spent that whole year finishing up the PhD and writing off loads and loads of applications for research fellowships because that seemed to be the logical next step and I wrote loads and loads and eventually got one. At that stage, I was 27. It was for four years and they call it Junior Research Fellowships and it's really a post-doc, you're really a glorified grad student rather than part of the institution hierarchy…After that I was obviously looking for teaching jobs, at that time anyway, and in autumn of 1994 the department here advertised. They had small amounts of money to try and develop

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departments and they had some of this money and they advertised a very short term, low paying position which I went for. And I got the position. So I started here, on this three year contract, in January 1995. (Michael)

Two other respondents with PhDs managed to secure jobs in pre-1992 universities. Rebecca secured a teaching contract:

Well I needed a job. That was fairly clear. Find something to do. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do but a guy in the department who was very encouraging to a group of us saw an advert for a job at a pre-1992 university and said, "Why don't you apply?" So I did and I got the job. It was a teaching fellowship, so they were just looking for somebody to do temporary teaching for a year for somebody who was taking a year off and so it wasn't a traditional post doc position. It wasn't research. It was a teaching position and I thought I could do it so I went to do that. And again that was slightly diverted from the usual academic career track, which is a PhD, post doc, then lecturing. I went straight into this teaching position. (Rebecca)

The other respondent, Helen, gained a position in the institution where she was studying for her PhD, because her supervisor left:

Well, I hadn't quite finished my PhD. I had done two years full time and I had done six months part time and then my supervisor left and I got employed. (Helen)

Following a brief spell as a university administrator, Hannah, an Oxbridge graduate who had gained an MA the following year, also embarked on an academic career:

I just started applying for things. I applied for a research fellowship at a pre-1992 university, got that, and did that for a year, and that was really the start of a career in academia. So, I was a research assistant for a year and did quite a bit of teaching actually, undergraduate students. They kept me on after the year as a part-time lecturer and I ended up staying there for about seven years in different forms. So, I sort of learned on the job. (Hannah)

Clive also entered academia straight from university, but did not complete his doctorate until later in his academic career.

The other twelve respondents all went into other jobs and careers including teaching, the army, law, the ministry, the civil service, nursing and industry. There was a range of different reasons why these respondents began to think about and pursue an academic career. These reasons are outlined below.

The Accidental Academic

Donna and Maria felt that they fell into working in academia, almost by accident. They both recalled how they had not previously thought about such a career move. Donna commented:

I had no intention of entering academic life at all, but there came a point in my professional career when really, you know you've done the job and it would

have been delightful to stay on, but the career development aspect of it was lacking…you get to a certain point and you think, 'I've done the job, I need to move on.' I applied to a range of jobs and, as an insurance, there was a job advertised at the same time at a university which was right in my field, which I applied for.   Out of the four posts I applied for, I was left with the choice, the realistic choice, of either doing one and earning a fortune, or looking at the academic option. And I can't really explain why, but in the end I decided that I would take the academic route with the intention of doing it for about five years and then going back to my previous job role. So, that's what I did. (Donna)

Maria described her move into academia as follows:

For the last couple of years of my previous career I had the opportunity to work with a pre-1992 university as a tutor, which I had never really considered, to be honest. I had never thought of having any kind of academic career but I found that I got on well, enjoyed it, so I then did a Master's and then later…I also got married at the same time; I had my child so I had a natural career break…then went to work in a polytechnic for a couple of years and then got a job here. And since I have been here I have completed my PhD. (Maria)

Wanting a New Challenge

Others, such as Elizabeth, felt it was because they wanted a new challenge and went back to university to take Master's or PhD level courses:

I had already got a degree and was getting a bit bored with my job after a couple of years. I negotiated to go onto university to do my Master's degree, so I obviously clearly had got a bit of a bent for doing further study. And it was a Master's degree at a time when other people in my profession weren't doing it...And I finished that, but I was still bored with my job. Now, my boss said she couldn't give me anything else and I was a bit bored and a job came up at a pre-1992 university, which was a PhD studentship where you got 150 hours of teaching and you got your bursary. So, you got your postgraduate grant and they paid your fees. And I was on maternity leave, so it's a transition in your life anyway. I applied for that and got it, because there's probably not that many people willing to give up a fulltime salary, pension and car. So, in a way, there wasn't a lot of competition and it just fell into my lap really. (Elizabeth)

Gaining Recognition

Elizabeth also wanted to gain recognition because, as highlighted earlier in section one, "the buggers didn't think I could do it"; she still wanted to prove that she could do better than other peoples' expectations of her at school:

I wanted a PhD. I quite liked that, chasing that goal. I don't know why. I had done well getting my degree, then I got my Master's. As I said, first in the family into higher education, it just seemed another good badge to give you credibility. I wasn't against doing research, but I didn't enter it feeling any great passion. (Elizabeth)

Career Crisis Points

Four respondents experienced crisis points in their personal lives, which led them to reflect on what they wanted out of life and their career. Alex's story is an example of this. He had just been through a divorce when his father died, and this proved to be the catalyst for a career change into academia:

> *But things had happened in my personal life. I had got married at the age of thirty-six. I had been with my partner for quite a while. We had had ups and downs, but we got married. But then we split again in 1995, so that was a prompt for me. And then my dad died which was quite significant, because there was nobody else in my family and so there was an opportunity in a way to look at life afresh. So, I kind of walked out on everything that was happening. I resigned from my job...There were all kinds of personal issues around that meant I was making this definite career move, if I wanted a career, that was going to give me flexibility. I hoped the university would give me flexibility and so I took the pay drop and the lower status here in a way for personal reasons.*
> (Alex)

Making a Difference

Four respondents wanted to move into a role where they were working with people and feel as if they were making a difference. This is reflected in the following comment from David, who wanted to move away from his systems-related job role, which he felt did not have enough of a human element to it, into a career that entailed working with, and helping, people:

I thought it would be interesting and I thought that…. I think the attraction of education is that it is more dealing with people than just systems. I mean my role was focused largely on an information system, data coming in, processing it in a certain way and producing reports and things like that. So, it's kind of systems orientated, whereas education is more people focused and I think that was the attraction. (David)

Similarly, Michelle perceived that her move into teaching and researching in the case University, then a polytechnic, was important and something that she really believed in:

It was one of those dream moments and I just thought, 'that's what I'd really like to do. That's what I want to do.' Again, I realised it was something I really believed in, just something that was so important and I could see the point of it and it was all the stuff coming together for me. (Michelle)

Reflecting on Core Values

Harry began to do a PhD in order to help him understand and reflect on the difficult job role he was experiencing and this led to a move into academia. In addition, he was keen to move away from aspects of his job with which he felt uncomfortable:

It was difficult. It was a very, very difficult job. So, I decided to do a doctorate in professional development because I thought, ' I have a professional development job basically and I need some kind of platform basis to stand back from what I am doing and understand it in a kind of dispassionate way'… I was well into my

doctorate and reaching towards the end of my four years and so I made this very...and I had moved more and more into staff development. As I had moved more into staff development, more into the doctorate side of things and I didn't like those aspects of my job, kind of exploitative aspects of being a manager in a resource tight organisation, I made the decision, jointly with my wife, that I would apply for the lecturing job here. (Harry)

Harry's profile of his career trajectory is outlined in Chapter Seven.

4.4 The Academic Career Journey

Forming an Academic Identity

Once working in academia, respondents felt that they began to form distinct academic identities in their job roles involving teaching, research or both. In the following example, Rebecca describes how she was initially scared of standing in front of a group to teach, but gained confidence and began to enjoy it. In the light of this, Rebecca had deliberately chosen to work at the case University, as she perceived it to be a teaching institution, that is, the type of environment where she would feel comfortable:

I mean at first lecturing was quite terrifying. I had never been somebody who was very comfortable at standing up in front of a group. If you told me as a school child that that's what I would do for a living I would have been horrified, but after a while you get used to it and I enjoyed it. It was very challenging and I enjoyed some of the topics that I was going to teach, some of them became really strong interests in my subsequent research which was good.

I took the job here because it was very much a teaching institution, certainly at the time, and seemed like somewhere I could fit in. (Rebecca)

Another example is Wendy, who also viewed herself as a teacher and chose to work at the institution because she perceived it to be a teaching university:

Well I always enjoyed, as you will have picked up, I always enjoyed the teaching side of it, and…moving here didn't remove me from teaching. So, I could still do the teaching. (Wendy)

In contrast, other respondents, such as Elizabeth, viewed themselves more as researchers:

At that point, I did think of myself as more of a researcher. I was research active; I had just been entered into the RAE and things. (Elizabeth)

Some respondents, such as Chris, saw their academic identity as involving both research and teaching. He deliberately wanted to avoid taking on other responsibilities at the case University so he could develop both these roles:

Well, I have to say, since joining here I kept my head down. I just wanted to keep on doing research and teach. (Chris)

Changing Identity

Five respondents found that although they started their academic careers as researchers, they became more and more interested in the teaching aspect of the job role and now perceived themselves to be teachers rather than researchers, as the following example illustrates:

> *So I got the job and things have gone downhill ever since in terms of my research because I think that one of the things that has happened to me since I've been here is that I've got really interested in the practice of teaching. I think the whole student centred aspect of here has rubbed off on me in a big way...I was, and still am, very student centred and have got very interested in the practice of teaching.* (Hannah)

Leadership Ambitions

Fifteen of the respondents recalled that before they became HoDs, they had no ambitions to become an academic leader. Clive was adamant that he wanted to avoid any such roles:

> *Yes, I did have thoughts about it. It was thoughts of the type, 'I never want to do that. I will try to steer a course to avoid getting into that.'* (Clive)

Chris also talked about his lack of ambition and the fact that his academic career path had not been planned, although this was more a perceived lack of ambition in general, rather than just about taking on a management role:

Nothing has been…nothing has been planned. It's just as these things have come up, things have evolved and it's in people's eyes, "You're the guy to do it. Will you do it?" "Yeah." I don't think anything I have ever done…I have never bothered, never looked to see if I could advance anywhere or go anywhere. I have applied for a couple of jobs at other places, but I never really felt that I really wanted to move. My wife nagged me a bit, so I did. Then I let it go. I have always enjoyed working here. Teaching is fun. And that is basically it. So, I am not really a particularly good subject as I have all the ambition of a dead slug. (Chris)

Michael also discussed that he did not perceive himself to be ambitious, but felt it was appropriate to take his turn for the benefit of the department:

I mean it wasn't that I was madly ambitious to do it like, "Gosh I'm department head!" it wasn't like that at all. We very much saw ourselves back then as a team in which you took turns to take on these responsibilities. And it was my turn, so I thought, 'Well, let's have a go.' (Michael)

Of the two respondents who did see themselves being promoted into leadership roles, Helen, who had been promoted to a professorship at a pre-1992 university before coming to the case University, wanted to be promoted in recognition of her research:

I think I wanted recognition of my research experience. I don't think I probably applied as early as I might have for my promotion, partly because I had a daughter which did have an impact on that and I think one of the effects of that

was that it probably made it a bit less important to me. My daughter was very,
very important especially when she was little. I did expect to get promoted, but I
wouldn't say it was a major motivation. I mean I've always done research
because I've enjoyed it and taking on administrative posts in an old university
typically doesn't get you promotion. Again it's strange here that taking on an
admin role gets you promotion because it didn't there. One was effectively
promoted on the basis of one's research excellence, not anything else. (Helen)

Rebecca also saw herself being promoted for research reasons, rather than her management abilities:

I don't think so. I mean it was just a step on the ladder and I don't think I had
any clear… I liked the idea of eventually getting to be a professor. I thought that
would be nice. I haven't got there yet, but there is still bit of time. But I didn't
really think in terms of my management at that time. I was just happy to be
getting on with the teaching and the research. (Rebecca)

Avoiding Management

Of the twelve respondents who had made a mid-career move into academia, five respondents had made a deliberate career move into higher education to avoid management roles. The following two examples reflect these views. Wendy discussed how she had felt uncomfortable with her previous management roles and did not want to be a manager again:

To begin with, I thought, 'I don't want to be a manager again.' Its funny isn't it? What I would love to have been able to do was to have the experience that I've got now when I was first a manager. But you only have the experience you have now because of the management jobs you've gone through. And, you know, there are a number of management things that I was having to deal with when I was in practice that were very uncomfortable; that in retrospect now I would handle differently or would be more able to cope with, but at that time I was kind of a bit shell-shocked by the whole thing and I thought, ' I don't want to go into management again.' (Wendy)

Harry had also decided to move away from being a manager:

I had deliberately left that kind of managerialist world behind. (Harry)

Another respondent, Donna, thought she would only be in academia for a few years and so would not be there long enough to take up a management position:

…at that stage I was still expecting to go back to my previous job role. A lot of people in that generation did very much the same thing - would do five years and then go back into practice. So when I started out, I didn't think I was going to be staying in academic life for a long time. So no, it wasn't something I was looking at. (Donna)

Apprenticeships

Ten of the respondents had gained experience as a course leader before becoming a HoD. For many of them, this appeared to be a good apprenticeship before taking on a HoD role. It was not, however, a job role that was taken on willingly, as Rebecca explains:

> *I think that was the first time I had any admin role apart from minor things to carry out. To be honest I didn't really want to do it and I felt I had been forced into because everybody stood back and I was the only one. I mean I was more told, rather than asked, "You have been elected to be the Course Leader". The head of the group said that it was my turn and I wasn't very excited by that. But it was okay and not as bad as I thought it was going to be. But I didn't really think it was my turn. I felt that there were other people who could have done it. There was quite a bit of aggro about it at the time. There were several course leader roles and all of us who had been given them didn't want them. And now look. I am in management, but there we are.* (Rebecca)

David also recalled how he was reluctant to take on this role, although he saw it as being a valuable experience:

> *Yes, one of the management roles was a kind of course director role here and I think the policy within the department was that it was quite an irksome thing to do and they gave it to the new guy. It was that kind of thing. It wasn't exactly promotion. I took on the role. I was taking my turn. It was interesting and it certainly helps you to get to know the way things work, the course structures, the*

regulations that kind of thing, and I think that is very valuable. It was fine. It was administration more than managing I would say. There wasn't much influencing of people or that kind of thing, not a huge amount of that. No, it was okay. I preferred teaching, to be honest. I preferred being in contact with the students. (David)

Michelle became course leader in order to try and make some changes, but she felt that taking on this role was going to be at a cost to her research profile:

…but what happened then was I took on being the course leader for our biggest degree programme because I wanted to do things. I wanted to make changes and I realised then that I was going to get sucked into all. That although my research was going well, and it was, although I still hadn't finished my own PhD, I was going to get sucked into some of this. (Michelle)

4.5 Reasons for Becoming a HoD

Respondents gave several reasons for why they became HoDs. These included gaining a "vote of confidence" from someone in authority by being asked to take on the role, attempting to gain more control over their working life, making a difference, and for career development. It was clear that these reasons were also entwined with personal situations, as the following example shows:

Why did I apply for the job? Well I had been commuting quite a way for ten years. It was the job that was available and the woman who was appointing told me to apply for it. Now, I had thought about going to Southampton to follow

more of a research career, more an academic type of career. That was the trajectory I was on really. But, you know, I was talking with my husband, "Shall I buy a caravan and stay overnight two nights a week?" I didn't want to do it full time, I've got two children. Suddenly I've got the opportunity to come here, be more senior, be paid better, be full time, be local…It was kind of like a job made for me, in a sense until I got here. It was a bit of a shock. But in a way 'Why wouldn't I?' would have been the question. If I hadn't taken this job, why wouldn't I have taken it? (Elizabeth)

Vote of Confidence

Eight respondents were persuaded by their managers to apply for the role of HoD. This vote of confidence helped them realise that they would be able to take on the role successfully. In the following example, Rebecca, who did not feel quite ready for the job role at the time, describes how being asked to take on the role confirmed to her that she could do it:

In 2003, my HoD decided to take early retirement and I was at a conference at the time and got the e-mail saying, "By the way I will be retiring at Christmas." This was Easter, and so I was really surprised as it really was fairly early. I don't think he was quite 60. He had been doing the job for 20 years, and I did think maybe I should be head of department, but I didn't feel quite ready for it at the time. I was still relatively young in those days. And the dean of the school called me in to talk to me and said she thought I should apply for the job. This confirmed that she thought I would be able to do it and, although it wasn't exactly the timing I would have chosen, I applied and I was the only candidate

and I got the job. I also thought that I would rather that I was in charge instead of somebody else. It was an internal appointment and I felt I could do a good job and it was important. (Rebecca)

Hannah also recalled how she did not think she was ready for the role, but her manager persuaded her to apply:

And then the head of department job came up and the ex-head of school kept saying to me, "You've got to apply to it, you've got to apply to it." I said, "I just don't know. I don't want to go through all that and not get it." He was telling me to apply as he thought I would get the job. Naively I thought, 'Strange. Maybe he's got no one applying.' So I applied, a bit daunted really, thinking, 'Well I don't know what I'm getting myself into, but there is an opportunity here for something so let's try, see if I get it.' And I suppose I had the view that you can't do anything, but you don't know if you can do it until you try it, and if other people think you have enough capability or experience in a certain area to do it, then it can't be that difficult. (Hannah)

Promotion for Empowerment

Seven of the academics perceived that taking on the HoD role would allow them much more flexibility and control over their working environment, as Alex commented:

What I really have been driven by, and I think this has been a feature of other so called career progressions where I have gone into high levels of management within my career, I have been motivated by a desire to either clear a space for

myself or to have a greater control of my own destiny or working environment.

And that's been a greater motivator than it has been to be a manager or in a

leadership role. I think that has happened here. The jobs have come up and it's

been if I don't do this, then I'll have to go back and do… five hundred hours is

attached to this role, that 500 hours I'll be teaching and it's not what I want to

do. At least if I do this I might be able to create some space to do the research

which I wanted to do. I've still not done that. Nine years this year working here

and I've failed to enrol for doctoral study. (Alex)

Five academics applied for the position of HoD in order to ensure they were not managed by people they felt were not up to the job. An example of this is Wendy, who explained:

I think they were kind of twofold. Part of it was ambition and the other part of it

was the first time they advertised it, which was six months earlier, they had a

couple of people applied who then actually dipped out. And so, they then had to

re-advertise and when it was re-advertised I knew a couple of the people who

had applied for it and actually thought, 'I could do a better job.' And I thought,

'Do I really want to be managed by them?' And I thought, 'No, I could do this

better.' So that was part of the thinking. It was partly ambition and also, 'No I

don't want to be managed by other people, I'd rather do this myself.' (Wendy)

Making a Difference

Nine of the respondents talked about how taking on the role would allow them to make a difference. David wanted to take on the role because he felt his former experiences and contacts would make him useful to the department:

> *I felt I could be useful to the department. I felt I would enjoy being influential and that I'd enjoy the role. I would enjoy maintaining and using my contacts with the wider school.* (David)

Sheila took on the role to save her colleagues from someone she perceived to be problematic and to make positive changes to the department:

> *So I went for it for a number of reasons, not because I was desperate to be head of department, but because I thought it would save the group if somebody was there who could work with her. And I thought it would save me from a job that was impossible, you know just not viable…In a way everything I have done pointed to that as being okay for the next move. I've always run teams and run courses, you know run course teams. I have always enjoyed doing that. And I could see I'd learned a lot about bad management from the people around me, so I thought, 'if you just let me do that I am sure I can make that happen.'* (Sheila)

Career Development

Only four of the participants mentioned that they had taken on the job role for career development. Those that did, such as Donna and Michael, came from very research

active schools, where the job role was more heavily linked to research development than departmental management. Donna commented:

My main reason was career development. Although I had been effectively a head of department as an acting head of department for some time, I had also been a deputy, it was time to move on. I think the freshness and a new challenge and in a different place, with a different group of people. I have to say it was the job as head of department, but also the place in terms of my research. So there was a particular research connection both at this institution and a nearby institution that made it very attractive to come here because my specialism is very particular and very small so that was an added advantage. So, yes, career development mainly. (Donna)

Michael recalled how he thought it might help his future career path:

That's a good question. I can't really remember. I think my philosophy at that point was take anything you're given because it could lead on to something and I just thought turning anything down would be silly at this point. (Michael)

Conclusions and Summary of Findings

This chapter has presented data to address research question one of this study:

- What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

It has examined the participants' family background and schooling, their university and initial career experiences, the reasons why they entered academia, their subsequent academic career journey, and the reasons why the became HoDs. The following is a summary of these findings:

- All 17 respondents came from two-parent families. Seven came from working class backgrounds and ten came from middle class, professional backgrounds

- Eight respondents went to comprehensive schools, five went to grammar schools and four went to independent schools

- Families and teachers influenced subject interests at secondary school

- For some, decisions on career paths were driven by expectations from family or school. Some respondents followed these expectations; some deliberately went against them

- From school, five interviewees went to polytechnics, ten went to pre-1992 universities (including three to Oxbridge), one went to university in America and one went into the army

- Five respondents were encouraged by their tutors to undertake PhDs during their undergraduate courses. Four of these individuals went straight into careers in academia, along with one respondent who entered academia following her Master's course

- The other twelve respondents went into other jobs and careers including teaching, the army, law, the ministry, the civil service, nursing and industry

- Reasons why these individuals pursued academic careers later in life included wanting a new challenge and wanting to make a difference

- Once in academia, respondents began to form academic identities as teachers, researchers or both. Some respondents felt that they had changed from perceiving themselves as a researcher to being a teacher

- Only two of the respondents had ambitions to become an academic leader before they became HoDs. Those that did wanted recognition for their research.

- Course leader roles were perceived to be useful training for becoming a HoD, but these were not taken on willingly

- Respondents gave several reasons why they became HoDs. These included gaining a "vote of confidence" from someone in authority by being asked to take on the role, attempting to gain more control over their working life, making a difference, and for career development. It was clear that these reasons were also entwined with personal situations.

These findings will be discussed in the light of published literature in Chapter Eight. The next chapter will present data linked to research question two of this study: How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

Chapter Five

Findings 2: Perceptions of being a HoD

The following chapter presents a summary of the data collected from 17 life history interviews with academics who became HoDs in relation to the study's second research question, namely:

- How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

The chapter is arranged in the same format as Chapters Four and Six. The data that emerged from the analysis procedures outlined in Chapter Three have been grouped into the following overarching themes, linked to the above research question:

- Defining the role

- Role socialisation

- Role difficulties

- Coping strategies

- Enjoyable parts of the role.

These overarching themes form the section headings for this chapter. Section 5.1 discusses how HoDs define their role. Section 5.2 explores HoDs' recollections of how they were socialised into the role. Section 5.3 identifies what HoDs perceive as the difficult aspects of the job and section and 5.4 discusses some of the strategies that HoDs use to cope with these difficulties. Finally, section 5.5 explores HoDs' perceptions of the enjoyable parts of the role.

5.1 Defining the Role

Participants identified wide ranging and differing sets of experiences of what a HoD does, including leading research, leading teaching, and leading administrative duties, such as workload planning. Each respondent undertook these tasks to a varying extent and the extent to which each of these tasks were experienced appeared to be dependent on the culture of the particular school, which, in turn, appeared to differ considerably across the case University. When asked to define the role of an academic HoD, several definitions emerged. These included being a role model, a representative academic and an enabler. The following section outlines these findings.

The "Role Model"

Six respondents defined their role in terms of being a role model. Alex felt it was important to adopt a 'hands-on' approach to the role:

> *So it has been about looking at new initiatives, being innovative, taking people along with people, doing that through demonstration and modelling and being engaged in it. Not through a distance. Not by saying, "Oh this looks like it might be a good idea, I'd like you to now go and do it."* (Alex)

Another respondent, Harry, felt that he could help others develop their academic career through his commitment to teaching and research. He was very clear that he did not view his role as being a manager of resources:

> *Yeah, well I think I would hope that I would see it as somebody who in this particular context, who, through the kind of teaching that I do and through the*

kind of research that I am engaged in and my face to face meetings with people,

that I can act in some ways as a more experienced exemplar of being an

academic in an academic setting. So, I see it as somebody who is offering a kind

of example of good practice to some extent in research and teaching. I've never

seen my own personal role as being in resource management. (Harry)

Wendy, who also saw herself as a role model, felt strongly that she needed to behave in ways that would be appropriate for someone in her position. She had learned these expected behaviours from observing other senior colleagues in her previous job roles:

It's showing them leadership in terms of role modelling. I try and behave

ethically and professionally in a way that I feel is appropriate to the role and

appropriate to the way that role models that I have observed behave. (Wendy)

One respondent, Donna, who is a HoD in a research-led school, talked about how the changing culture of the institution, from a teaching focused to a more research focused university, was affecting this role:

The other thing is that managing resource, my resource is my staff and

managing them I think is really through leading them, you know setting an

example in leading, doing research, you know, whatever it is. We are a research

led department, so it's important that I research and I am doing the same thing

as my staff, but equally so the sensitivity borne of a historical situation, which is

that an institution like here didn't have people doing research. As I said, people

went into higher education perhaps in the polytechnic sector who wanted to teach and didn't want to research. Because of the changes over the years the department now has, the majority are researchers but there are few people who are approaching retirement, actually not approaching retirement in that way, but they are near the retirement age who I think have found the institutional change from teaching to research a very difficult one and perhaps resisted that. I think it's managing those sensitivities and trying to see or help them to see that the university is committed to this particular path, but that their contribution is nevertheless valuable and they contribute to that agenda as well. I think that's a difficult discourse to have. I think ultimately probably it's the most challenging thing. I think the change management aspect of it is keeping those people on board and making sure they still deliver good quality courses to students. So yes, it is leadership by example. (Donna)

The "Conductor"

Elizabeth talked about how she saw herself as a conductor of an orchestra. She perceived that resource and operational issues were the most important aspects of the job role:

The two key words I would use, one is resource manager…and then the second is operational manager. So while I'm involved now in this job in strategic thinking, in strategic planning, student admin, all of those things, actually 90% of what I have to do is operationalise what we decide as a school we are going to do. And so, I am a bit of a conductor of an orchestra really. I have groups of staff out there in teams. I've structured them how I think it should be, and that's

great to be in that position to do it, but it's now for me to make sure when something needs operationalising that I can operationalise it and that's where the resource comes in. And argue for the resource and to say whether it can or can't be done. So that is very much what I see as the purpose…. a lot of it is staff management, line management, support, staff development, encouragement, motivation, team building, all of those things come into it, but resource and operational issues are probably the biggest aspects of my role. (Elizabeth)

Two other respondents also talked about operationalising strategy. Chris defined the role in the following terms:

…it's the management of the thing, the infrastructure in so far as I have got control over it and can influence it. So it's things like timetabling. It's things like looking and saying, "Well look, why don't we move in this direction?" I've got two members of staff, I've got to persuade them to give one another work or one to take it from the other…the reception is easy enough, it's persuading a member of staff to give it up is going to be the hard thing. But doing that sort of stuff, just looking at it and making sure, so that when the school strategic plans are made or looked at, then I can say, "Well OK, we will achieve this by doing this and this. And we are already doing this and I want to see this happen." (Chris)

David's description of the role was as follows:

Okay, I think it's middle management and therefore sits between the upper management and the strategy and schemes and the department who have to get on with the everyday life and make sure the classes run and stuff like that. And I think it's a two-way thing, isn't it? It's representing the department at management meetings and saying this is a good idea or this may not be a popular idea because…all those kind of things. On the other hand, going back to the department and influencing and persuading and those kind of things. This would be a good idea or they want us to do this so here is our take on it, this is how we might operationalise it and so on. (David)

The "Representative"

Seven respondents, including David quoted above, felt that one of their main roles was looking after and representing the staff for whom they were responsible. For example, when defining the role, Rebecca talked at length about how it was important to look after both staff and students and to represent them:

So very much looking after the particular group of staff…and also representing them at a higher level within the university. So representing the interest of that group, students and staff, within the school and then within the university. (Rebecca)

Sheila also felt that she was representing her department:

I thought that first of all I was representing them. I think they felt they had never been properly heard, institutionally, and that I would represent them, at every

meeting and at every level. So that people knew that this was a group of people who were serious professionals and needed to be heard. (Sheila)

The "Enabler"

Five respondents talked about how they felt they were in an enabling role, that they saw their role as enabling other staff to fulfil their potential. One such case was Maria, who discussed how she enjoyed enabling peoples' ideas to take shape and come to fruition:

I think it's much more trying to work with people, develop ideas, develop courses. Refine, you know? Kind of have a vision of where things might go within a kind of local and national environment as well. Does that make sense? And I think that's the interesting part of the job. So, it's the opportunity to support people where appropriate. I mean I have from time to time had to deal with more challenging situations with people, but you do it somehow. The thing I like is the kind of leadership of ideas, not just leadership. I mean leadership is actually about, I think, taking other peoples ideas and helping them refine them and throw ideas back and forth. It's not just about saying, "Oh, you know, I have this vision and this is what we will do." So, I can see myself as an enabler I suppose. (Maria)

Wendy also felt that she could empower people, but perceived herself to be in the middle of this process, with the dean above and her staff below:

It's probably a multiple of things. Part of it is managing up or managing down. So it's managing the expectations of the dean and fulfilling those and keeping

her abreast of what is going on to make sure that she feels secure in what we are doing…and the other part of it is managing down in terms of managing the people that I directly line manage and then helping them and empowering them to manage the people below them. (Wendy)

In addition, Wendy talked about her role in supporting staff through difficult times:

So, it's people management. It's certainly resource management in terms of money and in the last year we've had to, you know my directorate has had to shrink by 20 – 25%. And so there was a great deal of time spent in the last year just supporting staff, because this time last year, you know, staff were just getting all their letters saying that they might be redundant and that takes an awful lot of toll…I must have got through about 50 boxes of tissues in the last year. A lot of it is being there to listen to them when sometimes they just need to offload. They don't particularly want me to do something about it, but they want to offload. (Wendy)

5.2 Role Socialisation

Training

Fourteen of the respondents had received no formal training for their role. For some of the respondents, like Harry, Hannah and Michael, it was clear from their tone that they were quite annoyed and indignant about this:

I didn't receive any training at first, no. You're just kind of dropped into it as it were. No training was offered at all (Harry)

Let me see, any formal training…that would be none whatsoever. Let me think, 'Was I offered any?' Probably none whatsoever. So I didn't, and haven't ever, received any formal training in management to do the job. (Hannah)

Absolutely none. No, none at all. Nothing was available, I don't think. (Michael)

Similarly, Alex, who had recently been promoted, felt this lack of training had hampered him quite severely in his first few weeks and months in post:

Oh, I think there is a lot that doesn't happen in a university, and perhaps in education generally. There is very little induction to these roles. Nobody works with you to say, "This is what I've done and this is what you might need to look at." The prime example is six months ago, I took on this role and there was no handover file. There was no discussion with the previous incumbent. There was no indication of what needed to be done. It was, "Here you are. Get on with it!" People were either too busy to discuss it or it was just an expectation that we had to get on. So, it was a massive kind of barrier to being effective in the first few months. I kind of wandered around thinking, 'What on earth do I need to do here?' Trying to get information out of people was quite difficult. People had kind of gone into their bunkers over any notion that we might want to change things. (Alex)

In contrast, some respondents did not perceive this lack of training negatively. Wendy and Chris felt that, because of their experience, they did not really need management training. Wendy felt she could pick things up as she went along:

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No, not really. I mean within this university there are management courses that you can do, but having come from my background I had taken some management courses there. I did a diploma in management. And so I probably got to a stage of not necessarily needing to go on lots of courses. (Wendy)

Chris felt that it would not have been useful for him, although he did comment that if he thought he had needed it, he would have asked for it and received it:

No and I wouldn't want any I don't think. It's…well as somebody said, "Managing academics is like herding cats." It's impossible, so you don't. Everybody has their own idea. I probably, yes I suppose if one was to look at it objectively, I should have been trained, but I've never felt the need really to be. And the lack that I've got in management skills I probably would still have, even if I had been trained, because I wouldn't apply it…. as applying it would make me feel uncomfortable. So whether in fact I should or shouldn't is neither here nor there. I haven't been trained partially because I haven't really felt the need to, part of it is because nobody has suggested that I should be, but I am damned sure if I had suggested or I had felt that I needed it, I would have got it. (Chris)

Although almost all the interviewees stated that they had not received any formal training when they first took on the role, the case University had recently implemented a training programme for middle managers. Respondents who had experienced this course, such as Clive, spoke positively of their experiences on it:

Since then, I've been put on a course. It's kind of coincidental. They had planned to run this course anyway, but it's strategic leadership and management and that is a good course actually. (Clive)

For those that had received training, individualised training programmes, rather than generic "all must attend" courses, were perceived as more useful. This was due to the different nature of the job role across the case University, linked to varying school and subject cultures, and the different experiences and skill sets of each academic who had been appointed. Donna, who had come to the case University as a HoD from a pre-1992 university, felt that she had been expected to attend training which, given her skill set and experience, she did not feel she needed. Donna suggested that any training given to HoDs should be individually tailored:

Once I arrived, I was bombarded, which is the only word, to the point of irritation with training, which was a mystery to me because I assumed I had been appointed to do the job…so nobody had come along and assessed me and said, "We think you need training for this." It was really as if somebody had decided that all managers must have this, without looking at the individual. So I was a little bit reluctant because I couldn't see that there was a match between what they thought I needed and me. And a very good example of that I have to say, was equal opportunities diversity training…Nobody had asked me the question, "What equal opportunities and diversity training have you had?" And by this stage, I should say that I had had a lot of equal opportunities diversity training. So when I arrived here and somebody said, "You'll need to go on equal opportunities courses." I said, "Why?" And I think, from that point of

view, I was quite surprised at the ethos here. Because it seemed you could train someone to do a senior job by getting them to tick a box. And to this day, I do not know why the finance module had differential equations. And I went and I couldn't do it and I was surrounded by three scientists all sitting there. And I have asked various people why I would need differential equations and nobody can give me that answer. So I think it's about relevance. (Donna)

Maria also felt that training courses should be individualised, to ensure their relevance:

…I've read a bit about management theories and I think…sometimes I think, it's probably too late now, but it would be really interesting to pursue more of that. I would like to know more about it, and I do think actually that the case University could do more to support people who are in management roles. There were a couple of things, but neither of them very good and so something that was targeted and useful would be better. (Maria)

Learning How to Manage

Twelve respondents discussed how drawing on experience was an important strategy for learning the skills necessary for the job role. As an example, Alex, who had made a mid-career change into academia, felt that his previous management experience allowed him to tackle the issues surrounding the role successfully:

I think I had already developed lots of those skills and understandings in previous existences. I had had to. I led and managed a large organisation with twenty-five full time staff. I'd managed large projects. And so, I came to the

case University with quite a range of skills and expertise in those kinds of areas.
(Alex)

Another example is Garry, who also felt that his previous experience would allow him to take on the job; a job he did not initially think was going to be too challenging:

I had a sense of myself as being an all round reasonably competent manager who could sort of, whatever the case University was likely to throw at me, was within my sphere of competence. That was probably a misguided thought but I mean nevertheless it was how I felt about it. I wasn't expecting to be floored by this process. (Garry)

Harry also felt that previous experience was important, but so was common sense and an ability to listen:

I think by drawing on previous experience and partly I suppose through common sense. If you take a group of twenty odd staff, different people throw up different issues for you and therefore I am not sure that you can systematically manage all of them…So it's just common sense really. Common sense and a certain amount of just being able to listen to people, understand what they want to do and trying to facilitate that in some way. (Harry)

Helen discussed how she thought that good managers were probably born and not made, but then paradoxically recalled that it was probably her childhood

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socialisation experiences, coupled with her previous employment experiences, which had helped her develop her management skills. She said:

…but I have the feeling that although you can learn management skills, probably good managers are born not made because quite a lot of the management skills you need at least in academic management really is relating to people. And that's something I learned when I was a child, growing up in a vicarage and having to deal with everybody. You know, you had to deal with the Bishop one day and the itinerant at the door on the next and you know lots of people in the parish, people coming to meetings, answering the phone and so I think those sorts of skills. So, I guess it's a combination of childhood experiences and I think naturally being very organised which again were skills I suppose I developed in the course of time, in my career previously. (Helen)

Finally, David, who, like Alex, had made a mid-career change into academia, also mentioned how his absorbing of the local culture helped develop the skills necessary to be a HoD:

Kind of informally I think, by experience. By being managed oneself, I suppose. By seeing how things are done, by absorbing the local culture. Managing in higher education is a kind of genteel thing, isn't it? Or it used to be! I think it generally is, even now. It's not like industry in that sense. (David)

As discussed in Chapter Four, for ten of the respondents part of this previous experience had been gained as a course leader, which, although they had not willingly taken on the role, appeared to be a good apprenticeship for becoming a HoD.

Peer Consultation

Ten respondents identified that one of the ways that they had managed to learn how to cope with the demands of the job was through informal peer consultation. It was clear from their responses and their tone that this was seen as useful and extremely important. Wendy, who had not received any formal training, regularly discussed issues with two of her peers. She explained:

> *…it was more kind of doing it and then getting advice and support for dealing with particular situations as and when they arose…certainly some advice would be from one or two of my other colleagues. There are a couple of people particularly that I would go to for advice, who are peers.* (Wendy)

Michael, whose school had recently gone through two successive re-structures, felt that this informal consultative culture had been very useful, but was no longer applicable in the current culture:

> *The one thing you could do was go ask people for help. So, if I didn't understand something I could always pick up the phone. The case University worked like that back then, rather than through formal training.* (Michael)

Michael went on to explain how he thought the culture had changed:

This used to be an incredibly collegiate university - very friendly. Everyone was equal. Everyone below Vice Chancellor level was on a level and since I've been here, it has become much more hierarchical…the whole university has become stratified in an unhealthy way. (Michael)

Chris recalled how, in his school, he felt that people had not known what they were meant to be doing, but that talking things through with a colleague was very useful. He did, however, describe this process as a bit like "the blind leading the blind":

The big problem that we had to begin with was that nobody knew what a HoD was doing. I mean that was true of everybody. We didn't know what we were doing so we did what we thought was right. And I have a very good working relationship with the other head of department. And he is much the same. He hasn't got a clue really about what he is meant to be doing. (Chris)

Following the introduction of a new Vice Chancellor last year, these informal links have recently been formalised across the case University. Helen, a professor from a pre-1992 university who had been appointed as a HoD eighteen months ago, found this forum useful:

No, not specifically head of department training, no…However we did set up a kind of forum for heads of department when we talked to each other and that I found very useful. (Helen)

Also in support of this forum, Maria discussed how cross-university fertilisation of ideas and sharing of experiences at HoD level was important for improved practice and whole university growth. She described her experiences on the forum in the following way:

I think the other thing that I found useful is the opportunity to meet with other people in other schools who've got a similar kind of management role and you just can learn from their experiences and the kind of approach they take to things and it gives you a wider perspective. (Maria)

One respondent, Elizabeth, discussed how she learned a lot from discussing things through with her line manager:

I had very close contact with my boss, one to one sessions, we would talk through a lot of issues, a lot of heartache actually, because I was taking on a lot of difficult decisions, taking the flak from staff, who weren't in a culture of being told "no" with resources being limited. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth went on to recall a particularly difficult incident that led to her seeking professional coaching support to help her cope with the consequences. She was very clear that this was a turning point in the role; that if this had not happened, she would not be in the role now:

And I did have an incident, probably at the end of 2004. I'd lost my temper with a member of staff and they took a grievance out against me and that was very

traumatic…But the best thing that happened out of it was the action plan afterwards was for me to have some coaching. And I went to personal coaching for a year and that just really helped turn the job around. I was exiting out of the job at that point because I felt the weight of responsibility too much on my shoulders, felt responsible for the disgruntlement or anger that staff would express, and he just helped me work through - What was my job? What was the purpose of it? What can I decide is my worry and in my line and what is their problem? - And that made a lot of difference. Yes, I did get training over time but it was mostly from support from my boss and then the coaching was the most significant. (Elizabeth)

5.3 Role Difficulties

The respondents identified several key difficulties associated with the job role including having responsibility without power, managing the workload, managing people and conflict, and feeling isolated by being in the middle between senior management and academic staff. The following section outlines these findings.

Responsibility Without Power

Almost all of the respondents (15 in total) discussed issues of being in a management position, but of feeling that they had little power because they did not have any real financial control. This financial control tended to be kept at dean level throughout the case University and was the source of some tension, as the following comments from Donna, Michael and Alex demonstrate:

In terms of resource, I am not a budget holder so that's quite an interesting situation to be in…I have a devolved staff development fund, but that's really not anything. It's not real strategic management of resources at all and I think everything is upwards. I can probably do quite a lot but ultimately I still have to refer. It's always centralised and it's a bit like the politburo. (Donna)

We know desperately well we need to grow but it's incredibly hard to produce those strategies when you don't know where you are financially. You can't really draw up a proper plan; you're kind of guessing all the time. (Michael)

There have been management elements of it which have been around things like workload planning, which has been a very difficult thing to do here, but over and above this all the time there is a structure here where nothing happens unless the dean particularly says so. He has been a very close manager and there's a view that this is a kind of flat structure of management but it's not. Everything has to go through the dean before any changes are made, and there's been no delegated financial responsibility. So, a lot of those areas that you would normally associate with being head of department and having a degree of autonomy to manage people, manage the subjects or the programme, manage the resource, have actually not been evident and that's been a real source of contention between people who are in that role. (Alex)

Helen, who had come to the case University from a pre-1992 university, reflected that HoDs had financial responsibility there and, from her tone, it was clear she felt this was a better situation:

…in my previous institution, the views of heads of department were hugely important as they fed into the academic board and although we did have faculties, the budgets were actually held at departmental level. (Helen)

Only two respondents felt they had budgetary control. For Michelle, this control was viewed positively, although the budget was not extensive:

Yes, I did actually, which was nice…it wasn't enormous, but there was certainly a budget in terms of both capital and supplies and services, so if there were consumables, as we did, need to buy, I had certainly the authority to do as well. (Michelle)

In addition, although Wendy felt she did have budgetary responsibility, all financial decisions had to be discussed with the school's head of finance:

I would say I have budgetary responsibility in terms of all of my programmes have a budget allocated to them. It's up to me to make sure that it's managed properly, but I work extremely closely, hand in hand really, with our head of finance so any alterations that I want to make to start with staffing, or with resources like purchasing something or whatever, are discussed with him before we go ahead with it. (Wendy)

Lack of Time/Too Much Workload

Eleven respondents identified managing the increasing workload and the resulting lack of time as one of the most challenging aspects of the role. Typical comments included Michelle's, who felt that she had too much to do, but not enough time in which to do it:

I think often the sheer volume of workload associated just with the operational challenges that there are, because usually you are head of department and you have a significant span of responsibility. I often feel that's one of the worst things, that there is too much to do really and keeping it all up in the air is very, very difficult. (Michelle)

Another example is Hannah, who felt that her workload had significantly increased following the merger with another department, even though she had not received any more hours in her schedule. She was quite resentful of this fact, particularly in relation to her research time allocation, which was being used up by HoD administration duties. Hannah described her experience in the following way:

I am now effectively the head of two departments that weren't there before and I've got this programme and I've got the foundation programme which is pre degree - different funding body, different auditing body. We've also got the MA and all the technical areas. So quite a complex, big department and yet I only get the same workload hours I had the year before. I still get research hours, but the workload for the head of department just eats all of those up. (Hannah)

Further examples of similar identity conflicts will be discussed in Chapter Six.

People Management

Five respondents discussed how managing people and conflict resolution were the difficult aspects of the job role. Elizabeth, who, as reported earlier, had received coaching to help her through a difficult incident earlier on in her job role, still finds managing people and dealing with their feelings very difficult. She commented:

> *I think it's managing people…It is dealing with people, their distress. Even although the coaching helped, it's dealing with their distress and anger. If they are angry with me, I do find that very difficult. I have got better at it. And it has never stopped me making difficult decisions. I would say if my boss was to appraise me, I'm somebody who is willing to make difficult decisions, but I angst about it a lot. So it is not an easy part of the job.* (Elizabeth)

Rebecca also discussed how the unpredictability of managing people was the most challenging aspect of the job role:

> *Well, the line management side, particularly when there are difficulties. And there are always difficulties with people. One of my members of staff died when I was head of department, at a very young age. That kind of situation you can't predict but you have to deal with in the best way. So the unpredictability of line managing people, because people have difficulties, problems, and you have to be quite prepared to work them through. You have a responsibility to look after them…I really enjoyed doing the job but there were times when there were some very big challenges within the staffing. Issues arose, conflicts between members of staff, having to deal with that. That was difficult.* (Rebecca)

David was another respondent who discussed the difficulties of managing people, but more in relation to the changing culture of the case University towards becoming more research focused:

> *What has made it very difficult in recent years is the changing climate where research has become so much more important in general, but also in people's career advancement. Whereas in the past, people could angle themselves towards one thing or another, now research is kind of the be all and end all. People now come into academic jobs thinking that they have to really focus explicitly on their research and everything else is just an annoyance. And managing that particular tension has become the biggest problem because people can be quite resentful if they have to do some teaching or administrative job. And trying to make sure that people are treated fairly so that nobody is getting an advantage over anyone else has become very, very difficult, because some people are more conscientious than others. Other people don't do jobs, then the more conscientious people have to pick them up, and their research suffers. So, that is the tension that has become very difficult at the moment.* (David)

The tension that David highlights, based on what is viewed as important for academic career progression, will be discussed in Chapter Six in relation to academic identity, and in Chapter Eight in the theoretical discussion.

Being in the Middle

Wendy was one of three respondents who felt that being in the middle, between senior management and the rest of the academic staff, was a challenging aspect of the role. Wendy's comments have already been reported in section 5.1, when she defined her role as enabling staff below and above her to do their jobs. Another example is David, who described the difficulty of presenting a proposal from senior management to the rest of the department, even though he felt it had not been thought through carefully enough. He commented:

> *And I think there can be proposals that come from above, but possibly haven't been thought through in terms of their effect really and that needs to be managed very carefully. Partly to try and influence back and say actually this is a bad idea or whatever, or deliver the proposal to the troops and say, "Well, we have got to do this."* (David)

Experiences like this left David, and others, feeling quite isolated at times.

5.4 Coping Strategies

Some of the respondents identified strategies that they used in order to deal with the role difficulties they experienced, outlined in section 5.3. These strategies are presented below.

Managing the Workload

Rebecca talked about how she tried to manage her ever-increasing workload by being ruthless with her time. She felt it was very important to try to carve out a slot of time

from her schedule, particularly so she could do some research. One of the ways in which she tried to do this was to work from home on at least one day a week, but, because of her helpful nature and inability to say "no", she found this increasingly difficult to do. She explained:

Well, trying to book time. Saying this is time when I am going to do research, at least spend half a day a week, a day a week if I could, working from home. The Dean was very supportive about working from home, and for me that was one of the key ways of getting away from the distractions. My office has a glass door and it's right by the coffee room and so if I am in my office, people would see me and they would knock on the door, ask me things. And there was no way of getting away from that. I personally need a lot of quiet to do my research. In my subject, I don't need kit, I need my brain, but I can't do that when I'm being interrupted by things. So, I need time. So, my strategy was to have time at home or somehow closed away, but things did always eat into that. You put it into your diary - Thursday morning not to be disturbed - and then somebody says, "Well couldn't we just have this important meeting?" And you would say, "Yes." So my strategy was undermined by my inability to say "no" I think. I never had a problem with the teaching. I feel that teaching has to be the priority. If you have a class to teach you need to be prepared for it, but research is quite easy to leave to last and think, 'Ah well, I'll do that later.' And then you don't. (Rebecca)

Michelle, who described herself as a "corner cutter", offered different strategies. She felt that being a "corner cutter" and saying "no" to things allowed her to keep on

top of all the jobs she had to do. As one of her previous managers had suffered a nervous breakdown because of the pressures of his job, she was very aware that if she did not adopt these strategies, she might not be able to survive the role. She also discussed how keeping other interesting projects going, outside of her own specialist area, helped her remain fresh and interested in her day-to-day experiences as a HoD:

> *Well I'm quite lucky I guess in some senses in that I work quickly and I'm a corner cutter, I'm not a perfectionist. I know what needs to be done in order to get something through, so I'll do that. I realised quite early on as well, that this is not a sprint…. it's a marathon, and you've got to pace yourself and unless you pace yourself properly, unless you carve out time away from the drudgery of some of it, you won't survive it. Because I've seen better people than me go under and just not cope with it because they have just thrown themselves at it, lock, stock and barrel. So I think a balance of taking time out and saying, "No I'm not going to do that." And also having some interesting little projects going on along the way that you're really interested in, which maybe a bit tangential to what you are doing, is quite good. And I've always done that. I've always had other…I'm quite interested in economics and I've done some Open University economics courses. I also do a little research with one of the economists here now, so I always have these other little things going on.* (Michelle)

Dealing with Conflict

Some respondents, such as Elizabeth and Rebecca, discussed how they dealt with people management issues, particularly in relation to dealing with conflict. Elizabeth discussed how important it was to be accessible, so that people could talk to her. She

believed that good, clear communication was important to help solve these situations and if that did not work, she drew on advice given to her by her coach:

Always facing the people. If anybody wants to see me, being very accessible. If they want to be angry with me, you know, we can talk about things. If they want to be distressed, I don't have any problem with people being distressed in front of me. But, for my own self preservation, I usually do communicate quite well. I usually do not make decisions without having consulted widely. But in the end, if I think it is the right thing to do I go ahead and do it, and I do what my coach said and kind of switch it off a bit. If it is their distress, it is their distress.

Elizabeth also believed it was very important that she was honest about any mistakes that she had made, although she was fairly happy with the majority of decisions she had made. She said:

There have been one or two decisions I've made and I think, 'I've made a balls-up of that.' And I'm usually willing to say, if it has affected somebody. I will try and say afterwards, "I don't think on reflection that was a good decision." I have to say, in the main, I'm pretty happy with most of the decisions I've made. So I am either naïve and totally un-self aware, or I make relatively good decisions and I think I'm known for making relatively sound decisions. I'm just worried that they don't always understand why. The first reaction to change is to rebel against it obviously. That's how I handle it though: communicating.
(Elizabeth)

Rebecca also felt that communicating with the parties involved was a crucial part of the conflict management process. She discussed an example of conflict within her own department and talked through how she had dealt with it, which included trying to get the individuals concerned to come up with their own strategies for managing the situation:

Well, by talking to them and trying to find out what was at the bottom of the problem, trying to help them to see strategies for working things through. I had two colleagues; I was line managing them and they really just don't like each other. Their styles are completely opposite. They don't agree at all on anything and for various reasons they would often be put together to do a certain task and this always caused fireworks. And so it was time spent talking with each side, trying to see how we could manage the roles so that they didn't have to come into too much contact with each other. They just don't like each other, that's how it is. So it was quite a lot of delicate negotiation with them to make them think of their own strategies of how they can deal with the issues that they were experiencing. (Rebecca)

In contrast to the strategies offered above, Chris, who thoroughly enjoyed teaching but did not really enjoy his role as a HoD, discussed his dislike of people shouting or "whingeing" at him. One of the ways he dealt with this was to try to hide in his lecture or seminar room. He felt that at least if he was teaching, they would not be able to find him. He described this strategy in the following way:

Well, more people whinge at you or shout at you, which I don't like at all. You get a lot of complaints. Sometimes you need to deal with them because they are complaints based on things that you have already worked out, but other than that, which can be really miserable, there are some days when it feels like you don't want to come into work. I much prefer to be teaching so that nobody can find me. (Chris)

What Would I Do Differently?

Five respondents talked about what they would do differently if they were moving into a similar role again or if they were employing someone else for the same role. These discussions tended to centre on ensuring that the incumbent was very clear about the expectations of the role, as the following example shows:

…in retrospect if I was employing somebody at my grade now, what I would do when they started in the job is to sit down and be quite clear about expectations. And be quite clear about, "These are the sort of things that we expect you to do." And, "this is the sort of way that we expect you to run your working day," and that sort of thing. (Wendy)

Respondents also discussed the strategies that they used to successfully manage conflicts between personal and professional identities. These strategies included compartmentalisation: clearly segregating their personal and professional lives. These strategies will be outlined in Chapter Six.

5.5 Enjoyable Parts of Being a HoD

Although the results above paint a somewhat negative picture of the respondents' experiences of being a HoD, the final section of this chapter discusses how some respondents described the enjoyable aspects of being a HoD. The findings include gaining positive feedback, seeing students succeed, enjoying the challenge, and working with people.

Positive Feedback

Helen, a HoD in a research-led school, felt that gaining positive feedback was one of the most satisfying parts of being a HoD. She discussed this not so much in terms of formal feedback from her own manager, but in relation to seeing people happy and wanting to come to work. She felt that having a clear vision was one of the main reasons for her staff feeling valued and happy. She talked about her situation in the following terms:

> *I get a lot of feedback obviously from my dean, but you know people often come up to me and say how great the department is, so I think I am getting a lot of very positive feedback, even although I am not actually seeking it, but a lot of it is there to see. People are happy. They do feel valued, they enjoy coming to work and that, to me, is the main objective of leadership. We also have a very clear focus. We have a clear purpose. We know where we are going, what we are trying to achieve.* (Helen)

Seeing Students Succeed

When asked about what the enjoyable parts of the job role were, Rebecca, who had just stopped being a HoD, jokingly replied, *"What were they then?"* However, on reflection, she felt that seeing the students being successful was enjoyable. She explained:

> *…when it all worked, I suppose. When your students mostly pass and everything is under control. Graduation is always a lovely time. I like to be visible and meet parents and do that sort of thing. That's quite enjoyable.* (Rebecca)

Similarly, Michelle, who felt there were several enjoyable aspects of the job role, also identified that seeing the success of her students was pleasurable. Additionally, she enjoyed making things happen within her department:

> *I think there are lots of that actually, lots of that. I think it's really good. I think making things happen… seeing all of that develop, is just tremendous. That's on one level, alongside seeing the success of students. We've got three students at the moment who are working with top people in their profession. That's tremendous, the fact that we're producing students and these companies are coming back and saying, "I want another case University student." That to me speaks volumes.* (Michelle)

Enjoying the Challenge

Michelle and Rebecca also talked about enjoying the challenge of the job. Michelle enjoyed this aspect of the job role so much that she had moved from being a HoD into a

more senior position because she wanted more challenges. She made the following observations:

To be honest it's the day-to-day ironing out of the problems. It's things running smoothly, the fact that I know I can do that, there's a real joy to all of that. I suppose what I really like as well, is that it's constantly new. I'm always doing new things, and it's a different challenge. Last year we were going through a scheme of voluntary severances. Whilst that's difficult, you learn a lot from these experiences and you do, there's no doubt about it. So that's the other thing I like about it. I guess I had to move up the tree because I wanted more and more of those sorts of challenges really. (Michelle)

Michelle's career profile is outlined in detail in Chapter Seven. Rebecca also talked about how she enjoyed the challenges of the job:

I enjoyed the challenge. I enjoyed working with colleagues and seeing how different things worked. New developments are always good fun to be involved in. (Rebecca)

Working with People

Although Elizabeth admitted that she did not really enjoy the job overall, she did suggest that working with people was the most enjoyable part of it. She described how she did not really connect with people who were concerned with their workload all the time, but enjoyed being with a group of people who she could share experiences with and with whom she felt part of a team. She commented:

There are enjoyable parts. I wouldn't say I over-liked the job, if I'm honest, but there are……. the staff, the people I work with. I like the people I work with in the main. We have a good time, a good laugh. They are a committed group of people. I work best with people who…I work with some people who are constantly going on about their workload plans and they just don't connect into me. I am a "let's get the job done" person. I don't care what they are doing and when……, as long as they have done the job. And so, I get pleasure out of a good group of people. I would say I do have a good team and I like being with them and we share. We have our laughs, we have our sadnesses, which we share, and I feel part of that team…People make the good moments really, more than the job itself. (Elizabeth)

Similarly, David also identified the social aspects of the job role as being the most enjoyable. He talked about being part of a community and feeling good when you do the job effectively:

Well I think it's social really. It's being part of the departmental community, enjoying the support of colleagues. You do have the support of colleagues; it's fantastic really. Doing the job effectively, if you can do the job effectively, or the moments when you do it effectively, let's put it that way, it's a good feeling. (David)

Conclusions and Summary of Findings

This chapter has presented data to address research question two of this study:

- How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

It has discussed how academics who become HoDs define their role, how HoDs recollect how they were socialised into the job role, what HoDs perceive as the difficulties of being in the role, what strategies are used to cope with these difficulties and what HoDs perceive as the enjoyable parts of the job role. The following is a summary of these findings:

- Respondents gave several definitions of the role of the HoD. These included - being a role model, a representative and an enabler

- Fourteen respondents received no formal training for the role. For some, this was problematic; others, however, felt that they did not need training

- Twelve respondents learned how to manage by drawing on experience

- Ten respondents learned how to cope with the demands of the role through peer consultation

- Respondents identified several key difficulties associated with the job role including having responsibility without power, managing the workload, managing people and conflict, and feeling isolated by being in the middle between senior management and academic staff

- Coping strategies adopted by respondents to deal with the difficulty of managing workload included ring-fencing time away from the office, cutting corners, saying no, and having other projects on the go

- Coping strategies to deal with managing conflict included being accessible, communicating clearly, being honest and, for one respondent, avoiding the situation

- Five respondents suggested that if they were employing someone else for the same job role, they would ensure that the expectations of the job role were made clear to them

- The enjoyable parts of being a HoD were reported as gaining positive feedback, seeing students succeed, enjoying the challenge and working with people.

These findings will be discussed in the light of published literature in Chapter Eight.

The next chapter analyses and discusses data linked to research questions three and four of this study:

- Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time?

- How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

Chapter Six

Findings 3: HoDs' Perceptions of Identity and Career Trajectory

The following chapter presents a summary of data collected from 17 life history interviews with academics who became HoDs in relation to research questions three and four of this study, namely:

- Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time.

- How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

The chapter follows the same format as Chapters Four and Five. The data that emerged from the analysis procedures outlined in Chapter Three have been grouped into the following overarching themes, linked to the above research questions:

- Personal identity

- Professional identity

- Future career plans

- HoD influence on whole career.

These overarching themes form the section headings for this chapter. Section 6.1 discusses how academics perceive their personal identity has been affected by becoming a HoD. Section 6.2 outlines academics' perceptions of how their professional identity has been affected by becoming a HoD. Section 6.3 explores the respondents' future career plans and section 6.4 discusses how academics see their position of HoD influencing their whole career.

6.1 Personal Identity

Being a Parent

Ten respondents discussed how their role affected their children and vice versa. One such example was Hannah. She felt guilty about how being a parent affected her focus at work, but she also felt guilty about choosing to have a career. She discussed how she felt she was in a difficult moral dilemma:

> *I also think having children makes a big difference because then you've got…you can't focus totally on the job. You have to go at five o'clock to the nursery. You've got to drop them off. If they're ill, nursery won't have them. I've got no family in this country, so I'm alone in that sense. So, I am having to balance a lot of things - it's had an impact on me personally in those respects…I have to think, 'What would happen if I wasn't doing it?'…the alternative is to give up altogether and look after my son, because he has been in nursery four days a week since he was nine months old. So, there has been an impact on my personal life because of the job and I wonder whether I've done the right thing.*
> (Hannah)

Rebecca, who had recently changed job roles from being HoD to becoming head of research for her school, also talked about how the role affected her family life. First, she spoke of neglecting her family, but then corrected herself to say that although she had not neglected them, the demands of the job did not allow her to do much else:

> *I think it made me even more married to the department than I was before, which didn't go down well with the rest of my family. I felt very much that I had*

to be available and around and take responsibility for things. So, if we had open days on a Saturday - I felt I should be there and involved in activities and should lead from the front. So that affected my personal life in that sense in that I think I neglected...well I didn't quite neglect my family, I have two children and I don't neglect them, but I felt I didn't have much space for anything else. (Rebecca)

In addition, Michelle recognised how being a mother affected her work. Her strategy was to work late in the evening, after her child had gone to bed, a strategy she thought most people in her position adopted. She explained:

I think children are a full time pre-occupation, but almost everybody I know who is at my level who has got children, you'll see e-mails bouncing in from them about nine o'clock at night. Having got their children in bed, people start working again. That's what people do. It's difficult, very difficult. (Michelle)

These experiences were not confined to females. Alex was also aware how his role of HoD was affecting his relationship with his children. This was influencing his decision on whether to apply for further promotion or not:

…it's had quite a serious impact on my family life and my eldest daughter said to me in March, "Daddy's home and it's not even dark yet." That made me think that I had been working rather long hours. And this is my biggest worry at the moment: that a new job, another management job, will have a serious impact on my family life, and that is more important to me. (Alex)

Finally, Harry, who did not feel comfortable in his current role, discussed how his family circumstances had meant he could not move jobs. He explained that, because his wife worked locally and his children were settled into their schooling, he felt trapped by these personal circumstances and that he was not able to move to another job in another institution. He described his experiences in the following way:

> *And so, I haven't felt comfortable in this role, but having reached a stage in my career and a stage in my life where my options are very, very limited, partly because my wife works locally so our ability to move, our ability to up sticks…I was offered a job several years ago in the University of X for example. I was also offered a job in the University of Y and so I could have moved, but we are kind of locked into this area for different family reasons…So, in a way, I have had to reconcile myself to the fact that I have to stay here.* (Harry)

Harry has since taken voluntary severance. Harry's profile is outlined in Chapter Seven.

Gaining a Distinct Identity

Three female respondents, who were all mothers, discussed how being a HoD gave them a distinct identity. Hannah, who had a young son and, as reported earlier, felt guilty about whether she had made the right move in following her career, talked about gaining a sense of confidence:

> *…it gives you a sense of confidence…I mean I keep doing the job because I suppose I am worried about if I don't do it, it's not really about the money actually, it's more about my identify and I think, any job gives you an identity. I*

think when you are a mother as well, it makes you feel quite good that you are

doing a job which is quite responsible and trying to bring up a child as well...

but it also gives me a sense of confidence and value. (Hannah)

Wendy, whose teenage daughter was becoming more self-sufficient, felt that she needed something to do to keep her from getting bored. She explained:

It's very busy working full time…luckily now my daughter is self-sufficient, she

can let herself in after school. But, as I said, my husband has a very busy job as

well and sometimes we are…like ships in the night. So it is busy, but I actually

find if I wasn't working, wasn't in a job that motivated me, then I'd probably get

frustrated…If I wasn't working at all I'd probably be running a charity or

something. I'd be doing something just because…a couple of mornings of Fern

and Phillip on 'This Morning' would be enough to drive me a bit loony.

(Wendy)

Taking its Toll

Eight respondents discussed how becoming a HoD had negatively affected their personal life. Maria reflected that since taking on management roles, she did not have much time for herself and felt that even holiday experiences had changed. Maria also felt that senior managers at the case University did not appreciate what a difficult job the role of HoD was. She said:

I think the more responsibility I have had, the more I have had to work just in

order to manage not to go under…Before I took on any kind of management

responsibility, I had holidays. I still have holidays, but not in the same kind of way. I had more holidays, I had more time off, I had more time to do other things entirely. Now my whole life seems to be dominated by work really, and I'm not sure that's very healthy. I often laugh at the stuff the case University send around about work-life balance because it's rhetoric. It's not reality. And I'm not sure there is an appreciation from the higher echelons of how challenging it is for those people trying to juggle all these kind of roles…I think everybody is being pushed hard, very hard, and increasingly so. (Maria)

Similarly, David talked of "taking on too much". He was trying to ensure that next year, he would not make the same mistakes again. He commented:

This past year…I have simply been taking on too much. I have very large amounts of overtime on my workload and that has impacted quite negatively on my work/life balance. But I am trying to take steps to remedy that this coming year, because I don't want to get into a situation where I am continually working my socks off. (David)

Another respondent, Michelle, discussed how, since taking on the role of HoD, she had become more distant with people. She also talked about how, because of the stresses of the job, she wanted to spend more time on her own:

It's much more difficult to just be friendly with everybody, there's a little bit of that sort of distancing…It's probably made me a little bit more…I think the

stresses have made me a little bit more solitary, shall we say, wanting to spend

more time reflecting and relaxing and that sort of thing. (Michelle)

Managing Identity Conflicts

As mentioned in Chapter Five, some of the respondents identified strategies that they used to successfully manage some of these identity conflicts. For Harry and Garry, these strategies included compartmentalisation: clearly segregating their personal and professional lives. They both tried to make sure that they saw their job role as discreet from their home life, as the following comments illustrate:

I have tried to take a more philosophical view, which does not impinge very much on my home life. (Harry)

I am certainly much more inclined to differentiate kinds of activities in my life and put much stronger boundaries in place as I get older…I think about my job as increasingly separate from my identity as a human being. (Garry)

Other respondents, such as Michael and Clive, spoke of having their own rules in relation to when they allowed themselves to do work tasks in the evening or weekends. Michael explained his rules in the following way:

I am quite rigid about when I will and won't work. So I always take off Friday evening, Saturday mornings, Saturday evening and all Sunday. And, at the moment, Thursday evening as well…in a crisis I work at weekends. Occasionally

that happens, but generally my rule is to have those times off when I am not working. I just have to fit in work during the rest of the time. (Michael)

One respondent, Sheila, discussed how she undertook professional help during a particularly difficult time when she was struggling to maintain a balance between problems at work and her personal life. She described how her relationship with her husband almost did not survive and recalled how, because of this, she had set up some mentoring through work:

Well one way I survived was that I looked for neutral help at work. I thought, 'Work has to provide me with a way to survive this,' so I followed up the mentoring thing. I found somebody, saw that person, and said, "I need help. Regularly. Just during this transition period." So, that was good and that helped. (Sheila)

Sheila's career profile is presented in Chapter Seven.

Critical Incident

Donna, who came to the case University as a HoD two years ago from a pre-1992 university, was diagnosed with breast cancer last year and this experience had made her stop and reflect on the amount of work she was undertaking. Understandably, this experience also made her focus on the human nature aspects of her role and she reflected on the lack of personal contact that people now have within the case University. She described her ordeal in the following way:

Yes, I work hard and perhaps I shouldn't work quite so hard but I'm reviewing that. Well, I had to. This time last year I was diagnosed with breast cancer…I went into hospital and had the operation, spent the earlier part of this year having treatment and got ongoing monitoring and treatment… So, I guess it does make you think, 'Actually what are the important things'. Nevertheless, I don't think I'd make quite a big thing about work-life balance, although I do think in terms of the job perhaps the institution creates work that it needn't. I think the sole thing that is really pushing me down is the overuse of e-mail and electronic media. People don't seem to talk to each other. They have forgotten how to talk and it's very difficult to break that down. (Donna)

6.2 Professional Identities

The respondents discussed a range of issues in relation to how their professional identity had been affected by becoming a HoD. These issues were mainly linked to their perceptions of what constitutes academic identity and included gaining increased status; having different internal and external identities; moving away from core academic tasks; becoming a manager; being de-skilled; and staying in touch with the discipline. The following section outlines these findings.

Increased Status

Six respondents discussed how becoming a HoD had increased their professional status. One such example was Miranda, whose husband is also a head of department. She was pleased to take on the role because in addition to feeling that it gave her a distinct identity, she also talked about how the title and the role itself gave her certain responsibilities and visibility within the case University, which she found quite helpful.

Miranda also talked about now being "in the information loop" with the senior management team, which she found interesting.

David also felt that being a HoD had given him more status. He talked about being able to speak with more authority, although from his choice of words and his tone, he did not sound fully convinced. He described his experience in the following terms:

I think one feels as though one could speak with more authority, perhaps. If one has taken on the responsibility and has exercised responsibility, then I believe it might give you the right to speak with some authority. I don't mean to the detriment of other people's views or contributions or whatever, but I think that authority comes from being connected to the thinking of other people in senior management and that kind of thing. I think it's helpful. Possibly. But maybe that's superficial… (David)

Another example is Rebecca, who enjoyed the increased status it gave her both internally and externally to the case University:

I quite liked the status. It was quite nice to be head of department and say to people, "I manage a group of people." I quite liked that aspect of it…it makes you more visible…within the institution. Rather than being just a lecturer in your subject, you are the head of department. You get asked to be on interview panels and that kind of thing. So, you become part of a different level. And externally, I am on a committee for HoDs in my subject and that has put me in touch with another network or group of people, many of whom are my former

lecturers, which is quite strange. So, yes, I think it does give you some kind of

external status. (Rebecca)

In contrast, Harry also talked about how the role had given him some status, but described how, as he was unhappy with the way his school was managed, this also brought tensions. He reflected:

Well I think in some ways it has given me a professional identity that people

over the years have recognised the role to some extent, and see you as a head of

a department and therefore I suppose it gives more a kind of structure. But at

the same time, because it is apparent to most people within the department and

outside the department that I've never felt comfortable with the way that the

school is now managed, I guess my professional identity has been one which is

to some extent…negative, or running against the grain. And so, I have felt a bit

of an outsider in terms of the management structures and I have felt my

professional identity is somewhat ambivalent or clouded by that. (Harry)

Different Internal and External Identities

Harry went on to discuss how he felt that his internal and external professional identities were completely different:

The other thing, of course, is that quite a lot of my professional work has been

with national organisations outside the institution…and therefore very often my

professional identity has been beyond the walls as it were. I think to some extent

in meetings I have, say with national organisations, I am treated in a sense more

seriously than certain managers here treat me. And they recognise me in a less equivocal or nuanced way as somebody who has something professionally to contribute, compared to here where I have always felt that certain people regard me as maybe not quite on-line or buying into the vision as it were. (Harry)

Other respondents, such as Sheila and Maria, also recognised that internal and external professional identities were very different. Sheila commented:

I think I have always found that there are always two identities…when I've been around the world with foreign governments or external agencies paying, you are…this very special person to them…and then you come back and you're nothing. (Sheila)

Maria described her experiences in this way:

…externally it is my academic knowledge that's valued.   Internally I don't think the academic side, you know the managerial role, whatever that is, is probably seen…I am more probably seen as that person, than the academic…but certainly externally the management role has no relevance really. When people ask me to do things externally, it's because I have got a profile with my subject. (Maria)

Garry, who had experienced a number of re-structurings and downgradings to his role over the last eight years, felt that his professional identity was now very much linked to his subject area and his department, and not to the management structure of the school in which he worked:

…at one level, I'm on a fairly impressive downward slide at the moment. But it has to be said, and I don't think this is just rationalisation, that throughout this current re-organisation when I have looked at all the jobs that are available and asked myself, "What do I really want to do?" there was only one job in the whole place that I really wanted. And it's this job of head of department of my subject area. For better or worse, I have become sufficiently dislocated, which is a neutral way of putting it, disillusioned might be another way of putting it, though it's more dislocated than disillusioned, with the school as an entity that frankly I am not wanting to spend much, if any, of my time engaged directly in its management for the sake of the school. It doesn't much matter to me whether the school exists or in what form it exists. What matters to me is that the work of my subject area is done and done well, done for the benefit of the students and the wider community. (Garry)

Moving Away from Core Academic Tasks

Several of the respondents felt that they were no longer able to research, teach or do both because of their job role. Wendy wanted to do research, but her role made this impossible. She felt that her role now was to try to help other people take their research forward. She explained:

There isn't a research requirement to the role at all. Personally, I would love to have some time to do research, but it's just not possible with what I do. I see my role more, in a way, as being able to facilitate others, to either have release of time or to try and find sources of funding so that they can take some research

forward. There are a number of areas that I would like to be able to research, but a lot of the time there just isn't the time. (Wendy)

Elizabeth also identified that she no longer did any research, even though she had discussed achieving this goal with her line manager. From her tone, she was disappointed by this, but she did try to "keep her hand in" by supervising dissertation students. She also felt increasingly distanced from the rest of the staff, particularly in relation to taking on any teaching duties:

I can't do the research. I've tried to think that I would eventually…we have talked about this, the dean and I, and she said, "Maybe after two years you will." But I don't. I have written a chapter in the last four years. Wow! I don't do any research. I've got one PhD student. I am not the director of studies; I can't be actually because I have not seen through two to completion, but I am keeping my hand in there. I have done all my supervisor training and what have you…in terms of teaching, I've mucked in and taught in different parts of the school…I'm not sure the staff like me teaching. Now whether that's because I'm a crap teacher or whether it's actually too close for comfort for them I don't know. I don't belong in their programme and therefore it's a bit strange. But what they do allow me to do more is dissertation supervision because they can hand a student to me and leave them in my care. So, I do the Master's dissertation supervision. (Elizabeth)

David commented that he did not do research any more either, although he was not overly concerned about this as it was not one of his strong interests. What he was

more concerned about was the possibility of his teaching being "squeezed out", as he felt this was the main reason he had come into higher education in the first place. He described his experience as a "balancing act" and sensed that this was what all HoDs had to do. He said:

> *Well, I don't do research. Research has got squeezed out. It wasn't a strong interest of mine. Teaching is…I am frightened that it is getting squeezed out, but on the other hand, you can only do so much really. There is a kind of balancing act. Everybody does it, kind of spinning plates…I have several modules and other things going on at the same time, so I think everybody does some of that.* (David)

Rebecca also identified that she did less teaching and less research, but as she had managed to gain a sabbatical at a pre-1992 university for 12 months during her time as a HoD, she felt that her research had not suffered too much. She explained:

> *I did less of those things. I did less teaching. I just had to cut down on some of the teaching I had been doing as a lecturer. I had done a fair amount, but it just wasn't physically possible to do that much. We have a workload-planning model that allocates a certain amount of time to the head of department role, and it did reflect my time. I did spend a lot of my time doing administrative work. And my research suffered, certainly the first year. Something slightly unusual happened after I had been doing the job for eighteen months, which was that I was offered a sabbatical at a pre-1992 university, funded. So I had a year, slightly longer than that, there and so somebody else was head of department. So, that made a*

huge difference to my research. I was able to really get back on to an even keel.

(Rebecca)

Becoming a Manager

Some of the respondents, such as Michael, Helen and Elizabeth, spoke of becoming a manager. One of the consequences of becoming a manager for Michael was that his junior colleagues now saw him as more authoritarian, which he was quite shocked about:

I was quite shocked actually recently to find that some junior members of my department actually see me as a rather forbidding, authority figure which I had not realised at all…We had a good chat and that is over now and we are back to being a team again. And that was a complete surprise. I hadn't realised how it had happened, but I was actually behaving in a more authoritarian manner than I had realised. (Michael)

Helen, who had come from being a professor in a pre-1992 university to her role of HoD in the case University, recounted that she does very little teaching now, having decided that she can leave other people to teach while she concentrates on managing, a task that she feels she is good at. She reflected:

I mean my job is quite different now. There is very little teaching. In my previous job, in spite of everything else I did, I had one of the highest teaching loads in the department. And although I enjoyed the teaching, I decided really, lots of people can teach and particularly now with the younger lecturers coming along

there is a lot of emphasis on presentation skills and so on, so I have been able to use some of my other skills, in particular my managerial skills. I think I have proved to be a very good manager. I didn't know because I had never had to manage a biggish group of people before, but that all seems to have gone really well. (Helen)

Although Helen talked about becoming a manager, she still saw her main identity as being a professional researcher. This comes across very clearly through her career profile, presented in Chapter Seven, which she finishes by saying, "In the end, research is what I care about most." On the other hand, Elizabeth, who also talked about becoming a manager, now saw herself totally in that role. In order to reconcile this fact with her personal values and concepts of academic identity, she was very keen to point out that she was not just a manager but an "academic manager", as the following extract shows:

Well I've change my identity several times because I was a practitioner, then I saw myself as a teacher. Then they said, "You need to be a researcher", so I started to see myself as a researcher…My PhD work is in inter-professional identity, so in a way I can almost theorise my own transitions…I think I am now a university manager and that's what I am. I'm not a practitioner. I'm not a teacher. I'm not a researcher. I'm an academic manager. I think that's where I've settled. Yes, my job is about management but actually, the benefit for me is that it is within an academic context…I'm not a Sainsbury's manager. I'm not going to go for a job and run Sainsbury's…because I do see them as different. (Elizabeth)

Being De-skilled

Elizabeth went on to explain why she felt she could no longer say she was an academic, because she felt she no longer had the skills to keep up with the "student stuff". She described her experiences in the following way:

> *I almost feel I can hardly do the student stuff now. I've just recently been viva-ing an MPhil and a PhD and even that was a struggle. This is not an academic job I am in. I am not on top of the debates any more. So, yes, I do have my postgraduate students and in the main, I can do them because they are pretty bread and butter stuff, but actually, the academic stuff is leaving me. So, in some ways I almost dread it myself. It's a challenge for me now…I think I've changed. I'd have to have re-training to feel comfortable again in teaching.* (Elizabeth)

Similarly, Alex felt that taking on the role of HoD had "de-skilled" him, but while Elizabeth was relatively comfortable with her new identity, Alex was quite resentful of this fact. He said:

> *I find it quite de-skilling in all the areas that I want to do. The management roles I have had in the case University de-skill me in terms of what I had when I came. I was state of the art in terms of my subject area…I was in a very strong position six years ago to research my subject area and I am not now. I would need to go back a long way to recapture some of that ground.* (Alex)

Staying in Touch with the Discipline

In relation to being de-skilled by the job role, Wendy talked about how important it was to keep in touch with some of the core business of her school, to ensure she knew what was going on and could talk confidently about this in meetings:

I still support students out in placement…although I haven't got the time. I do it because I want to keep close to the ground in relation to actually seeing practitioners and students and their interface and making sure that I know what is going on. Because if I'm in a big meeting representing the school, then I think it's just very important that I'm able to speak from experience. People can tell you things second-hand, but it's not quite the same as actually being there. So, I still have dissertation students that I support and if there are occasions when I can do teaching then I do…I still do marking each semester, so there are a number of modules that I'll help out with the marking, go to moderations and things. And that actually gives you quite a flavour of what is going on - how students are managing and all that sort of thing. (Wendy)

Maria also discussed how important it was to "keep the academic side going", as those were the reasons why she had entered academia in the first place and it helped her maintain "academic credibility". She saw research and teaching as symbiotic:

Well I've deliberately kept…tried to keep the academic side going…for a lot of people, when they move to management, that tends to go, but it's always been important to me. Having said that, I don't manage to do an awful lot, but I do engage in debate, I do attend subject centred conferences and try to keep up to

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date with things, try to read. I've recently done external work for other

universities on the subject area. We've published a book as a group, which we

have made a lot of fuss about. I am also an external examiner at two institutions

and I'm part of a national strategy group…So, I've always tried to keep up with

what is going on nationally to make sure I have got some kind of academic

credibility in the area. I think it's very difficult to teach in an area if you don't

do it and one of the things that worries me about academia at the moment is this

development of teaching only contracts, because I think research is actually

essential if it's going to feed into the teaching. And I think that is something that

managers need to be thinking about as well. (Maria)

6.3 Future Career Plans

In terms of future career plans, respondents gave a variety of responses including planning to actively seek promotion, planning to stay at the same level, planning to take severance and planning a possible move out of higher education. A summary of these findings is presented in table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Respondents' Future Career Plans

Future Career Plans "Planning to…"	Names
…actively seek promotion (6)	Elizabeth, Michelle, Wendy, Alex (Associate Dean/Dean and beyond) Rebecca, Miranda (Professorships)
…stay at same level (7)	David, Garry, Maria, Chris (Nearing retirement) Michael, Helen, Sheila
…take severance (1)	Harry
…possibly move out of HE (3)	Clive, Donna, Hannah

The following section outlines these findings.

Planning to Actively Seek Promotion

Six of the respondents said they would actively seek promotion in the next few years, if an appropriate position became available. Three of these respondents, Elizabeth, Wendy and Alex, said they would like to be promoted to associate dean or dean level. As an example, Elizabeth talked about how she would consider promotion, mainly for financial reasons:

If it was a step up and it was more money…I'm very extrinsically driven these days. It was intrinsic at one time, but actually if people are willing to pay me

enough I am probably willing to do it…I could see myself doing another job in

academic management. (Elizabeth)

Michelle, who is already a dean, commented that she would consider further promotion, but recognised the personal and professional tensions surrounding this decision:

I think I will, but I'm terribly torn. My loyalty…I've spent my working life here; this is what I've built up. And there is the tension in that I would need to drag my son out of school, all that moving around stuff, which is horrid, so I'm a bit torn about it. But it's definitely there at the back of my mind. (Michelle)

The other two respondents who said they would actively apply for promotion, Rebecca and Miranda, stated that they would apply for research professorships rather than pursue administration type roles. Rebecca mentioned that this was an ambition of hers since the beginning of her career:

I liked the idea of eventually getting to be a professor. I thought that would be nice. I haven't got there yet, but there is still a bit of time. (Rebecca)

Planning to Stay at the Same Level

Eight of the respondents said that they would stay at the same level and would not be actively seeking promotion. Several reasons were given for this. Four respondents felt that they were nearing retirement age and did not want to take on any other role, even though two of these respondents were only 54. David was a case in point:

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I'll see how it goes. I'll see how long the present structure stays for a start. I am now 54 and I might retire when I am 60. So we are talking about six years. This is approximately the level at which I want to stay. (David)

Garry also felt that he was nearing retirement and so did not want to take on any other job. In his last few years as an academic, he wanted to concentrate more on writing. Specifically, he was very keen to write a book before he retired:

I am now 54 and…there is no job here…but actually there is no job I particularly want elsewhere either. My goals are in respect of the department and perhaps, even more importantly at the personal level, I would like to publish, to do some worthwhile publishing in the next ten years, the last ten years of my working life and probably that is what I aspire to most. I have got back into the publishing thing. I've published two or three articles in the last couple of years, but I would like to produce a substantial and significant book…probably if you were to say to me, "What is the most desired professional goal that you have over the next ten years?" it would be that I published a significant book…I would like to have published a significant book by the time I retire. (Garry)

Michael, who is 45, had no clear vision of where he wanted to go, but was quite happy at the level he was at. He did, however, appreciate that circumstances may change and he might consider taking on a new role. He explained:

Funny things happen, because when I look back on it, a lot of what has happened to me in terms of the various jobs I have taken on, they are not ones that I went looking for. They are ones that appeared and I decided to go for them or someone asked me to go for them. If something like that happens again in future, it is certainly not impossible. I might well this time go for it and go off in a new direction. But I have no clear vision at the moment of where I am going. (Michael)

Sheila, 54, who had just been made redundant, but had secured a new role at the same level, was taking stock:

At the moment, I am just recovering…from the fact that although I did that job and transformed the department, I lost the job. And no amount of having done it, like Napoleon…that made no difference to the sustainability of the job. So at the moment, I am just in retreat really, thinking, 'Oh gosh.'…I am just wondering if there is this whole other relationship to the institution that I need to be thinking about now. (Sheila)

Finally, Helen was adamant that she did not want to become dean because she felt this would affect her role as a researcher too much. She described her thoughts in the following way:

I don't want to be dean…because it's very, very difficult to carry on doing research if you take on one of those roles and I think I would be very, very frustrated…You have to make that choice. I have colleagues who have made that

choice and become PVCs, that kind of thing, but even although they were very

good researchers in the past, they have stopped doing research. And I really

don't want to do that. (Helen)

Concepts of what experiences academics perceive as important for their career progression will be discussed in section 6.4.

Planning to Take Severance

One respondent, Harry, 62, had decided to take voluntary severance because he was experiencing a clash of values between himself and the dean. The events leading up to this decision are detailed in his profile, which is presented in Chapter Seven. Harry had given some thought as to what he would do after leaving the case University and was very clear that he would "disengage" himself from management:

I think locally, in terms of the case University, it might be that I will continue

some supervision, doctoral supervision. If we get funds, I will probably continue

to be engaged in some way in research, because obviously I have been involved

in quite a lot of research projects in recent years, and generated quite a lot of

money as well. So I'd continue to be a researcher, I hope, and continue to

support individual colleagues in doctorates and that kind of stuff. And I am also

hoping to do some consultancy. So, I will continue my engagement as an

educationalist, but what I will completely disengage from is

management…management has always been a problem for me. I don't see

myself as a manager and insofar as I have been a manager, either here or

elsewhere, it has been somewhat reluctantly. (Harry)

Planning to Move out of HE

Although nobody stated that they would definitely leave the profession, three respondents discussed a possible move out of higher education. Clive, 53, was looking into whether there were any employment opportunities in the private sector, although he felt this might be difficult because of his age and current salary band. Similarly, Donna, also 53, was not resigning herself to being a HoD for the rest of her career. She said:

I think I will wait to see what opportunities present themselves, but I think that hanging on as head of department just for the sake of being head of department is not something that one should do. There are other things to be done and that could be either within education or outside. I could go for a full time post outside… (Donna)

Hannah, 40, felt that she was going through something of a mid-life crisis and was thinking about a range of options. She described her thoughts in the following way:

I suppose it is a bit of a midlife crisis. I'm 40 and I might die when I'm 80, so I have lived half my life and all I have ever known is my academic subject…and I have only ever been in that environment. It has been like that forever, so part of me is very curious about what else I can do…I've picked up quite a lot of skills while I have been here...but it's complex having children and doing that and carrying on a job. So maybe I'm just at a point now when I need to get the children thing done and get that responsibility, when he is still young, out of the way. And then I can move on a bit. I'm interested in property development. We've always been renovating properties at the same time as doing this and

earning a little bit of money doing that and I think, 'Well, I can project manage.

I understand structures'. My dad had a DIY shop. He is building his own house,

so I have come from that kind of making, practical, engineering family…maybe I

could go into that. Maybe I should have another career, but I am worried about

stepping out of this one and never being able to get back into it again. I feel that

that would shut me off from everything. (Hannah)

6.4 HoD Influencing Whole Career

As discussed in Chapter Five, 11 respondents identified a conflict between their initial reasons for joining HE and the actual day-to-day reality of being a HoD. This appeared to be linked to not being able to do research or teaching, having to do too many management tasks and being moved away from their areas of interest. Alex was a case in point:

As I say I didn't come in to manage, absolutely didn't come in to manage. I

came in to learn how to be an academic, to learn how to do research, to write.

And, you know, that's not where I am now. I am as far away from that now, if

not further, than when I started. (Alex)

Academic Career Capital

In relation to this conflict, nine respondents suggested that their research had suffered and, paradoxically, as a consequence of becoming a HoD, so had their career. It was perceived that research activity, rather than developing a reputation as a manager, was important for academic identity and career progression as the following examples show:

In a way, I followed one particular career path, which has been fairly prominent within the institution and not so prominent outside the institution. I've not been doing the networking and the conferences and the sort of research profile stuff that I probably should have been doing. (Michael)

There's quite a tension about whether I should carry on doing research. There is no doubt that I've ruined what could have been an extremely good research career by doing these other things. (Michelle)

So I got the job, and things have gone downhill ever since in terms of my research…One thing that concerns me is the perception of me as a researcher. And I think that, given that we are in a university that is meant to be research driven now, I am worried about my future because of where I am in terms of research. (Hannah)

Michael, who was trying to finish writing a book, also discussed the concept that research was the most important aspect of academic career capital. He was becoming very frustrated with this fact, as he explained:

This is a tricky one because at the moment I can't really see the future very clearly. I don't really know where it's going. I feel increasingly out of step with the whole climate of academia at the moment, as I feel it has become so excessively research driven. I mean I think that research is hugely important, but what I would like to see is a balance between research and teaching. I think it has become so excessively research driven that I don't feel entirely in step

with that…I have made some choices in my research which were foolish in retrospect in the sense that I have taking on too big too complex projects, whereas in the current climate it is better to take on relatively small, very clearly defined, very do-able projects. And so, once I get the book done, I think I will feel differently and I will be able to set myself different sorts of research goals. (Michael)

Academic Mobility

Other respondents also identified that research, not management experience, was important for career progression, particularly if they wanted to move institutions. One such example was Rebecca, who felt that her career possibilities had been reduced because she had taken on administration and management roles in the past. She described her thoughts in the following way:

It's hard to get a job in another university, perhaps a more research focused university, because I have done a lot of admin and that's not something that necessarily other universities are looking to recruit. Other universities like here may be, but red brick universities are not looking to recruit career managers; they just want those to happen by default. So becoming a career manager is a bit of a risk in education I think. (Rebecca)

Hannah also discussed notions of academic mobility and felt quite resentful that she had not been able to "keep up" with her research since being a HoD:

…but actually it's not fair when you look at the load that some people have been carrying to keep the rest of it going for years and years. So people like me who have been head of department, others have been able then to go off and do their research. So I am way behind now in that area, and when I think where I've come from I'm quite resentful about it, because I have the capability to do it, but I am one of those people who says, "Yes I'll help out, I'll do that"…(Hannah)

Changing Tide

Hannah was beginning to feel that she needed to be more selfish in order to survive, particularly as the case University was becoming more research focused. She said:

I find it difficult to be selfish and say I'm not going to do x y and z, I'm going to spend three weeks doing my research. But I'm getting to the point now where I'm going to have to do that. I'm going to have to do that if I'm going to survive in this place. And I really resent what the institution has done in that sense, and I feel there is a real lack of value…in people who've actually kept the audits going, the quality, all of that kind of basic, boring stuff that keeps the place going, that keeps students happy… all the detail…(Hannah)

Similarly, Sheila, who had been made redundant twice in her career, talked about what she had learned from the experience of being a HoD. It was clear that she no longer felt any institutional loyalty, but realised she now had to look after herself and her own professional development. She reflected:

I have learned about how you survive critical incidents. I was issued with another redundancy letter in June, but this time what's different is I have a PhD and two books with OUP. Nobody can take those things away from me. All the effort I have put into this job and I could still be out again... it just sounds ruthless but I've been driven to this realisation that I have to protect my own academic professional development because that is the only thing...institutions can do whatever they like, and they do, but in the end you have what you've built up for yourself. (Shelia)

Beneficial Experiences

In contrast to the negative perception of the role on an academic's subsequent career presented above, six respondents discussed how the role of being a HoD would benefit their subsequent career. Miranda, who was a HoD in a research-focused school and was actively seeking promotion to a professorship, felt that the experiences of being a HoD, along with her research record, would help her achieve this. She felt that getting a chair at the case University or elsewhere was not something that could be done without this experience.

Elizabeth also felt that her experiences were vital if she was to apply for further promotion:

This role has been vital. I could not have stepped any further than I did. If I had gone from where I was to try and jump in to the dean's role, I think I would have been dead. So in a way you have to do it. You should not go from being an academic…and I do think that those that take career changes, particularly those people who are professors and then jump into a dean's post, I don't know how

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they do it. Unless they gain some skills along with getting to be a professor that

helps them. I couldn't have gone from where I was to being the dean. I wouldn't

have made it. This is definitely where I broke my teeth in management.
(Elizabeth)

Michelle, who had become dean since being a HoD, felt equally strongly that the
experience gained as a HoD was important. She also felt that all deans should have this
experience in order to understand how things worked at ground level. She commented:

I think my experience as being head of department has been absolutely critical

and invaluable and I try to never forget all of those experiences and quite what

it's like to be a head of department. I think it's really important to understand

all that operational stuff. Sometimes I get really frustrated at executive board. I

think there are very few of the deans who have been heads of department here

and understand the operational nitty, gritty, difficulties of some of the things that

get proposed. And I sometimes get really cross and say, "We can't do it like

this!" And a lot of people don't understand that and I think it's really important

to understand and have your roots back in what actually goes on at the coal

face. (Michelle)

Finally, David also felt that his experiences had been valuable:

I suppose all experience is valuable, isn't it? You can draw on your experiences

of trying things, seeing how people react to plans, ideas and that kind of thing.

It's all helpful. I wouldn't say there is any one specific thing which has got to be

the most important thing. It's just an accumulation of dealing with people in this institution, in this higher education centre I suppose. (David)

Conclusions and Summary of Findings

This chapter has presented data to address research questions three and four of this study:

- Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time?

- How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

It has discussed how academics perceive their personal identity has been affected by being a HoD, how they perceive their professional identity has been affected by being a HoD, what their future career plans are, and how being a HoD has influenced their whole career. The following is a summary of these findings:

- Ten respondents, males and females, discussed how their role affected their children and vice versa

- Three mothers discussed how being a HoD gave them a distinct identity

- Eight respondents discussed how becoming a HoD had negatively affected their personal life

- Some respondents identified strategies that they used to manage these identity conflicts. These strategies included compartmentalisation, setting rules and seeking professional help

- Six respondents discussed how becoming a HoD had increased their professional status

- Some respondents felt they had different internal and external professional identities

- Several of the respondents felt that they were no longer able to research, teach or both

- Two respondents felt they had been de-skilled by being a HoD

- Two respondents spoke of needing to stay in touch with the discipline to maintain their academic identity and credibility

- Six of the respondents said they would actively seek promotion in the next few years

- Eight of the respondents said that they would stay at the same level

- One respondent planned to take voluntary severance

- Three respondents were thinking about moving out of HE

- Nine respondents suggested that their research had suffered and, paradoxically, as a consequence of becoming a HoD, so had their career

- It was perceived that research activity, rather than developing a reputation as a manager, was important for academic identity and career progression

- Some respondents felt that they were unable to move institutions because their research had suffered

- Two respondents felt they needed to become more selfish in order to survive their job roles

- Six respondents felt that the role of HoD would benefit their subsequent career.

These findings will be discussed in the light of published literature in Chapter Eight. The following chapter outlines four profiles in order to address the main research

question of the study: What are the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs

in a selected UK university?

Chapter Seven

Selected Profiles of Academics who become HoDs

In order to address the main research question for the study, "What are the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected UK university?" and in order to maintain the narrative of individual academic's career trajectories as constructed by themselves, this chapter outlines the profiles of four respondents, carefully selected according to procedures set out below.

As discussed in Chapter Three, to construct these profiles the researcher drew on suggestions by Seidman (2006). First, following labelling and coding procedures, the researcher selected all the passages from each participant's transcript seen as important, and put these into one document. The researcher then created a narrative from this data. The narrative was expressed in the words of the participant and in the first person. To allow the profiles to read more freely, any hesitation and repetition were eliminated and words were changed, removed or added to maintain the sense of what was being said. Each narrative was then re-read and edited a number of times, until a profile remained that the researcher felt accurately reflected the respondent's career trajectory. This analytical approach fits well with the main research question of the study as it allows participants' career trajectories to be viewed as a whole, in narrative form. Seidman (2006, p. 120) explains:

> *If a researcher thinks that his or her interview material can sustain a profile that would bring a participant alive, offer insights into the complexities of what the researcher is studying, and is compelling and believable, taking the steps to craft a profile can be a rewarding way to share interview data. Crafting a*

profile can bring an aesthetic component into reporting our research that makes
both the researchers' and readers' work enriching, pleasurable, and at times
touching to the spirit.

The four profiles presented here have been chosen to demonstrate the variety and range of different career trajectories of academics who became HoDs in the case University. Helen's profile, profile one, is of an academic who sees herself as a professional researcher. This profile is unusual because, prior to becoming a HoD at the case University, Helen had been a research professor in a traditional pre-1992 university. Such a career move is atypical, given the other respondents' trajectories in this study. Michelle's profile, profile two, is of an academic who has really enjoyed "making a difference" by being in a university management role. Michelle's profile has been chosen to provide insights into the reasons and influences behind these experiences and her subsequent move into a more senior management role. The final two profiles are linked, in that they both illuminate how two academics, one male and one female, have attempted to reconcile a clash of personal and professional values and identities throughout their careers. First, Harry's profile, profile three, is of an academic who has decided to take voluntary severance because of a clash of values between him and the dean of his school. Second, Sheila's profile, profile four, details the career of an academic who has been made redundant twice and who has begun to realise that she needs to look after her own professional development and career trajectory, because she feels that institutions no longer show any loyalty to individual members of staff. Both of these profiles offer different perspectives on the conflicts that people experience between structural (the university) and agency (the individual academic) values. All the profiles presented in this chapter also clearly demonstrate how the concepts of

socialisation, identity and career trajectory are inextricably linked. These connections and interpretations will be developed, in the light of reviewed literature, in Chapter Eight.

7.1 Profile One – Helen, 57

I was born in Hertfordshire. My father was a vicar and my mother didn't work. I am sure that was very common in that generation. So I grew up in a vicarage very much part of a parish and my father moved around when his job changed. I went to a typical primary school in the late 50s. It was a very working class area. There was a huge council estate; that's where the majority of people came from. I was a bit of an outsider in a way because we lived in a big house, even although we didn't have very much money, and I spoke differently from the rest of the children, mainly because my mother was very insistent that I didn't adopt a local accent.

I passed my 11-plus and went to grammar school. I studied English, history and French at A Level and went straight to a well-regarded pre-1992 university. I was quite worried about going to university, because it was at the time when there had been a big change in society and there was a lot of drug taking and that kind of thing. I had also come from a very protected environment in a sense and I was worried that it was going to be all raves and so on. In fact, where I went was a very middle-class, female dominated institution and wasn't like that at all, but I didn't make as much of the social life as I might have done, which I regret. I had a boyfriend with whom I went off to university. We met when I was 17, and I didn't feel I could go and join in the university activities, as he wouldn't be able to join me.

At university, I became more and more engaged with my subject and in particular with research, so when I talked to my tutor about what he thought I should do

and said that I had been thinking about doing some research, he told me about PhDs and PhD funding and he directed me towards doing that. So, I had already, by the end of the second year, got a very clear idea what I wanted to do. Of course, I never envisaged that I would end up where I am now, because one doesn't at that age, but I think that when it became clear that I was good at research then I think that added into the idea that I was going to have a career and this was what it was going to be in.

So, I got an ESRC grant to do my PhD. I actually only did it full time for two years because at the time the ESRC, in a way which would not be allowed now, only gave married women a very small grant because the view then was that they would be supported by their husbands. I was married by this time. I got married very young: I had just finished my second year at university. We were in such dire financial straits that I decided after two years, having nearly finished the PhD anyway, that I would go and get a job. And so I did. I went off and got a job lecturing, which I did part time, and we had some kind of arrangement whereby I got given part of the money as a kind of grant for tax purposes. I think the job slowed down the PhD a little bit, but it gave me lots of experience, which stood me in very good stead when I got my first full-time job.

I found lecturing quite daunting because I was given an enormous amount of lecturing to do on subjects that I didn't necessarily know a huge amount about. On the other hand, I turned out to be really good at lecturing and I received a lot of good feedback so I certainly felt that the first experiences in lecturing, in spite of them being stressful because of the workload, were actually positive and I found I enjoyed it.

I hadn't quite finished my PhD at this point. I had done two years full-time and six months part-time and then my supervisor left, and I got employed at the institution where I was doing my PhD. I think they knew me, they had heard me presenting my research and I had become something of a legend because I had got on so quickly and it

had all gone very smoothly. And so, I got the job. I think I got the job in April and I had actually submitted and had my viva by March of the following year.

Interestingly, having had a part-time job, I actually found having a full time job very liberating because it gave me space to finish my research and write up my PhD. So certainly initially, for the first few years and for a very long time, I never found anything very negative about the role. Things were different then, too, because we didn't have the RAE, so the need to keep having external validation of what one was doing was different. I think there was a lot more autonomy. I mean, we didn't have any targets, publishing or getting in research income, so I really enjoyed it. I suppose if there was a downside it was the fact that I did get tired, because by this time we had bought a house and I was commuting quite a long way to work.

After that, I tried for promotion and didn't get it. My impression is that promotion was a lot harder in those days, so I decided to apply for another job. A close colleague of mine had become head of department at another pre-1992 university. He and I had worked together quite a lot in organising conferences and he thought I was a very good administrator and good at organising things so he effectively, well he didn't create a job for me, but when a new vacancy came up in his university, he encouraged me to apply and I got the job.

I suppose I had quite a big impact on the department because it was quite a sleepy department when I arrived and I do remember making lots of suggestions to change things. I found over the years, because I was there a long time during which I was promoted, I think across that whole period I always had an enormous amount of influence in the department. It wasn't really until the last part of my being there that I had a kind of formal role and so a lot of it was indirect experience with the head of

department who trusted my opinion. I made lots of suggestions about how we could do things better.

I applied for promotion because I think I wanted recognition of my research experience. I don't think I probably applied as early as I might have for my promotion partly because I had a daughter, which had an impact. I think one of the effects of that was that it probably made it a bit less important to me. My daughter was very, very important to me, especially when she was little. I did expect to be promoted but I wouldn't say it was a major motivation. I've always done research because I've enjoyed it and taking on administrative posts in an old university typically doesn't get you promotion. It's strange here that taking on an admin. role gets you promotion because it didn't there. One was effectively promoted on the basis of one's research excellence, not anything else. My promotions were entirely based on my academic work, my research work, because I was promoted to reader and then to professor.

Why, then, did I move to this job role? Well, I had moved house in 1990 because my husband died and at that point I had to decide where I was going to live. I wanted to move nearer my mother, she was getting older and one of my sisters was living nearby so I thought that seemed like a sensible idea. So, I was commuting quite a long way to work. But it was just one of those accidents. I came here to a conference to give a presentation and we had a dinner afterwards and I happened to be sitting next to the dean of the school; I understand that was entirely accidental. We got chatting and he didn't know who I was and he told me about the fact that they were looking for a head of department, which didn't interest me, but also that they had just set up a research institute. At that point, my ears pricked up, because it would give me an opportunity to really bring on a department. And I wouldn't have to commute any more and with my daughter getting older and I think ironically needing me around more; she needed lifts

to places and things. Adolescence is quite a difficult period and I think mums need to be around. So, things came together and I just decided to do it. I did spend a long, long time thinking about it because it was a strange thing, one might say, to move from where I was working to here, but it was really the challenge of the department, the opportunity to work in a different environment and to do something a bit different.

When I started here, we set up a kind of forum for heads of department that I found very useful. We had a facilitator come in and do various sessions and I certainly did find that useful. I mean for me the challenge wasn't really how to manage a department, it was how to manage a department at *this* university, which is a strange place compared to many places. It was difficult to find out how things were done and to understand the systems. So it was learning "book speak" that I found a bit difficult, but fortunately there were people in the department who were really quite experienced and knew the system and so I got a lot of support from them.

My role is a combination of research leadership and academic leadership in the broader sense, because obviously we have to keep the discipline on track in terms of what we teach. I also think it is acting as a sort of interface between the department and the school. So, I have regular one to one meetings with the dean and the assistant dean and, in fact, I often see them at other times as well. I have also been discovering all about the university, feeding in from the department into the wider context, I think that is another important role for heads of department. It's not a very well defined role yet, because I don't think the case University has thought about what heads of department do, but I do see it as a very important role. It needs to be pursued, because residing in the department there is a lot of expertise about the discipline and about the directions of the discipline and that needs to be used.

I think the case University is over directed from above and it's not really using the resources within the different areas and subject expertise properly. This is something that has been articulated at the heads of department's group and I think I was one of the people who articulated it most strongly coming in from outside, comparing what we do here with what had happened before. In my previous institution, the views of heads of department were hugely important as they fed into the academic board and although we did have faculties, the budgets were actually held at departmental level. I think here they are missing a level of consultation and resource they could make better use of.

Last year was very busy, but I knew it would be as it was my first year and I had a lot to learn and because there was nobody else to do it. I had to do the RAE return on top of everything else. I was hugely busy last year and I knew it would mean I couldn't spend so much time on my research, though having said that when I reflected on what I had done I managed to finish writing a book which is coming out in January and I wrote two papers. Oh yes, and I was working on other things, so I actually did relatively large amounts…but last year was very busy and I am noticing the difference now that the RAE is finished. That was taking a lot of my time, partly because I had to try to define what we were doing as a department. So I am imagining now that the workload is going to be down and I'll have more time to get back on to research…there is a theme emerging here…. but one of the aims of the department is to increase the amount of research funding and part of that has got to be me bringing in the money, so I will need to get back to it.

I think coming to the role from outside the university was an advantage. It's not only the issue about moving from one role to another that can be difficult, I think it's also that there can be a history of things that have happened and I started effectively

with no history…I think there were lots of pluses and, as far as the department was concerned, really no negatives about taking over.

In terms of future career plans, I am not sure because I think I really enjoy this role and I'm not sure I want to take on another role. I realise I could because I'm a good manager, good at strategy. There are other roles I could take on if I chose to, but I suspect I am not going to because what I look to do in the longer term, maybe in the last part of my career, is probably to stop doing this and go full time into my research, so that's what I want to do. That to me is what my legacy is going to be; it's my research. I also think it is very, very important to actually train other researchers, so having PhD students. And that's really where I will see my career ending up, which is coming back to research and going back full circle. I don't want to be dean because it's very, very difficult to carry on doing research if you take on one of those roles and I think I would be very, very frustrated. You have to make that choice. I mean I have colleagues who have made that choice and become pro vice chancellors and that kind of thing, but even although they were very good researchers in the past they have stopped doing research and I really don't want to do that. In the end, research is what I care about most.

7.2 Profile Two - Michelle, 49

I was born in Chester. My father was a trained electrician and both of my parents left school at 14 without any formal qualifications. I was their only child. My primary schooling was relatively conventional, it was a nice sort of modern primary school, fairly forward-thinking and I remember it as a happy, positive experience.

My secondary school was interesting because I was sufficiently bright when I was at primary school that I could have gone to the state secondary school a year early. I passed my 11-plus a year early and was in the top percentages of that, but my parents

wanted me to go to a better school. So, I ended up going to a direct grant grammar school. This meant that I had three quarters of an hour bus ride every day. My parents weren't well off at all; they scrimped and saved so that I could have that education. It was a very good school, if you look even now in the rankings, it's one of those that's up there and does very well. It was full of the daughters of doctors, lawyers and other such people. Every year it would send at least 20 girls to Oxbridge, so it was that kind of environment. And it was very good at instilling people with good self esteem, being confident and articulate, and all of those sorts of things which I feel the same now as a parent, and for my parents they believed that education was incredibly important, as it is. So, it was a good thing to do and I'm very grateful that they took that decision, which for them can't have been an easy decision because it was something that was completely alien to them. I think my father actually left school at 13. He lived on a farm and as soon as he could get out of education, education to him was just…. he couldn't see the point of it at all. It was quite a brave thing for them to have done.

At school, I always was a good all rounder and I could probably, had I wanted to, done A-levels or studied degree subjects in many, many different disciplines. I guess that because of my family background there had always been a strong interest in education. In my mother's family, there were a large number of teachers from North Wales. You can imagine the Welsh Methodist sort of influence probably, so education was quite important. There was a strong push to go into a career that was useful, that would give employment opportunities, things that were applied in nature. Actually, my best subject at school was history, but the idea of going off and studying history would not have gone down particularly well with my parents.

At sixth form, I did have a very strong view in my mind that I needed to do something that was useful and something that would be good in terms of ensuring a

reasonable salary and that had prospects. I was very clear about that and I realised that I could actually be sponsored through university and that's what I ended up doing. I ended up getting a sponsorship and so they paid all my university fees, gave me a bursary and gave me work placements. I worked for them for a year before I went to university and I worked during the holidays and all sorts of things. So, for my parents again, which I was actually really pleased about, it took that burden away of having to pay for university education. My father had been forced to go to working three-day weeks and all sorts of things like that, so financially it was a terrible time for him and he also went through a period of ill health as well.

My university experience was also influenced by the experience I had the year before I went to university. Because I went from a girls direct grant grammar school, populated by these extremely well off white, middle class girls, and I went and worked in a company where there were probably in excess of about 2000 men. And I was probably the only woman, apart from female cleaners. It was a fascinating environment to work in. It was very interesting in terms of the systems that I was working in but also the people side of it was fascinating, absolutely fascinating. So, I went from that to Oxbridge and I was thrust back into this white, middle class privileged environment.

For my subject area, I think Oxbridge was pretty appalling really. The course was aimed right up there and the rest of us really struggled. The teaching is aimed at the best, and so many of the people who were there weren't able to get what they wanted out of the course. They decided: I've got a good degree, I'll go off and work in the city. But I never felt that. I always felt disappointed with that. It was interesting really, because it must have coloured my subsequent choices enormously. I felt, 'This is not the way to educate people. This is not the right thing to do. There have to be better ways

of enthusing, motivating, interesting people, in what really are actually quite interesting things.'

After university, I wanted to stay in one place, and for personal reasons at that time, I wanted to stay near here, so I applied for a job which was connected with the poly. It was part of what was called a teaching company scheme, which is now these knowledge transfer partnerships, and it was almost the first wave of those and it was working with a group of companies, quite small companies. I was pleased to be able to stay for two years and part way through that I started doing a PhD because I was really quite interested in the idea of doing some research. I didn't find the work, certainly what was going on in terms of the company that we were working with, particularly interesting. The interest was really amongst us as a group of colleagues. We were all people who were interested in doing quite different things and we were at the phase where they were bringing out the first PCs and we took it upon ourselves to teach the workforce word processing, spreadsheets and databases on this one PC that we bought in.

So, we did these kind of training sessions and these were the things that were interesting about it, much more than the work environment itself. But during that year I realised what I was interested in was education and that was really the thing. And I was interested in opportunities to learn more myself. I had an interesting two years but towards the end of that, the person who was supervising my PhD got another job and his job came up. I had never thought of it really but suddenly one day I thought, 'I wonder if I could apply for that?' And I went and said to the then head of department, "Do you think it would be alright if I applied for Tom's job?" and I could see his face lit up when I said it. It was one of those dream moments and I just thought, 'That's what I'd really like to do. That's what I want to do'. I realised it was something I really believed in, just

something that was so important and I could see the point of it and it was all the stuff coming together for me.

It had a nice mix about it and I think I was beginning to realise that by then I would be quite good at teaching, I was beginning to see that I had the right sorts of skills and personality to do that as well. But it was also that I wanted to do something that was really responsible. Things frustrated me. You know how it is when you are younger. You don't get enough responsibility - people don't give you enough. You're burning to have your own project, and the great thing about lecturing is that you're left alone to get on and do it, which is tremendous. So I was really taken with the level of responsibility that I would have as well. That was for me very exciting, but I think the fact that it was education…I could see the point of it all. It all knitted up nicely really.

I hadn't completed my PhD, so I'd still got to do all of that but I came in and I loved teaching. I still do. I absolutely loved all that side of it. I loved getting to grips with it. I loved explaining stuff, the rapport and everything… And I knew then this was what I wanted to do. I never had any doubts about that. And I started to do research. I started to bring in money, which was also good. In my first three or four years I brought in three research grants. I started to build up a team of researchers and all that sort of thing. But I also began to realise that I could see how things ought to be organised a bit better.

I was promoted to senior lecturer after two years and that was relatively unusual then. There were no management responsibilities with the role, it was just a sort of recognition really, but I had had this experience with a chap who was the deputy vice chancellor. He said, "We never promote anybody to senior lecturer, it's a waste of money for us." So I thought, 'Right. I am having that.' What happened then was I took on being the course leader because I wanted to do things; I wanted to make changes.

And I realised then that I was going to get sucked into it all. That although my research was going well, and although I still hadn't finished my own PhD, I was going to get sucked into some of this.

I managed to finish my PhD. It took a long time, as I had been doing it part time all this time, but I did manage to finish it. However, increasingly my time was being taken over as course leader. I got quite frustrated at that point and I did actually think about leaving, I did actually think that I could go off and do an MBA. And what happened was that a colleague of mine who was an assistant dean at that point suddenly got ill. He had a nervous breakdown and he was my line manager in effect. They advertised his job and I thought, 'Nobody else around here is going to do this job and if I look at the people that might get it, I'm not sure that I want to be managed by any of them.' So I applied for it. I was only twenty-nine at the time and I got the job. And I was told it was reasonably clear cut. But I knew it was the job I wanted. I knew that I would rather do that than go off and do an MBA. And then there were the opportunities to start doing things, in the sense of making a difference, which I then did start to do. My research carried on for quite a while after and I've still got, would you believe it, five research students at the moment, but I'm much less research active now than I was then.

A lot of what we do is oiling the wheels, making sure things keep running smoothly, making sure that the obstacles and difficulties that there are, are smoothed over so that operationally it is good student experience. We try to tackle some of the problems. The thing about being head of department is that you get your hands dirty all the time. You have to get involved in the difficulties that there are because other people can't necessarily sort them out. For me, it's not all about authority, but it is about being able to make things happen and it's being able to solve problems, and often people

problems. But it's also about the strategic stuff as well – "We want to introduce a course and it's going to be the most exciting thing since…" - there are some of those bits. And there are many days when I go home and think, 'Oh I didn't do anything today'. And you think, 'I'm totally ineffective.' But then, when you do smooth over some of the things and help things to carry on running and make sure that students come back to you and they say, "That was really great. I really did learn something there." And, "Thanks for sorting that out"…those are the things. So it's a real mixture of strategic and nitty, gritty operational stuff.

I think often what is difficult as a head of department is keeping a distance. Often, heads of department are promoted from within the ranks and you work with colleagues and having a little bit of distance from them, sometimes you have to take difficult decisions. There's always competing priorities and I think that's quite a hard thing: to establish just a little bit of distance so you can do that.   Apart from that, I often feel that there is too much to do really and keeping it all up in the air is very, very difficult.

I survive by being a "corner cutter". I'm not a perfectionist. I know what needs to be done in order to get something through, so I'll do that. I realised quite early on as well that this is not a sprint, it's a marathon and you've got to pace yourself. Unless you pace yourself properly, unless you carve out time away from the drudgery of some of it, you won't survive it. Because I've seen better people than me go under and just not cope with it because they have just thrown themselves at it, lock, stock and barrel. So I think a balance of taking time out and saying, 'No. I'm not going to do that.' And also having some interesting little projects going on along the way that you're really interested in, which maybe a bit tangential to what you are doing, is quite good and I've always done that.

I think there are lots of enjoyable parts to being a HoD. I think it's really good. I think making things happen and doing things that are really different is great. That's on one level, alongside seeing the success of students. We may never be the bee's knees in the research assessment exercise, but what we're doing counts out there. To be honest, it's the day-to-day ironing out the problems. It's things running smoothly. The fact that I know I can do that, there's a real joy to all of that. I suppose what I really like as well is that it's constantly new. I'm always doing new things, and it's a different challenge.

In terms of my academic career trajectory, the case University has quite a schizoid view about how it sees people who move into management and administration roles. Whilst it's great to be a professor, apparently, it's not so good to go off and do these sorts of things. So, I think although that I can see that it was really important, I did sort of worry that maybe it wasn't…you know…. there's quite a tension between should I be carrying on doing research or not. I never really thought about it that much or never really worried about it much, but I did think it was a shame. And there is no doubt that I've ruined what could have been an extremely good research career by doing these other things. As it happens, I'm still being returned as part of the RAE, which is nice, but you know I could have done a great deal more. I really could, because I went from having this little research team with three research grants to worrying about developing new courses and all that sort of thing. So it did change my professional life, there's no doubt about it. I'm well known, certainly well respected across the sector and I know lots of other people who are in similar positions to me in that sense. But it's always been a little bit of a shame. It's difficult keeping research going if you do these sorts of things. It really is.

7.3 Profile Three – Harry, 62

I was born in December 1946 in Scotland. My father worked for his father; they ran a coal business. My early school experiences were quite fragmented: I went to school in Scotland for a little while, then we moved to England and, by the time I was five or six, I had already been to three schools. I think there was a kind of assumption, strange really, that I wouldn't do very well in school, as I had had this fragmented past. I remember writing a very long essay and the teacher being very kind of impressed and going to the head teacher and saying, "You know, this child is really in the wrong class." And so I was quite bright at school, but I actually didn't like schooling very much. I was quite a lazy student. I think a lot of kids are like that. You breeze through your GCE's and you think A levels are going to be exactly the same. You just kind of turn up. So, I made a complete hash of my A levels. The other thing was that it was the sixties, so there was loads going on: rock music and pop music and dances and discos and all sorts of things going on and I really couldn't be arsed to work. I was having far too good a time without actually doing any work, so I made a hash of my A levels.

I also made a disastrous mistake in terms of what I was studying because I decided that I would like to travel …… I was very kind of left wing, very 'right-on' and I decided that I wanted to do something like development economics even though I had never studied any economics. As I had done so badly in my A levels I ended up in a polytechnic, but because I knew nothing about economics the course I had let myself in for was absolutely diametrically opposite to the one I wanted to study. I wanted to study development economics and this was about monetarist, capitalist economics and maximising company profits and stuff like that. Nearly everyone on the course ended up being accountants. I absolutely hated the whole three years. I hated everything about it.

I got the degree and actually won an economics prize, much to my astonishment, but I hated it.

At the end of my course, as I say, most people were going off to become accountants, but I didn't want to do anything like that at all. I wanted to teach. I did a PGCE in FE and got a job lecturing in an FE college. I was there for about three years and then I began a job as deputy head of department at a school but then two things happened. One, my marriage. I had met a fellow student when I was studying for my degree in economics and she became pregnant and although I don't think in the fullness of time we would have actually ended up married, parental pressures were such that we did get married. But it didn't last. And the other thing was I actually, at that stage in my life, became sick of where I was living. I decided that I just had to leave, not just leave the school, but also leave the country. I remember the head teacher saying to me, "You are ruining your career. If you do this you are just going to blow your career out."

From there, I went abroad and taught in a couple of universities. It was a time of real turmoil in my life and in my teaching. It was very fragmented, so I decided I would come back to the UK to do a Master's degree. I thought that things would now be open to me because I had quite a varied experience in FE and in HE and I thought for the first time, 'Now I have a proper degree, an MA.' But it wasn't like that at all. My C.V. was so fragmented. It must have looked absolutely awful and in a way, that head teacher was right. In terms of my career progression, I had shot it to pieces. On the other hand, I had lived quite an interesting time for a while. I did eventually get a job. I got a job at an FE College, but back where I started in a sense. I was very disappointed at that point in my career. I had had interesting experiences and got more qualifications, but I was back where I started.

I was there for the next six years, during which time I got married again, and then I got a job as head of department at a big FE and HE College. It was a pretty horrible job in many ways because so many of the members of the department were in a sense "past it", not necessarily in age, but in terms of their engagement with what they were doing. They had stopped developing as teachers and my job as head of the department was really to revive the subject in the college. As you can imagine, that's a job that doesn't go down well with the rest of the teaching team, all of whom to a person believed they should have got my job. They resented that I was trying to change the culture, trying to make them engage more in what they were doing and this proved to be such a difficult job, socially, emotionally as well as just in what you were doing, because I had never worked in a situation before where people felt antagonistic towards me. Not just antagonistic towards me, but antagonistic towards me when they didn't know me from Adam. It was a very, very difficult job.

So, I decided to do a doctorate because I felt I needed some kind of platform to stand back from what I was doing and understand it in a dispassionate way. Otherwise, I am just there, kind of up against it, working with these members of staff who don't want to help me to do my job.

Then, not long after that, I got the job of deputy head of faculty. In a way, it made my job easier as I had a more powerful position, but on the other hand it made it more difficult because the people who hated that I had been appointed in the first place now thought, 'That bastard. Not only has he come in, but he has now been promoted.' I was promoted to senior lecturer. Then I became deputy head. It got worse and worse for my opponents.

Then I became assistant staffing development officer for the whole of the college, not just the department, the whole of the college. I had to deal with lots and lots

of staffing issues, in particular the part time staff where you can only employ people if you have the numbers, and yet some of these people that you employ need the work, year on year, to actually pay their bills. And so, you are working with people in a situation that is at least semi-exploitative. You have to keep them on side and you know that, if for whatever reason you don't recruit the students, those people will be out of a job. And it's very uncomfortable because when people were nice to me, part time staff for example were very nice to me, I knew that it was partly because they quite liked me as a person, but partly because they were sucking up to me because I was the person dishing out the work. And I hated that. I hated the notion that my relationship with people was being mediated by their desire for me to give them work. I could understand it at one level, but it wasn't a fully human relationship. It wasn't a relationship of equality and reciprocity, it was a relationship in which I was the exploiter and they were the exploited.

Meanwhile, of course, I was well into my doctorate and reaching the end of that and … I had moved more and more into staff development for the college as a whole…and when I saw the advert for a senior lecturer at this place I thought, 'Well, I think I might go there.' This had a very good reputation as a poly and I had moved more into staff development, more into the doctorate side of things. And I didn't like those aspects of my job, the kind of exploitative aspects of being a manager in a resource tight organisation. So, I made the decision, jointly with my wife, that I would apply for this job. I knew when I applied for the job that it would be a cul-de-sac. It was like a dead-end kind of job in a way. I was shunting myself out of what would be the normal progression and it was the third time I had done it. Almost certainly, I would have gone on to become head of faculty, vice principal and so forth, but I decided that that wasn't

the life for me. I am fairly kind of ideological; I don't really want to spend my life doing things that I regard as ethically unacceptable.

I came here in 1989, and since then I have had several changes of direction. I ran the MA programme and then I worked with colleagues on creating a doctoral programme. I then became postgraduate tutor and then reader. So, as the school has evolved with different and more postgraduate programmes, I have been quite involved in all of those developments.

Then we got a new dean. It was quite clear that the kind of people that he had in mind for these roles didn't include me. They were going to be for people he knew. And so, I felt almost from day one that I was marginal. I was asked if I wanted to be head of a department because in a sense I didn't have…I had gone from having a distinct role to having a kind of hazy role as a reader in a situation where you weren't really funded to be a reader. You weren't actually given any hours for readership. So, I accepted the role, somewhat reluctantly, because workload planning, appraisals…I mean ok I can see the necessity of doing these things, but it seemed to me that, in a sense, that was what I had left behind. I had deliberately left that kind of managerialist world behind. I accepted it on the grounds that it would have a developmental aspect. It wouldn't just be those kind of things. I wanted it to be a different kind of role. Unfortunately, I have never felt that the role was satisfactory. I have never had any resource power and if you don't have resource power as a manager then you have no power, effectively no power at all.

So, I have never felt comfortable with the role and I have never felt that the school is a true democratic organisation. In my view, all organisations in education should model democracy because we are living in a democratic or supposedly democratic society. I don't see how you can actually develop a real participative healthy

democracy unless you model it in the way you educate people. If you can't model that in a university then it seems to me hopeless. A university should be a place for a real lot of dialogue and debate and discussion and if you close it down by having very centralised, top down management then I think that you end up with a very unhealthy situation. There is very, very little genuine consultation and dialogue, even within senior members of staff, and I have never really liked that. So I have to say that in the last few years of my career I have not felt comfortable; I have not felt happy. I have not felt that I have been doing a genuine job in some ways because of these cultural issues in which you are given a title but you are not really given the power. You are supposedly consulted, but I have never really felt that being a member of the management team means very much in terms of …people listening to my voice or any real dialogue or discussion.

The decisions seem to be made largely by one person, maybe listening to one or two other people, saying the things he wants to hear. And that seems to me a very, very unhealthy way of managing. I mean, on a macro scale, it's how people like Adolf Hitler or Stalin managed. They listened to the people who were saying things they wanted to hear and people could not say anything to them that they knew they did not want to hear, because they would fly into a rage. And I have tried. I have said very, very often things I know the dean did not want to hear and because of that, I feel I have been very marginalised. I think he has always regarded me as a bit of a thorn in the flesh.

And so, I haven't felt comfortable in this role, but I have reached a stage in my career and a stage in my life where my options are very, very limited, because my wife works locally and my kids are still at school. I have been offered a few other positions in other universities, but we are kind of locked into this area for different family reasons so I have had to reconcile myself to the fact that I have to stay here. I have had to stick

around, but I have felt uncomfortable about it. I think some aspects of it - working with individual members of staff for example - has been rewarding. But some of the bureaucratic procedures…over the years it has become more and more burdensome as the system itself becomes more and more important as a system. And it seems to me that all the added hours of work we do for workload planning… it doesn't actually add value in terms of what people do. And so, the resource is going into the system itself.

I think that that is a big mistake in terms of misplaced energies, but also it is symptomatic of the kind of cultural shift that is going on in all the public services. The systems of managing people, the accountability systems, command and control systems are getting tighter and tighter and I fear for the real quality of people's lives and that we are going off at a tangent in the way that we lose sight of what is really important. What's really important here is teaching and research. What's really important is the academic culture of the case University. What is not really important is managing resources all the time; minutely micro managing the resources to try and squeeze the maximum out of people. It just doesn't add up to me at all, it literally doesn't add up to me. I have to say that my own engagement for the last several years has been to become increasingly disengaged, psychologically, mentally, from managing here and I think in a way that is a normal human reaction. If you don't agree with something in principle, you kind of disengage from it. I have, and therefore my application for severance now is a result of that. I feel the time has come for me to get out. I can no longer sustain my own level of engagement enough to really stick around.

I think locally, in terms of the case University, it might be that I will continue some supervision, doctoral supervision. If we get funds, I will probably continue to be engaged in some way in research because obviously I have been involved in quite a lot of research projects in recent years, so I'd continue to be a researcher, I hope, and

continue to support individual colleagues in doctorates and that kind of stuff. And I am hoping to do some consultancy and so forth. So, I will continue my engagement as an educationalist, but what I will completely disengage from is management. As you can tell from my history, management has always been a problem for me. I don't see myself as a manager and insofar as I have been a manager, either here or elsewhere, it has been somewhat reluctantly.

7.4 Profile Four - Sheila, 54

I was born in London. My family are a kind of refugee family. My father's family came over in 1938 from Poland. They were Jewish-Polish and were brought up very much in the Jewish-Polish community and they've got this passion for education, that's the way they survived. He was a doctor, a consultant radiologist. My mother's family came over from Russia at the turn of the 20th century and that was a family where girls…none of the girls in the family… had even been to university. So there were these two double values: that education is literally the way you survive, but not necessarily for girls.

I loved primary school. I was really happy in primary school and I remember thinking halfway through primary school, 'Oh I'd like my whole life to be in primary school', or, 'I just want to be in school learning all the time'. I loved learning. I loved the environment.

Secondary school was a bitter, bitter blow. It was really bitter; it couldn't have been more different. We were slapped down right from the start. I was a really bouncy, bubbly pupil in the primary school and I was trying to be the same when I started senior school and I remember being slapped down in the first year and I never spoke again. My teachers told my parents that the things that were valued in primary school wouldn't work any longer; that I needed to get through O levels and A levels. Despite this, I

really loved English and I loved languages. I also really enjoyed history, although the teachers tried to kill that too. I enjoyed all the arts subjects, but I actually enjoyed maths and biology as well.

After school, there was a struggle. The family expectation was that you went into a profession. And there were only two professions in the world, law and medicine. Or marriage. It was quite funny really. I was engaged, so in a way for them I would have been exempt from a profession. I was engaged to a lawyer. It was all perfect. So I applied to do law. And then I realised all of it was awful, all of it was wrong. I broke off my engagement, I pulled out of doing law, and I went to study a subject that I really wanted to do.

After that, I got a scholarship to do a PhD in one of the strands I had done at university, but after about two weeks I realised it was an awful mistake, because I realised that people who are only interested in an academic subject - I didn't like them as human beings. I didn't see where it was going and I kind of confronted my own values: I wanted to *do* something in the world. The education department was over the road, I used to see all these great talks happening and I thought, 'That is about the real world', so I finished my MPhil and went to do a PGCE.

Then I taught abroad in a secondary school. I thought it was the perfect profession, because it also took me all over the world. Although I travelled all over the world, there was always this ambiguity about where to live. I mean, most people have homes, where do I want to live? So when I was offered a job at a UK university, a permanent job, I went. I came back from working and travelling abroad and I went to this pre-1992 UK university.

But I thought within two weeks, 'This isn't the right decision.' I did loads of things that the university wanted me to do for the RAE, but it still wasn't right. I

enjoyed working with the students and with the staff. The difficult thing was the university itself. They were so obsessed with finance, not just breaking even. They wanted everything to make a huge profit and I couldn't stand it. It was immoral to me because they wanted us to accept students to do degrees who were bringing money in even if they weren't ready to come in and study. They were trying to force us to move people on to PhD programmes before they were ready because of fees. I just thought, 'We'll end up in a collision, I just can't stand it, let someone else do this dirty work if they have to do it but I'm not going to.' I felt that I had found a vocation, but that dealing with the way institutions work was something I might not have the toughness to bear. So, I stayed for three years then I began my travels again. I worked all over Eastern Europe.

Then there was a post in the UK and it was based where I had always wanted to live, so I went back to the UK and worked at an HE College. I met Tom and we got married and I just thought, 'This is the place; this is the home I've been looking for.' I hadn't lived anywhere very long and it was great. The job was amazing. I went all over the world with the job. Then I began to write, get stuff, get materials published. It was all perfect.

Then I was made redundant. That was in 2000/1. It was pretty dire because we both loved where we lived and we had a house there. We had just bought it a year or two before and just didn't want to leave, but there were no jobs and I didn't have a PhD. And all the jobs that were equivalent, all the types of roles that I had been involved in, had either been wiped out or they had been taken over by people with PhDs, with possibly a lot less experience. So, I was really in a Catch 22. I applied for loads of things and I saw people who said, "We would really like you to work with us but you have to have a PhD." Then I saw the post of running the MA here. It was the nearest

thing, but it was 180 miles away. I got the job, but it was still a bitter blow because, firstly, it was 180 miles away, and, secondly, I had got to the top of the senior lecturer scale and I was dropped right down to the top of the lecturer scale; I got a huge pay cut.

They had a policy then, or said they did, that they appointed new people at the bottom of the scale. So, I had this huge pay cut and I had to commute 180 miles from home. We did not know how to work it out. How do you work a marriage out? It was really, really complicated and difficult. We thought about uprooting and coming here, but when we looked at what we could afford to buy it was so depressing that we just thought, 'No'.

We travelled back to our house at weekends, but it was very hard really. It was expensive. It was tiring. I was angry at the university for doing that to me, forcing me to take that huge pay cut and they didn't tell me until after they had offered me the job, so I was angry with myself. I could have done the PhD all those years ago, but I couldn't stand to do that there. I could have had a PhD from 1980....

I was the only full time member of staff so I wrote all the modules and it was unbelievable. I was doing everything: "I am your admissions tutor, now I am your personal tutor, now I am your module supervisor and now I am assessing your work." It was like a cottage industry. I couldn't believe, to be honest, that a university could be running the whole MA like a cottage industry from one room. Anyway, I wrote loads and loads of material. I worked really hard at it and got it off the ground. I worked with the whole spectrum of everything that an MA involves through nursing enquiries, through to writing the content, supporting the students through it, assessing, supervision, and everything. After two years, I thought either something changes or I leave, so it was in that context that when two departments in the university merged, I applied for a HoD post.

I went for it for a number of reasons. Not because I was desperate to be head of department, but because I thought it would save the group if somebody was there who could work with difficult staff. And I thought it would save me from a job that was impossible, so if I am doing the work loading, then I'll work load this MA so it's sensible, that it's run by the whole team instead of just by me. And it was difficult financially, so I mean in a way that is not an exalted reason to apply for head of department, but I needed a change in role urgently.

When I got the job, I was absolutely determined to be a force of good, very quickly, because the group were very disparate, very unhappy. They had been put at the bottom of the scale, just as I had. It made me very angry for the first year. Everyone was in similar positions; they had never been fought for. I just picked up every campaign, and there were many campaigns. Hourly paid people who had been there for sort of ten years, so I campaigned to get permanent posts. There were people like me put at the bottom of the scales and were doing really responsible jobs; I campaigned for them to get increments, which they did. I was just fighting for everybody on the ground. I know what it's like to be badly treated and I know that even when our last department folded and I was made redundant, what made it worse was that nobody had fought and nobody had talked to us. So, I knew that even if something horrible has to happen, somebody listening to you, talking to you, being honest with you, makes a huge difference. The other thing that I had experienced was intolerable work expectations running that MA. So, the other thing that I took on was: "Is everybody's workload real, is it realistic, are they carrying intolerable loads that they shouldn't be, can't the work be shared?" I talked to everybody, looked at their aspirations and their stress areas, and shared work out. Where I saw colleagues absolutely broken by the stress of running a course I thought, 'Why can't that be rotated and why can't you have two or three people sharing

that?' It went from being a damaged, angry group, deeply hurt, to gradually some of these things being healed, being resolved. It was also a jealous group. People were afraid of each other, so that was the other thing: information sharing, sharing good practice and finding out what other people did. So, I started a monthly newsletter, telling our stories as something that we shared and could refer back to, as well as away days and afternoons and lunches and teas and celebrations of peoples' successes. All sorts of ways of pulling people together, which hadn't happened in the past.

That was really very tiring because it was like an abused child, the more care you get the more needs emerge. So every time I had resolved one thing with one person, another need, another need, another need, and I realised that it would just never, never stop. There was too much. It was too fundamental and the fact is that the case University imposed new traumas on the group, because out of the three years that I was head of department, two of those years we were fighting for our survival. So, whatever you do for the group, they still are being made to feel we don't really belong. We could just be kicked out. So, I think that it was septic almost….

I would not want to do it again. I just lost too much of my life really and I think I lost too much of the quality of what I think I can give. I just think that the core of what one can give in leadership is the capacity to think a bit more at an angle and to think beyond, outside the box. They just squashed us into the box and tried to seal the lid closed.

In terms of my personal life, I think in the first year when I first took it on, I carried it home with me all the time and it had a terrible impact. We almost didn't survive together. After one year it became intolerable for me…I think I wasn't able to give to anything else for about a year until I just pulled myself short and thought, 'You are heading towards a crash here. You're going to find yourself without a husband,

without a home and instead you'll have this toxic situation.' So I had to really separate out my life from the job, very, very strictly. One strategy I used was that I looked for neutral help at work. I thought, 'Work has to provide me with a way to survive this.' So, I followed up the mentoring thing.

The bits I really enjoyed were empowering my colleagues, giving them more opportunities to grow as professionals, as researchers. To move people from seeing themselves just as teachers to seeing themselves as researchers, to seeing them become more visible, and encouraging them to do that. That's the bit that I thought I can really take away as being not just the thing I enjoy, but a strength as well, because it worked. And that was one of the things I discussed in the chapter that I wrote for my PhD, which I am finishing off at the moment, the process of change and transformation. So, supporting people through change is something that I could write about and I could make that my next job or next thing that I do. Also, what I have learned about how you survive critical incidents, like the ones I have been describing, is something I think I have now gathered enough experience to be able to pass forward as well and do something with. And I also realise that in the end what I was left with - because I was issued with another redundancy letter in June from this university - was… this time, what's different is I have a PhD nearly finished, I've got two books with OUP and nobody can take those things away from me. Last time, I didn't have those. Those are the things…with all the effort I have put into this job and I could still be out again and the only thing that…it just sounds ruthless but I've been driven to this realisation that I have to protect my own academic professional development because that is the only thing I stay with. Institutions can do whatever they like, and they do, but in the end you have what you've built up for yourself. Now I've got stuff that nobody can take away from me. And that's what I want to work on for myself and help other people to do too.

Conclusions

The four profiles presented here have been carefully chosen to demonstrate the variety of different career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in the case University. As discussed in Chapter Three, it is hoped that these localised narratives of HoDs within a UK university may be connected to the grand narratives of educational and social change in the UK (Hargreaves, 1999) and that individuals' social constructions of their own academic careers can be interpreted and understood in relation to national, social and political contexts. In addition, these profiles provide detailed accounts to allow the reader to draw comparisons to their own experiences. These profiles also clearly demonstrate how the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory are inextricably linked. These connections and interpretations will be developed in the following chapter.

Chapter 8

Theoretical Discussion

The following chapter provides a discussion of the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven. These preceding chapters analysed and discussed the professional and personal circumstances that led respondents to become HoDs, investigated their perceptions and experiences of being a HoD, explored perceptions of their changing personal and professional identity, and outlined their future career plans. In addition, Chapter Seven provided four different profiles which were carefully selected to demonstrate the variety and range of different career trajectories of academics who became HoDs in the case University.

In order to generate new theoretical insights into the career trajectories of university HoDs, these data are discussed using the study's analytical framework, namely the nexus and interrelationships between the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory. It was argued in Chapters One and Two that organisational, professional and personal socialisation experiences help to form our identity (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Giddens, 2006; Jenkins, 2004) and that this identity then helps people adopt certain roles within an organisation, influencing the job roles they take on, which in turn influences their career trajectory (Chen, 1998). Assuming different roles within an organisation means a person is likely to be subjected to new socialisation experiences that in turn may help form new professional and personal identities, which add to, weaken or suppress, a former identity (Henkel, 2002; Parker, 2004). Using this framework, the analysis and discussion that follows addresses the study's main and specific research questions, as identified in Chapter Two. The main research question for this thesis is:

- What are the career trajectories of university academics who become HoDs in a selected UK university?

In order to address this main research question the following specific research questions (RQs) are posed:

RQ1.	What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

RQ2.	How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

RQ3.	Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time.

RQ4.	How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

This chapter is arranged into four sections, addressing each RQ in turn. Section 8.1 addresses RQ1 and discusses the personal and professional circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs. Section 8.2 addresses RQ2 and investigates the perceptions and experiences of being an HoD. Section 8.3 addresses RQ3 and explores HoDs' perceptions of their personal and professional identity, and finally section 8.4 addresses RQ4 and discusses how the position of being a HoD influences the respondents' career trajectories as a whole.

8.1 Becoming a HoD (RQ1)

Family Background and Schooling

Even though they had different socio-economic backgrounds, overall the respondents came from families who expected their children to value education in order to improve their life chances, particularly their career choices. Those from working class backgrounds, such as Alex, were expected to better themselves, not end up following their parents, and those from middle class professional backgrounds, such as Helen, were expected to follow their parents' example and go into an appropriate profession. These strong familial-cultural expectations help to form individual and social identities (Marsh and Keating, 2006; Turner, 1994) and, for the respondents in this study, meant that they formed identities that valued education and knowledge at an early age. As the following discussion shows, developing such identities heavily influenced the respondents' subsequent career choices.

Although Bourdieu's thoughts on social class may suggest that all respondents were destined to follow a particular path related to their societal place with little or no allowance for individual choice (Fulcher and Scott, 2007; Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Jenkins, 2002), this was not the case for all respondents. Indeed, several of those from working class backgrounds managed to traverse expected traditional academic boundaries and attend grammar school, rather than the local comprehensive. This experience was not without difficulty, however, as Alex and David described. They talked of "feeling uncomfortable" when in this educational environment, because it was an unusual situation for their family and for their peer group. Perhaps they were feeling uncomfortable because they were experiencing two very different and contrasting socialisation structures, each with different cultures, rules and expectations. Experiencing these different socialisation structures may lead to internal conflict as

individuals struggle to identify with both structures and feel uncomfortable as they reflect on their own identity and try to reconcile these differences (Jenkins, 2004). This inability to handle two different sets of cultural norms, and identities, persisted throughout their secondary school experiences and led to Alex doubting his ability to go to university and David joining the Army because he felt he did not have the support of his family to enter the higher education system.

Other respondents, such as Elizabeth, struggled to shake off the expectation from her teachers that, because she had come from a working class background, she would not be able to succeed at school. She appeared to have a double disadvantage: she was from a working class background, and she was female. Some writers argue that macro belief systems relating to gender, as well as class, constrain career aspirations and individual choice for females, which may help explain why Elizabeth's teachers did not believe she could be academically successful (Correll, 2004; Correll, 2001; Evetts, 2000). These low expectations from her teachers made her determined to succeed "because the buggers didn't think I could" and were a key determinant in her undertaking and completing her PhD later in her career. This example shows how an identity conflict, caused by a clash in values between an individual (agent) and their social environment (structure), can lead to an individual reacting positively in making life and career decisions to overcome the odds. It points to the fact that, with appropriate determination, agents may overcome structural constraints and expectations throughout their career.

The above examples show how, by experiencing different organisational cultures and values through differing socialisation experiences, people begin to develop multiple identities from an early age, each with its own expectations of behaviour and social role. Whether individuals can balance these identities or whether they experience

a conflict between or within them will affect their career trajectory. If there is a major conflict within or between these identities, or one is seen as more important than another, this may lead to reflection and subsequently to a career changing decision. A key issue is that, when faced with identity conflicts, individuals react differently. Some are determined to overcome structural constraints and assume multiple identities; others find the challenge too much and fall back into the identity with which they feel most comfort. It seems that the capacity for individuals to embrace multiple identities varies considerably. These notions will be developed throughout this discussion.

University Experiences and Emerging Career

Building on individual and collective identities that valued education, cultivated through school and family influences and expectations, 16 of the respondents went straight into higher education from secondary school. In the same way that respondents had identified schoolteachers as being influential during their secondary school experiences, many of them identified university tutors who had been influential during their undergraduate study. For some respondents, such as Helen and Rebecca, these influential lecturers helped develop their academic identities by encouraging deep learning in relation to a specific subject. Indeed, five respondents were encouraged to undertake PhDs towards the end of their undergraduate study. Developing subject specific knowledge has been identified as a key aspect of being an academic for both males and females (Beck and Young, 2005; Blaxter et al., 1997) and all but one of the respondents who earned their PhDs in the years immediately following undergraduate study went straight into research or academic positions in universities. Thus, "being influenced by a significant other", in this case their university lecturers, led to them gaining socialisation experiences through undertaking a PhD, which in turn seemed to

help develop their academic identity, thereby affording the opportunity to begin a career in academia. In developing their academic identity, they appeared to be building on the core values and personal identities developed through primary socialisation experiences and were beginning to align their professional identities with these. Thus, for these respondents, their personal identity was influencing their career choice, which ensured that their subsequent professional socialisation experiences were in line with their core values around education and knowledge.

The knowledge that influential university lecturers can play such a pivotal role in encouraging individuals to embark on a successful academic career is important when considering the changing and often negative notion of what a modern academic career looks like. Academic careers, like careers outside education, are no longer seen as linear in terms of progressing from junior to senior rank (Poole and Bornholt, 1998). That is, a large number of academic staff are now employed on fixed term contracts (Collinson, 2004); more academics change research fields mid-career to keep up with rapidly changing research horizons (Gordon, 2005); and the notion of developing a traditional academic identity throughout a career in academia is under threat (Beck and Young, 2005; Collinson, 2004; Henkel, 2005; Nixon, 1996). It has been argued that all such changes can combine to produce an erosion of trust within the profession, greater workloads for academics, a decline in collegiality, and a threat to self, and professional, identity (Knight and Trowler, 2000). These research findings suggest that future recruitment into the profession may be adversely affected; they also suggest an increased role for the academic as an influential agent in shaping the careers of others and in future recruitment strategies.

The trend towards non-linear academic careers also holds implications for academics' identities, as increasing numbers of individuals experience a greater range

of professional and organisational roles and need to assume a wider range of multiple, flexible identities. Thus, many academics may develop what Clegg (2008, p. 340) terms "hybrid" identities in response to the changing structural environment, based on generic, cross-discipline and cross-university experiences, rather than identities based on traditional notions of discipline specific academic work. Whether or not an academic, who may have entered the profession with a different set of values, can accept these identity changes, may determine whether they stay in the profession or not. Consequently, there may be a "turning point" in relation to balancing or reconciling personal and professional identities, manifested by certain socialisation experiences, which leads an academic to decide to change their job role or leave the profession altogether.

While six of the respondents went into academic posts straight from university, 11 respondents, including Elizabeth, David and Donna, went into other jobs and careers, such as teaching, the army, law, the ministry, the civil service, nursing and industry and then made a mid-career move into academia. These findings reflect contemporary non-linear career theory, referred to earlier. They question whether the concept of the traditional hierarchical career structure is still an appropriate framework to help understand modern career trajectories, as people develop more individually focused career paths based on notions of portfolio work and the "boundaryless" career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). The current literature suggests a paradigm shift from the traditional hierarchical career pattern within one organisation, to one where individuals take charge of their career path and work in a variety of roles within a range of organisations (Becker and Haunschild, 2003; Cohen and Mallon, 1999; Gold and Fraser, 2002; Pringle and Mallon, 2003). It is reasonable to suggest that, for academics, this phenomenon is probably more prominent in a post-1992 university, such as the case

University, than in a more traditional pre-1992 university. As a former polytechnic, with its emphasis on applied, vocational courses, recruitment policies may favour individuals who have worked in other sectors previously. It may also favour individuals who look for changing, flexible professional identities and the challenge and stimulation of new socialisation experiences. Consequently, career trajectories of such people tend to be anything but a smooth, linear path.

The reasons that these respondents gave for making a move into academia included wanting a new challenge, making a difference and reflecting on core values. These reasons appeared to reflect each respondent's personal identity, still strongly linked to education and learning, as the following exert from Michelle shows:

I realised it was something I really believed in, just something that was so important and I could see the point of it all, and it was all the stuff coming together for me. (Michelle)

Michelle's case represents her maturing through a socialisation process by which she came to discover her 'true' sense of values and personal identity. As well as these career decisions linking to identities that valued education, learning and knowledge, they were also entwined with personal or professional socialisation experiences. A case in point was David, who wanted to move away from his system-related job to one that entailed working with, and helping, people. A further example was Harry, who was experiencing conflict between his core values and aspects of his job, a disharmony that was causing him increasing discomfort. When Harry reflected on and made sense of his experiences, he began to realise that his personal identity, his sense of self, made up of core values developed through prior socialisation experiences,

was more important to him than his present professional identity. Harry's story shows, once more, how a conflict between personal and professional identity, manifested through different socialisation experiences over time, can lead to a "turning point" and a decision that affects a person's career trajectory. Harry's deeply held personal values and identity, developed through earlier primary and secondary socialisation experiences, eventually prohibited his acceptance of expected professional identities and behaviours at work, and led to his subsequent career changing decision. As Harry said, "I didn't like those aspects of my job, kind of exploitative aspects of being a manager in a resource tight organisation…so I made the decision…that I would apply for the lecturing job here."

Other respondents who experienced an identity conflict of this type embarked on PhDs, which led to them gaining socialisation experiences and developing their academic identities, thereby allowing them to begin careers in academia. Their cases show that although the structures in which people operate are socially constructed and people may be expected to play particular roles in society (Turner, 1994), individuals (as agents) are often determined enough to change career paths and cut through or across such structures, and that in HE, education and gaining qualifications can help individuals do this. The individual effort that this represents (Fulcher and Scott, 2007), suggests a "turning point" when an individual is no longer prepared to put up with the identity conflicts they are experiencing and decides to align their professional identity more with their core values and personal identity.

Forming an Academic Identity

Once they had embarked on academic careers, all respondents felt that they began to form distinct academic identities built around teaching, research or both. These

academic identities were formed by the interaction between experiences and values gained though previous primary and secondary socialisation experiences and new socialisation experiences gained during their doctorates and working in the case University. Some respondents, such as Rebecca, deliberately chose to work at the case University because they felt they would "fit in" to the organisation. This suggests that a person's identity matches to varying degrees the organisation they join. The better the match, the more an individual is likely to feel they belong, the more willing they are to assume certain roles, and the greater extent to which their career trajectories are likely to be influenced as a result (Chen, 1998). If an individual can balance their professional and personal identities by choosing careers or roles that are in more line with their core values or by changing the social structures in which they work to align them, they may be more likely to stay within that particular career structure or role.

Other respondents felt that their identities had changed since working at the case University, as the following example from Hannah illustrates:

…one of the things that has happened to me since I have been here is that I've got really interested in the practice of teaching. I think the whole student centred approach here has rubbed off on me in a big way… (Hannah)

This example confirms that academic identities are a product of both structure and agency and are in a constant state of change over time (Jenkins, 2004). Furthermore, these academic identities are heavily influenced by socialisation experiences within a particular HE institution. Indeed, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) argue that in an educational context, socialisation does not entail passive involvement of an individual within an existing structure, but is an "interpretive and interactive" (p. 106) process

between the individual and the structure, with both affecting each other. Encountering strong organisational socialisation experiences and culture may change professional and even personal values and identities; or may drive people away who feel unwilling or unable to adapt to such identity changes.

The interactive process between agency and structure is an important notion to consider when interpreting the findings from this study, as Svejenova (2005) suggests that human agency and individuals are now seen as the driving force behind career trajectories. Within the higher education context, Gordon (2003) also discusses the importance of the individual. He suggests that in order for institutions to comprehend the changes and tensions taking place within their academic workforce, they should look to understand the notion of the individual's career path within their organisation. Within the case University, 15 of the respondents recalled that before they became HoDs they had no ambitions to become an academic leader. In addition, of the 12 respondents who had made a mid career move into academia, five respondents, including Wendy and Harry, had made a deliberate career move into higher education to avoid such management roles. These data suggest that academics may have very different perceptions of such roles in relation to their own career trajectory compared to the institutions' perceptions of the benefits of taking on such a role for the individual. More research into this apparent mismatch of academic career trajectory understanding seems necessary.

Reasons for Becoming a HoD

The apparent mismatch between the case University's and academics' perceptions of the importance of the role of HoD in contributing to academics' career trajectories can be further illustrated by interpreting the respondents' reasons for becoming HoDs. Only

four out of the 17 participants claimed that they had taken on the job role for career development. Furthermore, those who did see career advancement in the role, such as Donna, came from very research active schools, where the HoD role was more heavily linked to research development than departmental management. Research leadership, rather than departmental management, was perceived to be more important for these respondents. Within a research-led department, the HoD position was seen as contributing more towards career advancement than in other more teaching-focused departments. These findings suggest that the culture of the department within which an academic is working, and the school within which the department is based, provides important contextual information to help understand the socialisation experiences of the individual, their professional and personal identities, and, in turn, their career trajectories. Departmental cultures even within the same university seem to vary considerably (Becher, 1989; Becher and Trowler, 2001; McAleer and McHugh, 1994; Smith, 2005). Institutions, therefore, cannot assume that a "one size fits all" approach to career development strategies will be successful. Strategies need to be tailored to the organisational culture of each department and the individual concerned. The concept of organisational culture is discussed further in section 8.2.

Other reasons that the respondents gave for becoming a HoD included gaining a "vote of confidence" from those in authority asking them to take on the role, attempting to gain more control over their working life, and to make a difference. Each of these reasons is exemplified, in turn. Eight respondents, including Hannah and Rebecca, were persuaded by their deans to apply for the role of HoD. This "vote of confidence" helped them realise that they would be able to take on the role successfully. Having their ability and skills externally recognised by someone in authority allowed them to gain more belief in themselves, which duly increased their perceived status, and in turn, gave them

the confidence to apply for the role. Seven of the academics, including Alex, perceived that taking on the HoD role would allow them much more flexibility and control over their working environment. These respondents wanted to gain more individual control over the social and organisational structures in which they were working, which according to their reasoning, would allow them to change key aspects of the position thereby aligning their professional and personal identities more closely. Gaining more control over how their professional lives were organised was also the case for a further five respondents, including Wendy, who applied for the position in order to ensure they were not managed by people they felt were not up to the job. Finally, nine of the respondents talked about how taking on the role would allow them to make a difference, in a way that related to their core values and individual identity, cultivated through earlier primary and secondary socialisation experiences. These respondents, including David and Sheila, felt the need to gain more experience and responsibility by taking on a more senior role. This, they felt, would allow them to make changes to the social structures and systems in which they worked and align them more closely with their own developing set of values, thus providing another example of the interaction between agency and structure in a social system.

All the above examples convey a sense of agents exerting, or at least attempting to exert, control to overcome structures, with individuals experiencing their own "turning point" when they realised that by undertaking the HoD role, they might start to change the organisational structures within which they worked. Conceptually, this might be interpreted as the respondents seeking to bring their professional identities more in line with their core values and personal identities.

This section has shown that, after leaving school, experiencing different cultures and values through different socialisation experiences at home and at work, meant that

the respondents began to develop multiple personal and professional identities, each with their own expectations of behaviour and organisational-social roles. Whether or not respondents could balance these identities, or whether they experienced a major conflict between or within them, appeared to have influenced their career trajectories. If an individual felt able to balance these multiple identities by accepting the differences and conflicts between or within them - by choosing careers or roles that were in line with their core values, or by changing the social structures in which they worked to align them - they were more likely to stay within the career path they had chosen. If, on the other hand, they experienced major conflicts between or within these identities that they felt were hard to reconcile or accept, or that one was perceived as more important than another, this often seemed to lead to reflection and a change in career trajectory. These conceptual issues will be fully developed in Chapter Nine.

8.2 Being a HoD (RQ2)

Defining the Role

When asked to define the role of an academic HoD, respondents gave several definitions. These included being a role model, a representative academic and an enabler. Respondents struggled to see themselves as managers, findings which are consistent with larger scale research in this area (Anderson et al., 2008; Deem, 2008). It would appear that the term 'manager' and perceptions of what it entails, were incongruent with their academic identities and associated values developed through prior socialisation experiences. A good example was Elizabeth who, in order to reconcile the fact that she was a manager with her personal values and concepts of academic identity, was very keen to point out that she was not just a manager but an "academic manager". She explained that although her job was about management, it

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was within an academic context. She said forcefully, "I'm not a Sainsbury's manager. I'm not going to go for a job and run Sainsbury's." This example illustrates how problematic it was for some respondents to go through this identity change process, from being an academic to becoming a manager, perhaps moving away from the core reasons why they entered academia in the first place. To counteract this process, some respondents, such as Harry and Alex, perceived themselves to be academic role models, which allowed them still to prioritise teaching and research, thereby maintaining their academic identity. Other respondents, like Wendy, who could no longer teach and research because of the demands of the HoD role, reconciled this identity conflict by enabling others in their department to carry on with these roles, thus changing the social systems and structures within their working environment to ensure these tasks were still fulfilled. It can be seen from these findings that although individuals continue to develop new professional identities as they experience new socialisation experiences as HoDs, they are often unable to lose or suppress their former academic identities easily, suggesting that one identity may be more powerful than another. It also suggests that how individuals manage and deal with these identity conflicts differs from person to person. The different ways that an individual deals with these conflicts may be due to a person's ability, temperament, personality or experience. These identity changes and conflicts, and the differences in the way individuals deal with them, are discussed further in section 8.3.

Role Socialisation – Training

Fourteen of the 17 respondents had received no formal training for their role. These findings concur with previous research investigating academic management role socialisation (Deem, 2000; Eley, 1994; Johnson, 2002) and suggest that the case

University needs to develop a systematic training programme for new HoDs. It has been asserted that one of the key responsibilities of senior academic staff, such as pro-vcs and deans, is to "cultivate the academic leadership potential of their subordinates" (Rowley, 1997, p. 78). However, Deem (2000) argues that managing academic knowledge work is unique to HE and can cause problems for blanket management approaches and training. This stance links to issues highlighted by Trowler and Knight (1999), who argue that most socialisation and induction occurs at departmental level and suggests that training and development for academics who become HoDs needs to be individualised in relation to the subject area and departmental culture within which they will be working. They argue that it is within the academic department where the real socialisation occurs. These arguments are supported by findings from this study as, for those respondents who had received training, individualised training programmes, rather than generic "all must attend" courses, were perceived as more useful. This was due to the different nature of the job role across the case University, linked to varying school cultures, and the different experiences and skill sets of each academic appointed to HoD. One such respondent, Donna, felt she was "bombarded" with training and said, "It was as if somebody had decided that all managers must have this, without looking at the individual." Similarly, Maria felt that, "…something that was targeted and useful would be better."

Ten respondents of the 17 in this study had gained experience as course leaders before becoming HoDs. For many of them, including David and Michelle, this experience appeared to be a good apprenticeship before taking on a HoD role. It afforded them the chance to learn more of the organisational culture - "the values, ceremonies and ways of life characteristic of a given group" (Giddens, 2006, p. 1012) - of their work place. It also allowed the respondents to learn about the social

expectations and standards, signs, language, behaviours, events and people that embody this culture (Fincham and Rhodes, 2005). It has been argued that not only is the organisational culture of a university customised at department level (McAleer and McHugh, 1994), but that it is generated and sustained at this level (Trowler, 2008, p. 15). Consequently, learning the evaluative and material elements (Fincham and Rhodes, 2005) of a department's culture would allow individuals to learn how to act out roles of self presentation appropriate to their professional roles, such as the role of HoD, and to do so within the particular departmental context. As Goffman states: "when an actor takes on an established role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it" (Goffman, 1959, p. 37). It has been suggested that this knowledge can help departmental leaders be more successful in achieving change (Knight and Trowler, 2001). These socialisation experiences also allow changing and multiple professional identities to be experienced in a more gradual way, perhaps avoiding a major identity conflict or "turning point" for an individual, as they are able to come to terms with these multiple identity transformations over a longer period.

Ten respondents identified that one of the ways that they had learned to cope with the demands of the job was through informal peer consultation. This process allowed for reflection; a period of reflection is sometimes necessary for people to change the social environment around them, but institutional "habitualisation" of behaviour (frequently repeated actions becoming part of an expected pattern of behaviour) can make this more difficult (Jenkins, 2004, p.134). The process of peer consultation also gave the respondents a sense that they were not alone in their experiences and allowed them to meet new people and improve their social networks. In addition, it was felt that the cross-university fertilisation of ideas and sharing of

experiences at HoD level was important for improved practice and whole university growth.

Role Difficulties

Fifteen (of the 17) respondents discussed being in management positions, but still feeling they had little power because they did not have any real financial control. Such control tended to be kept at dean level throughout the case University and was the source of tension. The respondents felt this lack of financial control hindered their ability to manage. Donna, for example, felt that she had to refer everything upwards and likened the experience to the "politburo". These findings resonate with previous research (Deem, 2000; Hellawell and Hancock, 2001) and suggest that without control over a budget, the position of HoD may be seen as less important or less influential. This lack of financial control may also demonstrate a lack of trust between the case University's senior managers and the respondents (Hancock and Hellawell, 2003). More transparency about financial procedures between HoDs and senior managers may lead to improved trust and better productivity within the case University. Furthermore, more financial autonomy may also mean that HoDs could plan more effectively and be more proactive in their approach to leading their department (Hancock and Hellawell, 2003). As Michael stated:

> *We know desperately well we need to grow, but it's incredibly hard to produce those strategies when you don't know where you are financially. You can't really draw up a proper plan; you're kind of guessing all the time.* (Michael)

Other role difficulties identified from this study are consistent with previous research investigating the role of the HoD in both pre and post-1992 universities (Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005) and include managing the workload and managing people. Eleven of the 17 respondents identified managing the increasing workload and the resulting lack of time as one of the most challenging aspects of the role. Michelle felt that it was one of the worst parts of her job. She reflected, "There is too much to do really and keeping it all up in the air is very, very difficult." Deem (2000) also found that academics who are managers increasingly experience higher workloads and longer hours than in the past due to the increasing pressures of accountability. The main challenges for the respondents in this study appeared to be experienced because of clashes between socialisation (job role) and changes in academic identity, as the increasing workload meant that respondents' perceived their research time as being eroded. One respondent, Hannah, was quite resentful of this fact. Although she was allocated research hours, her administration tasks were using these up. Hannah's resentment points towards the fact that, for the majority of HoD respondents in this study, research was still perceived as more important than management in terms of academic career capital. The notion of what constitutes academic career capital for the respondents is developed further in section 8.4. Hannah, and others, were feeling uneasy that they had not managed to keep up their research outputs while in the role. These individuals were struggling to balance their multiple professional identities as academics, researchers and managers.

Five respondents discussed how managing people and conflict resolution were the difficult aspects of the HoD role. Previous research has suggested that as academics move into HoD roles they require different sets of skills, values and knowledge from those already acquired (Bolton, 2000; Knight and Trowler, 2001). It is clear from this

study that some respondents felt they did not have the skills to manage people effectively when they took on the HoD role. One respondent, Elizabeth, received coaching to help her through a difficult incident early in her HoD role and still continues to use the advice she was given to help her through current problems. This example suggests that career training and development courses for academics should include people management and conflict resolution skills, as it is unlikely that an academic would have experience in this area unless they had previously held a management role. Management of staff issues have also been shown to be one of the major causes of stress for HoDs in both pre and post-1992 universities (Smith, 2002). Once again, the respondents felt that experience as a course leader provided the best training for this aspect of the role. The perception is that a course leader has to work skilfully to get the best out of the people they are working with, even though they are not in a paid management position and so have no formal authority over the colleagues they are leading. This experience might allow them to balance and manage the identity conflicts experienced by being a HoD more successfully.

For some respondents, such as Alex, there was a clear mismatch between their expectations of what the job role would be like and the realities of the day-to-day experiences of being a HoD. Five respondents, including Wendy, talked about what they would do differently if they were moving into a similar role again, or if they were employing somebody else for the same role. These discussions all centred on ensuring that the incumbent was very clear about the expectations of the role. The suggestion is that before any academic takes on the role of HoD, expectations are made clear to them through the application process. Transparent job descriptions are needed for each role, as job descriptions are not always present for HoDs in both pre and post-1992 universities (Smith, 2002). Academic socialisation and induction, seen as crucial for

new entrants to the profession (Trowler and Knight, 1999), could also allow potential HoDs to speak to or shadow present incumbents. Alex was one respondent who felt quite strongly that this lack of socialisation and induction into the job role had hampered him quite severely in his first few weeks and months in post. He talked of having "no hand-over file" and said, "There was no discussion with the previous incumbent. There was no indication of what needed to be done." Angrily, he recalled, "This was a massive barrier to being effective in the first few months."

All the above role difficulties suggest that whether academics can accommodate and accept these different socialisation experiences or whether they lead to "turning points" in their career decision-making, will determine whether or not they opt to stay in the HoD role. For some, as discussed later in this chapter, their values and personal identities clash or conflict with newly developed changes to their professional identity brought about by being HoD. Feeling unable to manage and cope with these conflicting values and identities, they are more likely to change role and career track. Some may even leave the profession altogether. For others, even though they experience similar socialisation experiences, identity changes and conflicts, continuation in the role is less problematic. They may feel more comfortable and even successful in balancing, juggling and managing the different identities. The following section suggests why this may be the case for some respondents.

Enjoyable Parts of the Role

Deem's (2000) large scale study investigating concepts of "New Managerialism" in the HE sector, found that paradoxically, while the role of the academic HoD is acknowledged as being complex and difficult, there are some academics who seem to enjoy being in this management role. Deem identifies these individuals as "career-track

managers". She found that these academics are mainly to be found in post-1992 institutions and that they had made a deliberate decision, early on in their careers, to become HE managers. Although none of the respondents in this study had made a deliberate decision to become HE managers early on in their careers, there were some, such as Michelle (whose profile is outlined in Chapter Seven) who clearly enjoyed being a HoD. Other respondents, including Helen, Michelle and Rebecca, also identified several enjoyable parts to being a HoD in the case University. These included gaining positive feedback by seeing people happy in their work, making things happen, seeing students succeed, and working with people. These findings confirm previous research (Bryman, 2007; Smith, 2005) and it may be that these experiences are ways that individuals can reconcile conflicts between their core values and identity as an academic and their socialisation experiences and subsequent changing professional identity as a HoD. These enjoyable aspects of the job role allow the HoD to keep in touch with the key reasons why they entered academia in the first place by offsetting their negative experiences with more positive thoughts about "doing some good". Furthermore, they may now feel in a position that enables them to align the values, structures and systems of their workplace with their core values and personal identity. Empowered as HoDs, some are pleased to be in a position where they feel able to something about the things that they feel are important (Parker, 2004). In contrast, these findings could mean that some individuals have rejected their original academic identity and deliberately adopted the professional identity of a manager in the role of HoD. Perhaps some academics want to deliberately move away from teaching, research, or both and see taking on a management role and associated identity as a way of achieving this (Deem, 2000), while still retaining a high profile professional identity within their institution.

The above findings suggest that academics who become HoDs seem to experience a complicated balancing act - involving personal and professional identities influenced by their socialisation experiences - in terms of how many identities they feel they can shuffle and switch between. If the role conflicts they experience are felt to be too stressful and negative, and they cease to find enjoyable aspects of the HoD role linked to their core values and personal identities, then a critical "turning point" may be reached, leading to a major role change or career decision. If, on the other hand, they can successfully manage and balance these identities and conflicts, then they tend to enjoy the HoD role and may even look for further promotion. These notions are developed in the following section and in Chapter Nine.

8.3 HoDs' Perceptions of Identity (RQ3)

Personal Identity

Previous research suggests that in professional occupations where there is a strong sense of professional identity, such as lecturing, there are complex issues at work as people try to balance their family identity and their professional identity (Bird and Schnurman-Crook, 2005). In this study, ten (of 17) respondents discussed how their work affected their children, and vice versa. For some, such as Hannah, there was a tension around two conflicting identities: that of being a mother and that of being a HoD. Hannah felt guilty about how being a parent affected her focus at work. This guilt was mainly caused by her having to leave work at set times in order to pick up her child from nursery. Conversely, she also felt guilty about not being a full time mother to her child because she had to spend long hours at work. As argued earlier in this chapter, the conflict between a person's personal and professional identity can lead to the making of major career decisions. Hannah was currently reflecting on whether to give up her job

and look after her son on a full time basis because of this conflict; an example of an individual experiencing incompatible multiple identities.

To explain Hannah's experiences further, several researchers have investigated gender in relation to career paths and found that male and female academics tend to have very different career trajectories (Armenti, 2004; Deem, 2003a; Karp, 1985; Poole and Bornholt, 1998; Twombly, 1998; Ward, 2001b). Linked to notions of balancing family life with professional identity, Kemkes-Grottenthaler (2003) found that "...motherhood was unequivocally perceived as an obstacle to career advancement" (p. 218). Research by Armenti (2004) concurs with this view. She found that academics perceived that having children was detrimental to their academic career progression. Moreover, Knights and Richards (2003) argue that the typical academic career trajectory is structured within a masculine discourse, according to male constructed success criteria. Other authors also agree that universities' structures and cultures are gendered (Bagihole and Goode, 2001; Ledwith and Manfedi, 2000). These findings suggest that senior managers in HE need to reflect on possible gendered structures and cultural practices within their institution in relation to female academics' career trajectories.

In contrast to the negative aspects of balancing a professional identity with that of being a mother, portrayed above, three female respondents who were all mothers, discussed how being a HoD gave them a distinct identity. Taking on the position of HoD allowed them to separate their personal and professional identities more easily. In turn, this gave them more confidence and independence, made them feel that they were doing something worthwhile and stopped them feeling frustrated. As Wendy said, "a couple of mornings of Fern and Philip on 'This Morning' would be enough to drive me a bit loony." Thus, different organisational socialisation experiences gained through

being a HoD, changed their professional identities, which in turn helped them form more distinct personal identities. These individuals seemed able to handle their multiple identities successfully. It is clear that there are multiple identities *within* a role, such as being both a researcher and manager as a HoD, as well as multiple identities *between* roles, for example, being a mother and an academic. Indisputably, identity conflict or harmony may occur either within or between roles and individuals deal with these experiences in different ways and cope with them to varying degrees.

Although the above discussion appears to suggest that professional identity and family identity issues only affect female academics, it was clear from the data from this study that some male HoDs were also wrestling with similar experiences. As an example, Alex was also aware of how the role of HoD was affecting his relationship with his children and this experience was influencing his decision on whether or not to apply for further promotion. These findings suggest that career development strategies need to be cognisant of issues around work-life balance for both male and female academics.

Eight respondents, such as Maria, David and Michelle, discussed how becoming a HoD had negatively affected their personal lives. Michelle talked about how since she had become HoD, she was more distant with people and wanted to spend more time on her own to reflect and relax. Some of the respondents, including Michael, Harry and Garry, identified strategies that they used to manage the conflicts between their personal and professional identities, particularly those respondents who disagreed with the values of the organisation, their school or their line managers. It appears that conflicts between identities are exacerbated when personal and professional values are discordant with organisational culture and socialisation. For Harry and Gary, these strategies included compartmentalisation: clearly separating their personal and professional lives. This

separation allowed them to accept different values and act out different identities in each of these two spheres of their lives. Thus, although they may not agree with the structures and systems within their working environment, as a HoD, they accepted them because they knew that when they were at home, they would be part of an environment whose systems and structures they could control and that aligned with their personal beliefs and values. For them, the cost benefit ratio of this approach to dealing with these conflicts made continuing in the HoD role worthwhile. These examples show how complex managing a range of personal and professional identities can be for the HoD and how different people manage them in different ways. The issues surrounding how respondents felt their professional identities had been affected by becoming a HoD are discussed in the following section.

Professional Identity

In relation to how their professional identity had been affected by becoming a HoD, the respondents identified a range of issues. Six respondents, including Miranda, Rebecca and David, discussed how becoming a HoD had increased their professional status. They felt that taking on the role had increased their status and visibility within the case University. For these individuals, their professional identity had been enhanced. They perceived that being a HoD contributed positively to their career trajectory within the case University and felt that being a manager was their key role, which helped them gain a broader institutional profile (Henkel, 2002). As Rebecca said, "…you become part of a different level within the institution."

However, the findings from this study suggest that this was not the majority view. In contrast, eleven respondents, for example Elizabeth and Wendy, identified a conflict between their initial reasons for joining HE and the actual day-to-day reality of

being a HoD. The conflict appeared to be linked to an inability to do what they valued as core academic tasks, namely research or teaching; having to do too many management tasks; and being moved away from their areas of interest. Henkel (2000) suggests that shared values about teaching and research are central to the concept of academic identity in higher education, but Nixon (1996) argues that because of key changes to the sector, the professional identity of being a university teacher is changing and even under threat. If the role of HoD does not allow an individual to maintain their professional identity as an academic, because it reduces the time they have to spend on core academic tasks, this may well lead to an identity conflict. As discussed earlier, if academics experience identity conflicts between or within their personal and professional identities through socialisation experiences, this may lead them to reflect on and make, career changing decisions.

Continuing the theme of identity conflict, it has been argued that the recent move towards mass higher education provision has brought about major changes to the traditional role of an academic and these changes have generated new challenges for academic managers (Gordon, 2003). Hare and Hare (2002) suggest that the role of the HoD as an academic leader is changing from being a leader of core academic activities to one of an institutional manager. Additionally, in response to global organisational changes, Henkel (2002) identified that some academic leaders experienced tensions around acquiring their new identity as a manager and being perceived as different by their fellow academics. There is also a perception that HoDs must be both academics and managers, hence assuming multiple identities, and this can create conflicting interests. For some, issues arose concerning how they manage the dualism of teaching and research and leadership and management (Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005). Some respondents, such as Alex and Elizabeth, talked of how they could no longer say they

were academics because they felt "de-skilled". In the words of Elizabeth, "…the academic stuff is leaving me." Others, such as Wendy and Maria, talked about how important it was to stay in touch with their subject discipline to maintain their academic identity, but because of the workload, this was becoming increasingly difficult. Maria discussed how important it was to "keep the academic side going" as those were the key reasons why she had entered academia in the first place and it helped maintain her "academic credibility". In addition, some respondents, such as Harry and Sheila, discussed how they felt they had different internal and external professional identities with each valuing different academic tasks and roles. External identities were linked to research outputs and conference presentations and internal identities were linked to management roles and status within the case University. For these respondents, internal identities within the case University were seen as less important than their external identities. They also felt that it was their academic profile and subject knowledge, not their managerial role, which was valued externally. As Maria commented, "When people ask me to do things externally, it's because I have a profile with my subject." This shows that HoDs constantly need to move between multiple professional identities depending on the social situation they find themselves in and that how an individual develops each of these identities may determine their future career trajectory, particularly if they want to move institutions, or the organisational culture of the institution for which they work changes. Therefore, as HoDs they enjoy high status internally, within their university, and this is largely based on their positional status as managers, but a declining status externally, as academics, if they struggle to maintain a high research profile.

In relation to some of these tensions around managerial and academic identity, Parker (2004) identifies how socialistion into the role of HoD can erect barriers between

the HoD and other academic staff. HoDs are increasingly seen as managers and thus under strong cultural expectations to behave and act in certain ways in certain situations (Goffman, 1959). Some of the respondents, such as Michael, Helen and Elizabeth spoke of the aftermath of becoming a manager; for Michael, the consequence was that his junior colleagues now saw him as more authoritarian, which shocked him. Identity transformations of this type appeared to be particularly challenging for internally appointed HoDs, when they were seen to have contributed to forming the culture of a department as a lecturer and were then seen to alter this culture by introducing different values and ways of working as a HoD. This identity change has been likened to the transformation of a werewolf, because of the different way the person is viewed by former colleagues once they have become a manager (Parker, 2004). The conceptual inter-relationships between identity, socialisation and career trajectory linked to being a HoD, discussed in this section, will be re-emphasised and theorised in Chapter Nine.

Some of the tensions highlighted above, between academic and managerial identity, have been exacerbated at the case University as it has attempted to change its overall organisational culture to become more research focused. This has meant that research is receiving greater relative value. Some respondents have felt that being a HoD has hindered them from continuing with their research careers and, consequently, they perceive it as detrimental to their career trajectories. These findings are discussed in the following section.

8.4 HoD Influence on Whole Career (RQ4)

Academic Career Capital

Building on Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital and habitus, it is argued that individuals develop their careers within a career field and its associated cultural norms

and rules, and that each career field values particular sorts of capital (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Iellatchitch et al., 2003). For academics, valued capital might be related to qualifications or research outputs. The more valued the capital someone is judged to have, the more successful his or her career development might expectedly be. From the findings of this study, it is clear that the majority of respondents (11 out of 17) valued research activity as the most important form of academic career capital within the HE field in general. This was increasingly so within the field of the case University as its culture switched to a research focus. In relation to these findings, nine respondents, including Michelle and Hannah, suggested that since being a HoD, their research had suffered and, paradoxically, as a consequence of becoming a HoD, so had their career. These respondents clearly felt that conducting research activity, rather than developing a reputation as a manager, was more important for academic identity and career progression. As an example, Michael realised that he had been developing his academic career capital within the institution by becoming a HoD and sitting on a variety of working parties and committees, but had not been developing his external academic career capital, valued in terms of current research activity. He reflected, "I've not been doing the networking and the conferences and the sort of research profile stuff that I probably should have been doing." In addition, it appeared to be current, on-going research activity with the potential to contribute to future Research Assessment Exercises that was valued, rather than a distinguished past record of research. This suggests that no matter how good a reputation an academic has as a researcher, this reputation soon fades if they are not publishing at a consistently high level. Furthermore, it implies that academic identity needs profile, especially externally, whereas managerial identity may not need an external profile.

The concept of research being valued more than other academic and management tasks also relates to academics having different internal and external identities, each valuing different sorts of academic capital. While valuing different sorts of capital internally and externally may not affect respondents if their role remains constant within the same field, with the same social structures, systems, rules and culture, if the culture of the field in which they work changes, in this case becomes more research focused, problems arise. Michael was one of several respondents who was beginning to feel worried by this change in culture and emphasis on research in HE in general:

I feel increasingly out of step with the whole climate of academia at the moment, as I feel it has become so excessively research driven. I mean I think that research is hugely important, but what I would like to see is a balance between research and teaching. I think it has become so excessively research driven that I don't feel entirely in step with that… (Michael)

Similar tensions have been found by Grbich (1998), who investigated the socialisation experiences of academic staff who had moved from a teaching only to a research and teaching environment in Australia. Her findings suggest that there was resistance to this culture change and those members of staff who actively resisted acquiring the skills, knowledge and profiles valued by the institutions studied, were targeted for possible redundancy or for teaching only positions with limited career pathways. Other research also suggests that promotion within higher education is greatly enhanced by research performance over teaching (Roworth-Stokes and Perren, 2000). This emphasis on research could prove problematic for the profession, as a two-

tier career structure may develop based on those academics who mainly teach and those academics who mainly research, with the researchers holding more academic career capital within the sector (Court, 1999). Furthermore, the conflicting relationship between teaching and research is particularly acute for staff taking on management roles within a university (Deem, 2000; Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005), a fact confirmed by the present research. Thus, what is valued as academic career capital, both by an institution and by the external HE climate, and whether and how an individual can develop this career capital by virtue of their position, can significantly influence an academic's career trajectory. These are important messages to inform HE career development strategies at the case University, other similar institutions and institutions with little or no research tradition or expectation.

Academic Mobility

Other respondents also discussed how research, rather than management experience, was important for career progression and that it was important to develop their academic career capital both internally and externally. This was especially true of those who wanted to move to a more research-focused institution. One such example was Rebecca, who felt that her career possibilities were diminished because she had taken on administration and management roles in the past. In effect, she had developed her internal career capital, valued as management and administration experience, by taking on positions within the institution, but in doing so she had spent less time developing her external career capital, valued as research activity. She commented:

> *It's hard to get a job in another university, perhaps a more research focused*
> *university, because I have done a lot of admin. and that's not something that*

> *necessarily other universities are looking to recruit…So becoming a career*
> *manager is a bit of a risk in education I think.*

Hannah also discussed notions of academic mobility and felt quite resentful that she had not been able to "keep up" with her research since becoming a HoD:

> *…but actually it's not fair when you look at the load that some people have been*
> *carrying to keep the rest of it going for years and years. So people like me who*
> *have been head of department, others have been able then to go off and do their*
> *research. So I am way behind now in that area, and when I think where I've*
> *come from I'm quite resentful about it, because I have the capability to do it, but*
> *I am one of those people who says, "Yes I'll help out, I'll do that"…*

Her words express the sense of resentment that Hannah feels towards other people and the case University because of the sacrifices she has had to make as a HoD. She feels that she has damaged her own career by putting the institutional interests above her own; sacrificed her own academic reputation for the good of the case University. Once more, we can see how socialisation experiences can result in a clash of values between and within personal and professional identities, which can then lead to conflict and reflection, and a possible career change decision. The notion of institutional loyalty is developed below.

Institutional Loyalty

From her research into academic values, Henkel (1997) identified a difficult dilemma for academics in relation to career trajectories. Those interviewed felt that although it

was imperative to work collaboratively in order to "survive" the changing HE market and develop their department's reputation, developing their own academic research career was still down to them as individuals. Juggling these two commitments, to one's self and to the department or institution, was proving a struggle for a number of respondents. Similar experiences were apparent from the data in this study with HoDs struggling to balance their internal and external identities. Some respondents, such as Hannah (discussed above) and Sheila, were beginning to realise that they needed to be more selfish in order to survive, particularly as the case University was becoming more research focused. These respondents no longer felt institutional loyalty, but realised they now had to look after themselves and their own professional development. As Sheila reflected:

... it just sounds ruthless but I've been driven to this realisation that I have to protect my own academic professional development because that is the only thing that matters in the end...institutions can do whatever they like, and they do, but in the end you have what you've built up for yourself.

Similarly, after experiencing a number of re-organisations throughout his career, Garry felt that his professional loyalty now had to be to his subject area, and not to the management structure of the school in which he worked:

For better or worse, I have become sufficiently dislocated, which is a neutral way of putting it, disillusioned might be another way of putting it, though it's more dislocated than disillusioned, with the school as an entity that frankly I am not wanting to spend much, if any, of my time engaged directly in its

management for the sake of the school. It doesn't much matter to me whether the school exists or in what form it exists. What matters to me is that the work of my subject area is done and done well, done for the benefit of the students and the wider community.

Both examples show the painful realisation that, in line with modern career theory, "firms no longer cause careers, individuals do" (Dany, 2003, p. 821), and it is up to individual academics to ensure that they develop their external identity and what is valued as external academic career capital. If they do not, continual re-structuring and re-organisation of HE institutions could mean that an academic who is in a position of relative power one day, is no longer in that position the next. Sheila's profile, outlined in Chapter Seven, is a powerful reminder of this possibility. With less institutional loyalty, and the notion that people develop more individually-focused career paths based on ideas of portfolio work and the "boundaryless" career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), academics need to ensure they maintain and develop their external profile and, in turn, their academic career capital. In addition, organisations need to play their part by improving benefits for staff by providing enhanced professional development opportunities (Becker and Haunschild, 2003). These organisational strategies are particularly important to help develop the careers of ethnic minority staff. Such people may be disadvantaged by the notion within the concept of the "boundaryless" career that the individual agent has control over their career path, instead of recognising that individuals' lives may be constrained by their primary and secondary social experiences and the social structures and systems within which they live (Pringle and Mallon, 2003).

Positive Influences

In contrast to the perceived negative effect of HoDship on an academic's subsequent career, six respondents discussed how the role of being a HoD might benefit their subsequent careers. Miranda, who was a HoD in a research-focused school and was actively seeking promotion to a professorship, felt that the experiences of being a HoD, along with her research record, would help her achieve this. She felt that getting a chair at the case University or elsewhere was likely to be enhanced by her being a HoD. One explanation for Miranda's view, in contrast to the other respondents, was that she had managed to agree with her dean that, at the end of three years in post, she would be given a sabbatical to allow her to "catch up" on the research time she had lost as HoD. Thus, following her experiences of being a HoD, she would be able to develop her external career capital, and thus her external identity, through "earned" study leave. This situation was an anomaly within the case University and was not part of HR policy.

Elizabeth also felt that her experiences were vital if she was to apply for further promotion, although she conceded that this would probably be in the same or similar type of university. Michelle, who had become dean within the case University since being a HoD, felt equally strongly that the experience gained as a HoD was important. She also felt that all deans should have this experience in order to understand how things worked at ground level. These respondents felt that their socialisation experiences, learned through being a HoD, made a positive contribution to their academic career.

While the above findings appear to contrast with the rest of the study's data, on closer inspection it can be seen that these respondents had developed internal, not external, career capital. They perceived that this internal career capital would allow

them in turn to develop more internal career capital and progress within their field (the case University). As Bourdieu (1988, p. 85) suggests:

…capital breeds capital, and holding positions conferring social influence determines and justifies holding new positions, themselves invested with all the weight of their combined holders.

David explained how he saw this socialisation process working:

You can draw on your experiences of trying things, seeing how people react to plans, ideas and that kind of thing. It's all helpful. I wouldn't say there is any one specific thing which has got to be the most important thing. It's just an accumulation of dealing with people in this institution, in this higher education centre I suppose.

The above example demonstrates how learning about a department's or institution's organisational culture can enhance an individual's internal academic career capital by developing their understanding of expected human behaviour in any given situation (Goffman, 1959). These individuals were content that their core values and professional identities were in line with the institutions' in which they worked, were able to successfully manage and balance their multiple personal and professional identities and associated conflicts within and between them, and saw their career trajectory developing within this socialisation experience.

Future Career Plans

In terms of future career plans, respondents gave a variety of responses including planning actively to seek promotion, planning to stay at the same level, planning to take severance terms, and planning a possible move out of higher education. Six of the respondents, including Elizabeth, Michelle and Wendy, said they would actively seek promotion in the next few years, if an appropriate position became available. As discussed above, these respondents felt that the internal academic career capital they had acquired by being a HoD would help them gain promotion. Seven of the respondents, such as David, Garry and Maria, said that they would stay at the same level as HoD and would not be actively seeking promotion. For some of these, staying at the same level still allowed them to retain their academic identity and gave them a chance to continue researching. It was felt that if they moved up another level, this would no longer be a possibility. As an example, Helen was adamant that she did not want to become dean because she felt this would affect her role as a researcher too much. Garry also talked about wanting to write a significant book before he retired and felt that this could only be achieved if he stayed at HoD level.

Two of the respondents, Harry and Hannah, were experiencing major identity conflicts between and within their professional and personal identities and these were leading both of them to reflect on their positions. Harry had decided to take voluntary severance terms because he felt that his values and identity as an academic were not in line with the expected values of being a manager in the school in which he worked. He also did not see himself as a manager, "…management has always been a problem for me. I don't see myself as a manager..." As discussed earlier in this chapter, Hannah was thinking about a range of options. These were mainly linked to conflicting identities of being a mother and a HoD as she commented, "...but it's complex having children and

doing that and carrying on a job." Both these examples show how experiencing identity conflict through personal and professional socialisation experiences can lead individuals to make major career decisions.

Conclusions

In order to address this study's specific research questions, and therefore to explain the phenomenon of academics who become HoDs at the case University, this chapter has provided an analysis of the research findings using the three-fold conceptual framework of the interrelationships between identities, socialisations and career trajectory as a heuristic device. The discussion has shown that, through primary and secondary socialisation experiences at home and school, the respondents in this study formed personal identities that valued education and knowledge at an early age and these identities influenced both their career choice initially, and their career trajectories, latterly. After leaving school and experiencing different socialisation experiences at home, school and work, the respondents began to develop multiple personal and professional identities, each with their own expectations of behaviours and social roles. Whether respondents felt they could successfully balance and manage these often conflictual identities, or whether they felt unable to cope with the tensions between and within them, seemed crucial to their subsequent career decision making and trajectory. If an individual could accept and successfully manage the differences and conflicts between or within these identities, or could balance them by - 1) choosing careers or roles that were in line with their core values or 2) changing the social structures in which they worked to align them - they were more likely to stay within the career path they had chosen. If, on the other hand, they experienced a major conflict between or within these identities, which they felt was either too stressful or too difficult to

manage, they were more likely to seek a change in career trajectory, usually after some reflection.

In relation to becoming a HoD, the data suggest that some respondents developed their academic identity and embarked on a career in academia by building on the core values and personal identities developed through earlier primary and secondary socialisation experiences and aligned their professional identities with these. Thus, for these respondents, it is reasonable to assume that their personal identities, *inter alia*, influenced their career choice, which in turn ensured that their subsequent professional socialisation experiences were aligned to their core values around education and knowledge. Others initially made different career choices. During these socialisation experiences, some of these respondents experienced a major conflict between or within their multiple personal and professional identities, or perceived that one was more important than another, and this led them to reflect on, and subsequently to make, a career changing decision to move into academia. In taking on the role of HoD, some respondents felt that this would likely allow them to align their professional and personal identities more closely. Others felt that, through their past socialisation experiences, they had the ability to handle and manage the different role identities and conflicts associated with being a HoD, particularly if this ability was confirmed by someone in authority.

It was clear from the findings of this study that academics who become HoDs need the capacity to assume a range of personal and professional identities that are formed and changed by socialisation experiences at home, in society and at work; and more specifically in the HoD role. Personal identities include being a husband/wife and being a mother/father; professional identities include being a research, a teacher and a manager. Being a HoD means that an individual needs to regularly adopt and switch

between these multiple identities, with some identities perceived as more important than others, either overall, or in different situations. Whether individuals can successfully balance and manage these often conflicting identities, or whether they experience major conflicts within or between them that they cannot accept, affects their experiences of being a HoD and may influence their subsequent career decisions to stay in the role, change role or even change occupation.

Finally, this discussion has shown that academics who become HoDs have different internal and external identities, each identity valuing different academic tasks and experiences. For the majority of respondents in this study, research activity was valued as the most important form of academic career capital, and their general perception was that being a HoD had been detrimental to accumulating this capital.

The following chapter emphasises the study's original contribution to knowledge and outlines the interrelationships between the three concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory at each stage of the respondents' careers. In addition, it includes the implications and recommendations for practice and future research.

Chapter 9

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

This final chapter comprises three main sections. Section 9.1 provides a summary of the overall aims of the study and the methodology used to meet these aims. Section 9.2 emphasises the study's original contribution to knowledge and outlines the interrelationships between the three concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory at each stage of the respondents' careers. Finally, section 9.3 details the implications and recommendations of this study for practice and future research.

9.1 Summary of the Study

This thesis set out to investigate the career trajectories of academics who became university Heads of Department (HoDs) in a selected post-1992 UK university. It aimed to describe, understand and interpret the reasons behind why academics become HoDs, what it was like to be a HoD, and how the experience may or may not have contributed to their future career plans. The study was built on a conceptual framework based on the interrelationships between the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory.

Following a critical review of relevant literature, the main research question for this thesis was formulated as:

• What are the career trajectories of university academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university?

In order to address this main research question, the following specific research questions (RQs), elicited from the main research question and literature review, were posed:

RQ1.   What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?

RQ2.   How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?

RQ3.   Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so, what are those changes and how have they evolved over time.

RQ4.   How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?

To address the above research questions, the study adopted the interpretive paradigm, in line with social constructivism, and used a life history approach (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Both paradigm and approach were justified by the nature of the research aim and research questions, namely, to understand, through their own perceptions, the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs.

In total, life history interviews were undertaken with 17 male and female HoDs, from a range of disciplines, at a selected post-1992 UK university where the researcher had worked as a lecturer for the last five years. Data from the life history interviews were supplemented with a number of other sources, including the researcher's insider observations, knowledge, and experiences; the analysis of key strategic documents produced by the case University linked to management culture, working practices and re-focusing the academic offer; and web based profiles of each of the respondents.

These data were analysed in two main ways. First, the data were reduced using coding and thematic techniques outlined by Bryman (2008), Charmaz (2006), Lichtman

(2006), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Silverman (2006). Second, in order to maintain the narrative of each respondent's life story, the researcher crafted profiles of each participant in line with guidelines put forward by Seidman (2006). This analysis allowed the key aims of the study to be met and helped describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs at the case University. The study's original contribution to knowledge is elaborated in the following section.

9.2 Contribution to Knowledge

Prior to this study, there appears to have been little published research investigating the career trajectories of academic HoDs, although other authors have argued that research into this area was required (Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005; Tight, 2003). This thesis claims to make an original contribution to knowledge by extending our knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon. It does so through using a life history approach; investigating HoDs in-depth in a case post-1992 UK university; and adopting an analytical framework based on the concepts of socialisation, identity, and career trajectory. The following section emphasises the study's original contribution to knowledge by outlining the interrelationships between the concepts of socialisation, identity and career trajectory at each stage of the respondents' career trajectories, in line with the study's main research question. It is hoped that this discussion may help detail and develop existing career theory, particularly as, compared to traditional career research, the empirical evidence and theory base connected to modern professional careers is rather sparse (Iellatchitch et al., 2003).

Initial Career Choices

For all of the respondents in this study, primary and secondary socialisation experiences at home and school helped them form identities that valued education and knowledge from an early age. For 15 of the respondents (Alex, Harry, Hannah, Garry, Maria, Sheila, Donna, Michael, Helen, Chris, Clive, Wendy, Rebecca, Michelle and Elizabeth), these identities helped influence their initial career choices; it was clear that all 15 chose careers or roles that were in line with their core values. These choices included going straight into academia or entering careers where respondents felt they could make a difference, for example law, teaching or nursing. Thus, for these 15 individuals at the start of their careers, their personal identities influenced their initial career choice.

In contrast, Miranda (who began a career with the civil service) and David (who went into the Army), entered careers or job roles that were not in line with their core values, but instead, seemed to make their decision on what they felt would match familial, cultural and societal expectations. For both Miranda and David, it was their socialisation experiences and associated behavioural expectations, rather than their personal identities, that seemed to influence their initial career choice.

Becoming an Academic

In relation to becoming an academic, the respondents in this study can be categorised into two main groups: those who went straight into an academic career from university (Clive, Helen, Hannah, Rebecca, Chris and Michael) and those who embarked on a different career before making a move into academia (Elizabeth, Garry, Michelle, Wendy, Alex, Miranda, David, Maria, Helen, Sheila and Harry). For those who went straight into an academic career, it appears that, as discussed above, they built on core values and personal identities that valued knowledge and education (developed through

primary and secondary socialisation experiences at home, school and university) and aligned their professional identities with these. This career choice ensured that their subsequent professional socialisation experiences were aligned with their core values around education and knowledge. As previously mentioned, for these respondents, their personal identities influenced their initial career choice, which in turn influenced their subsequent professional and organisational socialisation experiences and hence, in turn, further reinforced and deepened their professional identities.

For all of the respondents in this study, after leaving full time education, experiencing different socialisation experiences at home and at work meant that they began to develop multiple personal and professional identities, each with their own expectations of behaviour and social role. Those respondents (Elizabeth, Garry, Michelle, Wendy, Alex, Miranda, David, Maria, Helen, Sheila and Harry) who made a mid-career move into academia appeared to experience conflicts between and within their professional and personal identities during their first careers. This conflict eventually led them to reflect on their job and career at the time and subsequently to make career-changing decisions to become academics in order to align their professional and personal identities more closely. Thus, for these respondents, it was their professional and organisational socialisation experiences at work that caused them to experience personal and professional identity clashes, which, in turn, influenced their subsequent career trajectory into academia.

Becoming a HoD

In relation to becoming a HoD, it appears that all respondents felt that by assuming the HoD position, they would be enabled to change the social and organisational structures within which they worked, and to align their multiple personal and professional

identities more closely and manage them more successfully. This can be seen by examining their reasons for taking on the HoD role, which include - making a difference and having more control over their work. They felt that a change in career role would allow them to exert more control over their professional and organisational socialisation, which, in turn, would allow more harmony with their professional and personal identities. These findings suggest that individuals may experience critical career events or "turning points" in relation to balancing and managing identity conflicts during their careers through assuming more senior roles, in this case, department headship. Assuming such a promotional position is seen as empowering. It is seen as providing leverage to change the organisational structures within which they work so as to better accommodate and align with their preferred professional identities. However, as discussed in previous chapters, for several of the respondents in this study, changing the structures within which they worked proved more difficult than they first thought and their initial intentions and aspirations failed to materialise.

Being a HoD and its influence on Career Trajectory

As argued in Chapter Eight, the findings from this study suggest that academics who become HoDs need the capacity to assume a range of personal and professional identities that are formed and changed by socialisation experiences at home, in society and at work. Being a HoD means that an individual needs to regularly adopt and switch between these multiple identities. Some of these identities are perceived as more appropriate and important than others, either overall, or in different situations. Whether individual HoDs can successfully balance and manage these often conflicting identities, or whether they experience major conflicts within or between them, influences their views and experiences of being a HoD. Those who are more capable of switching, and feel more compatibility between, multiple roles, seem more likely to stay the course as
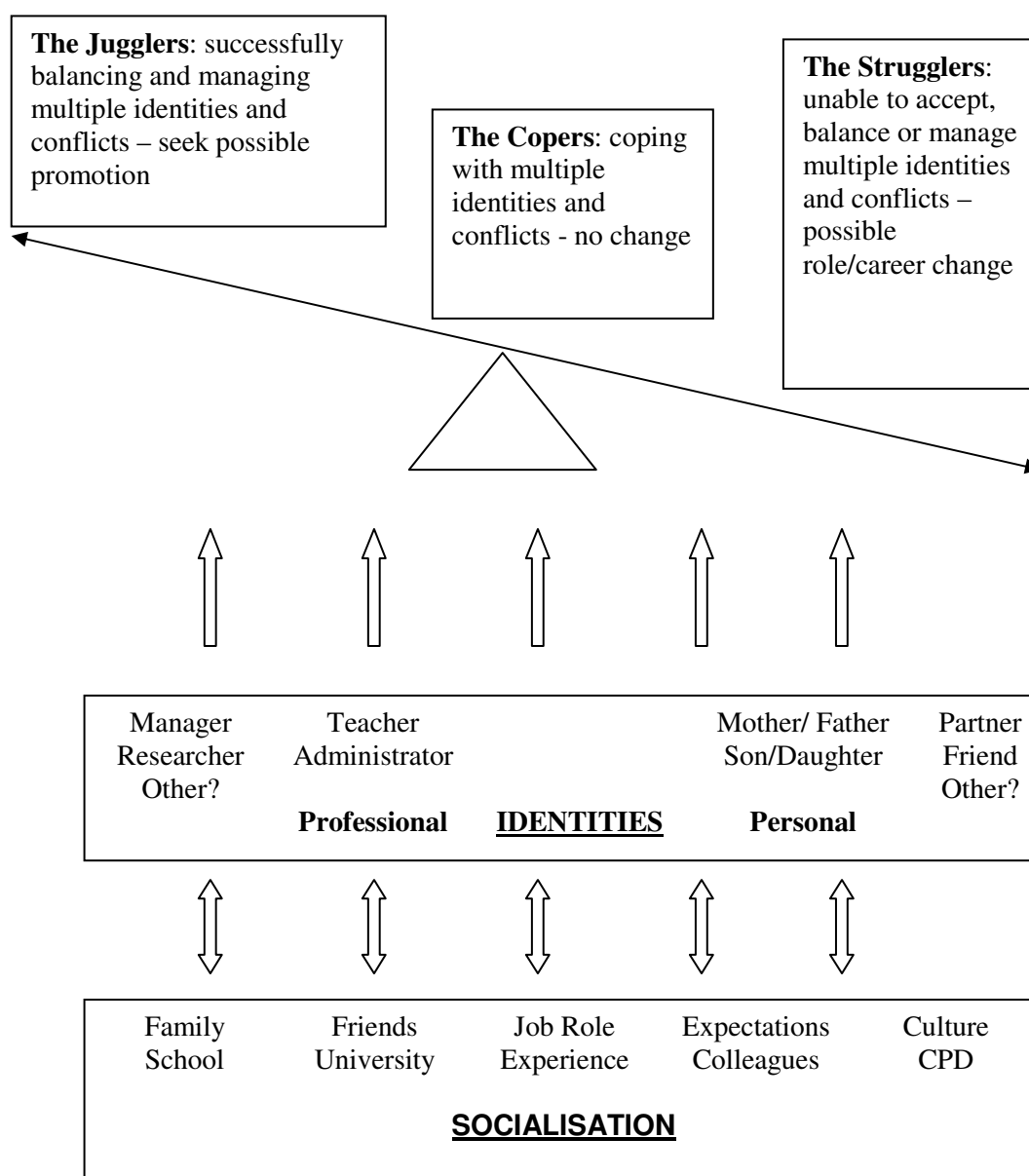
HoDs and even aspire to higher positions. The reverse applies, too. Those who find difficulty adopting and switching between multiple roles and identities, are more likely to resign, change occupation or retire early.

In relation to balancing and managing these multiple identities as HoDs, some of which conflict, each of the 17 respondents in this study can be tentatively placed into one of three groups. The first group are those who felt they could successfully manage and balance their multiple identities and associated conflicts – this group could be termed "the jugglers," and comprises Donna, Helen, Miranda, Clive, Rebecca, Wendy and Michelle. Second are those who could just about "cope" with, and accept, the identity conflicts and differences – this group could be called "the copers" and includes Michael, Alex, Garry, Maria, Chris, Elizabeth, David. Finally, a third group are those who find real difficulty in accepting, balancing and managing their identities and as a consequence, were reflecting on the possibility of changing their HoD role. This group could be termed "the strugglers" and is made up of Sheila, Harry and Hannah. The "jugglers" tended to enjoy being in the HoD role, with some even thinking about possible future promotion. It seems that they felt they had the capacity to experience and manage a further range of professional identities. The "copers" were mostly determined and able to remain in the role, even although some of them, including David and Chris, did not appear to particularly enjoy being in the position. One of the main ways that these participants coped with their identity conflicts was by carefully and consciously separating their personal and professional lives. They felt they did not have the capacity to accept any further changes to their professional identities. Finally, the "strugglers" (Shelia, Harry and Hannah), who felt the HoD experience was too challenging, even unfulfilling and negative, were experiencing career "turning points" and were consequently considering a change in job and role, or even a change in career.

These participants felt that they were unable to manage, balance or even accept the professional and personal identity conflicts arising from the multiplicity of expectations associated with being a HoD. Although these groups have been separated for ease of distinction, it is acknowledged that they are part of a continuum, that each individual conforms to the characteristics of their group to a greater or lesser extent, and that there might well be fluidity in relation to group membership depending on situational circumstances. These groupings are shown in figure 9.1 along with the socialisation forces and multiple identities participant academics experienced in their careers. Figure 9.1 provides a conceptual framework for interpreting the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in the case University. It may have transferability for researchers of HoDs in other universities who might wish to replicate this study.

In summary, this study's original contribution to knowledge has been to describe, understand and interpret the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs in a selected post-1992 UK university. There appears to be very little published research in this area. In addition, although the life history approach has previously been used to help explain schoolteachers' careers (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Dimmock and O'Donoghue, 1996; Goodson, 1992; Goodson, 2003), the approach has been underutilised in relation to careers in HE. Finally, by analysing the data using a conceptual framework based on the interrelationships between socialisation, identity and career trajectory, the study claims to have made a distinctive and original contribution to the extant literature in this field. The following section outlines the implications and recommendations this study has for practice and future research.

Figure 9.1 Career Trajectories of Academics who become HoDs

The Jugglers: successfully balancing and managing multiple identities and conflicts – seek possible promotion

The Copers: coping with multiple identities and conflicts - no change

The Strugglers: unable to accept, balance or manage multiple identities and conflicts – possible role/career change

Manager Researcher Other?	Teacher Administrator		Mother/ Father Son/Daughter	Partner Friend Other?
	Professional	**IDENTITIES**	**Personal**	

Family School	Friends University	Job Role Experience	Expectations Colleagues	Culture CPD
		SOCIALISATION		

9.3 Implications and Recommendations

It is acknowledged that the findings from this study cannot be generalised. This is because the sample is extremely small – just 17 HoDs, the context and setting is a post-1992 university, and indeed, generalising these results would go against the key epistemological tenets of interpretive research (Thomas and James, 2006). Nonetheless,

it is hoped that these findings may provide insights and understandings into the phenomenon of academics who become HoDs and enable readers to transfer these findings to their own contexts or environments. As such, they "…serve as touchstones against which readers can play off their own reflections, realities and experiences" (Dimmock and O'Donoghue, 1996, p. 142), and may help academics in similar contexts relate to, and perhaps gain an understanding of, their own and others' situations (Silverman, 2006). It is also hoped, as argued in Chapter One, that a more thorough understanding of HoDs' career trajectories will be useful for policy-makers, managers and researchers in the leadership and management of universities. The importance of the implications of these findings for practice has recently been confirmed as, following a presentation to senior members of HR at the case University, the study will be used to inform future career development strategies at the institution. The following section outlines the implications and recommendations the present study has for practice and future research.

Implications for Practice

Not surprisingly, the main implications that arise from this study are linked to the training and career development needs for academics who take on HoD roles. One of the key findings was that 14 of the 17 respondents had received no formal training for their role. This suggests that the case University needs to implement a training programme for academics who become HoDs, to allow them to learn some of the key skills needed to successfully take on the position. The findings suggest that such courses should include people management and conflict resolution skills, as it is unlikely that an academic would have previous experience in this area. As course leadership roles were seen as an important preparation for the role, strategies for leadership and career

development for the case University could include structures and systems to allow individuals to experience such roles as a kind of apprenticeship, before taking on the role of HoD. In order to ensure there is a large enough pool of potential staff to take up leadership positions, perhaps these lower level leadership/management roles could be rotated around a certain timeframe to allow as wide a range of academic staff as possible to develop their skills in this area.

Ten respondents in this study identified that one of the ways they had learned to cope with the demands of the job was through informal peer consultation. Therefore, formalising peer consultation processes may be beneficial when developing training and career development programmes for HoDs at the case University. This could take the form of a mentoring or coaching scheme, where experienced HoDs mentor new HoDs. Organic, informal support networks would also still need to be encouraged, as these were seen by the respondents in this study as important and beneficial. Perhaps there could also be more opportunities for new or aspiring HoDs to self-assess their strengths and weaknesses to identify their specific, individual training needs, as this study has shown that professional development courses linked to the experiences and needs of the individual, rather than a blanket "one size fits all" approach, would be more successful.

It was clear from the findings from this study that, for some respondents, there was a mismatch between their expectations of what the job role would be like and the actual realities of the experiences of being a HoD. This suggests that before any academic takes on the role of HoD, expectations are made clear to them through the application process. There was also the suggestion that socialisation and induction procedures for new HoDs should be improved, perhaps including shadowing opportunities for staff about to take on such a role. In addition, one of the main role difficulties that respondents identified was a feeling of having little financial control.

More transparency about financial and staffing procedures may lead to improved trust (between the HoDs and central university senior leadership) and better productivity; and at the same time allow HoDs to plan more effectively (Hancock and Hellawell, 2003).

For the majority of respondents in this study, research activity was valued as the most important form of academic career capital, and their general perception was that being a HoD had been detrimental to accumulating this capital. Becher (1999) argues that few universities offer appropriate learning opportunities for academic staff in mid-career and that, in order for the profession to develop in line with others, this situation needs to improve. In agreement, Gordon (2005) also calls for more strategically planned professional development and research support strategies in higher education, taking into account a person's whole career. One way of improving the career opportunities for academics in the case University might be to ensure that academics who become HoDs are given protected time in order to continue with their research careers. Another possible solution to this problem would be for the case University to formally allow, recognise and reward a position of deputy HoD. There is no doubt that most HoDs rely on others in their department to help them, but there are no formal rewards for such a position. This is especially important as the recent changes to HE policy and culture - changes in research funding, the increasing importance of the research assessment exercise (RAE now termed the Research Excellence Framework), and greater accountability for the quality of teaching – have meant that the position of HoD is now more important than ever (Bolton, 2000; Hancock and Hellawell, 2003; Knight and Trowler, 2001). Furthermore, there was evidence from this study to suggest that senior managers in HE need to reflect on possible gendered structures and cultural practices within their institution in relation to female academics' career trajectories and that

career development strategies need to be cognisant of issues around work-life balance for both male and female academics.

In relation to career theory, the findings from this study suggest that some academics' careers mirror modern career theory, with 11 of the 17 respondents entering academia following a different prior career experience. The notion that people are experiencing more "boundaryless" careers, and the possibility that most academics' career trajectories, especially in the post-1992 HE sector, no longer fit the traditional linear academic career, suggests that future recruitment strategies may need to target other professions. For those participants who had followed the more traditional route into academia by undertaking a PhD and gone straight into an academic post, it appears that these decisions were heavily influenced by significant others (academics) through their undergraduate and postgraduate socialisation experiences. This suggests there may be an important recruitment role to be played by individual academics in encouraging talented students to think about joining the profession, particularly in the current climate where future recruitment may be adversely affected due to the changing notion of what an academic career entails (Beck and Young, 2005; Collinson, 2004; Gordon, 2005; Henkel, 2005; Knight and Trowler, 2000; Nixon, 1996; Poole and Bornholt, 1998).

Recommendations for Future Research

There are three main areas for future research. The first is to investigate the career trajectories of academics who become HoDs across a wider range of institutions to see whether the findings from this study are indicative of experiences of HoDs across the HE sector. Further research could compare and contrast academics' career trajectories across different institutions, particularly between pre- and post-1992 universities. A second main area for future research is to investigate the perceptions of academic career

opportunities from the perspectives of the individual and the institution, as the findings from this study suggests there may be a mismatch in this area. And finally, the third main area of research is to build on this study's original contribution to knowledge by developing clarity in the interrelationships between identity, socialisation and career trajectory for a wider range of HoDs, across a more diverse range of universities.

Final Word

This thesis has investigated the career trajectories of academics who became HoDs at a selected post-1992 UK university. The findings offer an insight into the personal and professional reasons why academics become HoDs, what it is like to be a HoD, how academics who become HoDs perceive their professional and personal identities change after becoming HoD, and how academics perceive being a HoD influences their whole career. Although the focal context of this study is one post-1992 UK university, it is hoped that the study, notwithstanding its limitations, may help other individuals and institutions move towards a firmer understanding of the steps academics make when they become HoDs, the experiences they encounter while HoDs, and the consequences for their subsequent career development. Few would disagree with the claim that departmental leadership and management is of profound and increasing importance to the overall performance of universities going forward. On this ground alone, universities as organisations, and academics as individuals, need to acknowledge the case for, and benefits from, more research into those who aspire to and become, heads of departments, and the consequent impact on their careers.

University of Leicester

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

PhD Research Study - Career Trajectories of Academics who become Heads of Department

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

This aim of this study is to understand and explain the career trajectories of academics who become Heads of Department (HoDs) in a selected UK university. This will be done by undertaking edited topical life history interviews with several male and female academic HoDs, from a variety of disciplines, at the case University. This research is being undertaken as part of a PhD study based at the University of Leicester's Centre for Educational Leadership and Management under the supervision of Professor Clive Dimmock. It is proposed to submit the final thesis towards the end of 2009.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been identified from the case University Web Site as someone who is an academic head of department, in line with the specific research questions of the study.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in a one-to-one interview based on your career life history. You may then be contacted again to take part in a further interview as the study develops.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving reason.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

In agreeing to take part in this study there will be a time commitment to consider and due to the nature of this type of research it is impossible to determine what that might be at the outset but the first interview is likely to last between 1 and 1.5 hours. You are, of course, able to withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The main benefit for the individual will be an opportunity to reflect in detail on their career trajectory (past, present and future) and the proposed use of the life history approach has been

identified as a method which has considerable potential for personal and professional development. Whilst there will be a time commitment required from participants and there may be difficulties in preserving complete anonymity due to the small numbers involved, it is felt that the benefits of involvement will outweigh the costs.

This study will also help in furthering the academic community's understanding of academic HoDs' career trajectories. A more thorough understanding of the HoD's career trajectory (past, present and future) is important for policy-makers, managers and researchers in the leadership and management of universities. Such research, for example, could help in the potential selection process of new HoDs, could help predict and address the possible future supply and demand imbalance in the profession, could allow for more informed career advice for HoDs (potential and in post), and could help tailor specific training, development and support for them while in post.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure participants cannot be identified. The University name will also be changed. It must be stated that as the sample size will be relatively small (18-20) this may have implications for privacy/anonymity. All electronic data will be held securely in password protected files on a non-shared PC and all paper documentation will be held in locked cabinets in a locked office.

Data generated by the study must be retained in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity and therefore will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project.

What will happen to the results of the research?

All interview data will be transcribed and subjected to respondent validation where each participant will be provided with the transcription and account of the findings in order to check that the participant agrees with the researcher's interpretation of their life history.

This data will then be used in a PhD submission and may also be published in appropriate academic journals and/or books. All participants will be able to have access to a copy of the published research on request.

Who has reviewed the study?

The case University Research Ethics Committee has approved this research.

Name, position and contact address of Researcher

Alan Floyd
Senior Lecturer

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact the Chair of The University Ethics Committee on xxxx.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet, please contact me if you require any further information.

Alan Floyd

May 2007

Appendix 2 Initial Interview Schedule

Research Question	Interview Themes/Questions	Discussed
Introduction	*Study background and aims* *Participant Prerogatives*	
What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?	*General background* Place, date of birth, family background, childhood? Marriage, children? *Academic background* Schools, courses taken, subjects favoured, achievements? Higher Education, courses, subjects, achievements? *Career history* General work history, changes of job, types of job *Reasons for career decisions* What are the reasons behind your career decisions to date – personal and professional? Was it always your ambition to work at management level? *Reasons for becoming a HoD* Have you been appointed or elected to this position? Is it permanent? Could you explain how you came to be a HoD – what happened to you, or what were the decisions that you took which led to your progression? What experiences have you had that have been of benefit to your progression? What, in your experience, may have mitigated against your progression – and how did you set about overcoming those obstacles?	
How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?	*What does being a HoD mean to you?* What do you think is the purpose of management at the level of HoD? Do you consider yourself to be a leader, resource handler, representative academic, hands on head of unit, or something else? *What was it like when you first became a HoD?* How have you learned how to manage? How might you have been better prepared?	

How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD? (cont/d)	***What are your experiences of being a HoD?*** How has your function evolved – have you been able to define your role and function yourself? Have you been able to develop and influence how others in the institution interpret your function? What factors are involved in deciding how to handle particular tasks and situations? Do you rely on personal experience about what works or does not work?
Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so what are those changes and how have they evolved over time?	***Personal identity and HoD*** How has your role of being a HoD impacted on your personal life? Do you think your personal identity has changed since becoming a HoD? If so what are those changes? Do you think they have evolved over time in post? ***Professional identity and HoD*** How has your role of being a HoD impacted on your professional life? Do you think your professional identity has changed since becoming a HoD? If so what are those changes? Do you think they have evolved over time in post?
How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?	***Future career plans*** What are your own career ambitions for the future? ***HoD and career*** How do you see your experience of being a HoD contributing to your future career?
Conclusion	***Any other comments?*** ***What will happen to data?*** ***Follow up meeting/respondent validation*** ***Thank interviewees***

Appendix 3 Revised Interview Schedule

Research Question	Interview Themes/Questions	Discussed
Introduction	*Study background and aims* *Participant Prerogatives*	
What are the professional and personal circumstances that lead to academics becoming HoDs?	*General background* Place, date of birth, family background, childhood? Marriage, children? *Academic background* Schools, courses taken, subjects favoured, achievements? Higher Education, courses, subjects, achievements? *Career history* General work history, changes of job, types of job *Reasons for career decisions* Why did you decide to go into HE? What are the reasons behind your career decisions to date – personal and professional? Was it always your ambition to work at management level? *Reasons for becoming a HoD* Have you been appointed or elected to this position? Is it permanent? Could you explain how you came to be a HoD – what happened to you, or what were the decisions that you took which led to your progression? Why did you become a HoD? What experiences have you had that have been of benefit to your progression? What, in your experience, may have mitigated against your progression – and how did you set about overcoming those obstacles?	
2. How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD?	*What does being a HoD mean to you?* What do you think is the purpose of management at the level of HoD? Do you consider yourself to be a leader, resource handler, representative academic, hands on head of unit, or something else? *What was it like when you first became a HoD?* How have you learned how to manage? How might you have been better prepared?	

How do HoDs describe and understand their experiences of being a HoD? (cont/d)	*What are your experiences of being a HoD?* How has your function evolved – have you been able to define your role and function yourself? Have you been able to develop and influence how others in the institution interpret your function? What factors are involved in deciding how to handle particular tasks and situations? Do you rely on personal experience about what works or does not work? What do you see as the difficult parts of being a HoD? What strategies do you use to manage these difficulties? What do you see as the enjoyable parts of being a HoD?
Do academics perceive that their personal and professional identities change after they become HoDs? If so what are those changes and how have they evolved over time?	*Personal identity and HoD* How has your role of being a HoD impacted on your personal life? Do you think your personal identity has changed since becoming a HoD? If so what are those changes? Do you think they have evolved over time in post? *Professional identity and HoD* How has your role of being a HoD impacted on your professional life? Do you think your professional identity has changed since becoming a HoD? If so what are those changes? Do you think they have evolved over time in post? Why do you think these changes have occurred?
How do HoDs see their position as HoD influencing their whole career?	*Future career plans* What are your own career ambitions for the future? *HoD and career* How do you see your experience of being a HoD contributing to your future career?
Conclusion	*Any other comments?* *What will happen to data?* *Follow up meeting/respondent validation* *Thank interviewees*

University *of* Leicester

CONSENT FORM

Full title of Research Project:

Career Trajectories of Academics who become Heads of Department

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Alan Floyd
Senior Lecturer
xxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxx

Please initial box

1.   I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.   ☐

2.   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.   ☐

3.   I agree to take part in the above study.   ☐

Yes   No

4.   I agree to the interview being audio recorded.   ☐   ☐

5.   I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications (as the sample size will be relatively small (18-20) this may have implications for privacy/anonymity).   ☐   ☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

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