

Organisational hierarchies in English universities:

understanding roles and boundaries

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This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

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Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke.

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Abstract

This research seeks to advance understanding of senior roles and the boundaries between them in contemporary English universities. Analysing interviews with senior managers at eight different English universities, the research presents findings in support of the view that managerialism and professionalisation continue to shape senior leadership teams. The ‘roles and boundaries’ in the title of this research are drawn from the descriptions of participants who discuss their roles in terms of portfolio, and the boundaries of where their remit meets that of their colleagues as a process of negotiation in response to circumstances.

Grouped under three overarching themes (Sense of place, Drawing authority to lead, and Influencing change), the findings show participants describing strong collegial working at the executive level, blurred boundaries between the roles of senior managers, and an advancement of professionalisation at their institutions through the use of management information and plans to implement management training programmes. The academic mission is shown to be no less important but concerns for long-term sustainability of the organisation are seen to be shaping decisions, and in turn expanding the boundaries of professional managers into areas long seen as the domain of their academic colleagues. In doing so, the boundaries of roles at the senior executive level are reduced, providing a collegial space in which a broader range of

voices are heard, but which also move the institution further from any collegial ideal and increasingly to the managerial and hierarchical.

The research provides a framework for understanding the primary factors through which participants describe boundaries being expanded, maintained, or constrained, at the executive level. Three elements are identified as important, pushing against each other to shape the institution – *Focus of the executive, Resilience of the institutional normative, and Channels to promote change*. The research shows that none of these are fixed or dominant and are in a constant state of change, moving boundaries and changing roles and identities over time.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mum's memory and my daughter's future. Though you never met, you were together in my heart throughout.

Mao, as your grandma said to me - we're only here for a short-time; follow your dreams, be happy, and never let anyone hold you back.

List of abbreviations

CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
MARCOMMS	Marketing and Communications
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UKVI	UK Visas and Immigration

Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms

Many of the following terms have definitions which extend beyond the higher education setting. They are listed here as they are used in this thesis.

Centre/ Central Management: Used in this research to refer to centralised decision making and management, as opposed to decentralised, locally held autonomy.

Chief Operating Officer (COO): A title given to senior managers with broad responsibility for the operational functions of the university.

Collegial University: Those governed with an emphasis on the autonomy of the academic community, where the decision-making processes are shared amongst the academics as equals.

Competition and Markets Authority: UK government department responsible for regulating business competition and reducing anti-competitive practices in the UK. The

Competition and Markets Authority works alongside the Office for Students to monitor the market practices of English universities.

Deputy Vice Chancellor: A senior manager/leader in UK universities, hierarchically placed second in line to the Vice Chancellor, ordinarily a member of the senior executive team, often (though not always) coming from an academic background.

Education Reform Act 1988: An act of parliament which made universities in England and Wales more financially autonomous and accountable (amongst broader changes to the education system at all levels).

Management Information: Data collected from a range of internal and external sources to inform decision making. Typical management information in English universities includes (but is not limited to) student numbers, student satisfaction, equality data, graduate destinations, staff ratio numbers, unit data, details of income and expenditure.

Managerialism: The belief in the importance of professional management and the use of controls to encourage accountability and meet the expectations of external stakeholders.

Marketisation: The process of encouraging universities to operate as market-oriented institutions by changing the legal environment in which they operate.

National Student Survey: An annual student survey commissioned by the Office for Students and undertaken independently. The survey collects feedback data from students across the UK, asking about their experiences studying and overall satisfaction.

Neoliberal(ism): The belief that the market can replace the state as the determinant of policy and practice.

Office for Students: A non-departmental public body of the Department for Education which acts as the regulator and competition authority for the higher education sector in England.

Performance Management: The processes and systems put in place to ensure the activities and outputs of a university align with the institutional goals.

Post 1992 institution ('New' University): UK university with a history as a polytechnic or other educational establishment, that was given university status through the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The terms are also used more generally for institutions that were granted university status since 1992.

Pro Vice Chancellor: A senior manager/leader in UK universities, ordinarily a member of the senior executive team, often (though not always) coming from an academic background.

Professionalised/Professionalisation: The process of assigning professional qualities and measures to groups, (e.g. requirement for formal qualifications, recognition of professional networks and emergence of a common cognitive basis), often associated with increased oversight and controls.

Quasi-market: Conditions which encourage competition, less bureaucracy, and greater efficiency, but that also retain protections against the more aggressive elements of marketisation and retain barriers to access not found in open markets.

Royal Charter (university): Universities given powers to award degrees by royal statute as opposed to legislation.

Russell Group: Representative association for 24 UK universities. Used in this thesis as a broad term to discuss any member university.

Senior Executive: Leadership and management team tasked with the implementation and monitoring of strategy and policies. Responsible for operational management – e.g. allocation of financial, physical, and human resources.

Teaching and Education Act 1998: An act of parliament which allowed universities to charge tuition fees.

Teaching Excellence Framework: A voluntary (as of June 2020) ranking system designed to recognise and encourage excellent teaching in English universities. Institutions are ranked as Gold, Silver or Bronze.

Third Space (professionals): The domain which exists between academic and professional. Third space professionals are those who are either specifically employed to work in this space or those who have influenced and moved into such academic/professional domains.

UK Visas and Immigration: Department of the UK Home Office responsible for issuing visas and enforcing immigration law. For UK universities the UK Visas and Immigration department issues Tier 4 visas allowing international students to study for a fixed period in the UK.

Unit (Basic): The faculty, department, school or subject area within a university.

Vice Chancellor: The Chief Executive of a university in England. Ultimately responsible for all aspects of leadership and management in the university.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter positions the research contextually through an overview of the background of changes of English higher education from an elite to mass system and the resulting shifts in relationships between the various stakeholders (e.g. government, student, academic, professional services).

Following the contextual positioning, a clear overview of the research focus and methodology is provided before setting out the contribution and structure of the thesis.

1.1 Context of the research

Over the past 70 years higher education participation in England has been transformed from an elite to mass system, greatly increasing the number of those attending university from approximately 6% of the population in the 1960s (Foskett, 2011) to 50% in 2018 (UK Department for Education, 2019). In order to manage this increase, the higher education sector has both expanded in size and complexity (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed, 2008), with over 400,000 people working at 164 institutions, generating in excess of £38 billion of income a year (Universities UK, 2019).

The Education Reform Act 1988 re-framed the purpose of education and the state's role in providing funds, making institutions more financially autonomous and accountable. The Act set out to define students as consumers, develop performance criteria, and essentially encourage a system of payment on results (Floud and Glynn, 2000). Following this, the Teaching and Education Act 1998 introduced means tested top-up fees, further advancing the largescale rollback of state investment, with government policy creating quasi-market conditions; working under the assumption the market dictates higher standards and increases student choice (Waring, 2017).

Central to these changes is the notion of universities as business facing organisations, operating in a competitive environment, required to demonstrate their worth and value for money to both government and students as their customers (Browne, 2010). Competition between institutions is promoted as a means through which to improve quality, expand choice and reduce costs (Waring, 2017), encouraging an environment which positions the student as the primary consumer and beneficiary of higher education (Brown and Carasso, 2013). It has been asserted that this repositioning of the student as a consumer of education risks a commodification of the educational experience and threatens to reduce the student's ability to cope with the sense of inadequacy and struggle for progression found in a challenging educational experience (Nixon, Scullion, and Hearn, 2018).

The logic which underpins the marketisation of universities is firmly of the neoliberal political agenda, and the premise that the market can replace the state as the producer of cultural logic and value. In this world view the citizen is defined as an economic maximiser, governed by self-interest, and responsible for his or her own well-being (Lynch, 2006). To a large extent research around marketisation of higher education has focused on the changing nature of the academic/student relationship (Locke, 2011), but there is an important research area to be found in understanding how these changes have impacted on organisational roles and the boundaries of those working in universities. The governance and regulation systems designed to monitor the performance of institutions refocus the role of universities from communities of scholars primarily interested in scholarly pursuits, to workplaces concerned with meeting the needs of the market. It is a situation which Deem et al. (2008) view as a risk to trust amongst university communities. It is also asserted that the increase in regulation required to provide assurances for external stakeholders has had a negative

impact on institutional autonomy (Salter and Tapper, 2002) as universities find themselves both documenting and justifying their decisions in more quantifiable ways; though not necessarily pursuing what the academic community would deem to be their traditional core functions (Lea, 2011). However, there is also broad acknowledgement that for the modern university to thrive it must be entrepreneurial (Clark, 2003), continually promoting and monetising success, turning academic departments into business units (Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion, 2009).

Universities retain their important role as socio-economic institutions, though the increasingly entrepreneurial function which cuts across academia, industry and government (Meek, 2000), means their successes are measured in numbers of students on courses, successful completions, how many of those progress into well paid positions, the number of postgraduate supervisions, student satisfaction ratings and research income, rather than any transformational benefits of higher level study (Brown and Carasso, 2013). To meet this, academics have found their roles increasingly professionalised, with particular focus placed on defining harmonised professional standards, measuring the 'effectiveness' of teaching, introducing educational development programmes, and creating structured career pathways (Pleschová et al., 2012). Universities have also seen greater administrative specialisation and the emergence of career administrators (Bamber, Allen-Collinson, and McCormack, 2017); altering the relationship between the academic and non-academic as professional managers replace the administrators of old and take ownership of areas formerly controlled by their academic colleagues (Whitchurch, 2008). In many institutions this has led to a perceived disruption of the recognised first amongst equals style of academic management, replacing it with professionalised

managerial structures, giving non-academic staff increased decision making powers. (Tight, 2003).

New domains which do not sit within the binary terminology of academic and non-academic, continue to emerge. Those working in these domains, referred to as 'third space' professionals, blur the boundaries of professional identities, drawing on different skills to build credibility across domains (Whitchurch, 2008).

Leadership and management, once held as distinctly different elements in university communities, are now used interchangeably; both in discourse and practice (Tight, 2003). There is growing evidence of management becoming a discrete function within universities and that academic management is an increasingly important requirement in the appointment of Pro Vice Chancellor roles (Shepherd, 2014). The place of academic leadership has been eroded as academic manager and professional manager roles have increasingly become recognised career routes; at least in post '92 institutions (Whitchurch, 2008). The extent to which this is deemed to have impacted on the working culture of organisations and how best to manage within this landscape differs across the literature which ranges from 'how to' type guidance based on how best to manage higher education institutions, to the more theorised/analytical research which attempts to explain why and how higher education institutions are managed as they are (Tight, 2003). This thesis is informed by the latter theorised and analytical research, drawing on the perspectives of both academic and administrative orientated literature as well as broader theoretical studies of leadership and group decision-making.

1.2 Research focus and methodology

This research thesis is concerned with the roles of senior managers at English universities and the boundaries between them. It is positioned in the literature around managerialism and professionalisation, and also considers broader literature on leadership and the dynamics of group decision making, to provide insight into boundaries at the executive level.

Whitchurch (2008) describes boundaries between roles as much more complex than simply the remit of a job description, covering aspects as broad as 'functional areas, professional and academic activity, and internal and external constituencies. Whitchurch's work researching the blurring of boundaries between the professional service and academic constituencies of universities, provides a framework for conceptualising what is meant by roles and boundaries in this thesis.

The roles of participants are defined as the job role, rather than any sociological interpretation. This was not taken from sight of the employment contract, it was based on the description provided by participants, leaving space for participants to explain their roles as they interpret them. This research is primarily concerned with the perceived boundaries between roles as expressed by the participants, recognising that the professional boundaries of senior leaders are often more constructions of individuals than any formally defined boundary (Schneider, 1987).

The thesis utilises qualitative data gathered through 8 semi-structured interviews with the participants conducted in their places of work. The data is analysed using thematic analysis.

1.3 Research aims and questions

The research aims to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the boundaries between the roles of senior managers working at the executive level of contemporary English universities, and what factors influence them. The research sets out to:

- Evaluate the effects of meeting the needs of the contemporary university on the roles of senior managers.

and to

- Better understand how these pressures change the relationships between individuals working across academic and non-academic divides at the most senior level within English universities.

To build understanding, the following research questions have been established in response to the literature review:

- 1. How are senior roles in higher education changing in response to the pressures found across the higher education sector?**
 - 1a. What does this mean for the boundaries between professional and academic managers?**
- 2. Is there evidence in the data of different practices of leadership and management relevant to the background of the participant?**

1.4 Contribution

This research contributes to the discussion on leadership and management in English universities, advancing the established literature on the boundaries of roles across senior teams and how these influence the organisation.

The findings of this research suggest the participants, though describing working in increasingly managerial focused institutions which the literature review suggests limits collegiality, operate in a highly collegial environment at the senior executive level. Boundaries between the roles are less prevalent as the executive management teams meet as an informal, organisation focused group, within a democratising third space.

The research provides 'live' accounts of Whitchurch's (2004) model of the university (community, services, partnership, and reputation), showing the overlapping and shifting interdependencies between areas and individuals. It also revisits many of the same issues discussed by Deem et al. in 2008, (introduction of management training, increased use of management information, internal value systems), taking into account the passage of time, showing the varying degrees of success in implementing change, despite the period of time which has elapsed.

The thesis concludes with a framework for understanding the primary aspects important to encouraging and limiting changes to the normative at the participants' institutions, contributing to Becher and Kogan's synoptic model (1992), showing this as shaped from institutional and personal histories, as much as emerging external pressures.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The research is presented over 6 easily navigable chapters, providing a comprehensive and coherent research project. Each chapter builds on the last, providing a clear explanation of their function and relationships to the existing knowledge.

Chapter 2: The literature review provides the underpinning knowledge to frame and guide the research. Literature around managerialism and professionalisation in higher education is analysed and carefully criticised, also drawing on leadership and decision-making theory as a guiding framework when analysing the literature on higher education leadership. Particular attention is paid to professional identities and the effect organisational structures can have on them.

The conclusion brings together the literature, identified research gap, and aims of this study.

Chapter 3: This chapter provides a clear overview of the research design, including the process used to determine how best to conduct the data analysis, and the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen approach.

Focus on professional experiences and personal interpretations of those experiences is supported through ontologically constructivist and epistemologically interpretative positions.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the findings are presented under their thematic headings, having completed a thematic analysis of the data. The findings show

participants' describing decision making processes as much driven by consideration for the needs of the organisation as they are the academic needs of the university community. Participants describe the boundaries of their roles as a fluid, complex interplay between all members of the senior executive.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides a robust discussion of the findings, positioning the research within the existing literature. The extent to which the analysis showed any of the participants describing professionalisation having taken root at their institution is questioned, as is the notion of managerialism being dominant. A framework for understanding the primary factors at play in balancing the functions of the institutions is presented, and from this the potential implications to the boundaries of roles are discussed.

Chapter 6: The conclusion chapter brings the research to a close, clearly identifying any limitations and potential opportunities for future research from which to build on and further test the findings.

Together the 6 chapters (including introduction chapter) are the culmination of over two years research and are submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In order to position the research within the existing knowledge, presented here is a full and thorough review of the relevant literature.

The literature review process was conducted using a conceptual approach to focus on managerialism and professionalisation (with professionalisation presented both as a product of, and driver of managerialism). Literature around leadership and group dynamics in decision making were also drawn upon to provide further shape.

2.2 Managerial and Professionalisation discourse

Though there is little evidence in the literature relating to universities of managerialism being viewed as a positive to be embraced, there is a clear stream which seeks to investigate how managerialism can be justified, what benefits may be found in applying managerial processes to universities, and how individuals may excel in this type of organisation. Becher and Kogan's (1992) seminal work on process and structure in higher education, asserts that though the pressures to which academics and their institutions are now exposed may seem ill-informed and unjustified, it could be inferred that previously the sector was not sufficiently concerned with accountability and that this gave credibility to the expansion of the top-down hierarchical approach found in managerial institutions. Warner and Palfrey (1996) make the argument for more professional approaches to management and an assertive professional services better explaining their value to colleagues. And Bargh, Boccock, and Scott (2000) are interested in explaining the complex political systems of the modern university and how individuals utilise both the formal setting and the space between to connect with the organisation and effect change.

Focusing on the regulatory landscape and the performance management processes to which managerialism is both a response and a driver, Pritchard (2000) offers the complex regulatory requirements and competitive bids for funding as justification for re-imagining how institutions are led and managed. In contrast, Fanghanel (2012) discusses the way managerialism, and performance management, change the nature of academic identities; how academics see themselves, their work, and their relationship with their students. Parker and Jary (1995) offer a similar analysis, arguing that increased surveillance of academics re-orientates the academic identity away from their academic discipline towards career, quality ratings, and rewards. Highlighting the concerns of academics when faced with increasing drives for better management, Norton (2016) calls for more criticality in the measures used to determine educational quality as a way to enhance agency amongst academics who feel overwhelmed in the current working environment. Across the literature there is a consistent view of the academic role being professionalised in response to managerialism, and from the literature one can reach the conclusion that managerialism in universities is a process of actively redefining academic identities, as opposed to the change being an unexpected consequence of managerialism.

Underpinning the literature around identities, and how managerialism affects identity, is that which looks at the organisational structures/models of institutions, particularly the debate around collegial and managerial differences. Tight (2003) asserts that despite a tendency for the literature to describe a clear separation between collegial and managerial led institutions, one would be pressed to find such a stark contrast as many universities operate versions of both at the same time. Deem et al. (2008) describe this as a process of organisational hybridisation where any one logic is prevented from becoming dominant, allowing apparently contradictory organisational

models to co-exist within the same institution. This is further unpacked by Trowler (2008, p.120) who sets out a series of 'games' (research game, teaching game etc.) which shift the organisational agenda as decisions are made in relation to one 'game' without consideration of the impact on another. Coming from the literature is a picture of the university as a complex organisation with competing stakeholders, making implementation of a single model of organisational structure both difficult and unwanted. It is interesting to note this view is reflected in the Lambert Review (2003), which played such a pivotal role in the further entrenchment of business practices in higher education. The review on the one hand recognised and saw benefits in the differences in organisational complexity between universities and businesses, but on the other encouraged professionalisation and the implementation of business practices as a way to avoid the perceived inefficiencies of committee driven decision making.

Within the literature there is a strong focus on what gives the manager their right to manage or lead – be that organisational hierarchy or the consent of colleagues. Pritchard (2000) asserts that for all of the literature on educational management, the majority focuses on theories of organisational and economic management but fails to fully address the conditions and processes to which management is considered a response. This can be better understood by looking at the literature around organisational behaviours and how managerialism/professionalisation shape them.

2.3 Model of University

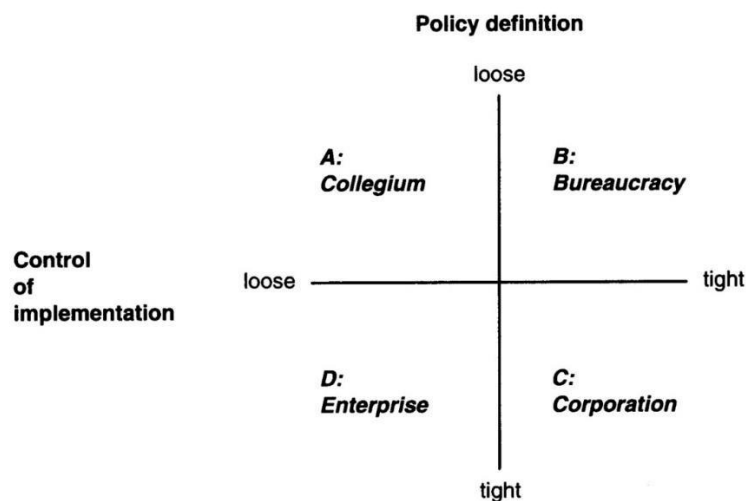
There are many models of university, including collegiate, bureaucratic, corporate and enterprise, to name a few (Lucas, 2006); and as already stated, Tight (2014) asserts no university in practice operates any one model. Dopson and McNay (1996) view

organisational structures, controls, and the distribution of power as key influencers in an organisation's culture, having implications for every aspect of an organisation's operations. Within each model of the university there are different forms of management relationships ranging from what can be described as soft to hard managerialism; the prevalence of either being an indicator as to what extent an organisation has adopted new managerial practices. Managerialism can be broadly defined as an ideological movement which insists 'managing' (the sociotechnical practices) and 'management' (agents responsible for enactment) are universal requirements of a modern, economically, and technologically advanced society (Deem et al., 2008). This is primarily visible in higher education institutions through the development of planning and control mechanisms implemented as a response to external demands (Bargh et al., 2000), and it can be argued that it is from these mechanisms that professionalisation of roles is driven.

Managerial Institutions are best described as those which extol the virtues of measurable performance outputs, organisational change, cultural change branded as organisational vision, obtaining competitive advantage, and a belief that internal processes can constantly be improved upon (Valentin et al., 2011). Soft managerialism accepts inefficiencies and ineffectiveness and implements rational performance mechanisms with the consent of those involved. It is managerialism but of a type which could be viewed as somewhat related to collegial management. By contrast hard managerialism is a model of contracting, performance, reward, and punishment (Deem, 1998), placing it firmly in the corporate model.

Universities are traditionally loosely coupled organisations, with departments working relatively independent of each other, connected by hands-off management structures

which place trust in localised leadership. There is a freedom and a sense of empowerment amongst the faculty or department that contrasts starkly with tightly coupled organisations; those with clear management structures and well-developed feedback mechanisms through which the performance of employees is monitored (Weick, 1976). In the loosely coupled university, decisions made in a localised setting are not ordinarily challenged or interfered with by distant senior management but are accommodated in the name of collegial working relations. It is a way of working which some view as resistant to change and one which reinforces the hitherto status quo of universities as a series of loosely connected faculties/departments. In loosely coupled organisations power is held locally (Lutz, 1982) and not constrained by the type of overarching hierarchical systems seen in tightly coupled organisations. McNay (1995) illustrates this by situating four models of University (collegium, bureaucracy, enterprise, and corporation) along a spectrum between loose and tight 'policy definition' and 'control of implementation':



(Fig.01) (McNay, 1995.)

It is possible for all four to co-exist in most universities, and one would not expect to see any university positioned solely as enterprise, collegium, bureaucracy, or

corporation. It is much more likely that an institution will operate a balance between them, dependent on a range of factors including leadership style and external pressures (McNay, 1995). Whitchurch (2004), expanding upon McNay's organisational model proposes a replacement of collegium, bureaucracy, enterprise and corporation with community, services, partnership, and reputation, in an attempt to better illustrate the interdependency/overlapping nature of domains. This is also reflected in Becher and Kogan's (1992) model of the higher education system as a series of interconnected units with four component functions (1-4) and two modes (a-b):

1. Central Authority – the various authorities responsible for resource allocation, planning and monitoring of standards
2. Institution – as defined in law through charters or instruments of governance
3. Basic Unit – the academic departments or subject based academic teams
4. Individual – those who compose the system: teaching and research staff, administrators, ancillary workers, and students.

To each unit there are two modes:

- a. Normative mode – which relates to the monitoring of values and maintaining what people working in the system count as important
- b. Operational mode – which relates to the process of carrying out tasks and what people actually do within the institution.

This overlap makes it easier to perceive the management structures of English universities as hybrid systems of different management models, shifting in response to external pressures - e.g. government, business, industry, etc, rather than outright collegial or managerial (Tight, 2003). There is also a clear connection between Whitchurch's model of community, service, partnership and reputation, and Becher

and Kogan's (1992) assertion that individuals can often be found working across units – e.g. as an individual academic and also senior manager. In all cases, the normative and operational are seldom distinct from each other, but instead two facets of the same situation.

Shifts towards managerialism are mostly seen as coming out of the central management of institutions as opposed to in from the departments/basic units (Deem, 2004) and those who promote managerialism do so with the claim that it is purely an objective search for efficiency, effectiveness, and excellence (Deem, 2001). However, Lynch (2015) argues that rather than simply maximising resources and prioritising efficiency, managerialism is a system which suppresses other organisational values by re-orientating scholarly activities towards those most likely to have a positive impact on measurable outputs. If this is considered in relation to Becher and Kogan's (1992) model of the university as being a process of normative and operational balance, then Lynch's assertion suggests managerialism encourages institutions to place the operational ahead of the normative (or put another way, actions defining values). This may be true, but as already shown, differentiating between the normative and the operational is difficult and it would be untrue to assume any one management style has been wholesale adopted by institutions to replace existing practices and dominate the institutional, basic unit, and individual normative. More likely is that managerial ideology and practices have been superimposed on existing management practices (Deem, 2001), making it less of a rupture from the established order as an expansion.

Partial or superficial adoption of managerialism has until relatively recently been seen as quite normal amongst academic communities (Deem, 2004); most likely because universities are not businesses in the true sense. Universities do not aim to provide

profits to shareholders, and they are not focused on a narrow range of services and products (Bebbington et al., 2018). As such, universities tend to operate an environment of virtual adoption of business practices, often responding to sector reforms with strategies and policies that promise considerable outcomes, but which are not then implemented (Birnbaum, 2000). Unlike regular business organisations, universities have features which make the implementation of business management processes difficult. Historic features such as the loosely coupled systems described by Weick and Quinn (1999), a reluctance to embrace change, and the disparity between administrative and academic power (Han and Zhou Zong, 2015), have made universities naturally resistant to managerialism. However, more recent studies have shown this to be changing as hierarchical management and the academic manager's right to manage have become legitimised (Shepherd, 2018), suggesting a change process which is incremental and continuous (Weick and Quinn, 1999).

2.4 The role of the academic in the managerial institution

If in the modern institution, shifts toward hierarchical management and the manager's right to manage have indeed become legitimised as a response to external influences, then Becher and Kogan's (1992) model would suggest the professional identities of academics will also have changed.

Academic identities, as with all professional identities, are shaped at the micro level of individual practice, the wider world at large, the practices and policies of the institution, and within communities and groups of co-workers (Fanghanel, 2012). Managerialism relies to a large extent on applying interrelated plans, rules, and instruments to control behaviour across an organisation (Deem et al., 2008). Applying controls to academics is problematic because of what the controls represent; a move away from the individual

and community level, and a hardening of hierarchy which removes creative autonomy (Bradley, Shipani, Sundaram, and Walsh, 2000). Since hierarchy assumes individuals in their roles possess authority to affect the behaviour of others (Becher and Kogan, 1992), any shift away from the collegiate system potentially moves institutional control away from the basic unit and more towards the centre/professional manager.

However, this is most likely an overly simplified view of the impact shifts from collegial to managerial have on the power of individuals. Any sense that the collegial institution model has ever been wholly inclusive is refuted by Jarvis (2012) who asserts that the notion of collegiality can act as a mask to give legitimacy to suppressing the views of minorities through the weight of the dominant group. Clegg (2008) reinforces this, listing class, race, and gender, as potential barriers, and Tight (2014) agrees that the image of the collegial university where all academics had an equal say in the concerns of the institution is a romanticised one which has never really existed.

Fanghanel (2012) provides a clear overview of the importance of discipline in the identity academics and how a love for their discipline and passion to share knowledge with their students is attributed to the successes of academics. Deem et al., (2008) acknowledge that academics tend to have strong loyalties to their department or school (the basic unit) and also agrees with Fanghanel that professional identities are shaped by personal and institutional experiences beyond the confines of their basic unit.

Appraisal mechanisms and the intensive auditing of universities form a core element of managerialism (Lynch, 2015). The ideology of quality in higher education is now used as a means of marshalling resources, creating new structures to academic activities and identities (Barnett, 2003). Both the NSS and TEF are used to judge the

performance of academics, replacing academic professionalism with corporate objective matched, management led, performance assessments (Waring, 2017). Despite being promoted as systems for appraising student experience and teaching quality, the quantifying of outputs has largely created an environment in which academic staff are removed from both peers and students, instead spending their time engaged in office based administrative tasks (Trowler, 2008).

The changes to the higher education sector have brought an enhanced level of autonomy for universities in terms of funding and contracting, but also the current educational landscape sees more state intervention on a broad range of issues, from widening participation to research (Deem, 2010). Brown (2011) suggests that all of these changes have the potential to negatively impact the academic community, and raises issues as varied as pressure to pass students, declining levels of trust between students and academics (with an increase in student complaints), accusations of unfairness and lack of professionalism placed upon academics by their students, increasing use of part-time lecturers and difficulties in getting permanent contracts, a diversion of resources away from teaching and learning to other activities like marketing and administration, and increasing academic workloads with higher levels of student-staff ratios.

This view however is not wholly shared by Slaughter and Leslie (1999) who differentiate between levels of seniority within the faculty, with junior members more likely to experience difficulties closer to those listed by Brown, and the more senior established members, better placed to embrace the commercial culture and thrive within it. Tight (2014) suggests the experience of working in higher education and an academic's ability thrive within the managerial institution may depend on the period in which they began their academic career – i.e. pre or post institutional moves to

embrace more of the mechanisms of managerialism. What is clear is that managerialism has changed the roles and job security of academics who find increased pressures placed upon them, coming from multiple directions.

2.5 Rise of professional managers in universities

The declining security of academics has coincided with an increase in the presence of staff primarily employed to meet the requirements of the market and its regulator (Whitchurch, 2008). For these professionals, a resistance to managerialism would be unusual as their positions are dependent on the need for institutions to quantify their actions and produce the data needed for audit; a key aspect of the managerial institution (Allen-Collinson, 2007).

Professional managers represent one strand of a broader professionalisation of higher education. These professionals utilise their positions to establish new occupational identities and norms. Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) identify four elements which define administrative professionalisation in higher education:

1. An increase in the formal status of administrative positions
2. An increase in the requirement for formal qualifications for administrative positions
3. The emergence of a common cognitive basis
4. The growth and formalisation of professional networks

These requirements are illustrated across the literature (providing assurances that Gornitzka and Larsen's study of Norwegian institutions is credible in discussions of English higher education). Slaughter and Leslie (1999) see a formalising of administrative positions and strengthening of positional power as directly resulting from the expertise of professional managers. Whitchurch (2012) presents a class of professional administrator with considerable qualifications and experience, working to

build common cognitive working practices, and Allen-Collinson (2009) sees the building of professional networks as intrinsic to professionalised administration and a source of professional capital.

Shepherd (2018) views managerialism as strengthening the position of managers in universities, and describes a scenario in which managerialisation encourages professionalisation, and professionalisation encouraging a further entrenchment of managerialism in the form of target setting, performance management, and new organisational structures. This Fielden (1975) asserts, creates a situation in which professional administrators become loyal to the system, interested primarily in standardisation, and ultimately untrusted by their academic colleagues. This chimes with the belief that professional managers place their loyalties with the university as an organisation in contrast to academics who are often viewed as feeling more loyalty to their disciplines rather than to their employing institution (Coate, Kandiko Howson, and Yu Yang, 2018).

Managerialism has changed the role of the manager, creating space for the professional manager. However, just as managerial practices have been unpopular amongst academic communities, which view managerial controls as detrimental to their professional identities (Fanghanel, 2012), traditional administrators have also been disrupted by the adoption of audit systems and the type of management style which accompanies them. Many of the processes extolled do not sit comfortably with the traditionally more conservative supporting function of administration in universities, and the managerial skills required to support this had not been a prerequisite to administrative roles in the past (Prichard, 2000).

Uslu (2017) lists three significant motivators of job satisfaction which help drive the scholarly output of academics:

- Institutional Resources – e.g. equipment, libraries, research funding etc.
- Motivators – e.g. recognition, time allocation for research, effective publications
- Administration Processes – e.g. academic policies, institutional communication, collegiality in decision making

Most of these motivators were formerly controlled by academics with the support of their professional service colleagues, but that is often no longer the case. Instead, each of these areas have been professionalised, transformed into career options in of themselves, often controlled by professional services with the support of their academic colleagues.

In the literature there is a common narrative of managerialism as a practice which places decisions with managers, removing power and input from employees, and breaking from the idealised 'golden-age' of collegiality (Tight, 2010). But to who power is being handed is often unclear; Shepherd (2016) asserts that the most senior roles within institutions remain largely closed to professional managers and Lucas (2006) sees the collegial ideal as a continuing influence on the normative values of universities; going some way to explaining why professional managers may struggle to reach the most senior tier of university management. American academic Dr Benjamin Ginsberg in his book "The fall of the Faculty: The rise of the all-administrative university and why it matters" (2011), writes of a largely dim-witted, self-serving administrative staff that has wrested control from their academic superiors, under the guise of compliance and external accountability. However, when unpacked it becomes less clear with whom Ginsberg is taking issue; professional managers bringing new

managerial speak and a belief of market first, or academic managers who have taken senior leadership roles, and are now organisational focused. Whitchurch (2007) observes a perception of power transferred from the academic community to management, which implies a polarisation between the two, but that does not consider the many successful and intertwined working relationships at the local level. Whitchurch notes that professional managers within much of the literature are subject to a dissonance between the local value (implicit) and the public appreciation of that value (explicit). This dissonance can perhaps be explained through a combination of historic professional divisions alongside a resistance to the consequences of managerialism in universities.

Shepherd (2014) asserts there is growing evidence of management becoming a discrete function for the construction of Pro Vice Chancellor roles, noting the importance of academic management experience in job advertisements. What appears to be emerging from the literature is a picture of academic and professional senior manager roles which in both cases do not conform to the traditional image.

2.6 Professional divisions in higher education

The literature review to this point has shown universities in a constant state of change and shift (Meek, 2000), and that this is as much true for the organisational structures as it is the roles and identities of the individuals working within them. Universities, as large employers incorporate a broad range of stakeholders which collectively keep the institutional machinery moving. There are two core stakeholder groups: the academics responsible for research and the delivery of education, and the professional services (the preferred term for support roles) responsible for day to day institutional administration; most often referred to as non-academic staff (Bray and Williams, 2017). Despite the apparent clear demarcation, the terms academic and non-academic can

be misleading and often do not accurately reflect the qualifications and skills of individuals, nor the level of influence each group has on the working environment of the other (Whitchurch, 2008).

Referring to Professional service staff as 'non-academic' seeks to define individuals by what they are not (Whitchurch, 2007), and is a label that has the potential to constrain the individual. This is juxtaposed against the term 'academic' which goes beyond simply describing a person's area of employment as active in research and/or teaching and is often also a mark of academic capital and credentials (Bamber et al., 2017). Such binary terminology would appear to present a clear delineation between academic and professional service colleagues; with professional service ('non-academic') employees being lower qualified, without research backgrounds and not involved in teaching. However, this fails to consider the many different types of academic and professional service roles found in the modern university. In truth, there are an increasing number of those in the professional services who are equally as qualified as their 'academic' counterparts (Allen-Collinson, 2007). There are those who have moved from a teaching and research background into the professional services, and there are those who have pursued professional service careers that have included attainment of higher-level qualifications and research output. This tier of professional services, like their academic equivalent in respect to the difference between professors and lecturers, sit above other less qualified/experienced administrators and exert more influence on their institution (Prichard, 2000).

Hence, the line between academic and professional services has blurred, as professional administrators are increasingly found to be highly qualified and aware of

teaching and research requirements, often having undertaken their own (Deem, 2010. Whitchurch, 2007).

At polar ends of the scale, the difference between administrator and academic are very clear. Administrative staff tasked with standard office duties (filing and photocopying) have very different working expectations to widely published and respected professors. But in the managerial space, the two camps of academic and administrator meet at a rather less clear boundary. Those operating at senior executive level are more fittingly referred to as academic and professional managers; the differing leadership styles of which have a direct impact on an institution's ability to realise its goals and vision (Pihie, Sadeghi, and Elias, 2011). Here senior managers from different career backgrounds exert greater influence over the working practices of the university, yet as a result of their different backgrounds, their expectations of (and for) their institutions are often very different (Kusku, 2003). Bray and Williams (2017) assert that despite working alongside each other, there is often a lack of understanding of the pressures and purpose of their respective roles within the institution, and that this leads to natural frictions as individuals are left feeling their professional opinion and experience is not given the deserved credence.

Though the expertise and skills required of academic and professional managers are often similar, the disparity in professional credibility between the two can evoke different responses from the teams who are directly and indirectly subject to their decisions (Deem, 2010). Professional management is often viewed with suspicion regardless of the individual's background. Maroofi et al. (2017) assert this is particularly true for academics who pursue a career in management which in academic circles continues to be viewed as the culmination of a less productive academic output. Deem et al. (2008), provide three typical routes through which academics enter management:

1. **Career manager** – those who quickly move from teaching and research into management roles, fully embracing management.
2. **Reluctant Manager** – those who are taking their turn to manage but who fully intend to return to being full-time academics at the end of their allocated period.
3. **Good citizen** – those who take on management positions out of loyalty to their institution, often towards the end of their career. These individuals are least likely to embrace managerialism.

The career academic manager is a professional path distinct from the academic leader extolled in the collegial model of institution. Whereas traditionally academic leadership is concerned with academic values and identity, with posts often held for a limited period of time, the academic manager is permanent, institution focused and associated with compliance and managerial tasks (Waring, 2017). The career academic manager shares much in common with the professional manager and is often more visible in post '92 institutions where the history of Local Education Authority control and the performance driven reporting mechanisms associated with local government, places a natural bias towards the executive management structures found in the corporate sector (Middlehurst, 2004).

Though a shift in professional orientation from self-focused academic to organisational focused academic manager is clearly a significant one (Rosewell and Ashwin, 2018), sector wide there appears to be little support for those who choose this career path, and few receive (or subsequently receive) management training (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight, 2008). Universities are perhaps unique in the size of their turnover in relation to their level of investment in relevant management training. It is a link to the broad sense

that leadership and the skills to manage are built in the discipline, not through formal training, and that to be able to make decisions on issues that impact students there is a need to have experienced academic professional life; to have experienced working as a front line academic (Bone and Bourner, 1998). This has its roots in the gentle manner of guiding colleagues through collegial leadership, rather than the overt managerial requirements of the modern academic manager position (Deem et al., 2008). So, without the relevant background an individual will struggle to gain the respect and buy-in from their academic teams, making them unsuitable for the role (Johnson and Deem, 2003. Deem, 2004). Viewed in relation to Maroofi et al.'s (2017) assertion, even with the 'right' background a conscious move to academic management will also threaten to undermine the individual's credibility.

Duncan (2014) asserts that effective organisations are built by creating a sense of shared endeavour. This requires a considerable shift in the organisational culture of most institutions, from boundary focused to one which embraces the innovation a diverse workforce can bring; creating equitable workplaces which minimise conflict and create space for individuals to meet both personal and organisational goals (Creed, 2012). Conceptual boundaries in higher education remain deep rooted and both professional and academic staff may see the other as more privileged, and themselves as marginalised (Whitchurch, 2010). In the highly fragmented structures of universities, where faculties act almost as satellite institutions, a sense of shared endeavour maybe difficult and professional service staff in particular can find their career aspirations severely hampered through a lack of opportunity (Duncan, 2104). Professional services often find their roles viewed as more expendable than their academic counterparts (Bray and Williams, 2017), but academics have also experienced a significant decline in job security, and this comes alongside an increase in the level of

scrutiny placed upon their performance (Fanghanel, 2012). These changes have led some academics to feel the entire ethos of a marketised education environment reduces academic professionals to service deliverers, and the academic experience becomes transactional (Ainley, 2016). In this view, it becomes easier to see professional managerial roles as appealing routes if they ease the burden of personal performance monitoring and provide job security, though full engagement with these roles as career routes may be difficult due to historic prejudices.

Deem (2004) found that when asked, academic managers often did not accept the rhetoric of management (perhaps because the terminology of management does not fit comfortably with their sense of self) yet felt obliged to at least superficially engage with the terminology and methods. Universities continue to offer a unique and privileged place of work where employees are able to access a wealth of professional and personal development opportunities (Duncan, 2014), but Fanghanel (2012) concludes the impact of managerialist policies on academics has created an environment of work intensification to which individual academics are inclined to take a position towards the agenda as either facilitative or obstructive. Becher and Kogan (1992) discuss the process of 'pigeon-holing' in which the constraints of the institution (e.g. requirements for collective activity and limited resources) are balanced with personal professional autonomy which gives the individual room to exercise creativity. This is reinforced by Trowler (2008) who recognises the need for structures and a degree of predictability to everyday life in universities, yet at the same time asserts that academics should retain a high level of agency as individuals and members of groups. It is a balance and a compromise between the needs of the individual and the organisation underlining what Deem et al. (2008) see as the tensions to which

academic manager identities are especially exposed and the 'notion of identity as a reflexive and oft-revised project'.

Prichard (2000) suggests professional managers working at the executive level within universities, present a direct challenge to their academic manager peers which creates tensions within the organisation. However, Bargh et al. (2000) believe the extent to which this challenge is real depends on the limits of managerialist intervention, seeing the internal processes of universities (e.g. peer review, examination, validation and assessment) as insulation against any serious threat of professional managers wholly taking control of the institutional agenda. This returns to the question of what is an academic function in the contemporary university? Warner and Palfreyman (1996) offer a few brief suggestions of the day to day decisions required of senior managers which include introducing new methods for allocating resources to academic departments, dismissing non-academic members of staff for gross misconduct, and introducing semesters and modular-based course structures. This list illustrates the difficulty in deciding what forms an academic or non-academic area of management; and perhaps contradicts Bargh et al.'s (2000) assertion that internal processes protect against significant intrusion from professional managers, leading one to question where the boundaries of roles are defined. It would appear that once managerialism is accepted, roles are professionalised, and management is normalised, the boundaries between what is deemed suitable for academic and non-academic managers to take ownership of start to fade.

2.7 Working across boundaries

Whitchurch (2008) describes boundaries between roles as much more complex than simply the remit of a job description, covering aspects as broad as 'functional areas,

professional and academic activity, and internal and external constituencies. Whitchurch's work researching the blurring of boundaries between the professional service and academic constituencies of universities, provides a framework for conceptualising what is meant by boundaries in this research – i.e. the point at which job roles meet, interact and overlap.

Krzakiewicz and Cyfert (2012) assert organisational boundaries are seldom truly set at either the external organisational or internal interpersonal level, arguing that both are in a constant state of shift. Schneider (1987) makes a similar claim, noting that internal boundaries between groups change in response to the entry of new members. This, Schneider asserts, often results in a perceived challenge to the established order and leadership, creating power struggles which continue until a new balance is established. It can be argued that the literature reviewed to this point shows the entry of non-academic leaders to the senior executive of universities as this process in action, with a new equilibrium yet to be found. Cilliers (2000) asserts that finding a balance between the boundaries of roles is not a peripheral concern, seeing equilibrium as central to the successes of organisations. Krzakiewicz and Cyfert (2012) argue that in the process of negotiating the boundaries of their roles, senior managers alter the organisation's value chain, resource allocation, and level of organisational efficiency.

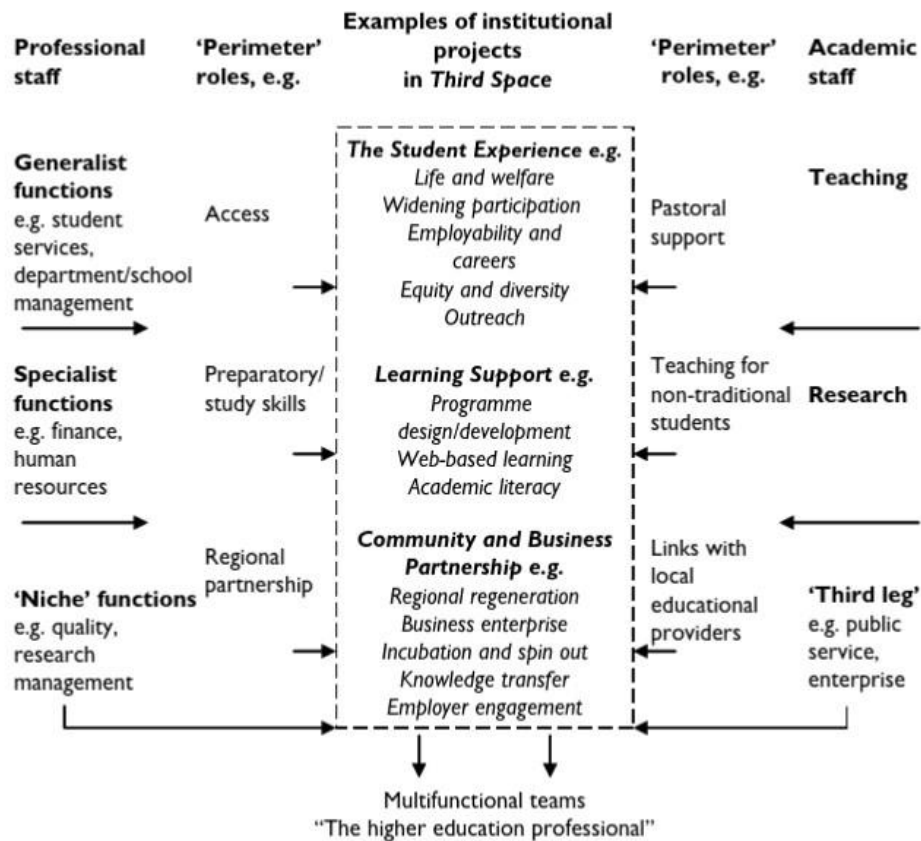
Boundary management is an acknowledged method of building and maintaining power within an organisation and is often used as a tool by those in senior leadership positions to solidify their own organisational power (Morgan, 1997). Universities in their attempts to meet the needs of the ever-changing external environment, have seen an increased movement and blurring of the boundaries between the binary divide of

academic and non-academic roles and functions. In this shift the sector has experienced the growth of 'third space' professional roles which are neither strictly academic nor administrative and sit within the space opened up in the sector wide need for diversification (Whitchurch, 2008).

The third space at its best can be seen as the emergence of a new collegial space in which academic and professional service colleagues collaborate on diverse projects, blurring boundaries between professional identities (Veles, Carter, and Boon, 2018. Whitchurch, 2007). Whitchurch (2012) describes professional identity as a concept which is as much a maturation of activities, identities and practices as it is proactive interpretation of a role, providing three common phases to processes and interactions in the third space which shape activities and identities:

- Contestation - positioning oneself in relation to the dominant rules and resources.
- Reconciliation - creating new space for collaboration on projects as a joint endeavour.
- Reconstruction - no longer being defined by the rules and resources of academic or professional space, but by the creation of a plural third space.

Henkel (2010) sees the expansion of third space roles as a blurring of boundaries not only within the organisation but also between the organisation and other external organisations, reflecting the increasingly close and complex relationships between universities and other sectors. The quasi-academic territories developed within the third space are broad and includes projects as varied as learning support, community and business partnerships, and access and outreach, to name a few (Whitchurch, 2015), as illustrated in Fig.02.



(Fig.02)

To better understand the third space Whitchurch (2008) identified four groups present in universities based on their working identities and cultures – *bounded, cross-boundary, unbounded and blended professionals*.

- Bounded professionals are those whose roles sit within the clearly defined boundaries of a function, often with a focus on the continuation of processes and standards through prescribed systems.
- Cross-boundary professionals are individuals who recognise and use boundaries to build careers which straddle identities and culture. Through developing negotiating and political skills, cross-boundary professionals use boundaries to gain strategic advantage. These individuals are likely to interact with the external environment and though their roles sit on the borders of academic space, they originate in traditional professional roles – e.g. student services.

- Unbounded professionals are those who have little interest in the boundaries of traditional roles, focusing instead on broad university wide projects and the development of the institution. Drawing on external experience and contacts, unbounded professionals are just as likely to view their future as outside of higher education as in.
- Blended professionals are a group of third space professional employed specifically to work across boundaries, often having mixed backgrounds and portfolios and coming from contiguous environments – e.g. charitable sector.

(Whitchurch, 2008)

Though the third space can be viewed as a collaborative place in which to test and develop new working practices, third space professionals often inhabit a difficult place within the organisation as their colleagues view them as neither truly academic nor administrative in their work (Whitchurch, 2015). The boundaries for third space professionals are not set and individuals will often be in a process of constant renegotiation of their borders according to the situation (Veles et al., 2018). In practice, this may involve a further blurring of boundaries, taking on more responsibilities in the third space, or a narrowing and retreat into more boundary defined roles where an organisation does not allow for lateral moves through structured organisational development programmes (Whitchurch, 2008). Senior academic leaders in the traditional mould would expect their roles to be unbounded and to take a controlling interest in every facet of the institution. But the same would not have been true of professional services managers who at best would be described as cross-boundary.

As shown, there is a wealth of literature centred on rethinking the boundaries of the academic role in the contemporary higher education landscape. Much of this is concerned with professionalisation, meeting performance targets, and producing the 'right' kind of research which benefits an institution's ranking (Harris, 2005). This highlights an apparent dichotomy in which the sector moves towards a less bounded form of education, working across international lines and virtual spaces, but the role of the academic is being more restricted (Henkel, 2012). Fanghanel (2012, p.29) views this as a risk to the academy - 'breeding a compliant tribe that could only operate within the parameters of instructions and regulations.' Changes to professional boundaries can have a considerable impact on the identities of individuals, and for academics this is problematic as traditionally they are identity driven, disciplinary focused individuals, with strong self-imposed professional boundaries (Henkel, 2012). However, Whitchurch (2012) suggests third space professionals may have a more fluid understanding of their professional identity which allows them to thrive in this shifting sector. Taking into account the changes that occur over the course of their careers; those with mixed professional backgrounds and experience may be more inclined to feel they have access to the most senior roles within their institution, greatly extending the boundaries of their remit (Whitchurch, 2009).

Though Whitchurch's research on third space professionals focuses on the middle manager level - 'those who had significant experience but also a career trajectory ahead of them' (2012, p.19) - and not those who are members of senior management teams, she acknowledges the emergence of the 'higher education professional' as individuals whose roles occupy the third space, and whose aspirations may include senior management positions such as Pro Vice Chancellor (Whitchurch, 2012). Deem (2004) asserts that the distinction between academic and professional managers is

increasingly difficult to identify, and one would assume the distinction is further removed at the most senior levels of the organisation. Bacon (2009), agrees with Deem but warns of different languages being spoken within the same space, leading to misunderstandings and unanticipated outcomes. How different senior managers interpret their roles, and those of their peers, would be in response to their own professional identity.

2.8 Leadership, group relationships, and decision-making

This research, primarily concerned with the experiences of senior university managers and the boundaries of their roles, draws from the literature around leadership and group relationships and group decision-making; interested in the behaviours and relationships associated with such processes. Accordingly, the following section of the review engages with literature from social sciences and psychology to inform the subsequent discussion of the same issues in a higher education setting.

2.9 Leadership theory

Tight (2003) notes there is a fine line in the distinction between research on higher education management practice and that on institutional leadership and governance; and the two often overlap. This issue of overlapping concepts and a lack of distinction between leadership and management is not limited to higher education and the literature shares much in common with discussion of the same themes across different sectors (Bargh et al., 2000).

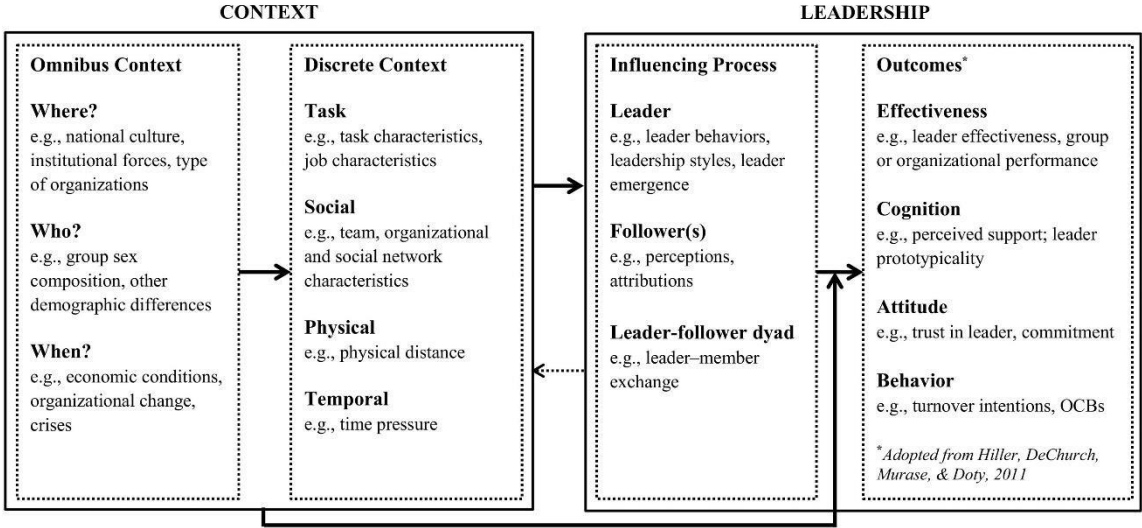
Some of the most influential leadership studies have focused on situational theories, providing a lens for understanding how those in leadership positions utilise or are shaped by the situation of the moment. Fiedler's (1967) contingency model views leadership style as connected to the extent a situation enables the leader to exert their

influence over the group, asserting that influence is only held on three conditions: the leader-follower relationship; the task structure; the leader's formal position of power. In this model leaders adjust their leadership style according to the situation, from relationship-orientated to task-orientated. These situations would not necessarily be internal and Bargh et al. (2000) highlight the fact that organisations are open systems, just as much influenced by what happens outside of the organisation as they are by that which happens inside, reinforcing Fielders' model of leadership as situational. There is a connection here with the notion of universities having both a public and private life, and that modern universities are hybrid organisations which differentiate between the task orientated and market orientated functions, creating strategies and structures to balance these needs (Tight, 2003). One can assume from this that leadership and who leads is driven by these competing forces.

Bass (1985) builds on this, discussing transaction or transformational leadership, recognising they are conceptually distinct, but also that the two types can be deployed by the same individual, to different degrees, to meet the needs of the situation. This highlights a sometimes-overlooked element in the literature on higher education leadership - that different approaches to leadership are not only seen in the different types of manager (academic / professional), but also coming from the same individual.

Contextual approaches to leadership build on the insights of situational theories, emphasising the role of the organisation in heavily influencing the individual leader's traits and leader-follower relationships (Bargh et al., 2000). Again, this is an important consideration because an institutions internal culture is a clear factor in the shaping of role boundaries.

Johns (2006) provides a categorical framework to assist researchers with determining the context in which leadership takes place and how contextual factors shape leadership and leadership outcomes. Johns conceptualised context at two different levels: the omnibus context and the discrete context. The omnibus context requires consideration of broad contextual/environmental influences, whilst the discrete context requires a narrower consideration of specific contextual influences including the task, social, and physical context. Oc (2018) provides a visual representation of this, reproduced here in Fig.03: *‘The integrative framework linking context to leadership.’*



(Fig.03)

It becomes apparent that looking at the differences between leaders based purely on the binary distinction between academic and non-academic ignores the great deal of contributing factors to how an individual leads at any one time. This notion of leadership in a state of constant shift resonates with Becher and Kogan’s (1992), model of normative and operational values, where what drives decisions may not always be the values of the institution or individual, but the needs of the situation.

2.10 University leadership in action

Despite the wealth of leadership literature (both theoretical and instructional), considerable ambiguity remains in understanding what differentiates leadership from more general management skills (Vroom and Jago, 2007). This, Bennis and Nanus (1985) assert, leads to difficulties when attempting to distinguish leaders from non-leaders, as is often seen in leadership literature. The problem is perhaps even more exasperated for public sector organisations, as discussed by Hassan, Gallear, and Sivarajah (2018) who attempt to provide clarity when seeking to understand leadership of public and non-public sector organisations. Recognising the ambiguity discussed by numerous researchers, Sastry and Bekandra (2007) assert it is better to consider leadership and leadership development solely in the higher education context rather than mimicking the approach of other sectors both in research and development.

Middlehurst, Goreham and Woodfield (2009) see the generally contested nature of leadership, alongside the difficulty researchers experience when attempting to categorise and separate leadership from management, as having particular significance in universities. They refer to the historical internal divide between academics responsible for leadership and administrators tasked with management, noting that despite considerable movement towards executive management teams which include both academic and professional managers, a cultural and operational divide remains. This, they assert, is an important area for research in understanding how these divides have moved in order to enhance practice.

Middlehurst and Elton (1992) describe a difficulty in differentiating between management and leadership in a higher education setting, particularly when focusing on the newer universities (i.e. institutions granted university status post 1992). In these types of institutions, those in leadership positions are often given discrete areas of

responsibility and accountability, similar to those found in more traditional business settings, making it difficult to see any distinct difference between management and leadership.

Middlehurst et al. (2009) assert that whilst there is a clear conceptual difference between leadership, governance, management, and administration, in practice there is considerable overlap between them. Looking at the conceptual differences, Mumford, Campion and Morgeson (2007) propose cognitive, interpersonal, business, and strategic skills as those most required for leadership. Their model conceptualises skills as layered (strata) and segmented (plex) – a strateplex which when tested found that position within an organisation altered the balance of skills required, with those holding the most senior positions requiring more cognitive and interpersonal skills, as opposed to business and strategic. Mumford et al. were discussing leadership but it can be argued their listed skills have much in common with the findings of Katz (1955), who when researching management asserted that managerial skills could broadly be categorised under three areas – technical, human relations, and conceptual. Katz assigned levels of seniority to these skills categories, believing technical skills were more relevant to lower level managers, human skills a requirement of middle management, and conceptual skills most important to executives working at the top level of an organisation Katz (1955). In a university setting this would suggest the core skills required to lead are the same despite occupational background or current portfolio.

Mumford et al.'s (2007) assertion that the skills required to be successful leaders change at different levels of seniority is echoed by Kezar and Lester (2011) who explored this further, interested in leadership at different levels within the higher education setting. Their case studies of leadership in action across five distinct types

of North American College/University (community college, technical college, liberal arts college, public regional university, and research university) focus on the importance of grassroots leadership, which they assert displays many of the same characteristics. For Kezar and Lester, hierarchy is less important than the skills and strategies utilised by those who choose to lead. Similarly, Middlehurst (1997) saw leadership in a higher education setting as happening at various levels, often in a non-formalised way, and ensuring some level of equity in the way universities operate. Again, this contradicts the notion that skills to lead change at different levels of seniority, though perhaps the extent to which an individual is given space to fully utilise those skills more associated with leadership is more apparent in formalised leadership roles.

Birnbaum and Edelson (1989) stress the importance of drawing on multiple perspectives as a requirement of successful leadership in higher education, returning to the already discussed perception of collegiality, and the need for broad consensus as important to lead in a higher education setting. Peters and Ryan (2015) in their report for the UK's Leadership Foundation (an organisation which sought to advance understanding of leadership, governance and management in UK higher education) found that 66% of their respondents believed the skills required for successful leadership in a higher education context were different to those required in other sectors. The respondents cited the unique structure of universities as both public and private facing organisations as evidence of how universities are different to other organisations. The report also found that those working in professional services were more likely to view personal skills as important to successful leadership than their academic colleagues who were inclined to emphasise collaborative leadership. This

suggests the perceived ideal approach to leadership in universities may be different for those working in professional services than their academic colleagues.

Bryman and Liley (2009) stress the importance of context when seeking to understand leadership effectiveness. Their research findings show the higher education context to be somewhat, though not wholly, distinctive, when compared with leadership in other sectors. The participants were mostly in agreement that leaders can be both effective and ineffective at the same time, dependent on the context, and this in large part reflects the findings of Fiedler (1967), placing the task structure central to effective leadership. Birnbaum and Edelson's (1989) notion of 'loops of interaction' within higher education, stipulates that relationships are not linear, but rather circular – e.g. the faculty shapes the curriculum, the curriculum shapes the faculty. This is much less an issue of professional and academic, as it is a blending of the different requirements of the organisation, sharing much in common with Becher and Kogan's (1992) model of the university and the assertion that the normative and operational are in a constant process of refocusing and rebalancing each other. Collinson and Collinson's (2009), research in a Further Education setting, found a common preference for 'blended leadership' which incorporates delegation and direction, close proximity and some distance, and both internal and external engagement. The need to be both near and far, and internal and external, draws attention to the competing requirements of senior leadership in education, and supports Birnbaum and Edelson's (1989) loops of interaction, as relationships are shown to be multi-dimensional, and seldom linear. Bolden et al. (2009) cite Collinson and Collinson's (2009) findings when challenging the often-prevalent view of leadership as either individual or distributed, instead framing it as something which sits between the two and incorporates much more.

Common to all of these studies is an inability to separate leadership from management and there is a clear requirement to be effective in both.

Bryman and Liley (2009) when interviewing leadership researchers, asking them to turn their attention to leadership in a higher education setting, found a largely negative view of the effectiveness of university leaders. Moreover, the participants questioned the connection between effective leadership and the performance of universities. The relationship is also questioned by Hassan et al. (2018), who note the lack of reliable evidence to support a connection between changes to organisational leadership and subsequent fortunes. Both of these studies note the lack of in-depth research into higher education leadership, and to what extent both the complex context of institutions as well as the expectations of those being led (primarily discussing academics) have prevented any better understanding.

Birnbaum and Edelson (1989) highlight the dual control systems present in higher education, with administrative/hierarchical systems operating alongside the more complex academic structures, requiring leaders to understand how to work across these requirements. This, Hoff (1999) compares with the more straightforward structures found in industry and the difference in pace of change within industrial organisations and universities, noting that what can be achieved swiftly in industry can be prolonged and arduous in higher education. Christensen and Eyring (2011) assert that this cannot last, and that higher education will be the next industry to face largescale transformation as a result of the current technological revolution. Recognising the turbulent nature of the contemporary university and speed at which change has been thrust upon the sector, Thompson and Miller (2017) promote the need for strong skills development as part of any process of enhancing university leadership, seeing this as essential to fully utilising any technological advances. They

are prescriptive in their four skills for successful leadership: agility, inter-professionalism (reaching across any perceived boundaries of roles), civility, and strategic emotionally intelligent communication. Though not wholly the same, this is reminiscent of Bennis' (1989) four competencies of leaders, which he asserts were exhibited to some degree by every leader in his study: management of attention (able to bring others to them), management of trust (reliable and consistent), management of meaning (able to communicate vision), and management of self (knowing and using own skills successfully).

Bargh et al. (2000) refer to 'qualities' and 'abilities' of successful leaders, as opposed to skills, noting a broad consensus for the need to have good interpersonal abilities, including empathy and compassion. Whilst these may be common to leadership literature, Middlehurst (1997) cautions against framing skills as 'qualities', noting that there is a risk of introducing gendered socially and culturally inherited influences to the perception of what is viewed as needed to lead. Hoff (1999) notes that many scholars have attempted (with varying success) to compile lists of attributes and skills relevant to leaders and leadership, drawing on current and historical reference points. Mumford, et al. (2007) assert this tendency to list skills comes from the assumption that skills represent capabilities which can be developed, fitting more comfortably Middlehurst's (1997) call for caution in describing skills in terms of innate qualities.

Ramsden (1998) presents contextual differences from which appropriate skills frameworks can be developed. Of Ramsden's three paradigms, paradigm 3 (see Table.01) is offered as the most preferential; built on mutual respect and trust, working creatively within the constraints of the contemporary higher education landscape. Though Ramsden presents these paradigms of leadership within the academic

department, paradigm 3 offers a model for institutional leadership which incorporates traditional university leadership with the managerial requirements.

Paradigm 1: Traditional academic department	Paradigm 2: 'Managerial' academic department	Paradigm 3: Academic department as team
Conservative and inflexible	Bureaucratic and rule following	Flexible and experimental
Non-interventionist leadership; management by exception	Positional leadership; authority resides in rank; compliance expected	Leader as creative coordinator, varying leadership roles determined by congruence of problem and expertise
Decision making by debate and individual power (academic freedom predominant)	Decision making by rule application or imposition (control over academics predominant)	Decision making by compromise and appeal to common needs, including fairness and equity (freedom and control in creative tension)
Discussion	Requirement	Dialogue and Discussion
Rhetoric of respect for all points of view	Emphasis on one way is right	Emphasis on testing ideas against demonstrated outcomes

Conflict in adversarial atmosphere; may be productive	Conflict restricted; seen as destructive	Conflict viewed as positive and comparatively comfortable
Goals vague or unspecified	Short term operational goals; reliance on algorithms	Long term fluid visions based on broad principles of problem solving
Slow learning adaptation	Reactive; possibly impeded learning and adaptation	Rapid learning and adaptation

(Table.01)

The need to find a comfortable balance between the more traditional academic leadership and a more managerial approach is highlighted in Ramsden's paradigms, which show the inter-connected needs of the organisation. Bargh et al. (2000) explore this further, discussing the difficulties one would experience in attempting to assign preferred leadership skills and styles to specific scenarios, noting that universities are complex organisations in which multiple factors influence success and failure. Hoff (1999) agrees, asserting that no leader can possess all of the skills required to lead any organisation, much less demonstrate them consistently. Hoff also describes the need for management and leadership skills as essential to success and notes the crossover between the two rather than any distinct difference. Across the literature, there are some commonalities in the perception of good communication skills and empathy, as intrinsic to leadership. There is also a degree of agreement on the need for agility and strategic thinking; skills that do appear to separate leadership from

management. However, the requirement for such skills is not unique to universities and there is a great deal of overlap between higher education leadership literature and that of Mann (1965) and Katz (1955) when discussing management; as asserted by Middlehurst and Elton (1992). This, it can be argued, calls into question any notion of actual boundaries between the remit of senior leaders.

As illustrated, differentiating between management and leadership is not easy, and it is difficult to find literature which fully supports the notion of leadership within a university setting as unique. The skills of leadership are shown to be universal, regardless of hierarchical position, and where universities appear to be different is less in what skills are required to lead than in how to engage those who are being led.

Ramsden's paradigm 3 puts the perspectives of a broad range of colleagues on equal footing to the operational aspects, in an attempt to create balance. If this were to be transposed to the most senior level of the university, it would suggest senior leaders require similar skills regardless of their professional background, making the boundaries between their roles less defined than simply the areas for which they are individually responsible. As asserted by Schneider (1987), the dynamics of the group set and continue to redefine boundaries, subsuming the needs of the individual into those of the group.

2.11 Decision-making and group dynamics

Across the literature, senior executive management teams are shown to be present in both older and post '92 institutions, and though their function is considered informal, in the post '92 institutions there is a tendency for the executive to have increased importance in influencing the institutional culture (Deem et al., 2008. Becher and Kogan, 1992. Warner and Palfreyman, 1996).

Decision making by committee remains the formal structure of the university, but the speed at which the committee cycle operates does not give room for rapid response to emerging issues, being more suitable to the stable and slowly changing sector environment of old (Becher and Kogan, 1992). To manage the disconnect, executive groups provide an informal solution to the inflexibility of the formal, calendar driven, committee structure. Deem et al. (2008) assert that though the executive teams may not fit with the traditional collegial approach, they are perhaps more inclusive, bringing a broader set of voices into the decision-making process. Becher and Kogan (1992) expand upon this by noting the same individuals who make up the senior executive, whether academic or professional services, are often also important members of committees, and that whilst not formal, the power to influence exerted by professional managers at the executive is more collegial than they can expect through the committee structure which Becher and Kogan assert suppresses the voices of those outside of the academic community.

Decision making is at the heart of management and leadership and as such is the subject of extensive literature on developing decision-making skills as part of the practices of managing and leading. Decision making is often presented as a process of steps, which Rowley and Sherman (2003) assert are the same in academic and non-academic settings:

1. Indicate the desired outcome conditions
2. Determination of one or more alternatives
3. Evaluation of the options to select the most desirable one

Behavioural decision theory has two interrelated facets: normative and descriptive. The normative is concerned with prescribing courses of action which align most closely

to the beliefs and values of the decision maker, whilst the descriptive involves describing those beliefs and values and the way in which individuals incorporate them in their decisions (Slovic et al., 1977). This appears straightforward, but as Slovic et al. explain, people often lack awareness of the factors that affect their judgments, and from where the normative is drawn. Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, and Frey (2005) discuss how decisions are made on the back of information provided by advisors, and that advisors are generally employed to affirm the biases and previously held beliefs of the decision maker. Tyler (1996) views this differently and puts forward the concept of trust between organisational members being dependent on shared motivations, and this is supported by Erdem and Ozen (2003) who assert trust is necessary to building effective teams. This also connects with Kohn and O'Connell's (2007) view that successful organisations rely on trust and embrace the interdependence of different teams to achieve their shared goals.

Universities hold a romantic connection to their collegial past and there remains a strong desire amongst academics to participate in decision making processes (McNay, 2005). Belenkey (1998) referred to this as 'creative consensus' - the process through which a group is able to voice their concerns and judgements to reach a collective decision; noting that to do this successfully requires more time, thought and commitment, than simply following set rules and precedent. It is a process of collective decision making which shares much in common with the processes of the collegiate university model, and which Vroom (2003) asserts makes successful implementation more achievable as it has the support of the group. Bloom (1997) highlights the difficulties in actually practicing 'creative consensus' which takes a willingness to tolerate ambiguity, confusion, suspended judgement, and ambivalence, accepting decisions as compromises rather than absolutes. Bloom notes, that creative

consensus is a process removed from the societal norm which favours the view that increased authority and responsibility requires independent and individual decision makers. This is a theme which features heavily in the leadership literature. The notion of the strong leader is one to which modern society remains bound, and this is replicated in the recruitment processes of universities which seek to employ leaders associated with strong performance and appearing to be in possession of personal qualities which make them suitable for senior positions (Bargh et al., 2000).

Forsyth (1990) raises serious concerns with the process of group decision making, highlighting the risk posed to removing individual will and thrusting that of the group on the individual. This is a theme which has been investigated extensively in the literature of higher education collegiate decision making, where minority voices are often not heard.

Simsarian Webber (2002), asserts that low trust occurs when group members do not feel their values are shared by all members of the group. Argyris' (1966) study of senior executives raised the issues found in relationships at the top of organisations as barriers to decision making; these included competitiveness and trust as the two largest. A lack of trust, or at least concerns about the motivations of managers from different backgrounds, is common to much of the literature on managerialism in higher education.

2.12 Mixing approaches

The link between decision making and leadership is made by Vroom (2003) who sees strong leadership as intrinsic to high quality decisions. There is a wealth of literature concerned with academic leadership and the difficulties experienced by those involved with leadership in education (Simkins, 2005). Collegiality in this strand of the literature

is addressed in terms of authority and discussed as horizontal and collaborative (including democratic, distributed, and local leadership) in approach (Woods, 2004). These collaborative leadership styles are community-based leadership practices, horizontal in nature, distributing authority across communities (Simkins, 2005), and it is these types of leadership which are commonly associated with collegial academic communities where authority is not primarily drawn from hierarchy, but rather the skills and expertise of those within the community.

Whilst there is a common theme within the literature of managerialism being incompatible with collaborative/collegial organisations, this is disputable (Tight, 2014). Clegg and McAuley (2005) assert that presenting managerial/collegiality as a duality misrepresents the complexity of leadership and managerial practices found in higher education institutions, and that the relationship between the two is much entwined.

Simkins (2005) presents seven key dimensions of the function of what he refers to as 'traditional leadership', aspects of which sit uncomfortably with horizontal leadership, but which are commonly found across educational environments. They are:

- That leadership resides with individuals
- That leadership is hierarchical based and linked to office
- That leadership occurs when leaders do things to followers
- That leadership is different from and more important than management
- That leaders are different
- That leaders make a crucial difference to organisational performance
- That effective leadership is generalisable

This illustrates that both horizontal and vertical leadership styles can and do sit alongside each other within institutions, and there are views on the importance of

either in the modern university. Shattock (2004) reasons that the intrinsic links between higher education policy, management, and implementation, make collegial decision making and progress through a series of small collective decisions a logical strength of horizontal leadership. Whilst Jones et al. (2012) assert that hierarchy and positional authority is necessary to empower leaders. This view is supported by Jarvis (2012) who sees hierarchy as a formalising mechanism through which to implement change, whilst also asserting that collaborative leadership is more a response to a lack of singular authority than a true leadership system.

Within universities there are a plurality of decision-making frameworks and organisational processes at play, all of which inhabit the space between any notion of purely collegial and managerial institutions. Through these complex structures, power and decision-making become less a process of collegial or managerial and more one of negotiation and bargaining divided across lines of interest (Lucas, 2006).

The emergence of third space professionals would perhaps lead one to expect major shifts in the make-up and career expectations of senior leaders across UK universities (Bargh et al., 2000). This is at least true of the expectations of professional managers who increasingly no longer see themselves in the traditional role of civil servants to dominant academics, but rather as managers to vital university services in their own right (Becher and Kogan, 1992). At the most senior level, this is illustrated by how professional managers are inclined to share more in common with their senior academic-manager counterparts than they do with subsequent tiers of professional managers (Johnson and Deem, 2003). However, Shepherd (2016) highlights the barriers for professional managers to progress to the level of senior management (in the pre-1992 institutions at least) having reviewed job advertisements and noted a

need for a track record of research excellence regardless of the policy portfolio. Ordinarily professional development opportunities to pursue professional management careers alongside research careers are not supported in English universities.

Despite good leadership being crucial to successfully meeting KPIs in the contemporary higher education climate (Jones et al., 2012. Pihie et al., 2011), universities generally lack structured professional development programmes for academic managers and instead fall back on academic credentials which professional managers may deem to be unsuitable for senior roles (Coate et al., 2018). This highlights a positional or horizontal difference in where academic and professional managers draw their authority to lead. Lumby's (2012) Leadership Foundation review paper suggests higher education leadership narratives as either:

- coming from command and control approach with clear goals and lines of accountability, that is data driven and adheres to the tenets of normative corporate leadership.

or

- from a culture which rejects top-down rational management and alignment to organisational goals with tight accountability structures as impractical in higher education.

The notion of professional managers leading through positional authority and academic managers through horizontal leadership across a community, present a stark contrast which seems not to fit with literature on third space professionals who are inclined to use a mixture of both (Whitchurch, 2008). Coate et al. (2018) present the importance of 'prestige' and 'credibility' to senior management roles in higher education, asserting that whilst 'prestige' is a requirement of a successful academic

career, it is less so for professional service careers and instead offers 'credibility' as a more fitting requirement.

Spendlove (2007) found that for senior academic leaders there was a need to retain self-identity as an academic, that relevant sector experience was an advantage, and that senior academic leaders require people skills and the ability to delegate. Yet Lumby (2012) asserts there are no truly distinct characteristics of higher education which would require any sector specific experience to lead, and that higher education's only differentiating aspect is the longevity of institutions which has established social capital and ways of working that are resistant to change. This view breaks with that commonly held across the higher education sector that it is different and cannot be managed and controlled in the same way as a commercial organisation.

Whitchurch (2007) observed that academic communities whilst resistant to management from professional managers, were reluctant to take on management roles themselves. There is form here as traditionally academic leadership has not been viewed particularly positively amongst academic communities, but rather as a burden to be taken for a limited time before being passed on to the next academic colleague (Rowley and Sherman, 2003). As Deem (2008) showed in her routes to academic management (career, reluctant, good citizen), two of the established routes entail reluctantly taking responsibility. One can assume some of this comes from the highly individualistic nature of academic careers which place importance on the achievements of the individual academic and from which the academic gains the credibility, or the prestige, to lead. This is in contrast with professional managers who are expected to downplay the role of the individual (Coate et al., 2018), submitting more to the hierarchy of the institution.

Finally, it is not only academic managers who are subject to conflicting identities. Whitchurch (2007) recognises the difficult position in which professional managers find themselves – adopt a service mode and be seen as ‘docile clerks’ or contribute to decision making and policy and be perceived as overly powerful. What is apparent from these conflicting and converging expectations is the issue of identity and from where the manager draws their credibility to lead and manage, remains active and largely unanswered.

2.13 Conclusion

Managing institutions in response to sector and regulatory changes has been shown to have transformed the working practices of university employees across a wide spectrum of roles, realigning much of the functions which were formerly viewed as the preserve of academics. The increased presence of cross-boundary and unbounded professionals working in the third space has further opened up debate about where power is held within universities, and which individuals can legitimately be seen to exert influence on the organisation.

Roles are described as increasingly professionalised, but much of the underlying structures of universities remain resistant to change. The literature review has shown the organisation and the individual as influenced as much by external as internal pressures. Across the responses to these pressures there is a thread of contradictory and superficial engagement: institutions are business facing but must not be seen to act as businesses, leadership is best when horizontal but the needs of the organisation are increasingly vertical, values must drive actions but it is difficult to ascertain whose values are dominant.

Having established the process of change and presence of new managerial practices, this research sets out to better understand the extent to which these changes have altered the boundaries of senior management teams. Bolden et al. (2009) identified the interfaces of boundaries between the academic and professional service management functions of universities as one of eight themes for further research into higher education leadership, noting that the volume of research focused on the permeability between the two remains small. Since that time there has been an increase in such research, but as can be seen from this literature review, a gap remains in our understanding of how boundaries between roles are constructed, maintained and changed at the senior executive level, with the majority of literature focusing on the issue at lower levels in the university. This forms the literature gap which this thesis seeks to address.

Clegg and McAuley's (2005) assertion that viewing managerialism and collegiality as a duality fails to address the complexity of leadership and managerial practices found in higher education institutions, takes on a different dimension when considering Middlehurst et al.'s (2009) argument that despite the increased prevalence of executive teams made up of academic and professional managers, there remains a cultural divide which places boundaries between them. It suggests there is fluidity between the boundaries of roles, but also limits to that fluidity. It is the question of these limits which provides the foundation for researching the relationships across senior executives in this thesis. The study aims to investigate these relationships and arrive at a more nuanced understanding of how boundaries between the roles of academic and professional managers at the executive work in practice, with particular attention to what extent (if any) internal and external pressures placed on the institution have an impact.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides a clear overview of the research focus, design, methodology and methods. The potential methodologies and methods are set out and evaluated in their appropriateness to support this thesis, providing assurances of a well-constructed research thesis.

3.2 Research Focus

The research is concerned with how senior executive teams work, and how senior managers build, maintain, and move the boundaries of their roles. Research into the workings of senior executive teams in English universities remains small due to the difficulties of gaining access to suitable participants, making this an interesting area to develop.

This thesis seeks to explore the boundaries between the roles of senior managers in English universities, and from this build on the existing knowledge of what factors influence boundaries.

3.3 Research Design

This thesis utilises a qualitative research strategy. Creswell's (2008) description of qualitative research as a process which involves the researcher arriving at knowledge claims primarily from constructivist perspectives or advocacy/participatory perspectives, was important in making the decision to take a qualitative approach. What Creswell described appeared to broadly fit with the research aims. The wealth of literature on qualitative research, much of which suggests different approaches and

interpretations, makes it important to clearly define how best it should be conducted for this thesis (Long and Godfrey, 2004).

Bryman (2004) asserts that qualitative research provides a strategy for analysing words, and is usually inductivist, constructionist, and interpretative, though is clear in saying not all researchers will subscribe to all three features. Willig (2008) sees a qualitative approach as providing a lens through which to explore how individuals understand their experiences and the world in which they exist. As this thesis is interested in exploring the experiences of individuals and their interpretations of those experiences, a qualitative paradigm provides the most suitable approach to answering the research questions.

Historically, qualitative researchers have struggled to gain the same level of acceptance as their peers utilising quantitative methods because of the perception of qualitative research as a less clearly structured and defined process (Byman, 2004). To counter this, Madill, Jordan, and Shirley (2000) set out their expectation for qualitative researchers to be explicit when presenting their ontological and epistemological positions. This research takes a socially constructivist ontological position, recognising the role individuals take in the construction of social reality as outcomes of interactions between individuals (Bryman, 2004). In considering an appropriate epistemological position, Alvesson's (1996) assertion that investigation of any aspect of leadership is essentially interpretative as the researcher is primarily concerned with understanding the behaviours of individuals, was at the forefront of the decision. This research is epistemologically interpretative. Both the ontological and epistemological positions taken in this research are, Bryman (2004) asserts, common to qualitative research, which he states as being interested in understanding the social world through an examination of the interpretation of events by participants,

recognising that 'social properties are the outcomes of the interactions between individuals.' (p.266).

A purposive sampling method was used to seek out suitable participants for interview. Qualitative data was collected through 8 semi-structured interviews and analysed using a socially constructivist thematic analysis approach, allowing the data to inform the coding and theme development, identifying commonalities across the data.

In the initial research design ethnography was considered as a potential methodology through which the author could observe the behaviour of participants as they perform the duties of their roles and engage with their colleagues. However, this approach was swiftly rejected on the basis that access to senior managers over a prolonged period of time would not be feasible considering the busy working lives of such individuals. It was apparent that at best the author could hope for single interviews over an hour or two and the design needed to take the problem of limited access into account.

In the initial analysis stage, a constructivist grounded theory method was considered, attempted, and then rejected as the appropriateness of this approach became less apparent once the analysis was completed. Despite a constructivist approach giving more freedom to the researcher, who isn't as bound by the stringent requirements of traditional grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008), certain expectations of grounded theory were missing – e.g. at no point was this research seeking to formulate a general theory of process, action or interaction as seen through the eyes of the participants, which one would expect from using a grounded theory methodology (Creswell, 2008).

Having unsuccessfully attempted to conduct the data analysis using constructivist grounded theory, the author was left to find a suitable research methodology and method that could provide the right tools practically, ontologically, and

epistemologically. The method aspect was relatively straightforward as the initial use of constructivist grounded theory had closely resembled a thematic analysis. So, the decision to utilise a thematic analysis approach as fitting to the research meant much of the working processes developed in the initial analysis could be retained, even though the actual analysis is different. Consideration was given to utilising an interpretative phenomenological approach, noting how phenomenological researchers seek to understand lived experiences in relation to the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2008). However, this approach was not fully suitable to investigate the problems highlighted in the literature review, nor would it support the research questions generated from the literature. Importantly, adopting a phenomenological approach would have repeated the practical problems of ethnography due to the need for extensive and prolonged engagement with the participants.

After consideration, it became clear that Thematic Analysis provided the best fit with the literature review and also the data, which by this point had already been collected. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a flexible method, not constrained by any theoretical framework. It is an exploratory method through which a rich analysis of multiple participant accounts can be conducted (Boyatzis, 2009).

3.4 Decision to use semi-structured interviews

Terry et al. (2017) highlight the flexibility of Thematic Analysis, listing the many different types of data which can be analysed using a thematic method. Having considered several of their suggested options (e.g. survey data, focus groups, and vignettes), it seemed clear that the only really appropriate option which would produce data useful to the research questions was to interview participants.

Knight and Arksey (1999) assert that semi-structured interviews are the most used form of interview in qualitative research. It is a view shared by Silverman (2007) who attributes this to the flexibility of the method. Unlike unstructured interviews, which often require extensive access to the participants, building trust and understanding over time (Bernard, 2000), semi-structured interviews offer a means to guide the interview and allow the researcher to attempt to collect all of the relevant data in one sitting – or at least more quickly. This was appealing, especially when put against a structured interview method, which serves to constrain and standardise the interview, and does not allow for any divergence from the interview schedule (Bryman, 2004).

Galletta's (2013) guide to conducting semi-structured interviews instructs the researcher to formulate their questions in such a way so as to elicit data formed by participant experience. The interview schedule provides structure but is not rigid. Recognising the difficulties in gaining access to suitable participants, this approach was deemed useful as it meant a timeframe for collection could be given to potential participants to encourage their participation but retained flexibility to expand upon responses. Galletta (2013) also recommends immersion into the existing literature as the means for constructing the interview questions, whilst maintaining an awareness of how the researcher's own experiences are shaping the way questions are framed. Having already started gathering literature for the thesis at the time of choosing a suitable data collection method, this too appeared to fit.

Rubin and Rubin (1995), similarly believe this method of immersion in the literature provides the foundations for setting pre-defined interview questions, and the semi-structured nature of the method allows the researcher to pursue any avenues of interest as the interview progresses. Bryman and Bell's (2007) assertion that semi-structured interviews, by giving the researcher freedom to further interrogate

responses and pursue new lines of interest, offers a protection against what Yin (2003) sees as a natural inclination for participants to provide responses they believe the researcher wants to hear, was a further positive of the semi-structured approach.

This research, as previously set out, seeks to advance the understanding of senior role and the boundaries between them in contemporary English universities, as perceived by those occupying those roles. The flexibility of a semi-structured approach, coupled with the need for well-developed questions coming from the existing literature, and the recognition of the researcher in the formulation of questions, make semi-structured interviews the correct choice for this research design.

3.5 Use of Thematic Analysis

This thesis utilises a Thematic Analysis method, as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis offers a process through which to explore and structure the data, reporting patterns by themes, and helping to produce a well organised final thesis (Nowell et al. 2017).

Thematic analysis is not bound to any theoretical approach, making it a flexible and easily modified method. Nowell et al. (2017) believe this gives a freedom and flexibility not found in similar qualitative approaches, making thematic analysis a more accessible tool for data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) agree, seeing thematic analysis as a good method for building the core skills required for conducting qualitative analysis, noting the similarities between thematic analysis and other methods such as Grounded Theory.

Braun and Clarke (2006), acknowledging the criticism that thematic analysis' flexibility has the potential to be used incorrectly, offer a 6-step guide to conducting thematic analysis. This, they assert, allows the researcher to maintain flexibility whilst also

having a framework through which to avoid criticisms of an 'anything goes' approach.

The steps are:

Step 1: Interview transcription and familiarisation with the data

Step 2: Generating initial codes

Step 3: Searching for themes within the data

Step 4: Reviewing the themes by returning to the data to check the established themes are clearly supported

Step 5: Refining, defining, and naming the themes

Step 6: Writing the analysis; using extracts from the data to illustrate the themes

The analysis in this thesis was conducted in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step process. The data was coded according to Charmaz's (2006) coding guidance (discussed in 3.13).

The interviews encouraged participants to discuss their experiences of senior leadership in higher education, providing their own analysis of the way in which their role fits into their institution. As such, the data is treated as a social construct shaped at the individual level, broader organisational level, and in response to the researcher (Creswell, 2008). From this the author sought to present the latent themes across the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

This approach allows for the development of what Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to as 'bottom-up' themes; those which were identified within the data, without any set coding frame, which they assert can result in themes which appear to 'bear little relation to the specific questions that were asked of the participants'. Braun and Clarke stress the importance of thematic analysis researchers using judgement in what is considered a

full and relevant theme, calling for flexibility and a willingness to keep returning to the data. The themes identified in this research were repeatedly revisited to ensure they were appropriate (a back and forth movement between steps 4 and 5 of Braun and Clarke's guide), satisfying Braun and Clarke's requirement that the themes did not simply re-use the wording of the research questions. Despite the modest sample, the analysis did reach thematic saturation, which Lyons and Cole, (2007) assert indicates the sample size is adequate.

Andrews et al. (2008) assert that for the qualitative researcher, interpretations of the data can only ever be connected to the vantage point of the researcher's own view of the world. Braun and Clarke (2006) are similarly concerned with the position of the researcher and are clear in their assertion that for thematic analysis the subjectivity of the researcher is integral. As an employee of a London based university, the author recognises this aspect and sought to draw it to the forefront of the analysis process by adopting a social constructivist ontological position.

3.6 The Role of the researcher

Qualitative researchers have a particular need to be aware of how their own personal circumstances shape the data collection and analysis due to their role as the primary data collection instrument. This closeness to the data requires the author to clearly identify any potential biases from the outset (Creswell, 2008).

As a mid-level professional services manager at an English University, the author was aware of how knowledge of this may affect participant responses and how the responses were subsequently interpreted in the data analysis. When asking questions around regulation and line management experience, both of which form the focus of the author's own employment, there was a worry that the responses received would perhaps be skewed towards what the participants believed the author wanted to hear.

To prevent against such issues, the author regularly asked the same question twice, asking participants to approach the response from the position of their colleagues.

It was decided early in the planning stage of this research that all interview participants should come from universities to which the author has no current or previous employment connection. This decision was made in an attempt to avoid any sense of embarrassment or inadvertent compromise placed upon participants as they discuss decisions they have made, and how they interact with other senior colleagues the author may have known.

Potential for unintentional bias was recognised at all stages:

- During the literature review, concentrating on literature which appears to validate personal experience.
- Playing an overly strong role in the construction and interpretation of participant responses.
- Analysing the data with a disproportionate focus on the responses of professional managers due to a perceived understanding of their experiences.

Recognising these concerns, the research is presented systemically and transparently, making every effort to be consistent and suppress any potential bias (Bryman, 2004).

The care taken to avoid a one-sided analysis is evident in chapter 4 where efforts are made to evidence the analysis by presenting direct extracts from the interviews as often as possible. As can be seen in the themes, the academic and professional managers often interpreted situations in ways which were common to their professional background and this provides assurances of a balanced analysis in which all voices are heard.

3.7 Limitations of the chosen design

Perhaps the most frequent criticism of thematic analysis is also that which makes it so popular – the flexibility of the method, and the assertion that too much flexibility may result in a weak analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Nowell et al. (2017) discuss the comparatively little available literature on thematic analysis to that of grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. They note the difficulties novice researchers may experience as a result, and the possibility of a lack of coherence when developing themes. Holloway and Todres (2003) recommend this is avoided by being consistent in the application of an explicit epistemological position – something which is addressed in the research design for this thesis.

In the context of this research there was the possibility of senior managers presenting themselves according to idealised versions of their roles (perhaps as the collegiate horizontal leader, or the strong individualistic leader), influenced by the social conditions that exist in creating narratives of the self. The author was keen to avoid this by asking the participants to reflect on their responses from the position of their peers, bringing in a sense of the outside into their words.

Qualitative data and thematic analysis by nature requires the researcher to interpret the data and search for themes or categories to draw conclusions. This process of interpreting the data will always come with an element of personal interpretation situated in the socio-political and historical moment (Creswell, 2008). This was recognised in the research design which purposefully chose a social constructivist approach as a means to actively incorporate both the interpretation of experiences brought by participants and also the author.

3.8 Sampling method

In selecting a sampling method for this research, the author followed Bryman's (2004) guide to sampling, with the intention of establishing an approach that was both useful to the research and which also provided a transparent account of the sampling processes. After consideration of other approaches, it was decided a purposive method for selecting the sample size/participants, was the most appropriate for this research. Creswell (2008) asserts that not only is purposive sampling intrinsic to most qualitative research, but also describes the benefits of using personal judgement in the selection of participants. Bryman (2004) adds to this by asserting that a purposive sampling approach is often used when working with small samples.

3.9 Participants

In approaching participants, the author originally sought to focus on what are often referred to as 'New' or 'post 92' universities; labels that refer to institutions which received university status either through or subsequent to the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. This decision was made in response to the literature review which identified the stronger managerial characteristics of these institutions in contrast to those with a longer lineage. However, after the initial interviews and coding, it became apparent that the spread of institution could and should be expanded to include universities created by Royal Charter, recognising the overarching feature of the institutions as not one of when the institution became a University, but rather its roots as an establishment – i.e. to include those with a recent history of being another form of institution before receiving chartered or statutory university status. This decision greatly increased the number of potential participants, though ultimately was to have little impact on the number of acceptances for requests for interview.

In keeping with a purposive approach, the selection took place in stages with universities approached two at a time. Participants were invited to contribute to the research via an initial email of introduction which included a full participant information document in keeping with Lancaster University's research ethics guidance. Possible participants were identified by reading their profiles available on the executive management team pages of their respective institution websites. Only those who currently hold senior management positions with a seat at the institution's executive group were asked to participate.

The author was aware of the importance of recognising the concerns when researching powerful people, particularly when the research is focused on boundaries and role within the organisation. Potential participants may feel their anonymity cannot be assured as the prominence of decisions they have made or been involved with makes them readily identifiable (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2010). In the early stages of emailing potential participants, the majority of requests went unacknowledged, which was disappointing but not unexpected. When the author received a particularly negative rejection from a potential candidate questioning not just the validity of such research but also the authenticity of the author, it became apparent that this combined with the general lack of responses signalled a need to change the approach to requesting interviews if the potential participants were to feel adequate consideration had been given to their vulnerable position, allowing them to participate without fear of being identified. The author achieved this by copying the interview questions into the body of the invite email. This way participants could quickly get a sense of how the interview was to be conducted and their potential level of exposure (see Appendix A for interview questions).

Consideration was given to the make-up of participants with an early decision to ensure a balance between those from academic management and professional management backgrounds. The author did consider grouping respondents by approaching academic and professional managers from the same university, with a view to comparing and contrasting their respective views of the same scenarios within their institution. However, this was quickly deemed to be unfeasible as getting one participant per institution was difficult enough, and the benefits of such an approach seemed minimal.

Originally the author had hoped that all interviews would be conducted in and around London due to time and financial constraints. However, after having sent out the initial round of interview requests and receiving little positive response, the distance was expanded to incorporate institutions in Inner and Outer London (as defined by the London Government Act 1963), as well as those further afield in the East and South East of England.

The combination of improving the interview request email to take into account the sensitive 'researching up' aspect (i.e. the view that a mid-level manager in a local university asking probing questions of senior managers had the potential to damage their professional standing) (Cohen et al., 2010, p.127), with a broadening of the geographical area through which to identify potential candidates, paid dividends as the number of positive responses soon totalled the 8 required in the research design.

3.10 Summary of participants

The author provides here a table summary of the participants by role, location, and occupational background. Participants are coded as R1 – R8:

Code	Role	Location	Background
R1	Chief Operating Officer	Outer London	University Registry
R2	Deputy-Vice Chancellor - Chief Operating Officer	Central London	Broadcasting
R3	Chief Operating Officer	Central London	University Registry
R4	Chief Operating Officer	Outer London	British Military
R5	Provost	Central London	Research Academic
R6	Pro Vice Chancellor - Education and Students	South East England	Faculty Administration, Research Academic
R7	Deputy Vice Chancellor	South East England	Teaching and Learning
R8	Pro Vice Chancellor - Education and Student Experience	East England	Primary Education, Teaching and Learning

(Table.02)

The participants are split between two distinct groups – academic and professional managers, and there are also subgroups within the two:

Academic Manager	Professional Manager
Research being the stronger element of the participant's background	A background in a higher education setting.
Teaching and learning being the stronger element of the participant's background	A background in a non-education setting.

(Table.03)

Of the academic managers interviewed: R5 and R6 had built careers in higher education on their research credentials, whilst also having a background in teaching and learning, and are identified as ***academic managers research***. Whereas R7 and R8 had built their careers around teaching and learning, whilst also having experience of research (though in both cases their research experience was limited by comparison to R5 and R6), and are identified as ***academic managers teaching and learning***. The subgroups for academic managers are used to inform the analysis and at times provided insight into complex relationships, however overall, the analysis shows the differences between the *academic managers research* and *academic managers teaching and learning* to be small.

Of the 4 professional managers: R2 and R4 entered higher education after high profile careers in different sectors and are identified as ***professional managers external***. Whereas R1 and R3 had considerable experience in the higher education sector, working their way from junior administration to senior management, and are identified as ***professional managers internal***. Unlike the academic participants, the professional manager subgroups exhibit distinctly different approaches to their roles and the roles of others.

Recognising the importance of contextual factors in setting the boundaries of the research, a more extensive overview of the careers of the participants, including experiences they chose to highlight as important, is included in Appendix C.

3.11 Conducting the interviews

A semi-structured approach was chosen for conducting the interviews, due to the freedom semi-structured interviews give the researcher when attempting to reveal and understand the 'what', 'how', and 'why' of a what is being studied (Saunders, Lewis,

and Thornhill, 2003, p.248). In keeping with a semi-structured approach, the author was able to ask relevant follow up questions in response to what appeared to be significant replies to the set questions (Bryman, 2004). The interview plan contained 18 set questions informed by the literature review. Several of the questions were variants of each other, used as a tool to encourage participants to discuss not only their own priorities but how they believed colleagues viewed them. For example:

Q11. What would you describe as the skills you use the most during your working day?

Q12. Do you see these as skills as something different to those most used by your academic colleagues working at the same level?

The interviews were conducted over a period of seven months, with the pace set by participant availability. In total 27 higher education professionals were approached for participation: 17 academic managers and 10 professional managers. From that number, 8 individuals agreed to participate, representing a 30% positive response rate.

The numbers breakdown as:

- 4 positive responses from academic managers
- 4 positive responses from professional managers

Six of the interviews were conducted face to face in the participant's office at their place of work. The author had offered each participant the choice to conduct their interview at a neutral location if any felt uneasy discussing their organisation in their work environment, but in each case the participant deemed this unnecessary.

Two of the interviews were conducted at a distance – one via skype and the other over the telephone. In both instances this was a decision of the participant and the author

was happy to conduct the interviews on the participants' terms, grateful for their participation. For both of these distance interviews the participants were in their regular place of work when the interview was conducted.

As senior managers within large organisations, the author was very much aware of the value of time given by participants and grateful for the opportunity to conduct the interviews. Keen not to take more than the one hour requested in the initial email sent to participants, the author made sure to keep to a rigid set of timings (Saunders et al., 2003). Each interview was conducted over a maximum of one hour with two exceptions: R5 and R7. R5 was unable to give a full hour and so the interview was conducted over 40 minutes, with some of the questions, which in earlier interviews had produced less insight, dropped. This was not viewed as problematic as the coding and comparison of the previous 4 interviews had identified several questions which produced little to address the research questions, as interesting as the responses were. The interview with R7 was less than one hour due to technical issues with using Skype. Again, the same less insightful questions were excluded to ensure the interview was completed on time whilst still providing the required data.

With each participant the author was keen to build a good rapport to encourage an open flow of information. Achieving rapport in the interviews conducted via telephone and skype was more difficult. When interviewing via telephone, there is a risk of not gaining adequate rapport, due to not being able to give obvious facial cues such as smiling (Bryman, 2004). With skype, the interview was conducted 'face to face', but there was at times a lag which led to garbled audio and requests from the author for the participant to repeat the response. Aware of the risk this posed to creating a barrier to good rapport, the author was keen to ensure a friendly atmosphere, without going

so far as to create a situation in which the participant felt obliged to give answers which pleased. This the author believes was achieved and the transcripts are evidence of good rapport encouraging participants to be generous in their responses.

3.12 Data collection process

The data was collected using a digital Dictaphone to record the interviews, with the author's mobile phone acting as a backup recorder should the Dictaphone recording fail. After each interview, the recording was transferred from the Dictaphone to the author's desktop PC for transcription.

During the interviews, the author avoided taking lengthy notes and instead wrote single word jogger gerunds at points when there was a sense the participant had discussed something important. This marked the beginning of Charmaz's coding with gerunds recommendation (Charmaz, 2008). Once each interview had been completed the author quickly (within the hour) reviewed the recording, skipping to the noted timings and made handwritten notes to further assist with the coding and analysis. These notes included details of the setting and feelings of the author, which later proved invaluable in helping to retain some of the atmosphere and tone of responses once the interviews had been transcribed (Bryman, 2004).

After transcription, the original audio document was destroyed in accordance with the assurances given to participants. Each transcript was anonymised, using simple codes in place of people and place names. Several participants requested that certain parts of their responses were not transcribed for fear even a heavily redacted version would identify them due to the uniqueness of their experience. These sections were deleted, and the requesting participant received a copy of the transcript for approval. Where requested, all participants were provided with a copy of the transcribed interview for

comment and amendment. On two occasions the participants themselves made amendments, removing aspects that could be perceived as overly negative and softening comments when discussing colleagues.

The transcription and early coding process were slow, taking considerably longer than anticipated in the original research project schedule. As such a new schedule was drawn up in January 2019, moving the data analysis completion period back to June 2019 to take into account the reality of transcribing and coding interviews.

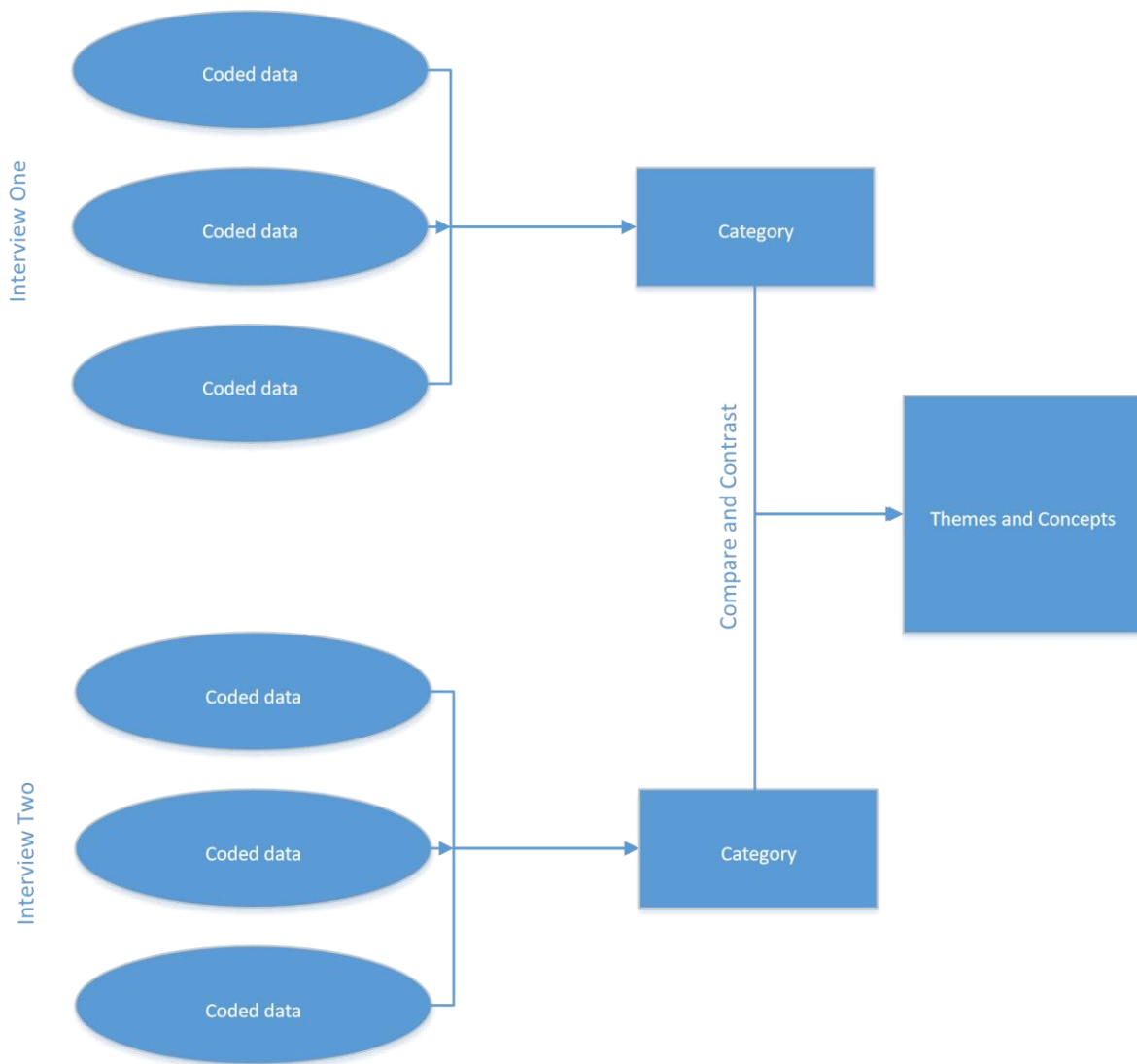
Steps were taken to ensure the quality of the transcription, with a view to identifying any errors which would skew the findings (Bryman, 2004). Once a transcribed document was completed, the author replayed the audio, reading the transcription as it went to check they matched. Also, during the coding stage, a general sense check was undertaken to be sure the response to each question in the transcribed document was in line with the views given by the same participant elsewhere, as a sudden change could represent an error in the transcription process.

3.13 Data Coding

Practically, coding is the process of reviewing interview transcripts and giving labels to the parts that appear to be of significance (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For the researcher, coding is about generating the analytic framework from which to build the analysis (Charmaz, 2006), making a well organised and clearly staged coding process an integral part of this research.

The coding process is one of breaking down the data in order for it to be regrouped to consolidate meaning, as the researcher looks for patterns and explanations. To do this the researcher progresses through the data adding codes to describe what is being observed, before grouping these codes into higher categories and it is these categories

which are compared and contrasted to arrive at themes and concepts (Saldana, 2013), as illustrated in Fig.04.



(Fig.04)

Coding was completed according to Charmaz's (2006) model which advocates a process of initial coding followed by focused coding. In this model, the focused coding builds on the work of the initial coding stage, using direct, selective, and conceptual coding to synthesize and explain larger sections of the data. Collecting together the most common and apparently significant codes from the initial line by line coding, the data is categorised under more telling codes. As the data collection, coding and

analysis continues, the researcher builds on these categories, grouping together what may have previously seemed like unrelated responses.

Initially, the author attempted to follow to Charmaz's coding guidance (Charmaz, 2006), coding exclusively with gerunds. However, at each attempt, coding solely with gerunds proved to be more difficult than expected, as the author on several occasions arrived at data which was perhaps unrelated to the research questions and needed to be flagged as such. To process this additional data, most of which came as the result of follow up questions, it was coded using an in vivo approach, meaning the coding process used a combination of gerunds and in vivo style coding. This gave the author a method by which to clearly identify data which at least superficially appeared not to fit with the research questions.

Using a mixture of in vivo and gerund coding methods created a large number of codes at the end of the first stage of coding. In the subsequent rounds, when looking at the data with the benefit of slower paced review, many of the in vivo codes were removed and the data shifted to the more fitting gerund code; ultimately reducing the number of codes.

With each further stage of the coding process the author sought to collect the data under overarching themes which featured across the responses given by all participants. The themes under which all data came to be grouped were Sense of place, Drawing authority to lead, and Influencing change.

3.14 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

Both coding and analysis were conducted using NVIVO as the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The software provided a more efficient way to analyse the data.

Aware there is risk the coding process may result in decontextualizing data (Bryman, 2004), the author sought to minimise this by incorporating substantial parts of the conversation from before and after the section being coded. This was beneficial as it retained the context of responses, giving a sense of validity where findings were made. However, it also increased the analysis time as the core body of what had been coded was not always apparent, requiring considerable re-visiting to establish the important element.

The analysis process was simplified by having grouped codes under themes using a tree node approach (Bryman, 2004). This made unpacking, comparing, and contrasting responses a much more manageable process which became increasingly important as the analysis developed, and initial findings had to be reviewed and amended with each new cycle of analysis.

3.15 Validity and Reliability

The challenge of validity for qualitative researchers is ensuring confidence that what is being presented represents the findings of a genuine critical investigation and is not simply a series of examples selected from the data to give credence to the researchers own views; what is referred to as a 'anecdotalism' (Silverman, 2007, p.211). The data collected represents a broad range of roles suitable to the research questions, giving assurances of balance in the responses which are not skewed in favour of any one type of senior manager.

In this research the author implements a constant comparative method, seeking to compare what emerges from the data with that from other participants (Silverman, 2007). The process is not always explicitly illustrated by providing each data example to reinforce a point, instead the author uses phrases such as "generally", "largely", and

“overwhelmingly”, to show where consistency was found, in keeping with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis approach. Where the author was unable to find another example to compare and contrast what appeared to be an important point, this is clearly stated in the analysis.

The author sought to ensure reliability by asking the same set of base questions to all participants, though the follow up questions were often different according to participant responses. When transcribing the data, the author was sure to include all aspects including pauses, overlaps and confused sentences, ensuring the data integrity. When coding the data, the author again was careful not to code out of context and included as much information as needed (Silverman, 2007).

3.16 Ethical Considerations

In completing this research project, the author followed the ethical procedures for Lancaster University researchers, gaining full consent from participants and providing assurances of protecting their anonymity in the final document.

As a researcher entering the participant’s place of work for a brief period of time, asking probing questions about the organisation, the author was aware of the participant’s potential vulnerability as an employee of the organisation. As such, the author remained sensitive to the affects the research could have on participants during and after collection (Saunders et al., 2003). To mitigate against any problems of intrusion, the author worked with participants to time visits so as to have little impact on the flow of activities in the workplace (Creswell, 2008). To protect participants from potential harm once the data has been recorded, they received assurances of full anonymity for both themselves and their institutions. This included guarantees of suitable redaction,

as well as clear information on how the audio recording would be stored prior to transcription, and the destruction process after transcription.

Participants were provided with substantial participant information, detailing the nature of the research and how it will be used, in order to get fully informed consent (Saunders et al., 2003). Participants were also reminded of their freedom not to answer any question with which they felt uncomfortable and their ultimate ability to exit the research at any time during and up to 4 weeks after collection and coding of data (Cohen et al., 2010). It was explained to participants that as the data was to be coded and analysed immediately after collection, it would become increasingly difficult to be removed from the data after the 4 week deadline because of the high level of anonymity expected in the process (all identifying data removed). By explaining not only the nature of the research, but also how the data would be coded and analysed, the author received informed consent which was verified in the signed consent forms from each participant (Cohen et al., 2010).

Throughout, the author maintained an awareness of the responsibility not to jeopardise the reputation of the broader research community by conducting a poor or badly designed data collection process. Keen to complete this research to the standards expected of a researcher working to become a recognised member of the academic community, the responsibility to ensure high quality ethical research was paramount.

3.17 Retrospective appropriateness of Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis proved to be the correct approach to analysing the data, and this is evident in the findings and subsequent discussion. Having taken an interpretative position, and aware of the author's own place in the construction of participant

responses, thematic analysis provided a structured approach to categorising and interpreting the data.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps for conducting thematic analysis was a valuable tool in ensuring the process was robust and the themes genuine. The opportunity to examine the data thematically highlighted the areas in which there was overlap as well as clear differences in interpretation of similar events, making the process of analysis manageable.

The iterative nature of coding gave space to revisit what had already been coded and categorised, interpreting the data in response to new findings. The themes were generated from the data and named according to the author's interpretation of what the participants were describing.

Conducting the literature review ahead of the data collection and analysis, ensured consideration for relevant context formed part of the analysis process. An important aspect of the contextual element was the position of the researcher, and attempts were made throughout to highlight where the author drew parallels with the responses of the participants and own views built from experience and understanding of the literature. This was done through the use of language such as 'presumably' and 'may', making it clear that the participants themselves had not made these connections.

3.18 Conclusion

Arriving at a suitable methodology and method was a drawn-out process, with several potentially suitable options investigated and subsequently rejected. As a result, confidence can be taken that the final design is the most suitable, having exhausted the other options. This is evidenced in the analysis and discussion, where clear themes are presented and discussed in relation to the existing literature.

The decision to utilise a semi-structured approach to interviews gave space for the author and participants to digress as part of an evolving data collection process (Saunders et al., 2003); allowing for variation to the questions asked, changes to the order in response to replies given, and inclusion of follow up questions where appropriate. Transparency in the research process is provided in this chapter as each decision is set out and discussed.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and sets out the key findings of the research. The data analysis was conducted thematically and is set out as such, using carefully selected extracts from the data. Thematic maps are included in Appendix B to provide transparency and give assurances of a robust analysis from which credible findings are drawn.

4.2 Themes

The analysis identified three overarching themes and ten subcategories under which to group the coded data:

- Sense of place – *pathways, hierarchy and breadth, utilising skills*
- Drawing authority to lead – *management practice, building successful teams, a leader or a manager, credibility to lead, knowledge*
- Influencing change – *across boundaries, decision making*

The themes are interlinked and cannot be separated from each other without decontextualizing the data, which risks making the findings unreliable (Bryman, 2004).

4.3 Theme – Sense of place

The background and expertise of participants are important to understanding their current position, providing insight into how participants view their own progression routes. Key to this is how the participants frame the university as primarily either academic institutions or semi-corporate organisations. Participants describe their professional space at the senior executive through their personal understanding of the context in which they operate. Their sense of place is a construct of personal past

professional experience, the unique characteristics of their present institutions, and the broader sector norms. This combination, it can be argued, influences the participants in their perceptions of the university as an organisation to manage or a community to lead.

4.3.1 Pathways

The backgrounds of participants had a clear connection with the progression routes available to each as they understood them – their pathways. To understand how participants viewed their own professional future and individual pathways going forward, each was asked to discuss the progression routes available to them in future.

The academic managers provided the clearest responses when discussing progression opportunities, and all cited the role of Vice Chancellor as an option, should they desire to pursue the role:

Well, I've only got one other position I can go to. So, when I became a DVC, I took the role, solely with the intention of doing the role as well as I could, but knowing that after I'd done it for two or three years, I would be thinking to myself, do I want to stay as a DVC, or do I want to become a VC? And in a sense, this role has given me a chance to see whether that is something that I want to do. So, I am looking for Vice Chancellorships. (R5. Extract: 01)

and

There's like, only two more levels. That's Deputy VC, and then VC. Unless I moved across to another university to take on... you know, some people do a PVC role at several institutions, though. (R6. Extract: 02)

The academic responses were uniform regardless of their primary background – research or teaching and learning. Less uniform where the responses from the professional manager participants which were divided across the two identified groups – internal and external – with limitations found more in the expectations of professional managers internal than their external peers.

For immediate progression opportunities, the professional managers internal saw a similar role at another institution as their clearest option, perhaps expanding the boundaries of the role to incorporate more services. The responses had parallels with Whitchurch's (2008) description of cross-boundary professionals – pushing the boundaries of their roles further into academic space whilst retaining a respect for academic identities; neither saw progression to the role of Vice Chancellor as a realistic option. In both cases the stated reason was a perceived a lack of credibility due to not having come through the academic pathway described by the academic managers:

There's a very small number of people from my background or position who have been able to move into Vice Chancellor. There's a couple who've had a background which is more about professional services, but the majority don't, and I don't see that significantly changing. Partly because understanding what academic activity is all about, is what universities are all about. They're not just corporate entities. Increasingly but...but also, I think in my lifetime I would be surprised to see many more. (R1. Extract: 03)

and

Personally, I think I couldn't honestly see myself saying, 'well I think I can be Vice Chancellor'. Because I do think there is something about having the kind of credibility to be the head of an academic institution and I think to do that, if you're not that - you haven't got that kind of background, is difficult. (R3. Extract: 04)

R1's description of universities as 'not just corporate entities', asserts the importance of academic credibility as much as organisational management, and this is reinforced by R3 who saw it important to have 'that kind of background'. The correct background as discussed by R3 was not necessarily academia, but profile, and gravitas to lead.

At the start of R3's interview, the author was given a copy of the institution's organisational chart as a visual aid when discussing the senior executive. On the chart, the Vice Chancellor is placed at the top of the organisation as a single role from which

all tiers of seniority and responsibility cascade down. It is a hierarchy no different to that seen in any large corporation, leading one to assume any employee of the university could aspire to become Vice Chancellor, and certainly any member of the senior executive. But as shown, R3 did not take this view, placing background credibility as an important requirement. The Vice Chancellor at R3's institution had completed a PhD but was not from an academic background - either as active in research or teaching and learning – and had entered higher education at the level of Vice Chancellor following a high-profile career across different prominent arts and culture organisations:

I think it's difficult internally but also externally with all the kind of stakeholders you have to deal with. It would be a challenge. I mean having said that, <name>, our Vice Chancellor isn't an academic. I mean, he's got a PhD but his background is basically <arts/culture sector>, and you know he ran the <arts/culture organisation> and then he went to <overseas> and he ran <arts/culture organisation1> there for quite a long time. So obviously there's a kind of, you know, a close kind of synergy between his professional background and <current institution>. And he hasn't, there's never been any kind of question about his kind of credentials or whatever to be the VC. But I think that's slightly different to saying you've come up through the sort of professional services/admin route and now you're going to be the head of the institution. Because you know, simply something like, you know, chairing Senate, I just don't think you'd have the credibility to do it. (R3. Extract: 05)

R3 sees the Vice Chancellor at his institution not as drawing his credibility from academia but from his achievements in a different setting. In the interviews with both R1 and R3 there is a strong focus on management and the tools required to manage, but looking at the language used in extracts 03 and 04 shows they are not discussing the role of Vice Chancellor through the lens of management, but rather leadership, and this was important to their sense of suitability to pursue such a role.

This contrasts quite starkly with the response given by R2. Currently Deputy Vice

Chancellor at his institution, R2 recognised his next logical progression as the role of Vice Chancellor, but showed little interest in further progression, citing a reluctance to be the face of the organisation as reason. When discussing possible barriers to progression, R2 was quite explicit in seeing the role of Vice Chancellor in much the same way as one would view the leader of a large corporation, articulating his views in a way more aligned with the corporate hierarchy:

There may be a disinclination because I'm not an academic, but then neither is my boss. So, it doesn't rule it out. But most - no that's not true - many universities would be reluctant to have a non-academic heading up the institution, but it's certainly not impossible. So, if I were to be pursuing a Vice Chancellorship, I don't think it would inhibit me that I don't have an academic background. I would feel that I could offer some things, not everything, but some things that a Vice Chancellorship would require, and the Vice Chancellor's role these days is essentially, I think, rather different perhaps from even a decade ago. It's increasingly, as you realise, they have to run as effective businesses with effective investment portfolios, decision making about a multitude of matters. And there are no grounds for believing that an academic is better at doing that than a non-academic. (R2. Extract: 06)

This view reflects that of Lumby (2012), stripping away any notion of academic institutions as special or unique, and framing the university as a business entity.

Similarly, when linking this back to the literature, there is a clear unbounded nature to R2's response, unconcerned with the established norms of the sector. This was also reflected by R4, who saw a sector wide role, rather than institutional, as a preferable progression route (though R4's response is framed by his impending retirement).

When discussing prior experience and his current role, R4 drew parallels between the two which he believed equipped him to lead in an academic setting:

So, yeah. I've done a lot and enjoyed a lot. And the amount of experience that I've been able to bring into this role, I think with the exception of the Registry function, which was a black art to me when I first arrived, you know, there's nothing I hadn't - I'm running a campus instead of running a base. I've got 4,500 students in residencies instead of a horde of <military employees> in barrack blocks. IT here. There's not a lot I hadn't done and that has stood me in good stead. (R4. Extract: 07)

What can be drawn from the data is a sense of differing perceptions of the requirements of what is needed to take the most senior position, and that this is built from past experience, as one would expect when approaching the data from a social constructivist viewpoint. This is further highlighted in R2's response which referenced the presence of a non-academic Vice Chancellor as giving credence to his own assessment that he too could aspire to the role. His frame of reference was built in his own experience. However, R3 could not make the same connection, despite his own experience of working alongside a non-academic Vice Chancellor and this appears to come from a differing view of the role of Vice Chancellor as primarily a leader of an academic institution and not the leader of an corporate organisation.

The professional managers internal, like the academic managers, referred to the university as an 'academic' organisation and throughout there was consideration for their role in relation to the academic mission. Their responses sit somewhere between the civil servant style administrators of old and the professional managers of vital services as described by Becher and Kogan (1992).

4.3.2 Hierarchy and breadth

The professional managers described their perception of the importance of hierarchy in their progression, but this was less visible for the academic managers who associated hierarchy with management rather than leadership:

I think that in administration, you can probably get away with rising higher with good management skills, rather than leadership skills because you've got a hierarchy that will allow you to do that. Where you've got a flatter structure in the academic environment, if you don't show the leadership characteristics then you're not going to be able to achieve what you want. (R5. Extract: 08)

R5 describes academic management in terms of leadership across flat organisational structures, reflecting how academics learn to manage without the defined boundaries or support of a clear organisational hierarchy, exposing them to a more complex collegial aligned process of management from early in their careers. R5's view that professional managers are able to utilise hierarchy in place of leadership is an affirmation, but not endorsement, of what Jones et al. (2012) asserted when citing hierarchy and positional authority as a means to empower leaders.

R5's response was common across those of the academics who recognised the importance of hierarchy for empowering professional managers, but with all seeing hierarchy as inappropriate for leading academics. Their responses were shaped by comparing the experiences of professional managers to their own, and feeling that hierarchy, and focus on hierarchy, placed limitations on development of a more rounded individual. Fanghanel (2012) asserts academic careers are built individualistically, and all of the participants spoke in terms which showed an agreement with this view, believing this shaped the way academic managers approach the organisation:

But I think if you're an academic member of staff, then your kind of sense of your career trajectory is much more personalised than it is if you're a member of professional services. Because obviously for professional services there is a structure and you think, 'how do I move up the ladder? What do I want to do?' Whereas if you're an academic you want to do more of that teaching, and more of that research, and it's more about, you know, how you progress your academic profile and your career. (R3. Extract: 09)

R6 in particular, highlighted the different ways in which academic and professional service careers progress, with academics essentially putting themselves forward for promotion based on their scholarly output, and noting how different this is to the search for opportunities seen in hierarchy focused professional service careers. R3's view of

academics wanting to progress their profile was mirrored by R8 who described having a public profile and approaching the running of the institution as much from an ideological and theoretical position than as a general management one:

So, the other professional services senior team here, aren't writing book chapters, they're not speaking at conferences, they're not thinking about 'what is my position on?' So, you know, I take a position on student partnerships, for example. It's a kind of ideological position. It's a theoretical position. I'm reading about it. I'm staking my kind of ideological claim on what I believe. Now, the man who runs estates isn't doing that. You know. He doesn't have to defend his academic position on estates. And I suppose that's, that's the difference. (R8. Extract: 10)

This discussion of a public profile, and taking a position being interpreted as important to the role of academics, was further highlighted throughout the interviews, with professional manager participants seeing a disparity in how far external profile carries influence in the institution.

Across the data, hierarchy was closely connected with the breadth of the role.

The professional managers had much more clearly defined portfolios and were able to provide simple overviews of their role when compared with the academic manager participants:

Well, I suppose crudely, I think what they'd say, and what I'd say, is that I think my role, and the role of the services, is basically to provide the infrastructure and the support that they need to get on with their job - teaching and research and knowledge exchange. (R3. Extract: 11)

and

I set out my stall quite clearly - I am here to provide a platform for Teaching and Research. It is an enabling activity in an enabling environment. If you don't invest properly in any environment, you won't get the support you need. (R2. Extract: 12)

In extract 11, R3 was discussing how he thinks his role is viewed by his academic colleagues and this is supported by R2's views where the boundaries of the role are

set out clearly. The professional managers discussed their roles in terms of their immediate portfolio – IT, estates, infrastructure; change programmes they have led, and how these facilitate the academics and grow the institution. This contrasted with the responses from academic managers who spoke about their own portfolio, and also any aspect of the institution deemed as part of the student experience. The academic managers described their roles as touching on all aspects of the university, rather than simply underpinning or supporting them:

So, my priorities are around the strategic priorities of the university. So, our institutional vision is around transforming lives. And that drops down into providing expert teaching, engagement with the research business and the professions for our students. So, it's around, my priorities are around, how do we make sure that every programme we offer is high quality? That every student is supported, no matter what their background? their home circumstances? has an opportunity to engage? - Not only with course but with other things. My priorities are education and the student experience, you know, that's that. So, it's all of those things that you'd list and many, many more. (R8. Extract: 13)

and

Once you've run a school and it was a big school, with all the dramas of waking up at three o'clock in the morning and wondering if that person who's gone sick, is going to be in that front of those students tomorrow. And alongside various other big personnel issues and the funding issue. And, and, you know, being able to kind of carry a vision for the school all the way through. (R7. Extract: 14)

More than just discussing breadth, the interview data contains different levels of focus, with the participants conceptually and practically discussing management and leadership. The roles of the professional managers, as they described them, talked primarily in terms of service delivery and the running of the institution as a physical organisation, whereas the academic managers also spoke of strategy, vision, inclusivity, and other more high level concerns when discussing theirs.

4.3.3 Utilising skills

The academic managers had shown an understanding of their roles as broader and less focused than the professional managers, just as much interested in the principles as the practice of leading a university. This was amplified when discussing the range of skills required to be successful in the role.

The following table lists the skills most used during the working day as described by the participants themselves and is similar to that used by Moses and Roe (1990) when seeking to find commonalities between the top ten most important headship functions, as ranked by staff and heads of departments.

The table lists skills according to the terminology used by participants, grouped by type of manager (professional or academic):

Skill	Professional Manager	Academic Manager
Analytical	X	
Communication	X	X
Assimilate knowledge		X
Questioning decisions	X	
Conflict resolution	X	X
Decision making		X
Diplomacy		X
Empowering people	X	X
Recruiting good people	X	
Listening		X
Agility	X	
Patience / Calm	X	
Able to Prioritise	X	
Problem Solving	X	

Project Management		X
Multi-tasking	X	
Line Management	X	
Operational Duties	X	
Strategic Planning	X	

(Table.04)

There is little convergence in the data, with only three skills referenced by both professional and academic managers: communication, conflict resolution and empowering people. It is important to approach these responses with caution as it is clear from the data analysed in hierarchy and breadth (section 4.3.2) that many of the skills would span all participants working at this level. – e.g. multi-tasking. Fiedler’s (1967) contingency model of leadership as situational is useful in interpreting this data as it recognises the need to take into account the contextual aspect of when the interview was conducted - e.g. R1 began the interview after a particularly busy morning, and her responses centred around multi-tasking, problem-solving and ability to prioritise.

Accepting these limitations, the data does contain insightful detail and provides a starting point for analysis in relation to Johns’ (2006) categorical framework of leadership at the omnibus and discrete levels. The responses from the academic managers centre more on the people side of their role, citing listening, communication, and diplomacy as some of the key skills they use on a daily basis. This was to feature strongly throughout the interviews with the academic participants, and a line can be drawn from this to the distributed styles of community-based leadership which favour soft skills and the institutional normative over operational. Professional managers gave

responses which were more aligned to operational requirements discussing line management, strategic planning, and agility, amongst other such skills.

The skills table (table.04) shows a convergence at the cognitive level similar to those discussed by Mumford et al. (2007) as important to leadership. The academic managers are shown to list more of the cognitive skills than their professional manager counterparts who instead list skills more associated with management (Katz, 1955).

The differing skills are illustrative of the different approaches to management and leadership. R6 as an academic manager saw a duality in her role, describing the balancing act involved in meeting the needs of the organisation (in relation to external pressures) alongside the need to bring academic colleagues onside:

So, it's not just like, understanding it, it's taking part in shaping it, and helping other colleagues to understand it. Because it's just so difficult, because there's so much of it now. And we have academic staff who are like, you know, CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) is the worst thing that's ever happened. And we should resist it. Somebody said that, again, a director of teaching said, 'what if we just opted out and just didn't comply with it?' I was like, 'yeah, we're not doing that.' Anyway, so you have to be a translator. (R6. Extract: 15)

Similarly, R1 talked about communicating compliance requirements to academic teams and the challenge of gaining their support:

I spent yesterday at our Faculty Management meeting talking about - with really good people - but talking about, we have to do this, this is what we're going to do, we're putting lots of options in places, there's different ways people could do it, but we still have to do it. And I still had them sitting there going - 'Oh this'll ruin the External Examiner system. What does the government think it's doing? Doesn't it realise...' And I think, yeah, you can vent at me and I'll just sit and listen and go 'yeah I agree with you', but we've actually got to do this here. (R1. Extract: 16)

Though the response from the academic audience is the same in both extracts, there is a difference in the way the senior manager approaches the situation. In extract 15 the academic manager discussed helping colleagues to understand and having to be

a translator. In extract 16 the professional manager wasn't trying to explain or translate the changes, instead the meeting is described as a one at which academic colleagues were told they had to comply with the changes and were given a range of options to help them do so. This approach was common to the professional managers who described management as for the most part transactional.

Throughout the academic manager data, when discussing interactions with their academic colleagues at more junior (hierarchically) levels within the organisation, their approach remained rooted in their experience and all describing managing across a flat structure despite now being a member of the senior executive. The academic managers gave a sense of being caught between the requirements of the institution and the need to gain the acceptance of the academic community for decisions to be effective. However, this was not the case for the professional managers who saw their roles as more defined, nor was it the case when the academic managers focused on managing professional service colleagues, with all describing taking a more direct managerial approach.

4.3.4 Summary of Sense of place

- The presence of professional managers external makes it easier to view their employing institutions as semi-corporate, and this is reflected in their own interviews which focus on the organisation rather than academic mission.
- Across the data, the role of Vice Chancellor is perceived to be more accessible than traditionally the case, but this is dependent on having 'relevant' experience and expertise.
- Hierarchy is deemed to enable professional careers but also has the potential to limit the breadth of experience traditionally seen as necessary to lead.

- Academic managers describe engaging more collegially with fellow academics but switch to managerial approaches when working with professional services. Their roles are changed when interacting with the organisational hierarchy of the university unlike the professional managers who describe maintaining the same hierarchical approach throughout.

4.4 Theme - Drawing authority to lead

The theme of drawing authority to lead is the largest of the three, and contains the categories of management practice, building successful teams, a leader or a manager, credibility to lead, and knowledge. During the interviews, participants discussed management and leadership both conceptually and in practice, describing overlaps between the two. Across the data, participants described what they saw as a professionalisation of management. Participants described a number of issues which they deemed important to build authority to lead, with their professional backgrounds playing an important role in the formation of their opinion.

4.4.1 Management practice

When looking at the mechanics of management, discussion of what skills are required for 'good' management produced similar responses from all participants, regardless of their role. This view was repeated throughout the interviews but with important differences in how well participants believed their colleagues were able to implement them due to their professional background, experience, training, and what they were tasked with managing. The professional managers viewed management as their domain, describing academic management as undeveloped, and articulated their expectations of management in a professionalised, hierarchical sense.

I think academic management is fledgling in the sector. As in you've got an academic - what's their work plan? What are they doing? How are you performance managing? How are you checking? And how are you supporting? How are you developing? It doesn't happen as readily as it should do and could do in Professional Services. (R1. Extract: 17)

The professional managers discussed management as a collection of tools implemented to meet the 'outcomes and outputs' of the role. The professional managers saw professionalisation of management practices as important but also took issue with moves to include aspects of the professional services in the portfolios of academic managers, questioning their skill level. The responses from professional managers showed a view of management and the university services firmly within their remit and none discussed the extent to which the same services had previously been part of academic roles:

I think different institutions do things in different ways, but I see a professionalisation at last, and I see more academic managers who are picking up responsibility for some of those professional activities; not necessarily with the skills to deliver. (R1. Extract: 18)

Whereas the professional managers discussed the tools of management and the experience and skills needed to manage certain areas, the academic managers focused on the interdependence of areas under their control. R7 was more concerned with how well her portfolio fits together than the practice of management or any limits to what she could manage by experience:

I'm really pleased that I manage the technical support. I'm really pleased I manage quality. And even student records and things like that, these things, and I think this stems from my understanding when I was head of learning and teaching some years ago, you understand that these things are levers and triggers in the system, they're not just professional services. They're part of the wider academic mission of the university. (R7. Extract: 19).

Across all of the participants management progression was discussed as a process of moving away from the individual's specialism (discipline, or area of expertise) to a

place of broad experience. R2 stated a view that the further an academic manager progresses the more they move into 'administrative management', as their focus becomes the operational side of the organisation. However, the academic managers, whilst recognising this transition and accepting their roles focused increasingly on the organisation, also discussed management as something happening in parallel with their role as an academic, a split between the operational and intellectual:

Because what people sometimes don't understand is that when you're an academic, the operational aspect of your job - so I don't know, holding appraisals with your team, looking after your budget - it is happening in parallel to you perhaps writing a book, doing your paintings, speaking at conferences about that, and there's that kind of, it's a kind of, an intellectual engagement going on in parallel. (R7. Extract: 20)

Common to all of the participants was a view that the external pressures placed upon universities required a more professionalised approach to how they are managed, reflecting the assertion of Pritchard (2000) that the complex higher education environment motivates change in how institutions are led. The extent to which participants felt this was necessary was linked to their professional background, with the academic managers (and especially those from a research background) being the group most wary of further increasing professionalisation of management as a substitute for more traditional academic pathways to senior roles.

4.4.2 Building successful teams

The participants recognised the need to become more management focused as their career progressed, and in response to the literature review which showed formalisation of training as a tenet of managerialism, each was asked about structured management training opportunities for colleagues in their organisation. The responses were unified in identifying the need for management training to build successful teams, and all saw

a lack of good quality management training in their organisation as an issue. R4 put this bluntly: *It's optional and there's not enough of it, and that's too late.* (R4. Extract: 21)

Amongst the participants, only the professional managers external had received formal management training over the course of their careers, and this was before they moved into higher education (R6 had undertaken a leadership programme at her previous institution but described this in quite different terms to the management training received by R2 and R4, with a focus on the principles as much as practice). For those who had spent their careers in education, professional development had mostly been a process of broadening experience and learning on the job, and despite the academic managers seeing their backgrounds as providing important experience, there was broad recognition of the need for formal management training to support their colleagues:

So, there's a - we've just been talking just very, at the very early stages of like, where would we - if we wanted to have like a really good structured program of training and development and leadership opportunities for all staff, where would it sit? And how we structure it. So, we're just starting to have those kinds of discussions. I think it's been a bit patchy. And some people have had some things and there have been attempts to try it out. But I think there's now the knowledge that actually in this day and age, you probably do need to have pretty smart training and leadership opportunities for your staff at different levels and in different places. Because otherwise you just keep kind of limping along. (R6. Extract: 22)

This view that modern universities require structured approaches to management would suggest a hardening of managerialism in the institutions of participants and is similar to the changes described by Deem et al. (2008) when discussing the sector wide increase in management training programmes. Most respondents saw the lack of management training as an issue to be fixed, with several saying a new

management training programme was being developed. These programmes were not for existing senior managers and had been designed for new and lower-level managers from professional and academic teams, recognising the issues future leaders will face.

When discussing the training opportunities being developed, there was particular focus placed on the leadership aspects of succession planning, giving colleagues a structured programme to aid their progression. Only R4, whose own professional training had been particularly regimented to meet the needs of the military, stating a need for solid management training, separate to leadership training, whereas the other participants spoke of leadership and management training opportunities as one and interchangeably.

4.4.3 A leader or a manager

The data shows similarities in the way participants discussed leadership, regardless of background. Despite having discussed requirements of leadership and management training in very similar terms, when discussing what they believe is required to lead, participants tended to describe leadership as something different to management, and requiring an additional set of skills if one is to be successful. These apparent contradictory stances can perhaps be understood by returning to the differences between leadership and management conceptually (a clear demarcation), and practically (often interlinked).

Generally, the academic participants discussed leadership more openly and directly than their professional manager counterparts, and all described leadership as integral to their current roles. Leadership was discussed as both horizontal and vertical, with participants describing the need to gain support from colleagues but also know when

to take decisions, lead change, and enact their plans. The data across all participants showed leadership as both transactional and transformational, and as Bass (1985) asserted, both modes are in use by the same individual according to the situation. In fact, the participants described this ability to switch modes as important to their success.

R8, questioned to what extent she actually was a leader and not a manager, as her role entailed more managerial duties though she had no direct reports to manage:

That's something in my PhD, I questioned whether there was actually in practice quite a difference, or whether actually those roles blurred quite a lot. So allegedly, I'm a leader, not a manager, I don't have any direct reports, I lead. But in actual fact, if you looked at the list of stuff that people would put under management, and looked at the list of stuff I did, you'd find quite a lot of that fell under management. So, I'm a bit...I'm not sure there's a difference. (R8. Extract: 23)

R8 made regular reference to the importance of balancing the needs of the organisation with the academic mission, and when discussing leadership and management her approach was similar to that found in the literature; showing a clear overlap between management practice and institutional leadership. The same thread ran through all of the interviews, with participant responses to questions about leadership and management overlapping, mirroring the same interconnected nature of management and leadership found in debate across many sectors (Bargh et al., 2000), showing the difficulty in defining the two as distinct in practice. It may also be interpreted as a response to the increasing need to think about the university as a market focused organisation as much as an educational institution, with leadership choices being made in response to managerial requirements.

Where leadership was discussed in terms different to management it was often around soft skills, and common to all discussion of leadership was the importance of good

communication skills which participants cited as an integral requirement. Communication was often articulated as a need to be seen as much as heard, with participants seeing visibility as important to their ability to lead:

And so, I do – you kind of make a conscious effort to kind of get out and about and meet other people. You know, even if that's just the simple thing of having the meeting somewhere in their office rather than yours. Because there is something important about just being visible and being about. (R3. Extract: 23)

Participants spoke of their soft skills as having been developed over the course of their career, and all believed they had progressed in part because of their ability to communicate well. R8 listed the skills she believed are required to work at a senior level, and this was similar across the participants:

But in terms of the kinds of the listening, the negotiating, the understanding, you know, being able to rapidly grasp things, using your knowledge to develop your authority, I would have said that's the same for my professional colleagues as it is for me. (R8. Extract: 24)

This appears to reinforce Mumford et al.'s (2007) assertion that the further up the organisation a person progresses, the more cognitive skills become important – both to reach senior manage and to succeed in the role.

4.4.4 Credibility to lead

The interviews showed a uniform expectation that academic managers must continue to engage more broadly in the academic life of the institution if they were to maintain their credibility. This was ascribed to the way academic credibility is built and maintained in academia, as opposed to professional service credibility which is gained through operational and management experience.

Actually, mostly Vice Chancellors have come from that academic background, which I think is right. And so, my experience has been that mostly, there is that understanding, you know, and sort of sympathy for and appreciation for the, the academic life of the university, and that normally does take precedent. (R7. Extract: 25)

R6 described her role in comparison with that of the Chief Operating Officer (COO), noting that the COO's credibility was not judged on the same criteria because of their different career pathways:

Yeah, I think in a way, that's the other weird thing about the cultural divide is that even though I'm doing the same type of job as the Chief Operating Officer, a lot of academic colleagues would want to see academic credibility from me, because I've come through what they would see as the academic path to senior leadership. Even though he has a doctorate, he's come through being Chief Operating Officer at other universities and things, you know. So, although we're sat at the same top table, and making decisions together, I'm being judged on a different, slightly different metric to him. And it's do I have credibility as an academic? You know? And it's like, why? You know? In some ways you're like, does it even matter? You know? But it certainly is helpful. (R6. Extract: 26)

The participants saw credibility to lead as being drawn from experience, though the boundaries of what constituted relevant experience was different amongst the participant groups. R5 saw 'good' leadership as drawn from experience and rooted in an understanding of the management issues, suggesting a non-academic manager would struggle to have the authority required to lead an institution because s/he would not have the experience of the issues to which academics are exposed. An understanding of the issues was further expanded upon by R8 who discussed what constitutes relevant knowledge and experience in relation to professional services:

But what content knowledge is counted as legitimate might be different. I think if I tried suddenly to become an expert on MARCOMMS (marketing and communications), I don't think they'd accept that, so I think there are some boundaries around what knowledge you can assimilate and claim to have got a grasp of. What people will accept from you. (R8. Extract: 27)

This notion of 'relevant' knowledge and experience was discussed by R2 and R3, with their framing of what is relevant expanding the boundaries beyond the academic.

Neither Vice Chancellors at the institutions of R2 and R3 came from an academic background but their credibility to lead was not questioned. In both cases the Vice Chancellors had entered higher education after a high-profile career in a different sector, and both R2 and R3 felt this made them credible leaders in a university setting, though their reasons for doing so differed.

R2's own credibility was primarily built in his former career in another sector. Within the university R2 described clear reporting lines and hierarchical tiers through which to manage and lead, making the need for sector specific knowledge less important than well-developed management skills. His authority was established through his hierarchical position and his credibility brought from his background. As such, R2 saw clear parallels between his current Vice Chancellor's background and his own, viewing the university as an organisation to be led.

R3 shared some of the same view, seeing the credibility of the Vice Chancellor at his institution as drawn from a prior high-profile career, and a synergy between that sector and the university's specialism. This, R3 believed, gave the Vice Chancellor credibility to lead, and allowed the Vice Chancellor to meet academic colleagues on an equal footing as peers. For R3 the university was primarily an academic institution and not simply an organisation like any other, making the role of Vice Chancellor closed to professional managers.

The different ways in which academic and professional managers are expected to display their credibility to manage and lead, and what contributes to that was discussed at length by R1, providing clear limits in what experience is seen as credible to different roles:

So, you have to have that credibility on whatever grounds it's based and that includes lots of knowledge. Is it different for Academics and Administrative? I

think it is a little bit, because again back to when you're professional services, there's a much stronger expectation of management. So, we've all met managers who we think 'oh you're rubbish!' But they manage to keep in the role, and the work still gets done, because there's a clear expectation of roles or because there's a management hierarchy that allows it to happen. With academics, the credibility is still really important but actually there might be something slightly different around ability to get resources, and, or external profile; which are slightly different. So, if you're a world leading professor who's always out at conferences you may have - maybe that's part of your credibility, I don't know - but that gives you more of a way to help manage the academic community because the route to success is an individual one based on your subject discipline primarily, whether it's teaching or research. Therefore, someone who has succeeded in that, has arguably more credibility and can help you move things forward, you see them that way even if they're terrible at managing. Whereas the Professional Services, I've got staff who do a lot of external stuff, but that doesn't necessarily add anything at all to their internal perceptions of ability to manage. (R1. Extract: 28)

With credibility built in different domains, R4 expressed a need to respect the skills and backgrounds of colleagues, recognising the important role each plays in the life of the university. In extract 29, R4 discusses the boundaries of roles and attaches this to a respect for the skills of different professionals, placing limits on how far credibility built in one area can be extended into another:

So, I suppose it's about respecting the two roles. That they are – they have to work well in tandem. Yeah, I think that's probably how I would articulate it. It's just an understanding - what's the work of the role and sticking with that. If they start sticking their noses in my business -again a good old military expression. I don't use it too often; get your tanks off my lawn - Yeah, I respect what they do. I don't have the in-depth knowledge to deliver what they deliver in the way that they do. I'm trained in my background, I've done it, so I have a view on the approach to teaching, but fundamentally that is their business for them to get on with. Likewise, I look for them to respect the fact that they don't have the depth of knowledge and experience that I do. (R4. Extract: 29)

R4 was discussing boundaries between roles at the executive level and his sense of respected boundaries was common to all participant interviews.

4.4.5 Knowledge

As already presented, knowledge and what is seen as 'relevant' knowledge is a complex issue. What is being discussed may be more accurately described as expertise, which covers a very wide range of backgrounds. Participants were asked to discuss their knowledge of higher education regulation in England, reflecting the increasing focus on the institution and meeting external pressures shown in the literature review.

Pritchard (2000) discussed knowledge and practices of management as priorities which flow around professional identities rather than subordinating them, and this is reflected in the responses of academic managers who when discussing regulation chose to focus on the principles tied up in regulatory changes:

I think there are different, bigger problems in the way that OfS is managing things. But it's not to do with the regulations. It's more to do with the support or lack of it, that I see from OfS for the university as an institution under the mistaken belief that if the students are the most important thing, then bugger the university, we put all the focus on the student. Now, my argument would be that the students are studying at the university and if you don't work with the universities for the universities to be as good as they can be, a bit like, crudely, you take a company like John Lewis, and it's generally regarded as a very good place to shop as a customer. And the big thing behind it is that they look after their workforce. So, their workforce care for what happens, and it matters to them. So the argument that from the OfS - well, we're there for the students - there is a real sense that everything that is being done is with little consideration for the universities, their long term sustainability, a sense that market forces will always prevail to produce the best outcomes, but there are lots of reasons to believe that's unlikely to be the case. (R5. Extract: 30)

The concern for the normative in R5's response was shared across the academic managers when discussing regulation. Knowledge of regulation for the academic managers was not viewed as important to their roles as senior managers, and discussion often moved back towards the discipline when describing authority to lead. However, despite the perceived unimportance of regulatory knowledge, regulation

itself was viewed as important to their identities as members of the academic community due to the way regulation is perceived as refocusing the institution away from the accepted norms of higher education (Parker and Jary, 1995). All of the academic managers stated they had good regulatory knowledge, but were different to their professional manager counterparts, being much more inclined to question the rationale behind the new regulatory framework, taking a broader view of the impact of regulation on higher education.

Professional managers external also described regulation as an aspect of the role but not one which shaped it, and regulatory knowledge played little part in their professional identities. They did not see their authority as built in or enhanced by regulatory knowledge, but they did acknowledge a view that organisational interests in regulation serves to strengthen their positions more broadly because of the teams they managed.

The professional managers internal were the only group to see regulatory knowledge as important to their professional identities and current position, describing sector specific knowledge as intrinsic to their roles:

I think it's got to be very good, partly because I'm responsible for strategy and governance, partly because no one else in the institution is asked to pick up on those questions. So, I have a small team of people who pick up on detail, but I have to be really up there on understanding. I have to read the WonkHE things. I have to go through the reports, and part of that is also wanting to. So, I run the {higher education sector representation group}. So, we're meeting in three weeks' time and part of my job is to make sure my colleagues feel that they understand what's going on and bring people in. So, that's the one thing that I have to stay on top of. I can't... I can miss certain things, but I can't just ignore the sector because my job is about where the institution's going in the next three to five years, so I have to understand it. (R1. Extract: 31)

R1 places regulation and regulatory knowledge at the centre of her role, and this is distinctly different to the disciplinary knowledge which underpins the roles of the

academic managers, and the broader managerial knowledge of the professional managers external. R1's describes an incursion of the managerial into all aspects of the institution as a result of the external regulatory requirements. This serves to maintain and strengthen her position, and this was further expanded upon when discussing the implications of TEF:

It's my job to keep that overview, particularly on areas I'm responsible for. But I still need to know - not quite in as much detail - but I still need to know as much as the Deputy Vice Chancellor knows about TEF, because I need to understand that to help the institution's strategy development going forward. I need to understand the implications across the different areas of the organisation. Whereas she's interested in what academics have to do, I have to be thinking about exactly how we run our data collection. What does mean for processes? So, there is that sense and I think most COOs and Registrars would say the same thing, that part of the benefit of their role is that they are seen as having that sort of knowledge - hat. (R1. Extract: 32)

R1's responses highlight the way professional managers internal manage the boundaries of their roles through regulatory knowledge and this is different from the professional managers external who aren't bringing sector specific knowledge, but rather a broader knowledge of management. This is clearest in R2's interview when describing his regulatory knowledge as "probably less than ideal", but did not see this as a barrier to being successful in his current role:

No, because I have expertise around me at all levels. So, if I want to know about an aspect of regulation, I have a person around the corner I can go to and say 'what's this all about? Can I see something on this?' and they will get it for me. There's multitude of regulatory aspects of higher education institutions. So, when the issues emerge, as they may at Court or Executive Board, then I would read material and try to understand it. But I don't think it...I don't find it inhibiting that others know more about this than I do. And many - some people know a lot about it. (R2. Extract: 33)

R2's response is managerial in outlook, drawing on the skills and knowledge of his direct reports as and when needed. The response places little importance in the need for sector knowledge, which R2 sees as secondary to his role as manager. Across the

data there is a strong sense of disciplinary expertise as the knowledge which carries the greatest influence in shaping careers and giving authority.

4.4.6 Summary of Drawing authority to lead

- Management is perceived as institutional focused and the further one moves into management the less focus participants believed could be placed on the professional background which assisted career progression.
- Leadership is intertwined with management, possibly being viewed as secondary in importance at the executive level where institutional decisions are described as being made much more according to the operational than the normative.
- Participants believe credibility is built in numerous domains and is not necessarily connected to academia, but the need for experience as an academic to enable one to envisage a clear progression path remains strong.
- There are limits to the extent different types of credibility can be used, and that which is built in higher education management is the most restrictive.
- Knowledge is closely tied with credibility and again, different types of knowledge have different currencies for managers with discipline remaining the most valued in how far it can carry a career.

4.5 Theme – Influencing change

The way participants discussed the boundaries of their roles was drawn from their own perception of ability to influence change. The weaker the boundary, the more influence could be exerted. Participants described a centralising of power at each of the organisations, tightening the couplings of their component elements, which they believed had resulted in closer working across academic and professional service boundaries. All of the participants saw a divide between academic and non-academic

management at their institution, and discussion of the boundaries between the two was woven through the interviews. There was a uniform belief that professional boundaries are to be expected and need careful consideration when making decisions so as not to create conflict. Boundaries were discussed in terms of remit of the role but also more conceptually as principles which guide decisions.

4.5.1 Across boundaries

Discussion of needing to work across boundaries in order to influence change, was common to all interviews, with participants recognising the need for close working relations. However, participants also discussed experiences of colleagues working to protect their own boundaries as an issue of professional integrity and securing positional authority.

R5 described an entrenched academic/professional manager divide coming from a period in which the institution experienced serious financial difficulties, heightening an existing sense of 'us and them' and creating siloes across the institution. This view of organisations under pressure becoming siloed was shared by other participants, who also discussed the divisions which were not at the executive but rather from the level of Dean/Director down. At the executive level, the participants saw the boundaries between roles as something to be aware of and respected but not as barriers, with all feeling their contributions were welcome and encouraged across a whole range of areas regardless of their background.

Professional service managers internal were more inclined to discuss boundaries and how they managed across them, using their knowledge of the sector, and increasingly drawing on management information (ranging from market insight to course completion and satisfaction data) to give credibility to their decisions and drive

organisational change. Academic discussions about pedagogy and methods of learning may not ordinarily include professional managers, but when using data to understand the academic offer of the institution, the professional managers at the senior executive groups described expanding their remit to discussing quality of provision and the expectations of students:

We've got quite fantastic data here - I think <author's employing institution> are developing actually - around all the admissions cycle marketing information, down to a very finite level of information, and that has been able to expose things that are quite interesting. So, if we were - one of the discussions I was having with the Union was we've got a small area of academic study that we're not going to be continuing with any further and so we've got some processes, restructuring processes going through. But the argument for not progressing that subject is the students don't want to do it. The quality is not very good. The research funding opportunities aren't there. Why would we continue with it? (R1. Extract: 34)

This process of using data to influence change was often referenced by the professional managers, illustrating a method of engagement with academic colleagues much in the same way professional managers lead their own teams – i.e. stating the case for change and then enacting the change.

R2 also discussed boundary expansion when taking budgetary pressures into consideration, describing this as setting the framework for what is 'justifiable' when establishing and servicing a programme:

Or it might be that there would be discussions about course duration, course content, and such subject areas might arise and we may say well this is going to require significant capital investment if we're going to go down this path, so are we certain that we've got the funding available and we're going to share the facilities that we have as a result of this investment? These are not academic in the sense of precise course content but they're academic in the sense of commitments are being made to the academics and to the course and we need to debate whether or not they're justifiable. (R2. Extract: 35).

R2's interactions with academic colleagues demonstrates a focus on the financial pressures placed on the institution and is firmly managerial in approach. The academic managers recognised the importance of such information for gaining the support of professional managers and the professional services, and often spoke in similar terms. However, they also believed these tools were less useful when managing fellow academics where debate was expected and use of data to push decisions created conflict. When using management information, external regulation, or financial constraints to justify a decision, the academic managers described strong resistance from academic teams and a need to engage in discussion of the principles of the issue.

Participants expressed a consistent view that the programmes, though held by the individual faculties and academic teams, need to fit into the strategic priorities of the organisation, opening up the decision-making process to a much larger set of considerations than purely the academic. These broader considerations result in a meeting of the academic functions with the business needs, giving a stronger voice to the professional managers as discussions around resources and market take precedence over the academic output. This was highlighted by the way professional managers described being heavily involved in the formation of the working cultures of their organisations, managing large transformation projects and helping to set appropriate budgets:

We went through a major restructuring of the whole University in 2013/14, called <name>: transformation program. I led that. I was asked to lead it, I didn't volunteer for it, I made the mistake of being away on holiday, came back and was sort of invited to the VC's office. So, I suppose in that regard I program managed a complete reorganisation, but the actual policy decisions on what the academic structure should be, were academically led; albeit I brought in consultants that particularly tackle this issue of the work of the role - what is the job of an academic at a particular level? How can we best aggregate the business? (R4. Extract: 36)

In extract 36, the financial constraints of the institution created space for questioning the role of the academic, framing the boundaries of the role at different hierarchical levels. This thread of questioning the role of an academic, and looking at the spread of duties which sit within, was also raised by R2: *'And so, this issue about academic or non-academic, what are the confines of an academic role, is continually questioned - and I don't mean by me or by my teams, I just mean conceptually it's a question'*. (R2. Extract: 37)

Questions of what is and is not an academic issue were common to all of the interviews, as participants discussed the considerations of the executive, and this was conveyed as being an approach of principle (academic) or operational (management). Professional managers acknowledged the need for academic manager colleagues to approach issues differently, recognising the broader nature of their roles. There was broad discussion of the motivations of senior leaders, with professional managers considered to be more institution focused than their academic colleagues who were seen to be primarily discipline focused. The academic managers described being exposed to the greatest tensions as they attempted to balance the two sides of their role, often reflecting on the arbitrary divide between academic and non-academic, citing areas where the divide was only one of framing. Timetabling was one such area, often cited as an issue which could be viewed as both academic and operational, and participants saw difficulties whichever way timetabling is framed, with the boundaries of roles being expanded or reduced as a result.

Both of the professional managers external saw the boundaries of their role as much wider than any of the other professional manager participants, describing boundaries as increasingly irrelevant barriers to success for the modern university. Only the

academic managers were uniform in discussing their roles in unbounded terms, seeing any aspect of the institution as within their remit if the outcome was in any way linked to the student experience, though recognising the limits of what is deemed appropriate knowledge when doing so.

Across all participants there was a recognition for the need to streamline ways of working, reduce barriers, and focus the institution to meet the needs of the market and regulator, and this was evident in the strengthening of the centre at their institutions. However, attempts to move to wholly centralised management were not discussed and the data showed participants describing a continuation of more hands-off, loosely coupled management of the basic units. Most of the participants did not have any budget responsibility, and in large part budgets were managed at the tier below the executive – e.g. Deans and Directors. Participants were however involved in the setting of budgets, and this allows for influence over parts of the institution which could fall outside of the senior manager's areas of experience.

4.5.2 Decision making

The criteria for framing decisions as being of academic or operational was unclear, and all aspects of the institution discussed by participants (other than the academic content of programmes which participants viewed as very much the territory of the subject specific academics) were open to input from academic and professional managers at the executive.

Across the participants, decision making was articulated in similar terms to Belenkey's (1998) managing through creative consensus. Participants described the process as collective across senior management, with decisions ranging from resource allocation,

to appetite for entering a new market, made by the executive. Two participants likened the decision-making process to that of cabinet government, with the different portfolio holders presenting their plans and each member of the executive making a valued contribution to the final decision. Others spoke more generally of the collective nature of decision making and having respect for the contribution of their colleagues. The collective consensus approach was illustrated in an example provided by R4 who recalled an occasion when a decision was taken by the group after consideration of his concerns:

They welcome inputs from me - so a contribution to the decision-making process - if I put my foot down does it make any difference? Not particularly. I mean, I've only done it once. I did it three summers ago, when we'd been through very difficult budgetary times and I found out that one of our colleges could have taken within one of the departments an extra 80 students but just decided they didn't want to and that was 750,000 quid worth of business. So, I really let at it. I didn't get my way, probably didn't expect to, but it put the marker down. Then in the next round they knew what I was going to say because we needed the money. But ultimately, they will make...if they are the ruling caste, using that expression, if it's got an element of academic judgment around it, then they will have the final say. (R4. Extract: 38)

In this example 'academic judgement' is used to overrule the empirical data through which the professional managers manage, placing the academic concerns ahead of the operational. Description of the tensions of balancing academic and organisational priorities were present in all interviews, and R4's interpretation of events is similar to those experienced by R7:

So, occasionally, I would say, you know, on my Vice Chancellor's group, we can have quite robust conversations about, for example, I'll be saying, we need to protect the academic life of the university. And actually, if the cuts have got to come, let's see the cuts happening as stringently on ICT projects or estates projects, because actually it's the academics who are the life of the University and student experience, and that's where...do you know what I mean? And I can see other people saying, 'hang on a minute, you know, you've got masses of lecturers in that school, and I've got hardly any people to do these ICT projects. And you're telling me we need a new student record system or a new library system.' And, you know, so there's a definite tension. And you have to

work that through, and you have to, when you're on a senior group, you have to decide when to have a fight and when not to. (R7. Extract: 39)

Once decisions were made, the participants described different approaches to enacting them depending on both the type of function in question and manager charged with implementing it. Professional managers communicated decisions through what Simkins (2005) described as traditional leadership, speaking with the direct reports, and tasking them with implementing change. The style described was transactional and the professional managers felt no need to engage further unless they were required to resolve issues. The academic managers however described feeling much more bound to the decision and continued to lead horizontally when working with academic colleagues, taking time to try and build consensus at subsequent levels of the institution. This was not the case however when describing their interactions with professional service colleagues which were more similar to their professional manager colleagues.

The experiences described by academic participants show an emerging recognition of the more hands-off approach of professional managers as a more efficient process of management for meeting the needs of the contemporary university, though all saw a lack of consideration for the true function of the university in this approach. Tensions were seen as resulting from an increasingly vocal professional services encroaching on the authority of academic managers, and several academic participants described situations when they felt a need to reassert the importance of the academic mission and remind professional service colleagues of their role in supporting this, though such concerns were relatively minor.

The framing of issues as academic or non-academic was not discussed as an active process, but rather one of discussing an issue in relation to a range of other concerns and arriving at the most appropriate outcome; displaying an organisational focus to decision making. Participants described decision making processes as either a flattening of the organisational hierarchy to accommodate academic colleagues and the discipline, or a utilisation of hierarchy to push through the decisions which were seen as important to the organisation as a whole.

The participants were uniform in describing cordial and collegiate relationships between executive teams as they come together to make decisions which shape the organisation.

4.5.3 Summary of Influencing change

The participants described their experiences as:

- Boundaries at the executive level are low and not fixed, regularly changing in response to the academic and operational imperatives.
- Where boundaries are experienced, they are reduced through the use of management information which is used as a tool to allow broader influence for professional managers. This suggests managerialism expands the remit of collegiality beyond academic voices.
- The executive teams are collegiate and operate processes of decision making by collective consensus; though there are limits to this as the academic mission remains central to the identity of universities.
- A professionalised workforce is a requirement for success, and this illustrates the importance of quantifiable outcomes for the contemporary university as well as a further entrenchment of managerialism in coming years.

4.5.4 Conclusion

The data analysis has produced clear findings and the summaries provided at the end of each theme are used here to address the research questions. The findings are not generalised to the sector, but rather to the participants, summarising the analysis of their responses.

1. How are senior roles in higher education changing in response to the pressures found across the higher education sector?

The analysis has shown the roles of senior managers changing to operate in the uncertain climate of the contemporary higher education sector. These changes are equally represented by the role of professional managers in making institution wide decisions, as they are in academic managers placing organisational concerns ahead of the academic. Interdependencies between roles are viewed as important and this is evident in the collegial approach taken across executive teams.

Key findings in relation to research question 1:

- The senior management teams provide a collegial, consensus driven space in which concerns for professional background are less important than the need to ensure the sustainability of the organisation in a challenging environment.
- Academic managers are increasingly institutional focused and are further entrenching managerialism through plans to implement management and leadership programmes for the next generation of leaders.
- The senior management teams through the use of management information promote a managerial influence on the institution's normative.

- The academic mission of the institution has a reduced influence on the institutional normative as the perceived need for professionalised management and leadership skills has taken root.

1a. What does this mean for the boundaries between professional and academic managers?

As the senior managers are increasingly required to focus on the organisation, management information and professionalised approaches to roles gain increased importance, reducing the boundaries between senior academic and professional managers at the executive.

The literature review and interview responses show the practice of academic management as complex, with the individual required to alternate their management and leadership style according to the audience or the nature of the issue – academic or professional service / academic or organisational. However, if professionalisation is imbedded in the development of roles (as the participants stated was their intention going forward), then the skills needed to manage, and lead academics will also presumably change over time as the normative is reshaped.

Key findings in relation to research question 1a:

- Participants for the most part perceived the boundaries of roles their roles as not fixed, moving in response to the situation.
- The academic managers are using management information when managing and leading. This, coupled with implementing formal training programmes, suggests an entrenching of moves from collegial leadership to hierarchical management.

2. Is there evidence in the data of different practices of leadership and management relevant to the background of the participant?

Descriptions of practices and processes of managerialism and professionalisation are present in the data, though the extent to which either has been fully embraced is described as considerably less than some strands of the literature suggest. Management is described in much the same way across the data as a set of tools to be utilised to reach personal and organisational goals. Generally, the perceived importance of management is shown across the data, with participants displaying an organisational focus and an interest in achieving results.

Key finding in relation to research question 2:

- Management and leadership as increasingly discreet functions, used to arrive at quantifiable outcomes, making them more transactional in nature.
- Those who have built their careers in higher education continue to see problems with managerialism and professionalisation despite also further embedding both as the only clear solution to the pressures placed on the contemporary university.

In conclusion, the analysis has shown participants believing the roles of senior managers have changed in response to the needs of the organisation, creating a collegial space at the executive level in which broader concerns give voice to professional managers, and move their academic colleagues to a situation in which management information is also important to their roles.

For the most part, the changes are shown to be to the advantage of professional managers who have seen the extent of their influence grow, as they begin to show signs of operating as a more defined professionalised group. For the institution this

can be seen as working to ensure sustainability in a highly regulated, marketised environment, but also as potentially weakening the academic normative which is forced to compete with an increasing number of influences. This view was expressed in the academic data as participants discussed having to re-assert the importance of the academic mission during discussions. Not that this is new; in 1992 Becher and Kogan discussed the many influences on the institutional normative, which range from financial pressures to social and cultural changes in society. What is perhaps more recent is the strength with which professional managers see themselves as able to state their case and have the organisational concerns placed firmly within discussions about the academic portfolio.

The participants described an environment in which senior managers work collegially and barriers are reduced by positioning the executive as an organisational focused team. The findings show the academic managers continuing to alternate between managing hierarchically and leading collegially depending on their audience. However, there is also evidence of the same participant group focusing on the use of management information through which to do both, creating the space for professional managers to exert influence and broaden the boundaries of their roles. Despite any misgivings about the principles of managerialism and the effect it is having on academic identities, the academic managers describe supporting the professionalisation process as a means to thrive in the current higher education sector environment.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The participants provided candid accounts of their experiences and views on managing and leading in the contemporary university. Their views are drawn from different professional experiences, but there are clear themes across all. This chapter examines the findings in relation to the existing literature, seeking to establish what the research may contribute to the broader debate on changes across higher education.

5.2 Professionalisation of higher education

The literature review utilised Gornitzka and Larsen's (2004) four key characteristics of professionalisation in higher education administration as a starting point from which to review broader literature on the implications of professionalisation. Across the literature there is clear evidence of all four in practice in the English higher education sector:

- An increase in the formal status of administrative positions
- An increase in the requirement for formal qualifications for administrative positions
- The emergence of a common cognitive basis
- The growth and formalisation of professional networks

Though Gornitzka and Larsen were describing the professionalisation of administration, when looking at the data in this research, much of the same criteria can be assigned to academic roles - e.g. a requirement for formal qualifications, a strong allegiance to a common cognitive basis and an early exposure to formalised professional networks. Though formulated at an earlier point in academic careers.

Unlike their academic colleagues, the careers of professional managers do not give easy access to the four characteristics and it is more likely a professional manager will advance their career through a process of seeking out opportunities which will allow them to stand out from their peers. There is a lack of structure one would expect to see in a truly professionalised environment, and this can be seen across the four characteristics.

The constant reflection on principle in decisions found coming from the academic participants, displays a common cognitive basis from which academic professional identities are built. Though there are differing perspectives across all participants in the importance of principle when placed alongside the interests of the institution as an organisation, the academic participants showed a consideration found to be less present in the professional manager interviews. This supports Fielden's (1975) assertion that professional managers are loyal to the system and university as an organisation and belies any notion of a strong underpinning cognitive basis attached to broader principles of discipline or academic experience. This is particularly true of the professional managers external who in contrast to the academic participants stripped the academic element out of discussion of the university, choosing instead to focus on the organisational issues, placing the sustainability of the institution ahead of the academic mission.

Similarly, there is little evidence in the data of any perceived importance of qualifications to the roles of professional managers. This was in contrast to the academic managers who were keen to explain how formal qualifications had featured in their professional development – this being particularly true of those from research backgrounds – largely seeing qualifications as important to position.

Alongside the lack of common cognitive basis and focus on the need for formal qualifications, the networks available to professional managers were seen as an additional aspect of their development rather than intrinsic, leading one to question how true in practice Allen-Collinson's (2009) assertion that building external professional networks provides a source of capital for professional managers, actually is. Where external professional networks exist, professional managers are likely to find prominence within them does not carry over into internal credibility and this may be linked to the lack of common cognitive basis amongst professional managers who build their credibility internally, through a process of expanding their roles over time.

Professionalisation is an empowering process, conferring status upon members of professional groups, and as asserted here, academic careers inherently provide access to the four characteristics, however the professional managers described a continued struggle to have the same criteria recognised as important to their roles. So, whilst professionalisation is taking place, it does not appear to be conferring the same level of status to the professional managers. The difficulties professional managers experience in meeting all four criteria suggests the professionalisation process for them remains under-developed, and this in turn fits with the views found in the literature of managerialism as having been only partially adopted (Deem, 2004).

The professional managers external by contrast, have arrived in higher education via a different route, with their professional credentials established in their previous career, in environments where professionalisation of administration had long since been adopted. Each held clear status in their previous organisation, required formal qualifications and training to progress, held a common cognitive basis found in the more focused role of the organisation (e.g. military purpose), and had strong links with formalised professional networks. Once in higher education these managers described

utilising their successes in a different sector to access senior management posts and continue to draw on this throughout their career in higher education, able to carry over status built externally.

With the importance attributed to formal qualifications being seen as important to professionalisation, one would expect management training to feature prominently in organisations which are managerial in outlook. However, for the institutions of the participants, this was not shown in the data. Instead, the participants were only now at the point of implementing management training, having recognised a gap at their institution. This appeared to contradict Deem et al.'s (2008) finding that a large number of post 1992 providers had invested heavily in internal management development. However, in two of the interviews the participants discussed having previously had a training programme which was suspended and was now being re-instated, having acknowledged the need for further management development. This perhaps reinforces the view of a partial or protracted adoption of managerial practices, and the continued importance of more traditional progression routes in their institutions.

This is supported in the literature which shows a tendency for academic managers not to fully engage with the managerial process (Fanghanel, 2012) because of how it undermines the existing structures for academic professional identities and progression. Hence, whilst in 2008 Deem et al. were writing about heavy investment in training, by 2019 this had been removed at the participants' institutions and only now were they again looking to re-instate the training. This seems symptomatic of a broader start, stop, adoption of managerialism in the contemporary English university, and the drivers of this constant state of flux may well be in response to the shifting

policy framework and external regulations which creates turmoil from which new orders are established.

Whilst evidence of professionalisation was present in the data, there was a lack of formal structure to support progression and this was recognised by all participants as something lacking, with each describing a suitable structure being important to success in the contemporary higher education market.

5.3 Managerialism and academics

The literature and analysis both show professional managers primarily managing through hierarchy, using their position as a tool through which to influence change. The data suggests there an expectation for professional managers to only engage with any debate on how a decision impacts the normative at a very superficial level, taking time to listen, and answer questions before enacting a decision which has already been made. This is described in terms which suggest the process is driven by hierarchy and the way professional managers build their careers as one of many working *for* the institution, rather than how their academic colleagues position themselves as independent individuals working *at* an institution. The academic managers by contrast spoke in terms which showed a perceived expectation to manage with consideration for the normative, taking care to include academic colleagues in discussion, respecting their individuality.

As shown, according to the criteria of Gornitzka and Larsen (2004), academic roles are already professionalised. However, in the contemporary university professionalisation is closely linked with managerialism and so any further attempts to 'professionalise' academic management is to strengthen the role of managerialism in academic roles (Deem, 1998). In practice this is to place the institution at a higher level

of priority, utilising the tools of professional managers to analyse situations, make decisions, and enact them. It is a moving away from the subject expertise and traditional methods of building academic careers, to a focus on the institution and management information. When linked with Deem et al.'s (2008) three paths to academic management (career, reluctant and good citizen), this would suggest both the reluctant and good citizen managers are increasingly less relevant to the contemporary university, and potentially that boundaries between roles are less relevant as a result.

Much of the debate around managerialism centres around the extent institutions have adopted more corporate organisational structures and the impact this has on academic communities. The findings of this research show the participants describing managerialism being further entrenched into the management structures of their universities, even as the academic managers continue to ideologically resist the process of managerialism and professionalisation, recognising the impact they have on institutional focus and professional identities.

Across the data, there is broad recognition of the need for their institutions to adopt professional approaches to management if they are to survive in an increasingly competitive landscape. The senior managers are responding to this with plans to create structures into which the next generation of leaders can build their careers with the organisation rather than discipline in mind, accepting this as important to protecting the life of the university as a market dependent organisation. Intrinsic to this is a refocusing of the way academic managers manage and lead, moving more towards the approach employed by their professional manager colleagues. Though as shown, this is not a new way of managing for the academic managers as they described already engaging with their professional service colleagues in this way.

As managerialism becomes increasingly entrenched, and the further up the hierarchy a manager climbs, it is arguably the case that discussion of normative and operational priorities divided across roles (academic and professional managers) becomes less relevant. Instead it is more a case of looking at the operational and normative across the needs of the organisation and balancing this with one's own priorities. There is evidence of this in the participant interviews, and a keen awareness amongst all, of the particular difficulties experienced by academic managers as they try to balance the two.

5.4 The boundaries of roles

In 1998, Deem wrote of a situation in which a financial crisis at Lancaster University resulted in a hardening of managerial practices and a tightening of the loose couplings of the organisation, with the intention of redefining professional roles and boundaries under clear management structures. 25 years later when interviewed for this research, R4 described a similar situation at his institution where financial concerns presented a serious threat to the future of the organisation, requiring a restructure of the academic and professional services, reducing staff numbers and strengthening organisational couplings.

In much the same way as Deem (1998) described a process of partial or superficial adoption of managerialism to survive a period of crisis, R4 also described subsequent events (a and b below) as a partial return to the norms of the institution before the crisis, illustrating that a real cultural shift had not been possible and continued to be resisted:

- a. The decision discussed in extract 38 when academic colleagues refused to enter a group of students despite the organisation having serious financial concerns, placing the academic needs ahead of the organisational.
- b. Continued resistance from academic teams to full engagement with institutional compliance requirements despite having experienced the consequences of a failing in UKVI compliance: *'But in terms of academic engagement in the compliance training that's required for UKVI, and you can write that across Health and Safety, GDPR, bribery and corruption, they're difficult to get to the table, with one exception - that's the younger ones. The younger ones seem to get it and when we do open the sessions up, they say 'why haven't we had this before?'. The older ones, particularly those who are more embedded in research, just sort of come forward grudgingly.'*

This view of resistance to change reflects the perceived presence of different working cultures within the contemporary university, as shown in the literature review. But R4 also describes a difference in approach from academics who have more recently entered academia, and this can be seen as potentially an example of changing expectations of professionalised roles and a broader acceptance of quantifiable, recorded processes and outcomes, as important to the contemporary institution.

The difference in cultures across the university are less evident at the executive where there is a clear sense of shared endeavour (Duncan, 2014), with participants discussing decisions as being made by cabinet style processes. The way in which decisions are made as either predominantly academic or organisational focused, with all members of the senior executive team feeling their role is important, reflects the presence of both loose and tight couplings overlapping according to situations. It is an

affirmation of Whitchurch's (2004) model of the university as four intertwined domains - community, services, partnership and reputation - and presents the institutions of the participants as hybrid organisations, with all the contradictions of hybridisation as described by Deem (1998).

Further moves towards a predominantly managerial system would involve a strengthening of the organisation's hierarchy and with that clearly defining the role of the academic (as was discussed by R2 in extract 37), though none of the participants showed a particular drive to implement such wide-ranging change. Instead they described a process of compromise driven by the constraints of the institution – a method of collegiality that involves a wider range of stakeholders than traditional found in universities. The academic managers describe being able to operate in this space by altering their approach to management and leadership to fit the situation, balancing the two aspects of their role, much in the same way they describe their interactions with professional service colleagues. However, there are clear boundaries to how far an academic manager can take this balance before they compromise their position, which has been shown to be built on academic credentials. Operating on professional manager terms risks superimposing managerial practices across the entire decision-making function of the university, resulting in the academic manager becoming divorced from the everyday academic activities of the institution (Fanghanel, 2012). Though senior academic managers in any university model are bound to end up somewhat removed from their academic colleagues, in the managerial institution the potential for this is further exasperated, hence the need for a mixed management system of loose and tight if the academic manager is to retain their credibility amongst academic peers. Assessing this in relation to the already established moves the executive teams are making to imbed professionalised approaches to management,

there appears to be an increasingly real, long term threat to the established norms of academic leadership in the organisations of the participants.

The role of the senior executive as described by the participants, can be viewed as both a necessity to respond quickly to the needs of the organisation, and also to an extent a destabilising force in the norms of institutional leadership. Warner and Palfreyman (1996), set out two modes of decision making in higher education: formal, committee driven and academic led, or informal, outside of the structures of the institution and led by management. The boundaries of roles are apparent in the differentiation, and full access to the entire formal committee structure is only really available to academics. Though professional managers may sit as lay members on committees, the limits to their contributions will be constrained by the focus of the committee – i.e. primarily academic or supporting functions. The space of the senior executive sits outside of the committee structure, and though categorised as informal in the university context, the executive utilises and strengthens formal hierarchy across the organisation. By nature of making and enacting decisions through hierarchy there is a clear case for viewing the executive teams as managerial entities, however, the way in which participants described how they operate is clearly collegial; involving debate, consideration for the views of others and a process of agreement through compromise (Bloom, 1997).

5.5 Management and leadership

The question of knowledge, and what knowledge is legitimate to lead, remains pertinent for the higher education sector, and this is shown in the data. Academic managers are expected to meet two criteria to build and maintain their authority to lead – a background in the discipline coupled with experience of management and

leadership. This is in contrast to professional managers who are primarily employed on their competence to manage. The knowledge they are required to demonstrate does not necessarily need to be higher education specific, in fact several participants were quite clear in seeing sector specific knowledge as limiting roles to cross-boundary.

Fanghanel (2012) addressed the differing requirements for legitimacy and discussed the ways in which managerialism changes academic identities through the dependence on quantifiable outcomes. This can be seen in the responses of the academic managers where the pressures of running the university as a market dependent organisation, forces a constant reappraisal of their professional priorities. Despite the best efforts of academic managers to stay rooted in their background, the operational is increasingly placing pressure on the institutional normative, and this is apparent when programme decisions are framed in relation to management information.

The use of management information is seen as important to making informed and justifiable decisions, removing some of the need for building consensus when implementing change. Management information as a tool for change adds a further dimension to Salter and Tapper's (2002) assertion that providing assurances for external stakeholders negatively impacts on institutional autonomy. The analysis has illustrated how participants are taking the same information used to provide assurances externally and actively using it to shape their institutions internally. This represents a clear shift towards management as a discrete function, using quantifiable measures to enact change.

As the data shows, operational and normative considerations influence the decision-making processes of senior managers. If the decisions are made primarily through the lens of the organisation, then the issue moves further towards the professional/operational side of the organisation's management. The same is described as true of decisions made purely on academic merits, in which case one would expect the issue to come more under academic management and the normative of an academic institution takes priority.

All participants showed a strong focus on the financial (operational), as without the financial security of block grants from government, the institutions were obliged to put market considerations at the heart of decisions to protect their academic missions. However, the participants provide a sense of the institutional normative being academic, mission focused. Becher and Kogan (1992), discussed the deeper fundamental questions which result in the operational concerns being placed at the centre of decisions, which they assert would shift the normative:

- should the university resist or strive to meet market pressures?
- should it seek to influence social and industrial practice or be a humanising force for sustaining traditional liberal education?
- Is it predominantly a community of scholars, or should it meet the demands of students and non-academic colleagues who seek to share in policy making?

It can be argued that the history of post '92 institutions will mean some of these normative questions were answered in their creation (e.g. a history as an applied skills based polytechnic) and those coming into senior executive roles at these types of institutions require an understanding of this from the outset. However, organisations change and the individuals leading them bring their own histories and values which

shape the institution as much as the experience of working at the institution shapes the individual (Warner and Palfreyman, 1996).

It is clear that a focus on financial sustainability reduces the boundaries between senior managers, allowing for the skills of professional managers to play a larger role in setting the criteria in which a decision is to be made; creating an environment of collegial decision making on different criteria to traditional collegiality. The senior executive is described by participants as collegial, and their decisions are made by broad consensus, but what drives the decision is not necessarily academic and this may have repercussions for the whole organisation.

However, limits to the influence of the senior management team remain built into the structures of the participant institutions, and this in turn maintains some level of boundary between the academic managers, who can be involved in very broad decision making, and professional managers whose authority in decisions is drawn from sector knowledge and management information. Bargh et al. (2000), highlighted the importance of academic quality assurance processes in protecting the academic life of the institution, and the responses from participants to this research show finances providing a further counterbalance to top down driven decision making. Though the organisations' finances play a central role in the renegotiation of boundaries at the executive level, none of the senior managers had direct access to academic budgets, which continue to be under the control of Heads of School/Deans, placing a divide between the centre and the academic. Interpreted hierarchically this shows influence from the centre as susceptible to resistance from the department, which through finances is able to retain a degree of independence and a looser coupling than would be the case if budget responsibility were held entirely in the centre.

Here a potential difference between the working culture of the senior executive and that of the individual units is identified. Whereas the boundaries between senior managers appear to be blurred due to the imbedding of managerial practices and use of management information as a driver of change, this is less true for the departments where a focus on academic leadership is still important.

This appears to affirm Tight's (2003) assertion that there is no single model of the university in use at any one time, and rather as complex organisations universities are managed according to the needs of the situation, with professional boundaries changing at different levels of the organisation. Having said that, accepting the increased use of management information as driving organisational change, there is a clear argument to see this as solidifying the position of professional managers whose teams are often the owners and interpreters of this data, and that this may over time reduce boundaries at lower levels of the institution.

Universities have multiple identities which MacDonald and Phillips (2012) assert shift during moments of organisational change, leading one to assume they are in a state of constant flux as a result of the continuous process of change in the higher education sector. In responding to pressures, the structures of universities are regularly reorganised with the effect of shifting organisational identity, impacting on all stakeholders (Steiner, Sundstrom, and Kaisu, 2012). True managerial approaches to organisational management assume a single identity of the institution and set about managing as such, regardless of the presence of multiple identities; but the experiences of the senior managers do not reflect this.

Increased managerialism creates a scenario in which academic managers struggle to maintain credibility amongst their peers as the organisational structure moves them

further away from academic life. Throughout the responses from the academic participants, hierarchy is associated with a restricting of experience and this is because hierarchy sets more clearly defined boundaries to a role. Once boundaries have been set and hierarchy takes precedence, the distributed leadership model common to academic roles is less of a requirement to lead.

The analysis shows participants viewing credibility as a key aspect of leadership, though what gives credibility is different according to the categories of senior manager. Broadly, credibility is seen as linked to trustworthiness and competency, and while trustworthiness includes the attributes exhibited by the individual, competency is often defined by the assessment of others as to the individual's ability to perform in a role (Kim et al., 2009). What influences this assessment clearly depends on how a role is framed – e.g. is a Vice Chancellor primarily the leader of an academic institution or the CEO of a large semi-corporate entity? (Bargh et al., 2000). At present academic managers exhibit characteristics of leading horizontally and managing vertically, dependent on the situation. It is a process which maintains academics as the dominant group within university leadership, however, shifts away from the requirement for skills and experience in leading horizontally would ultimately be expected to further reduce the boundaries between academic and professional managers.

Since academic managers attach much of their credibility to having a continued connection with the role of the academic, allowing the institution they lead to further embrace managerialism would surely be detrimental to their own position. Yet, this is what appears to be happening at the institutions of the participants, as both academic and professional managers are implementing structures to support more

organisational focused leadership as a way to safeguard the future of the institution as a market driven organisation.

Deem et al. (2008) discussed management training as an attempt to standardise the way in which universities are led. Noting that academic careers include leadership at an early point and management is often introduced much later, placing management and leadership programmes early into careers would potentially result in a refocusing of priorities for those who receive the training. It is boundary blurring in that professional services can no longer view themselves as the owners of management, and neither can academics see leadership as primarily drawn from academic experience. This, Deem et al. assert (2008), provides the foundations for a form of collegiality which is more democratic and inclusive, and this is reflected in the interviews with the participants to this research.

5.6 Importance of the third space

The third space and third space professionals form an important part of the literature review, illustrating the emergence of new working domains which span the academic and organisational elements of the university (Whitchurch, 2009). The identities of third space professionals cross communities, making use of the different knowledge and approaches to domains, as Whitchurch defined in her four interlinking modes of the organisation.

Third space literature is primarily focused on the shifting boundaries within units, and the discussion to this point has shown senior managers as key to building the structures which allow this movement. It remains questionable to what extent the senior managers, lacking some of the associated characteristics, can be described as third space professionals. However, when looking at the executive teams, the third

space as a concept retains relevance as a question of what domain is legitimate for senior managers to inhabit, and how do different senior managers use their identities to work within the executive space.

The executive groups have been shown to work collegiately, with each member playing an equally important part in shaping the institution, and barriers between roles in any real sense are very low. This suggests the third space not only exists at the highest level of the institution, but also that it has been more fully accepted than at lower levels of the university. Yet there are subtle differences in the data that show nuances in the way participants view their own boundaries as well as those of their colleagues, and from this one can conclude that different participants see the role of managerialism (though not directly stated as such) as being more or less present in the organisational culture.

Ronald Barnett (1990) discussed organisational culture as a meeting point between theory and practice, noting the differences in the conservative ideals of the academic institution (maintaining traditional customs and beliefs), alongside the reality of operating a modern institution. In his assessment universities are a series of interwoven subcultures, rather than any one single entity, creating a unique working environment. Though drawing this conclusion primarily from an assessment of multiple disciplinary units, it can be seen as true at the higher organisational level, where the differing cultures of the university come together to shape their working environment. There is much of the third space about this, with boundaries being shaped and reshaped to accommodate the needs of the institution. However, whereas Barnett (1990) saw differences in approach as a result of discipline at the unit level, this is less present at the executive where broader interests take precedent (Deem et al., 2008).

This is illustrated in the responses from the academic participants who though categorised in this thesis as *research* or *teaching and learning*, and who at times did discuss their discipline background, were primarily focused on the broader institutional issues and showed little to differentiate their approach.

The nuances, having been drawn from the interviews with participants and as such are generalised to the participant groups, are set out here:

a. Academic Manager (research / teaching and learning)

Academic managers seek to retain close links with their academic colleagues throughout their careers, viewing this as important to their ability to lead by consent, rather than manage through hierarchy. When managing professional services, the academic managers utilise the hierarchical structures of the university to provide clarity of instruction, moving away from the need to lead by consensus. As a result of the changing approach to management dependent on audience, the organisation as managed by academics moves between loosely coupled, giving greater trust and control to localised leadership, to hierarchical with diktats coming from the centre.

The academic managers exhibit unbounded outlooks in approach to their roles, viewing any area of the university as legitimately open to their influence.

b. Professional Manager Internal

Professional managers internal have experience of working at different levels within the administrative tiers of the organisation, yet at each progression point they move further away from their initial role. Unlike academic managers who seek to retain a connection with their academic roots, professional managers internal seek to distance themselves through hierarchy, using this to provide their positional authority.

Professional managers internal operate in the executive space as cross-boundary professionals who use political savvy to straddle identities and culture, aware of the traditional boundaries of universities and sensitive to the concerns of their academic colleagues. The method of progression for these individuals creates within their outlook a broad balance between the normative and the operational, with a view that neither should impinge too much on the other. As a consequence, the organisation as influenced by these individuals retains much of its traditional characteristics. However, the knowledge they utilise in relation to management information does potentially pose a threat to the accepted norms because of how it encourages further imbedding of managerialism.

c. Professional Manager External

Having never worked at any of the lower levels within the organisation, the professional managers external are more inclined to view professional barriers as hinderances to organisational success. Professional managers external are unbounded or at the very least blended professionals who show little regard for traditional boundaries, working on university wide projects. There is particular importance placed on the organisation and ensuring sustainability. The professional managers external rely on managerial processes to maintain their position and communicate with colleagues. This makes the presence of professional managers external on the senior executive teams a strong influence on how their academic colleagues frame discussion – having noted that academic managers adjust their approach when working with those from professional backgrounds.

Having described roles at the executive level in third space terminology, there is a link between Deem et al.'s (2008) assertion that third space professionals may become

more bounded over time if structures are not in place to support them, and Dopson and McNay's (1996) view that suitable organisational structures are important to shaping the model of the university.

In expanding the structures which support third space working, the organisation shifts and the categorisations above may change – e.g. academic managers may operate more as cross-boundary professionals if the internal structures are not provided to make data management as much owned by academic teams as their professional manager colleagues.

5.7 Framework for understanding

Having arrived at evidenced responses to the research questions and engaged in a discussion of the relevance of the findings in relation to the existing knowledge, three aspects emerge as the central considerations from this research when discussing roles and understanding boundaries both now and in future. The framework shares much in common with Becher and Kogan's (1992) Synoptic Model, which described the pressures on the internal norms and operations as coming from the external, internal, and individual to arrive at an equilibration between the functions. However, the framework is more explicit in seeing the channels to promote change as being central to that balance, and that it is this which enables change. It is important to note, this framework is drawn from the findings; social constructs of the participants and interpretation of the researcher. As such, the assertions of this framework are limited to the boundaries of this research and are not generalised across the sector.

1. Focus of the executive

The extent to which senior managers view the role of the executive as organisation or academic mission focused plays a significant part in the boundaries between roles.

The executive is part of the centre and outside of the academic structures of the university, but its function shifts between the organisational and academic concerns, recognising that the two are intrinsically linked. There is no one set mode for the role of the executive, and senior managers are likely to adjust their focus according to the situation. To this, the managers bring their own experiences and interpretations of their role which shape their views and decisions, and the expectations of individuals are built in their backgrounds as much as their current experiences.

The more organisational focused the senior executive of a university is, the more one can expect an expansion in the boundaries of professional managers at that level. Management information is shown to play an important role in focusing the executive away from academic concerns, placing increased emphasis on the second order values (finances, licences, facilities, etc.) of an institution (Becher and Kogan, 1992). In being focused on these issues, collegial space is created, and boundaries are flexible.

2. Resilience of the institutional normative

Though the literature review shows a long history of changes to the normative, the participants described experiences which would suggest change is cyclical, with the operational needs changing the normative which again changes the operational. Second order values have been shown as important to influencing decisions and moving boundaries. The more vulnerable an institution is to movements in these areas, the more one can expect the operational to dictate the normative. Where second order values are more prominent in decision making, there is a potential risk of academic identities being constrained by the needs of the organisation and efforts to remain financially viable.

Though consideration 1 shows a focus on the organisation as creating collegial space, this cycle of change also risks weakening academic identities by entrenching managerial approaches. A stronger and more stable normative provides increased resistance to change, and acts as a counterbalance the consideration 1.

Consideration 1 and 2 would appear to push against each other and share something of Trowler's (2008) 'games' assertion, with a strong focus on one being to the detriment of the other.

3. *Channels to promote change*

Sitting between the organisational and the normative are the organisational channels for promoting change, and these may be strong or weak depending on the institution.

Such channels may include the use of management information in influencing decision making outside of the formal committee structure, or management training programmes placed early in careers to shape working expectation. Channels to promote change sit between the *focus of the executive* and the *resilience of the institutional normative* and the extent to which these structures influence the operational or normative of the university is dependent on how deeply imbedded and supported they are by the structures of the organisation.

A university may provide staff with a well-developed management training programme and excellent management information with the aim of building the tools to succeed in the current landscape, expanding professional boundaries to cover a wider range of areas, but senior leaders may find the organisational structures and internal culture required to implement these skills are resisted by the normative. Conversely, the structures could be strong, the culture may be open, but any real change is limited by

a lack of focus on the tools required for the operational to make any impact on the normative.

There is a balance to be achieved, as discussed by Deem et al. (2008), seeing a changing landscape as an opportunity for real, considered change, or just further entrenchment of managerialism without thought for the consequences.

Boundaries are complex and not simply issues of professional and academic divides. They are tied up in focus (both personal and institutional), external influences (be that second order or social and cultural), and the structures which exist to shape organisational change. Of the three conditions here, the data has not shown any element is dominant at any one time, and the interpretations of the participants suggests they believe boundaries are constantly being negotiated in response to the shifting considerations.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a discussion of the findings in context of the existing literature. The findings provide an insight into the way the participants interpret the way boundaries are built, maintained, changed, and removed. Importantly boundaries are not shown to be fixed and multiple identities of the institution and individual are evidenced throughout.

There is evidence in the data of participants seeing moves to centralised decision making, placing control for organisational norms at the centre. In centralising, it can be asserted barriers become less relevant as the executive sits outside of the formal reporting structure of the university, and this is utilised by senior managers to choose how decisions are focused (as described most clearly by R7 in extract 39).

Barriers at the executive level are described as being reduced as a result of encroachment of managerial practices being brought into universities. This, as described by the participants and interpreted in the analysis, has encouraged a new type of collegiality which uses the language of professional managers to protect the institution, reducing barriers and extending boundaries for professional managers. This reinforces Bacon's (2009) view that different languages between leaders are to be avoided if success is to be possible, and has clear implications for the future of boundaries between professional and academic colleagues across the institutions of the participants as the type of collegiality shown at the executive is cascaded down.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an opportunity to look more broadly at some of the issues which have been raised in this research. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the limitations and opportunities for further research.

6.2 Executive Collegiality

It would be incorrect to describe the universities in this research as market driven as they do not primarily pursue market share in the way a private corporation would be expected to. The participants do however perceive the decision-making processes as incorporating particular consideration for the market to ensure programmes are sustainable. The data shows the participants describing their organisations as operating soft managerial structures, which they deem is a requirement of being able to successfully operate in the contemporary higher education sector.

It can be argued that the experiences of collegiality at the executive are possible in part because the executive sits outside of the formal committee structure and is more able to focus on the university as an organisation. Descriptions of a more unified sense of purpose are evident, and this would make decision making by consensus easier.

The literature review and findings suggest the professional service managers bring the much-needed skills required to manage the contemporary university, and this is balanced by the academic experience of the academic managers who are able to speak with authority on a wider range of institutional issues. The senior executive space, as understood by the participants, is collegiate, constructive, and democratising in a way the higher education system is often not imagined to be.

6.3 Drivers of change

There are arguably few, if any, organisations which can claim to be purely driven by their core mission without any influence from the external landscape in which they operate. The academic mission of universities remains a constant but has been shown to be increasingly susceptible to influence from a myriad of interconnected internal and external pressures.

The increased monitoring of higher education providers is a central driver for change as institutions find themselves increasingly having to evidence a wide range of activity (Barnet, 2003). At present there appears to be no indicator to suggest this situation will be reversed, rather universities find year on year increased regulatory requirements to evidence and justify their activities. As such, one can assume the drivers for change as discussed by the participants, will continue to press against the operational and normative, in turn requiring further moves to professionalise workforces.

6.4 Professionalisation of staff

The analysis has shown the participants viewing the professionalisation of roles as an ongoing process which requires adequate structures to fully support. The elevation of professional manager roles is driven by an awareness of the need for universities to run with market and regulatory interests in mind, but this does not mean there is a perception of the boundaries of professional managers as totally open yet.

Many of Becher and Kogan's (1992) questions in relation to the focus of the university (e.g. – *Is it predominantly a community of scholars, or should it meet the demands of students and non-academic colleagues who seek to share in policy making?*) perhaps

formally remain unanswered or resisted, however the data suggests informally they are being shaped through the actions of the senior executives.

If boundaries are to be removed, then channels to promote change need to be situated at lower tiers of the university, if they are to have any lasting impact on barriers for academic and professional managers. Creating a balance in opportunities which does not take away from the academic mission or further encroach on the freedoms of academics is difficult, but the collegiality seen at the executive level is evidence of the benefits of shared endeavour, and this is perhaps the first point to address.

6.5 Limitations

The data analysis provides findings through which to conduct a robust discussion and reach a conclusion which adds to the existing knowledge. But there are clearly limitations to this research, and they are set out here:

6.5.1 Small number of participants

When considering the contribution of this thesis it is important to recognise the difficulties experienced in gaining access to suitable participants and the small number interviewed for this study; common problems when attempting to 'research up' (Cohen et al., 2010).

Due to issues with finding willing participants, the interview questions were not piloted and the impact of this was felt throughout the earlier interviews as questions were rephrased, changed or dropped as it became clear which questions did and did not work. This did not take away from arriving at broad themes across, and the research is robust despite this initial weakness, but it did make aspects of the analysis more difficult.

Utilising a semi-structured interview approach allowed for discussions to be broad and the thematic maps (Appendix B) are evidence of this. However, there are clear limitations in one-hour interviews. The research would have benefitted from access to the participants over longer periods, building richer data.

The framework in this research provides a simple process for evaluating the level of pressure applied to the institutional normative through the structures designed to manage in the contemporary higher education sector. However, the findings which underpin this framework are based on the responses from a small group of participants and cannot be extrapolated to make broad claims across the sector.

6.6 Further research opportunities

This research is based on a small data set drawn from participants working primarily at institutions in the South East of England, selected for their status as 'new' universities or those with a recent history of having been another form of institution. The decision to focus on these types of institution was informed by the literature review which showed newer universities as more likely to allow for a range of voices at the senior executive level.

Looking at further research opportunities, in the first instance the possibility of cross-regional studies would provide a larger data set from which to further validate the findings of this research; collecting data from institutions across England. Additionally, expanding the type of institutions to include Russell Group universities would provide the opportunity to contrast the findings, and test the three criteria in the framework of this study against institutions with different histories and relationships with the higher education market.

Any further research would benefit from access to the participants over a longer period of time and so another possibility would be to situate the research in one setting, looking at the members of one executive rather than multiple as is the case in this research. In that instance, the research could be expanded to include experiences of early career academics and professional service employees at the same institution. This would provide a way to investigate the impact of decisions at the executive level for those who are only now entering into a career in the increasingly professionalised environment. There are also potential benefits in including a review of the management and leadership programmes being implemented at the institutions of participants, looking to understand what role these play in defining the boundaries of roles.

The findings show change at the executive influencing the normative of the institution, and there is an understanding that this is felt at subsequent levels of the university. As such, further research could look at the subsequent tiers of management, moving from a focus on the centre to the boundaries of those working in the units.

Finally, family obligations were often raised throughout, with participants explaining how family influenced moves throughout their careers. This was particularly true of the female participants who described the pressures of juggling successful careers with raising young families. This provides a further avenue for possible investigation, looking at the way the boundaries of female senior leader roles are shaped by their experiences both in and out of the institution.

6.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides an insight into the roles and boundaries of senior managers working in contemporary English universities through their own experiences and interpretations. The research has shown they perceive the boundaries of their

roles to be mostly open, describing the workings of their executive teams as collegial in a way not often seen at lower tiers of the university.

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Appendix A

(Interview Questions)

Organisational hierarchies in English universities: understanding roles and boundaries

S1. Role background and working day

1. Can you tell me about your career progression to date?
2. Could you describe an average working day?

S2. General (not members of senior team)

3. How would you describe your working relationship with administrative teams across the University?
4. Can you describe the boundaries of your role in relation to administrative teams?
5. How do you think your administrative colleagues would describe your role in relation to theirs?
6. Do you feel there is a culture divide between academic and administrative managers at your institution?

S3. Senior (Executive)

7. At the most senior level, looking at the same role divides do you feel there is a pecking order or credibility divide between the two types of leaders beyond the obvious VC – DVC type tier?
8. Do you feel at the most senior level there is resistance to your ideas around administrative decisions due to your role and background?

S4. Career Progression

9. What are your possible career progression routes, if any, going forward in a University setting?

S5. Knowledge and Skills

10. How would you describe your knowledge/understanding of Higher Education regulation in England?
11. What would you describe as the skills you use the most during your working day?
12. Do you see these as skills as something different to those most used by your administrative colleagues working at the same level?

S6. Priorities

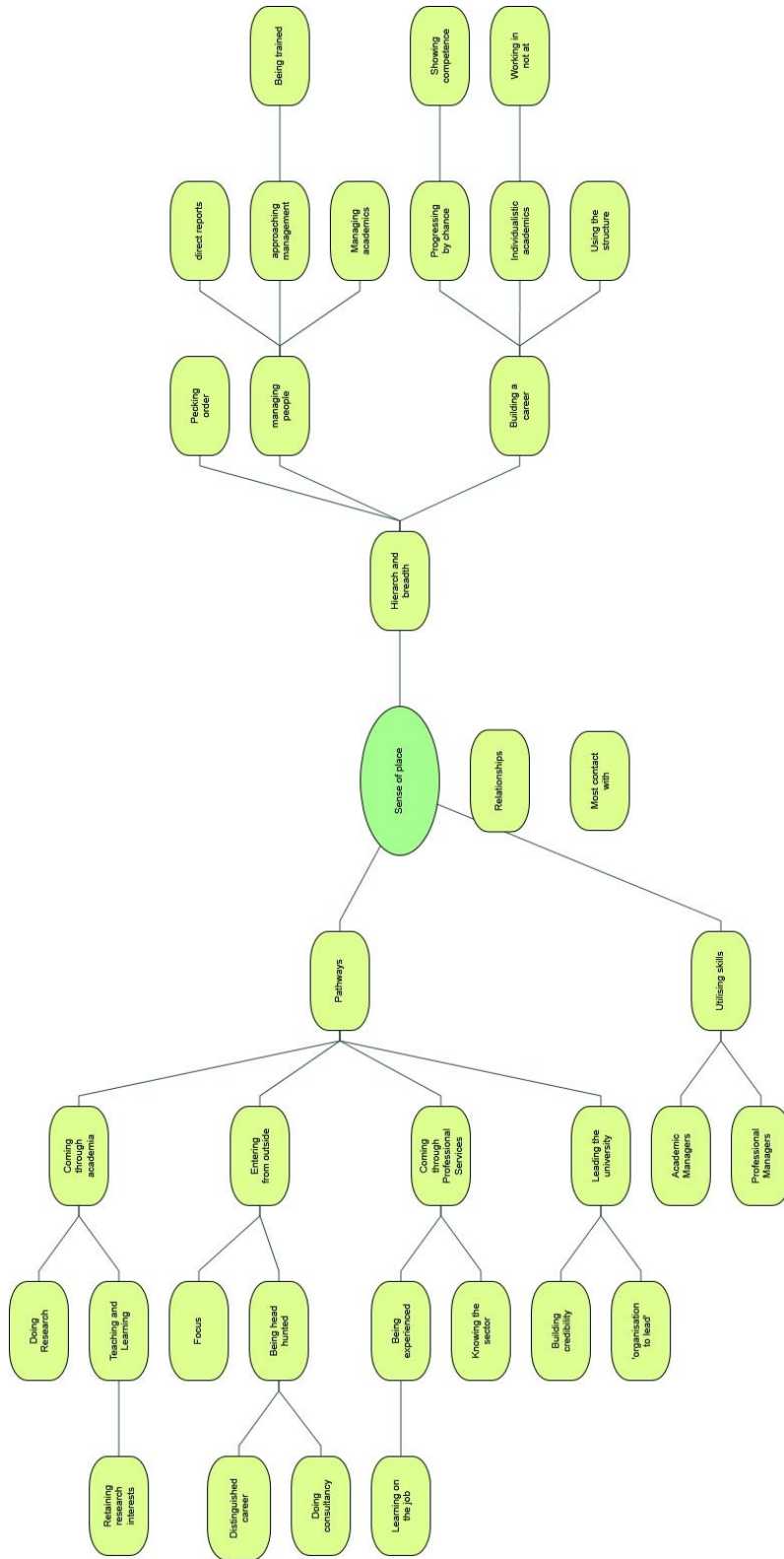
13. What are your work priorities? (i.e. where do you see the priorities for the institution in relation to your role? e.g. Portfolio of courses, learning experience, compliance, facilities/timetable management?)

S7. Management and Leadership

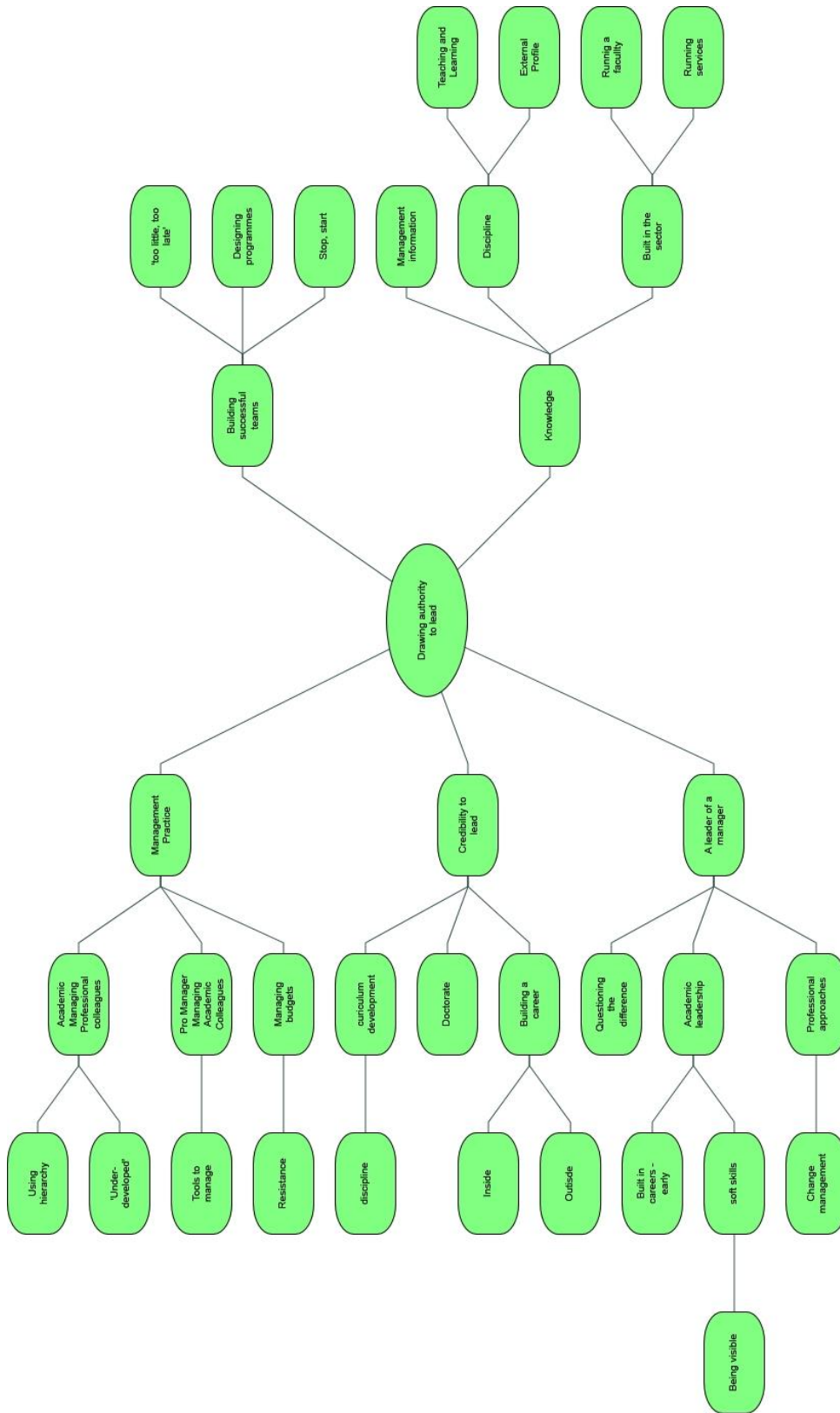
14. What do you think academic management is, and what do you think administrative management is?
15. Does your institution provide management and leadership training to senior staff?
16. What do you see as important to being able to lead in higher education? Is this different for academics and administrative?
17. Do you feel your current skills and qualifications would allow you to manage administrative staff?
18. What do you see as the future of senior Higher Education management in England?

Appendix B

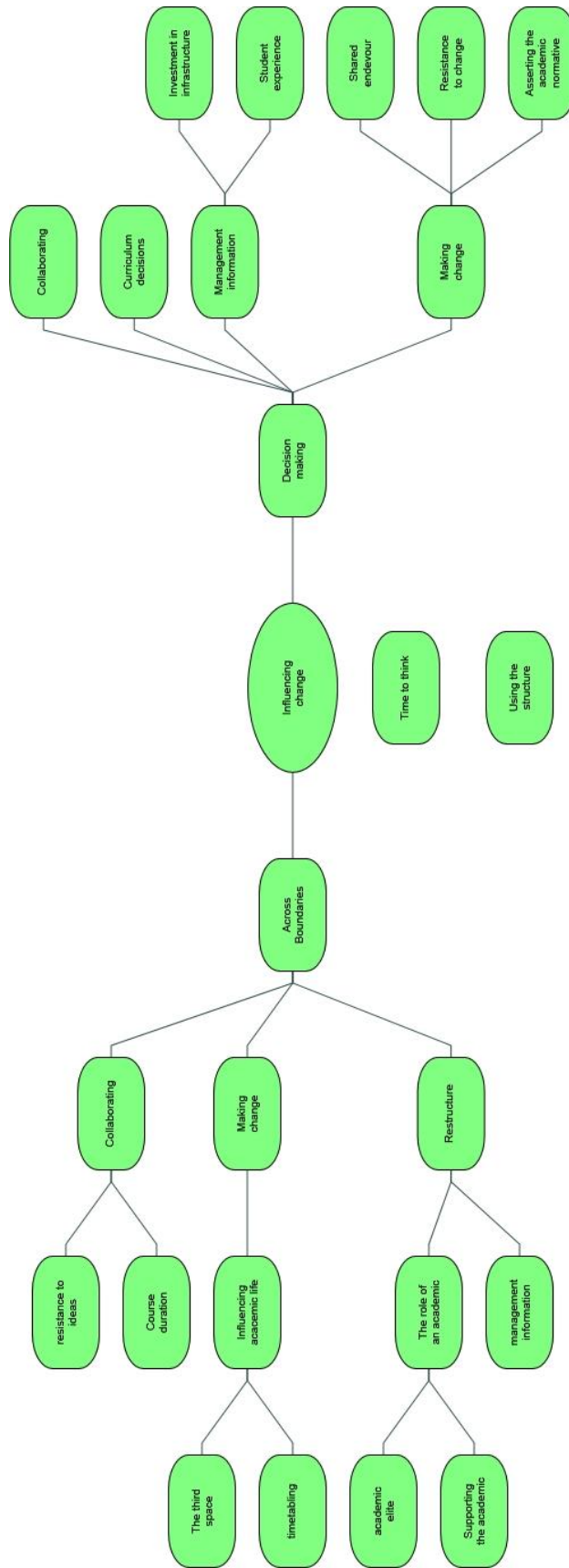
(Thematic Map – Sense of place)



(Thematic Map – Drawing authority to lead)



(Thematic Map – Influencing change)



Appendix C

R1 - Interview One – Professional Manager Internal

R1 was contacted via email on 1st October 2018 and the interview took place on 25th October 2018.

R1 was contacted after viewing her profile on her university's website. The request was sent, and received a swift positive response inviting the author to the outer London campus where R1 works. The interview was conducted in her office and began with an introduction to the research followed by a further request for verbal and written confirmation of approval to participate, which was given. This was the first interview and also essentially the pilot due to not having managed to find a suitable individual to assist with piloting of the questions.

R1's career in education started over 20 years ago, having moved into the higher education sector after a brief period in a contiguous sector (charity). R1's first university role was as a graduate trainee at a Russell Group university. On completion of her traineeship, R1 began a period of moving from one registry role to another. This provided strong foundations in the professional services and R1's breadth of experience led to her being asked to take on a management role. From there, after an unspecified number of years, R1 made a larger jump to the level of Director, managing all aspects of student facing services, and subsequently changing institution several times to expand her experience.

R1's current institution is a large outer London post '92 university, with a history as a college and polytechnic. Student numbers are around 20,000 divided across three faculties. At the time of the interview, R1 was responsible for Strategy, H.R., Registry, Business Improvement, I.T., Planning, Governance and Student Affairs.

R1 described beginning her career in an administrative role. From there R1 explained progression through roles as a process of showing aptitude, 'serendipity', and being selected for promotion in the earlier stages of her career before gaining the experience and skills to put herself forward for new roles elsewhere. This R1 described as a difficult and lengthy process of understanding the role, herself and being able to sell herself - a skill she gained over time as her confidence grew. When discussing transitions, R1 focused on organisational cultures, how these influence the transition process, and the importance of thinking about how she was going to engage with the culture of a new organisation.

There was a strong focus on personal attributes and reflection on how experiences had shaped her professional persona. In detailing her career to date, R1 reflected on changes to her character, seeing herself as having had to move from shy and '*much more about the written word*' to '*very bolshie and verbal!*'.

Demonstrating competency and capability were central to R1's interview responses, as was the importance of sector specific knowledge.

The interview was completed in one hour.

R2 - Interview Two – Professional Manager External

R2 was contacted via email on 31st October 2018 and the interview took place on 15th November 2018.

R2 had responded to the interview request positively, inviting the author to the central London campus where he is based. The interview took place in R2's office and began with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R2 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent).

Of all participants, R2 was the only non-academic senior manager to hold an academic title – Deputy Vice Chancellor. When asked to give an overview of his career to this point R2 asked how far back he should go and the author explained that R2 could start at any point he felt fit in explaining the route he took to arriving at his current role. R2 began at the age of 18 and failing to be accepted to his university of choice, before jumping to the age of 21 and being accepted to university, studying for an undergraduate and then post-graduate degree over a five year period. R2 did not state what he studied during this period, only the levels.

After completing his studies, R2 started a career in broadcasting, spanning 25 years over two different broadcasting companies. His roles had focused on resource provision (including human resources) and ensuring the broadcasters had access to good facilities – IT, specialist equipment, buildings etc. R2's career in broadcasting was distinguished and over the course of 25 years he rose to the level of senior management at a national level.

The move into higher education had been instigated by a head-hunter who suggested the role and R2 saw many similarities between his role in broadcasting and higher education, piquing his interest. At the time of the interview R2 had been working in

higher education for over 10 years and spoke as a strong advocate for the sector, which he saw as incredibly stimulating and listed the positives of his role as *'it's in the <identifying specialism redacted>, it's in education, it's in management and it's in London. So, what's not to like?'*

R2's institution at the time of the interview was a large post '92 London based university, created from a series of mergers and consisting of six faculties. Student numbers are around 20,000. At the time of the interview R2 was responsible for Recruitment, Estates, IT, Communications, and Commercial Activities.

Managing people, and his ability to manage, formed a central aspect of R2's professional identity. He described himself and his direct reports as supporters of the academics, enabling them to better meet the needs of their students through the provision of good facilities.

Throughout the interview R2's manner was to downplay his substantial achievements, and this fitted with his sense that the roles he has held have been supporting ones. This is best illustrated in the response given when asked about the importance of facilities and the areas for which he is responsible to the student experience:

I think when a student is here, they may, and you may have done exactly the same thing, you may reflect upon the poor state or good state of the facilities being offered, and that you can't get into the library at nine o'clock at night, or there are not enough computers available - and so on. When you've left and five years later, whatever it is, looking back down the line, almost certainly those considerations have gone and what you really remember is one, possibly two or three academics who've really helped you.

The interview was completed in just over one hour.

R3 - Interview Three – Professional Manager Internal

R3 was contacted via email on 31st October 2018 and the interview took place on 29th November 2018.

R3 responded to the interview request positively, inviting the author to the central London campus where he is based. The interview took place in R3's office and began with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R3 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent).

R3 had spent his working life in higher education; 25 years at the point of interview. He had started at a small, specialist institution and this had set the tone for subsequent moves which had seen R3 progress through roles at similar specialist institutions.

Having started in a general administrative role supporting a Director of services, R3 had viewed his progression as a process of showing interest, capability and opportunities presented by working in a small institution. Progression to senior management came through the illness of a colleague and a request that R2 join the executive leadership on an interim basis due to experience and skill. What started as a temporary role was soon made permanent. Progression to his current role had been made on the basis of opportunity and a desire to work in another institution before reaching retirement age, rather than any sense of moving up in hierarchical terms.

R3's institution at the time of interview was a small, specialist university in central London, with a history as a specialist school. Student numbers are around 2,000. R3 was responsible for the Finance, Estates, HR, Safety, Registry, Governance departments of the institution, and described his role as sitting alongside the Deputy Vice Chancellor, who is responsible for the Schools, Research Office IT, Library, and Workshop Technical support.

R3's spoke in less individualistic terms than the other participants. As perhaps the most traditional of the professional managers, R3 saw relatively rigid boundaries to his role and was happy in the space he had created. The credibility to lead and from where credibility is drawn features strongly throughout the interview.

R4 - Interview Four – Professional Manager External

R4 was contacted via email on 31st October 2018 and the interview took place on 4th December 2018.

R4 had responded to the interview request positively, inviting the author to the outer London campus where he is based. The interview took place in R4's office and began with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R4 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent).

R4's career was both prominent and eclectic, having managed many services and projects across two sectors – defence and education. At the time of interviewing R4 he was approaching retirement, an event which framed much of the responses as his entire career was being interpreted in relation to this upcoming event. This was not R4's first 'retirement'; having come from a military background he had previously retired from the service before taking up his current position.

R4's institution at the time of interview was a large post '92 university in outer London, with a student population of around 15,000. R4 was responsible for a broad portfolio including Academic Services, Communications, Marketing, Student Recruitment, Commercial Services, Estates, and HR.

Despite having spent over a decade working in higher education, R4 presented himself as something of an outsider to the sector, and the previous career in the military cast a long shadow over his working practices and outlook. There was clear pride in all of his achievements, particularly those in the military, but also an ability to be frank and candid about events:

I was the Director of Operations for the <previous employer>, which is all three services: administrative support systems, payroll, pensions - and integrated

them together in a big PFI contract with <external company>, which was an ocean-going disaster that cost us a fortune to fix.

R4 had studied for an undergraduate degree before joining the military and also undertaken a level 7 training programme during the course of his military career. R4 had also received two prestigious public honours during the course of his military career and saw these as a particular source of pride and recognition of his commitment.

Having moved from one career to another, and now with retirement approaching, there had been a refocusing of R4's priorities. Some of the drive which had propelled him to the top had waned (though his commitment was as strong as ever) and he talked openly about the need to find balance of priorities, being there for his family, having previously been divorced. Family and outside commitments featured relatively often. Being towards the end of his career and financially stable, R4 felt able to speak more openly and without the same level of deference to seniority that one may find in an individual at an earlier point in their working life. He explained this through an anecdote from his time in the military working with colleagues from privileged backgrounds whose financial security gave them the power to speak freely and shine a light on those in power. These types of anecdotes were not only fascinating because of the window into a very privileged world they presented, but also because they were telling of the participant.

R4 referred to the author's own position as a compliance manager on several occasions as he sought to explain his own struggles in communicating issues to academic colleagues, drawing parallels he believed were present. It was an example of how the place of the researcher shapes responses and is recognised in the analysis.

The interview was completed in one hour.

R5 - Interview Five – Academic Manager Research

R5 was contacted via email on 17th January 2019 and the interview took place on 12th February 2019.

R5 responded to say an interview was possible but that he may have to cut it short due to other priorities. The author agreed to this, keen to take any opportunity to interview a senior academic manager and accepted the offer to conduct the interview at the central London campus where R5 is based. The interview took place in R5's office and began with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R5 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent). Interview R5 was the first interview with a senior manager from an academic background. This was intentional as the interviews had been scheduled in two phases: professional and then academic managers.

When asked to discuss his career to this point R5 began at the age of 18 and studying for an undergraduate degree and then PhD at Oxford university. Immediately from there R5 began a career in academia at a Russell Group university in the north of England. After 8 years in post, R5 was appointed to a professorship at a different university going on to take up a role as Head of Department after 'a couple of years' there. This experience of management encouraged R5 to pursue a career in academic management whilst continuing to work as an active researcher. R5 came through the most traditional route of the academic managers interviewed for this research and was keen to explain his continued commitment to being active in research.

At the time of the interview R5 was working as Deputy Vice Chancellor at a large central London post '92 institution with student numbers around 20,000 and a history as a polytechnic. R5 was responsible for all of the Academic Schools, Research, and

large investment projects. R5 openly discussed actively looking for a Vice Chancellorship position elsewhere, confident his current role had prepared him to lead an institution.

R5's responses were leadership focused, though management was a clear feature and his role as Deputy Vice Chancellor gave him responsibility for many of the large projects taking place across the university which were both operational and strategic. R5's description of career progression included describing personal responsibilities and family reasons for not having taken earlier career opportunities, explaining that the roles would have either required relocation of his family or separation during the working week. Neither option was viable and so R5 waited until his children were of university age themselves to pursue senior management roles above the level of Head of School, and there was a suggestion R5 believed this would have happened sooner if personal circumstances had allowed.

This interview was conducted in just over 40 minutes due to an issue with the conflicting diary priorities of R5.

R6 - Interview Six – Academic Manager Research

R6 was contacted via email on 17th January 2019 and the interview took place on 12th February 2019.

This interview was conducted outside of London and required the author to travel by train to R6's office where the interview took place. As with previous interviews, the author started with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R6 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent).

R6 started by saying her career progressions was 'not very linear' or 'easily explainable' and chose to begin with the period of her PhD studies 25 years ago. During this period R6's research interests had been developed and she engaged in her first work as a paid researcher at the same London based Russell Group university where she had studied. This she described as the intellectual path she has been on since that time, choosing to frame her career development as intellectual first and foremost.

For a period, R6 worked overseas, lecturing. This she described as a family decision, seeking the security of a full-time permanent role, without the same stresses of a fulltime research career. After a number of years in this role, R6 returned to the UK and moved to a position as senior lecturer at another London based university. Shortly after starting this role R6 was asked to take on management responsibilities as a restructuring of the department was underway and the '*previous manager was pushed aside*'. She took the role willingly, seeing it as giving her a voice in decision making but described it as a struggle as she suddenly found herself managing more than 20

members of staff, having budget responsibility, and no longer involved in teaching and research.

Shortly thereafter R6 was made Director of the same unit and placed onto an internal leadership training programme which she described as transformational and moved her away from wanting a traditional academic career, seeing opportunities in management. The restructure had the unexpected consequence of placing R6 more on the professional services side of management and she saw this as a barrier to progression, being advised to seek a senior academic leadership/management role if she wanted to enhance her career prospects. Following this advice R6 made the decision to move to a different institution as Dean of a faculty and used this as a springboard to her current position as Pro Vice Chancellor.

R6's institution at the time of interview was a large university in the South East of England, established by Royal Charter, and with a student population of around 20,000. R6 was responsible for the institution's Education Strategy and the large-scale transformation projects that came off it.

R6 often jumped in time to discuss experiences at different stages of her career progression. At one point in the interview, R6 returned to a time pre-PhD studies when she worked in faculty administration. She used this to show her understanding of the challenges faced by those working in professional service roles, but it did not form a central part of her responses which were rich in detail and self-analysis, taking time to reflect on events and see them in light of later experiences.

The interview was completed in one hour.

R7 - Interview Seven – Academic Manager Teaching and Learning

R7 was contacted via email on 6th March 2019 and the interview took place on 24th April 2019.

R7's institution is located in the South East of England and she suggested the interview take place over skype from her office. After some difficulties in starting the call the interview began around 10 minutes late, cutting into the allotted time. After apologising for the difficulties, the author began with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R7 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent which was provided via email).

R7 began by describing her first lecturing role in a college of higher education, before shifting to a university setting and discussing her academic qualifications – an undergraduate degree, post graduate degree, and teaching qualification. R7 was the only senior manager from an academic background who had not completed a PhD, and this was explained as a factor in subsequent choices. R7 had started her PhD studies whilst a lecturer at the college but after having children found herself unable to dedicate enough time to completing it. The decision not to complete her PhD studies refocused R7's career track and she began to pursue a teaching and learning career which she saw as providing a better balance for her circumstances. Over a 15-year period as a lecturer, R7 found her research interests unabated despite the decision not to complete her PhD studies, and she continued to research whilst teaching. R7 described using both her teaching and learning experience, and research interests, to build a successful programme for the training of new lecturers, seeing her 15 years of teaching experience as important in establishing her credibility.

R7 moved from delivering the new lecturer training programme to running the department in which it sat, taking on management responsibilities. She described how over the next 15 years the role grew around her as other smaller departments were subsumed into hers. The move to more senior management was described as a sudden crisis at the institution, and not a planned move. As a result of the unspecified crisis R7 was asked to take on the role of Dean on a temporary basis, which soon became permanent. Though the move had not been planned, R7 described finding herself enjoying the role and used it to gain the experience of management and leadership required for applying to the role of Pro-Vice Chancellor, which led to her current role as Deputy Vice Chancellor.

R7's institution at the time of interview was a mid-sized post '92 university in the South East of England, with a student population of around 10,000. R7 was responsible for the institution's Academic Schools and Services, as well the university's Teaching and Learning Strategy.

R7's background and focus were evident in her choice of language, which was different to the other participants, often using the term 'lecturer' as opposed to 'academic'. Central to R7's responses were themes of credibility and understanding the role of the educator. This featured across R7's responses, whether discussing committee work and how the voice of academics is heard or speaking anecdotally about where she ate lunch and how important it is to be seen by academic teams.

The interview was completed in 50 minutes.

R8 - Interview Eight – Academic Manager Teaching and Learning

R8 was contacted via email on 30th March 2019 and the interview took place on 14th May 2019.

R8 suggested the interview take place via telephone from her office as this was most convenient for her schedule. The call was arranged for in the morning. As with all of the previous interviews the author began with a brief explanation of the research, how the data will be used, and R8 gave verbal confirmation of being happy to be interviewed (in addition to written consent via email).

R8 described her career in a very linear fashion, and unlike previous interviews where participants talked in terms of duration in role, R8 used the year of change – e.g. *'I became Dean of School 2013, and then Pro Vice Chancellor in 2016'*. The result of this approach was to give a sense of very clear progression when discussing her career in higher education. In addition to her career in higher education, R8 also discussed previous roles from an undefined point, working in a range of unrelated areas, balancing work with family responsibilities – raising her small children.

R8's career in education began in primary education, progressing after 12 years to a senior leadership role in a school setting. A move to higher education came initially through a secondment opportunity which later became a permanent post. At this time R8 undertook her Masters degree and followed that with a PhD, which was completed over a 7-year period. Once working in higher education, R8 swiftly progressed through roles, gaining a broad range of experience, reaching the level of Pro Vice Chancellor at the same time as completing her PhD – the role not being contingent on completion.

At the time of interview R8 was working as Pro-Vice Chancellor at a large post '92 institution with a history as a technical college in the East of England. With a student

population in excess of 25,000 R8's institution was the largest of the participants. R8 was responsible for the Academic Portfolio and Student Experience.

R8's professional interests were around teaching and professional development, and this was carried over into her career in higher education. R8's own PhD studies were concerned with authority and leadership in higher education and seeing the parallels between the author's work and her own, R8's interview contains a lot of theoretical discourse and referral to relevant scholars.

The interview was completed in one hour.