

Authors of Our Own Lives?
Individuals, institutions and the everyday
practice of sociology

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Nicola Jane Spurling

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Abstract

Theories of practice suggest that social structure is reproduced and transformed through the everyday enactment of mundane practices. However, individuals' careers, institutions and policy interventions are typically marginalised within conceptual frameworks and empirical studies, of 'practice' and 'social structure'. This thesis redresses this imbalance. It does so by showing that understandings of social reproduction and transformation can be deepened by exploring intersections of everyday practice, careers, institutions and government policy in the lives of sociologists working in different kinds of UK university.

Theoretical arguments about the reproduction and transformation of 'practice' and 'structure', and how individuals' lives both shape, and are shaped, by these processes, are examined and developed with reference to a programme of empirical research. Interview data relating to everyday practice and careers are woven together with institutional and economic histories of UK universities and the discipline of sociology. By these means the thesis isolates and analyses different 'intersections' within academic life, and details the processes of reproduction and transformation identified in each intersection.

The thesis shows that different 'registers' of structure and agency are at work in processes of reproduction and transformation. In the process it develops theoretical contributions from Archer (2000, 2003, 2007), Giddens (1979, 1984), Bourdieu (1980, 1984, 1986) and MacIntyre (1981), and shows how these might be combined to provide new ways of conceptualising the relation between individuals' careers, institutional history and shifting 'landscapes' in practice reproduction and transformation. The implications of this work for analysing and understanding how policies impact on daily lives are discussed.

Chapter One

Introduction

Any organization – no matter what its purposes – consists of the interaction of men – of their ideas, their wills, their energies, their minds, and their purposes. The men who interact are involved in the organization in varying degree, for varying periods of time, and at different stages of their careers. (Becker et al, 2002:14).

This thesis explores the intersections of everyday practices, careers, institutions and policy, given the marginal presence of these intersections in theories of social practices. The key premise of practice theories is that social structure is reproduced and transformed in the everyday enactment of mundane practices. With its focus on everyday life and social structure this premise marginalises various social facts; that individuals' practices emerge across a career, and at any given moment those engaging in social practices are at different stages of their careers; that social practices are enacted in (and at the same time constitute) institutional settings and require resources, including money to be sustained; that the commitment of individuals and the allocation of economic resources to practices is politically-mediated, as is access to practices and the goods they produce. My central argument is that understandings of social reproduction and transformation can be usefully deepened by exploring the intersections of everyday practice, individuals' careers, institutions and government policy.

The aims of the thesis are two-fold. To enable the theoretical exploration outlined above, my empirical work investigates what it is to be an academic sociologist in UK universities, what do sociologists do? and how do they make their way through their careers? The perspectives of academics rarely feature in government policy documents, yet such policies aim to transform universities and academic work. In a policy landscape that emphasises Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and models of research from the natural sciences, the views of academics in the social sciences, arts and humanities are less likely to feature or be sought. Assumptions are made about what is possible within the ever-increasing range of activities that universities can embrace, and what the purposes and products of these activities should be, yet these assumptions overlook Becker's observation (above) that organisations

consist of individuals engaging in social practices. They show minimal understanding about the processes of academic work, the 'goods' that academics pursue, or the commitments of individuals that both underpin, and must be juggled within their academic lives.

In this sense, my thesis responds to the models of academic work found in government white papers by presenting a more complex account of the challenges and situations that academics face. My argument in this respect is that although governments might be concerned with reframing the role of universities and the practices and products of their inhabitants, institutions and individuals are concerned with these things too – though in different ways. It is in everyday practice that these multiple concerns intersect and are navigated and negotiated. Understanding how practice is made at these intersections challenges the simplistic models of intervention that are presupposed in white papers, and the related devices used to 'implement' change, and highlights that in practice, policies are sometimes naïve, often in contradiction with each other and can affect academic work in unintended and undesirable ways.

The intersections which my thesis addresses can, in theoretical terms, be analysed by contrasting MacIntyre's (1981) discussion of practice with Giddens' (1984) explanation of reproduction/transformation and Archer's (2000, 2007) discussion of reflexivity.

MacIntyre (1981) suggests that social activities organised as 'practices', each with their own internal goods and standards, become vulnerable in a market economy where their standards and processes are 'undermined' by economic priorities. As such, he proposes one manner in which social practices, such as academic sociology, and their associated products might be transformed across time (in a market economy). Giddens (1984) suggests that the production and reproduction of social structure makes and is made in day-to-day practices of individuals. In this case, transformation occurs in a 'crisis' of routines and the development of a new social order ¹. Archer (2000, 2007) suggests that individuals 'make their way through the world' through

¹ Though MacIntyre is talking about practices of a particular kind and Giddens is discussing practices in general, I use the two concepts alongside each other in this discussion because the work of academic sociologists can be viewed from both perspectives, and each offers an understanding of how the practice of sociologists might be reproduced or transformed.

reflexively weighing-up their commitments as part of their on-going identity formation, variously activating enablements and constraints of structure as they act in the everyday.

MacIntyre's perspective provides a useful framework for exploring conflicts between 'practitioners' and their institutions in a market economy, as well as how the value system of the market may come to dominate practices. How such economic priorities become incorporated into the everyday reproduction of social structure remains a question. Giddens offers an understanding of how day-to-day activity might be important for producing and reproducing social structure, and of how everyday practices intersect with institutions, however he offers no framework to understand how the intersections of practices with institutions *across* individuals' careers reproduces or transforms the social. Archer provides a perspective on how individuals make their decisions in the everyday and across their lives, however her emphasis on the individual produces a static conception of the structures and social landscapes in which they act, and provides no cultural or political understanding of what they are committed to and why.

To explore these intersections within this thesis, my empirical investigations take the form of a small scale in-depth study of academics working in sociology departments at four study sites. That is, repeat in-depth interviews were conducted with academics from sociology departments at four different kinds of UK university between October 2007 and June 2008. The interviews collected present and retrospective accounts of everyday activities, as well as detailed career biographies of the study participants – careers that had traversed different periods of university history, and varied in their longevity, from new lecturers to retired professors. These data of everyday practices and career biographies are then 'sliced' in several ways to explore how the practices of sociologists are reproduced and transformed at particular intersections – for example at the intersection of individuals' day-to-day practices and institutions (chapters four and five), and at the intersection of individuals' careers and institutions (chapter six).

Academic disciplines offer useful cases to explore the theoretical intersections with which I am concerned. To summarise, they can be conceptualised as 'practices' (in MacIntyre's sense), that is, social activities governed by their own standards of excellence that are primarily concerned with producing internal goods, are dependent on institutions for their resources and are potentially

‘vulnerable’ to economic priorities. They can also be conceptualised as ‘everyday practices’ in Giddens’ sense: everyday activities that, at one and the same time, form the production and reproduction of social structure. Finally, disciplines are made up of individuals who, to draw on Archer’s terms, have their own commitments and who reflectively make their way through daily life, and through their careers. As sites for exploring the intersections of everyday practices, careers, institutions and government policy, academic disciplines make useful empirical cases.

Amongst the plethora of academic disciplines that might have formed the site of the study, the specific history and situation of sociology meant it had several methodological advantages. Firstly, in the UK, sociology only began establishing as a discipline with the development of numerous departments in the 1960s. This relatively short history offered a discipline established long enough to have developed the traits of ‘practice’ identified by MacIntyre (above), whilst at the same time existing in all kinds of university, including the post-1992 institutions which quickly developed sociology departments and courses shortly after their change in status. The discipline therefore existed across the spectrum of institutions, yet had a cultural history that cut across institutional boundaries. Looking at sociology and sociologists, it would be possible to investigate the relationships of institution and everyday practice at the different kinds of university. It also seemed to make sense to study a familiar discipline so that I would already have some background understanding of what my respondents were doing.

Secondly, within the 40-50 years of the establishment of sociology in UK universities, the position of government policy to the social sciences, including sociology, has seen some dramatic shifts. As a ‘young’ discipline linked to the establishment of the post-Robbins Greenfield universities, the 1960s and early 1970s was a period of disciplinary development and there were an increasing number of jobs for sociology academics (Platt, 2002:180). This trajectory was quickly curtailed under the conservative government in the 1980s, when alongside the other social sciences it was subjected to massive funding cuts, as well as a public undermining in social and political discourse. Redundancies were made, departments were closed, promotions were frozen and new permanent positions no longer existed (Platt, 2000:9).

During the 1990s, increased university funding meant that once again sociology jobs and departments grew (Platt, 2000:9), though with new stipulations about the form that research and teaching should take, in particular new requirements for universities to engage with local communities and the business world (Henkel, 2000). In terms of my study, at first glance it was possible to see that sociology (possibly more so than other disciplines) had been strongly affected by shifts in government policy. Studying sociologists provided the opportunity to consider the intersections of policy, institutions, careers and everyday practices, in distinctly different periods of the discipline's development that were closely linked to policy agendas.

Before giving a more detailed description of my theoretical orientation, I would like to provide an example of a current debate of concern to sociologists to illustrate the complexity of reproduction and transformation in academic life.

Impact: An assessment of demonstrable economic and social impacts that have been achieved through activity within the submitted unit that builds on excellent research. This is to assess the extent to which a submitted unit has built upon its strong record of excellent research to make a positive impact on the economy and society within the assessment period. (HEFCE, 2009/38)

In their Second Consultation on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (HEFCE, 2009/38), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) proposed that 'Impact' would form a 'key characteristic of an excellent submission'. The proposal was introduced as part of a framework that aimed to uphold the underlying policy of the selective allocation of research funding whilst making the mechanisms 'simpler and less burdensome' than its predecessor – the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Since the RAE itself had a long and controversial history, why did the new framework, and in particular the inclusion of 'Impact', become such a point of contention for those in the social sciences?

The answer to this question lies at the intersection of academics' commitments to research practice and the imagined implications the new policy might have for these activities and the goods they produce.

In one sense, the REF reflected mounting demand from academics and universities to reduce the burden of the RAE, which had substantially changed in its scope, methodology and funding criteria since its inception in 1985. For example, in the initial exercise universities submitted "...the numbers of research staff and research students, the titles of not more than five recent books or articles, or other comparable examples of research achievement, which the university would regard as typical of the best of its research in the subject area" (Cave et al, 1997 in Henkel, 2000:114). This contrasts with the funding formula of the most recent (2008) RAE that required universities to make strategic decisions about who was 'research active' and to submit four publications *per academic*, alongside detailed facts and figures about research funding and PhD students, and a text describing the research environment and culture. Though deemed overly-burdensome, the increasing depth of the assessment was in part a response to criticisms from the academic body that initial exercises failed to produce an 'accurate' reflection of the research taking place and led to unfair differentiation in funding (Elton, 2000).

However, within the academic press, and within more formal critiques of the RAE (Lucas, 2006; McNay, 2003; Strathern, 2000) the main concern was with the potential changes occurring in academic research practice and its adverse effects on 'good research'. These included a pressure to produce publications that aligned with RAE definitions of research (Henkel, 2000:118) but that might undermine disciplinary definitions, timing publications to fit with audit cycles (rather than research findings), and targeting publication at high impact journals, rather than more specialist (and possibly more appropriate) ones. The pressure for frequent publication was felt to discourage long term projects (Henkel, 2000:118) and to 'mainstream' particular methodologies or substantive topics (Lucas, 2006:43), for example undervaluing applied and collaborative work. The case of the RAE illustrates two facts: firstly, that policy and funding affect everyday practices, and that these affects might be unexpected or adverse; and secondly that academics' views of what makes 'good research', and the practices required to produce this are complex and difficult to measure.

The new REF was framed as a response to the concern that this 'heavy-touch' exercise (the RAE) took too much time and resource (HEFCE, 2009/38). Yet the focus on 'impact' in the debate

surrounding the second consultation suggests that, once again, the priorities of academics and of policy can be at odds with each other. In late July 2009, the British Sociological Association (BSA) President, Professor John Brewer, discussed 'Impact' and requested feedback in the face of budget cuts and the need to measure economic value:

Most humanities and social sciences subjects do not have links with industry and the market, and knowledge transfer in our areas tends not to be reflected in spin-off companies and the like. So work on the economic benefits of housing research, inter-cultural relations, ageing and population demographics, sport, heritage and so on will have to be stressed, once we get beyond our resistance to crude notions of utility.

Responses to the REF consultation from sociologists emphasised a need to retain alternative notions of 'impact' than economic utility, with academics arguing that though limited research funding is a reality, sociology should be valued on its own terms (as a practice with its own internal goods), rather than re-orienting itself to the professed needs of policy, or redefining itself in economic terms.

The focus of this debate suggests that though ensuring continued funding is of obvious importance to academics and is required for social science research to continue, it is not the only aspect that matters. Individuals' subjective commitments to disciplinary practices are embedded parts of their identity; being able to align their practices with these commitments is deeply important to them. Indeed, for many, re-framing research in terms of 'impact' (as defined within policy documents) poses threats to the 'goods' to which they are committed. At the same time, as with the RAE, the potential influences of the REF on everyday practice and the processes by which this new policy will intersect with the everyday, remains an empirical question.

Understanding the relationship between everyday practice and government policy is a difficult endeavour; the 'crises of routines' that practice theories propose are not easily identified in the empirical world. The supposed changes in practice related to the RAE and REF mentioned above tend to be based on pre-emptive responses to policy that speculate about what might happen to research practice (Gibbons et al, 1994; UUK, 2007), or post-hoc anecdote as academics reflect on

the conflicts faced in working life (Evans, 2004; Harley, 2002). Asking any individual academic about how their work is shaped by the RAE receives a hazy response. Explicitly, individuals remain committed to (subjectively different) ideas of research practice that drew them to their 'profession' or 'vocation' in the first place. On the other hand, Lucas (2006) has shown that the RAE did result in practice change. In addition, everyday practices change and evolve across a career as individuals reflect on previous experiences, change their role and status and gain new practical knowledge. Further, universities, which form the ever-changing landscapes that interact with these everyday activities and careers, are diverse, being constituted of many different kinds of institution with different histories, traditions and strategies, that mediate policy in different ways. Though within public debate academics might discuss sociological research as an entity, the empirical situation is that everyday work varies greatly in different institutions (Smith, 1998). Finally, and related to this, academics and universities are not solely concerned with economic goods and one reason that policy is hazy on the ground is because aspects other than the allocation of funding are significant in academic life and work (Becker, 1960; Fuller, 2006; Weber, 1922).

These examples highlight the complex and interesting context that the everyday work of sociologists provides for exploring my theoretical questions. Many believe that debates like those discussed reveal an undermining of academic values by economic imperatives (Gombrich, 2000; Heelas and Morris, 1992; Keat, 1991). Other developments such as the introduction of student fees and the positioning of students as consumers (Fulton, 1994; Keat et al, 1994; Wright, 2004), the move from an elite to a mass HE system, the increased pressure on universities to diversify their activities and sources of financial income (Evans, 2002; Harding, 2007; Newfield, 2003) and, the serious debate in the media about whether all research should be measured in terms of its 'impact', give an indication of the extent of university transformation in the last three decades. The rate and extent of university reform across the last 30 years has been dramatic (Ryan, 1998). Disciplines and disciplinary practices are viewed as having much longer histories (Abbott, 2001). Individual academics make commitments to a vocation that aligns with their own values and identity (Henkel, 2005), and make their way through careers that traverse different temporal and

spatial landscapes. In everyday practice these different aspects must be negotiated and reconciled, with implications for what is reproduced or transformed. This provides fruitful ground for exploring the intersections of practice, career, institution and policy, and for developing a fuller understanding of processes of production and reproduction at these intersections of social life.

A 'practices' approach

The importance of everyday activity in the reproduction and transformation of social structure is central to theories of social practices found in works of (amongst others), Bourdieu (in *Outline of a theory of practice*, 1977) and Giddens (1979, 1984) in his theory of structuration. What these theories have in common is their premise that it is via the everyday activities of individuals that social structure is reproduced and transformed.

Reckwitz (2002) highlights that practice theory is distinct from other forms of cultural theory in that the 'smallest unit' of theory and analysis is not mental qualities, discourse or interaction but *practice* defined as:

... a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge." (Reckwitz, 2002:249).

Though rather general, this definition forms a useful point of departure. It highlights that 'practice' is distinct from individual behaviour and more than just one-off action. It suggests that sociologically speaking, many everyday activities should be conceptualised as being, at one and the same time, the production and reproduction of social structure. That is, any 'practice' – 'a way of cooking, consuming, working' (Reckwitz, 2002:249) depends on the interconnectedness of many different aspects including embodied knowledge, practical understanding, materials and know-how.

Methodologically speaking, a 'practices' orientation enables a focus on peoples' doings and sayings that are viewed as including embodied practices, deliberate choices and unintended consequences. Reckwitz emphasises this point by highlighting that practice theories offer an

alternative to Rational Choice Theory – which conceives of individual action as purpose-oriented – and the norm-oriented perspectives offered by Durkheim and Parsons (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices, viewed as “...a ‘type’ of behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different body/minds” (Reckwitz, 2002:250), are ‘bigger than’ the individual yet can be identified through individuals’ activities.

Bourdieu (1980:32) is one of the key authors to discuss this point. Through his development of the idea of habitus he suggests that social orders are embedded in practices which express embodied dispositions, though not necessarily deliberate choice. Habitus refers to the dispositions that individuals acquire through the process of socialisation which provides orientations to the social and physical world around them. Actors acquire, reproduce or modify their habitus to adjust to external influences, according to Bourdieu this process is only partly conscious and the actors themselves hardly notice it, especially in early life. The structure of these dispositions reflects the habitat in which they were formed – a position in the wider field of social relations.

The idea of habitus refers to more than just habit, and might better be understood as an internalised ‘feel for the game’ that is learned through bodily repetition. Social action is based on a feel for what will come next rather than rational planning and in this sense is the key concept that connects practices and structure. Since habitus develops via socialisation it is influenced by an individual’s positions in the social world – including occupation, group membership, class and gender. Similar social positions bring about a ‘harmonization’ of agents’ experiences and thus the dispositions of the habitus. In this manner regularities of subjective and objective conditions are reproduced, resulting in collective practices without any intentional or conscious reference (Bourdieu, 1977:80-81).

In terms of this thesis, the habitus concept has several limitations (expanded on in a moment), but it is useful in its central premise that though sometimes people’s actions reflect deliberate choices they also frequently do what they do without thinking about it. Such practical actions constitute processes of social reproduction and transformation, though the actors themselves may not be aware of these processes. By looking at mundane practices that are accessible to an

empirical researcher, sociologists can explore everyday practices, and theorise about how processes of reproduction and transformation operate.

It is in relation to these processes that some limitations of habitus can be identified. Locating the formation of habitus within socialisation at the start of life results in a conceptual framework in which society and individuals are in an endless state of reproduction. Habitus sidelines the reflexivity and choice that guides individuals through their everyday actions, and more broadly through a changing landscape of options across their lives and careers.

In contrast, thinking of the empirical world suggests that individuals' biographies and careers stretch across time and are constituted of many 'everydays' which are made up of 'day-to-day' activity. Individuals develop careers, and refer to their experiential learning and evolving practical knowledge to change how they *do* things. For example a new lecturer will 'step up to' lecturing or being responsible for a course, and as they progress through their career to chairing meetings, being undergraduate director or head of department and so on. Across this temporal span, the landscapes of social action are also subject to continuous change, because individuals tend to move around the 'field' within their career, and also because a field like that of UK higher education is subject to policy reforms, changing funding regimes, and institutions that constantly try to mediate such reforms to ensure their survival and success. The relations between everyday practices and careers, institutions and policy cannot be reduced to those of habitus.

For the remainder of this chapter I draw on Giddens, Archer, MacIntyre and Pred to explore some ways in which these relations might be more fruitfully conceptualised to explore the processes of reproduction and transformation that occur at the intersections of everyday practice, career, institution and policy.

Taking account of biography

In contrast to habitus, 'knowledgeability' or reflexivity (Giddens, 1984) refers to the ability of human actors to monitor their own and others' activities within day-to-day conduct. Through continuous reflexive monitoring of their own and others actions, and the surroundings in which these actions take place, individuals maintain a 'theoretical understanding' (or a 'rationalization')

of the grounds of their activities (Giddens, 1984:5). This does not necessarily occur at the discursive level, rather, human actors use 'interpretative schemes' – stocks of knowledge – that exist as part of the 'practical consciousness' and are reflexively drawn upon in the production and reproduction of interaction (Giddens, 1984:29). Giddens' notion of 'knowledgeability' is more relevant to this thesis than Bourdieu's habitus, as it conceptualises a process that accompanies the individual throughout their life.

Like habitus, knowledgeability exists as practical consciousness – the view that most day-to-day action is not purposive or directly motivated. However, Giddens does suggest that at the discursive level individuals may have overall projects and plans.

...Motives only tend to have a direct purchase on action in relatively unusual circumstances, situations which in some way break with the routine. For the most part motives supply overall plans or programmes... Much of our day-to-day conduct is not directly motivated... (Giddens, 1984:6)

This reflects the advantage of practice-perspectives noted earlier, that everyday doings and sayings can be viewed as including embodied practices, deliberate choices and unintended consequences. However, Giddens' alignment of motives with long term plans rather than the day-to-day is pre-emptive. When individuals – such as the interviewees in my study – discuss their day-to-day lives, they are generally capable of expressing how their current (and previous) positions do or do not contribute to their long term plans. That is not to say that all action is directly motivated, but rather that distinctions between practical consciousness and deliberate choice should form part of our empirical inquiry, rather than preceding it. Whether deliberate or not, past everyday affect the now whilst at the same time *making* an individual's biography. Commitments to practices wax and wane, and new commitments develop; individuals sometimes experience conflict in their everyday life, or find their normative commitments undermined and make considered decisions of what to do. Therefore, although Giddens' concept of 'knowledgeability' is useful for my study, it still provides no account of how such 'practical consciousness' is developed and shaped by an individual's interaction with the world *across a life*.

Archer's works on social identity, reflexivity and the internal conversation offer an alternative perspective here, which helps to draw individual biography into discussions of social reproduction and transformation. Archer's analysis begins with the reflexivity and creativity of individuals (in contrast to those of Reckwitz, Giddens and Bourdieu that are based around social practices). She suggests that individuals become 'social actors' by choosing to identify with particular roles and actively personifying these roles in subjective ways (Archer, 2000:284). Individuals do not just passively 'take' roles (e.g. job roles), but actively *make* them, via the 'human qualities' of 'reflexivity' and 'creativity' (Archer, 2000:288):

Without these qualities, the Actor is not a subject who can reflect upon the stringency of role governed constraints and decide whether nothing can be done other than routine acts of reproduction, nor one who can bring his or her personal ingenuity to bear in order to exploit the degrees of freedom and thus attempt role transformation. (Archer, 2000:288).

'Roles' are elastic (i.e. in practice their boundaries and requirements are flexible), and the subjective personifications of roles by individuals leads to an expansion of a role's 'array'. Over time this may lead to social expectations of a role (such as 'university professor') changing, and so social transformation – transformation of structure – occurs. In this sense, the subjective personification of roles might be viewed as a micro-political process.

In many ways Archer's theory crosses the boundary between practical consciousness and deliberate choice. She uses the term 'reflexivity' in a different sense to Giddens. Whereas for Giddens the concept of reflexivity and knowledgeability are interchangeable terms for the rationalization of action, for Archer the term refers to 'internal conversations' – continuous reflection and self-critique – a potential outcome of which might be *change* in action. She therefore provides us with a concept that can help explain how an individual's practices might be reproduced, or transformed, as they move through their lives.

For example, Archer discusses the competing demands an individual may experience from their different roles in social life. She notes that:

Any social role makes its demands on time, energy and commitment... most roles are greedy consumers: there are never enough hours in the day to be the 'good' academic, billing lawyer or company executive (Archer, 2000:293)

For Archer it is individuals who moderate these competing demands, doing so via their own definition of what constitutes 'self-worth' in society (Archer, 2000:293). It is to these kinds of private debates about the kind of person an individual wants to be that the ongoing dialectical 'internal conversation' relates (Archer, 2000:290). 'Weighing' different roles against each other, and making decisions about commitments is what internal conversations are all about.

...by virtue of their powers of reflexivity, people deliberate about their objective circumstances in relation to their subjective concerns. They consult their projects to see whether they can realise them, including adapting them, adjusting them, abandoning them or enlarging them in the deliberative process (Archer, 2007:21)

Archer then, provides a way of drawing biography into discussions of everyday practice, and of exploring the intersections between the two. However, her emphasis on the individual takes us almost too far in the opposite direction – too far away from ideas of social structure. This creates limitations in two areas.

Firstly, one premise of Archer's account is that roles have an initial form that is there to be transformed, and that though roles are 'elastic', they are enabled or constrained in ways beyond the causal powers of individuals. However, with her focus on the individual she provides no conceptual scheme for understanding how, or by what processes, such roles are defined or limited. The (ever-changing) landscapes within which such roles are personified are marginal to the discussion. Yet, it is via the intersection of such landscapes with individuals' biographies that roles are produced and reproduced.

For example, in the context of academic work we can theorise that such landscapes might be shaped by government policy, or by institutions (that are likely to be mediating policy in diverse ways). Not only may these landscapes influence social understandings of the 'role array'; they may also influence the *array of roles*. Further, individuals may discursively 'keep alive' their

commitments, even where they cannot practice them. Alternatively, they may view the inability to personify roles (e.g. due to lack of time) as a personal failing.

The second set of limitations of Archer's theory is that though she suggests that individuals negotiate their 'competing roles' via conceptions of self-worth she offers no cultural understanding about where ideas of 'self worth' come from, or of their substance. MacIntyre's discussion of practices, and his attempt to develop ideas of practices as 'entities', is useful in developing and addressing this point.

Viewing a practice as an entity

Developing the idea that practices are social activities, MacIntyre(1981) offers an alternative interpretation when compared to Bourdieu, Giddens and Reckwitz. Rather than theorising practices in general, MacIntyre is concerned with practices of a particular kind. As such he is concerned with defining the characteristics that these entities (practices of a particular kind) have. This is summarised by Keat (2000) as:

...social activities which are governed by their own *standards of excellence* and conducted in such a way that the *external goods* of money, power and status remain subordinate to each practice's concerns with its specific *internal goods*... (Keat, 2000:5)

The most immediately apparent and useful feature of MacIntyre's model is his idea of 'internal' and 'external' goods, which adds a normative, and so political, dimension to the discussion.

Goods 'external' to practices refer to those that could be achieved in alternative ways – for example money, status and power – the practice per se is just one way of obtaining these. As such, external goods are the possessions of individuals (although institutions can get them too, for example, Oxford's status and symbolic capital) and often the object of Hobbesian competition. Although participants get some pleasure from external goods, and in the case of money, require them to live, MacIntyre makes the normative claim that this is neither the key goal of the practice nor the main motivation of those committed to it. The main concern is always participating in the practice and producing internal goods.

Internal goods are both the products of the practice, as well as the 'goods' achieved by being a practice participant, for example, a way of life "... the painter's living out of a greater or lesser part of his or her life as a *painter*" (MacIntyre, 1981:190), or the development of specific technical skills. The practice's standards define what are 'good' or 'bad' instances of internal goods, and since they can be achieved in no other manner, participation in the practice is essential to be able to produce these goods and identify them.

Although internal goods can be derived from competition – and 'goods' such as status may be internal, as well as external – it is the whole practice, and not just the individual that benefits. For example, in academic research, publishing may benefit the individual, but it is also an act of reciprocity (Ravetz, 1971) – a contribution to a body of knowledge, which belongs to the practice as a whole. Another way of understanding the internal goods concept is to recognise that individuals "...do not merely strive for what is instrumentally advantageous, but for what they consider to be good." (Sayer, 2005:104). According to MacIntyre's concept, when engaging in a practice, an individual's key motivation is the achievement of internal goods; external goods are secondary.

MacIntyre's conception of a 'practice' adds a useful dimension to Archer's discussion of reflexivity, commitment and the individual's pursuit of self-worth discussed above, which I criticised for their individualism and lack of cultural understanding. In fact, it is this cultural understanding that MacIntyre's perspective offers.

For MacIntyre, practices are intrinsically linked to 'virtues'. This concept includes 'moral values' associated with how people treat one another, for example, the idea that education is a collective good. It also encompasses those values that underpin the 'standards of the practice', for example, 'careful scholarship' and 'diligence in checking sources'. It is via a practice that the idea of 'virtue' comes to have meaning. Practices are therefore a central background aspect to defining virtues:

...an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goals which are internal to the practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goals. (MacIntyre, 1981:191)

Within practices, such virtues have a key role in defining relations between participants:

... virtues are those goods by reference to which... we define our relationship to those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards which inform practices (MacIntyre, 1981:191)

This presents a challenge and adds complexity to Archer's model of social roles negotiated in terms of an individual's 'theory of self-worth'. Rather than conceptualising individuals as having several (possibly greedy) social roles, we might instead imagine they are participants in several practices at any moment in their life. Not only do such practices compete for an individual's time (although it is likely that they will), each will also have intrinsic practice-bound virtues. Such virtues will become apparent if two practices come into conflict. For example, within their lives, individuals may be involved in practices of academia and practices of family life. In this example there may be a conflict of commitments to the 'vocation' of academia, and the associated standards of being a 'good' academic, versus family commitments and the standards of being a 'good' parent. The dilemma for the individual here is not (or not only) how and the extent to which a role should be 'personalised' or how much of oneself to 'invest' in it, but rather how the standards of both practices can be adequately met. MacIntyre's concept offers a cultural dimension to the ideas of 'self-worth' an individual holds and suggests a cultural understanding of such ideals is required. Both Archer's and MacIntyre's work provide the possibility of the multiple 'roles' or 'practices' an individual is committed to having implications for each other.

Daily paths, life paths and projects

In investigating these under-theorised aspects of practice theory, I rely on a mixture of the theoretical works of Bourdieu, Giddens, MacIntyre, and Archer. In the following chapters I will show how these are variously useful in exploring the intersections of everyday practice, careers, institutions and policy and the processes of reproduction and transformation that can be identified at these intersections. In order to incorporate the ideas outlined above and begin an investigation of social reproduction and transformation by looking at the everyday work and careers of sociologists, I borrow the concepts of daily path, life path and project from 'time

geography'. These concepts were first brought together with theories of practice by Allan Pred (1981a and 1981b), though with little subsequent take-up or development.

Paths

The concept of path refers to the biography of an individual, all the actions and events which compose it, and the temporal and spatial attributes of these actions and events: '... the biography of a person is ever on the move with her and can be conceptualised... as an unbroken, continuous path through time-space.' (Pred, 1981a:9). Each individual has a 'daily path' and a 'life path'. The daily path refers to the consecutive activities that take us through the time-space of each day. This is in a dialectic relation with the 'life path', that is, the long-term institutional roles with which each individual is associated (both inside and outside the workplace). Paths are constantly coupled and uncoupled with the paths of other individuals as well as man-made and natural objects, which have uninterrupted time-space paths of their own. There are always trade offs in the coupling and uncoupling process because it is only possible to be in one place at a time, a space can only be used for one task at a time and all tasks have a duration, but time resources are finite.

Pred notes:

Because the path concept stresses the physical indivisibility and finite time resources of the individual, it forces us to recognise that participation alterations in one realm of practice invariably bring participation adjustments or changes in other realms of practice – both for self and others. (Pred, 1981a:10).

This is interesting, as following Pred's logic, we can theorise that if biographies are interconnected to each other and to time and space, then these interconnections form an essential part of the everyday process of social reproduction.

Projects

Working alongside the path concept is the idea of project, defined as: "...the entire series of simple or complex tasks necessary to the completion of any intention-inspired or goal-oriented behaviour" (Pred, 1981a:10) The 'intention' here might originate with an individual or an

institution (meant in broad terms to include, for example, the family). Projects always consist of ‘activity bundles’, and in general these must occur in a particular order, and involve the coming together of particular paths (of people and materials) at particular points.

Pred suggests that an institution can be said to be synonymous with the everyday and longer term projects for which it is responsible. If we follow Pred’s logic here, we can theorise that if an institution is synonymous with the everyday and longer term projects for which it is responsible, then it is at the *intersection* of these projects with particular individual paths that social reproduction and transformation occurs (Pred, 1981a: 10).

The relationship between paths-projects and structure-agency

Pred suggests two ‘dialectics’ to understand the relationship between, on one hand, the concepts of ‘path’ and ‘project’ and, on the other hand, discussions of structure and agency. These dialectics are referred to as the ‘external/internal’ and ‘daily path/life path’ dialectics. The external/internal dialectic refers to the interplay between the ‘external’ corporeal actions experienced in the activities of the daily path and the ‘internal’ mental activities of the individual. Their intersection can be viewed as a reflexive process in which knowledge and experience from previous projects is imprinted on current activities, and new knowledge and experience is acquired. This dialectic is conceptually useful as it takes account of the experiential learning that is accumulated by individuals across their biography, as well as acknowledging the agency individuals have in their daily lives.

The daily path/life path dialectic refers to the relationship between the activities of an individual’s daily path and the institutional roles with which an individual is connected. If we imagine an individual’s CV, the roles an individual is committed to *now* have in some ways been enabled or constrained by their roles in the past. It is because of their commitments to particular roles that certain activities are given priority in the allocation of an individual’s time – the ‘daily path’ takes a particular shape. This then has implications for the institutional roles potentially available to an individual in the future.

When considering the place of government policy and its connection to these discussions of everyday practice, social reproduction and social change, Pred's work is slightly thinner, though he does begin to touch on this area within his discussion of dominant projects.

Dominant projects

Pred notes that not all institutional projects are of equal importance. Rather, different institutions and the projects they encompass compete for limited resources. Some institutions and some projects are more successful at securing these resources than others. In light of the previous discussion, we can see that the individual's daily path is likely to be influenced by the institutions and projects which gain dominance. Building on the hypothesis proposed earlier, if it is at the *intersection* of institutional projects and individual paths that social reproduction and transformation occurs, then one process by which policy may gain influence is by its projects dominating the daily paths of individuals.

From Pred's discussion we can hypothesise that one way in which 'traces of policy' might be found in the everyday practices of academics is within the activities of the daily path. These activities lend insight into the dominant projects of the institution and also the other non-dominant projects which are given peripheral resources, or pushed to one side as a result.

Summary of key concepts

There are several advantages in viewing social reproduction and transformation through the lens of life path, daily path, project and practice. Firstly, it enables a methodological focus on people's everyday activities, which may include embodied practices, deliberate choices and unintended consequences. Secondly, it allows the incorporation of individuals' careers as a continuous process of becoming based on reflection and experiential learning, within the analysis. This includes the moral dilemmas faced across their careers and the temporal waxing and waning of commitments. Thirdly, the concepts of 'project' and 'dominant project' provide tools with which to consider the intersections and interactions of policy and institutions with everyday practices at different times and places. Finally, concepts of 'practice' provide a framework for understanding how different daily activities have implications for each other, as well as culturally situating individuals' ideas of 'self-worth' and the moral dilemmas that they face.

To summarise, the key concepts mobilised and developed in my thesis include the following:

- Practice. This thesis takes a practice-based approach to study social reproduction and transformation in the everyday work of sociologists. I draw on two concepts of 'practice' to assist my discussions. One from MacIntyre (1981) contends that the practices of sociologists are usefully viewed as social activities governed by particular standards of excellence and a concern with internal goods. The other from Reckwitz (2002) supposes that many everyday activities can be viewed at one and the same time as the production and reproduction of social structure.
- Life path. In this thesis I am interested in the place of individuals' careers within processes of social reproduction and transformation. The life path concept is useful for considering these careers and their intersections with an individual's everyday practices, as well as their intersections with institutions and policies that are also temporally situated.
- Daily path. The idea of a daily path allows me to consider the organisation of the current everyday activities of individuals. The cumulative sum of these everyday activities at any moment is taken to form the 'practice' (as it is performed) – though this may differ from the practices that individuals espouse commitment to.
- Project. The concepts of project and dominant project are drawn upon to consider relations of power and their implications for everyday practices. The different relations of power come to the fore in individual's discussions of the dilemmas they face as they attempt to align their practices with their commitments, activating various enablements and constraints along the way. The enablements and constraints that individuals experience and how they navigate and negotiate them provide a method of considering the intersections of institutions and policy with reproduction and transformation in everyday life.

Outline of the thesis

In the previous sections I have outlined the theoretical background and the key themes of my thesis. As I mention at the start of the chapter, my concern is with the intersections of everyday practices, careers, institutions and policy. My proposition is that understandings of social reproduction and transformation can be usefully deepened by focussing on these intersections. My empirical study focuses on the everyday practices and careers of academic sociologists at four different types of university. The following chapters analyse data on practices and careers from different angles, in order to explore the intersections with which I am concerned.

In chapter two, I set the scene of my empirical study. I talk about the recent history of the UK's higher education system and the kinds of institution, that have different histories, traditions and strategies, that now comprise UK universities. I argue that despite the large and diverse field of universities that are promoted as 'equal but different' in government policy, the sector behaves as a field in Bourdieu's sense of the term, that is, a network of relationally determined positions (1986). I suggest that this field is organised around systems of cultural and symbolic capital that are reflected in university league tables. As well as setting the scene for the empirical work, the chapter argues for a study that enables comparison of practices and careers across different kinds of university.

In chapter three I describe my research methodology. In particular I discuss how the study sites and interviewees were selected, how interview questions were developed and why I chose to focus on my interviewees' everyday practices and careers. The chapter outlines some of the limitations of these methods, in particular focussing on the challenge of using career biographies and retrospective accounts. I explain how these challenges have been handled within this study. To conclude the chapter, I outline how the thesis structure itself forms part of my methodological approach, with each of the empirical chapters focussing on a specific slice of data to explore specific intersections, one at a time.

Chapter four is the first of the empirical chapters. Within it, I consider how practice is reproduced and transformed at the intersection of individual and institution. I do this by discussing the organisation, competition and negotiation of institutional and personal

temporalities. The analysis shows that the interests and ambitions of my interviewees are variously aligned or in tension with institutional requirements of academic work. I show that this is often to the cost of those lower in the academic hierarchy, and that in this way the stratified field of UK universities (set out in chapter two) is reproduced in everyday work. As the stratifications of the field are reproduced, so the practice of sociology – conceptualised as the cumulative sum of everyday activities – takes different forms across the study sites.

Chapter five elaborates on the navigation and negotiation of personal and institutional temporalities set out in chapter four. In chapter five, I concentrate on research ‘strategies’; both the strategies of universities and departments, and the informal strategies that individual academics adopt as they make their way through their everyday work. My analysis reveals what the negotiations of temporality, introduced in chapter four, are about. I suggest that individuals and institutions are struggling for various forms of capital, as well as for access to valued practices and ways of life. How these institutional and individual struggles intersect in the everyday has implications for what is produced and reproduced in practice at the different study sites.

Together, chapters four and five offer an analysis of practices, and their reproduction and transformation, at the interface between individual and institution. Chapters six and seven shift the focus to consider how *careers* can be understood in processes of practice change.

In chapter six, I explore some of the intersections and dynamics of structure and agency across my interviewees’ careers. I show that via processes of experiential learning, individuals develop commitments to doing particular things (e.g. research, teaching), as well as moral commitments to particular *ways* of doing that they regard as good. As such, within the structural constraints of the university field, individuals inhabit and personalise their positions in their own ways. I also show the importance of personal capital accumulation in gaining positions of influence and in accessing valued practices of academic life. I show that individual’s careers gain different qualities depending on how the ‘life path’ is navigated and discuss the strategies my interviewees have used to deal with negative situations, namely ‘settling for less’, ‘moving on’ and attempting to ‘challenge structure’. Though these strategies have different implications in terms of individual lives, they are alike in that they fail to challenge the reproduction of the stratifications of the field.

In Chapter seven I review changes in the UK academic labour market, using this to provide another view of reproduction and transformation. I consider how the existence and shape of the practice of sociology and of sociologists' careers intersect with an academic labour market strongly influenced by changing political agendas. Statistics from HESA and other secondary sources inform these discussions, alongside the key career turning points within the accounts of my interviewees. The chapter explores how changing policy and institutional structures can influence both the number of positions and the 'array of roles' that exist in a practice like sociology.

In Chapter eight – the concluding chapter – I consider how studying the intersections of everyday practice, careers, institutions and policy contributes to understandings of social reproduction and transformation. I also evaluate the methodological approach developed in this study. Finally, I comment on the contribution this thesis makes to research on academic life, and its broader implications.

Chapter Two

Setting the Scene

History... is the temporality of human practices, fashioning and fashioned by structural properties, within which diverse forms of power are incorporated. (Giddens, 1984:220).

The aim of this chapter is to set the scene of my empirical study prior to outlining the research design in chapter three. To achieve this I elaborate on the recent history of the UK's higher education system, and the diverse kinds of institution with different histories, traditions, governance arrangements and strategies that the category 'university' now encompasses. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital (1986,1989), I argue that despite policy-led efforts to create a diverse but equal higher education system, the field remains stratified, with institutional status being closely linked to institutional history. I show that a university's strategic goals; the volume and kinds of resources available; the positioning of academics within their institutions; and, the practices to which institutions and individuals have access are strongly related to institutional type. Further, I suggest that institutional type acts as a metaphor for accumulated capital and institutional habitus.

These observations and analyses are important for the study in two ways. Firstly, given my aim of designing an empirical study of sociologists that explores the theoretical intersections of practices, daily activities, careers and institutions, the material in this chapter suggests that a *comparative* approach that considers how and why these intersections vary by institution has great potential. Secondly, incorporating the stratification and diversification of the field within the empirical study (rather than overlooking it) enables a 'thick description' of the complexity and challenges that individual academics face in their everyday work and across their lives, and allows a more nuanced analysis of academic work than is to be found in government white papers and policy documents.

The UK higher education system: a brief institutional history

In the past, and until the 1960s, UK higher education consisted of a small number of elite universities which had comparable histories and relative autonomy from the state. Over the past 50 years, the government's focus on developing a higher education *system*, and the accompanying

trends in UK higher education policy, have substantially changed the nature of universities and the scope of what they do. These trends include an expansion (which began in the 1960s) from elite to mass higher education; an increased move towards managerialist ideas and corporate structures in their governance and management; the development and embedding of quality assessment and university ranking that is closely linked to financial rewards and quasi-market ideals, and a reframing of the purpose of universities within society.

Within this section I provide a brief history of the sector and the policy circumstances in which different institutions have received their university title. Linked to these histories, I describe how changing governance arrangements between universities and the state, and within institutions, have had implications for the academic profession and touch on the mediation of these changes in different parts of the sector. Later in the chapter, I draw on Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital (1986, 1989) to show why these histories still matter today.

Early developments

The first UK institution that formally came into existence as a university was Oxford in the early 13th Century (Farrington, 1994:13), followed by Cambridge (circa 1207). Graham (2002) notes that these institutions, alongside the six other British universities (five in Scotland, one in Ireland) were for the most part formed by a medieval conception of the university "...a place of learning and training, commonly (though not always) made up of four 'Faculties' of which Arts was foundational" (Graham, 2002:9).

Providing a university education for a very small elite, the State had little to do with these institutions which were organised around collegial forms of governance. Academics were dominant in decision making processes (as opposed to 'lay' interests on the university council), and consensus was deemed highly important.

The first major university expansion occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The University of Durham was founded in the 1830s as a result of an initiative by the Church. The constituent institutions that now form the University of London were founded in the same period (University College in 1826 and King's College in 1829) (Farrington, 1994:14). These

universities closely followed the examples of Oxford and Cambridge in terms of their purposes, organisation and governance structures.

Lucas (2006) notes two important models that made these structures explicit and wove them into a broader fabric of 'academic values'. The first was set out by Humboldt in a 10-page pamphlet in 1810 (Krull, 2005, in Lucas, 2006). The document argued against Napoleon's attempts to reform universities in France by separating off research into the 'Grand Ecoles' and making universities teaching-only institutions. Humboldt, then Head of the newly founded University of Berlin, wanted to substantiate the link between teaching and research and protect the universities from the state. As Krull (2005, in Lucas, 2006:25) notes, Humboldt's idea of a modern university rested on four main conditions which are still retained in our ideas of a university today.

First, was the integration of teaching and research, and a duty to create, preserve and transmit knowledge. Second, the complementary principles of *Lehrfreiheit* (freedom to teach) and *Lehrnfreiheit* (freedom to study). Third, the demand for *Einsamkeit* (solitude) and *Freiheit* (freedom) in the autonomous pursuit of truth. Fourth, the introduction of the seminar system as the backbone of a community of teachers and students ("*Gemeinschaft der lehrenden und lernenden*") (Krull, 2005 in Lucas, 2006:25).

A second model that has influenced English universities is that of Newman (1931) who first delivered his lectures on 'The Idea of the University' in 1854 as rector of the new Catholic University in Dublin. His emphasis was on teaching rather than research, but teaching for a liberal education, with a strong pastoral bond between the tutor and student. Like Humboldt, Newman emphasised the development of knowledge as 'an end in itself', as an important process of personal development of the individual, and as a public good to be valued by society (Lucas, 2006:26). In practice, this became known as the 'Oxford model' and was influential as the English system developed and attempted to emulate the practices of Oxford and Cambridge.

After these initial foundations were laid, there was little development in English universities until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the industrial revolution was taking hold and English cities were developing at pace.

The civic universities (late nineteenth & early twentieth century)

The corporations of these booming Victorian cities were responsible for the founding of the civic universities (e.g. Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester). Local political, commercial, civic and industrial elites competed for Royal Charters of university title and provided funding to establish new institutions. These initiatives often formed part of a broader campaign to become a chartered city, as well as aiming to develop 'expert' professions (medicine, law, engineering) and to provide the education required to grow local industry.

Reflecting these roots, civic universities were initially governed by their founders. For example, Bargh et al (1996:4) note that both the state and the academic profession were subordinate to the dominant lay councils. Similarly, Shattock (2002:236) highlights that when Birmingham achieved university status in 1901, membership of the Court of Governors "...intended to demonstrate ownership of the new university by the City and the Midlands region and to be a means to mobilise interest and support over the whole area" (Ives, Drummond and Schwarz, 2000 in Shattock 2002:236). In these institutions, the internal powers of governing councils were virtually unqualified; universities did not have government backing and were almost entirely dependent on their lay governors to generate funding.

From the mid 1930s onwards, the balance of lay:government funding began to shift. Reflecting this fiscal change, the University Grants Committee (a government appointed committee that advised government on university matters) began recommending against granting full university status if the institution was too subordinate to lay control (Shattock, 2002: 236). This position became prevalent, especially during the post-war period, by which time government funding had risen from almost nothing to 95% of the recurrent budget of most universities (Shattock, 2002:237).

The University Grants Committee

From the moment that central government granted funds for the university colleges (1889, in the first instance), a committee was assembled to advise on the distribution of the money. Maclure notes:

The Treasury Memorandum of 1 March 1889... authorized the Lord President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to nominate 'a small committee of men well-versed in academic questions, to elaborate a plan for the distribution of the grant.'
(Maclure, 1987:14)

A general principle, that academics from the universities should have responsibility for distributing the money, continued as the grant grew (£15,000 in 1889; £170,000 in 1914; £779,000 in 1919; £3.5 million in 1937) (Maclure, 1987:13). In 1919, this group became formalized as the University Grants Committee (UGC) responsible for allocating funding to all the university colleges and universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

Maclure (1987) highlights that this body was traditionally weighted towards the elites of the academic profession, with a leading academic as full time chair, a board of academics and 'a few' industry representatives. Further, he notes that 'The academics are not representative in any direct sense, but there is a spread of departmental expertise and they are chosen because they are among the 'best' in their fields' (Maclure, 1987:15).

In a situation in which lay governors now had a minor funding role, and the major decisions about university grants were made by members of the academic profession, the governance councils and their relationship to academic senate within the universities began to reflect this new balance of power. For example, by the 1960s university statutes gave senates substantial rights to be consulted by governing councils in decision-making, and encouraged participation in university governance by students (Shattock, 2002:237).

We can see then, that from the period that began with the founding of the civic universities in the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century, there was a shift from lay control of institutions, to a sector in which the academic profession gained power that was reflected in the dominant practice of academic and university autonomy from the state (supported by 'traditional' models of governance that originated at Oxford and Cambridge).

'Mutual trust' and the shift of power

The terms on which power was ceded to the academics is open to interpretation. Henkel (2000) suggests that academic self-government was based on a relation of 'mutual trust' between universities, industry and the state, founded on the agreement that:

...autonomous universities, regulating their own standards, would ensure the advanced forms of knowledge and education required to sustain the nation, its military and industrial power, its key institutions and culture. (Henkel, 2000:29).

In idealistic terms such an agreement is frequently characterised as an actualisation of Polanyi's 'Republic of Science' as described by Henkel (2000): "...the social and political conditions for the collective pursuit of truth lie in the independence, academic freedom, originality, integrity and equality of the 'republic of science', and in its 'citizens' operating within clear but permeable internal boundaries and strong external boundaries" (Henkel, 2000:17). Indeed, the UGC was often seen as a 'resilient buffer' between the universities on the one hand and the politicians on the other. However, this only really started to matter in the 1980s, a period of high inflation, large cuts in university funding and a government that disagreed with the UGCs decisions ². It is therefore important to remain critical of the idea of 'mutual trust', which might simply have reflected a period of congruence between government and university agendas.

Bargh et al (1996) note that during this period the academic profession was comprised of elites that had their own ambitions. From this perspective, the 'mutual trust' might also be viewed as a 'gentleman's agreement' between academics, high class industrialists and members of the civil service, who were often drawn from the same social strata at that time, all being part of the 'old boy's network' (Mills, 2006; 2008). Alternatively, Maclure (1987) suggests the situation was quite simply an accident of history, arising from the late involvement of the Exchequer in university funding, rather than reflecting any ideological commitment on the part of the State (Maclure, 1987:11).

² For example, in 1981 the UGC decided to make disproportionately large cuts at Salford and Aston Universities. Both institutions were developing close links to industry. Although this practice was aligned with Government policies at the time, the UGC still withdrew funding.

Whether the realisation of an ideal, an agreement amongst elite professions, or simply the outcome of chance circumstance, the 'mutual trust' relationship and the self-governance the universities by the academics represents a benchmark, in terms of which the period of change since the 1960s and, in particular, the 1980s is often discussed. The reasons for this are explained more fully in the following sections.

Post-Robbins expansion (1960s)

The next major period of university expansion occurred in the 1960s. In 1958, under the advice of the UGC, the government approved the establishment of seven new 'greenfield' universities, including Lancaster, Warwick, Sussex and York. These developments were supported by the Robbins Report of 1963, and underpinned by the policy principle that "...courses of higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so." (HMSO, 1963:8). These new 'greenfield' institutions were established and governed along similar lines to the existing universities. The Robbins Report also recommended that nine Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) should be designated as universities with a focus on teaching and research in science and technology, and the power to award first and higher degrees.

Though university-state relations remained relatively unchanged during this decade, one of the important aspects of Robbins for future policy was the fact that it was the first commission of its kind reflecting the growth in public funding discussed earlier. It questioned whether a higher education 'system' existed and had the explicit objective of designing such a system for the future. The report emphasised the importance of universities retaining their 'legitimate autonomy', however, their role within a 'higher education system' was a new conceptualization.

The polytechnics

The second expansion of the post-Robbins era was the formation of 30 polytechnics, offering a new form of public sector higher education to replace the CATs, whose main purpose would be vocational education and training. There were key differences between the polytechnics and universities from the start. For example, in contrast to the power assigned to academics in the universities, the polytechnics were governed by their immediate managers; the Local Education

Authorities and local industrialists. The polytechnics attracted different types of student, many of whom were part time with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, in contrast to the full time school leavers who populated the universities (Henkel, 2000:31). Public accountability via audit and review from external regulators was built into the polytechnic system from the start, and they had no funds allocated for research.

Though their remit was to provide vocational education and training, the 1970s and 1980s saw the development of courses for new subjects and degrees based on innovative curriculum models. These included business courses, general social science degrees, degrees that combined academic and professional qualifications and modularisation (Henkel, 2000:32, Platt, 2002:181).

This broadening of disciplines in part occurred as the expansion of the public higher education sector outran the number of technology students. In addition, the universities had grown their facilities for these subjects and competed for undergraduates. In other words, there had been little attempt to coordinate the binary system, and the polytechnics were soon perceived to be (and operating as) a second tier of higher education (Maclure, 1987:19).

By the end of the 1970s, it was becoming clear that greater coordination between the university and polytechnic sectors was required. This presented a challenge because the polytechnic system was funded by central government, but owned and administered by local authorities. The National Advisory Board (NAB) was established as mediator between these two interests, which still retained the initiative of the local authorities whilst reserving to the Secretary of State the right to accept or reject its advice. This shift in the governance of polytechnics led to questions being raised about the necessity to have two sectors of higher education. The NAB itself reflected the government intention to have more control in the public sector, and this gained momentum when the NAB was abolished in 1989 and replaced by a Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council. Alongside these developments, the intention of state intervention in the university sector was also becoming more pronounced.

The universities in the 1970s and 1980s

By the mid 1970s the funding system for the universities was being challenged. As noted by Trowler (2003:50) funding cuts were announced in the Thatcher Government's expenditure

White Paper of 1981. It was the UGC that was faced with apportioning these across the universities. The cuts were part of a broader response by Thatcher's Conservative Government to the 'failing' Welfare State, and a policy emphasis on 'economy, efficiency and effectiveness' (Henkel, 2000:36). This was a new challenge for the UGC, and one that conflicted with its position as a 'buffer' between universities and the state:

The UGC was... struggling to distribute diminishing funds while trying to protect the unit of resource for universities and chose the option of selectivity in order to protect the unit of resource for at least some institutions/cost centres (Lucas, 2006:31).

As noted in chapter one, the UGC handled the requirement to fund selectively by conducting the first 'assessment exercise' (which would later become the RAE) in 1981.

These shifts in the landscape were further developed in the 1985 Green Paper (the Jarrett Report) which pushed for more market-like behaviour in universities (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). In practice, the recommendations of the report led to various non-market rankings of teaching and research being increasingly linked to financial and symbolic consequences, and students being redefined as customers, which placed new expectations and constraints on the 'services' universities provided (Greenwood, 2007). A continuation of cuts throughout the next three years led to a more formal assessment exercise being established by the UGC in which funding was allocated based on overall objectives, research plans, student numbers and financial forecasts.

In 1989, under the same Act that replaced the NAB with the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, the UGC was abolished and the new Universities Funding Council was established. Just as the removal of the NAB created more direct channels of governance between the state and the polytechnics, the removal of the UGC bypassed an intermediary body that increasingly had disparate objectives to those of the government.

These changes in governance at state level were reproduced within the universities. For example, Jarrett pushed for a change in the relationship between Senate (the academics) and Council (the board of governors) within institutions:

The relative decline in the influence exercised by Councils has increased the potential for Senate to resist change and to exercise... conservatism. Vice-Chancellors and university administrators have in the past been trained to believe that harmony between the two bodies should have a very high priority in a university. It may well be, however, that a degree of tension between them is necessary in the circumstances now facing universities, and can be creative and beneficial in the long term. That can only happen if Councils assert themselves. (CVCP, 1985, in Shattock, 2002:237)

The report portrayed senates as 'the main forum for an academic view and giving advice on broad issues to Council'. Subsequent legislation extended the power of governing bodies. For example, the 1988 Education Reform Act extended rights in the dismissal of academic staff, in 1994, further legislation shifted the supervision of student unions from Senate to Council. The Financial Memorandum (1994) placed responsibilities with governing bodies for ensuring an institution's sound financial system, to deliver 'value for money' and for approving financial and strategic plans. These increased legislative responsibilities affected the activities of governing bodies and changed their relationship to the institution as a whole, just as they had been intended to do.

So, across the 1970s and 1980s there was a profound shift in the relationship between institutions and the state, which challenged traditional models of university autonomy and the power of the academic profession. Within universities, ideas of consensual governance were replaced by corporate models that viewed conflict between Senate and Council as an expected, and even the 'healthy' state of affairs. These changes had lasting implications for universities, creating new channels for policy to shape university activities, and changing the relationship (on paper at least) between academics (in Senate) and boards of governors. There were also implications for the governance arrangements of polytechnics, when they were released from local authority control in 1988, and then when they became universities four years later.

1992: The end of the binary divide

Polytechnics were granted university status under the Education Reform Act of 1992, and a single Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) was established (Trowler, 2003). The 1992 Act also

provided the Privy Council with the discretionary rights to grant degree awarding powers (DAPs) to other institutions (e.g. Bolton). Whereas the governance arrangements of the CATs in the 1960s had been based on the models of existing universities, there was no suggestion that the polytechnics would be permitted to move in this direction. Rather, the ideas of governance that had emerged across the 1980s provided the founding frameworks for these new universities.

The whole sector now received public funding via HEFCE, with the self-governance of institutions being periodically assessed by the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) (replaced by the Quality Assurance Agency in 1997). The polytechnics were included in the 1992 Research Assessment Exercise (Lucas, 2006) and several members of staff at the new post-1992 universities began to undertake research (Henkel, 2000).

Taking advantage of the now diverse sector, and newly afforded policy channels, the *Realizing Our Potential* White Paper in 1993 established a strategy for the future of publicly funded research. The paper emphasised the importance of forging links with industry and the public sector in research programmes (Shove, 2000). These ideas were reinforced in the Dearing Report (1997) which placed an emphasis on including 'lay' members in the governing bodies of all institutions (Deem et al, 2007). In a world where the old allies of academic, political, professional and industrial elites had faded, this became something of a threat and the focus for evolving debate on the purposes of universities, a theme that remains with us today.

The Lambert Review of Higher Education/Industry links (2003) developed the ideas of the 1993 White Paper, encouraging the private funding of university research that should be 'more useful' to industry (Deem et al, 2007). The 1993 White Paper encouraged greater differentiation between institutional missions, recommending a clearer distinction between teaching and research, and extra funding for high quality research departments. Symbolically, a change in the requirements for University Title was introduced that removed the necessity for universities to offer research degrees. This meant that higher education institutions undertaking no research activity but with undergraduate Degree Awarding Powers could now apply for university status (e.g. Bolton, Roehampton).

The post-1992 era

In terms of Trow's often-cited categorisation of higher education systems, the UK system remained 'elite' (Age Participation Rate (APR) of up to 15%) until 1984/5, and is now 'mass' (APR between 15%-33.3%). Such a generalisation can easily conceal the diversification that now exists across the field of universities. This point was noted by Teichler (1988) who characterised UK HE as being comprised of a large number of permeable institutions with overlapping functions but different missions.

The end of the binary divide led to much speculation over the future trajectories of the university system. On the one hand, in a quasi-market with a large number of institutions competing for funding and students, a greater diversification would now be possible. On the other hand, the ranking of institutions closely linked to allocation of financial reward might result in homogenisation across the sector, with all institutions emulating those at the top.

As would be expected given the histories discussed above, early studies highlighted some distinct differences between pre and post-92 universities. For example, in the years just prior to 1992, twice as many staff in universities held doctorates, and higher proportions of polytechnic staff were at the lower end of the salary scale (Fulton, 1996 in Henkel, 2000:34). Surveys reported that academics in post-1992 institutions were spending more time on teaching and had shorter vacations. By contrast, a higher proportion of pre-1992 university staff spent vacation time on their research. A much lower proportion of post-92 staff had any research activity included in their employment contracts (Henkel, 2000:34-35).

From a policy perspective, these differences in activities might be interpreted as evidence that the sector had successfully diversified. Indeed, within policy discourse, an emphasis on difference has emerged across the last 20 years. For example, Dearing's 1997 Higher Education Report discusses the 'spectrum' of universities that now exist:

Institutions of higher education have different profiles of activity. At the risk of oversimplification, universities at one end of the spectrum can be characterised as more heavily engaged in research; having a higher proportion of postgraduate students, and more selective entry requirements for undergraduate students; and playing a

predominantly national or international role. Those at the other end tend to concentrate on teaching activities; have a higher proportion of sub-degree students, and to promote the access of non-conventional students; and focus on serving the locality or region.

There is a tendency for the pre-1992 and post-1992 universities to be concentrated towards opposite ends of the spectrum. (Dearing 1997: section 3.9).

This emphasis on difference continues in Mandelson's 2009 higher education report stating that 'excellence' in all realms of university activity should be both encouraged and valued; 'excellent service' to local and regional communities should be viewed as important as 'excellent research' and should be rewarded and ranked on equal terms (Higher Ambitions, 2009:4).

This framing of the situation is in tension with the academic perspectives represented in empirical studies. Here the debate focuses on stratification - the issue for academics being whether their profession is better supported in some areas of the sector than in others. Locke's (2007) research illustrates the case in point. The academics in his study are not represented as workers in a diverse system, but members of the same profession that are housed in different institutions and therefore have access to different resources, different career possibilities and different practices of academic work..

In a comparative analysis of academic activity at pre and post-1992 institutions, Locke investigates what it means to be an academic drawing on measures such as hours spent on teaching, research and administration, where academics' primary interests lie (in teaching, research or different combinations of both), scholarly contributions completed in the past three years, perspectives on what scholarship means, institutional expectations of individual staff (e.g. number of classroom hours, number of students in class, number of graduate students). He concludes that though academics' views and conditions of work have partially harmonised across different kinds of institution, distinct differences persist. The contrast I wish to make is that Locke seeks to understand how institutions are positioned on the 'spectrum' that Dearing describes (above). Whereas Locke asks if the system is 'still stratified?', Dearing draws on the same indicators to illustrate that the sector is 'diverse'.

Summary

The higher education system as it currently exists in the UK encompasses many kinds of institution, with historically different relationships to the State that are reflected in local relations of power between the academic profession, lay interest and government agendas. In this study, where I am concerned with sociology as a practice and its reproduction/ transformation at the intersection of individuals' everyday activities on the one hand and institutions on the other, incorporating these complexities within the theoretical and methodological frame is important. The discussion of diversification and stratification outlined above reflects the ambiguity currently surrounding these power relations across the sector, as well as the complexities that arise in their analysis.

Empirical studies show that the everyday activities of individuals – i.e. the practices they engage in as academics - are variously enabled and constrained depending on the kind of institution in which they are housed. That the 'diversity' of institutions is experienced in this manner, and frequently interpreted as a 'stratification' by members of the academic profession suggests such broad-brush terms require further analysis and deconstruction. In the next section I introduce Bourdieu's concepts of *field* and *capital* as useful tools for understanding these complexities. Using Bourdieu helps me to interpret the parallel discourses of diversification and stratification, and assists in understanding why different institutional histories still matter today.

Bourdieu: 'field' and 'capital'

Bourdieu conceptualises the social world as a 'multi-dimensional space' (Bourdieu, 1987) or a 'field' which at one and the same time positions agents and shapes the struggles in which they are engaged:

...both as a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and as a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure... (Bourdieu, 1989:32).

Within particular fields, agents compete for and collect economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital like 'aces in a game of cards' (1989:17), and different kinds of capital are interchangeable

(to varying degrees). Agents are distributed according to their overall volume of capital and its structure – that is the different amounts of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital that they have. The closer that agents, groups or institutions are within the field, in terms of the volume and structure of their capital, the more common properties they have. Accumulation and heredity are important when considering capital, and focussing on all four kinds of capital suggests that visible hierarchies do not necessarily show what is immediately given but rather conceal the invisible which determines it. (Bourdieu, 1989:16).

The reason those in similar positions have ‘common properties’ is because of the development of a similar *habitus*. I define this in chapter one as an ‘internalised feel for the game’; dispositions that are learned through bodily repetition via socialisation. Here we can understand the dispositions of the habitus in relation to the ‘field’, with those subjected to similar conditionings developing similar dispositions and interests and ‘producing practices that are themselves similar’ (Bourdieu, 1989:17). The concepts of ‘field’ and ‘capitals’ provide a useful way of thinking about the higher education system and the social differences that exist, as well as offering a way of understanding how *both* diversification and stratification exist and have implications for each other.

The university field: league tables

I note earlier in this chapter that since the mid-1980s, a key aspect of government policy has been for the higher education system to operate as a quasi-market. I also highlight that this trend has been accompanied by various assessment and ranking mechanisms that are increasingly linked to financial rewards. University league tables, which claim to aid consumer choice by ranking universities on the comparative quality of their activities, are one of the objectified outcomes of these trends. The emphasis these tables place on ‘excellence’ means that in theory they underpin the government agenda of diversification; an institution that is top in its research should be comparable with one that focuses on widening participation, or one that has engagement with local business as its central aim. However, an analysis of the league tables suggests they generally reproduce hierarchies that are related to university histories.

Tables 2.1-2.4 below show excerpts from the 2010 University League Tables published in national broadsheet newspapers, The Times and The Guardian. Being publicly available both

nationally and internationally, such tables are important in shaping public opinion about the relative quality and status of institutions in the UK higher education system. The colour key, that I have added to categorise institutions according to the period in which University Title was received, reveals the strong correlation between age and ranking.

Table 2.1: Top 50 league table rankings in The Times 2010

Max scores	Student satisfaction	Research Quality	Student: Staff Ratio	Services & Facilities Spend	Entry Standards	Completion	Good Honours	Graduate Prospects	Total Score
1	100%	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	100	100	100	1000
1 Oxford	85	3.5	10.8	3396	524	97.7	91.1	82.3	1000
2 Cambridge	86	3.7	11.6	2385	539	99	87	85.5	968
3 Imperial College	75	2.7	10.3	3518	489	97.1	68.5	88.4	859
4 St Andrews	84	2.5	12.4	1423	468	94.2	85.1	77.8	792
5 University College London	77	2.7	8.9	1784	452	92	80.4	82.9	775
6 Warwick	77	2.4	13.1	2118	463	96	79.7	79.2	772
7 London School of Economics	73	2.8	13.3	1699	483	96.5	76	90.6	768
8 Durham	79	2.5	14.8	1578	459	96.7	77.5	78.3	749
11 York	79	2.5	13.1	1534	434	96	74.9	69.4	711
12 King's College London	76	2	11.4	1821	415	92.3	72.8	83.2	709
13 Bath	78	2	15	1358	440	95.7	75.1	81.9	705
14 Edinburgh	74	2.8	12.4	1511	447	90.4	80.6	76.9	704
17 Loughborough	85	2.1	17	1340	368	91.3	67.7	75.7	691
19 Glasgow	79	2.2	13.2	1377	412	86.6	71.3	75.4	671
23 Lancaster	79	2.4	13.7	1407	388	93.3	69.6	64.3	661
25 Aston	80	1.2	16.5	1507	365	91	63.6	78.1	631
28 East Anglia	83	1.8	17.1	1231	361	85.4	70.1	71.9	622
30 Royal Holloway	75	2.3	14.5	1308	365	92.9	70.3	69.8	617
33 Aberdeen	81	1.9	15.1	1194	363	77.3	67.6	74.4	607
33 School of Oriental and African Studies	72	1.7	10.8	1829	378	82.6	73.2	73.5	607
35 Sussex	74	2.2	15.5	1117	378	90.1	81.7	70.6	606
36 Queen Mary London	76	2	13	1161	346	88.5	64.2	77.3	600
37 Surrey	76	1.8	16.8	1202	352	88.8	65.1	80	596
37 Strathclyde	76	1.6	19.1	1344	394	83.1	73.9	78.1	596
39 Kent	81	1.4	17.1	1148	317	87.8	61.7	71.8	566
40 Heriot-Watt	75	1.7	15.6	1183	350	80.3	65.5	76.2	558
42 Keele	77	1.2	14.3	1148	319	89.1	64.4	70.4	552
43 Essex	76	1.8	13.7	1385	302	87.4	61	62.7	550
45 Goldsmiths College	72	2.1	12.7	806	318	85.7	65.2	69	529
47 Brunel	72	1.6	17.8	1576	319	86.4	64.9	67.9	516
48 Stirling	76	1.3	14.2	958	288	81.5	64.3	69.8	512
49 City	72	1.2	17.8	993	316	84.3	66.6	81.4	511

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14 Edinburgh	74	2.8	12.4	1511	447	90.4	80.6	76.9	704	
15 Leicester	84	1.9	14.7	1489	360	93	71.6	76.2	693	
15 Southampton	78	2	13.9	1562	407	93.7	74.6	76.5	693	
17 Loughborough	85	2.1	17	1340	368	91.3	67.7	75.7	691	
18 Sheffield	78	2.4	14.2	1191	406	92.1	74.5	79.1	684	
19 Glasgow	79	2.2	13.2	1377	412	86.6	71.3	75.4	671	
20 Nottingham	76	2.1	13.7	1402	408	95.7	74.3	76.3	668	
21 Newcastle	77	2	14.9	1504	405	92.2	72.2	79.4	664	
22 Birmingham	78	2.1	14.9	1552	403	93.6	70.9	72.7	653	
23 Lancaster	79	2.4	13.7	1407	388	93.3	69.6	64.3	661	
24 Manchester	73	2.4	13.6	1489	412	91.6	70.4	73.8	641	
25 Aston	80	1.2	16.5	1507	365	91	63.6	78.1	631	
26 Cardiff	77	1.8	14.7	1177	394	92.4	66.8	77.6	630	
27 Leeds	76	2	13.9	1143	392	91.9	73.4	71.1	627	
28 Liverpool	76	1.8	12.2	1273	387	91.2	68.8	72.5	622	
28 East Anglia	83	1.8	17.1	1231	361	85.4	70.1	71.9	622	
30 Royal Holloway	75	2.3	14.5	1308	365	92.9	70.3	69.8	617	
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32 Queen's Belfast	78	1.7	15.2	1382	358	85	69	78.3	611	
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42 Keele	77	1.2	14.3	1148	319	89.1	64.4	70.4	552	
43 Essex	76	1.8	13.7	1385	302	87.4	61	62.7	550	
44 Hull	81	1.1	18.7	1053	285	87	57.7	73.2	530	
45 Goldsmiths College	72	2.1	12.7	806	318	85.7	65.2	69	529	
46 Aberystwyth	81	1.7	17.5	1047	310	87.5	61.1	53	522	
47 Brunel	72	1.6	17.8	1576	319	86.4	64.9	67.9	516	
48 Stirling	76	1.3	14.2	958	288	81.5	64.3	69.8	512	
49 City	72	1.2	17.8	993	316	84.3	66.6	81.4	511	
50 Swansea	78	1.5	14.7	1122	304	87.3	50.8	62.5	506	

Table 2.2: Top 50 league table rankings in The Guardian 2010

2010 ranking (2009)	Name of Institution	Guardian score/ 100	% Satisfied with teaching	% Satisfied with feedback	Spend per student (FTE)	Student: staff ratio	Career prospects	Value added score/ 10	Average Entry Tariff
1 (1)	Oxford	100	92	68	10	11.8	79	6.7	522
2 (2)	Cambridge	97	92	76	9.46	12.1	83	4.9	535
3 (5)	St Andrews	87	94	75	6.55	12.8	74	7.2	466
4 (4)	Warwick	84	86	60	8.76	15.2	76	6	461
5 (3)	London School of Economics	82.4	73	63	7.62	14.5	86	5.4	481
6 (7)	UCL	81.5	85	60	8.34	11.2	79	7	451
7 (9)	Edinburgh	78.3	85	45	9.28	15.4	74	6.2	442
8 (6)	Imperial College	77.9	81	50	8.82	12.2	84	4.4	487
9 (13)	Bath	75.6	86	57	5.54	16	80	6	438
10 (10)	Loughborough	74.6	90	72	5.72	18.7	73	5.4	368
11 (11)	York	74.4	89	64	7.48	14.2	65	4.7	431
12 (8)	SOAS	74.2	90	64	6.99	12.8	85	6.5	386
13 (14)	Exeter	73	92	73	4.55	17.5	68	6.5	397
14 (16)	Durham	72.7	87	64	4.54	16.5	75	5.5	456
15 (14)	Lutchester	72	90	71	5.18	18.2	73	6.5	350
16 (12)	Lancaster	71.4	87	63	6.88	15	61	5.2	386
17 (20)	Glasgow	70.7	89	60	5.65	15	73	5.8	407
18 (33)	Sussex	70.1	88	61	4.65	17	68	7.5	376
19 (18)	Aston	69.9	88	66	5.27	19.8	75	5.1	364
20 (17)	Durdee	69.9	85	55	6.77	15.3	71	6.2	380
21 (26)	City	69.8	80	60	6.58	18.1	77	6.6	318
22 (52)	Heriot-Watt	69.4	81	59	6.49	17.5	75	6.4	346
23 (25)	Southampton	69.4	86	59	5.94	15.4	73	5.6	401
24 (30)	Birmingham	69.1	87	63	7.02	16.4	69	5	402
24 (21)	King's College London	69.1	85	55	7.12	13.1	80	5.7	412
26 (16)	Nottingham	68.7	86	54	6.68	15.1	74	5	403
27 (22)	Surrey	68.5	80	56	6.22	18.4	77	6	352
28 (27)	Leeds	68.4	85	60	6.94	15.8	69	5.4	391
28 (31)	Bristol	68.1	88	50	5.77	14.3	79	5.6	444
30 (38)	Sheffield	67.9	88	62	4.95	16.4	76	5.8	404
31 (34)	Royal Holloway	67.7	85	62	5.14	15.7	66	5.3	362
32 (37)	Bournemouth	67.5	82	66	6.16	23.5	73	6.4	293
32 (24)	Manchester	67.5	83	51	7.97	15.9	71	5.1	411
34 (23)	Aberdeen	67.2	91	69	5.14	16.8	73	6.5	357
35 (40)	UEA	66.8	91	70	5.4	18.8	67	6	357
36 (50)	Robert Gordon	66.3			4.45	18.7	83	6	326
36 (37)	Stirling	66.3			5.18	14.7	66	6.6	
38 (29)	Strathclyde	66.1	84	58	6.04	20.5	74	6.5	387
39 (42)	Goldsmiths	66	87	62	3.98	14	64	5.9	316
40 (43)	Newcastle	65.1	85	58	5.06	17	76	5.3	413
41 (39)	Reading	64.6	86	62	4.91	17.6	69	7	341
42 (41)	Nottingham Trent	64.8	82	63	5.67	17.1	72	4.7	276
43 (49)	Edinburgh Napier	64.7			4.1	19	69	8.2	290
44 (32)	Cardiff	64.3	86	53	5.44	16	74	4.8	390
45 (28)	Kent	64	88	69	5.06	17.6	69	5	318
46 (45)	University of the Arts, London	63.2	69	56	8.64	23.1	61	5	317
47 (44)	Liverpool	62.9	84	58	6.27	14.1	78	5.5	388
48 (35)	Essex	62.1	84	63	5.27	14.7	58	5.2	305
49 (46)	Queen's Belfast	61.9	85	58	4.9	16	70	5.8	351
50 -	Keele	61.6	87	66	4.08	15.8	66	6.5	321

Key

-  ancient universities
-  initial civic universities
-  civic universities (expanded sector)
-  greenfield universities
-  new universities (1992)
-  post 2004 universities
-  university colleges
-  colleges of HE

Table 2.3: Position 51 – 100 league table rankings in The Times 2010

Max scores	Student satisfaction 100%	Research Quality 7	Student: Staff Ratio n/a	Services & Facilities Spend n/a	Entry Standards n/a	Completion 100	Good Honours 100	Graduate Prospects 100	Total Score 1000
51 Robert Gordon	77	0.6	18	1102	332	81.8	53.2	84.1	504
52 Oxford Brookes	77	0.6	18.4	997	301	83.9	66.1	73	496
53 Bradford	75	1	15	1176	270	82.3	62.8	70.4	492
54 Ulster	75	1	15.9	1548	268	77.4	61.4	65	487
55 Bangor	77	1.5	18.9	998	25	83.9	55.7	67.8	480
56 Portsmouth	79	0.5	18.7	1158	271	86.1	52.4	63.9	463
57 Nottingham Trent	74	0.4	17.1	1144	276	86.2	55.7	74.1	462
58 Bournemouth	74	0.4	20.8	1059	289	85.2	58.9	75.5	450
59 Chichester	81	0.2	18.3	851	234	89.2	49.3	64	445
60 Glasgow Caledonian	75	0.3	21	933	328	76.8	66.5	68.8	443
61 Queen Margaret Edinburgh	77	0.4	20	885	328	78.5	65.3	69.2	442
62 West of England	76	0.5	19.2	995	275	78.8	63.2	66.1	436
63 Plymouth	75	0.7	15.7	955	268	84.3	61.5	58	435
64 Northumbria	76	0.3	20	1063	291	80.3	54.1	73	434
65 Edinburgh Napier	77	0.4	18.2	895	291	72.6	62.4	72.9	430
66 Hertfordshire	73	0.3	14.4	1593	244	82.3	47.3	65.3	424
66 De Montfort	77	0.6	17	882	248	81.5	51.1	65.7	424
68 Gloucestershire	74	0.3	16.5	1190	239	82.1	56.2	64.2	421
69 Sheffield Hallam	73	0.4	18.1	937	268	83.8	61.3	64.2	420
70 Brighton	74	0.8	20	800	278	84.7	58.5	65.3	417
71 Coventry	75	0.3	19.1	1122	280	75.2	61	67.5	414
71 Bedfordshire	75	0.2	15.6	1431	215	75.1	47.8	66.7	414
73 Winchester	77	0.4	17.2	867	261	85.6	55.7	55.6	411
74 Staffordshire	76	0.1	17.5	1092	232	78.1	53	69	410
74 Bath Spa	77	0.4	21.6	615	287	87	67.7	59	410
76 UWIC Cardiff	74	0.4	19.9	1205	261	83.2	51.8	61.5	401
77 Birmingham City	72	0.2	16.5	1217	258	75.5	57.3	65.7	393
78 Central Lancashire	76	0.4	20.2	1083	252	72.9	49.3	70.1	392
79 Lampeter	74	1	14.8	482	252	87.7	52.8	61.8	391
80 York St John	75	0.2	20	1042	288	84.5	52.9	58.8	390
81 Worcester	76	0.1	20	869	236	83.9	48.4	88.2	389
81 Teesside	77	0.2	19.3	808	257	72.7	52.4	67.3	389
83 Cumbria	70	0.1	14.9	741	256	84.2	48.8	71.4	384
84 Salford	73	0.9	18.6	987	253	76.4	55.1	62.7	383
84 Sunderland	77	0.5	16.1	775	226	75.6	50.2	59.3	383
86 Lincoln	75	0.5	23.7	865	266	85	57.1	60.4	381
87 Huddersfield	74	0.2	16.1	897	265	81.2	51.9	56.9	378
88 Edge Hill	78	0.1	19.8	1082	248	79.2	46.1	56.8	373
89 Kingston	73	0.4	19.1	1012	236	79.4	60.1	61	372
90 Manchester Metropolitan	72	0.5	19.7	972	266	79	57.2	63.8	371
91 Chester	73	0.2	18.3	753	267	78.2	54.8	65.1	365
92 Roehampton	71	0.8	18.4	1242	251	78.5	51	56.8	362
92 Northampton	75	0.2	20.4	853	233	81.3	53.7	59.5	362
94 Glamorgan	74	0.4	18.3	1103	263	69.1	52.4	60.4	361
95 Abertay	77	0.4	19.8	1603	279	70.1	48.3	53.3	353
96 University of the Arts London	62	1	21.7	849	322	85.5	61.6	63.6	339
97 Glyndwr	72	0.2	19.7	996	212	70.1	50.6	69.3	338
98 Canterbury Christ Church	73	0.2	18.3	633	238	80.2	49.7	59	334
99 Liverpool John Moores	73	0.4	19.6	979	244	76.1	45.7	58.8	327
100 Westminster	69	0.5	16.4	800	249	77.5	51.5	54.1	321

Table 2.4: Position 51 – 100 league table rankings in The Guardian 2010

2010 ranking (2009)	Name of Institution	Guardian score/ 100	% Satisfied with teaching	% Satisfied with feedback	Spend per student (FTE)	Student: staff ratio	Career prospects	Value added score/ 10	Average Entry Tariff
51 (48)	Plymouth	61.1	85	81	7.11	16.9	54	6.8	274
52 (53)	Hull	60.1	88	70	4.47	21	70	5.4	265
53 (76)	Northumbria	59.7	85	70	4.85	21	70	5.4	291
53 (54)	Brunel	59.7	77	60	4.28	18.2	62	6.8	318
55 (67)	Staffordshire	59.2	82	63	6.67	19.1	65	5.2	249
56 (57)	Oxford Brookes	58.9	83	60	4.94	19.1	68	6.8	299
57 (66)	Queen Margaret	58.7			2.43	18.5	67	7.3	321
57 (47)	Queen Mary	58.7	82	61	5.89	15	74	5.2	343
59 (66)	UWE Bristol	58.3	85	68	3.63	20.1	63	7.4	273
60 (55)	Bath Spa	56.9	88	70	2.62	25.1	56	7.9	285
61 -	UC Falmouth	56.7	78	67	5.36	21.2	55	5.1	264
62 (72)	Sunderland	56.6	85	74	6.45	19.3	55	5.2	233
63 (56)	Birmingham City	56.4	76	63	5.64	19	61	6.2	254
63 (59)	Gloucestershire	56.4	80	65	6.27	21.1	60	6.2	240
65 (77)	UWIC	56	82	66	4.92	20.1	57	5.1	257
66 (55)	Glasgow Caledonian	55.3	82	62	3.57	22.4	65	7	325
67 (76)	Sheffield Hallam	55.2	81	63	4.45	20.7	60	7.2	264
68 (70)	St Mary's UC, Twickenham	55.1	88	72	2.93	24.3	65	7	246
69 (95)	Thames Valley	54.5	77	62	6.7	14.8	55	5.2	215
69 (91)	Teesside	54.5	83	71	5.08	20.6	61	5.3	252
71 (69)	Aberystwyth	54.3	88	68	4.51	18.4	60	5.1	304
72 (61)	Bangor	54.2	84	69	5.15	20.9	62	4.5	286
73 (86)	Kingston	54	82	64	4.67	20.7	57	7.1	235
74 (63)	Brighton	53.9	83	63	4.68	24.2	63	5.8	278
75 (75)	Coventry	53.5	79	63	4.63	22.3	63	7.1	277
75 (59)	Ulster	53.5	76	60	4.24	17.9	63	6.6	269
77 (82)	De Montfort	53.4	83	70	3.64	18.5	62	4.7	246
78 (115)	Lampeter	53.3	87	67	3.79	14.1	63	9.5	262
79 (73)	Portsmouth	53.3	88	67	5.14	20.3	61	4.1	269
80 (58)	Glamorgan	53.1	80	59	4.56	18.5	55	5.3	257
81 (87)	Chichester	52.9	89	73	3.69	19.3	60	4.2	240
82 (62)	Central Lancashire	52.7	82	67	5.95	22.3	67	3.3	262
83 (71)	Anglia Ruskin	52.4	77	58	7.22	22.6	61	5.8	256
84 (63)	Bradford	51.8	77	59	5.07	16	68	4.7	268
85 (95)	Cumbria	51.4	80	64	5.53	18	68	3.5	263
85 (51)	Newman University College	51.4	89	71	2.87	19.3	73	5.2	231
87 (107)	York St John	50.7	83	66	5.51	21.4	56	4.1	288
88 (91)	Bedfordshire	50	81	62	3.69	15.7	62	4.8	213
89 (101)	Lincoln	49.4	82	69	2.78	23.2	58	5.7	261
90 (80)	Chester	49.3	85	66	3.59	20.3	63	4.4	264
91 (74)	Worcester	49.2	85	67	4.04	19.8	64	4.2	232
92 (103)	Glyndwr	48.9	78	71	3.78	22.7	65	4.8	222
93 (86)	Salford	48.6	81	64	4.36	19.9	58	5	271
94 (95)	Winchester	48.3	87	67	2.31	18.3	53	4.9	255
95 (83)	Swansea	48.1	86	61	4.11	18.8	66	9.6	280
96 (83)	Huddersfield	47.9	78	64	3.86	17.6	52	4.4	258
97 (100)	Herefordshire	46.9	78	57	4.69	17.1	60	3.8	241
97 (92)	Manchester Met	46.9	76	60	3.53	20.6	60	5.8	268
99 (94)	Marjon (St Mark and St John)	46.2	85	69	2.95	19.2	59	4.3	213
100 (84)	Newport	45.3	76	67	3.7	26.7	53	6.1	242

Key

-  ancient universities
-  initial civic universities
-  civic universities (expanded sector)
-  greenfield universities
-  new universities (1992)
-  post 2004 universities
-  university colleges
-  colleges of HE

The top 50 rankings within The Times (table 2.1) contains only institutions that were founded as universities; the ancient universities, civic universities and those founded in the 1960s post-Robbins era. In Table 2.2 we can see The Guardian top 50 follow a similar trend, with the exception of four post-1992 'new universities' that were originally polytechnics. Institutions in positions 51-100 then follow suit, containing in The Times (Table 2.3) the majority of the post-1992 'new universities', as well as post-2004 institutions, which in the main originated as university colleges and mechanical institutes. Once again in this area of the table The Guardian (Table 2.4) is slightly less exclusive, also incorporating (current) University Colleges and one College of Higher Education.

Ranking diversity?

The key difference between the two League Tables discussed above is the emphasis placed on teaching or research excellence. The Guardian tables focus on the former, drawing on statistics from the 2009 National Student Survey (NSS) and institutional data available from HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency). For each institution the table shows the proportion of students 'satisfied with teaching and feedback', the spend per student, the staff student ratio and a score for career prospects. Based on these criteria, three of Britain's oldest universities come top, with four 1960s institutions making the top 10. In a report by The Guardian on the release of the tables in May 2009, Anthea Lipsett reports that 'Newer universities tend to do less well in the Guardian's tables because they spend less money on teaching, they have lower ratios of staff to students and students are less happy with the feedback they get'.

The Times League Tables focus on different criteria including key indicators of student satisfaction, research quality, entry standards, student-staff ratios, spend on services and facilities, completion rates for undergraduates, students receiving good honours degrees and graduate prospects. Information is taken from the same sources as above, and also draws on the Research Assessment Exercise. Scores for student satisfaction and research excellence are weighted by 1.5, with all other indicators weighted by one.

In spite of key indicators that claim to compare universities objectively, the colour-coded tables show undeniable correlations between league table position and institutional history. This raises

questions of the extent to which comparisons give credence to diverse activities and places government discourses about 'diversification' in a more sceptical light. In his discussion of field and capitals, Bourdieu suggests that 'Spatial distances – on paper – coincide with social distances' (Bourdieu, 1989:16). This observation suggests that league table rankings of 'excellence' might reflect social distances formed along different criteria.

Identifying capitals in the university field

One way of identifying cultural, social and symbolic capital within the university field is to explore traditional and inherited ideas of what is good. The very nature of these forms of capital means they are difficult to identify, however considering the history and academic values outlined in the first part of this chapter can help to make these capitals explicit.

A key theme that emerges from my overview of the history of universities is the relationship between universities and the state, and the relations of power within institutions between the academic profession, lay interests and government agendas. I show that traditional ideas of university governance, beginning with Oxford and Cambridge, emphasise a collegiate/consensual approach in which academics have autonomy and power in the running of institutions. These ideas were embraced by the universities of Durham and London when they were established in the early nineteenth century, harnessed by the civic universities and the state as they were increasingly released from lay control in the early-mid twentieth century, and formed the basis of the statutes of the 1960s Greenfield universities and ex-CATs. This principle of university and academic autonomy was made explicit and woven into a broader fabric of academic ideals by figures such as Humboldt (1810) and Newman (1931). Guarded by the 'buffer' of the UGC which was mainly composed of academic elites, the academic profession and their values retained their position of power - on paper - until the mid 1970s and early 1980s. These principles are consolidated by Barnett in his 1990 book 'The Idea of Higher Education', shown in table 2.5 below.

Table 2.5: The Value Background of HE

1. The pursuit of objective truth and knowledge
2. Research
3. Liberal education
4. Institutional autonomy
5. Academic freedom
6. A neutral and open forum for debate
7. Rationality
8. The development of the student's critical abilities
9. The development of the student's autonomy
10. The student's character formation
11. Providing a critical centre within society
12. Preserving society's intellectual culture

League tables and capital

Contrasting these values, the effective pursuit of which requires and generates specific forms of cultural, social and symbolic capital, with the weights and measures of the league tables shows that current rankings actually reflect inherited capital, framed in a discourse of current policy agendas. For example, The Guardian tables, with their measure of 'teaching excellence' (including staff:student ratios and spend per student) conceal that different institutions, because of their different histories, begin from different starting points. Often older universities have greater economic capital, because they have higher research income, receive higher donations in alumni funds, and attract higher numbers of fee paying international students (itself an outcome of higher league table status).

On the surface we might say that the league tables simply reflect the economic capital of institutions, but economic capital is often a conversion of the cultural, social and symbolic capital that an institution holds. By means of their histories, institutions accumulate different amounts and structures of capital which are differentially converted into new forms that have kudos in the present ranking systems. This conversion of capital occurs in two directions.

In the first instance, some institutions have greater amounts of capital that are directly (though implicitly) measured by the indicators. Within the Guardian table the measure of 'career prospects' assumes that graduate employment is a direct consequence of good higher education teaching. This conceals the fact that older universities have higher entry requirements and so their students have greater cultural, social and symbolic capital to begin with. In addition, degree

certificates from older institutions tend to have greater symbolic capital amongst employers, enhancing students' labour market prospects.

Another example can be found in the Times league tables that place more emphasis on 'traditional' ideas of higher education, in particular research. Measures of research excellence are based on achievement in the RAE. This immediately disadvantages new universities that have shorter histories of research. Staff in these institutions experience particular enablements and constraints meaning fewer staff undertake research, with a lower proportion viewing it as part of their role. Staff who do engage in research find it more difficult to illustrate a 'track record' in bids for research funding because their institutions have not accumulated this form of capital. The shorter histories and lower priority of research at these institutions means they have always received lower RAE grades.

Similarly, the measures of 'entry standards', 'completion' and 'good honours degrees' reflect the cultural capital that students hold on entry. It is little surprise that Oxford, Cambridge, and the other ancient and civic universities are placed top here. In a slightly circular manner, these institutions are able to demand these characteristics of their students because of their strong position in the field. In the examples above, we can see that the measures within the league tables rationalise elitism to meritocracy, concealing the point that forms of capital acquired via heredity and accumulation affect a university's ranking.

There is another manner in which these conversions of capital occur. Universities begin to 'play the game' as knowledge of the weights and measures develops. Bournemouth stands out in the Guardian as being the post-1992 institution that has reached the highest position (32). The Vice-Chancellor discusses how investment has been made to improve staff:student ratios and raise the qualifications of its staff:

We focused very clearly on academic excellence and investing in academic staff... We've recruited 150 new staff over two years and doubled the number of staff who have doctorates, which has improved the student experience. (Prof. Paul Curran, Vice-Chancellor, Bournemouth University in Lipsett, 2009)

Another example is Manchester University's controversial appointment of Martin Amis at a rate of £3000 per hour and two Nobel prize winners – the economist Joseph Stiglitz and scientist John Sulston (Kennedy, 2008), which were viewed by some as a strategy to gain status in the Shanghai Jai Tong University (SJTU) Academic Ranking of World Universities which takes Nobel Laureates and highly cited researchers as heavily weighted indicators.

Institutions then, begin to seize opportunities to raise their rankings and change their position in the field. With this effect, the extent to which league tables promote 'diversity' is questionable, since struggles for capital focus around a small number of criteria. Further it might still be said that older universities have an advantage because they have higher levels of economic, social and cultural capital to begin with. Not everything can be 'bought' or 'interchanged' on equal terms. In the above example, the appointment of research stars at Manchester is not only a consequence of high economic reward, but also reflects the fact that individuals too compete for capitals in the field; being associated with a high status civic institution is worth an individual's while. What this point highlights is that individuals, as well as institutions struggle for different capitals within the field, and that there is a relationship between the two, discussed further in a moment.

Summary

I have drawn on Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital to highlight that accumulation and heredity – in other words institutional history – are important for understanding the university field as it stands today. The analysis shows that though institutions are diverse, this is in constant tension in a stratified field that both reflects and conceals the struggles for capital that are taking place. This tension pulls institutions (and possibly individuals) in different directions at the same time.

In overlooking this tension, the league tables are rather confusing and confused objects. The conflation of diversity and hierarchy within their methodology means they are unclear about what they are measuring and why. As a result they reproduce and reinforce traditional hierarchies of universities. Though the 'binary divide' no longer exists in name, many commentators persist in identifying where it lies, and one suspects that any league table that produced radically different

rankings from the assumed hierarchies would lose credibility in the eyes of the public, and especially of the elite.

An institutional habitus?

It is possible to take Bourdieu's concept further, and imagine that institutions also have a habitus. Different types of universities have similar positions within the field and, as such, they are subjected to similar conditionings, develop similar dispositions and interests, and might therefore be expected to produce similar practices. At the institutional level, we might see this explicitly in internal structures and procedures, for example in the development of large research departments at many institutions, and related efforts to centralise RAE strategy or to coordinate responses to large funding streams from the research councils. In a similar manner to individual habitus, such structures result in institutions going about their daily business without 'thinking about it'. They too have ways of responding to internal and external issues that are embedded and do not require conscious effort or deliberate choice. Such dispositions and practices might also be found implicitly in less tangible 'institutional cultures', for example general 'feelings' about the extent to which research is supported, irrespective of representations in university documents.

As with the discussion of capitals, applying the concept to the institutional level does not preclude its relevance to individual agents, and in fact, applying the concepts to *both* institutions *and* individuals opens some useful avenues that are exploited throughout the thesis.

Setting the scene

In chapter one I outlined the central theoretical concerns of this thesis, namely the intersections of everyday practices, careers, institutions and government policy. I suggested that understandings of social reproduction and transformation can be usefully deepened by exploring these intersections, and introduced key concepts drawn from social theories of practice and 'time geography'. Within this chapter, I have set the scene of the empirical study, which focuses on the everyday practices of sociologists situated in universities in the UK.

I have shown that the higher education system as it currently exists encompasses many kinds of institution, with historically different relationships to the State that are reflected in local relations of power between the academic profession, lay interest and government agendas, and I have

suggested that practices are variously enabled and constrained in these different settings. I have conceptualised the UK higher education system as a 'field' in which institutions and individuals accumulate different forms and structures of capital by means of their histories, and I have suggested that they continue to struggle for these capitals in the present, despite policy discourses of diversity that conceal these stratifications.

In the next chapter, I bring together these themes with the conceptual framework introduced in chapter one to describe and explain the methodology of the empirical study. Within this methodological discussion I talk further about why sociology was chosen as the focus of the thesis, and how this influenced the selection of the study sites.

Chapter Three

Studying Individuals and Institutions

Every research investigation in the social sciences or history is involved in relating action to structure, in tracing, explicitly or otherwise, the conjunctions or disjunctions of intended and unintended consequences of activity and how these affect the fate of individuals. (Giddens, 1984:219).

Exploring practical and theoretical intersections between individuals and institutions posed a number of distinctive methodological challenges. For example, what data could I collect to understand the relationships between individuals and institutions now and at previous moments in a career? How could I explore the effect of an institution's position in the 'field' on this relationship? Is it possible to study the effects of government policy in the day-to-day, or understand the relationship between government policy and changing everyday practice? Which methods could I use to explore the processes of experiential learning and reflexivity across individuals' careers, and to analyse their location in processes of social reproduction and transformation?

In many ways these challenges highlight the difficulty of studying structure and agency in social life. Bourdieu (1984), Archer (2003) and Zerubavel (1979) are amongst those who have attempted empirical studies in this area, and their approaches provided a useful starting point for my own research design. Their work provided strategies that I might emulate and advanced warning of challenges I might face.

For example, Bourdieu (1984) in his study of power structures in the French higher education system draws on publicly available data including academics' CVs, biographical files and 'who's who' publications as well as administrative data from universities and the membership lists of learned societies. Indicators of capitals were selected through combining his theoretical framework with his 'insider knowledge' of the sector. The quantitative approach was successful in highlighting the persistent hierarchies of the French higher education system. However, in terms of my own study, such an approach would not allow me to explore the everyday activities of

individuals, or the processes by which these intersect with institutions and government policy, as I wanted to do.

In contrast, Archer's (2003) book considers how structure and agency combine through the personal capacity of reflexivity or the 'internal conversation'. Her empirical work takes the form of 'a very small scale, in-depth, and entirely exploratory study' (Archer, 2003:154). She conducted in-depth interviews with 20 individuals who 'were not randomly selected... nor representative' (Archer, 2003:159), but whom provided as much diversity as possible with regard to class, age, gender and occupation. Her approach provided the thick data needed to develop new theoretical understandings of individuals' reflexive styles, their commitments and the structural enablements and constraints encountered across their lives. Within my study, such an approach would offer the scope to discover how individuals' practices and commitments changed across a career, however, biographical accounts alone would not capture how such reflexivity had intersected with institutions and shifting political contexts.

Zerubavel (1979) investigates the rhythmic structure of social life, focussing on how the practices and experiences of hospital employees are shaped by organisational time structures. He conducts observations and interviews over an extended period of time which enables a detailed analysis of the rhythmic structure of hospital life, its major cycles, the moral aspects of time, the temporal aspects of division of labour and its affects on group affiliations, concluding that the temporal structure reproduces the social structure. Such an in-depth ethnography would have made a multi-sited study difficult, and would have obliged me to forego an important aspect of my research design.

These and other studies - which are referred to later in the chapter - helped me to situate and craft my empirical research. My main aim was to explore and develop my theoretical concerns, rather than undertake a systematic study of UK sociologists. In the pages that follow I explain how I developed an approach that achieved this goal, whilst tackling the challenges set out at the start of the chapter.

Research design

For reasons that will become clear, I decided to undertake a relatively small scale, in-depth study of practising academic sociologists, in order to deepen understanding of my theoretical concerns. In summary, this study consisted of repeat in-depth interviews conducted with 15 sociology academics at four research sites from October 2007 to June 2008. The organisations selected as the study sites (described in more depth below) were different kinds of university, reflecting some of the histories, and related positions in the current 'field' of UK universities that I outlined in chapter two. Interviews were conducted with three to four academics at each university, selected to include people who were at different moments in their careers, had lived out their careers across different periods of university development, and who had a variety of roles and statuses within their institutions.

Selecting study sites

The selection of sites was informed by the account of the university sector developed in the last chapter, which drew on Bourdieu's concepts of the capitals to analyse the current field of universities represented in league table data. That analysis showed that stratifications of the UK university field are closely linked to institutional history. Further, it suggested that strategic goals of universities, the volume and kinds of resources available, the positioning of academics within their institutions and the practices to which institutions and individuals have access are strongly related to institutional type. Based on these differences, I wanted to explore the possibility that different kinds of university would mediate government policy in different ways depending on their location in the field, and that the everyday practices of individual academics would vary too, possibly because of different enablements and constraints in their day-to-day work (e.g. varying workload requirements reflecting different strategic aims of institutions). It was important to design a research methodology that would allow me to compare experiences of everyday work in different parts of the field.

Four institutions were selected informed by the analysis in chapter two, as well as data on the size and location of the sociology department/ subject group within the institution, RAE rating (in 2001) and Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) scores. The decision to investigate a small

number of institutions was jointly prompted by the topic itself and by feasibility. To allow a *detailed* exploration of my theoretical concerns, I decided to conduct repeat interviews with a limited number of academics at each study site (further details below). The interviews were supported by reviewing publicly available documents related to the institutions and the individual academics, as well as making full interview transcripts for analysis. I concluded that four study sites was the most that I could handle, whilst providing a body of data substantial enough to enable the explorations I wished to make. Access to the study sites was negotiated in summer 2007.

The aim was to include two civic universities positioned differently within the ‘field’, a 1960s university and a post-1992 university, and this was achieved. The institutions visited were:

- a large civic university with a sociology department that received a high RAE 2001 rating;
- a smaller civic university in which the sociology subject is located in a broader social policy group;
- a 1960s ex-CAT university, with a relatively high RAE rating and a strong focus on the local community and local business; and
- a post-1992 institution with a relatively high research rating (compared to other universities of similar type), but where the sociology department emphasises innovative teaching, student support and the development of ‘employability skills’;

The study sites therefore had the potential to provide insight into differences and similarities relevant to my central theoretical concerns. In addition, as previously noted, incorporating (rather than overlooking) the stratification and diversification of the field within the study would enable a ‘thick description’ of some of the complexity and challenges that individual academics face in their everyday work and across their lives, and a more nuanced account of academic practice as compared to that found in government white papers and policy documents.

Selecting respondents

As I noted in chapter one, the academic practices of individuals emerge across a career, and at any moment those engaging in such practices are at different stages of their careers. It was

important to the study that I embraced this social fact in my empirical research for several reasons. Firstly, when considering current everyday practices, I was interested in comparing the experience of being a new lecturer, established lecturer, reader and professor at the different institutions: how did practices vary as a result of status?; and how were these roles configured in different parts of the field?

Secondly, I wanted to explore intersections of everyday practice, institutions and policy across an individual's career, and it was therefore important for my dataset to include careers that began in different decades and traversed a variety of periods of university history and higher education policy. Theoretically, I expected that the values and practices of academics might vary depending on the period in which they entered the field – for example, new academics who have 'grown up' with the RAE may find it less of an imposition, having incorporated its requirements within their practice from the start.

Thirdly, I was interested in how the career path itself might have been shaped by its associated institutional and policy landscape. In particular (and rather ambitiously) I wanted to explore potential connections between the paths and turning points of my interviewees' careers and shifts in the academic labour market. These challenges were addressed partly via the design of interview questions and the analysis of secondary data, and partly via the selection of study participants.

My main source of information in selecting participants were website profiles, and on this basis I sought a new lecturer, two mid-career academics assumed to be senior lecturers or readers, and one professor at each study site. In order to maximise the variety of experiences, I also varied the sample to include both male and female academics, those with significant departmental administrative roles (for example, head of department, head of research), and I drew on the variety of career trajectories available (for example, a new lecturer who had undertaken BA, PhD, Postdoctoral position and first lecturing post at the same university, a senior lecturer who had a previous 20 year career as a social worker). Several issues of access and recruitment limited the choice of participants, and some of these limitations were linked to the handling of ethical concerns.

Gaining access to research participants took place at two levels. In the first instance, the departments I wished to visit were contacted in July 2007 via a letter to the department head. The letter outlined the aims of the research and the time and resources that I was asking participants to contribute. To reduce the burden on interviewees and departments involved, I estimated research participants would be asked to take part in two in-depth interviews of one-two hours in length. My use of documents would focus on those publicly available on the internet (which includes a plethora of information including university strategies and statutes, prospectuses and histories, staff profiles and lists of publications, RAE submissions and staff employment statistics since 1994 (HESA)). For ethical reasons, institutional and individual participation in the project should be voluntary, and identities would, as far as possible, be anonymised.

All four universities agreed to take part in the study in principle, with the promise that ethical approval documents from my own institution would be provided. In each case I then had a face-to-face or telephone meeting with the head of department where a process for recruiting individual participants was agreed. This varied at the different institutions. At two study sites, following an 'official' email from the department head informing staff of the project, I was free to directly invite participation in the project and arrange interviews. Not everyone from my initial lists agreed, so the process of looking at web profiles and contacting staff continued for several weeks.

At one of the institutions recruitment proceeded via the department head, who was reluctant for staff to be contacted directly. The contact details of four individuals who had 'agreed' were then sent to me so I could arrange interviews. This was not ideal, firstly because the sample did not have the variety I sought elsewhere – in particular all the participants were male. Also, one potential interviewee never returned my emails or phone calls, reducing participation at this university to three academics, with the department head unwilling to seek an alternative.

At the remaining institution, the whole process was much more 'collegiate'. Rather than the department head providing agreement in principal to the project, I was invited to attend a departmental staff meeting, present the project and receive questions about it. Participation and the process of recruiting interviewees were agreed by consensus, with volunteers putting their

names forward to the department administrator, who then sent me the list of volunteers so I could select and contact the individuals I wanted to interview.

Despite these various (and sometimes unplanned) approaches to recruiting interviewees, my final sample was remarkably close to my original aim (see table 3.1). I had academics at different positions in the hierarchy across the institutions, and was able to compare for example, the everyday practices of new lecturers, senior lecturers/readers and professors at different kinds of institution. As illustrated in table 3.2, interviewees' careers began in different decades, offering the potential to retrospectively explore everyday practices across a variety of periods of university history and higher education policy. Finally, via the interviewees, I had access to a variety of career 'paths' the shapes of which had potentially significant relationships to the temporal landscapes they had traversed.

Table 3.1: Academics interviewed at the four study sites

Large Civic	Small Civic	1960s Ex-CAT	Post-1992
New Lecturer (f)	New Lecturer (m)	New Lecturer (m)	New Lecturer * 2 (f, f)
Senior Lecturer (m)	Senior Lecturer (f)	Senior Lecturer (m)	Reader (m)
Professor * 2 (f, m)	Professor * 2 (f, m)	Reader (m)	Professor (m)

Given the problems of gaining access and the limited resources and time available for the study, there were inevitably gaps in the coverage of the four selected institutions. Nevertheless, I was able to get sufficient variety to indicate some of the main kinds of differentiation that exist. I could not expect to explore all the possible sources of variation I had theoretically identified, but as I hope to show in the following chapters, the coverage was sufficient to assess the value of my approach. As noted earlier it was not my aim to have a representative sample, but to have some cases that provided sufficient variety to explore my theoretical concerns. I will suggest further possible developments of the approach in the conclusion to the thesis.

Table 3.2: Working lives of interviewees by current position

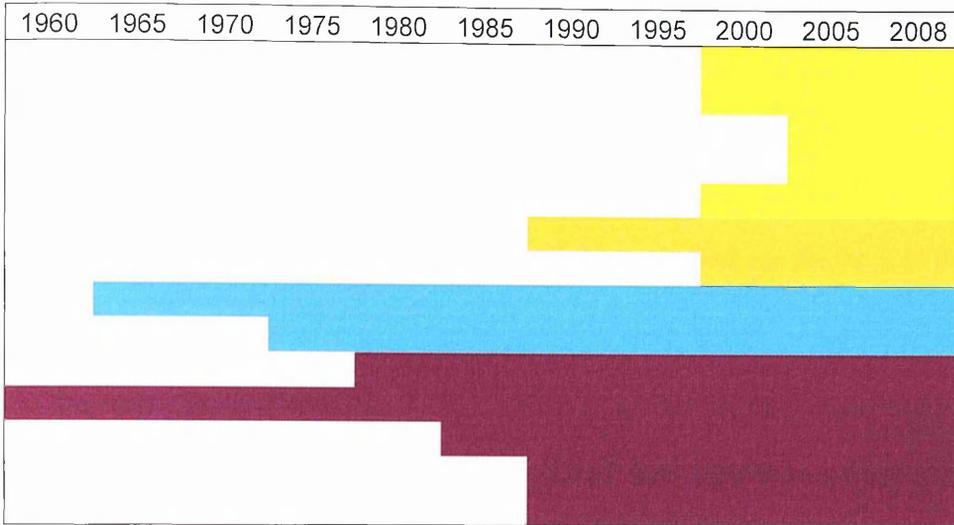


Table 3.2 above offers another opportunity to explain why a qualitative study was chosen (as opposed to for example, a survey study collecting data on practices of many respondents in particular periods). The table shows the working lives of interviewees from the year they began their first academic post, arranged by their current positions as new lecturer, senior lecturer, reader and professor. Instantly observable are the different lengths of career that lie behind an individual's current position (e.g. a senior lecturer who took his first academic post at the same time as two of the professors).

Abbott (1990) notes how using statistical methods can often characterise the past as having 'no depth' (1990:376). To illustrate the point he imagines a school of minnows (cases) swimming in a lake (the variable space). Statistical models might try to look at changes in the whole school (based on averages) from one time to another. Thinking about table 2 above, using such an approach may have enabled a study of the aggregate properties of 'sociology practice' at different moments in time (similar to Bourdieu's study of 'capitals' across the faculties). However, any analysis of change processes would have been extremely limited, with no opportunity to discuss the reasons for such changes reflexively. Staying with the analogy, the approach I chose

attempted to look at the paths of individual fish, and how these paths took shape via their intersections with an individual's previous experiential learning, and the institutional and policy landscapes that their 'paths' had traversed.

In the next section I discuss the design and approach of the interviews, but before moving on I say a bit more about why sociologists in particular were chosen as the focus of the empirical study.

The short history of sociology in UK universities described in chapter one had a further benefit for my research, since it would be possible to track down interviewees whose careers had started during the 'youth' of sociology in the 1960s, and who were still practising today. Contrasting these careers with those beginning in later decades would provide me with the data relevant for tracing some of the variation in careers, that I wished to explore.

A further reason for choosing sociologists is that I expected these academics, more so than others, to draw on the tools of their discipline to reflect on their own lives. In other words, I thought they might have sociological reflectivity. However, with the exception of a handful of interviewees this proved not to be the case. There appeared to be a lack of awareness of the 'field' of university policy, which sometimes led to a personalising of issues that are actually social – an aspect of the research that is of potential interest to all sociologists.

Having outlined the choice of study sites and interviewees, and demonstrated the relationship of these methodological decisions to the theoretical concerns, in the next section I discuss the approach and design of the interviews themselves. Developing the interviews offered a further opportunity to focus the research, but also presented challenges, especially in relation to the need to rely on individuals' memories and reflectivity.

The interviews

The decision to undertake interviews (outlined above) and the design of the interview format were developed through a pilot study conducted at my own university in October 2007. The pilot (with four interviewees) explored two key concerns: how would I encourage participants to talk in depth about their daily practice when it was so familiar to them?; and, how could I invoke the

memory of participants to talk retrospectively about practices in the past? I experimented using both photo-elicitation and diaries as memory-aids/reflective tools within the interviews and decided on the latter.

After reflecting on the results and insights of the pilot study, the empirical work commenced. Two interviews were conducted with each of the interviewees between October 2007 and June 2008. Acknowledging the busy schedules of the interviewees, I always arranged one hour meetings, though in many cases interviews continued for one and a half or two hours as the interviewee wished to continue discussions and complete the narrative they had begun. In the first interviews, the aim was to collect in depth data about the individual's everyday practices in their current post, the actual time-use and weighting of activities, their thoughts and feelings about how their time was spent, and how decisions about time management and prioritization were made. These interviews also focussed on the individual's career, key positions and turning points, and how they had made the career decisions of their academic lives. As interviewer, I intervened within these narratives to explore everyday practices within the periods of the career that individuals identified, encouraging comparisons to be drawn between these previous periods and the present, and reflectively investigating with participants how their practices and commitments had changed and the reasons why.

Drawing on my experiences in the pilot, all the interviews began by requesting interviewees to provide an in depth account of their previous seven days of work, using their diaries as a memory aid to provide as much detail as possible. They were prompted and encouraged to give details of their activities, (for example, what had been discussed in meetings, details of seminars or lectures – what material had they prepared, the number of students, what research writing/funding bids/conference papers they had spent time working on etc.), how they felt about the activities and how decisions were made. Discussions were then broadened to address how the week described was different across the year, both in and out of term time. Though interviews took place across several weeks, they were all held mid-term, enabling activities to be plotted and compared for the different academics across the institutions.

The next part of the interview aimed to gather retrospective accounts of everyday practice to contrast with the ‘present’ that had been described. Within the pilot interviews, I had realised this was inextricably connected to individuals’ careers, which provided the most useful reference points for retrospective discussions. By talking about particular periods and turning points of their academic lives interviewees crafted ‘memory bookends’ against which changes in practice could be discussed. Taking the career as a starting point proved much more useful than direct questions about higher education reforms or institutional changes, which either elicited little response (memories of particular reforms were often vague) or more general opinions on government policy that were disassociated from everyday practice. My theoretical and methodological interest in careers had also evolved through the pilot work that had challenged my assumptions of a ‘traditional career path’. As noted earlier, this led me to an approach that allowed expression of a great variety of trajectories within my data collection and analysis.

For this reason, the first interviews focussed on the interviewee’s career, and for each key period of the academic’s life, explored how previous everyday practices differed from the present. Discussions of why practices had changed encompassed developments in role, working at different institutions, new university policies and procedures, the waxing and waning of commitments or the appearance of new commitments in professional and personal lives, as well as changes in practice due to experiential learning. For example, less proximity to the institution and greater personal commitments (e.g. family life) may change rhythms of involvement in academic work, with overlaps between life and work being more or less clearly defined in particular periods of a career. The move from lecturing positions to professorships, taking on managerial roles, or the securing of research funding had implications for the shape of daily activity. More broadly, changes in university procedures, increased student numbers, or institutional research strategies, meant different things were possible across a career. Alternatively, ‘horizontal’ moves between institution – e.g. to take equivalent lecturing posts at a red brick from a post-1992 institution – were cited as pertinent for shifts in everyday work.

Through these first round interviews, intersections of everyday activities, careers and institutions began to unfold. Comparisons of daily activities of lecturers, senior lecturers, readers and

professors at different kinds of institution, and surrounding discussions of the everyday dilemmas they faced, pointed to cultural ideas of what 'sociology' is, as well as the enablements and constraints activated in the various settings. In a similar way, the moral dilemmas and discussions of an 'academic home' that dominated career biographies offered insights into the everyday practices with which individuals sought to engage, and showed how this ideal had been supported, at different moments in a career, and currently, at different locations in the field.

Second interviews

Despite these interesting insights, two aspects I was keen to explore were still lacking from the interview data: how did the various enablements and constraints individuals experienced shape the products of academic work?; and, what was the relationship of the different careers and everyday to shifting government policies, mediated by institutions in a variety of ways?

An example from the research data helps to contextualise these questions. Within the transcripts I noticed that interviewees would talk openly about the moral dilemmas faced in daily activity. They would also frequently cite policy reforms, such as the introduction of the RAE, as having important (ongoing) affects on academic life. However, they rarely brought the two together. There seemed a constant view that though such shifts often shape the work of others, they do not shape what 'I' do. 'I' am still a good academic, committed to the standards of good sociology.

To explore how the dilemmas faced in everyday practice affected the products of academic work, the second interviews took a different focus; the 'life history' of a particular piece of research, from the initial idea to publication and beyond. This approach therefore took a 'product' as its starting point, and sought to understand the decisions and dilemmas that the interviewees had experienced along the journey of its production.

Prior to the second round interviews, I read the most recent journal paper the interviewee had published (as shown on their webpage). For some of the new lecturers this was their first or second published article. For more established academics it was another in a steady (or not so steady) stream of publications spanning 10, 20 or 30 years. The journal papers (as I discovered in the interviews) had a myriad of histories, from being the 'academic rewrite' of a project report for

an NHS (National Health Service) sponsored project, to the culmination of a research idea coined 20 years earlier that had finally reached fruition.

The approach opened up new realms of data for exploration. Interviews focussed on the everyday decisions and dilemmas that had been faced across the piece of research, which sometimes traversed different periods of an individual's career. The discussions provided 'thick' case specific information about how enablements and constraints were experienced and negotiated, the kinds of compromises that were seen as acceptable, and which were not. In addition, these research histories highlighted the myriad of policies – or rather policy impacts on practice – that were sometimes in conflict with each other, but that individuals negotiated to weave successful careers in academic life. For example, producing research reports to meet the requirements of research funders at the same time as writing a theoretically engaging piece of sociology for academic audiences in order to meet the demands of the RAE and be viewed as a 'good sociologist' in the eyes of peers.

The ongoing analysis of the data from the first and second interviews enabled me to build a picture of some of the processes of social reproduction and transformation revealed at the intersections of everyday practices, careers and institutions. The location of government policy reforms within change processes required further consideration and this is discussed shortly.

First, I address the issues of memory and reflexivity which my methods of data collection and analysis brought to the fore.

Memory and reflexivity

My empirical data, consisting of biographical accounts of careers and discussions of current and retrospective practices, was strongly reliant on invoking the memory of participants, not only in talking about details of previous everyday, but also in their reflective accounts of how and why everyday practices were different at previous moments in their career, and how and why their career had moved through its various periods and turning points. As I have already discussed, these methods were selected to embrace the range of careers that existed, as well as using the turning points of a career as memory triggers for discussions of previous practices. The focus on

how and why practices had changed across a career sought to identify processes of reproduction and transformation at the intersections of everyday practices, careers, institutions and policy.

These research aims can be closely aligned with discussions of biographical research by authors such as Merrill and West (2009), who suggest that using biographical methods is one way to reinstate subjectivity in research and the role of agency in social life (Merrill and West, 2009:17).

They also note that:

The current resurgence [of biographical methods] may also be understood by reference to a late or postmodern culture in which some of the social scripts that shaped people's lives in earlier agrarian or industrial periods have weakened (2009:17)

Within my own study, collecting career biographies helped dispel my assumption, which was challenged at the pilot stage that a traditional 'career path' existed for academics. This assumption was also held by the majority of interviewees, many of whom began their biographical accounts by 'warning' me that *their* career was not 'typical'. Indeed, the great variety of career paths was an important research finding, of potential importance in our conceptions of how practices are reproduced and transformed.

It is not only biographical accounts that I use within my research methodology, but also retrospective accounts of previous practices. In methodological terms these might be considered as oral histories of the sociology profession, and in treating these accounts as fact, the data is subject to the same criticisms and questions of validity; '...what credence can be given to the stories people tell, riddled as they could be with self-justification or even illusion as to some idyllic past?' (Merrill and West, 2009:18)

Within my study, the 'illusion of an idyllic past' was of particular concern, especially because of the anecdotal depiction of a 'Golden Age' of academia found in the literature on higher education (Tight, 2010:204). This 'Golden Age' is portrayed as a period in which the teaching and administrative workload was lower, academics were free to pursue their own interests with less audit and review, and were held in high esteem by the public. Whether there is any accuracy in

such accounts is not my concern here. Rather, I want to reflect on how my interviews avoided this kind of anecdotal reminiscence.

In my earlier discussion of the pilot interviews, I note that directly interviewing about policy changes led away from discussions of practice to general comment about university reform. The invocation of a 'Golden Age' crept into these responses. My decision to collect retrospective accounts triggered by the periods and turning points of an individual's career overcame this tendency. On reflection, I believe that Thompson's (2000) discussion of oral history helps to explain why.

Thompson notes:

Oral history... makes a much fairer trial possible: witnesses can now be called from the under-classes, the unprivileged, and the defeated. It provides a more realistic and fair reconstruction of the past, a challenge to the established account. In so doing, oral history has radical implications for the social message of history as a whole. (Thompson, 2000:7)

Though the talk of the under-classes and the under-privileged may sound slightly dramatic in relation to university reform, I have evidenced in chapter two a highly stratified field that is strongly linked to history, inherited prestige and status. It may be that the 'Golden Age' represented in the discourse of the academic profession is a dominant history told by elites – indeed it is a story that is readily reproduced if interview questions become too generalised.

However, within accounts of their own pasts (rather than the past of the profession) my interviewees took the opportunity to talk about their positive and negative experiences, their disillusionments and loss of self-esteem, and their moments of triumph. For example, an interviewee who had experienced a long period of unemployment in the 1980s, another who had experienced prejudice when she came out as lesbian in the 1970s, one who felt he had made some misguided decisions in his early career in the 1960s, and another who had experienced physical exhaustion and breakdown as a result of work stress in the 1990s. The interviews were referred to by several of the interviewees as a 'therapeutic' process; the pasts individual's presented were

not idyllic. There was conflict and regret, a mixture of good times and bad times in no particular order, with the best times for some being in a previous period, and for others being now.

Although I accept that memory is selective, enough of the good and the bad exists within the accounts to conclude that a systematic idealising of the past had not occurred.

The second potential limitation in the data might be the observation that accounts of the past – and especially accounts of one’s own decisions – will be reconstructed as they are retold to make sense of the present (Samuel, 1990). Chamberlain (2006) suggests that ‘recounting the past involves accounting for it’ (Chamberlain, 2006:391) and Merrill and West (2009) note:

The past may be a painful place of lost hopes and frustration and the stories we tell of it can be shaped by a need for self-justification (Merrill and West, 2009:20)

A common criticism of oral history and biographical approaches is that such self-justifying narratives affect the ‘accuracy’ of retrospective accounts. In part, these self-justifications were what I was interested in. I was of course interested in the dates and order of job changes and promotions in an academic’s life too, and the factual accuracy of these was checked against C.V.s (either during the interview, by the interviewee, or afterwards by me). I was also interested in linking retrospective accounts of practices to particular periods of an academic’s career – and efforts were made to achieve this, as discussed earlier in the chapter. I was though, interested in the reflective accounts of individuals. I wanted to understand individuals’ inclinations and dispositions – in current everyday practice, and in the shaping of a career – and though such accounts may self-justify ‘the telling of the story is part of the story being told’ (Merrill and West, 2009:20). In the case of my study, the accounts are revealing of individual’s commitments, and how these commitments have shifted across their lives. They provide a window on the experiential learning of the interviewees and how these experiences have influenced subsequent approaches and perspectives on their work. They offer a perspective on the complex combinations of personal aspiration/motivation, interpersonal relations, institutional settings and personal life that make continuing in a particular position, or continuing as an academic, possible or not. In this manner, the self-justification within the accounts provides exactly the data that I am interested in. A question, however, that remained unanswered by the interview data was how

shifting policy could be conceptualised and identified in everyday practice. This is discussed in the next section.

Identifying shifting policy in everyday practice

The question of identifying policy in everyday practice relates to broader questions of how policy change should be conceptualised and researched. As noted, within the pilot interviews I attempted to ascertain relationships between changing everyday practices and changing higher education policy by introducing questions about particular policy moments deemed important within the literature. This is a common approach to researching the affects of policy change on practice. For example, Lucas (2006) focuses her interview discussions on the affects of the RAE since 1986; Henkel (2000) focuses her research on academic identities, around policy developments in the policy areas of QAA and RAE; and, Trowler (1998) focuses on the affects of modularisation for academic practice. Though these studies provide useful analyses of the conflicts or challenges that particular policy shifts introduce into academic life, their potential to understand processes of practice-change, or the complex ways in which policies, institutions and individuals intersect and interact is limited.

This is because focussing on one policy area makes prior assumptions about the aspects of policy that have been important (or not) for the everyday work and lives of the researched. Shore and Wright (1997) refer to this as the 'instrumentalist' view, which assumes that policy is made and implemented in a 'top-down' manner, embodied in material form as a document which will have identifiable affects in practice. Though this model is frequently reproduced (e.g. in the research studies above), and in discursive discussions that surround new policy agendas (e.g. in national newspapers), I found that applying it to my empirical discussions of everyday practice did not work.

Such an approach relies on interviewees being equally aware of 'policy' as it is embodied in government papers, yet knowledge of the content and objectives of policy documents was extremely varied amongst my research participants. In addition, to relate such documents to changes in practice across time would require a constant iterative reflection between the two. Within the ongoing activity of the day-to-day this is unlikely to happen. Within their everyday

activities individuals are never just responding to one particular area of policy. They are negotiating their academic work and careers through a myriad of requirements that are mediated by their institutions. They juggle their commitments to being a 'good academic' or 'good sociologist' with the possibly conflicting commitments of being a 'good employee'. Generally, they simply 'get on with it' and get through the day.

With these limitations on current policy concepts, how could shifts in government policy, and its place in the reproduction and transformation of everyday practice be understood? One possibility was to map the accounts of retrospective practice – which could be dated by the period of an individual's career – against a timeline of policy change. I decided, however, that such an approach would encapsulate the limitations noted above; it would overlook the complexity of everyday practices and their connections to individuals' biographies, cultural standards and institutions that are themselves positioned within a 'field'. Such an approach would also be weakened because of the myriad of different 'everydays' that exist for one individual, both in the present and across a life. Trying to compare how everyday academic life is different and then attempting to link this to policy would be a very difficult task. It would also still not capture the processes of change that I wanted to identify.

I developed, through the ongoing review and analysis of my interview transcripts, a more useful 'practice-based' view of policy and its place in change processes. I noticed that 'traces of policy' could be identified within the 'thick' interview data - for example, via the processes of prioritization in everyday work, via the changing shape of everyday activity across careers. Since my project was concerned with theorising about processes of change, rather than establishing which practices linked to which policy periods per se (which addresses the question of whether practices have changed but doesn't tell us how), drawing out these traces of policy and their role in change at the intersection of daily life and institution (chapters four and five) and in shaping careers (chapters six and seven), offered a new way of thinking about policy that stayed close to the data. This is not to say that such traces 'emerged' from the data, but rather that through iterative analysis the conceptual framework I have finally settled on offered understandings of the data that could not be found in traditional policy approaches. My interviewees generally did not

link their everyday work to government policy, but rather experienced opportunities, inconvenient institutional procedures, personal success and personal struggles.

One of the interesting insights of the project is that personal challenges that academics face are often shared by their peers. Further, the conflicts and contradictions of their working lives are a reflection of myriad policies that can create multiple and sometimes competing practices in everyday work. Identifying these ‘traces of policy’ therefore formed one technique that I used to theorise about the place of policy in processes of reproduction and transformation.

My second approach to this puzzle was something of a methodological experiment. Theoretically, I expected that changes in the academic labour market would intersect and interact with the shapes and kinds of academic careers found amongst my interviewees. To explore this hunch, I moved away from the interview context, and collected secondary data on changes in the academic labour market, and in particular the labour market for academic sociologists, across the period of careers in my study. In the first instance, I researched key policy documents, particularly focussing on expansions and contractions in academic jobs. This was supplemented by gathering data from research papers and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to analyse a broader trajectory within which the academics’ careers had been located. These shifts are drawn together with the career biographies of my interviewees in chapter seven, to speculate on the relationships, constraints and enablements that potentially shape academic careers, and suggests that some of the dilemmas and problems individuals have internalised may be understood as social phenomenon. This methodological experiment and its outcomes, leads me to make suggestions on alternative approaches to conceptualising policy in future studies, which are discussed in more depth in the conclusion to the thesis.

This combination of research sites, in depth interviews and secondary data form the basis of the thesis which follows. In the next section of this chapter, I discuss the data analysis and how the thesis structure has been used to develop my theoretical findings.

Data analysis and thesis structure

Rather than viewing data analysis as a specific stage in the research, data collection and analysis was simultaneous, providing opportunities for theoretical developments to be followed up across the interviews, as well as developing the second interviews to explore issues that had remained untouched in the initial meetings. The interviews were digitally recorded (with the permission of interviewees) and I made full transcripts soon after the interview had been conducted. By listening and transcribing the interview recordings, themes and ideas were identified (e.g. the idea of ‘developing a home’, ‘making a home’ or ‘being homeless’; themes of time and prioritization in everyday work) that were explored with other participants. By the end of the first interviews, I therefore had a good idea of the themes addressed by the data and the issues that I wished to pursue in the second interviews – this led to the model of second interviews described earlier. Once transcribed, interviews were read and re-read with a focus on processes of social reproduction and transformation, and the intersections and interactions of everyday practice, careers, institutions and government policy. I kept a journal to record my developing ideas, the challenges of analysing the data, and the key decisions made with respect to these challenges. Following this process, the data was coded and divided up in a number of ways, for example, by focussing on the different aspects of everyday practice that individuals discussed (e.g. teaching, research, attending meetings), by drawing out references to particular policies (e.g. the RAE) or of institutional intersections with everyday work, and by drawing out particular categories or terms coined by the interviewees.

Charmaz suggests:

Memo writing aids us in linking analytic interpretation with empirical reality. We bring raw data into our memos so that we maintain those connections and examine them directly (Charmaz, 2000:517)

Reflecting this approach, over several months I wrote, and rewrote, memos about the themes identified, a process which enabled me to ‘take apart’ the familiar world and to consider how categories (such as ‘academic home’) were constructed, and under what conditions they

developed, remained or changed across time. In this way, a picture began to form of the processes by which individuals negotiated their everyday work and made their way through their academic careers. Many of these memos eventually became chapters or sections within the thesis.

Various comparisons were made across the data, for example the working weeks of all the interviewees were summarised and compared across the sample (see chapter four), and the career trajectories (as series of events across time) were mapped for further analysis (see Appendix). The qualitative details of individuals' careers were considered in relation to changing higher education policy.

As noted earlier, a key aim of the thesis was to develop theory, which might then be taken forward in subsequent studies. I have outlined above that this was achieved via an approach similar to Charmaz (2003), in which theory was developed through an iterative process of empirical data collection and conceptual analysis. It is via this iterative process that the next four chapters came to be structured as they are; focussing in turn on different aspects of the data in order to theorise about processes of practice reproduction and transformation. Each of these chapters consequently draws on the empirical data in different ways, described below.

In Chapter four, I explore the everyday activities of all the interviewees in my study, showing how their experiences vary and the reasons why. I show the qualitative differences in everyday work across the sample, and illustrate these differences by selecting quotations that represent these features especially well. I show the breadth of my interviewees' experiences in several ways, for example, I begin the chapter with charts that compare an example working week, from data provided by all the interviewees, I discuss all the conceptualisations of 'work' that were identified across the sample, and I include illustrative quotations relating to this data and therefore drawn from a broad range of interviewees.

This use of data contrasts with the approach in Chapter five. The aim of Chapter five was to explore why the differences, in terms of institutional and personal temporalities, that were revealed in Chapter four existed, and what they were about. My focus was informed by the ongoing data analysis outlined above, during which I had noticed that the status of research work,

and its place in weekly, termly and annual cycles, had been a particular point of tension for all the interviewees. Since my objective was to explore the relation between institutional and personal temporalities, I selected two cases from my data that illustrated ‘maximum variation’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001:79), the large civic and post 1992 university. This contrast provided comparative material that was useful for elucidating some of the differences in everyday practice that had been found in Chapter four. Using these contrasting cases reveals, in some detail, tensions and strains between the personal and the institutional aspects which are of relevance across the field of study, and across other professions beyond academia.

Chapter six is concerned with experiential learning and commitments across a career. The Chapter considers how the relationship of my interviewees to their everyday work changes during the course of their working lives, and the implications of such changing relationships for the reproduction and transformation of sociology as a practice. As with Chapter four, the quotations and cases have been selected to illustrate the range of experience across the qualitative sample. However, as this chapter is concerned with careers, interviews with longer serving academics necessarily provide more relevant data. The accounts and experiences of the more experienced academics within my sample are not generalisable since the institutional and temporal context continues to change in ways that matter, however, they do point to aspects of the field that are likely to play an important role in the careers of all my interviewees. Finally, in Chapter seven I touch on examples from across my sample to show how the careers of my interviewees intersect with the shifting labour market and the institutional landscape associated with it.

Alongside the iterative process which led to these uses of the empirical data, I continually referred to the literature, considering a variety of concepts that might help understand and interpret the data. The final theoretical framework of the thesis reflects those concepts that were most useful in this endeavour. As noted above I use each chapter to foreground a particular ‘slice’ of the data, and these are outlined below.

Slices of academic life

Daily paths and institutions (Chapter four)

The first slice of interview data – and the first intersection I foreground – focuses on the ‘daily path’ and institutions. As outlined towards the end of chapter one, ‘daily path’ is a concept borrowed from Pred’s (1981a) theoretical model, where it is defined as ‘the consecutive activities that take us through the time-space of each day’. Within this thesis, the daily path is equated to the detailed accounts of everyday activities gathered in the first interviews. The activities of a seven day week are charted and compared across the interviewees and across the institutions. I explore how and why daily activities are different for the interviewees and how, across the study sites, individuals are enabled or constrained in their everyday activities and how decisions about prioritisation are made – for example what are individuals committed to? and what implications do practices have for one another?. Drawing on this analysis I theorise about how social reproduction and transformation occurs at the intersections of daily path and institution.

Research ‘strategies’ (Chapter five)

The second slice focuses on the research strategies of institutions, departments and individuals. Alongside slice one, this analysis provides another perspective on the intersections of institutions and everyday work. Less concerned with the temporal ordering of academic life, the analysis draws on Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘field’ and ‘capital’, and MacIntyre’s concept of ‘internal goods’. I explore how everyday research decisions weave together policy agendas, institutional structures, dominant disciplinary paradigms and individual commitments and consider the implications that these particular constellations have for the products of academic work. Further consideration is given to the processes of social reproduction and transformation revealed at the intersections of daily path, institution and policy.

Life path and daily path (Chapter six)

I then switch focus, foregrounding agency in the analysis. I draw once again on Pred’s concept of ‘daily path’, and consider how this intersects and interacts with the ‘life path’: ‘the long-term institutional roles with which each individual is associated’ - and which I view as synonymous with the ‘career biographies’ that I collected. Within my data I explore the experiential learning and commitments of my interviewees across their careers, and draw on Archer’s concept of

commitment and Bourdieu's concepts of capital to understand these journeys. During which periods of a career has the daily path become impossible to 'live with' and why? At which stages have interviewees felt 'at home'? and, how do these intersections of daily path and life path across a career reproduce or transform the stratifications of the field, and the practice of sociology across the study sites?

Life paths and labour market landscapes (Chapter seven)

The final 'slice' considers intersections between government policy, labour market landscapes and the career biographies of my interviewees. The labour market is viewed as a landscape that mediates policy reform, meaning that individuals' careers are not only navigated through shifting policy reform, but rather at the intersections of such reforms with a landscape that accumulates and bears the inherited characteristics of its history. The chapter presents statistical data of the changing number of sociology staff since the 1960s, and explores the dynamics underpinning these statistics, which create a labour market with different characteristics, bottlenecks and opportunities in each of the decades (from 1960-2009). I draw on these analyses to theorise about labour market landscapes and the careers of my interviewees.

In the conclusion to the thesis I evaluate this novel methodological approach for researching processes of social reproduction and transformation, and consider the picture of academic work that the substantive findings reveal.

Chapter Four

Reproduction and Transformation in the 'Daily Path'

...the details of social reproduction, socialization, and structuration constantly take the form of temporally and spatially specific intersections between individual paths and institutional projects... (Pred, 1981a:15).

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to show that the organisation, competition and negotiation of institutional and personal temporalities have implications for the production and reproduction of sociology as a practice. I shall write about how the academic commitments of my interviewees are negotiated within different kinds of university and reproduced or not in everyday work. In so doing I show how the stratified field of UK universities described in chapter two is evident in the day to day lives of my interviewees.

I concentrate on the temporalities of 'daily paths' (Pred, 1981a) because these are sites in which tensions between academics' commitments, status (e.g. professor, senior lecturer, new lecturer), institutional rhythms and personal temporalities are especially visible. I shall point out that the interests and ambitions of my interviewees are variously aligned or in tension with institutional requirements of academic work, often to the cost of those lower in the academic hierarchy, namely, new lecturers and those located in the post-1992 university. The chapter shows how these tensions play out in terms of time pressures.

The discussion will begin with an analysis of the everyday activities of my interviewees. I will then move on to consider how personal and institutional temporalities shape the day-to-day at the different study sites. I focus on conceptions of work and leisure, how different aspects of academic work compete for time and how work is managed via processes of 'buy-out', consolidation and deferral. In the end I will show that the daily intersections of institutions and individuals reproduce the stratifications of the UK university field and that the practice of sociology – conceptualised as the sum of everyday activities – consequently takes different forms across the study sites.

Time use in the daily path

Pred's (1981a) 'path' concept offers a useful tool for thinking about temporalities of academic work. The 'path' is conceived as the ongoing activities and events that continuously make an individual's biography as they move through time and space, and can be applied to a variety of temporal units that constitute an individual's life. In this chapter I draw on the concept to think about the day-to-day work of the individuals in my study – or their daily paths – and to a lesser degree their career biographies or life paths, developed later in the thesis.

The detailed accounts of everyday work collected from my interviewees provide empirical examples of 'daily paths'. By contrasting how everyday activities are organised and prioritised in practice, and considering the constraints and enablements experienced at the different study sites, I draw on a few specific examples to characterise the everyday intersections of institution and individual.

Table 4.1 below compares the activities of a working week for each of the interviewees. Though not on exactly the same week, all the interviews were conducted mid-term and so they are to a certain extent comparable. Creating a diagram of the everyday activities discussed in the interviews is a useful aid to compare activities of academics within institutions, and across the field.

For analytic purposes, broad categories have been used to code the data that draw on workload balancing models. Later in the chapter I discuss the extent to which academics, in practice, divide their work in these ways or not. That said, in this initial analysis the term 'research' encompasses collecting and analysing data, research writing for conferences and publication, writing and building collaborations for funding bids, attending, arranging and hosting conferences and seminars, reviewing books and journal articles and research centre management meetings. Tasks related to departmental 'research' roles such as 'research manager' have been included in 'admin', alongside other departmental meetings, personnel-related tasks of managers such as appraisal and return to work interviews, email, and other departmental roles such as 'health and safety officer'. 'Teaching' includes teaching preparation and marking, delivery of lectures and seminars and meetings with undergraduate and masters students. 'Academic enterprise' refers to a genre of

work in the ex-CAT and post 1992 in which academic skills and knowledge are applied for profitable gain. ‘Trade Union’ refers to buy-out for UCU (University and College Union) roles. ‘PhD supervision’ has been retained as a separate category, reflecting the overlap of teaching and research frequently expressed by academics when discussing this role.

Table 4.1: Summarised activities across a working week

Type of Institution	Interviewee position	Gender	Total number of days in one week spent on different activities						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Large Civic	Professor	m	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research		
	Professor	f	Research	Research	Research	PhD Supervision	Admin	Admin	
	Senior Lecturer	m	Research	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	
	New Lecturer	f	Research	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching		
Small Civic	Retired Prof	m	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research	
	Professor	f	Research	Research	Research	PhD Supervision	Teaching	Admin	Admin
	Senior Lecturer	f	Research	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Admin
	New Lecturer	m	Research	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Admin
Ex-CAT	Reader	m	Research	Research	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Academic Enterprise	
	Senior Lecturer	m	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	
	New Lecturer	m	Research	Research	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Academic Enterprise	
Post-1992	Prof	m	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Academic Enterprise
	Reader 0.5	m	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	
	New Lecturer	f	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Admin		
	New Lecturer 0.7	f	Teaching	Admin	Academic Enterprise				

Key:

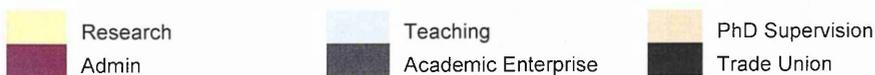


Table 4.1 uses these categories to show the weighting of the activities of my interviewees across a working week. The table presents a cumulative summary of the different kinds of work undertaken. It does not show the temporal ordering of activities, or their allocation to specific days and neither does it capture the differing length of the working day, these points are addressed in the next section. What the table does show is that the length of the working week varies. At the large civic institution, all the academics reported working five days. The new lecturers at the post 1992 also reported this, but across the other institutions working into the weekend is commonplace and viewed as a necessity to stay on top of work. The table also highlights that amongst my interviewees there is a distinct difference in the amount of time devoted to specific activities across the study sites. This suggests that institution type has implications for the shape of the daily paths in my study. The differences are easier to view in

tables 4.2 and 4.3 below, which focus solely on research (in table 4.2) and then teaching activity (in table 4.3).

Table 4.2: Time spent on 'research' activity

Type of Institution	Interviewee position	Gender	Total number of days in one week spent on research						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Large Civic	Professor	m	■	■	■	■	■		
	Professor	f				■	■		
	Senior Lecturer	m				■			
	New Lecturer	f							
Small Civic	Retired Prof	m	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Professor	f	■	■	■	■	■		
	Senior Lecturer	f				■	■		
	New Lecturer	m				■			
Ex-CAT	Reader	m	■	■					
	Senior Lecturer	m	■	■					
	New Lecturer	m		■					
Post-1992	Professor	m	■	■	■				
	Reader 0.5	m	■	■	■				
	New Lecturer	f							
	New Lecturer 0.7	f							

Table 4.3: Time spent on 'teaching' activity

Institution Type	Interviewee Position	Gender	Total number of days in one week spent on teaching						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Large Civic	Professor	m							
	Professor	f							
	Senior Lecturer	m	■	■	■				
	New Lecturer	f	■	■	■				
Small Civic	Retired Prof	m	■	■					
	Professor	f	■	■	■				
	Senior Lecturer	f	■	■	■	■			
	New Lecturer	m	■	■	■	■			
Ex-CAT	Reader	m	■	■					
	Senior Lecturer	m	■	■	■	■			
	New Lecturer	m	■	■	■	■			
Post-1992	Professor	m	■	■	■				
	Reader 0.5	m	■	■	■				
	New Lecturer	f	■	■	■	■			
	New Lecturer 0.7	f	■	■	■	■			

Table 4.2 highlights that a much greater amount of research is undertaken across the week by those at the small civic and large civic institutions. Within these universities those in higher ranks undertake a greater proportion of research compared to teaching (table 4.3). For example, at the large civic both the professors did no teaching in the week preceding the interview (reflecting research funding or institutional roles that 'buy them out' of teaching activities), whereas the

senior and new lecturer had one-two days of teaching activity. At the small civic the new lecturer has almost three days of teaching activity, though he retains research time by working a seven-day week.

This division of activity is less pronounced at the ex-CAT institution, with relatively equal distributions for all the interviewees. At the post 1992 university, all the academics interviewed had teaching responsibilities, but the two new lecturers undertook no research activity (during this week).

These patterns of work within and between institutions suggest a hierarchy within the everyday work of my interviewees. At the ex-CAT and post-1992 university (institutions that are lower down in the league tables) the daily path is heavily weighted to teaching and administration. At the civic universities it is weighted towards research. This pattern is reflected within institutions, where professors undertake more research and less teaching, with the ratio shifting as we move down the academic hierarchy. Amongst the academics interviewed, this hierarchy is more pronounced in the large civic university.

Other 'daily path' differences of note are the long working week of the new lecturer at the small civic, in contrast to the five day week of the new lecturers at the post-1992 university. The professors at the civic universities have shorter working weeks, in comparison to the professor at the post-1992 institution.

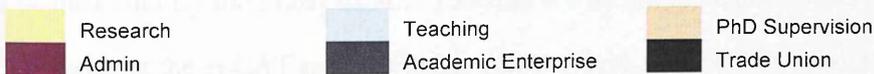
As noted, the tables above do not reflect the temporal fragmentation of different activities or the exact day of the week on which they are undertaken. It is more difficult and less useful to make tables of this, because of the frequency with which tasks are changed during a day, and because of the broad range of tasks that academics do. However, the overview below is useful for highlighting some key points about the temporal ordering of work.

Of particular interest in table 4.4, which is organised by actual day of the week, are the kinds of work undertaken at the weekend. At the small civic university, all the academics reported working six-seven days per week. During the week of the interview, the professor had used this time to complete marking, but emphasised that weekend work was unusual. However, the weekend

‘research’ of the new and senior lecturers was ‘normal’, possibly because much of their working week was taken up with teaching and administrative duties, meaning research is deferred to the weekend. This is different to the large civic where all staff worked a five day week (NB. though one interviewee had conducted research on the weekend he had taken Thursday off). At the ex-CAT the reader and senior lecturer use the weekend to stay on top of a much heavier teaching load than their counterparts at the civic universities, though at this institution all the interviewees wove research into their everyday work. The two interviewees who researched at the post-1992 university were a professor who mainly did research at the weekends, and a semi-retired reader who researched outside his 0.5 (2.5 days per week) contract.

Table 4.4: The temporal ordering of types of activity during a working week

Type of Institution	Interviewee position	Gender	Days						
			Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Large Civic	Professor	m	Research	Research	Admin	Admin	Research		
	Professor	f	Research	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Admin	Research	
	Senior Lecturer	m	Teaching	Teaching	Admin		Teaching		Research
	New Lecturer	f	Teaching	Research	Research	Teaching	Teaching		
Small Civic	Professor	f	Admin	Research	Research	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Teaching
	Retired Professor	m	Teaching	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research	
	Senior Lecturer	f	Admin	Admin	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Research	Research
	New Lecturer	m	Admin	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Research
Ex-CAT	Reader	m	Research	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Research	Admin	Admin
	Senior Lecturer	m	Teaching	Research	Teaching	Teaching	Research	Teaching	Admin
	New Lecturer	m	Teaching	Admin	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Admin
Post-1992	Professor	m	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Research	Admin	Admin	Research
	Reader 0.5	m	Research	Admin	Teaching	Research	Admin		
	New Lecturer	f	Teaching	Admin	Teaching	Teaching	Admin		
	New Lecturer 0.7	f	Admin	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Admin		



So to summarise, the weighting of activities across a week varies and this is somehow related to institution and individual status. In general terms, across the field more teaching and less research occurs in the ‘daily path’ as we move down the league table hierarchy. This trend is reproduced within institutions, with professors spending more time on research than new lecturers. Having said that, the relationship is not simple. For example, there are different lengths of working week and the hours spent working each day varies.

In this sense, though the tables above provide a useful overview of the daily paths of my interviewees, they create partial images of academic life. They offer no insight of the ‘whole lives’ within which academic work is arranged. This is noted by Pred (1981b), who reflects on the path concept to suggest that:

...one cannot realistically place specific types of individual action within the context of an unbroken sequence without acknowledging the fundamental importance of normally assumed family and household activities in the overall composition of a person’s daily or life path (Pred, 1981b:5)

The next section focuses on this ‘bigger picture’. In it I consider how personal schedules contribute to the organisation of daily life. In particular, I focus on conceptions of ‘work’, ‘non-work’ and pleasure, and explore how these ideas shape the daily paths discussed above.

'Work', pleasure and personal time

Notable in the interviews were the efforts many interviewees made to ‘carve out’ periods each week when they did not work. Different strategies were used to try and create a weekly routine that made space for non-working life. For example, two of the academics had strict weekly schedules which emphasised times when they ‘definitely could not work’, times when they were ‘at work’ (whether at the office or at home) with flexible ‘optional’ periods where they would work if it was required. This is illustrated by the professor at the large civic, ‘Monday and Wednesday night I will try to do emails at home in the evening and I deliberately don’t do email on a Tuesday and Friday night... Thursday is a try not to, but often end up doing it’. Similarly the reader at the ex-CAT spoke of doing weekend work if he felt like it, but making it a rule that ‘he shouldn’t feel like he has to’.

Others spoke of trying to have such a weekly schedule which often fell apart in practice. For example, the professor at the small civic had a rule of not working at the weekend, though she had spent the previous weekend at a conference and intended to spend the next weekend marking essays. Another common strategy was to work late in the week (e.g. until eight or nine

pm) to keep the weekend free, though these interviewees often did weekend work too, for example. if they still had teaching preparation to do, or were writing to meet deadlines.

That these interviewees referred to ‘carving-out’ leisure time each week highlights their conception of academic work as potentially boundless and all-encompassing. ‘Carving’ refers to ‘making something’ by cutting into a single whole, and for these individuals, personal time, if desired, needed to be created from the endless rhythms of academic work.

These discussions of working and non-working life were framed by conceptions of a ‘standard’ working week – five days of work and a two day weekend, as well as a ‘normal’ (i.e. nine to five) working day. This was surprising when a key benefit of being an academic (noted by the same individuals) was the flexible working hours it offered. An important reason why accounts of these personally-defined schedules invoked this underpinning model were family commitments and the desire to participate fully in the ‘practice’ of family life. Others found it necessary to draw boundaries because, though they might enjoy their job, work was still work, and they wished their non-work time to coincide with that of their social networks. In addition, several aspects of academic activity need to be coordinated with colleagues or students, and simply have to take place when the university is open. Personally-defined schedules are framed and shaped by social practices that require co-ordination with other individuals, both in and outside the workplace.

These efforts to co-ordinate and schedule time have strong resonance with the interviewees in Southerton’s 2003 study. In his paper, Southerton found that when coordinating work and leisure in everyday life individuals ‘...felt the need to allocate and schedule practices within designated time frames (which created hot spots). This was ‘necessary’ in order to coordinate practices within social networks and to ‘free-up’ other time frames (cold spots) for interaction with significant others’ (Southerton, 2003:5). Southerton’s terms of ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ spots go some way to explaining the personal temporalities of the academics in my study; their concern is with bounding the time spent on academic work and saving up time for family and personal activities.

We will see later in the chapter that this drawing of boundaries when combined with institutional type has important implications for the range of academic activities in which individuals engage.

Here I am interested in the unanticipated effects the creation of 'hot' and 'cold' spots had on the everyday work of my interviewees. Of particular interest is the difference between new lecturers and more established academics.

Making 'hotspots' and feeling 'harried'

Though the more established academics – the readers and professors – spoke about the creation of boundaries (and the occasional crossing of boundaries) calmly, as part of narratives that indicated they were 'in control', the narratives of the new lecturers were often 'harried' (Southerton, 2003). An extreme example of this is the new lecturer at the ex-CAT, who at the time of interview expressed a total loss of control over his personal schedule to the pressures of academic work:

... Thursday morning, because my partner is also an academic, and the next two weeks are hellish, so Thursday morning we put the dog in the kennels for two weeks.

This quote forms part of a hectic and confused discussion of the previous week's activities in which the lecturer found it difficult to identify how his work had been scheduled. His daily life appeared to be determined by 'immovable' work, rather than a self-imposed routine. For example, he discusses how a meeting with a dissertation student at one o'clock shaped the rest of his day:

I've got quite a long commute in... about two hours, and my first meeting wasn't until one o'clock, so I actually got a lie-in that day, I'd have left home about 10 in the morning

This contrasts with the weekly timetable of the professor at the small civic, representative of the work patterns of those who were 'in control':

I come into the university about three times a week. If I work at home, I did that Monday and Tuesday, I have a schedule where I would normally start working at about 9/930 and then I'll work until 630/ 700... Wednesday I started at 9 – you see I live outside the city so when I get the train I get in about quarter to 9

Some of the new lecturers discussed their weekly schedules in similar terms to this professor, however, for a variety of reasons plans fell apart in practice.

Firstly, new academics had a tendency to multi-task and try to do everything at once, a situation exemplified by an interviewee at the large civic who described attending a symposium and writing lectures at the same time. This created a hectic day in which she multi-tasked to complete work that otherwise might 'spill-over' into the evening:

... because the symposium was just across the road I just went to the morning to the keynote and then I nipped back to the office here to write lectures again, then I nipped back over there for lunch, then back here for more work, then I nipped over again for the closing keynote, and then I nipped back here to write more lectures.

Though such multi-tasking might occur in the daily paths of the established academics it was generally related to urgent, unexpected items that arose. For example, a personnel issue interrupted planned research time for the reader at the ex-CAT, who was also head of department. However, generally his work was arranged in a scheduled but flexible weekly routine that enabled him to spend at least some time on all his key activities (teaching preparation, research writing, administration and academic enterprise).

In addition to multi-tasking, problems for new lecturers arose from a genuine naivety about what the academic year would hold. This resulted in plans for the annual cycle going awry. For example, a new academic who had allocated term two for research writing found that teaching related work continued to absorb her time, even though her face-to-face teaching time was lower. This situation was enhanced by a tendency to say 'yes' to everything, resulting in too many deadlines falling together, as acknowledged by another new lecturer who was working seven days per week at the time of interview:

... this year has been a bit hard with lots of deadlines coming all at once, so the deadline for the book I edited was three weeks ago, and then this book was yesterday, so quite a backlog of work. (new lecturer, small civic)

In general the established academics were more successful at organising their working lives in line with personal priorities. They were better at drawing boundaries and keeping to self-imposed schedules. For new lecturers, a lack of experience combined with the desire to get a career off the

ground (by saying yes to everything) made organising time and successfully ‘carving out’ free time more challenging.

Finding it difficult to carve out personal time was also linked to feelings of guilt about the amount of work that could be done. The senior lecturer at the small civic expresses the conflict this caused. With no institutionalized separation between work and leisure time, and because there is always something that could be done – be it reading, replying to emails or thinking about the next research project – it felt like ‘perpetually never having done your homework’.

This feeling of guilt was one of the risks of setting up a weekly schedule. If tasks were not completed in their allocated timeframes, or were usurped by something else, individuals felt they had failed. Though individuals could sometimes clearly identify where weekly schedules had gone wrong, there was also a strong feeling that time was sometimes ‘eaten up’ with no real understanding of why.

The above discussion highlights that attempts to impose personal schedules and clearly distinguish working and non-working life had varying success. The new lecturers found themselves multi-tasking, and working in their ‘non-work’ periods to juggle competing commitments to academic work and personal or family life. The established academics were more successful in drawing boundaries and keeping to self-imposed timetables. This was due to more experience, but also because of different intersections with institutional temporalities. This is a theme explored in more depth later in the chapter.

The work-pleasure spectrum

Making such a clear distinction between work and leisure was less problematic for several of the interviewees. These individuals focussed on the pleasure they derived from certain aspects of their work, and took this ‘measure’ as an organising principle for their schedules. The activities that comprised academic life were conceived along a work-pleasure spectrum. On the one hand, there were activities providing the least pleasure and which ‘felt the most like work’ (such as administration, department meetings, exam boards, marking and for some, teaching), which were generally undertaken during the working week on campus. On the other hand, there were activities which were the most pleasurable and felt the least ‘like work’ – such as reading and

research writing – which were often undertaken at home – as well as more sociable activities like attending seminars and conferences, and discussing ideas with colleagues. There was no concern with completing such activities in particular timeframes, making them exempt from the ‘squeeze’ discussed above.

We cannot assume that these approaches to work, which draw on ‘pleasure’, simply reflect individual differences in the approach to academic life. It was generally the professors who spoke about their work in this manner, and these individuals had greater power over their weekly work. For example, several of them had ‘bought themselves out’ of those activities they found less enjoyable or in conflict with their main goal of research activity. In other cases they more rigorously ‘protected’ their time. Such a strategy is illustrated by a professor at the large civic who discusses how she limits her availability to students:

I’ve always been quite conscious at the start of protecting my own time, and I was mentored very carefully that women do too much pastoral work, so I try to have clear lines... I don’t tend to see PhD students much in between.. it’s not really a drop-in culture ... (professor, large civic)

In contrast, the new lecturer has more fluid boundaries, meaning time is often ‘eaten up’ in unplanned ways:

I try to condense my teaching to 2.5 days... But I find invariably, if I’m in the department then there are other things that need doing... the amount of time I have spent with two students in particular is just incredible (new lecturer, small civic)

Two strategies: blurring and reinforcing boundaries

In the context of their ‘whole lives’, the interviewees conceptualised their academic activities in two ways. Either as distinctive categories of working and non-working life, or along a work-pleasure spectrum that blurred the boundaries of work and leisure time. Those who made strong work/non-work distinctions experienced a competition of time between their academic activities and the practices of their non-working life. They found the encroachment of work into ‘non work’ time stressful and were prone to feeling ‘harried’ or ‘guilty’. The ‘hot spots’ of Southerton’s

(2003) study were scattered throughout their daily and weekly paths. This was especially the case for the new academics who were less successful at imposing their personal schedules onto institutional temporalities.

By contrast, those who defined their lives in terms of a 'work-pleasure' spectrum blurred the boundaries of work and leisure and were less susceptible to this kind of stress. This was partly because the competition of practices, and so the juggling of commitments between working and non-working life was less pronounced.

Though the interviewees' conceptions of work and their personal strategies were important in shaping everyday work, the arrangement of daily paths was not solely in their control. The various activities in which academics engage and their prominence within an academic's workload are in part determined by their universities. Further, these activities have different rhythms, and the extent to which they are defined by institutional temporalities is more or less pronounced. In the next section I explore these relationships between institutions and daily paths. I show how the demands of different activities compete for time, and I review the strategies my interviewees use to alleviate this competition. I show how access to such strategies varies across the study sites, influencing the balance and character of activities in everyday work.

Institutional demands and the daily path

When discussing their daily paths, individuals revealed that some of their activities were deemed more important to the institution than others. The activities institutions emphasised were variously aligned or in conflict with the personal commitments, aims and ambitions of my interviewees.

For example, at the post-1992 university all of the interviewees felt that teaching and administration were more highly valued by the institution than research. This stemmed from the dominance within the daily path of teaching activity (shown in the tables at the start of this chapter), and is noted by the new lecturer who highlights that though 'research' forms part of the contracted lecturing role, the activity has little time allocated to it within the institutional temporal order:

Somehow here when you want to do research you kind of feel like, even though they do want you to do it, but there's also this belief that you can still do loads of teaching and loads of admin because, you know, that's what we employ you for. (new lecturer, post-1992)

This emphasis is also illustrated by the semi-retired reader, who explains that he works five days per week in order to engage in research, even though he is only contracted for 2.5 days by the institution:

... it's partly my own fault. If I stopped doing research and stopped writing, and said I'm not supervising any more PhD students – if I just did the basics – then I could probably come in for 2.5 days per week. (semi-retired reader, post-1992)

The quote suggests he would be considered as satisfying the commitments of his role even if he solely focussed on teaching and administration.

This institution's emphasis on teaching and administrative work was also reflected in promotion criteria. A new lecturer explains that a career which includes research is not available at this university:

... I think the next level up here is basically either principal lecturer or reader, and principal lecturer – you kind of get promoted – but you're basically taking the admin route.

The emphasis to prioritise teaching and administration is not only apparent in the institution's workload allocation and promotion criteria, but was also reflected in and supported by the department culture which created 'peer pressure' to focus on certain activities. The semi-retired reader reflects on his career and explains that he was unable to engage in research in the pre-1992 era because it lacked kudos at the institution:

I guess like a lot of other polytechnics, they weren't interested in research, there was no research culture here, in fact you had to kind of conceal the fact that you had a PhD or that you were writing, because if other colleagues found out they'd be 'who does he think

he is?’ ‘he’s elitist’. It had no kudos, for a very long time. So everybody’s career path – if you wanted to get on – was to teach and do admin

We can see that the current emphasis on teaching and administration at this university is a long-established tradition. This remains the case, even though the interviewees in my study all desired academic careers that would enable them to develop their research activity, as well as wishing to develop their research activity so they could build their careers. When considering their future, improving status within the institution was not their only, or even their main concern. Instead, they described a drive to accumulate the ‘capitals’ valued by universities higher in the league tables. There is a belief, amongst the interviewees in the post-1992 institution, that securing a job in one of these universities would enable different daily practices as a sociologist (which would include research), and provide avenues to alternative career trajectories.

This contrasts with the social situation at the large civic university. The new lecturer here discusses how her commitment to research is not simply personal, but is part of the broader culture. This contributes to research being considered an established part of the job.

...we are expected to get research funding and also publish, because it’s a good department... I think that shows in that I just have the sense that I work with lots of people who do really good quality work, and that’s implicit peer pressure, you don’t want to let the side down... (new lecturer, large civic)

Similarly, the civic universities place emphasis on research activities in their promotion criteria.

The senior lecturer at the small civic emphasises this point:

... if you look at the current promotional process here.. it isn’t clear to me, for example, whether a professor is a managerial role, or some sort of expertise in terms of research, teaching doesn’t ever seem to feature very highly on the agenda, and yet you would think that teaching is actually one of the primary roles in academia

So, whereas undertaking research activity at the post-1992 university is a choice driven by individual commitment, and one that required investment of personal time and possibly ‘going against the grain’, at the civic universities it is a cultural and institutional expectation. Individuals

feel that they are given at least some research time within the institutional temporal order, and in fact, though teaching (obviously) takes place it holds relatively little kudos when it comes to promotion. Reflecting on this emphasis, several of the academics at the civic universities feel the status accorded research is unbalanced, as illustrated in the quote from the senior lecturer above.

That said, a departmental and institutional culture that values research does not necessarily mean the time to undertake this work is obviously available. Wherever they are located, those who teach find that the rhythm of teaching dominates their daily, termly and annual path. The new lecturer at the small civic encapsulates this point when he discusses how teaching competes for time with his research work:

when it comes to workload... there are things that are important and things that are urgent... Teaching's urgent because you need to prepare teaching, or if you've got something you need to do by the end of the day. It's not like it's the most important thing, but it's the most pressing. And I think that increasingly people are exercised by those types of urgent things, that are perhaps in the scheme of things, less important.

(new lecturer, small civic)

Wherever an individual's commitments lie, and whatever activities are valued by the institution, involvement in teaching strongly shapes daily paths. But why is it that the rhythm of teaching is so dominant? Pred's concept of 'projects' and 'activity bundles' can offer deeper understanding of this observation.

Teaching as a dominant rhythm

Pred (1981a) defines a project as '... the entire series of simple or complex tasks necessary to the completion of any intention-inspired or goal-oriented behaviour' (1981a:10). The tasks associated with a project – called 'activity bundles' – almost always contain an internal logic of their own so that they must be sequenced in a more or less specific order. For example, in the case of teaching outlined above, to deliver a lecture in a particular time and place requires that the lecture be prepared prior to the event. To design and deliver a whole course requires a repeated sequence of this preparation and delivery, ongoing student support and then marking, exam boards and administrative activities after the event.

This collective organisation of daily social practices is important for individual experiences of time, a point that is exemplified in Zerubavel's (1979) ethnographic study of hospital life. In his study he details the rhythms and cycles of shifts, work rotas, staff teams and medicine rounds to show how experiences of time vary for different kinds of staff. Though the institutional temporalities of universities are much less structured than those of a hospital, my study suggests that different areas of academic activity require different degrees and kinds of socio-temporal coordination with others, as well as logically sequenced 'bundles' of tasks that are specific to the activity, creating a variety of rhythms in academic life. Further, the intersection of these rhythms with the institution, and the extent to which they are defined by the institution's temporal order, vary.

Returning to the example of teaching discussed above, face-to-face teaching is established in the weekly and termly cycles of the university. The 'activity bundles' associated with these face-to-face events result in teaching strongly shaping weekly and daily paths. This is different to the rhythm of research work (as already noted this encompasses a broad range of activities), which shapes the individual's temporal order according to a set of longer deadlines. For example, writing to an editor's (or personal) deadline, preparing a research bid, undertaking empirical work, developing a conference paper, attending meetings (on collaborative projects), or producing reports for funders, all have different temporal characteristics. These deadlines and rhythms are unlike those of teaching in that they are sometimes more flexible (especially if they are self-enforced), because the decision of which work to undertake and when often lies with the individual, and because they often require coordination with networks external to the university where an academic is based (funders, collaborators, interviewees etc.).

Drawing on Pred's concepts, we might say that those with higher teaching loads have less flexibility in their daily paths, less power to impose their personal temporalities and so fewer opportunities to follow their personal academic commitments, aims and ambitions. This helps to explain why those lower in the academic hierarchy, who have a higher weighting of teaching in their daily paths, feel more harried as they attempt to coordinate the competing activities of their academic work, and of their work and personal life. It also explains why professors, more than

other academics, can draw upon the work-pleasure spectrum to arrange their daily paths.

Experiences of time are not simply subjective, nor the outcome of improved time management strategies gained from experience. They also reveal differences in the distribution of activities within workloads, and on the varying relationships of such activities to institutional rhythms.

Negotiating and navigating temporal orders

Amidst these rhythms of the daily path, there is an ongoing negotiation and navigation of teaching, administration and research and of institutional temporalities (linked to institutional demands) on the one hand, and personal temporalities (and personal aims and ambitions) on the other. These temporal demands are not necessarily in opposition and indeed, there is often overlap between institutional demands and personal commitments. However, there is never total alignment and this leads to a persistent tension in the relationship of institution and individual.

In negotiating and navigating their everyday work, the individuals in my study adopt a variety of strategies to weave daily paths so as to minimise these tensions and produce a working rhythm which they find personally acceptable – academic lives which they can ‘live with’. I explore these strategies in the next and final section of the chapter. I show that the everyday management of these tensions of academic life via ‘buy-out’, consolidation and deferral, are strongly situated resulting in the ‘practice of sociology’ taking systematically different forms across the field.

‘Buying out’

‘Buy-out’, from teaching and administrative activities, was important for the daily paths of the senior lecturers and professors at the civic universities, in that it allowed them to spend time on research. This was the case for the two professors at the large civic university who had research funding or departmental responsibilities that meant they had very little teaching. In this sense, they were successful in creating daily paths which aligned with their personal commitments, aims and ambitions. Similarly, the senior lecturer at the small civic had used research funding to buy herself out of administration for the past six years. Such buy-out at the civic universities is important in reproducing the hierarchy of activities discussed at the start of the chapter. In my study, it is the more established academics, working in higher status institutions, who are successful securing funding for buy-out.

The success of senior colleagues in gaining funding opens up doors for the younger lecturers in the same universities. For example, they can work with more experienced colleagues on research bids and projects, benefitting from their experience of writing proposals and research management, as well as capitalising on the reputations of their colleagues and departments. The new lecturer at the large civic described a joint research project with a more senior colleague as a 'safe place' to begin a research career:

... I'm the second person named, she's a more senior academic so she'd take the lead on that. I feel as though it would be a very safe space for me to be managing the project in...

This contrasts with the new lecturer at the post-1992 university who can see little point applying for research funding because of a lack of colleagues to collaborate with, a lack of reputation within the institution, and thus the unlikelihood of succeeding:

I think if you work in a place like this... you have to think will you invest an entire year's time on something that has... a 20% chance of succeeding? ... there's so much competition, and the kind of people you work with here, the vast majority of my colleagues don't have research bids...so what falls away is that possibility of attaching yourself to someone who's already got a history and so is much more likely to get it.

So, despite the similar commitments, ambitions and interests of my interviewees to do research, the possibility of 'buy-out' from teaching is greater at the civic universities than at the post-1992 and ex-CAT. In this sense 'buy-out' as a strategy to reduce the competing time demands of teaching and research is only accessible in certain parts of the field. Though research funding may, on the surface, appear to be equally accessible, the possibility of making successful bids is related to institutional goals and department culture, as well as the reputations of departments and individuals. For the academics in my study the advantage directly tracks league table position, and within departments is linked to status of individuals.

Studying the 'daily paths' of my interviewees also reveals interesting relationships between the size of research grants and the kinds of research activity that buy-out supports. At the large civic

university, research management was the main activity of the two professors. They were both coordinating teams of research assistants, who were involved in developing research projects (within the framework of the professor's initial proposal, which had funded their post). They undertook empirical data collection and analysis, and were involved in the co-writing of research reports and papers. This led to the large civic university having more hierarchical research structures than the other institutions. At the time of interview, the new lecturer here was beginning to notice the dominance of this form of research, and its implications for her future 'daily path':

I see the future now more in terms of getting money to fund a research fellow or a PhD student to collect data, which reinforces all those hierarchies... because that was my one big shock when I came here, was to realise that people don't do their own research. And now I understand that yes, there are kind of structures in place that actually make it quite hard for you to do that.

The smaller amount of research funding secured by the senior lecturer at the small civic was also used for buy-out, but in this case there were no new staff to manage. Her buy-out was used to engage in the research process – data collection and analysis, and research writing. The new lecturer here notes that the department 'doesn't draw down these enormous research grants', but that small 'pockets of money' could help to move research forwards. At the ex-CAT similar 'pockets of money' were sought out, once again, generally to facilitate lecturers to undertake research. At the post-1992, buy-out was not experienced by any of the interviewees, and neither was it a key research strategy for them. The point is that buy-out, as a strategy to manage competing academic demands, is not equally available across institutions³. At the same time, it not only affects the individual's daily path, but also the form of 'sociology' that develops within departments. I explore the substantive implications of these arrangements in the next chapter, but

³ It is important to acknowledge that when a grant is secured, the extent to which departments and universities support 'buy out' varies, with better off, more research oriented departments more able and willing to allow grants to be translated into buy-out. In addition, grant-giving bodies have different requirements of departments.

here we can see that across the study sites, a more hierarchical research structure based around research managers and research assistants uniquely exists at the large civic university.

This example of 'buy-out' as a strategy to manage research neatly fits with the presuppositions of Pred's time geography approach. Namely, that individuals can only be in one place at a time, that they can only engage in one task at a time and that time resources are limited. 'Buy-out' frees up time that would otherwise be dominated by teaching work, making certain kinds of research possible.

Interestingly, although this concept of 'competing activities' is evident in some of the interview transcripts, for others, an emphasis is placed on consolidation. This challenges Pred's model, showing that daily path activities can contribute to several aspects of academic life simultaneously. I discuss some examples of this in the next section, and show that once again, such a strategy is not equally available to all my interviewees.

Consolidating practices

Some of the academics in my study capitalised on the institutionally-driven 'projects' that dominated their daily paths to fulfil their personal ambitions and goals. An example of this is where individuals establish strong links between teaching, academic enterprise and research so that rather than competing for time, these activities overlap and shape each other. The professor at the post-1992 illustrates how such links can be made:

When I came they gave me stuff to teach that I was completely unfamiliar with. So the first year I spent reading around things I knew nothing about, and teaching them. ... In the second year I submitted a module modification to change the course. Both to reflect what I knew but also in response to some of the students' interests. .. Now it gives them more diversity, which is what they wanted, and it's good for me because I bring in the things I have more expertise in. (professor, post-1992)

Similarly, at the time of interview the new lecturer at the large civic was beginning to see the potential for such overlaps. She was in the process of designing a course that would broaden her reading with the aim of developing a new perspective on her research for future funding bids.

A further example is found in the academic enterprise-research overlap of the post-1992 professor. He discusses how his ongoing ethnographic research overlaps with his academic enterprise activity with local residential organisations:

...the way my work works... I might go down one day next week to the office of one of these residential organisations and whilst I'm writing a proposal with them for the national lottery... that might be deemed as something that the university would be interested in, I'll also be doing research. (professor, post-1992)

So, taking us beyond Pred, these quotes illustrate that some activities contribute to more than one practice at a time; multi-purposing takes us beyond the zero-sum time use that is a central presupposition of Pred's account. Activities can contribute to both a dominant (institutional) project (e.g. teaching) and projects motivated by personal commitments and ambitions (e.g. research) too. A similar consolidation of practice is seen earlier in the chapter when academics draw on the work-pleasure spectrum to organise their schedules, meaning some activities contribute to work and leisure at the same time. Both forms of consolidation effectively mean there is less competition for time each day, and that temporal demands are not experienced as pressure.

Consolidation and multi-purposing might seem an obvious way to achieve both personal ambition and institutional objectives simultaneously, as well as being an approach that supports the ongoing development of ideas that move the discipline forward. We might hypothesise that those with the greatest teaching commitments in their daily paths – the new lecturers – would be the most likely to engage in this strategy. However, similar to the example of 'buy-out' above, opportunities to consolidate practices also varied across my sample.

Though the new lecturers at the civic universities were developing consolidated activities, such a strategy was problematic for those at the post-1992 and ex-CAT. These interviewees spoke of their surprise at the lack of overlap between their teaching and research, and the difficulty of doing the two activities simultaneously. They felt that the level and number of students they were allocated had the affect of 'separating' their teaching and research work. For example, working

with foundation level students required a different mindset that was not conducive to the kinds of thinking required for research:

I mostly work with mainly first year and foundation year students and so obviously the level of interaction in terms of content is not very sophisticated. (new lecturer two, post-1992)

Similarly, a lack of opportunity to engage in discussion with students was felt to undermine the teaching:research relationship:

... when you're teaching groups of 100-150 students there is a sense in which you're just going through the motions...I had more of a view of teaching smaller seminar classes of five or 10 people and actually having discussions with them... and then having a closer relationship between your research and your teaching, but now it feels they're more separate (new lecturer, post-1992)

In addition, these lecturers had been given 'broadbrush' first year undergraduate courses, meaning opportunities to draw on their research specialisms in teaching were very limited, or non-existent.

So, my research findings suggest that the extent to which practices can be consolidated once again varies by institution and status. For example, the new lecturer at the large civic (who is beginning to 'buy-out' research time) has the opportunity to develop courses related to her research. The new lecturers at the post-1992 neither have buy-out nor overlap in their everyday work. The post-1992 professor can develop consolidation because he has the power to align his teaching (which is with higher level students) with his research interests.

A further point to note is that in order to weave his research into a daily path that is dominated by teaching and administration, the post-1992 professor takes an ongoing ethnographic approach to his research. It is doubtful if research designs that require intense periods of data collection would be possible at this institution. Likewise, it is questionable if this professor's style of research would draw down the large research funding grants sought by the large civic university. This further illustrates that forms of sociological research are situated practices, shaped by the intersections of institutions and individuals in everyday work.

Deferral

The final kind of navigation and negotiation that I wish to discuss is deferral. The interviewees in my study draw on the temporalities of the term, the year, and their careers to arrange the different aspects of academic work. Performing all aspects of the 'practice' of sociology each and everyday is impossible, yet it is experienced as a constant pressure. This pressure is alleviated by planning other everydays that will embrace aspects that are currently and necessarily on hold. As well as being a time management device, deferral is a discursive tool which enabled my interviewees to express their personal commitments to sociology, despite a lack of alignment with current daily paths.

Broadly speaking deferral takes two forms. Firstly, academics take account of the academic year and plan their work within this – 'sometimes things get pushed back, but then you end up doing other things out of work time to keep on top of that.' (professor, post-1992). This kind of deferral is intentional and used by academics as a time management tool.

There is also unintended deferral, where these intra-year postponed activities are repeatedly 'pushed back', always waiting for the next window of opportunity. The new lecturer at the post-1992 illustrates this trajectory when she postpones research to the summer because her daily path in term time is dominated by teaching, she then postpones her research again because of personal commitments:

I moved house last summer, so that means the time you would allocate yourself for research, July and August was significantly taken up by that ... in the term you're so busy with teaching and teaching related stuff and admin. (new lecturer, post-1992)

Followed by another year that is dominated by teaching and administration, the next window of opportunity will not arise until the following summer. This is already concerning the new lecturer, who envisages an increase in teaching workload and the need to spend the summer months designing lectures and course materials.

To understand these different forms of deferral and their implications for individual careers, and for the 'practice' of sociology, it is useful to refocus the analysis and consider how deferral is

'fitted into' the weeks, terms, years and careers of my interviewees. The professor at the large civic provides an interesting example. In the first interview, she discussed how she had taken on a substantial departmental role which had affected her writing plans for the year: 'I'm deliberately not writing this term because I knew I was taking on this big job, so I've suspended writing until January'. In the second interview (held in the January) the professor describes her writing as being 'non-existent at the moment' and proceeds to explain 'I'm trying to be very organised this term, although I'm not going to get there until Easter'.

Taken at face value, this might be viewed as synonymous with the example of the new lecturer above, however, the professor goes on to explain that this deferral of research writing is a sacrifice she is willing to make. A key benefit of taking on the managerial role now, is that after two years of service she will receive a 12 month sabbatical. Although the repeated postponement is something of an irritation she also has a clear idea of when it will end. The deferral is part of a longer term career strategy that is supported by the university.

In contrast, for the new lecturer at the post-1992 the only 'way out' of the repeated deferral is to view her current role as a temporary stage of her career. Caught up in a daily path that is dominated by teaching and administration she postpones her research until she has a better job elsewhere:

I think the drive is always going to be towards getting you to do more teaching and admin. So I think if you stay in an institution like this, not much will change, but it will change for the worse in that you will get less research time. I think generally speaking I'll be here a few more years and then I'll move on.

These examples illustrate that there is always a tension for academics between the cyclical character of much of their work - in the routines of the daily path - and the expectations of progress or development driven by institutions and personal ambitions. Giddens (1984) notes this cyclical characteristic of temporalities in the day-to-day:

...the events and routines of daily life do not have a one-way flow to them. The terms 'social reproduction', 'recursiveness' and so on indicate the repetitive character of day-to-

day life, the routines of which are formed in terms of the intersection of the passing (but continually returning) days and seasons. Daily life has a duration, a flow, but it does not lead anywhere. (Giddens, 1984:35)

For the interviewees in my study, the dominance of teaching in the daily path, led to cyclical patterns of deferral. Buy-out and consolidation, as methods of incorporating research into these everyday cycles offered possible solutions, but as I have shown, access to these strategies was uneven.

Such logistical problems of the everyday not only have implications for individuals— possibly making it difficult to move a career forward - they also mean that different versions of ‘sociological practice’ develop, as individuals engage in different activities, and as different styles of teaching and research emerge across the field.

To be specific, for my interviewees, the logistical arrangements of daily paths at the post-1992 institution made research a peripheral (or non-existent) activity. High (and increasing) teaching and administrative workloads, lower chances of ‘buy-out’ from large research funding bids, a lack of enablements such as sabbaticals and limited opportunities to consolidate activities, resulted in research remaining peripheral in the long-term.

This contrasts with the situation at the civic universities. Here, the availability of ‘buy-out’ assisted by the institution’s reputation, the existence of sabbaticals, peer pressure to develop research and often lower teaching workloads meant that (at the moment at least) postponed activities eventually found a window of opportunity. This provided more motivation to keep research ‘ticking over’ even when things were busy, a motivation underpinned by promotion criteria that emphasised research, meaning that eventually such activity would be rewarded.

Within this context, interviewees across the field draw on various temporal landscapes – of the term, the year, and their career, to illustrate commitment to the forms of sociological ‘practice’ that incorporate research. These commitments continue to act as the driving force of academics’ lives, even when current daily paths show little alignment with these personal aims and ambitions.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have illustrated how the everyday activities of my interviewees are negotiated in different kinds of institution within the daily paths of individuals. Far from being outcomes of subjective differences in an individual's approach to academic life, or improved time management strategies gained via experience, the different distribution of activities between interviewees and study sites has strong correlation to the league table hierarchies discussed in chapter two.

The activities emphasised by institutions are variously aligned or in conflict with the commitments, aims and ambitions of individuals. This tension of individual and institution – of institutional temporalities (linked to institutional demands) and personal temporalities (and personal aims and ambitions) is negotiated and navigated via 'buy-out', consolidation and deferral, as academics seek to establish academic lives – daily paths – that they can 'live with'. However, the strongly situated availability of 'buy-out' and 'consolidation', and the different outcomes of 'deferral', resulted in the 'practice of sociology' taking different forms across the field, both logistically and substantively.

In the next chapter, I will describe in more depth differences in sociologists' research at the different study sites. I will show how institutional structures and department cultures, as well as intersections with external funders, affect academic research practices.

Chapter Five

Research 'Strategies'

No struggle is reducible to striving for power or advantage, because power or advantage can only exist in relation to goods, that is, valued things, practices and ways of life.

(Sayer, 2005:99).

Introduction

In this chapter I argue that tensions between individuals and institutions persist because both are variously concerned with accumulating capital (economic, symbolic, cultural capitals) and with accessing valued practices and ways of life – in a broad sense - with accessing the 'goods' of academic work. That is to say, in navigating their way through their everyday work, there is both congruence and discrepancy at the intersections of individuals' commitments, everyday practices, and institutional or departmental strategy and culture, which varies across the study sites. The chapter elaborates on the negotiations of personal and institutional temporalities described in chapter four by analysing why alignments or tensions arise and exploring what individuals and institutions are competing and striving for.

The chapter specifically focuses on 'research work' as within the interviews, these discussions, above all others, exemplify the tensions in question. The extent to which individual academics have access to research practices, the kinds of research practice they engage in, and how this work is recognised and valued, is particularly important for self-esteem, professional fulfilment and personal success. At the same time, as I have shown in chapter two, research is important to institutions as it is a key 'measure' in league tables, both via direct rankings based on RAE scores and research funding, and via conversions of capital (for example, a university attracting students with higher entry qualifications because they have high research ranking). That the term 'research' is used across the interviewees and study sites to refer to a diverse range of academic activities is itself revealing of the struggles of the field, and the meaning of 'research work' at the four universities is a recurring theme throughout my discussion.

The chapter will begin with a comparison of the role of two departmental research directors; one based at the large civic university and the other at the post-1992 institution. I show that

Bourdieu's concept of capitals provides a fitting theoretical explanation of differences in the research director roles, in the research strategies of the two departments, the 'elasticity' of role arrays (Archer, 2000) (e.g. what it is, or what it can be, to be a professor), and the breadth and structure of the array of roles (the division of labour). I then examine the deliberations individuals described in relation to their everyday research practice. I show that though Bourdieu's concepts provide some useful insights, they do not adequately explain the everyday 'struggles' in which my interviewees are engaged.

More specifically, I argue that distinctions between internal and external goods (MacIntyre, 1981), alongside Bourdieu's capitals, provides a far richer understanding of the struggles for goods and recognition found in my empirical data. In the end, I show that though individual academics espouse commitments to particular 'standards', such as contributing to social science knowledge and selecting the most appropriate methodology for the research in hand, research practices – and so 'research' – varies by university type. As such, research practices follow the stratifications of the field, resulting in a hierarchy of research work in which certain formulations are privileged and valued whilst others become peripheral, and remain so.

The 'direction' of research work

In this section I draw on discussions with professors that had the role of Department Research Director at the large civic and post-1992 universities. I talk about the status of this role within the department, and the extent to which the role is institutionalized. I compare the emphasis and ambitions of the research strategies they were involved in making. I draw on Bourdieu's concepts of capital to theorise why research strategy and 'research work' have such different meanings in the two departments.

Research strategy at the large civic

At the large civic university Professor A has accepted the role of Department Research Director as a 30% allocation in her workload and in return for a double sabbatical after three years. The role has been created centrally, as part of the institutional structure, to steer research strategically both nationally and internationally. There are equivalent posts in each department across the

university, with a formal reporting structure in which departmental directors form a faculty-level committee which reports to senior management boards.

At this university, the role involves leading RAE preparation, coordinating the department's response to RAE framework developments (e.g. at the time of interview to respond to the proposed metrics for the Research Excellence Framework), head-hunting new chairs for the department, and presenting the case for research investment within the department and faculty. The professor explains that the role has been established as part of the university's 'modernisation' – the development of an institutional structure in which roles are clearly defined and allocated, and within which academics can make networks and share ideas across disciplinary boundaries in more dynamic ways.

At the time of interview a key aspect of the role was to establish, with the research directors from other departments, the thematic priorities of the Faculty via an internal review. The professor explains:

... there's seven research themes, and we're reviewing whether we stay with them - what should we be thinking about longer term, in terms of developing the strengths we have and picking up on issues which are big bucks for the social sciences at the moment. So I'm somehow going to come up with some ideas, which partly reflect what we already do, partly ensure that my department is represented up there thematically, as well as thinking blue skies...

The department strategy at this university has several threads – strings to the department's research bow – and these are highlighted through our ensuing discussion of the current internal review.

In addition to her description of the review as an opportunity to 'identify existing strengths' she also states that it is an 'opportunity to notice links' in research between different departments, a chance to 'link strengths to future research income' and a way to 'bring on' newer members of staff in a more formal way, for example, by encouraging such individuals to lead research bids in 'strong' areas.

Within this department, the research director role is very closely linked to the development of research strategy, and the development of strategy is linked to research income – money - in several ways. Firstly, one of the immediate effects of the review will be to put small pots of institutional money that are ‘taxed from each of the departments’ into initiatives that strengthen and develop the newly identified themes (e.g. by holding cross-department seminars). Secondly, the themes identified will inform future appointments, with the possibility of new chairs within the faculty – so the strategy will affect what kind of research expertise is bought in.

Thirdly, the strategy has the explicit objective of securing future research funding. Institutional strategy – as mediated by the research director – aims to prospectively link research themes, and the development of research expertise, to future research income. Perhaps then, the professor’s observation that the themes identified are ‘remarkably similar’ to those already defined by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) should come as no surprise. The professor notes they are ‘playing the game that the ESRC is trying to trigger’ – the themes are, in the first instance, about increasing potential research monies, rather than setting an agenda of sociological research.

That said, the strategy has other aims too. The University is concerned with attracting funding from other sources (in particular the EU). Though these may benefit from some aspects of the ESRC-related strategy, there are also areas of divergence (discussed later). A high RAE grade is also important, both for the money it provides, and for the kudos it gives the department, which strengthens bids to other funders as well as affecting the institution’s success more generally in terms of league table position. RAE funding is retrospective – awarded for work done, and this adds complexity to the institutional and departmental strategy. Different practices and products are important depending on which source of funding is prioritised, for example, I note above the ESRC’s apparent concern with multi-disciplinary teams, whereas historically the RAE has categorised research by discipline and given higher ranking to sole-authored publications.

Considering how these multiple objectives are mediated by the professor as she shapes the research strategy provides some insight into what the department and institution is striving and competing for. I have already introduced Bourdieu’s concepts of capital in chapter two, and

considered how the UK University system can be viewed as a stratified field, reflected in league table rankings which measure and prioritise specific forms of capital in particular ways. In the example above, which focuses on the institutionalisation of research strategy at the large civic university, some mediations of these capitals are apparent.

In terms of strategy, there is particular concern with accumulating material resources – economic capital – to ensure that research can continue to form a substantial proportion of the everyday work of the department and institution. This accumulation requires individual academics to engage with multiple forms of research funding which have different criteria and methods of allocation, as well as generally having themes and purposes which are partly shaped by funders.

Direct accumulation of material resources is not only important for the ongoing funding of research. It also strengthens the research capital of the department and institution – acting as a symbolic good which contributes to league table status and converts to further economic capital by adding to the reputation of the department, and the individuals who work there.

Understandably, the University is also concerned with performing well in the RAE – this acts as a source of both economic and symbolic capital too. However, with the key measure being peer reviewed publication, chasing this target requires different provisions to be made for individuals in their everyday work. I expand this point further in a moment, by discussing the role array and array of roles at this university. First though, I want to compare the position of this department research director to that of her equivalent at the post-1992 university.

Research strategy at the post-1992

At face value Professor B at the post-1992 has the same role as Professor A. However, our discussions reveal some significant differences. I have noted above the institutionalization of the role at the large civic, which is related to a centralised restructuring of the institution in order to ensure department research strategies are linked to institutional objectives. In contrast, the professor at the post-1992 university has taken the research director role upon himself. As such, he has developed a strategy and structure for the department that is localised with no connections to broader institutional goals. For example, he says:

When I came there wasn't one [a research strategy]. So I created one. The vast majority of people in the department didn't have any vehicle to pursue and develop themselves as researchers, so you know, there was no meetings about research, no research culture.

For him, the role has involved creating a research strategy, identifying themes which relate to groupings within the department, and designing some procedures associated with their operation, aims and objectives. He has also created a departmental research committee to oversee the research in the department.

The primary goal of the strategy here is to create a 'research culture' so that those who wish to research have a 'vehicle' with which to do so. Due to the 'bottom-up' nature of the strategy the professor has created, he is totally aligned with its altruistic aims. He has a particular concern for new lecturers and his objective is to ensure they remain active in research (e.g. via publication) rather than expecting they will apply for large funding bids. This is because he sees that there is a risk they may not do any research if they are not encouraged to do so:

If people came in and started their career off the back of a PhD then there was nothing to link them in with other people, because there's no research going on. Once you lose that thing after your PhD, if you don't do something within a couple of years you very easily just fall into being a teacher, and that was happening.

Another reason why the strategy is focussed on sharing work with colleagues, and the development of conference papers and publications, is that making successful research bids from this department would be difficult since there is a lack of experience and a minimal 'track record' of both individuals and the department in this arena, making it difficult to compete with other universities. In addition, even if funding was granted, staff access to 'buy-out' for research would be unlikely. At this institution, there are no established procedures and protocols for this kind of working arrangement.

During our discussions the professor explains how individuals within the department are positioned quite differently in terms of research. This is not only associated with the temporal limitations, and the distribution of access to 'buy-out' and 'consolidation' discussed in chapter

four, but also to do with the amount of 'research capital' an individual has accumulated prior to joining the department.

For example, those academics who already have an established publications record and external networks (a 'home' for their research) can flourish at the university. He is himself an example of this phenomenon; because he can confidently author papers without the support of immediate colleagues, as well as having a track record which means he receives invitations to participate in seminars and conferences elsewhere, he finds a way to weave his research into his everyday activities. The new lecturers are positioned differently. With no established publications record or area of research, and little time to get something 'off the ground' they find themselves in the situation of permanent deferral discussed previously. As recognised by the professor, this can be damaging for their reputations in the long term. In other words, those with higher research capital have reputations which outweigh the reputation of the institution. Those with low research capital can become 'type-cast' as teachers not researchers, whether this is their long-term intention or not.

Returning to my discussion of how institutions prioritise capitals and my question of what it is that institutions are striving and competing for, material resources once again take priority. However, in this case, rather than coming from research funding the institution's main financial resources come from teaching work. This explains why there is neither a centrally coordinated research strategy nor the protocols to support research, whilst departments are nevertheless able to submit to the RAE if they wish. Research is viewed as 'nice to have', because of the kudos it might give the department and institution – it is recognised to the extent that having some form of research capital is important - however, the lack of money that it generates means that, from the institution's point of view, it is not worth a great deal of investment.

In the preceding discussion I have shown that material resources – or economic capital – is the primary (though not the only) concern for institutions across the field. Such resources exist as positional goods, and are the object of Hobbesian competition – if one university has them

another cannot⁴. Universities and departments focus their attention on particular economic resources depending on their position in the field. The large civic, which has existing accumulations of economic and research capital, focuses its attention on more of the same, institutionalizing and investing in the development of research strategy. Those institutions without such accumulations focus their attentions on other areas. In the next section, I describe and discuss the role array and array of roles at the two universities to consider the implications of this mediation of capitals into research strategy for the meanings of ‘research work’ and the division of research labour at the two study sites.

The role array and the array of roles

In my data, it is apparent that the potentiality of roles, and the place of research within these roles, varies across the study sites. By this I mean that what it is to be a new lecturer, senior lecturer or professor in practice has different possibilities in different places. Staying for now with the comparison of the large civic and post-1992 university, I found that at the large civic there are lots of ‘niches’ that co-exist as legitimate formulations of the academic role. However, at the post-1992 this is not the case, niches do not exist in the same way, and what it is to be a sociology academic in this department is relatively similar across academics of different position and experience.

Archer’s concept of ‘role array’ (2000) is useful when considering this point. As I note in chapter one, Archer suggests that individuals do not just passively ‘take’ roles but subjectively personify them, that is, they actively make them via human qualities of creativity and reflexivity (Archer, 2000:288). In this sense, roles are ‘elastic’ – in practice their boundaries and requirements are flexible – so for example, we can expect that being a ‘professor’ will differ depending on who is doing it. Though Archer introduces the concept of role array to theorise the process by which ‘agents’ become ‘social actors’, here I draw upon the idea with a different purpose in mind. Given my discussion of institutional struggles for capital in the previous section, I want to consider how and why the role array, and seeming ‘elasticity’ of roles varies across the study sites.

⁴ Though the total amount and qualitative character of the economic capitals available varies across time, and the ‘sum’ that is divided between them is not itself fixed.

To begin, I consider the kind of research work the two professors and a senior lecturer at the large civic university engage in. In particular I show the different ‘niches’ that they occupy and discuss some of the reasons why this is possible. The flexibility of roles, and the potential to occupy a ‘niche’, means that greater alignment of personal commitments, everyday practices and departmental strategy and culture is experienced, than at the post-1992 university. A key point is that at the large civic, roles can be ‘stretched’ in many different directions and still be valued and supported by the department. Conversely, if we consider the situation of the interviewees at the post 1992 it is evident that niches do not exist in the same way, and though individuals may experiment with the ‘elasticity’ in their role, the valuing and support of a variety of work that is experienced at the large civic university is lacking.

The role array at the large civic

In addition to being Departmental Research Director, Professor A also directs a research centre. She is very successful at securing research funding, resulting in high allocations of research time via buy-out. At the same time, she spends a large proportion of her research time writing funding bids – a pattern of work that for several reasons she describes herself as being ‘locked-in’ to.

These are some of the reasons. First, her research funding is valued as it helps achieve strategic targets of external income generation. Though this income contributes to the RAE to a certain extent, publications are of more value in this arena. However, she notes that RAE money alone cannot sustain (or grow) the levels of research in the department. As noted above, alternative sources of funding are viewed as essential in the broader departmental research strategy and as such her activity aligns with departmental ambitions.

Second, she feels a commitment towards her PhD students and contract researchers. She continues to conform to departmental expectations because of a sense of loyalty and duty to colleagues and once one funding stream has been secured and staff/students appointed, she feels a personal obligation to ensure these continue:

You can’t turn around and say ‘oh this year I’m not doing any funded work’... well you can, but a lot of us would be concerned if we knew there was someone [student/research assistant] looking for money and we were closing the gate down.

Finally, her involvement and status beyond the department in various European and policy networks means lots of research ‘comes her way’. She is always keen to accept this work to maintain the relationships and the potential funding projects they will bring, despite the fact that she sometimes experiences this as ‘rewriting her PhD’ over again. Her current daily path is dominated by research management and administration, rather than undertaking research or producing academic publications, and in part she feels that constantly accepting projects and invitations to keep her networks alive restricts her publication of academic articles, and the development of new areas of research.

The case of this professor is interesting, as though she is committed to her research area, she describes herself as being ‘locked-in’ to a particular pattern of work repetition. She also notes that though she draws a lot of funding into the department, her academic publications can sometimes suffer – for example, as a result of the lock-in she describes she does not always have opportunities to author publications that will be valued highly by the RAE.

The point here is that the professor has developed her career – and shaped her role – in a particular manner. For her, research means applying for funds in a particular research area, managing research projects and related staff and students and building/maintaining European networks. Though academic writing (valued by the RAE) is important to her, it is frequently deferred, with priority being given to the kinds of reports for funders and policy audiences that are often essential outcomes of this kind of project

That she can occupy her role as ‘professor’ in this manner is, in part because of the external funding she receives, but importantly she also takes advantage of a niche available at this university. As shown earlier the department has a broad research strategy which values both prospective and retrospective funding. That this professor contributes more strongly to the former than the latter is not a problem (though it might be at other universities). She was submitted to the RAE with an unconventional publications record (one sole-authored chapter, an edited collection and two co-authored journal papers where she was not the lead author). She has also been promoted to professor ‘even though’ she had not authored a book.

I interviewed another professor (Professor C) at the same university. His research career has focussed on the development of academic ideas, via funded projects from the ESRC. Like Professor A he also directs a research centre, though his is an ESRC centre, funded as such by the research council. This contrasts with the research centre of Professor A which has been created within the University to house and develop projects around a theme. Whereas Professor A's research is oriented outwards towards funders, project partners and policymakers, Professor C orientates his research towards developing and making new contributions to social science knowledge; his contributions to policy are secondary: 'We work for policymakers to some extent but it's not our main role'. For example, his current ESRC funded research centre identifies an unexplored gap at the intersection of quantitative/qualitative methods and develops a particular group of theoretical concepts. This Research Centre builds on a previous four year ESRC project which he participated in as a team member. In both the projects he undertook empirical research and authored (or co-authored) several publications which developed themes which have run through much of his research work across his career, including his PhD.

That a 'niche' also exists for this professor is no surprise. In terms of strategy he 'ticks all the boxes', drawing down high status ESRC funding, creating research and PhD posts within the department, and producing a steady stream of academic publications highly ranked in terms of the RAE. Even so, for the professor to hold this grant is partly due to his location in a university that has the infrastructural arrangements, and the economic and research capital both to attract the funding in the first place, and to accommodate the research centre once it has been awarded. In addition, since the research centre is multidisciplinary, there is a dependence on several different departments, and individuals within departments having research profiles and track records of similar repute. In this case, the professor's research capital would probably be recognised across the field. Indeed, his research capital in many ways outweighs that of the institution, however, securing such research awards may not be possible if he was located at another university (lower down) in the field.

Whereas Professor A experiences some tensions between her personal commitments, everyday practice and her 'niche' in the department – observed when she expresses feeling 'locked-in' and

that she is 'rewriting her PhD', Professor C shows little evidence of such conflict. The capitals which he accumulates in his everyday work are very closely aligned with those desired by the institution.

For example, with ESRC funding there is less of a gap between the funded project and producing written academic output. That is to say that whereas with European projects (and other externally funded projects e.g. those funded by government departments) there are requirements to write for external audiences which must be given priority, with ESRC projects the written outputs are generally for academic audiences first and foremost. Further, this professor has a slightly different approach to writing anyhow, authoring an ongoing string of publications which develop his theoretical ideas, work which continues even when funding is not there (e.g. a lot of the writing in his early career took place in a teaching-only role that came after four years of postdoctoral positions). This is different to Professor A, who speaks of writing reports for funders and then 'carving out' a paper. This is a less conducive setting in which to generate a continuously evolving stream of theoretical ideas that build and develop through a series of publications.

This is a point of ongoing deliberation for Professor A who is constantly anxious about her academic output. It is deliberations like these that I return to in the final section of this chapter. For now, I continue to focus on the variety of niches at the large civic. In addition to the 'niches' occupied by these professors, I now consider the case of a senior lecturer at the same university who has quite a different understanding and practice of 'research work'.

Rather than bidding for large amounts of research funding to 'buy out' time for empirical research, his efforts are concentrated on producing the sole authored books that comprise his research profile. He described a daily path in which he spent two days per week on campus, undertaking teaching and administrative duties, with the rest of the time spent writing at home. This academic explains that he writes books partly because that has been his lifelong ambition (discussed further in the next chapter). However, he also mentions there are institutional pressures which shape the publication deadlines of his work:

Partly I want to write books because I always did want to write books... it could be about institutional pressures to write books. But I think that isn't really true in my case. I think it's been true. For example the book I just published was written in a hurry because we were told to write stuff. I wanted to get promoted and I knew that to do that I needed to write a book. So I did, and I got promoted, but now I feel that I've sold my soul away. It didn't start out that way, but it became more and more instrumental as it went on.

Given the previous discussions, it is quite obvious that this academic's research makes no direct contribution to prospective research funding in the department. Instead, he occupies a niche which directly contributes to the retrospective funding of the RAE, and as such he can only be accommodated in the department as long as he publishes. He also recognises that he must make some attempt to bring in funding, though there is no penalty if it is not secured:

You're expected to make some effort to apply for money but there's a recognition that you don't control who gets the awards.

This senior lecturer then, has found an 'elasticity' in the role array which enables him to practice being an academic in the manner he desires (for now at least). It is likely that such a niche would be impossible in other institutions, as its existence depends on the economic resources of the department to support his research time (meaning others are teaching and undertaking departmental duties, to support this writing post), though it is likely that such privilege might be the cause of discontent amongst colleagues.

To summarise, these qualitative accounts suggest that role arrays at the large civic are often broad and flexible; in the examples I have described, the roles of the two professors and the senior lecturer have been occupied in quite different ways, yet all are valued by the department. This is due to the multiple objectives of the department's research strategy which is concerned with both retrospective and prospective funding, and the strong position of the institution and department within the field, which means both economic and research capital are relatively high.

Nevertheless, some tensions exist in alignments between personal commitments, practices of

everyday work, and the department's research aims. Further, the dynamics of these tensions are likely to change as the new research strategy is developed.

For example, I have noted above that securing economic resources is a key aim of the research strategy. It is therefore likely that as research policy and funding changes tack, institutional and departmental aims will be mediated to ensure the continued accumulation of economic capital. The direction of the current strategy, described earlier in the chapter, attempts to second guess the future direction of prospective funding, at the same time as keeping a check on the criteria of retrospective funding (which are currently shifting to an emphasis on the former). This suggests that whereas the niches of the two professors might be relatively secure, that of the senior lecturer might be placed in tension in the near future (e.g. he might experience increasing pressure to bid for and secure external funding for his work).

The role array at the post-1992 university

I have already discussed in chapter four that the professor at the post-1992 university consolidates both his teaching and academic enterprise activity with his research work. Whereas in the previous chapter I draw on this example to illustrate the strategy of consolidation, here I wish to use the same case to develop the discussion of role array begun in the preceding section. At the large civic my interviewees all develop departmental niches as they occupy their roles, but this is not the case at the post-1992 university. The professor's position (as a professor) means that he has a small reduction in other activities (eight hours teaching per week instead of 11) to undertake research. Though this indicates a policy of unequal treatment according to status, it is not as marked as at the large civic, and he must still engage in all the usual teaching related and administrative duties, like everyone else in the department.

This requirement to engage in departmental activity places limitations on the potential shape his research can take. Rather than having the option of 'big funding' and 'buy-out' that is available at the large civic, his research is arranged via consolidation of activities, and progressed (in terms of ideas, and in terms of his career) via sole-authored publication. Being tied to the everyday rhythms of the institution, and without buy-out, or the finances to employ research assistants, the empirical studies he can develop are small scale, and in fact he has developed a style of research

not found in the large civic university – an ongoing ethnographic study, which runs alongside his academic enterprise work with local community organisations.

The semi-retired reader at the post-1992 university also engages in research activity in his everyday work. However, once again, it is peripheral to teaching and administrative duties, and mainly undertaken in addition to his contracted hours. Once again, the financial limitations mean he has adapted his research to focus on the city in which the university is located. This makes empirical work much cheaper and pragmatically possible.

These limitations on the flexibility of roles, and the subsequent impact on research work can be understood if we consider the position of research in the department and institution. Engaging in research work does not contribute to the institution's economic income in any direct sense, and though the research of these individuals might strengthen an RAE submission, the weak research culture of the department means such a strengthening will still have little economic impact (i.e. overall the submission would still receive a low grade that would probably remain unfunded).

There is a realisation that research has the potential to raise the kudos of the university and department, and in this sense it is viewed as 'nice to have', but a lack of material resources mean the niches which develop at the large civic do not exist here. Academics are free to pursue their research interests, as long as it does not interfere with their everyday work.

This lack of money from the RAE is noted by the semi-retired reader who has worked at the university for over 20 years, including the period after it received university title in 1992.

Reflecting the discussion of this period in chapter two, the reader notes that though immediately after 1992 some opportunities for research arose, such funding was quickly curtailed in future RAEs:

we got some money through the early RAE – I never quite worked out how – not a huge amount, but enough to have a few PhD students, and enough that I was once able to get my hand on about £10,000 to hire someone to do some work in the mid 90s, but unfortunately that stopped as quickly as it started.

This lack of money for research, means that institutional investment in such activities is low. This is reflected in the limited number of readerships and professorships, and explains the difficulty which the semi-retired reader experienced in gaining his promotion:

I applied on a number of occasions, I think five times before I finally got it. It was very hard getting a readership in this university. By 1991, I had three books –one edited, two single authored, but I think they were looking for money [research funding], and I've never had any... people who've got that money tend to get readerships

This lack of investment in research, and the accompanying rewarding of strong research profiles with readerships and professorships helps explain the situation described earlier, in which those with existing research profiles might thrive at the institution, even though it is not an easy place to develop research as a new academic. Until an individual's research capital outweighs that of the institution, undertaking research is difficult. But at some point the situation reverses, this is the point at which an individual becomes a valuable and desirable asset for the university; any research time available is given to these individuals.

The array of roles

Equally interesting, when contrasting the large civic and post-1992 universities is the division of labour – or the array of roles – that has developed at the two universities. The securing of large amounts of research funding by academics at the large civic means that for both the professors, research work includes a large proportion of research management (including project and staff management) and administration. It also means that contract researchers – individuals employed on short term contracts to undertake research for particular funded projects – have become vital members of the workforce (this is discussed further in chapter seven).

This contrasts with the roles of the professor and reader at the post-1992 university. At this institution those appointed at this level are expected to maintain their teaching and administrative duties. Though both these academics receive a slight reduction in teaching contact hours to undertake research, for these individuals 'research activity' means undertaking small-scale empirical work themselves (rather than managing large-scale funded projects), and writing publications. Though in many ways this means the possibilities for their research projects are

more modest, they are, at the same time, released from the ‘niche dependence’ experienced by Professor A and the senior lecturer at the large civic university.

At both universities, the increase in student numbers (experienced since the 1980s) means that there are also large numbers of hourly paid teaching staff, employed to teach seminars and mark course work and exams. However, the different institutional situations result in such divisions of labour having quite different implications in practice.

At high status universities, like the large civic, such work is taken by postgraduate students – for example, the new lecturer at this university talks about managing these postgraduate teachers as part of the ‘administrative’ aspect of her role. For postgraduates such work provides much needed income, as well as the opportunity to gain teaching experience. This allocation of contract work, though not without its controversies, has reciprocal benefits for those undertaking the teaching work.

The department at the post-1992 university has very few PhD students, therefore contract teaching posts are externally advertised. One of my interviewees – newly appointed to the lecturer grade – had spent seven years of her career in a contract teaching position. She discusses how she had originally taken the post to ‘get a foot in the door’, thinking it would be the start of an academic career:

I’m a good teacher, I do also engage in research activities... as do most of the contract lecturers here. Because if you’ve got an aspiration for a career in higher education you have to do those things, and if you didn’t like doing them or if you weren’t doing them then you wouldn’t be here.

However, over the years she had come to realise that she had in fact become ‘type-cast’, not only at this university, but possibly across the academic field:

You have a professional aspiration and unfortunately you end up, if you’re not careful, you find yourself in a groove that you can’t get out of. Because if you spend too many years as an hourly paid lecturer no other university will touch you, because they assume you’re not doing anything else, or that you’ve not got the competence.

Capitals, the role array and the array of roles

The discussion in the preceding sections suggests that a relationship between the capitals an institution seeks to accumulate, the flexibility of the role array, and the array of roles that develops at the study sites. Firstly, I have shown that the position of an institution in the field of universities has implications for the investment of institutions in research.

At the large civic, research income is a key source of economic capital. Here the research aims of the department are broad, as the institution attempts to harness the different sources of money available. Such a strategy both requires and accommodates broad and flexible role arrays⁵ – the analysis highlights that the two professors and senior lecturer have occupied quite different niches, all of which are valued and supported by the department. It is true to say that this diversity of research work is not only valued for the economic capital it secures, but also for related accumulations of research capital as a symbolic good that improves league table status, as well as ‘feeding back’ into economic income via the track record and reputation of individuals and the department. However, the primary aim of bringing in money can be seen in the current revision of strategy that attempts to predict where future funding will be channelled.

At the post-1992 university, the key source of economic capital is teaching activity. Here there is no institutional direction to the research strategy – rather, it is because of the commitment of a professor that a strategy exists at all, based on his concern that new lecturers will forego the development of their individual capital in their early career. At this university, the small amount of support for research that exists is channelled towards academics with established research profiles, however, the requirement to continue engaging in teaching and administrative duties remains. The flexibility of roles is more limited, and the main value of research within departmental goals, is the kudos that might be gained from having some research taking place.

This not only leads to a difference in the potential of the role array, it also limits the kinds of research in which it is possible to engage. So for example, the professor and reader develop research methods and research areas that can be investigated despite the institutional rhythms and commitments that dominate their lives. Although subject to these (mainly financial) limitations, in

⁵ This is also supported by department size, which is larger at this university

many ways the research of these academics is less vulnerable to changes in research policy and funding regimes. Whereas the potential ‘niches’ at the large civic are likely to wax and wane as developments in funding sources and criteria are mediated into the departmental research strategy, those who find a way to research at the post-1992 universities can continue to do so unaffected by such policy shifts and the related economic concerns of the institution.

The concept of capitals goes some way to explaining the research strategies and role arrays at the study sites, as well as throwing light on what it is that individuals and institutions are struggling for. However, if we draw solely on these concepts, many of my interviewees’ deliberations and decisions simply do not make sense. Such deliberations and choices form the focus of the final section of this chapter, as I seek a more adequate understanding of the ‘struggles’ of the individuals and institutions found in my empirical study.

The ‘goods’ of research work

The nature of the struggles characteristic of academic life can be further illuminated by referring to MacIntyre’s (1981) distinction between *internal and external goods*⁶. Though MacIntyre introduces this distinction in the context of his critique of modernity, the concepts are useful here in that they help understand what it is that individuals are seeking when it comes to research work, and why this can be in tension with departmental and institutional aims.

Internal goods are those that are unique to a practice in which one participates, including both the products of the practice, and the ‘goods’ achieved by being a practice participant. Examples include the specific achievements and satisfactions of doing complex skilled work well, the development of specific technical skills that come from continued practice and refinement over long periods of time, or a particular way of life “... the painter’s living out of a greater or lesser part of his or her life as a *painter*” (MacIntyre, 1981:190). Internal goods like these can be found in activities such as music and the arts, carpentry and other crafts, and academic study. As Sayer (2005:112) notes, all these activities allow learning and the development of complex skills.

⁶ Chapter five in Sayer’s (2005) *Moral Significance of Class* alerted me to the analytic power of drawing together these conceptual schemes.

The same activities which offer internal goods may also provide external goods such as fame, prestige and money to participants. Whereas internal goods are unique to the practice – for example, the complex skills and knowledge required to play a musical instrument are quite different to those learned and used by a novelist – external goods are ubiquitous, especially money which can be obtained in infinite ways and once accumulated bears no trace of its origins or their *raison d'être*.

In MacIntyre's particular definition of practices, it is the practice's standards that define what are 'good' or 'bad' instances of internal goods, and since they can be achieved in no other manner, participation in the practice is essential to be able to produce the goods and to identify them. Further, those participating in the practice desire and seek the recognition of those who are 'experts' in the field (Sayer, 2005:114). This does not mean all the participants of a practice are in agreement all of the time. In fact, contestation and reflection upon standards may be intrinsic to the practice's vigour. This distinctive definition of practices and goods provides a useful alternative perspective with which to view my research data.

Though the everyday research practices of my interviewees varied a great deal, all the academics in my study had a 'project of research' – a research area with which they identified and saw themselves contributing to or developing – in the past, present and future of their career. Interviewees had commitments to such 'projects' irrespective of their access to the means and everyday practices required to pursue them.

Referring to the examples in this chapter, Professor C at the large civic university had developed his career around ESRC funded projects. He is committed to the ongoing development of a set of theoretical ideas which remained his focus in periods when he had no research funding. For this professor his 'project of research', his 'everyday practices' and his departmental niche had a great deal of alignment. This was not so for Professor A at the same university, who had a large proportion of allocated research time, and had 'made it' to professor but expressed frustration at feeling 'locked-in' to a particular pattern of work. She had achieved many of the 'external goods' of academic work, yet was still troubled and dissatisfied.

Likewise, the senior lecturer was concerned that writing his latest book had become 'more and more instrumental' as he went along. He felt that the pressure to publish had undermined the contribution to knowledge he had wanted to make (an internal good). In the end, he had to forego his commitments so the book could be published and he could apply for promotion (an external good), leaving him feeling he had 'sold his soul'.

Another interviewee – this time a new lecturer – expressed similar sentiments in relation to his first authored book:

I was struggling with it for quite a while, just thinking well what's the value of doing this, and I couldn't tell you how many people said to me 'yeah, just get it out, try and get it right in the second one'. I was thinking, what a strange sort of thing to say, you know? I was thinking, yeah but you're just adding to all this, aren't you?

Across the study sites, my data is rich with dilemmas like these. What these examples suggest is that rather than merely being concerned with accumulating research capital (in the form of external funding, journal articles and books) my interviewees are committed to 'goods' that are internal to the practice of social science research, such as developing knowledge and new ideas. These may be compatible with the accumulation of external goods – in the form of research capitals, or not.

Further, my interviewees have a desire to be recognised for the particular skills and excellences of their practice. As Sayer suggests:

We are social beings and we need the recognition of others: the question is what the recognition is for, or, to put it provocatively, whether there is any problem with having unearned income and status unrelated to any genuine internal goods. (Sayer, 2005:114)

This is exactly the deliberation that the senior and new lecturers are engaged in when they reflect on the books they have recently authored. There is no doubt that the publications are good for their curriculum vitae, in one case leading to promotion, but both are left feeling this has missed the point. What really matters – and what has perhaps been undermined – is the opportunity to develop fully the contribution to knowledge they hope to make.

In addition to generating ideas, my interviewees acknowledge an intrinsic worth and enjoyment of research practice and its 'goods'. For example, the semi-retired reader at the post-1992 university discusses that he does not want to stop working, because finally, at the end of his career he has access to the research practices that he has always sought:

I'm very interested in all the things I do, and I can't stop being interested in them... the last 10 years have been much more exciting for me... Conferences, meeting people, networking, writing, doing empirical work and I don't want to give it up just yet.

The academics in my study do not just seek to undertake research so they are freed from institutional rhythms (e.g. via buy-out, or reduced teaching loads) though that probably comes into it for some. They also get inherent enjoyment from undertaking research, and believe that it has value in the world – that it is - or can do good. For many academics, being committed to these 'goods' is synonymous with their commitment to being an academic:

...research isn't just reducible to the RAE, you know there is some value around research that involves contributing to discussions and engaging with important issues, doing work that you think is of value, or trying to do work that's of value, and I think that I always try to hold onto that, and try not to be driven by externalised pressures. Perhaps it comes down to doing what you think is good and important. Answering questions that you think are interesting.

Institutions and departments require money to survive, so their strategies cannot help but be shaped by systems of funding allocation. Different mediations of these systems occurs depending on an institution's position in the field. However, they also need academics in order to survive. For all my interviewees continuing as an academic is about striking a balance between performing practices that meet the requirements of the institution, accumulating research capitals, advancing careers and achieving the goods of academic work. Assuming that all academic life is about competition for capitals in and for themselves, as a means to promotion and recognition, misses much of what is going on.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have shown that institutions and individuals are variously concerned with accumulating capital and with accessing valued practices and ways of life – in a broad sense, with accessing the ‘goods’ of academic work. I suggest that departments and institutions are first and foremost concerned with accumulating the material resources – or economic capital – which they need to exist. An institution’s position in the field means these financial resources are mediated into departmental and institutional strategies in different ways. In particular, those high up in the field can focus on research income as a key source of funding, while those lower down cannot.

Research strategies and the dispersal of economic capital across the field affects the role array and array of roles at the institutions. This influences the availability and valuing of research practices per se, as well as shaping the kinds of research practice in which individuals can engage.

Individual academics are also concerned with accumulating capital. However, the deliberations they face in their everyday work cannot be reduced to these competitions. Academics also strive for access to practices and valued ways of life, they desire the achievement and satisfaction that comes from undertaking research work, and are often driven by their commitment to find something out about the world. As they navigate their daily paths and careers through these intersections that are sometimes congruent and sometimes discrepant, they become inadvertently ‘locked in’ to particular kinds of work that they experience in positive and negative ways.

Focussing exclusively on capitals (as institutions often do) undermines this aspect of research work, yet it is vital if we are to understand the tensions of individuals and institutions.

In the next chapter, I build on this discussion of internal goods, by focussing on the waxing and waning commitments of academics across their careers and the dynamics of path dependency and ‘lock in’. I show that having everyday practices they can ‘live with’ (pragmatically, morally and politically) is central to decisions of whether to continue in academic life or not. As such, institutions should also be concerned with striking a balance between concerns with capital accumulation and protecting the internal goods of academic work.

Chapter Six

Experiential Learning and Commitments across a Career

...the ordinary individual is not only created by society... but creates herself, purposively or habitually, adding action elements to her path... thereby contributing (usually unknowingly) to social reproduction and the perpetuation or transformation of society's structural relationship. (Pred, 1981:12).

The aim of this chapter is to show some of the intersections of structure and agency across individual careers. I shall write about how the relationship of my interviewees to their everyday work and their departments develops, evolves and transforms across their working lives, and discuss how these dynamics might be conceptualised as processes of practice-reproduction and transformation. As such, I shift focus from the intersections of 'daily path' and institutions which have been the main concern of chapters four and five, to consider how the 'life path'⁷ (itself a long-term developmental process) can be understood in processes of practice-change.

I focus on the 'life-path' because accounts of current everyday practice within my research data are frequently inseparable from the biographical narratives of my interviewees. I make a conceptual distinction between moral commitments, concerned with how specific aspects of academic work are conducted, and academic commitments (discussed at the end of chapter five), which relate to the 'goods' of academic work and personal career ambitions. With reference to the former, I suggest that moral commitments are developed via experiential learning and are in continual dialectic with how particular aspects of work (e.g. supervision, relationships with colleagues) are done. Regarding the latter form of commitment, I suggest that in navigating their careers, individuals reflexively evaluate the relationship between their academic commitments and everyday practices, alongside other life commitments and their ongoing accumulation of personal capital, and that such reflections are integral in career decisions including the decision to stay within a particular department or seek work elsewhere. As such, cumulatively, the individual's

⁷ The 'life-path' is a concept defined by Pred as the long-term institutional roles with which individuals are associated, and which are in constant dialectic with the daily paths discussed in the preceding chapters. (See this thesis chapter one, page 23)

navigation of their career is important for the reproduction and transformation of the different forms of the 'practice of sociology' identified across the study sites (and how they change).

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the relationship between careers and everyday practice. I then discuss the relationship between experiential learning and the reproduction or transformation of everyday practices over time. I move on to consider how individuals' current positions have been shaped by their career trajectories, the related processes of path-dependency and lock-in, and the strategies adopted by individuals coping with unwanted situations. In the end, I will show that all the individuals in my study are seeking working lives that they can 'live with', and that this is key to understanding how they make their way through their careers.

Careers and everyday practice

My focus on biographies and the temporal dynamics of individual careers, everyday practices and institutions combines two ideas. The first of these - by now, familiar - is that the cumulative sum of everyday activities that individual academics do produces what I have referred to as the 'practice of sociology' at any given time and place. The character of the 'practice' imagined in this way varies depending on university-type. In other words, within departments of sociology everyday practices exist in the sense that Reckwitz (2002) describes; as sets of norms and ways of doing. As such, when an individual joins a sociology department, whether they realise it or not, they are joining particular formulations of 'practice'. As I have shown, this is shaped by institutional rhythms and the negotiation of personal temporalities; and by departmental concerns with capital accumulation, related elasticities of the role array, and individuals' attempts to access valued practices and ways of life.

The second proposition is that there is interdependence between the trajectories of practices (their existence, persistence, and disappearance) and the careers of academics. As Pred's (1981) work on the 'time-geography' of everyday life reminds us, the 'daily path' and 'life path' of individuals is in constant dialectic and there is a temporal dimension to everyday activity that is broader than the negotiations of institutional and personal temporalities discussed in chapter four. Through experiential learning and reflection across their lives, individuals reproduce or change what they do, sometimes through deliberate choice, and sometimes without thinking

about it (Pred, 1981a:11). Further, the character of current daily life is (in part) ‘rooted in past intersections of individual path and institutional projects’, at the same time as potentially shaping future possibilities (Pred, 1981a:13). Becker’s (1963) discussion of moral careers captures a similar idea when he shows the constant tension of continued participation versus defection from marijuana-use or jazz performance, ‘a social-temporal dimension to doing such that the relation between drug-taker and drug-taking is constantly changing’ (Shove and Pantzar, 2007:156).

I am therefore interested in how my interviewees’ relationships to their chosen profession change across their lives. As such, I step away from existing studies of academic careers such as those offered by Becher and Trowler (2001) and Henkel (2000) who focus on socialization into disciplines. Rather, I am interested in considering the processes of reproduction and transformation revealed when we take individual careers as our starting point. For this reason, I draw on concepts from Pred (1981a) and Archer (2000), both of whom offer resources relevant to the task in hand.

Experiential learning: reproducing practice

Across the study sites, my interviewees frequently drew on their previous experiences, and their reflexive learning, to provide reasoned explanations of their current practices. Such experiences add a subjective aspect to our understandings of everyday work, as even when the daily path is heavily shaped by institutional temporalities, exactly *how* work is done (and how it is developed) varies by individual and depends on the commitments that have evolved across their lives (as well as those commitments evolving in the present). Contrasting the supervision practices of Professor A and Professor C (introduced in chapter five) provides a useful illustration of these daily path:life path dialectics, and the subsequent experiential learning, including the development of moral commitments and reproduction of practice that is my focus here.

Professors A and C both work at the large civic university. As such, they are guided by the same institutional protocols when it comes to supervising research students. These guidelines suggest that a contract should be signed at the start of the PhD which sets out the parameters of the student-supervisor relationship. This stipulates that supervisors should meet with students once a fortnight, and requires that students should provide minutes of each meeting in an electronic

workbook that is verified by the supervisor. What is interesting in the interview discussions is the different ways these guidelines have been put into practice by the two professors, and how their current supervision practice (and mediation of the university guidelines) is shaped by their biographical experience.

Professor A follows the guidelines quite stringently. When students begin their PhD a contract is signed which establishes fortnightly meetings, and the dates of the meetings are diaried. In part, she follows the guidelines to ensure that her students get a 'fair deal', both relative to each other and in relation to her other work. They also provide a 'marker' to protect her own boundaries and to make it clear to students that her relationship with them is formal. This approach is further reflected in other aspects of her practice, where she makes clear distinctions between work and social life; she does not meet with students in between supervisions, engage in much 'corridor chat', or encourage a 'drop-in' culture. This professor's concern with protecting her own time is based on the advice of a mentor early in her career, which was reinforced in her subsequent experience with particularly demanding students:

I've had needy students in the past, it's strange the amount they expect, to be their mother and everything... we're not going to be friends, or if we are... that's not a presumption at the start.

This formal approach to supervision, and concept of what a PhD should be, is also underpinned by this professor's career pathway, which she describes as a 'research apprenticeship' based on research assistant posts. Whilst undertaking her PhD in the early 1990s, she was employed as a part time researcher on a European Project, beginning as an assistant and increasingly gaining 'voice', during the development of research bids. She refers to this career pathway, and the hierarchical division of labour as 'normal'. Further, she expresses the view that such a clear hierarchy is beneficial for correcting the arbitrary routes through which success and promotion might be gained in academic life. Adhering to the university guidelines means all her students are treated equally, and her requirements of them are clear.

In addition to the contract and fortnightly meetings stipulated in the University guidelines, professor A has developed further formalities in her practice. For example, she describes a two-page form which she now uses (a document shared by a colleague) which her students are required to complete prior to meeting, outlining the work they have undertaken. This further reflects her view that the role of supervision is to make the PhD process explicit, and to help the student manage their PhD as a project. She views structured meetings as an important part of this approach.

This contrasts with Professor C's supervision practice, and his mediation of the university guidelines. Though he is aware of the university regulations he states that the formal contracts and minutes of meetings 'don't always happen'. In his view, the formal procedures can provide a useful 'safety net', however this is not synonymous with good supervision:

... On some occasions a bit more formal can be useful. But if I'm worried about them – are they doing the work, are they going in the right direction – I think the better way is to talk to them about it.

Despite their different biographies, both professors describe their career pathways as 'normal'. However, there are distinct differences in Professor C's experiences which affect his approach to supervision. Professor C was a full time ESRC-funded PhD student at a 'Greenfield' university in the late 1970s. He was subsequently employed on a series of ESRC-funded post-doctoral posts for six years, prior to taking a full-time lectureship. Rather than emphasising his 'rise through the ranks' or a hierarchical division of labour, he talks about the 'buzzing research community', lack of hierarchy and social academic life that forms the 'culture of sociology'. Reflecting this experience, he emphasises the importance of socialising and 'chat' in the development of informal knowledge, which he views as an important aspect of 'learning the ropes'.

For him it is important to engage in 'corridor chat', to join in student-staff seminars and informal discussion and to have an 'open-door' (meaning students can see him when they need to). He notes that putting this into practice has been easier at some times of life than others; his current long commute to campus combined with commitments to a young family means he is at campus

less often, and cannot always stay for evening seminars as much as he would like. Even so, for him ensuring these activities take place is part of being a good supervisor:

... the PhD students here have their own seminar, which runs every three or four weeks which I try to go to, so we try to keep the collegiate thing going... the thing with a PhD is that it can be a very lonely enterprise. As a supervisor it's important to find mechanisms to get people collaborating and feeling part of a community.

These examples illustrate that current practice – in this case how supervision is done – is shaped at the intersections of current daily paths, institutions, and previous life:daily path trajectories. In other words both professors have current daily paths shaped by a range of commitments which affect what it is possible for them to do (e.g. Professor C cannot attend evening seminars; Professor A is engaged in several European Projects and concerned about protecting her time). They both subjectively mediate the institution's supervision guidelines, and they reflect upon previous experiences of departmental culture, and of particular individuals, to decide what good supervision entails and the kind of supervisor that they want to be. In the examples above they reproduce their own experiences of supervision. For Professor A this is a formalised, highly structured and rather hierarchical process that is synonymous with the university guidelines. For Professor C, it is the development of a supportive research community and the provision of opportunities for informal learning. The University's procedures are a formality, providing a 'safety-net', but otherwise superfluous to the process of good supervision.

The examples also suggest that whereas *whether* supervision is done or not (i.e. whether there are any research students to supervise or not) is closely linked to the kind of university and its position in the field, *how* supervision is done is closely linked to biography – in particular an individual's previous experiences, and their inherited views of what is 'normal'. Practices may be adjusted across the career as an individual continually reflects on their experiences, or as personal circumstances change. Nevertheless, the cases above are examples of practice reproduction across the careers of interviewees that are potentially passed on to the next generation.

Experiential learning does not only result in the inheritance and reproduction of practices. Some of the academics in my study had reason to question seriously some of the practices they had encountered in their working lives, resulting in them endeavouring to create something different in their current work. This theme of practice-transformation is explored in the next section.

Experiential learning: transforming practice

Professor D has been in academia since the early 1970s, spending a long time (20 years) as a researcher and research fellow, and taking her first lecturing post in the mid 1990s. As with Professors A and C, she has had positive experiences across her career; colleagues whose approach she respected and tries to emulate. For example, she talks about her PhD supervisor, who was particularly supportive and committed to students, even though this was not really 'how things were done' at the time. The supervisor has remained a mentor to her throughout her career, and she talks about the importance of taking a similar approach to colleagues in her own working life: 'it's important to me, you have to help people up the ladder, not step on their heads as some people do'. When discussing her current mentoring practice and the emphasis she places on being a supportive colleague, it becomes apparent that this has been shaped as much by reflection on the negative experiences of her career – practices she has witnessed which she believes are morally wrong – as by the positive ones.

Her early research was concerned with lesbians; a research theme, and sexual orientation that in the early 1970s met a great deal of prejudice. In addition, she was 'out'. Though fortunate enough to have a supportive supervisor, the theme of her thesis, combined with prejudice against her own sexuality, made the early years of her career very difficult. For example, she says:

I was unemployed for some time, and we always think – my supervisor thought this too – we always think it was because of the PhD topic – because it was on lesbians you see... and also because I was out. People would make gay jokes all the time.

She talks about the prejudice she experienced from her boss and colleagues when she was in her first post, where she withstood rude comments about her sexuality and the insinuation that she should not have written a thesis on such a topic. She was therefore made to feel very

uncomfortable, and powerless as a young, 'out' female academic: '... I couldn't do anything about it. I mean I was legal, but what are you going to say to these people?'

During this period, an important source of support came from the women's caucus at the British Sociological Association (BSA), which was in its heyday at the time. Professor D attended meetings and discussions with this group, and met with them at annual conferences, where they talked about the difficulties they were facing as women in academia. She notes the successful female academics within the group that were role models and mentors for the younger academics, herself included; 'rather ferocious women who you knew were there to provide support'.

The combination of negative experiences with the positives of a supportive supervisor (who became a lifelong mentor) and the BSA women's caucus had a powerful affect on professor D's subsequent practices. The moral obligations she holds towards colleagues, particularly as she climbs the ranks to a position of status and power, are very striking in the interviews.

For example, she talks about a young female researcher who she is currently helping. This mentee is a research assistant from another department. Through informal chats the professor has come to realise that she is being treated unfairly, and though she is a 'smart woman' her name is being excluded from papers and she is receiving little credit for her work. After realising the isolation of her younger colleague, the professor offered to be her mentor and is now helping her develop a PhD proposal. In addition, she plans to 'have a friendly word' with the researcher's boss in an attempt to improve the current situation.

This is not just a one-off instance. The professor notes her pride on leaving her previous position when her colleagues spoke in their leaving speech about the supportive colleague and mentor that she had been. Elsewhere in the interview, she talks about helping younger colleagues as 'being her policy' – a personal commitment that she has adhered to across her career, and that is particularly pertinent now that she is professor. The power of having a professorship, and the affects it can have on the careers of others, was pointed out to her by a mentor and friend that she originally met in the women's caucus discussed above:

... She told me, she said ‘now you can do what I did when I got my Chair, and that’s help other women – give a leg up to other women, because they need it the most’. I thought that’s a nice thing to say, and that’s always been my policy, it’s what makes sense to me.

This example illustrates that experiential learning not only leads to reproduction of practices, but also transformation of practice. As well as retaining and reproducing the positive experiences of her career (as with Professors A and C in the previous section), this professor has also reflected on her negative experiences to shape her current approach. For her, an overriding moral commitment of professional life is the acknowledgement of influence and power, and of her position and responsibility in relation to colleagues. This not only applies to colleagues in the immediate vicinity, but is a general principle which she believes should be promoted throughout the academic world. As such she puts this principle into practice as frequently as possible, which often takes her work beyond her contracted role, and beyond what is required for her own success.

Archer’s discussion of commitment is useful when analysing the processes of practice transformation identified here. I have already noted in the previous chapter that individuals do not just ‘take’ roles within their lives, but rather *make* them via ‘human qualities’ of reflexivity and creativity (Archer, 2000:288). Previously I drew on this idea to explore the valued practices, or ‘goods’ of research work, that my interviewees are committed to. Here, through the continual reflection on biographical experience, commitments of a different kind are brought to the fore. Though not mutually exclusive, these commitments are conceptually distinct, and are important for the reproduction or transformation of practice across a life.

Though all my interviewees endeavour to gain access to valued practices of professional life, not just *any* means can justify this end. In the preceding example, the professor prioritises a broader commitment in which the means must be expressive of her values too; her practices should not reproduce the inequalities and prejudice of society within the academic world. The emphasis she places on this approach suggest that in fact, for this academic such practices are ends in themselves, as Archer suggests, ‘...when we seek to be loved, regarded and respected, not only are

these things not for sale, but also they are something like a terminus in that they do not lead on to further ends' (Archer, 2000:79).

That is not to say that this professor makes personal sacrifices to engage in her work in this manner; the strength of her moral commitments mean it would be a sacrifice not to. Further, in describing how she has made her way through her career she invokes a series of mentor-mentee relationships which cut across the academic hierarchy in a variety of ways, and in which roles may become reversed for durations as part of a reciprocal exchange of academic and emotional support. As such, this professor's interview is filled with self-corrections as someone described as a mentee is immediately also categorised as a mentor, and the boundary of colleagues and friends proves just as difficult to distinguish.

The professor at the post-1992 university (introduced as Professor B in the previous chapter) describes a comparable trajectory of reflexivity. I note in chapter five that this professor is developing a 'bottom up' research strategy for the department that focuses on developing a research community to encourage, support and create a 'home' for new academics. When explaining his motivations for spending time developing the strategy, Professor B also discusses the experiences of his own career to explain that this practice is underpinned by moral commitments and the desire to democratise academic life.

He identifies the period in his early career when this commitment developed. In the early 1990s professor B took his first research assistant post at a civic university where there was pressure to publish. Whilst in this position he was mentored by a senior academic who particularly helped him with his writing, publication and promotion. Though a positive experience, the professor recognises that he was arbitrarily helped, whereas his peers (other research assistants in the same centre) were not:

for some reason, he picked up on me, and helped me develop... but there were four or five other researchers in my position who he didn't help at all, not nasty or anything, he just liked me, and thought I had potential – it was both those things. But nevertheless it was very arbitrary.

Though the professor B's career benefitted from this experience, he did not want to reproduce the practice in the same way. Rather, he became committed to 'writing out the arbitrariness' which he felt had unfairly helped his own career at the expense of others. He believes the way to achieve this is via a strategy that encourages networks and relationships – a 'research culture' in the department – that is equally accessible to all.

The examples of these professors suggest that individuals do not simply inherit or embody ways of doing which they reproduce in their own lives, though this may happen sometimes. Rather the individuals in my study reflect on their positive and negative experiences throughout their careers. They observe and make judgments about the practices of colleagues. Through these processes they develop moral commitments that shape how they do things now and in the future. As such the flow of an academic life is the flow of an individual's moral life, '... something that goes on continually, not something that is switched off in between the occurrence of explicit moral choices' (Murdoch, 1970:36, in Sayer, 2011:97). I would add that this flow always occurs in relations with other individuals, and at the intersections of the daily path with institutions. It is as part of this 'flow' that practice is produced, reproduced and transformed across an individual's career.

These examples contrast with the discussions of the daily path in chapters four and five, as focussing on the intersections of past biography with current practices has brought an 'internal politics' of academic life to the fore. *How* particular aspects of academic work are performed - how an academic supervises students or develops their relationships with colleagues - is a divisive issue. Further, the individuals I have discussed here show greater agency as they gain status and influence in their departments. As they rise through the ranks there is more scope to put their commitments into practice and to influence their successors.

However, to achieve these positions in the first place, requires an accumulation of the right kinds of capital, they need to have done the 'right' kinds of things across their career to gain the professorships which afford the status and influence discussed⁸. In the next section, I explore the

⁸ Even then, professors vary in the capitals they have, and some may lose capital and come to be seen as 'out of date', without losing their chairs.

dynamics of the life path in relation to the accumulation of personal academic capital and discuss the implications of these dynamics for the career trajectories of my interviewees.

The 'life path' and personal capital accumulation

The past everyday of an individual's career – in particular the capitals accumulated during these everyday – have implications for current situations. In this section, I explore this dialectic of life and daily path by considering those careers, or periods of careers, that have been experienced negatively by my interviewees. Though it is important to remain critical of interviewees' interpretations of their struggles and subsequent success, the examples that follow illustrate some ways that structure intersects with the life path. I discuss how individuals' current positions have been shaped by their career trajectories, how path dependency and lock-in are experienced and the strategies adopted by individuals coping with unwanted situations, namely 'settling for less', 'moving on' and 'challenging structure'. As such, I argue that Pred's discussion of the life: daily path dialectic can be usefully combined with concepts of 'capital accumulation' to explore some of the ways that the structures of the field intersect with and shape individuals' careers.

Settling for 'less'

In the previous chapter, I introduced the case of a semi-retired reader at the post-1992 university. For him, access to research practices has been limited across his career, yet he has remained committed to this aspect of academic work, taking it up in retirement. With such a strong commitment to research work, how has it come to elude him across his biography? He explains what happened, drawing on a narrative that stems back to his PhD.

The reader graduated in 1963. His was one of the first sociology degree courses in the UK, and he notes that his graduation coincided with a period of growth in the academic labour market; many sociology positions were available, and he was offered an opportunity to work with a top sociologist in the US. However, as a new graduate, with few other commitments to consider, he decided to postpone developing his career and instead went to live and work overseas for two years. He returned to England, having being inspired by his trip to undertake an MA in development studies - a disciplinary area which was evolving at the time. He undertook the MA at a civic university funded by part time teaching work and continued to teach whilst designing an

empirical study for his PhD. The study he decided upon would involve overseas fieldwork combined with a junior lectureship in the same location to fund this period of study. By the time he left to undertake the fieldwork he had a wife and baby. He explains that though his personal commitments were increasing, there was still flexibility to live away as his child was pre-school age, and his wife keen to accompany him on the trip.

Due to the teaching commitments of the post, and the difficulty of juggling this work with empirical research, the fieldwork took two years to complete:

I had to teach a major course... I had to work like mad for about nine months, just preparing all these lectures to give to 300 students... the following June that was all done and I could actually do my PhD research. Second year I started to teach, but I didn't have to prepare it, so then I did all the interviews.

He was about to return to the UK to write up, when he was offered a research position from a greenfield university – to undertake related fieldwork in the same country. He felt 'vey lucky' to be offered a position by a 'new and bright' department, and accepted the post, returning to the field after a break in the UK. He identified this decision as the point at which his career 'went wrong'.

He explains that while he was doing fieldwork he was 'very much on his own'. Before the days of email, all supervision took place by letter, and he had limited access to journals and new book publications. As a result he became increasingly out of touch with other research in his area and on returning to the UK, after a total of three years in the field, he describes a 'paradigm shift' which rendered all of the fieldwork useless:

I came back to find the whole paradigm had completely changed... I had no idea what was going on. I came back with all this data that wasn't relevant or of interest to anymore to anybody... the result was that my career was really knackered before it started.

He also recalls that the university that had employed him as researcher told him he had the 'wrong kind of data', and that he could only extend his contract if he went to another overseas location to collect data that would speak to the new paradigm. With two toddlers and the

additional consideration of family illness he chose to stay in the UK, with the aim of completing his PhD before his research contract ended.

He did not manage to complete the PhD as planned, but since he required an income to support his family he applied for several lecturing jobs at different kinds of institution, his top choices being greenfield and civic universities. With no success gaining these positions he eventually took a post at a polytechnic. He was well aware of the stratifications of the field when applying for the posts, and knew that employment at a polytechnic would have implications for the kinds of everyday work he could engage in, and for the career he could hope for:

I knew when I didn't get jobs at Swansea, Lancaster, Warwick, Salford and got a job at a polytechnic, I knew that I was facing a future that would be quite different.

Whilst at this institution he completed his PhD in the holidays, and then took a full time position at another polytechnic. Though still undertaking research when possible, the heavy teaching load and lack of research culture at the polytechnic, combined with his commitments to family life, meant he never developed the research profile to make the 'leap' to a different kind of university, and he has remained in this institution until the present.

The case of this semi-retired reader illustrates several points of relevance to the discussion in hand. First of all, it shows that the different practices to which an individual is committed have implications for one another. As Pred's conceptual scheme suggests, as individuals navigate their lives the array of 'projects' which shape the life path and the connected array of practices which form the daily path ebb and flow; the precedence given to particular practices varies too. The example above suggests that the nature of such commitments has implications for an individual's 'manoeuvrability' in relation to career decisions. For example, when the reader first graduated from university he had few commitments and chose to travel overseas and postpone developing his career. As time went on commitments to his pending career developed – his ambitions grew and he hoped to become established as an academic in a civic or greenfield university. These ambitions had implications for daily path activities and the kinds of personal academic capital that needed to be accumulated. He had a sense of these capitals which informed his decisions at the

time, though with hindsight he believes that some of his choices were misinformed – that maybe better choices could have been made with closer supervision and advice.

For him, his growing career ambitions are accompanied by evolving commitments to family life. This led to situations in which he had to ‘weigh up’ sometimes conflicting practices that vied for his time and geographic location. For example, the time he could spend developing his research, the flexibility to travel, the need for temporal and spatial presence in family life, and the need to provide an income for his wife and children.

He took the job at the polytechnic for reasons of financial necessity, but this had implications for the activities of his daily path. With personal time absorbed by family life, his commitments to research were sidelined and he found himself ‘locked-in’ to polytechnic positions which emphasised teaching. Through the accumulation of these everyday activities his life path became characterised by a particular texture of academic capital, which enabled promotion within the polytechnic sector – ‘I came as a lecturer and was made senior lecturer quite quickly’ - but took him away from the research career he had initially desired.

This point is in part captured by Pred, when he observes:

...there is a constant dialectical relationship between, on the one side, an individual’s previous assemblage of institutional roles and resultant record of everyday project participation and, on the other side, the objective life-path opportunities that remain open to him or her (Pred, 1981a:13).

However, Pred’s observation does not capture the qualitative detail of these dynamics as they operate in the careers of my interviewees. The case above highlights a general point that individuals’ careers gain different qualities depending on how the life path is navigated amidst an array of practices at any particular moment. In a stratified higher education system, the dialectical relationship of life and daily path locks individuals into career trajectories in the long term. This ‘lock-in’ can be experienced positively, or negatively as is the case here. The reader deals with the ‘lock-in’ by settling for a career that is less than that he hoped for. There are other strategies for

dealing with such 'lock-in' which are explored later in the chapter, but before delving into these there is a second important point to draw from this example.

The case of the reader illustrates that the life path intersects with a landscape of opportunity that continually shifts; an academic labour market that expands, contracts and alters in its qualitative detail, and within which individuals shape their careers. As Archer notes, 'The social identity of each human being who achieves one is not only made *under* circumstances which are not of their own choosing, but is partly made *out* of them...' (2000:314). I provide an overview of this shifting landscape in the next chapter, but here I am interested in how it intersects with the career of this interviewee.

On graduating in 1963, the reader's life path intersects with an expanding landscape of opportunity; the number of academic positions is increasing, and both sociology and development studies are new and emerging disciplines. He easily finds teaching work to support his MA and PhD, and even before his PhD is completed, a research post from a greenfield university is offered to him.

By the time he applies for his first lecturing position in the early 1970s this landscape has shifted. Though sociology jobs are still abundant there is a much greater supply of applicants because of the increase in undergraduate and postgraduate sociology students throughout the 1960s. The capitals accumulated in his own trajectory are placed in competition with those of many others (including his own students) – and possibly because he has not yet obtained his PhD, or maybe because of the nature or quality of his research, he is unsuccessful in securing a position. In terms of his own career trajectory, perhaps he competes in the job market before he is ready. In terms of his biography the need to earn an income had to be given precedence at the time. Though he has kudos in the polytechnic sector, he is unable to secure a position in a civic or greenfield university.

Through the activities of his daily path, he begins to accumulate forms of academic capital valued in the polytechnics. His development of courses and talent as a teacher leads to promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer in the first six years of his career. However, the landscape shifts again.

Large student numbers mean the sector is saturated with qualified individuals. Further, the large cohort of new lecturers from the 1960s is progressing (or attempting to progress) through the ranks at the same time. This was within a structure in which legislation stipulated that only 35% of the workforce could be in senior positions (to protect public funding from incremental drift in salaries). There is a decline in opportunities during the late 1970s which culminates in 1981 with the funding cuts under Thatcher's Conservative Government. There are redundancies and early retirements which are not replaced, and no new positions; the labour market is frozen for several years, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. The reader notes:

So like a lot of other people around the British university system, I then had no income increase at all from about 1981 through until I got my readership in 2000

Throughout the 1990s, as the array of practices in his life shifted and with less demanding family commitments as his children left home, the reader once again began to publish research. By the mid 90s he had two sole-authored books and an edited collection. This was supported by a shift in departmental research culture after the granting of university title to polytechnics in 1992. It was now possible to apply for research funding, the institution received some money from the first RAE, and this new recognition of research meant positions of readership and professorship – which emphasised research in promotion criteria – became available. Though it was still difficult and highly competitive to secure a readership position, after several attempts he was successful. In summary, his gaining of a readership in 2000, reflects an intersection of a period of increased 'manoeuvrability' in his own life path, the changing character of the institution after the end of the binary divide, as well as the gradual opening up of the labour market as HE funding increased and the 'quota' for proportions of senior staff was raised to 40%.

We can see then, that across an individual's life path, particular qualities of 'manoeuvrability', shaped by the navigation of commitments at particular moments, have implications for the personal academic capital accumulated along the way. These qualities intersect with a shifting landscape of opportunity that transforms both quantitatively, in terms of the numbers of positions, and qualitatively, in terms of the kinds of positions available. How these different temporal flows of agency and structure intersect has implications for individuals' careers, the

'lock-in' they experience, and the potential strategies for dealing with negative situations. Whereas this interviewee 'settles for less' for a large part of his career, the senior lecturer in my next example 'moves on'.

Moving on

When I asked him to tell me about his career, the senior lecturer that I interviewed from the large civic university, highlighted how initial expectations of academia can be unrealistic or inaccurate. He commented that he was always into writing when he was young, and undertook his undergraduate degree with the ambition of becoming a 'humanities academic/intellectual revolutionary', roles which he believed went together at that time. His graduation in 1981 coincided with the Thatcher cuts. He applied for several university posts but was unsuccessful. Though partly due to the small number of positions available, his trajectory also suggests a misplaced understanding of the labour market he was competing in, and the capitals required to secure a post.

Whereas sociologists graduating in the 1960s might expect to secure an academic position with no more than an undergraduate degree, by the 1980s it was more common for new appointments to be given to postgraduates. Rather than seeking a polytechnic position (which may have been possible), this interviewee continued to write and publish whilst working in part time jobs outside the sector, an option that was available because of few other personal commitments. He eventually secured an ESRC PhD studentship when the system began to open up in the early 1990s, an application which was probably enhanced by the publications he had made in the interim period.

On completing his PhD in the mid-90s he still could not find an academic post, so continued to write, publish and apply for lecturing positions whilst doing hourly paid teaching work. Eventually, in 1999 he decided to take an MA in computing, with the intention of developing an alternative career.

At the end of the year he got a job as a lecturer at a post-1992 university. He notes that one reason he may have obtained a position then, when he previously had not, was because of the computing qualification which had begun to influence his research and teaching interests, and

was viewed as an 'up and coming' sociological area. The role was a permanent lecturing post in sociology, and he recalls that on securing the position he 'thought he had made it', however, as time went on his perspective changed:

...when I started there they gave me 22 contact hours a week, which is more than a school teacher. I spent the next three years negotiating that down to something more reasonable.

He talks about working on a book for the duration of the post (four years). He worked during evenings and weekends (which for him could be used for research) to produce the book, driven by his commitment to publishing, and also because he assumed that was what all academics must do. He interpreted his struggle as his own inadequacy though he realises, with hindsight, that this was a misplaced evaluation of the situation:

I realised when I came here that really I should have left that job after two years, but I was incapable of seeing that when I was in the situation. So I don't know what to say about that it was a pretty miserable time... more than once I doubted, you know I thought it was me, maybe I can't be happy, but I now know this isn't true.

After three years he began applying for jobs, including the position he was offered – as a lecturer at the large civic university. He thought his chances were low, because the leap from post-1992 to large civic was notoriously large. Although reflecting on the reasons for his successful appointment he emphasises the importance of the book, which strengthened his application, and meant he was 'in the running' with those who had worked at higher status universities.

This example reiterates the importance of personal capital accumulation for life path trajectories, and highlights how difficult it can be to develop these capitals if a position which supports such work is not secured. At the same time, it illustrates just how strong individual commitments to particular kinds of academic work can be. Similar to the 'struggles' of this senior lecturer, several other interviewees talk of the sacrifices made in personal life to gather the capitals required to get a career 'off the ground' – an interviewee who talks of 'having no life' for several years while she completed her PhD, and another who remembers the turning point when he 'promised himself'

he would never stay up after midnight again. Navigating these early periods of a career alongside other personal commitments and responsibilities is particularly difficult, especially if the 'daily path' is dominated by institutional requirements that do not support the 'right kinds' of capital accumulation. For example, if the senior lecturer I have been discussing had had the family commitments of the semi-retired reader in his early career, his future prospects would have been rather different.

Unlike the reader, the senior lecturer was, to begin with, unaware of the stratifications of the field, and their implications for everyday work. Indeed, the broad granting of university title from 1992 conceals such differences and provides a veneer of a single academic profession. He experienced his early struggles as disillusionment with the academic profession, a reflection on his academic ability and a painful battle with self-esteem. His strategy was to 'move on' out of the department, or into a different line of work altogether – a trajectory which, in his case, led to experiential learning about the variation of academic roles across the sector. Some of my other interviewees are very aware of the field, and capitalise on such 'mobility', taking advantage of lower status universities as 'stepping stones' to the positions they desire. The point here is that such mobility – the strategy of 'moving on' - does nothing to challenge the reproduction of the structures of field.

The persistence of these stratifications means that using this sort of steps to develop a career needs to be handled very carefully. The field does not exist as a 'ladder' and not all positions provide a 'foot in the door'. If an individual does not develop personal academic capital early in a career, or (inadvertently) develops the 'wrong' kinds of capital, then they can find themselves 'type-cast' in an inferior role. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss an interviewee who finds herself in this position, and describe the struggles she has engaged in as she attempts to challenge the structures that are having such a negative impact on her career.

Challenging structure

The career path of a lecturer that I interviewed at the post-1992 university resonates with those of the senior lecturer and semi-retired reader discussed above. This lecturer graduated in the early 1990s with a first class degree, and was encouraged by her university to apply to the ESRC for PhD funding, applications which were unsuccessful. Still keen to do a PhD, she applied for

several bursaries and scholarships advertised in the newspapers, finally getting a post as a research assistant at a college that was affiliated to (and about to merge with) a civic university. One aspect of this position was that she could register for a PhD which would be 'carved from' the research assistant post. She notes that there was no history at the university of having post-graduate students, and no expertise in the particular methodological area in which she had interest. This immediately placed her in a position where there was no mentoring or support for the PhD process.

I didn't have good supervisors in various ways. The substantive stuff they didn't know about, they didn't know about the analytic approach and the third element is that they weren't very good at knowing what I needed as a student. Because I knew so much more than they did about it, I think they felt they could leave it to me. And what they could have provided was that boot up the backside, keeping me to deadlines and all that sort of stuff, but they didn't do that either.

She stayed as an employee at the college for four years, two years as a researcher and then two years doing part time teaching, whilst still working on her PhD. Then she returned home, and continued working on the PhD from there, taking on contracts to earn money.

it's always been a balancing act, and I've never juggled it well enough, it's always been about earning enough money to live and pay the bills in order to finish the PhD and it's never been very good.

Five years after beginning her PhD, still no nearer completion she moved to her current city with the aim of building networks that might help her complete it.

At that point she also began working as an hourly paid lecturer at the post-1992 university where she is currently employed, to earn money and because she thought it would be a foot in the door, 'I thought it would be a good way to complete the PhD in an academic environment, whilst gaining some teaching experience'. However, as time passed she realised this was a mistake; rather than leading to an academic career, she was never offered promotion by the institution and now

realises this is because part time teaching is not a career pathway and has few promotion prospects.

the idea essentially is that the university does not want to have all these part time lecturers as permanent staff. It would cost the university a fortune, they just want to pay for the element that they do. But you can wreck a lot of careers in the process of that activity, which nobody wants to admit to.

At the time of interview, she had secured a permanent lecturing position via a long battle backed by the University and Colleges Union (UCU), in which she had to prove that her teaching work was equivalent to that of a full time lecturer. However, she feels she is still 'teaching-only' staff in the eyes of the university. This is because the 'equivalence' she has proven has resulted in her employment on a 0.7 contract that does not include a requirement to research. Though she still intends to complete her PhD during the summer after our interview (15 years after it began), alongside a part time teaching profile, the texture of academic capital which she has accumulated will not help her to compete for lecturing and research roles. Rather than being a powerful form of academic capital, the PhD that takes 'too long' positions individuals lower in the field. Further, in terms of personal capital, the duration spent in hourly paid teaching work reaches a threshold; there is a shift in how it is viewed by potential employers from a being a common way to support PhD study, to being the appropriate (meritocratic) positioning of an individual within the field.

This case illustrates the importance of structural constraints, and the relationship of these constraints to personal capital accumulation. There are only so many permanent lectureship jobs (the total number of which fluctuates with the shifting landscape) and part-time and temporary roles provide a 'cushion' that deals with short-term needs. Such job structures shape the social field, ensuring the scarcity of the more desirable positions, so that however much capital individuals may accumulate they are always competing for a limited number of posts. Further, capitals accumulate across a career and take on a self-justifying character. That is to say, what an individual does now – and the possibilities available to them, is shaped by their curriculum vitae and track record relative to competitors. If the moment is lost, if an individual (inadvertently) fails to develop the 'right kinds' of capital early in their career, or perhaps more importantly, develops

the ‘wrong kind’ of capital, they can end up type-cast in an inferior role. There is an assumption amongst employers that the system operates in a meritocratic manner, meaning that the trajectory, decisions and luck of an early career can have implications for the subsequent life path.

I note earlier the importance of remaining critical when drawing on these career biographies to understand the intersections of life paths and the structures of the field. The possibility remains that the negative experiences of these interviewees are evidence of a functioning meritocracy, that these individuals had unrealistic expectations of academic work, or of their own potential.

However, the case of the senior lecturer and the enormous amount he has put in to ‘make the leap’ from a post-1992 to a civic university suggest that negative experiences cannot simply be explained away by individual potential.

Alongside individual potential, the preceding discussion highlights a temporally shifting landscape of opportunity in relation to government policy and funding. Firstly, since the early days of the discipline in the 1960s, there has been a scarcity of more desirable jobs relative to demand. The qualitative and quantitative characteristics of this landscape intersect with the careers of individual interviewees in different ways as each life path necessarily begins at its own moment. Secondly, the particular array of commitments shaping the individual’s daily path continually shifts as well. The navigation of these commitments at particular moments has implications for the personal academic capital accumulated along the way. Thirdly, in a situation where accumulation of such capital is paramount to career success, good supervision and mentoring early on in a career become highly advantageous. This is illustrated in the early parts of this chapter, which highlight the concern of the professors with reproducing the positive experiences and transforming the negative experiences of their own careers, and is further demonstrated in the preceding discussion of struggling careers where informal knowledge of how systems of capital operate, and support to navigate the field, have been lacking.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have illustrated some of the intersections and dynamics of structure and agency across the life paths of my interviewees. I show that via processes of experiential learning individuals develop academic commitments to doing particular things (e.g. research, teaching,

supervision), as well as developing moral commitments to particular ways of doing that they regard as 'good'. As such, within the structural constraints of the university field, individuals inhabit and personalise their positions in their own ways. The gaining of status in departments and within the field increases the scope to integrate such moral commitments into practice for instance through influencing departmental strategies and mentoring successors who may reproduce such practices in their own working lives.

At the same time, achieving such positions of influence and power requires an accumulation of the right kinds of capital in the first place. Personal capital accumulation takes place within a highly stratified university field, and focussing on the intersections of this field with individuals' careers helps to reveal the qualitative detail of these structures. In particular, I show that individual's careers gain different qualities depending on how the life path is navigated amidst an array of commitments at any particular moment. These navigations are shaped by the intersections of life paths and landscapes which have their own temporal flows and such temporally shifting dynamics of agency and structure have implications for careers, the 'lock-in' experienced by my interviewees and the potential strategies available for dealing with negative situations. Though 'settling for less', 'moving on' and attempts to 'challenge structure' have different implications in terms of individuals' careers, such strategies are alike in that they fail to challenge the reproduction of the stratifications of the field.

In the next chapter, I describe the shifting landscape of opportunity navigated across the lives of my interviewees. I will show how such landscapes are not only shaped by present policy and funding, but also by their histories which intersect with the policy agendas of the moment to cumulatively shape the temporally shifting characteristics of the academic labour market.

Chapter Seven

Careers and Labour Market Landscapes

Present staffing structures are often the outcome of commitments undertaken several years ago and decisions taken now will affect the career structure for several years to come. (Williams et al, 1974:10)

The aim of this chapter is to consider the careers of my interviewees from a different angle. Such lives are not lived in a vacuum, but are made through and from the landscapes they traverse. It is for this reason that I consider the quantitative and, to a lesser extent, the qualitative shifts in the academic labour market that have been navigated in the careers of my interviewees. As such, my discussion covers the period from 1960 to the present, 1960 being the year in which the career of my oldest interviewee began. I draw on secondary data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) – figures which begin in 1994 - and a variety of other data found in publications about university reform from across the decades. There is no single source of data about changing numbers of academic sociology staff, and the resources available vary in their focus, style, quality and in the detail of information across the period. Further, my focus on ‘sociology’ and ‘social studies’ staff offers no insight into the migration of academics to other disciplines in an increasingly multidisciplinary environment (shifts that are considered by Mills et al, 2006), and neither does it capture the changing shape and boundaries of the discipline itself (Abbott, 2001). Nevertheless, there are sufficient data to identify some of the significant shifts in the labour market with which my interviewees’ careers intersect.

I show that the trajectories of my interviewees’ careers are not only the product of individual decisions. Neither are they simply influenced by government agendas of the moment, though both play their part. Rather, careers intersect with a labour market landscape shaped by earlier generations, disciplinary history and shifting government agendas. As such, individuals’ decisions are always situated at the intersections of disciplinary growth/decline, current policy agendas and the legacies of previous policy periods which include temporal accumulations of staff and the related demographic profile of the labour force.

To illustrate these intersections and show how lives shape, and are shaped by them, I talk about the establishment and development of sociology as a discipline and profession in the UK, the structure of the academic career (which has changed across the period of my study) and the demographic shape of the labour force, which each generation enters and then forms, via participation. As such, I argue that past landscapes, and previous decisions and practices of recruitment, create legacies that filter through to the present and continue into the future.

To begin, I look at sociology staff numbers across the decades and describe quantitative changes in the sociological labour market across the period of my study. I spend the rest of the chapter considering the dynamics underpinning these patterns and their links to government policy.

Sociology staff numbers 1960-present

Table 7.1 below provides a useful starting point for my discussion. The data shows the numbers of sociology teaching staff in pre-1992 universities from 1960 to 1997. Taken from Platt (2000), the data were compiled from the Commonwealth Universities Yearbook (CUYB), an annual publication that lists all members of teaching staff by department for each university⁹.

As these figures show, there was a rapid increase in sociology staff across the 1960s, with a particularly dramatic rise from 389 staff in 1964 to 1731 in 1968. The rise continues (though at slower pace) throughout the 1970s, until it peaks at 3135 in 1981 and begins to decline. Chart 7.2 provides a visualisation the totals to highlight these trends. There was also a gradual increase in proportions of female staff across the period. (I have discounted the proportions for 1960 and 1964, as it is likely the number of female academics in the early 1960s were social workers in 'joint departments'. These departments subsequently divided, Platt, 2000).

⁹ Platt (2000) was concerned with proportions of female staff across the period and she notes that the intervals between years were selected to adequately illustrate these trends. The identification of female staff is based on CUYB conventions of providing their full first names, whereas male names include initials only. Platt provides only the numbers of female academics and a percentage figure showing the female proportion of the academic body for each year. From this I have calculated the number of male academics, to provide the totals shown. Since the data are concerned with staff in departments, changes to institutional structures affect the numbers of individuals classed as 'sociology staff'. It is likely that number of female academics in the early 1960s were social workers in 'joint' departments. As the discipline developed these departments often divided, explaining the decrease in proportions of female academics in 1968.

Table 7.1: CUYB data, British pre-1992 universities: teaching staff in sociology departments by gender

	Male	N	Female	N	Total
1960	79%	233	21%	62	295
1964	72%	280	28%	109	389
1968	84%	1454	16%	277	1731
1972	85%	2176	15%	384	2560
1976	82%	2287	18%	502	2789
1981	83%	2602	17%	533	3135
1987	83%	2099	17%	430	2529
1992	80.50%	1651	19.50%	400	2051
1997	74%	1403	26%	493	1896

Chart 7.2: CUYB data, British pre-1992 universities: teaching staff in sociology departments 1960-1997

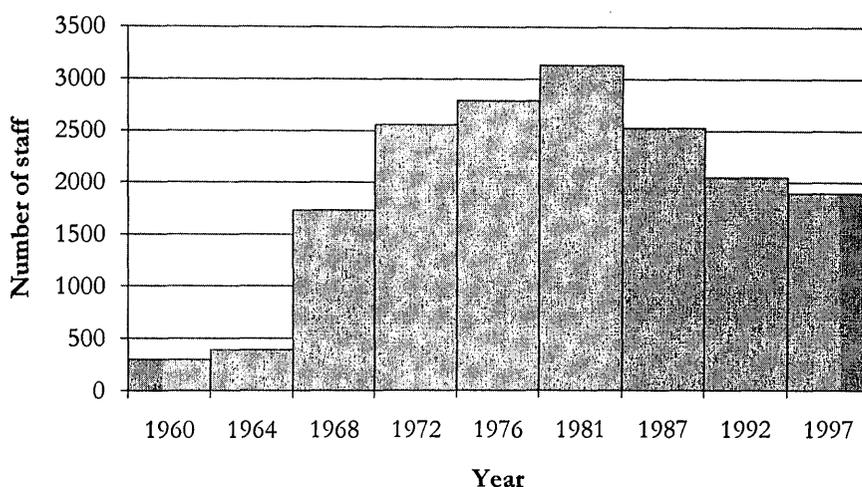


Table 7.3 and Chart 7.4 show figures from HESA (2006) for the period 1994-2004. These include all full time social studies staff and, unlike the data above, show staff numbers from both pre and post-1992 universities and represent all categories of ‘academic staff’ (as opposed to just ‘teaching staff’). The table suggests that numbers of social studies staff increased from the early to mid 1990s, with a gradual decrease from 1995-1999. Numbers began to increase again from 2000, with a more marked rise in the year 2003-04. Proportions of female academic staff continue to increase year on year, reaching 41% of total staff in 2003-2004. Table 7.5 shows that this proportion is weighted towards the lower end of the scale, with women representing 60% of

researchers and 40% of lecturers, but only 18% of professorial posts, possibly reflecting changes in recruitment practices in recent periods, or a 'glass ceiling'.

Table 7.3: Full time academic staff in 'social studies' at pre and post 1992 universities, 1994-2004 (HESA, 2006)

Year	Male	N	Female	N	Total
1994-95	68%	5814	32%	2679	8493
1995-96	67%	6184	33%	2978	9162
1996-97	67%	5965	33%	2935	8900
1997-98	67%	5902	33%	2900	8802
1998-99	66%	5775	34%	2931	8706
1999-00	65%	5770	35%	3130	8900
2000-01	65%	5910	35%	3235	9145
2001-02	64%	5845	36%	3250	9095
2002-03	62%	5755	38%	3465	9220
2003-04	59%	6690	41%	4620	11310

Chart 7.4: Full time academic staff in 'social studies' at pre and post 1992 universities, 1994-2004 (HESA, 2006)

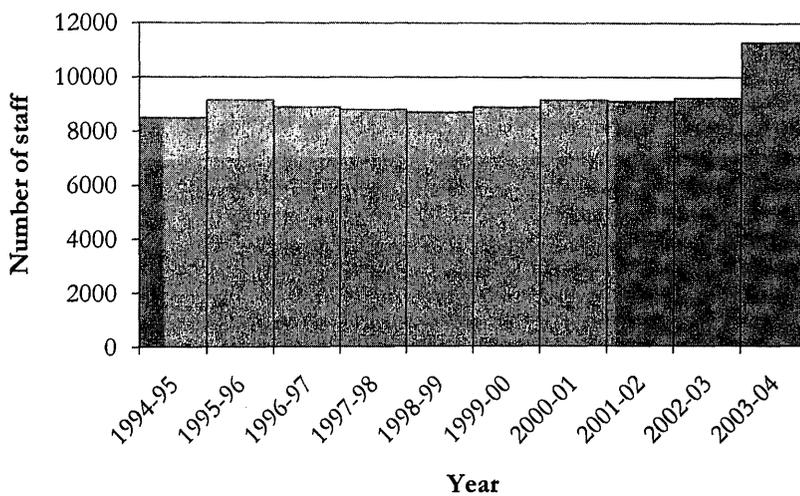


Table 7.5: Full time academic staff in 'social studies', by gender and role, at pre and post 1992 universities, 1994 and 2004 (HESA, 2006)

Grade	1994					2004				
	Male	N	Female	N	Total	Male	N	Female	N	Total
Professor	89%	822	11%	98	920	82%	1330	18%	295	1625
Senior Lecturer	80%	1460	20%	373	1833	68%	1470	32%	695	2165
Lecturer	65%	2741	35%	1501	4242	55%	2195	45%	1810	4005
Researcher	48%	535	52%	590	1125	40%	640	60%	950	1590
Other Grades	73%	216	27%	81	297	55%	1010	45%	835	1845
Total	69%	5774	31%	2643	8417	59%	6645	41%	4585	11230

In the sections that follow, I explore the labour market dynamics underpinning these trends, focussing on the development of the discipline and changes in government policy. Where relevant, I consider how this shifting landscape and the careers of my interviewees have intersected with each other.

Sociology before 1960

Platt (2002) notes that the first posts in sociology in British universities were created at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1907. By 1945 there were still only five posts, all at this institution, including the only professorship in sociology in the UK. During the 1950s the discipline began to develop; the British Sociological Association (BSA) was established in 1951 and the early cohorts of graduates from the LSE degree began to campaign to have sociology recognised as a profession in the UK, as it was in the USA.

On Wednesday May 16th 1951, *The Times* published a letter announcing the launch of the BSA (Banks, 1967), which referred to the Association's aims of 'promoting interest in sociology, and advancing its study and application in this country, and at encouraging contact and co-operation between workers in all relevant fields of inquiry' (1967:1). Initially, the aims of the Association were not linked to the professionalization of the discipline and membership was not defined in these terms. Rather, the founders hoped to bring together academics from established disciplines including social philosophy, psychology, anthropology, human geography and demography who were interested in the sociological aspects of their own work (Banks 1967:1). Further the BSA

was to incorporate members from other (non-academic) professions who might be interested in such inquiry. These aims and the intended membership reflected the interests of the founders¹⁰ and the dominance of the LSE syllabus, which emphasised sociology as being 'general and synthetic', drawing heavily on more established disciplines.

The aims of the Association soon shifted, as new members identified their own agendas:

At the very first A.G.M. a resolution was passed on a majority vote, asking the newly elected Executive Committee of the Association to appoint a sub-committee to study the recruitment, training and employment of sociologists (Banks, 1967:3).

This move was prompted by the small number of students graduating in sociology from the LSE, who were concerned about their career prospects now that they were qualified in a profession that barely existed in the UK. Though there were some small developments in the number of positions during the 1950s, by 1959 only seven universities taught sociology, and only four had chairs in the subject (Westergaard and Pahl, 1989:379). The concerns of these early cohorts would soon be answered as the discipline developed in the 1960s.

The 1960s 'boom'

I observed earlier in this chapter that the number of sociology teaching staff increased dramatically during the 1960s (from 295 in 1960 to 1731 in 1969), but how did these increases come about?, and what were the implications of 'the boom' for the careers of this and future generations of sociologists? As I have outlined in chapter 2, during the 1960s the new greenfield universities were founded and colleges of advanced technology became universities. The social sciences, and sociology in particular, became important and popular departments in these new universities - a development that requires some comment.

Rather than being a discipline that was particularly supported by policy (though it was not undermined by policy at this time either), there were pragmatic reasons why sociology and the other social sciences developed and were supported by universities during this period. It was

¹⁰ The founders included Carr-Saunders and Glas who were known for their work in demographic studies; the archaeologist Childe; Firth and Fortes who were both social anthropologists; Ginsberg, whose background was in philosophy; and, Pear and Spratt who were both social psychologists (Banks, 1967:2).

partly a response to the preferences of sixth formers who were applying for these subjects more than ever before (Stewart, 1989). Perhaps more significantly, the social sciences and humanities provided relatively low cost ways for universities to increase student numbers in line with the government targets set out in the Robbins Report (HMSO, 1963). As Sanderson (1972) notes:

... it was a hard fact that unit costs per student were lower in social studies than in any other branch of study, and that they had the highest staff: student ratio of any except education... To achieve expansion on this scale [the scale proposed in the Robbins Review], without astronomic costs, the arts and social studies would have to be encouraged... (Sanderson, 1972:371-372)

Banks (1967) notes this trend, observing that by 1964 the number of universities offering sociology degrees had risen to 19, and the student membership of the BSA had risen from 31 in 1960 to 102 in 1966, with total membership rising from 535 to 799 in the same period (Banks, 1967:6). For similar reasons, the polytechnics also began to focus on social science subjects.

These trends resulted in the sociological labour market in the 1960s being characterised by the sudden appearance of a large number of posts, in both universities and polytechnics, with a very small number of graduates in the subject, at least to begin with. For example, Bibby (1972) notes that 'social studies changed from being the faculty with the oldest staff in 1962 to that with the youngest in 1969... and Registrars reported finding it difficult to fill posts' (Bibby, 1972:26).

Similarly, Westergaard and Pahl (1969:379) note that between 1962 and 1969, 28 new chairs were created. The increase in the number of teaching posts was paralleled by a rise in research positions (Smith, 1975:309). This intensive period of disciplinary development was accompanied and supported by the founding of a Social Science Research Council in 1965 (which later became the Economic and Social Research Council), set up by government to support graduate students and research (Platt, 2002:181).

So, for the first half of the 1960s, there was a demand for university teachers in sociology and a shortage of applicants due to the low numbers of graduates. For example, though no data are available for the early 1960s, Platt (2000:5) notes that between 1966-71 the ratio of higher degrees

to appointments was 5.49 (this increases to 75.4 in the 1980s). The low number of applicants meant that appointments were frequently made to people directly from undergraduate degrees. For example, Robbins (HMSO, 1963) showed that in social studies only 16% of those recruited to the profession between 1959 and 1961 had a PhD.

In my own study, this situation is reflected in the 'easy' first appointment of the retired professor at the small civic university, who graduated in 1963 and 'walked into' his first research post with no postgraduate education:

At that time... Heads of Department were phoning each other up, saying have you got any good graduates available. Can you imagine that today? I was being sounded out for a lectureship – as a new graduate! I didn't apply as I wanted the opportunity to get stuck into some research. I mean, can you imagine?, I turned down the offer of a possible lectureship to go and be a research assistant. The whole thing was much more open.

He became a lecturer, via a similar process, two years later and was promoted to senior lecturer by the late 1960s, and professor by 1972 (see Appendix).

This situation did not last for long. With the rapid increase in the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students, the scarcity of qualified staff soon lifted. By the end of the 1960s there were over 1000 sociology graduates per year, and the figure was still rising (Westergaard and Pahl, 1989:379). Though there were still large numbers of sociology positions available, the competition, especially for the more desirable positions, was beginning to increase.

This period of demand for sociologists (with the number of positions outweighing the 'supply'), which was followed by a glut of qualified individuals highlights a unique dynamic of the academic labour market; the almost paradoxical relationship between supply and demand. That is to say, the rapid increase in student numbers noted above resulted in high demand for qualified teachers and researchers, and individuals like the retired professor in my study found it easy to get positions. However, such a situation can only exist temporarily, as the same students that create the demand also form the future supply.

Further, this rapid growth of sociology during the 1960s created a particular dynamic in the sociological labour market that would have effects for years to come. To draw on Westergaard and Pahl's metaphor (1989) the workforce was shaped like a 'moving pyramid'. The large cohort of new sociology academics recruited in the 1960s would all progress (or attempt to progress) through their careers at the same pace, and as we will see, with limited numbers of top positions, this created problems for careers further down the line.

The inclines and declines of the 1970s

The first half of the 1970s was characterised by further development of the discipline, and a continued increase of academic jobs in sociology. For example, table 7.1 (above) shows that between 1968 and 1976 university teaching posts in sociology rose from 1731 to 2560. Sociology also continued to develop in the polytechnics, institutions that continued to grow during this period. For example, the Labour government of the mid 1970s championed the binary HE system, and expanded the public HE sector via the creation of 30 new polytechnics. Platt notes that by 1974 there were a higher proportion of sociology positions in these institutions than the universities. However, from the perspective of an individual's career these positions were not equally desirable. Henkel (2000:33-34) notes that the low mobility between sectors at this time meant that the acceptance of a first position in a polytechnic would likely lead to a career based in these institutions (as with the semi-retired reader in my study).

The early 1970s also saw significant shifts for women in the sociological profession, in particular via the establishment of the women's caucus at the BSA. The professor at the small civic discusses the importance of the women's caucus for her career (in this thesis, chapter 6:136), and Platt's work highlights how the establishment of this group was part of some significant changes at the BSA. In 1974, the first BSA conference on gender related issues was held:

The organisers were active in the women's movement, and went to pains to draw in women, including some not previously active in the BSA. At it a women's caucus was formed, and started to press for change within the BSA, as well as to provide a supportive forum for its participants. (Platt, 2002:188).

As a result of the activities of the caucus, gender equality became an explicit BSA policy. A female president was elected for the BSA in 1975, and it has been conventional since then for men and women to alternate for key positions.

The early 1970s were also characterised by an emerging 'bottleneck' to promotion that now faced the 'moving pyramid' of academics from the 1960s. The rapid promotion of young staff to high ranks in the 1960s, meant that those occupying these positions still had many years of their careers ahead of them, this created significant barriers to promotion for subsequent cohorts of academics. For example, the retired professor referred to earlier was professor by 1972 (around the age of 36). Such a trend led Williams et al to note that:

The academic profession is a young one... 63 per cent of university staff are under 40 years old, 26 per cent are under 30; only 13 per cent are over 50. The mean age is 37 years; for lecturers it is 34... (Williams et al, 1974:24).

This created a stasis in staff turnover; that is, there were very few retiring staff at the top of the scale which placed limits on the promotion prospects of those lower down. These limitations were further shaped by government legislation which stipulated that no more than 35% of university staff should be in senior positions. This specific quota partly existed due to tradition, but was underpinned by the general economic principle of avoiding incremental drift in employee costs¹¹.

The problem was in part tackled by a legislative change, which raised the senior staff quota to 40%. However, universities were reluctant to 'use up' this new quota immediately. Such a strategy would simply perpetuate the rate of promotion through the ranks and make further additions to the youthful senior staff. A slowing down of the promotion rate was required. It was for this reason that, in 1971, the lecturer scale was lengthened by two extra points. Rather than being blocked at the top of the scale, lecturers would continue with small incremental increases for two additional years before applying for promotion (Williams et al, 1974:11). For those seeking new

¹¹ In incremental salary scales, if the recruitment and 'wastage' of individuals is balanced then the upward 'drift' of any individual's salary is compensated by retirement at the top of the scale and recruitment at the bottom of the scale. For UK sociology, the large scale recruitment of the 1960s and the number of relatively young academics in senior posts meant such a balance was not in place.

positions competition continued to increase. For example, by the late 1970s, the ratio of higher degrees to appointments had risen from 6.19 between 1971 and 1975 to 17.97 between 1976 and 1981 (Platt, 2000). So, by the mid-1970s there had been a decline in the sociological labour market in general, with a decrease in new positions, as well as stasis within universities, with promotion increasingly difficult to obtain.

It was this landscape that faced decline in the mid-1970s, as student numbers decreased and government funding reduced. This 'slowing down' in the development of sociology jobs was, in part, due to the period of economic downturn in the UK, related to the financial and energy crisis of 1973. However, Stewart (1989) notes this was not the only reason for the decline in state funding for the universities. In addition to the economic downturn, the forecasts of student numbers were not met. For example, the age participation ratio in 1972-73 stood at 14.2% but by 1977-78 it had decreased to 12.7% (Stewart, 1989). By the end of the 1970s the actual university population was 14% below the lowest forecast made by the UGC at the start of the decade. As a result, there was a reduction in real terms in the financial support that universities received.

These changes in the amount of university funding were accompanied by a shift in the methods of funding allocation. Until 1975, the UGC had been responsible for allocating university funding (acting as a 'buffer' between the Treasury/ Department of Education and Science and the universities). Funding had been administered via an advanced quinquennium system, in which block grants were allocated, based on expenditure forecasts, every five years and universities were free to decide how the money was spent. From 1975, as part of attempts to make savings, the quinquennium system was removed. Funding was allocated based on calculations of the 'unit of resource' – the spend per student – intended to provide an index of comparison between universities. The ensuing concern over where funding would come from next and how much there would be, resulted in universities freezing academic posts from 1977 (as experienced by the semi-retired reader in my study), and few new appointments were made.

The 1980s: cutting back

Henkel (2000) notes that the 1980s were a period of major structural and policy change for higher education, with severe cuts to funding in the early years of the decade, followed by dramatic

growth in student numbers (that were not matched by increases in funding) from the mid-1980s (Henkel, 2000:30). In sociology, the number of undergraduate students began to decline in 1982 (by 50 from the previous year) and by 1988 they had more than halved. This was in part a reflection of the demographic of 18-year-olds in the population, as Stewart notes:

...the peak of 18-year-olds in 1982-83 was to be followed by a decline of about 34 per cent in the age group during the succeeding 10-12 years. (Stewart, 1989:225)

However, of greater significance was the response of the Thatcher government to the 1970s economic crisis. Universities, amidst many other areas of public expenditure, became a major target for financial cutbacks, and between 1981-82 and 1983-84 there was a total reduction in the recurrent university grant of 15 per cent (Trowler, 2003:50). In real terms this meant a reduction in funding to the universities of around £130-180 million. Savings of this size could only be achieved by cutting the number of academic staff, as academic salaries accounted for over 65 per cent of the total recurrent expenditure (Stewart, 1989:225). These cuts were allocated based on subjects and disciplines.

Those subjects whose funding was protected included the pure sciences, engineering, medicine, mathematics, computer science and business studies. Due to the different 'unit of resource' required per student in these subjects, compared to the arts and social sciences, the latter subjects were bound to suffer:

...the UGC indicated as many as six student places in the arts or social studies had to be sacrificed in order to maintain one in medicine and between two and three places to maintain one in science and technology (Stewart, 1989:226).

Further, broad disciplinary quotas were set for student admissions to enforce the shift to science and technology subjects (Westergaard and Pahl, 1989:376).

Sociology departments were closed or merged, and the staff were encouraged to take early retirement or voluntary redundancy. Promotions were frozen across both the university and polytechnic sectors, and few new permanent lecturing positions were available. For example, between 1981 and 1986 the ratio of higher degrees to new appointments rose to 75.4 (Platt,

2002:188). This resulted in the rapid decline in sociology staff numbers, noted at the start of the chapter, from 3135 sociology teaching staff in 1981 to 2051 a decade later. In response to these changes in sociology staff, the universities also chose to reduce their student intake. Table 7.6 shows the effects of these cutbacks on a student body in the early 1980s, which (taking account of the 'lag' between the cutbacks and their impact on the student body as a whole) reached its lowest for higher degree students in 1987 (299), and for first degree students in 1988 (622).

Table 7.6: Number of degrees in sociology, 1980-1993 (Platt, 2002)

Year	First Degrees (not only honours)	Higher Degrees
1980	1326	742
1981	1355	783
1982	1305	800
1983	1273	828
1984	1205	776
1985	721	429
1986	681	380
1987	664	299
1988	622	372
1989	642	358
1990	664	326
1991	704	436
1992	765	421
1993 ¹²	827	489

The polytechnics did not respond in the same way, but rather viewed the reduction in university intake as an opportunity, and attempted to meet the demand. Henkel (2000:39) notes how they did so at increasingly lower unit of resource, enabling the government to 'support, and indeed promote, major growth in the system, whilst adhering to a policy of public expenditure control'.

The universities would soon be expected to follow suit. In the 1985 Green Paper 'The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s', there was a move towards accepting the

¹² Platt (2002) notes that the sequence cannot be continued here, as the published statistics' format changed; although numbers graduating in 'Sociology' are still given, it is impossible to believe that the definition used is the same because the numbers nearly quintuple from one year to the next.

expansion of the higher education system after the cuts of the early 1980s, but within clearly limited spending. As Trowler (2003) notes, this was an attempt by government to tackle the dilemma of catering for the demand for higher education while containing the escalating costs of a 'mass' system. The UGC block grants began to increase again from 1986, distributed on the basis of an initial 'assessment exercise' (the precursor of the RAE), in which universities put forward overall objectives for the planning period, research plans, student numbers and financial forecasts (Lucas, 2006:31), though the criteria that formed the basis of final decisions were unclear. Further, under the 1988 Education Reform Act (HMSO, 1988) the possibility of tenure was removed. This eradicated the difficulties previously faced when attempting to make compulsory redundancy and departmental closures.

The impact of these changes on sociology can be seen in table 7.5. The number of undergraduate and postgraduate students began to increase again. However, this was not accompanied by an increase in the numbers of sociology teaching staff (table 7.1) which continued to decline across the 1980s. This trend is reflected in Henkel's (2000) observation that between 1979 and 1990 university student staff ratios rose from 9.4 to 12.2; and, in the polytechnics there was a shift from 8.2 to 15.2 (Henkel, 2000:34).

It is during this period of cutbacks that the semi-retired reader (chapter 6:148) found himself 'frozen' as a senior lecturer. Similarly, the senior lecturer at the large civic (chapter 6:149) was unemployed, finding it difficult to secure a university position on graduation from his undergraduate degree. Others, including the reader at the ex-CAT developed their careers overseas. The professors at the small civic and large civic universities both took a series of contract research positions, until the system 'began to open up again' in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

With voluntary retirements taking a considerable toll on many older staff and hardly any new recruitment during the 1980s the labour force now had a new shape. In 1987-88 only 22% of sociologists were under 40 and virtually none still in their 20s. Since sociology had a higher 'middle-age peak' than any other discipline (because of its rapid development in the 1960s), there

was an emerging concern that if new recruitment did not occur there would be a lack of potential employees by the turn of the century.

The 1990s: proliferation and fragmentation

A key theme running through 1990s policy was how to fund a mass system of higher education within limited spending. This was tackled by an emphasis on 'cost effective expansion' and by a new focus on students contributing to the costs of their education, initially via student loans, and then later in the decade via 'top up fees'. For example, initial steps towards the latter strategy were taken in the Education (Student Loans) Act of 1990, which empowered Secretaries of State to make arrangements for higher education students to receive loans towards their maintenance while studying. The former principle (cost effective expansion) was set out in the 1991 white paper 'Higher Education: A New Framework' which highlighted that 'the general need to contain public spending, the pattern of relative costs in higher education, and the demands for capital investment, all mean that a continuing drive for greater efficiency will need to be secured' (DES, 1991:10-12). This principle of 'cost efficiency' was accompanied (in the same document) by a new target of 30% of 18-21 year olds to attend university by the end of the century.

As explained in chapter two, a significant aspect of this 'cost effective' growth of the higher education system was to bring an end to the binary divide in 1992 (HMSO, 1992) by granting university status to polytechnics. The separate funding councils for the two sectors (that were created in 1988) were replaced by a single Higher Education Funding Council. This shift was accompanied by the termination of the block grant system and the introduction of separate funding streams for research and teaching. The RAE became increasingly important in determining how the former stream was spent, and to the concern of the pre-1992 sector, the 'new' universities were included in the 1992 RAE (meaning that research funding would be distributed more widely than had previously been the case). Many of those working in the new universities (including the semi-retired reader in my study) were pleased with this move, as it meant they could finally engage in, and be recognised for their research work. Several of the new universities successfully secured some RAE money (we will see later, this situation was short-lived).

The expansion of the system is, to a certain extent, reflected in the change in sociology student numbers in table 7.6. After the decline and then relative stability of sociology students at pre-1992 universities in the late 1980s, the number of first degree students increased by around 30% between 1990-93 (from 664-827). Postgraduate student numbers also increased (though less dramatically). This was in a period when the numbers of sociology teaching staff declined – from 2529 in 1987 to 2051 in 1992 (table 7.1).

The rapid expansion of the early 1990s brought home the reality of the escalating costs that mass higher education brings. The government responded by putting the brakes on, and in their ‘Autumn statement on funding’ in November 1993 they announced cuts of 45% in student fees to universities, and planned for stasis in the system, in particular by penalizing universities that under or over recruited target numbers of students. The planned number of places to be offered in 1994 was reduced by 10,000.

During the same period, definitions of research within UK government policy were changing. For example, the 1993 white paper ‘Realising Our Potential: A Strategy for Science, Engineering and Technology’ (HMSO, 1993) encouraged ‘systematic’ exchange between industry, scientists, engineers and policy makers. Shove et al (1998) note some of the implications of the Paper for the ESRC’s strategy, which changed its practices of research proposal evaluation to include ‘users’ in programme committees and peer review, and modified its grant forms to include specifics of non-academic involvement in projects. However, these shifts had a broader influence on the kinds of research that social scientists could engage in, as well as creating a plethora of short term research positions.

For example, the release of the white paper coincided with a period of European funding that has been an important source of income for social sciences (and many other disciplines) ever since. In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty was signed, signalling a new period of ‘research informed policy’ at the European level. Grants for consortial research projects on particular areas of policy became available, and in a sector that was seeing a reduction in funding, and the broad distribution of RAE money across an enlarged HE sector, such funding offered valuable opportunities for research. Similar opportunities began to emerge from UK government departments and the

NHS, who wished to work with social science academics on research projects. The proliferation of such contract funding across the 1990s and into the 21st century have allowed new forms of research to take hold, leading to an increase in contract research posts and new kinds of ‘research-manager’ academics, as well as the development of institutional and departmental structures to enable this kind of work.

The career of Professor A provides an example of this ‘new breed’. As I note in chapter 6, and as is shown in the Appendix, her academic career began in 1992-93 when she was employed as a contract researcher on a European project. Her research career comprises an accumulation of these projects, and her associated networks, and she is now manager of a team of postgraduate students and contract researchers. A career like this is a product of its time, and would not have been possible in previous decades. Similarly, the career of the professor at the post-1992 university has been built around contract research projects funded by the NHS and government departments.

The 1996 Education (Student Loans) Act allowed students to borrow from banks on the same terms as from the Student Loans Company. The banks applied to provide loans through a competitive tendering process; this was a move towards ‘privatizing’ student loans after criticism of the Student Loans Company and its handling (and recovery) of borrowed money. By now it was becoming clear that the burden of higher education was going to be shouldered by students and that HE was increasingly seen as a ‘positional’ rather than a ‘public’ good; that is, one which primarily benefits the individual rather than society as a whole and therefore should be paid for by the individual.

1996 also saw the next RAE which contained a number of significant changes to the 1992 version. These included the stipulation that only the best four publications for each ‘research active’ staff member should be submitted; that the criteria of each assessment panel were published prior to submission; the use of a seven point rating scale (as opposed to a five point scale) to further differentiate departments (now include 3b, 3a and 5*); and, greater focussing of research funding, with only those submissions that were rated above 2 being allocated funds. Lucas (2006) notes that this not only led to research funding being channelled to particular

universities and departments (mainly pre-1992 universities), but also to differentiation amongst staff within departments. The teaching loads of high status researchers were reduced whilst others were employed in teaching-only positions, making it difficult for them to undertake the research required for promotion (and that had led them to the profession in the first place).

The early and mid 1990s then, were characterised by continued 'cost efficiency' alongside expansion of student numbers, as evidenced in the decreasing numbers of staff. There was an increased channelling of research monies to those performing well in the RAE, new ideas emerging from government about the relationship between researchers and 'users' and a broadening of sources of research income. The sociology labour market contracted in some areas, especially in the availability of full time lecturing positions (and above), but was expanding in others, namely contract research and teaching positions. These were developed in response to new research funding streams (that were often time-limited projects), and with the increasing number of students, which created the demand for more higher education teachers. In my own study, the lecturer at the post-1992 university began hourly-paid teaching during this period, to the detriment of her career (see chapter 6:149).

In 1997 a new Labour government was elected, and in September of the same year they announced £165 million funding for higher education. This money aimed to bridge the 'funding gap' that had developed with the increasing student numbers and relative decline in funding that had characterised the 1980s and early 1990s. The Dearing Report (1997) recommended the expansion of the higher education system with 500,000 new places by the end of the century. These were to be funded from an increased allocated proportion of national income, as well as students bearing part of the cost of their higher education. In addition, there would be greater selectivity in funding for research (implemented via the RAE). The new Labour government was quick to implement the funding changes which placed more of the burden on students, announcing the introduction of 'top-up' fees at a rate of £1000 per year from 1998.

In the 1998 budget a further £250 million was announced for education, and then £445 million over 1998-2000 as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (Trowler, 2003:62-74). Overall during the period 1997-2001 there was a real terms increase in government spending on HE of

18% - from £4.7 billion to £5.8 billion (Trowler, 2003:77-79). This additional funding for HE, combined with the requirement for more staff at all levels within the academic body, explains the opening up of positions during this period. For example, the number of full time academic staff in social studies increased from 8900 in 1996 to 9145 in 2000, and was at 11310 by 2004. A senior lecturer that I interviewed talked about benefitting from this 'New Labour boom', which for him coincided with securing an academic position after eight years of unemployment.

The new 'top up fees' were heavily criticised, especially in relation to agendas of widening participation. HEFCE responded to these criticisms in March 1999 when it announced that it had earmarked £95 million from the forthcoming year's settlement to encourage universities to provide more places for poorer students. This particularly benefitted the post-1992 universities, many of whom already had this mission, which they felt was finally being fiscally recognised.

Sociology positions in the 21st century

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s the 'core academic staff' (i.e. those at lecturer level and above) continued to increase, for example there was a growth of 17% in 'social, political and economic studies' between 1995 and 2005 (HEFCE, 2006). This trend is reflected in table 7.5, which shows that the number of full time academic staff in social studies increased from 8417 in 1994 to 11230 in 2004. However, those at lecturer level or above on permanent contracts declined whilst the proportion of academics on fixed term contracts increased (Locke, 2007).

This situation began to change, at least for those on research contracts, after the UCU (Universities and Colleges Union) took an interest in the issue, and the problems such contracts created for careers. In 2002, legislation was introduced to protect the rights of employees on fixed term contracts, and across the sector 'research staff concordats' were put in place, in which universities committed to improving the employment conditions and development opportunities for such staff, as well as encouraging universities to move them onto permanent contracts (HEFCE, 2006:19).

In March 2005, this development was furthered, when the European Commission adopted a European Charter for researchers and a Code of Conduct for their recruitment. These built on

the UK concordats, setting out the roles, requirements and entitlements of researchers, funders and employers, with the view of making a research career more attractive and developing a European market for research labour (HEFCE, 2006:16).

The European Fixed Term Employees (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations came into effect from July 2006. These aimed to prevent fixed-term employees being treated less favourably than similar permanent employees, and limited the use of this form of contract by specifying that after four years of successive employment on two or more contracts, the employment term should be indefinite. Several universities pre-empted this legislative change and began changing their contracts prior to this date. Despite these changes, HEFCE's 2006 report highlighted that there was no automatic career progression for academics (Locke, 2007:4).

Locke (2007) notes how this increased fragmentation of academic roles is a reflection of government policy. As noted earlier, since the early 1990s research had been concentrated into 'centres of excellence', increasing the proportion of contract research staff (Jacob, 2000). The proportion of research contracts was much greater in the pre-1992 universities (see table 7.7 below). 'Teaching-only' contracts became a necessity for universities struggling to cope with the increased teaching requirements of the mass system, as well as reflecting the re-designation by institutions of 'underperforming' researchers as a strategy for improving success in the RAE. Further, these figures fail to capture the parallel increase in hourly-paid teaching work (Abbas, 2001; Husbands, 1998) though the increase in proportions of staff in 'other roles' (table 7.5) from 297 in 1994, to 1845 in 2004 indicates something of this trend.

These shifts in academic roles have resulted in the relationship between research and teaching becoming a hot topic, especially after the 2004 Higher Education Act which granted university title to teaching-only institutions (i.e. an institution can now have degree awarding powers, even if its staff do not undertake research). In my own study, balancing these aspects of work, and accessing the practices of research work, proved to be significant to my interviewees. This is interesting in light of the fact that only 16% of academics in 2006 were employed to 'teach and research' (Locke, 2000:11).

This growth in academic staff numbers (and student numbers) has continued to the present. HEFCE (2010) notes that ‘numbers of staff and students in English higher education institutions underwent sustained growth between 2005-06 and 2008-09, with an increase in student full-time equivalent (FTE) of 69,950 (5%) and an increase in staff FTE of 5,900 (8%)’. There are though, still distinct differences between the pre and post 1992 universities. Table 7.7 shows a 4% growth in the proportion of professors in pre-1992 HEIs between 2005-06 and 2008-09 and a much higher proportion of staff on the ‘lecturer’ grade in post-1992 HEIs. This difference in grade profile and workforce structure relates to the overall balance of teaching and research undertaken at the different types of institution and the resulting need for more staff at lecturer versus professorial level.

Table 7.7: Staff with academic roles in English pre and post 1992 universities by grade and type of institution (HEFCE, 2010)

Type of institution	Grade	2005-06		2008-09	
		N	%	N	%
Pre-1992 institutions	Professor	8,450	14	11,305	18
	Senior lecturer/researcher	14,310	24	15,875	25
	Lecturer	14,880	25	14,260	22
	Researcher	21,410	36	22,695	35
	Total	59,045	100	64,135	100
Post-1992 institutions	Professor	2,705	8	3,370	9
	Senior lecturer/researcher	6,825	20	7,785	22
	Lecturer	22,045	65	22,400	63
	Researcher	2,245	7	2,040	6
	Total	33,825	100	35,595	100

A further characteristic of the 21st century sociological labour force is one inherited from the discipline’s beginnings in the 1960s. HEFCE (2006) notes that the retirement of the ‘baby boomer’ generation poses no threats for UK HE in general, however, it does have implications for sociology, which ‘boomed’ as this generation came of age. Though the ‘moving pyramid’ was in part balanced by the early retirements and voluntary redundancy in the 1980s, Williams et al’s observation (in 1974) that ‘the academic profession is a young one’ is no longer the case. Further,

Locke (2007) notes that social studies is more markedly 'ageing' than many other disciplines, with over 45% of the workforce over 50 years of age.

At the time of writing, significant shifts in government funding for universities are once again in the limelight. In November 2010 the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government announced plans to reform higher education and student finance which further shifts the financial burden of higher education to students (with proposals to allow universities to charge up to £9000 per year with a general threshold of £6000). The ensuing protests of students and university staff have focussed on the impact of such fees on access to university, social mobility and the consequences of such cuts for humanities and social science subjects. The extent, focus and impact of the cuts are yet to be seen.

It is, though, worth highlighting, in the context of this thesis, that in terms of sociology the labour market entering this period of cuts is quite different to that of the 1980s. As noted above, the profession is now ageing and is not young as it was then. Further, the labour market is now international, and shares this 'ageing' profile, potentially opening up positions for new generations. As HEFCE, 2006 highlights 'the proportion of academics aged 55 and over is rising in all the developed English-speaking countries: In Australia in 2002 it was 36 per cent, in Canada 30 per cent, in New Zealand 35 per cent and in the United States 30 per cent... an estimated 230,000 recruits would be needed in the next decade to replace retiring staff' (HEFCE, 2006:15). This suggests that the labour market dynamics of the time will play out quite differently for the careers of academics in the present.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have filled out some of the quantitative and to a lesser extent the qualitative shifts in the academic labour market that the careers of my interviewees have traversed. I show that the labour market landscape not only depends on current government agendas, but is also shaped by history. This history includes the development of the discipline that weaves and intersects with shifting government HE policy. As part of this temporal process, the workforce accumulates and takes its demographic form, and each cohort of academics, by becoming part of this landscape, leaves legacies for the careers of others in their own and future generations.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

I titled my thesis ‘Authors of our own lives?’, a title that captured my interest in structure and agency within a profession. Academic life is frequently characterised as a life driven by individual commitment (Weber, 1922; Fuller, 2006; Furedi, 2004). These commitments, as I have shown in this thesis, include striving to provide original insights and to reveal something new about the world, often to social actors who remain unaware of the social situations and of the ordering and organising of their own lives. But what about the lives of academics themselves?

My focus on sociologists was, in part, underpinned by the expectation that these individuals, more than others, might reflect upon their own situations and draw on the broad range of tools from their discipline to do so. Yet this proved not to be the case. Many of my interviewees were blinkered when it came to the social situations of their everyday work and careers, often interpreting the conflicts and struggles they faced as personal failings. My analysis of daily paths and life paths from different angles challenges this perspective, revealing some of the intersections of structure and agency within everyday work and across academic lives.

Before heading into a more theoretical discussion I summarise the key points of the preceding chapters. I then consider the contributions of my study to ideas of reproduction and transformation. I comment, in particular, on the benefits of drawing together distinct and contrasting theoretical frameworks and argue that such combinations can provide powerful analytic tools with which to analyse the different ‘registers’ of structure and agency that my research reveals. I suggest that many of the substantive findings are of relevance across the professions, and that the theoretical and methodological insights from this study are of potential relevance to many other realms of social life.

Summary of previous chapters

In chapter one I began by introducing the example of the current debate about the ‘Impact’ of academic research to illustrate the complexity of reproduction and transformation in university life. I showed that the priorities of academics and of policy can be at odds with each other, and that though continuation of funding is of importance to social scientists, it is not the only aspect

that matters. I drew on the example to make the point that analysing the intersection of individuals' lives and institutional priorities is important if we are to understand complex processes of change. I explained why sociology was chosen as the focus of the empirical work, and I situated my work theoretically. The main concepts mobilised in my thesis include 'daily path', 'life path', and reproduction and transformation both of practice, and of the structures of the field (and the relations between them).

In chapter two, in order to introduce the complexities and tensions within the field of my empirical investigation, I provided a brief institutional history of UK universities. I drew on Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'capitals' (1986) and used these to show that institutional histories still matter for the conduct, operation and character of universities today. I considered university league tables from broadsheet newspapers, *The Times* and *The Guardian*, using this data to provide a powerful illustration of the relationship between institutional history and the positional relations of the field. I concluded the chapter by emphasising the importance of a comparative empirical study that would capture some of this variation.

In chapter three the design of my empirical study was explained. In particular I discussed how the study sites and interviewees were selected, how interview questions were developed and why I chose to focus on my interviewees' everyday practices and careers. The chapter outlined some of the limitations of these methods, focussing in particular on the challenge of using career biographies and retrospective accounts, and of how changing government policy and its intersection with everyday life and careers could be researched.

Chapter four focussed on personal and institutional temporalities as sites of tension, reproduction and transformation. I showed that the amounts of time devoted to different activities varied between interviewees and study sites, and that these patterns of work were strongly correlated to the stratifications of the field. In this chapter I talked about the tension between institutional and personal temporalities and showed that the range of possible strategies that might be adopted to help manage this tension were unevenly distributed across the field. I suggested it was for these reasons that the everyday 'practice of sociology' varied as it did across the study sites.

In chapter five I focused on ‘research strategies’ and argued that tensions (and sometimes happy marriages) between individuals and institutions persist because both are variously concerned with accumulating capital (economic, symbolic and cultural capitals) and with accessing valued practices and ways of life. These capitals and ‘goods’ are unevenly distributed across the field, resulting in a hierarchy of research work in which certain formulations are privileged and valued whilst others become peripheral, and remain so. For instance, large, externally funded research projects and hierarchical divisions of research labour were commonplace at the large civic university, whereas at the post-1992 university, if academics engaged in research, it tended to be consolidated with other work and consist of small, local, ethnographic projects.

In chapter six, I switched focus, to discuss some of the dynamics of structure and agency across the ‘life path’. I showed that via processes of experiential learning individuals inhabit and personalise their (changing) positions in their own ways. I also argued that individuals’ careers take on different qualities depending on how the life path is navigated amidst an array of commitments and opportunities (or lack thereof) faced at any particular moment. I showed that the strategies that individuals use to deal with negative situations had different implications for career trajectories (for example, whether they ‘settle for less’, or ‘move on’). However, such strategies were alike in that they rarely served to challenge the reproduction of the structures of the field, and it is difficult to see how they could do so.

Finally, in chapter seven I showed that career trajectories are not only the product of individual decisions, and neither are they simply influenced by government agendas of the moment, though both play their part. Rather careers intersect with a labour market landscape that is shaped by earlier generations, disciplinary history and shifting government agendas. In contrast to the difficulty of identifying influences of government policy in everyday practice, taking this ‘long view’ reveals a striking relationship between shifting policy agendas and the shape of academic lives.

Combining diverse theories

This thesis combines conceptual resources from Giddens, Bourdieu, MacIntyre and Archer, an array of authors who are not routinely positioned alongside each other. There are two points to

highlight about this strategy. First, this ‘marriage’ of resources has allowed me to generate a distinctive and productive approach to the analysis and understanding of processes of social reproduction and transformation in academic life. Second, this set of theories have been selected for their ability to talk to one another, which stems from a shared acknowledgement of the importance of repeated practice in shaping dispositions and ways of thinking (as set out in Chapter one of this thesis). The thesis then is developed through a constructive layering of commensurable approaches, with respect to the problem in hand and the empirical data available to me.

In the case of this thesis, drawing on one theory or another did not offer a satisfactory theoretical interpretation of the data. The aim is not to produce some ‘complete’ account, but to demonstrate that it can be useful to deploy different theories alongside each other, and that in certain cases, such combinations are themselves generative: as such I suggest that the theories I have drawn upon work best not when ‘used’ in isolation, but when they are drawn together in this manner. For example, to understand how individuals make their way through academic careers (Chapter six) requires Archer’s concept of commitment and Bourdieu’s concept of capital accumulation. Similarly, to understand what it is that individuals and institutions are competing for (Chapter five) requires Bourdieu’s concepts of field and capital and MacIntyre’s discussion of internal goods, indeed the latter enables us to resolve an important ambiguity in Bourdieu’s concept of capital (see this thesis, p. 125). It is for this reason that this specific set of theories, which together offer a convincing interpretation of the empirical findings, have been drawn upon. Further, I am not the first to note the compatibility of this suite of conceptual resources. For example, Bourdieu’s ‘capitals’ and MacIntyre’s ‘internal goods’ are drawn together by Sayer (2005); the shared ‘practices’ orientation of Giddens and Bourdieu is noted by Reckwitz (2002); Archer’s work provides a way into the individual ‘life paths’ that, as Pred (1981) illustrates, have been excluded from discussions of social reproduction and transformation; and Sayer (2010), Mouzelis (2008) Fleetwood(2008) and Elder-Vass (2007) all argue that Archer’s rejection of Bourdieu is mistaken and that their theories can and should be integrated, to their mutual benefit.

Finally, this use of different literatures might be viewed as a first step. As I have explained, the thesis is exploratory, setting out some ways that the temporalities of individual careers, the histories of institutions and everyday practice can be studied to understand social change. In this initial attempt to develop a theoretical framework that embraces these ‘intersections’ of social life, I have woven together and developed some conceptual resources from existing theoretical models. This is not the last word on the matter, but the first one, providing a starting point for future research and theoretical development in this area.

In the paragraphs that follow, I reflect on how this conceptual weaving has been achieved, and discuss some of the insights gained from developing this strategy.

Throughout the chapters I have drawn on Pred’s ideas of ‘life path’ and ‘daily path’ as mediating concepts through which my discussion of individuals and institutions, careers and landscapes has taken form. Though I have not drawn fully on Pred’s time geography, daily path and life path are useful to this thesis because they capture something of the rhythm and temporal flow of the empirical world, in particular providing a conceptual frame to ‘take account of biography’.

Further, these ideas have enabled a ‘slicing’ of the empirical data, and provided an opportunity to think about the interaction of structure and agency from different angles and at various scales.

This slicing methodology allows me to capture the interwoven lives of individuals and institutions, and to reveal some of the dynamic processes involved in their mutual configuration.

Such a slicing both benefits from, and requires, different theoretical positions to be positioned alongside each other. For example, Archer’s concern for the individual and their ‘human’ qualities of reflexivity and creativity, leads to a social model in which ‘structure’ is activated as individuals ‘make their way through the world’, this structure is experienced by individuals as enablement and constraint as they set about achieving their ‘projects’ (Archer, 2007). Bourdieu emphasises the structures of the field, and the internalisation of these structures in individuals in the form of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Linking concepts of daily path and life path with these theoretical ideas provides further insight into the everyday detail of what Giddens describes as the duality of structure.

These theoretical positions have methodological implications (as I show in chapter three).

Bridging the conceptual distinction of structure and agency presents a number of methodological puzzles that have been approached in different ways. Giddens focusses on everyday practice as the unit of study, as a way to bridge, or more accurately, sidestep this divide. However, as Archer highlights, such an approach results in 'central conflation' whereby significant implications of both agency and structure may be overlooked. That is to say that social theories of practice risk sidelining on the one hand individuals, who perform the practice, and commit to and develop the practice across their lives, and on the other hand institutions, which shape and provide the resources to sustain practices.

One of the lessons from my research design is that in order to study social reproduction and transformation, it is necessary to study people and careers, practices and institutions simultaneously. Further, it is through focussing on these aspects, via Pred's 'mediating concepts', that Giddens, Bourdieu, Archer and MacIntyre become such comfortable bedfellows. So, what new insights does this combination of theorists provide, that might otherwise be overlooked?

When focussing on the activities of the daily path (as I did in chapter four), I took Giddens' notion that the production and reproduction of social structure makes and is made in the day-to-day practices of individuals as my starting point. My analysis of the navigation of institutional and personal temporalities shows some of the ways that individuals navigate the daily path to create working lives that they can live with – via 'buy-out', consolidation and deferral. At the same time, there is a significant relationship between the structures of the field and the kinds of work undertaken in the daily, weekly and annual cycles of my interviewees. This variety cumulatively results in different practices of sociology across the study sites.

Though useful in revealing the relationship between university type and everyday work, this approach does not help us to see the importance of history and accumulated capital in the positional relations of the field. We are aware of a difference between universities, but we do not understand why it exists. On this point, combining Giddens and Bourdieu is useful; the Bourdieuan analysis of university league tables in chapter three illustrates that tradition and accumulated capital have implications not immediately visible in the day-to-day.

Though this combination makes the relationship between the everyday practices of individuals and the reproduction of structure apparent, we are still left wondering what it is that individuals and institutions are striving for. What are the navigations and negotiations of institutional and personal temporalities all about?

A discussion of research 'strategies', of both individuals and departments helps me broach this question. In chapter five, I draw attention to the analytic power of combining Bourdieu's concept of capitals with MacIntyre's ideas of internal and external goods. Drawing on this framework, my analysis shows that though both individuals and institutions seek to accumulate symbolic and economic capitals, there can be congruence or discrepancy in how these are prioritised and valued. Further, reducing the dilemmas of my interviewees to struggles for capital misses much of what is important to them. MacIntyre's concepts reveal that access to valued practices and ways of life are also at stake, and are often the focus of my interviewees' commitments to the academic profession, as well as the topic of their moral dilemmas when these 'goods' evade them. These commitments are key in their decisions of whether to stay within a department, and within the profession, or to seek work elsewhere.

Through my discussion of 'research strategies' I engage more directly with Archer's work. My consideration of the 'niches' my interviewees occupy, and of the flexibility which they experience in developing their research work, provides an example of Archer's elastic 'role arrays', which make it possible for individuals to create satisfying daily paths, congruent with their commitments. At the same time role arrays are limited, depending on an individual's and institution's position in the field of structural relations. That is to say, the structures of the field highlighted in chapter two affect the potential forms a role can take (though indeed this is only discovered through practice, and does not pre-exist the individual in concrete form). In this instance, drawing together Bourdieu and Archer tempers the structure-agency polarisation that might emerge from focussing on the conceptual frames of one or the other in isolation.

I continue to draw on Archer in chapter six, to illustrate the importance of individuals' commitments in shaping everyday practices. In particular I show that across the life course, individuals develop moral commitments via their experiential learning; that is to say, they reflect

on their experience and change how they do things. The possibility of such reflection and change in practice across a life remains hidden if we draw on Bourdieu or Giddens alone, because the concepts of habitus and knowledgeable do not to fully capture this temporal reflective change. That is not to say that ideas of habitus and knowledgeable should be discarded, but rather that to understand how everyday practices of sociology are reproduced and transformed, we need to take account of the experiential learning of individuals across a life.

I show that individuals accumulate personal capital across a career, and that gathering the ‘right kinds’ of capital can be difficult, however, once again, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is not enough to explain such processes. In navigating through their careers individuals reflexively evaluate their ongoing accumulation of capital in light of their commitments. Such reflections are integral to decisions, for instance, of whether to ‘settle for less’, ‘move on’ or ‘challenge structure’. Archer reminds us that humans are reflexive and creative beings, who learn from their experiences and make decisions about what to do.

In the penultimate chapter, I illustrate an alternative ‘register’ of structure to that set out in chapter two, showing how the landscape of the academic labour market has shifted across the careers of my interviewees. Alongside the positional relations of the field which relate to institutional history, fluctuating labour market dynamics – that are strongly shaped by past and present government agendas – have implications for the array of opportunities and ‘bottlenecks’ experienced by my interviewees as they make their way through their lives.

In sum, my thesis draws on a broad range of theoretical perspectives, which in combination provide a powerful theoretical framework with which to explore the intersections of everyday practices, careers and institutions. Though used here to analyse processes of reproduction and transformation in the practice of academic sociology, such a framework, and the findings outlined above have relevance for all academics and could be used to characterise and analyse the careers and trajectories of other professions.

Tracing policy

As described above, a further ambition, and another reason for studying the practice of sociology as it is enacted in different institutions, was to reveal the day to day implications of policy intervention in the university system. Understanding policy in processes of reproducing and transforming practice relates to broader questions of how policy change should be conceptualised and researched. Within my research the majority of my interviewees were unaware of government policy, past and present. That is to say they were in the dark about many current government initiatives, and were often unaware of the history of the university system of which they were a part. This situation presents a challenge to models of policy, and related ideas about how policy can be researched, which I outline below.

A common approach to researching the affects of policy on everyday practice (an approach that I discarded at the pilot stage of the study), is to attempt to ascertain the affects that particular policies have had on everyday work. As I point out in chapter three, such approaches are based on 'instrumentalist' models (Shore and Wright, 1997), which view policy as being made and implemented in a 'top-down' manner.

Ball (1994) is critical of this view, suggesting that:

Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete insofar as they relate to or map on to the 'wild profusion' of local practice. (Ball, 1994:10)

In saying this, Ball moves away from the top-down view, acknowledging that interpreting policy is an active process; that policy statements are always subject to multiple interpretations depending on the standpoints of those doing the interpretative work; and, that implementation of policy in practice almost always has different outcomes to those intended. This position has resonance with Lipsky's (1980) analysis of 'street level bureaucrats'. The 'on the ground' practitioners (teachers, policemen and women, health workers) he studied had to put contradictory and sometimes unrealistic policy expectations into practice. In the process they effectively made policy, in a 'bottom-up' manner. Despite moving away from the 'top-down'

model, these perspectives are still based on a premise of policy ‘encoders’ and ‘decoders’, such that the gap between policy and practice is explained by the ‘losses’ that occur in transmission from policy makers to ‘practitioners’.

In contrast, the academics in my study were not equally aware of ‘policy’ as it is embodied in government papers, nor could they identify those past policies whose legacies were still felt in the present. Rather, within their everyday activities my interviewees negotiated their everyday work and careers – their commitments and ambitions - through a myriad of requirements that were mediated by their institutions. The individuals in my study were never simply engaged in ‘decoding’ or responding to particular policies, or to policy per se. Rather, they juggled their academic commitments (shaped by competitions to access capitals and the ‘goods’ of academic work) and their moral commitments to particular ways of doing. In their everyday work such commitments were in congruence and discord with the requirements of their departments and institutions.

In contrast to the models of policy discussed above, theories of social reproduction and transformation present ideas about shifting practice that marginalise policy intervention. However, my thesis clearly shows that ‘traces’ of policy can be seen in and through the intersections of everyday practices and institutions. For example, the different daily paths found across the study sites, and the negotiations and navigations of institutional and personal temporalities in which my interviewees engage, are shaped by institutional mediations of policy. This is made explicit in chapter five, which shows that institutional decisions to focus on research or teaching as the key source of income have implications for the practices and niches available to my interviewees. Less obviously, the capitals which institutions and individuals are concerned with accumulating are in part influenced by audit mechanisms such as the RAE (though this mechanism has itself been ‘captured’ by academics, meaning that many of its measures attempt to quantify some of the existing ‘standards’ of the practice). In spite of these examples, linking changing policy to changing everyday practice remains difficult.

My analysis of the sociological labour market landscape in chapter seven reveals some of the reasons why this is so. Critically, the affects of policy accumulate across time. New policy

agendas always intersect with landscapes comprised of individuals and institutions both at different stages of their careers. These landscapes bear the legacies of previous policy decisions, as well as being shaped by disciplinary histories and by the demographic of the workforce, the characteristics of which depend on cohorts of individuals whose lives and careers are defined by and integral to this changing landscape. In taking this 'longer view', the intersections of policy and practice are much easier to identify.

For example, in focussing on temporally-shifting labour market landscapes, we are reminded that commitments and roles are not made and occupied in a vacuum; careers are made from circumstances which both precede the individual and are shaped by their presence and participation in the academic world. As such, careers are structurally limited (both in terms of enablement and constraint). That is to say, depending on one's positioning in the structure, there is only limited room for success. At the same time, such opportunities for success fluctuate, depending on the temporal intersection of careers with the landscape. Again such conclusions are not only relevant to the academics in my study, but also to other academic disciplines and to other professions, all of which are comprised of intersecting everyday practices, individual careers and institutions.

Practices of sociology

In putting together the experiences of the individuals in my study we come to see that the academic world, and sociology, is not one thing. Especially striking in the thesis are the differences in academic work, and the array of possibilities at different kinds of university. Though academic commitments and the 'goods' of academic work that are valued are found across the sector – and drive all my interviewees to remain in the profession - the opportunities to engage in highly valued practices are unequally distributed. There are a limited number of top positions, and getting to the top is not a simple outcome of merit. Knowledge of the system acts as one limitation to the 'smooth' operation of such a meritocracy, and in that sense the insights of this thesis have immediate practical implications for all those engaged in academic work, especially those in the early stages of their careers. For example, the academic world, and discipline of sociology, that new academics enter and navigate today are not the same as those

navigated by their predecessors. Understanding positional relations within the university field, and the relationship of university type to possible daily paths and 'niches' are important if individuals are to reflect in an informed way on their own work and careers.

Of course, my focus on individuals and institutions means that other potentially significant dynamics of practice reproduction and transformation have been overlooked. For example, I have not pursued a line of enquiry associated with epistemological development and the implications of disciplinary fragmentation and paradigm shifts for everyday practices and academic careers. Abbott develops such a model in his 2001 book 'Chaos of disciplines'. In it, he proposes that the social sciences change via an 'interactive cultural system', suggesting that the academic labour of the social sciences is organised around sub-disciplinary distinctions, with some research areas persisting whilst others die out. He argues that these sub-disciplines structure the academic labour market, he describes how knowledge structures are mediated by institutions (for example in how departments are organised) and he outlines the implications such histories of ideas have for the detail of academic work.

Though not investigated within this thesis, such a model provides an interesting further angle to the discussion. For example, it emphasises the importance for success in academic life not just of having good ideas but of having good ideas about the 'right' topics, at the right time. In addition, Abbott's work suggests that accumulating the 'right kinds' of personal academic capital might depend on developing research in a persisting sub-disciplinary area, rather than in one that is waning. I have not delved into the history of sub-fields within sociology, or to relations between sociology and neighbouring disciplines. Tracking the 'margins' of the field within the wider world of academic knowledge production, and doing so with reference to a competition for ideas represents another potential line of enquiry and one which could be approached with the help of the methodological and theoretical framework developed here.

In conclusion, my thesis redresses an imbalance in social theories of practice, by showing how the relation between individuals' careers, institutions and policy interventions can be described and analysed using a conceptual frame that integrates a range of theoretical positions. In the process I show that such an integrated approach is important for understanding social

reproduction and transformation. The idea that different ‘registers’ of structure and agency are at work in processes of change has relevance to work concerned with ‘practice transformation’ across the social sciences. Further, many of the findings – specifically about the intersection of individual and institutional careers - will be of interest to those studying other professions, and for those interested in reflecting on how policy works in practice.

I hope my thesis will encourage others to incorporate the temporality of individual’s lives and landscapes into practice-based theories of social change. For the academics in my study, and more broadly for all those in the profession, this thesis demonstrates that individual struggles and discontents, often regarded as personal failings, are in fact as likely to be social in their character.

Appendix

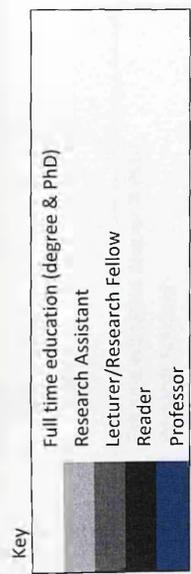
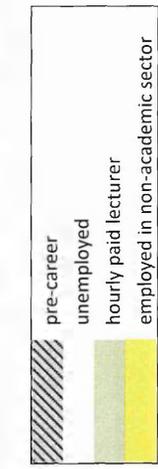
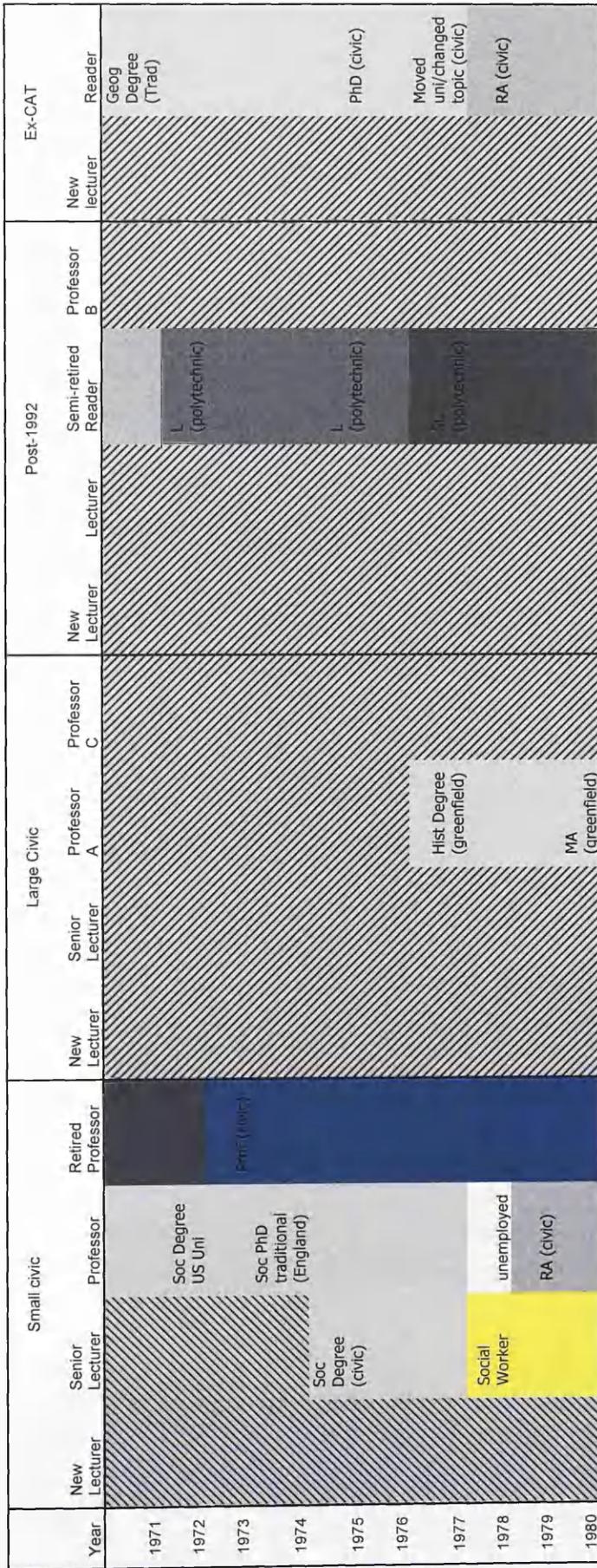
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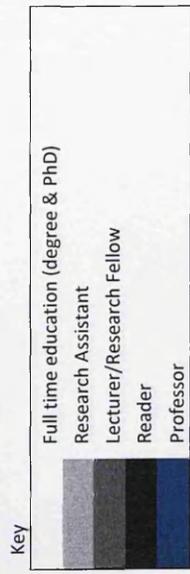
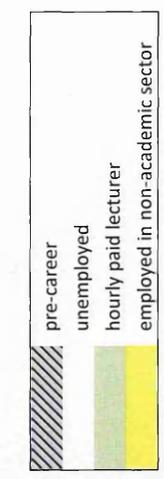
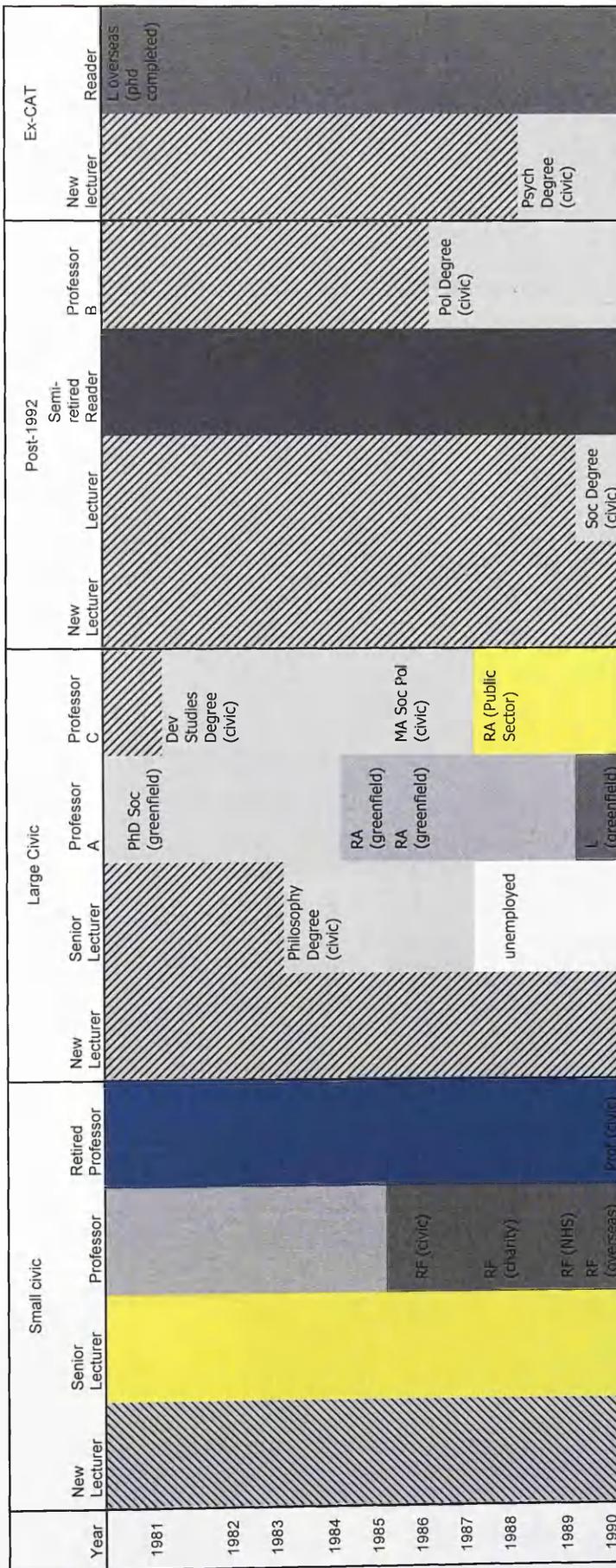
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	New Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Professor	New Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Professor A	New Lecturer	Lecturer		Semi-retired Reader	Professor B	New lecturer
1960			Retired Professor						Soc Degree (civic)			
1961												
1962												
1963						RA (civic)						
1964									work overseas			
1965												
1966										PhD (civic & overseas)		
1967												
1968												
1969												
1970												

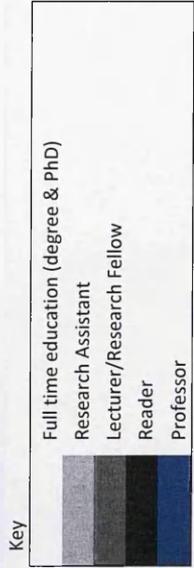
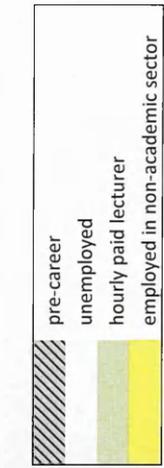
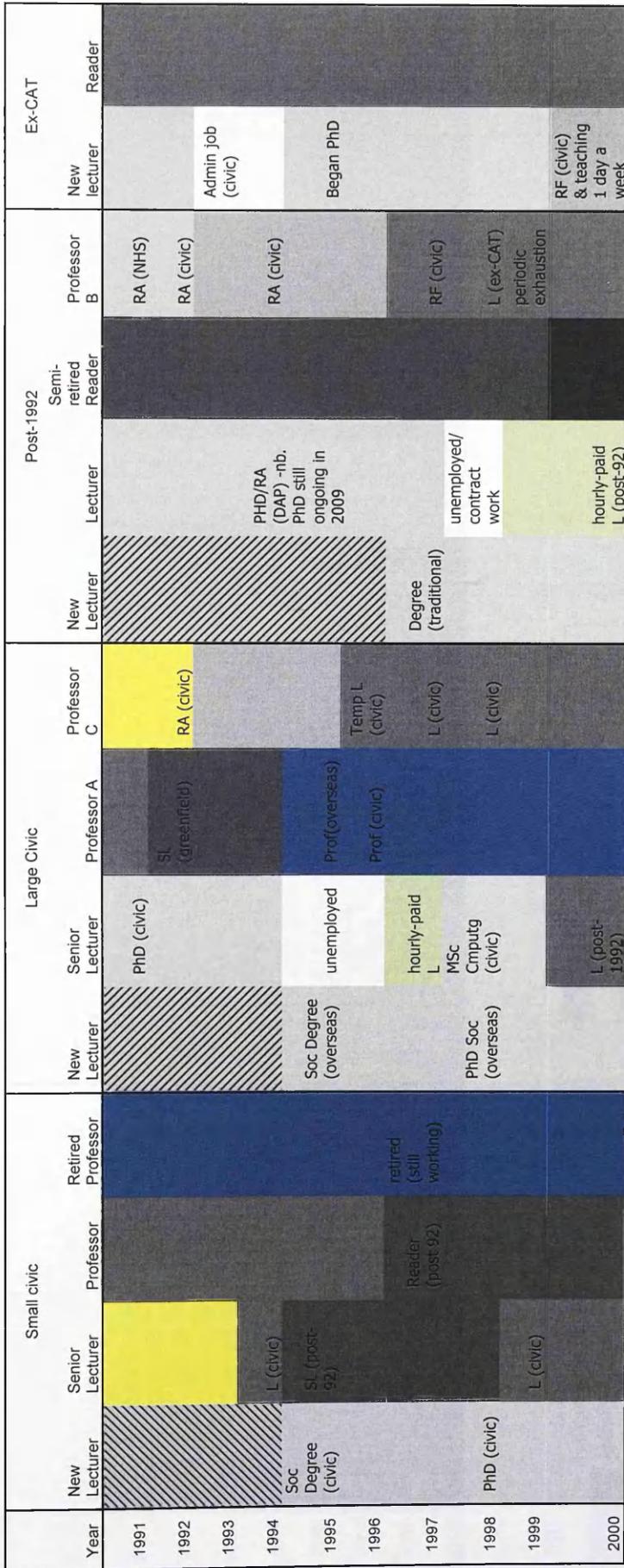
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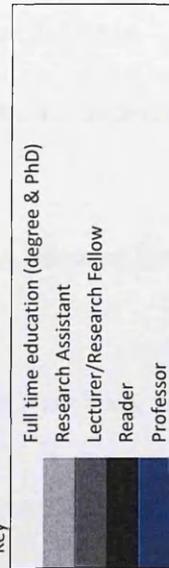
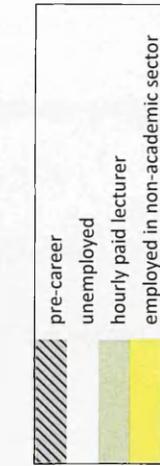
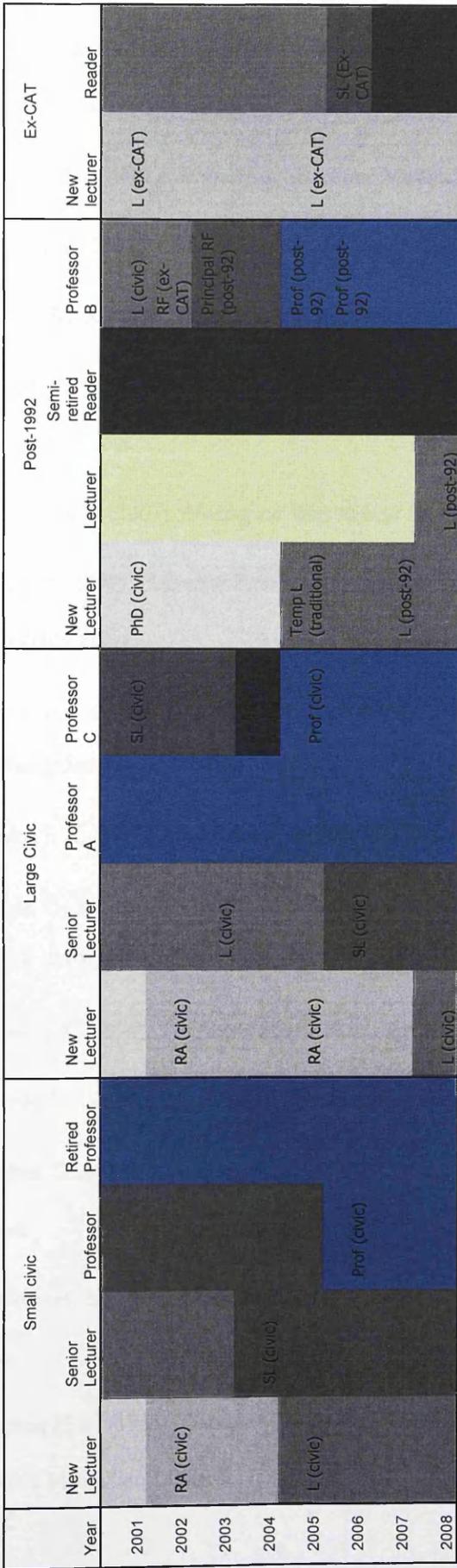
	Full time education (degree & PhD)
	Research Assistant
	Lecturer/Research Fellow
	Reader
	Professor

	pre-career
	unemployed
	hourly paid lecturer
	employed in non-academic sector









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