

Shifting academic identities in a post 1992 university. What are the implications for gender?

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Shifting academic identities in a post 1992 university. What are the implications for gender?

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Abstract

Under the weight of the neoliberal agenda, higher education lecturers in the United Kingdom (UK) struggle to maintain their professional identity, destabilised by the pressures of marketisation and accountability. The questions explored within this thesis are based around a research project that aimed to examine the shifting academic identities of lecturers in a post-1992 university. The research adopted a qualitative methodology, informed by a post-structuralist perspective and a Foucauldian theoretical framework.

Neoliberalism, marketisation of higher education and new managerialism have disrupted academic identities and altered the very nature of academic work (Fumasoli *et al.*, 2015). Academics are required to meet students' raised expectations in a business-based environment and are obliged to participate in the new culture of audit and increased accountability. This thesis argues that academics' identities have shifted to include three new identities: customer service-provider, carer and for some, researcher. Analysis of the data suggests that there are clearly gendered patterns of work at the university and highlights how the Research Excellence Framework (REF), also has gendered implications (Yarrow and Davies 2018).

This thesis presents the concept of academic identity in a post-1992 UK university as a fluid and multifaceted entity. This is shaped by the broad relationship between the universities' adoption of neoliberal agendas and the impact of this commitment on the life of academics, resulting in the appearance of a new identity of a 'multifarious' academic.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research locates significant configurations of academic identities in Higher Education (HE) since the 1980s in the context of neoliberalism. Over recent decades, a number of authors (Power, 1994; Giroux, 2011; Cannella and Koro-Lungberg, 2017; Santamaria, 2020) discussed how neoliberalist ideology brought about the deregulation of the landscape of HE by leading it towards a consumer-driven market and associated economic and managerial practices.

Drawing on literature and the data from a UK university, this thesis explores the interplay of powers within the university's structures and processes and the impact of these powers on academic identities. Post-structuralist theoretical positions are employed throughout this study to make sense of the data. In the words of Durrheim (1997), post-structuralism aims to account for how particular conceptions of the world become fixed and commonly accepted, rather than making truth claims about how specific phenomena function. I was drawn to this approach as it accepts the researcher's own contribution in the interpretation of the data (Fox, 2014).

This study took place in a post-1992 university, giving an insight into the meanings and beliefs associated with the construction of academic identity and how these constructions have evolved over time. Specifically, the study focuses on the impact of neoliberal discourses on academics' social relations with students and colleagues under the pressures of performance reviews and auditing. The Oxford English

Dictionary (2020), refers to an academic as someone at a university who teaches and/or does research. This is the definition I have adopted throughout this thesis.

A qualitative methodology was implemented in the course of this research, adopting a post-structuralist perspective, informed by a Foucauldian theoretical framework.

How the neoliberal ideology has impacted on higher education policies

The 1980s brought a change in the way that universities were defined, moving from a “professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate” to a culture of “performance indicators, quality assurance measure and academic audits” (Olssen and Peters, 2005, p.313). Neoliberalism emerged through the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States. This was a time of reduction in government spending and increased privatisation. Neoliberal Managerialism emerged in the late 1970s/early 1980s, and its pro-market, pro-consumer ideological vision transformed public services from the 1980s onward (Larner, 2000). The term ‘neoliberalism’

... has usurped labels referring to specific political projects (Thatcherism, Reaganomics, Rogernomics), and is more widely used than its counterparts including, for example, economic rationalism, monetarism, neo-conservatism, managerialism and contractualism (Larner 2000, p.5).

The economic principles of neoliberalism led to the introduction of competition and market forces in higher education, in order to increase choice, reduce costs, and increase performance. A mechanism for doing this was the introduction of student fees

and the conceptualisation of students as customers and consumers of education. Student fees were introduced in the UK in 1998, with students being expected to pay up to £1,000 a year for tuition (Wilkins *et al.*, 2013). In 2006 student fees were increased to up to £3,000 a year, then increased to £3375 in 2011–2012. In 2012, following the Browne Review (2010), universities could charge up to £9,000 a year.

Heather Rolfe's (2002) research provides a useful intellectual bridge between the neoliberal policy context and their impact on universities, which resonated with the focus of my investigation. Specifically, her qualitative study involved interviewing university lecturers from four English universities, which enabled her to identify four main changes since fees were introduced:

- More students were entering higher education to enhance their employment prospects rather than to study a particular subject.
- Students preferred the vocational elements over the academic study in their programmes.
- Students were studying and also working part-time.
- The introduction of fees had resulted in increased consumerism within higher education (Rolfe, 2002).

The final point of increased consumerism within higher education is also discussed by Ritzer in 1998, when he referred to the 'McUniversity'. This term denotes how students and their parents now see universities from a consumer viewpoint, and with the decline of funding and consumerist demands from their customers, universities are responding by cutting costs and introducing measures to attract more students. Back in the early 1980s, Ritzer (1983) had introduced the notion of the 'McDonaldization of society', suggesting that McDonalds fast food restaurant provides a modern-day example of

the process of rationalisation: “A society characterized by rationality is one which emphasises efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of nonhuman for human technology, and control over uncertainty” (p.100). The concept of rationalisation dates back to Max Weber (cited in Beetham, 2013) whose work on rationalisation focused on post-war Germany, which saw increasingly sophisticated technology and bureaucratic administration within industry. Ritzer uses the theory of rationalisation to outline the dimensions of McDonaldization, which are efficiency, calculability and predictability. It was this notion of ‘McDonaldization’ which led to him referring to Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as the McUniversity.

In 2005, the National Student Survey (NSS) was introduced in the Higher Education sector in England and Wales, to measure student satisfaction. According to Carey, (2013, p.74), “The focus on satisfaction is indicative of the notion of the student-as-consumer”. Carey also sees the increased focus on student voice being related to consumerism within the sector. Any uncertainties about whether students are consumers were clarified in March 2015 with the Competition and Markets Authorities (CMA) informing providers about their consumer law obligations to undergraduate students (CMA, 2015).

Linked to the idea of students as consumers is the notion of ‘value for money’. The HEPI-HEA (2015) Student Academic Experience Survey identified that 41% of undergraduates rated value for money as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, and 29% rated it as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’:

Perceptions of value for money have diverged as a result of the increase in the full-time undergraduate fee cap to £9,000 in 2012 for students from England (and for students from Scotland and Northern Ireland who travel elsewhere in the UK to study). Only 7% of students from England on the higher fees feel they receive 'very good' value for money (p.2).

The survey also highlighted the expectation that academics should be trained to teach. Moreover, if academics make claims that teaching is research-informed or research-led, then the benefits to the students need to be communicated to them.

The intensification of academic work and audit practices has also included the auditing of academic research undertaken in universities through peer review exercises. In the United Kingdom, there have been six Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) in 1986, 1989, 1992, 1996, 2001 and 2008 (Rowlinson *et al.*, 2015). This has now been replaced with the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Case studies that demonstrate impact were a new element of REF 2014. Furthermore, the prediction of future impact has now become part of research funding bids (Cotton *et al.*, 2018). Following the 2014 REF, Lord Stern was appointed to chair an independent review of the research assessment process. The recommendations were that all research active staff should be returned in the REF, which has led to staff being moved to teaching only contracts in some universities (Hand, 2017). The institution involved in this study, however, decided not to change contracts in this manner. In the professional conversations I had within this institution, there had been a debate about how this resulted in gendered implications within the faculties of Health and Education, which employed predominantly female academics, many of whom were not research active at the time of this study, and did not have the skills and time to produce research

outputs for the REF due to teaching responsibilities and care responsibilities. In addition,

As the REF is a time-oriented mechanism, it exacerbates existing inequalities caused by maternity leave and caring responsibilities, which ultimately amount to time taken out of a REF cycle. The REF simply does not sufficiently consider the ongoing care responsibilities undertaken by “encumbered” faculty members, predominantly women (Yarrow and Davies, 2018, p.1).

Research outputs are now often linked to performance review and according to Deem *et al.*, (2007, p.15), managerialism involves a much more intrusive performance management regime and consequently the service provider is now “literally the servant of consumer needs and priorities”. This has led to a major impact on universities in the United Kingdom, which have been forced to change management structures, systems and practices. As a consequence of the change of regime, the status of professionals as experts has been reduced, and many find it difficult to accept the “radically changed political and organizational context in which they have to operate” (p.19). A lot has happened since Deem wrote his article in 2007. Contemporary neoliberal consciousness is

...based on continuously changing economic organization and techniques, as well as societal organization broadly as competition is privileged. Anything and anybody can become a channel or a watchdog for neoliberal policies and practices under conditions where competition reigns, resources are limited, policies are market-driven, and individual worth is tied to financial and monetary profit. Value-for-money, the rise of managerialism, consumerism, accountability, and strictly controlled performance support audit culture and evidence-based practices globally (Cannella and Koro-Ljungberg, 2017, p.156).

This marketisation of higher education also led to the notion of ‘teaching excellence’ which became a focus in higher education in the early 2000s and slowly grew in importance (French and O’Leary, 2017).

Key drivers for this slow development have resulted in the creation of formal frameworks for recognising ‘teaching excellence’, the increasing need to focus on teaching as the main income generator for some HEIs, the rise of student satisfaction data, particularly through the creation of the National Student Survey, and the organisational imperative to capture positive performance indicators around programme and module evaluations. In turn, these factors have become increasingly important due to the rise of the ‘marketised’ higher education (HE) system (p.1).

The Higher Education and Research Bill (HERB) was passed in April 2017, leading to the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), “heralding an era of unprecedented scrutiny and focus on the quality of teaching in England” (French and O’Leary, 2017, p.2).

The audit culture within universities has led to increased measurement of the performance of academics. Ball (2012) discusses how performativity in Higher Education is a form of regulation which serves as a measure of productivity, and he outlines a new mode of social regulation on the work of professionals and emphasises that the flow of changing demands, expectations and indicators are making us insecure and wondering whether we are ‘doing enough’:

In regimes of performativity experience is nothing, productivity is everything. Last year’s efforts are a benchmark for improvement – more publications, more research grants, more students. We must keep up; strive to achieve the new and very more diverse targets which we set for ourselves in appraisal meetings; confess and confront our weaknesses; undertake appropriate and value-enhancing professional development; and take up opportunities for making ourselves more productive, ... Within all of

this more and more of the scholarly disposition is rendered explicit and auditable (Ball, 2012, p.19).

Ball's reference to an increasing sense of "ontological insecurity" (p. 20) within Higher Education is particularly relevant to this study as he explains how for academic tutors, there is now a lack of knowing what is important, and if what they are doing is right both pedagogically and scholarly. Their professional judgement about their performance has been superseded by performance measures. Ball ends his article by declaring that if we want to keep any practices from the previous public service regime, then academics need to understand the current relations of power and how this affects how they see themselves and their practice: "This is a necessary precursor to the possibility of free and critical thought in the neoliberal university" (p.26).

Theoretical framework

I chose a post-structuralist perspective, informed by a Foucauldian theoretical framework. My decision was determined by the relevance of Foucault's work investigating power relations within society and individuals and how institutions exert power upon them (Foucault, 1980). I drew upon Foucauldian theoretical units to analyse the data. These approaches were:

- Power relations and resistance
- Disciplinary power
- Self-regulation

My decision was also influenced by the way Foucault's analysis of power interrogates how individuals show resistance to its effects. I have highlighted in this chapter how

some of the mechanisms of performativity and regulation impact on professionals within higher education. This climate has led to a natural dovetailing with poststructuralism and power as a theoretical framework.

Foucault sees power as relational and these relationships cannot be established without discourse and the construction of truth:

We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart (Foucault 1978, p.101).

Foucault sees power as relational and not necessarily oppressive:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (Foucault, 1991, p.194).

He argues that wherever there is a power relationship, there is the opportunity for resistance. In professional conversations, even at the start of undertaking this thesis, there was a sense of resistance to undertaking research by some academics.

Foucault observed that technologies of the self were formed alongside the technologies of domination such as discipline:

The subjects so created would produce the ends of government by fulfilling themselves rather than being merely obedient...Central to this approach was that attention would not only focus on the great technologies such as the Panopticon but would turn to the mundane, little governmental techniques and tools, such as interviews, case records, diaries, brochures,

and manuals, that were key to this creative process (Rose *et al.*, 2009, p.10).

This approach leads to individuals regulating themselves. Foucault's earlier work emphasised the subjugation of docile individuals in the grasp of disciplinary powers but he later admitted that not enough was mentioned about agency. He re-defined power, therefore, to include the notion of agency as self-regulation (Besley, 2005).

Traditionally, Foucault's work is associated with discourse analysis, however I prefer to draw upon Georgaca and Avdi (2012), who suggest that discourse analysis examines language in use, rather than psychological phenomena such as attitudes, memory or emotions, which are traditionally presumed to underlie talk and be revealed through it. In addition, in discourse analysis language is examined in terms of construction and function; that is, language is considered a means of constructing, rather than mirroring reality. In the context of my research, my focus is not on the functions of the text but rather on 'mirroring' experiences through my interpretation of the data.

The changing nature of post-92 universities

In 1992 the UK government formally ended the divide between universities and polytechnics, granting polytechnics full university status. "Post 1992 universities (often referred to as 'New Universities') are the old Poly-Technical Colleges that took up the mantle of 'University' after the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 was brought into force" (Feather and McDermott, 2016, p.1).

Boliver (2015) argues that pre-1992 universities “continued to be held in higher regard than New, post-1992, universities and that differences in esteem were prevalent even amongst the Old universities” (p.608). In 1994, the Russell Group was founded to petition the government on issues such as funding and research in the interest of their members. Research income and the number of postgraduate students is a significant facet of status within universities in the UK. Research has always been of primary importance to the Russell Group:

Historically, many Old universities have prioritised research over teaching, aligning themselves with the label “research intensive” (as opposed to “teaching only”) institutions. Many New universities, in contrast, have embraced their teaching mission, styling themselves as “teaching led” (rather than “teaching only”) institutions... It is well known that students from more advantaged social class backgrounds and private schools are especially over-represented at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and the Russell Group, whereas students from ‘non-traditional backgrounds’ are concentrated in New, post-1992 universities with widening access remits (Boliver, 2015, pp.615-616).

Boliver (2015) also emphasises how post-1992 universities often have an occupational rather than an academic nature and serve students from less advantaged social backgrounds, on far more limited resources than pre-1992 institutions. Surprisingly, however, the National Student Survey results are not lower in the new universities, leading to many of the new institutions referring to themselves as teacher-led universities.

The emphasis on teaching in the post-1992 sector is now changing, with many post-1992 institutions trying to develop a research culture, either through employing staff on either research or teaching only contracts, or demanding that all staff become research active (Quigley, 2011). As mentioned previously, the move to ensure that all

staff become research active has had gendered implications for some post-1992 universities.

The drive for universities to develop a significant research profile was due to the requirements of the Research Excellence Framework. The Research Excellence Framework involves “Complex and unpopular tendering processes by which institutions bid for ‘Quality-related research funding’ on the basis of the recent ‘outputs’ of academic staff” (McGettigan, 2013, p.194). At the time of the study, staff were working towards a REF planned for 2020 and there was increased pressure on staff to engage with research. For those who were already experienced researchers there was pressure to research within the university guidelines. The university at the time, was behind most of the pre-1992 universities in relation to acceptable outputs. The Stern Review (Stern, 2016) proposed changes to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and proposed that all research active staff be returned in the REF. This was particularly important to academic staff at the time this research took place, particularly in a post-1992 university, as there was pressure from university management for many academic staff to shift from ‘teacher’ to ‘academic scholar’.

At the time the research was undertaken, the Teaching Excellence Framework had only recently been introduced, by the Government in England, the purpose of which was to “identify and incentivise the highest quality teaching to drive up standards in higher education” (McGaig, 2017, p.100). It drew on data that was collected nationally in the areas of student satisfaction which was measured by responses to the National Student Survey (NSS), student continuation which was measured by data collected by

the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and employment outcomes which was measured by responses to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DHLE). (Office for Students, 2020) Consequently, academics were made aware of the importance of student satisfaction, retention and employability. Theil (2019, p.538) highlights how the National Student Survey's "rise in status is linked to its influence on national rankings and associated funding streams referenced to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Consequently, many universities have implemented further assessments of student satisfaction, thereby putting additional internal performative pressures on courses and individual lecturers". Employability data was high for the vocational programmes in the Faculties of Health and Education. Compared to the rest of the sector the setting had done well in the TEF, achieving Gold status.

The university was aware of the forthcoming Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) which would involve research partnerships with non-academic partners and working with businesses (Research England, 2020). Academic staff, however, had not been given targets around the KEF, however, departments were being expected to report on this in their planning documents.

Performance in the REF and the TEF contributed to the position in the university league tables. The three main UK league tables are published by The Times & Sunday Times, the Guardian and the independent Complete University Guide. They are important to the setting as they provide information for future students, parents and other key stakeholders to draw upon to form opinions about higher education

institutions. Research does not feature overtly within the tables “by the Guardian and is only referenced directly by a couple of metrics within the Complete University Guide and The Times & Sunday Times. However, the volume and intensity of research at different providers affect the numbers of academic staff employed as well as the resources available within libraries, which are both included in other metrics” (Turnbull, 2018, p.13). The assessment of research quality, is provided by statistics from the Research Excellence Framework (REF), however the REF only takes place approximately every six to seven years. Data for these metrics, therefore, may be out of date as time passes. To represent teaching quality, the tables rely on data from the National Student Survey (NSS). Within the setting for this study great importance was given to the university’s position in the league tables and pressure was being put on academics to ensure good NSS scores, and provide research outputs to increase the scores for research quality within the league tables (Turnbull, 2018). Compared to the wider HE sector the institution had performed well in the teaching quality metrics, but had not performed well in the research quality metrics.

The marketisation and ‘value for money’ discourses at the time the research was undertaken are encapsulated in the English Higher Education policy white paper (2016):

More needs to be done to ensure that providers offering the highest quality courses are recognised and that teaching is valued as much as research. Students expect better value for money; employers need access to a pipeline of graduates with the skills they need; and the taxpayer needs to see a broad range of economic and social benefits generated by the public investment in our higher education system (p.18).

Whilst the white paper suggests that teaching should be valued as much as research, the setting where this study took place felt that the teaching was mostly high quality

and they therefore did not need to focus on that aspect performance. As mentioned previously, the institution had recently received 'Gold' status' in the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Overview of the thesis

The overall structure of the study takes the form of seven chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature related to the changes in Higher Education and the associated impact on academic work and professional identities. This review also looks at the literature around consumerism in Higher Education. This chapter begins by laying out the purpose of the review, then examines the research relating to the professional identity of academics in the United Kingdom, while also drawing from an international perspective.

The third chapter outlines the justification for my methodological approach and lays out the theoretical dimensions of the research. My methodology is qualitative; an interview-based study of 32 academics across all three faculties within the university. The chapter gives a rationale for my sample, chosen qualitative methods, and the process of analysis. Information is given about the participants who took part in the research, including gender. This chapter includes a discussion around the reliability and validity of the research and ethical issues are also considered. The chapter concludes by giving a brief summary of the research design and the philosophical foundations of the study.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters present the findings of the research, focusing on the three key themes. Chapter 4 focuses on the first theme: Neoliberal governance and academic identity. Chapter 5 presents the second theme: The pervasive influence of the Research Excellence Framework, and the resultant shift in professional identities. Chapter 6 introduces the third theme: Students as customers, academics as service providers.

The seventh and final chapter draws upon the entire thesis, tying up the various theoretical and empirical strands in order to give a critique of the findings. This chapter includes a discussion of the implication of the findings for future research, identifying areas for further research and implications for the university.

Key research aims

This thesis explores academic identities and the impact of consumerism and managerialism on these identities. Policy, informed and developed from a neoliberal ideology, has gone on to impact higher education and communities of practice. The impact of consumerism and the National Student Survey involved considerable emotional labour, which had led to increased caring responsibilities for some.

...emotion was recognized as one element of labor from the 1970s. As the service industry has developed, emotional laborers, who are asked by organizations to hide their emotions and display emotions customers want, have increased rapidly” (Choi and Kim, 2015 p.283).

In addition, at the time this research was undertaken, the university was driving to establish a significant research profile, which together with REF-related requirements

had impacted on academics' identities. My own professional justification for undertaking this research is linked to the changing nature of the institution, and my professional discussions with colleagues, where I witnessed the stress that the pressure to publish was bringing about on staff, particularly female colleagues. In addition, colleagues were complaining about increased workload. Furthermore, low staff morale was becoming obvious due to constant scrutiny within an audit culture. This mattered to me as at the time I started to undertake this research I was a head of department. I therefore felt a responsibility for the welfare of my colleagues within the department.

This research study, therefore, had three overarching aims:

- To examine how new models of HE governance impact on academic identities in a post-92 university
- To analyse how the university's drive to establish a significant research profile, has influenced academic roles and responsibilities and to analyse the associated gender implications
- To examine the impact of student expectations and the associated performance measures on gender, academic roles and their identities.

The associated research questions were:

- How do new models of HE governance impact on academic identity?
- In what ways has the university's drive to establish a significant research profile, influenced academic roles and responsibilities and what are the associated gendered implications?

- How do student expectations and the associated performance measures impact on gender, academic roles and their identities?

This thesis, using data from one post-1992 university, makes an original contribution to the current debates around the shifting professional identities in higher education, bringing the voice of academics to the foreground.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

For this review, I have focussed on research studies relating to changes in Higher Education in the UK and internationally, their impact on the nature of academic work and the configuration of academic identities. Central to the literature in this area is neo-liberalism and its associated economic and management principles, which has led to a consumer-driven market within the sector (Avis 2003; Ball, 2012; Deem *et al.*, 2007; O'Meara 2015). This literature review demonstrates the history, vocabulary, theories and methods related to the changes in Higher Education since the 1980s and the impact of these on academics. The review includes political standpoints, economic principles, theories, but mainly focuses on findings from research studies. This review, therefore, includes relevant work of others and addresses limitations and gaps within the literature helping me to clarify my thoughts and provide a firm foundation for my own research project.

Theorising identity

This section looks historically at the concept of identity and how it has developed. It also examines the complexities related to the notion of academic identity.

Erickson (1968) sees a distinction between personal and social identity and views identity as a collection of interacting factors that are largely independent. He views personal identity as “an individual project that engages with historical, cultural, and social contexts and practices” (Azmitia *et al.*, p.3), and social identity involving “collective, group-level identification that represents a sense of “we-ness”” (p.4).

According to this approach, it is up to the individual to adjust to suit particular life situations. Erickson views identity as fairly flexible and pragmatic. Ericksonians, however, do not mention the role of emotion as a social construction and there is no reference to the role of power relations (Zembylas, 2003c). The current debates around concepts of emotion (Goleman, 1995; Leitch and Day, 2000; Burkitt, 2014) nonetheless, indicate that researchers' focus has shifted, increasing attention towards the emotional domain. Willis and Cromby (2019) note a 'turn to affect' across the humanities and social sciences, where issues related to emotions forge their own distinctive contribution and trajectory within research studies.

Vygotsky's (1978) approach to identity highlights how our perceptions of a person's mental functioning involves examining the social and cultural processes from which an individual is constructed:

His focus on action implies that identity formation involves an encounter between individual choices and cultural tools employed in a particular institutional context. Identity is the ordered sum of all these: relationship skills, emotions, physical abilities, and so forth. These traits are associated with the actions one performs, including relationships, career, ideology, producing an amalgamated identity (Zembylas, 2003c, p.220).

Within Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach, identity is viewed from a cultural and political perspective, rather than Erickson's social psychological perspective. Both Erickson and Vygotsky imply the notion of a unified identity (Zembylas, 2003c). The Vygotskian approach, like the Ericksonian approach, however, does not refer to the role of power relations. Foucault, in contrast, "sees identity as a form of subjugation and a way of exercising power over people and preventing them from moving outside fixed boundaries" (O'Farrell, 2005, p.1).

A post-structuralist perspective on identity is particularly relevant to this study. It underlines the impossibility of an origin for the 'fixed self' and is concerned with how identities are constantly changing:

In a poststructuralist approach to identity, identity is a dynamic process of intersubjective discourses, experiences, and emotions: all of these change over time as discourses change, constantly providing new configurations (Zembylas, 2003c, p.221).

This resonates with my research as a post-structuralist perspective on identity sees emotion as being central to its construction. According to this approach, our perception of its function is complicated by the myriad of emotions likely to be experienced on any one occasion and by the dynamic nature of the connection between emotion and other aspects of an individual's identity. People do have individual traits, but different emotions may produce behaviours that are different to one's predicted behaviour and therefore opens up the possibilities for self- transformation (Zembylas, 2003a). The main justification for adopting a post-structural approach is the multi-faceted nature of post-structural identity. Chao (2019) highlights how poststructuralists see identity as dynamic and multiple, and is actually a hybrid, integrated in cultural practices across communities and time.

Clegg (2008) adopted a post-structuralist approach in her study into the ways academic identities were formed and developed in "response to the changes in university structures and external environments" (p.340). Clegg implemented a post-structuralist analysis, the strength of which was in "offering insight into these processes and in connecting the structural changes impacting on higher education to

lived experience on the ground” (Clegg, 2008, p.331). She interviewed 13 academics, seven women and six men, from various backgrounds and lengths of employment, in a university where income from funding was concentrated in a few areas of the university, so the majority of staff were not, classed as research active. Student support and teaching was the focus for most, together with a high-level commitment to widening participation. Gender emerged as a theme, and the “normative masculinity of the academy was problematised in a number of interviews” (p. 341).

Her findings identified that academic identities were being shaped in response to the changes happening within the sector:

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

This study took place over 15 years ago; however, it is particularly relevant to my study, as it researched academic identity in a non-traditional university with an approach influenced by post-structural thinking. My investigation into academic identity, includes the same commitment to the fluidity of identity, which is recognised as multiple. Literature indicates that academic identity is a complex and multi-faceted notion, which is continuously impacted by the dynamics between individuals, disciplines, and universities within which academic identities are formed and sustained (Henkel, 2005).

Quigley (2011) suggests that factors affecting the construction and preservation of academic identity include the types of HEI; private, pre- or post-1992 universities.

Different types of universities are organised in different ways in terms of funding and governance. In addition, some HEIs have teaching only, or research only contracts which can impact upon identity. Those in post-1992 universities who are not on teaching only contracts are now under “pressure to do both teaching and research to a high standard” (Quigley, 2011, p.25). Likewise, those in pre-1992 universities are also under similar pressure and now have to focus more on teaching quality than they did previously due to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which assesses the quality of teaching in universities. The first TEF results in 2017, caused mixed reactions. “With some Russell Group institutions receiving Silver and Bronze awards and other newer providers achieving Gold status, it is safe to say the TEF sent shockwaves through the UK higher education sector, testing assumptions of conventional hierarchies and ranking systems” (Beech, 2017 p.11). This affects the preservation of identities and the construction of new facets to academic identity in both types of institution.

In addition, the TEF can lead to negative effects on academic identities. O’Leary *et al.*, (2019) refer to the impact of the TEF on academic’s health and well-being in their study across both pre-1992 and post-1992 universities in England, Scotland and Wales.

The TEF has resulted in the creation of another layer of administrative bureaucracy, which in turn has given rise to additional work streams for staff, often with no additional resources to support this extra workload. The project data revealed evidence of this extra workload having a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of participants (p.6).

There is some literature that discusses how the TEF has impacted on academics in research intensive universities (Perkins, 2019), and across post and pre-1992 institutions (O’Leary *et al.*, 2019), however there seems to be a limited amount of

literature as to how the TEF has particularly impacted on academic identities within post-1992 universities in the UK.

Literature related to academic identities focuses mostly on the similarities rather than differences in the key aspects. Vieira (2014) confirms that when we talk about cultural, professional, or other groups there is usually a predisposition to think more about what culturally unites them than about their differences. Human thinking is predominantly categorical and seeks to find more similarities than differences:

However, although we may be dealing with similar social trajectories, everything depends on the identity bricolage that individuals construct with their own cultural métissage throughout their own singular life stories. There is, therefore, no unique cultural identity within each one of these groups, but rather different ways of living, of living together, and of identifying with the cultural worlds through which each individual passes in each specific social trajectory (p.10).

Quigley (2011) suggests that culture should not be ignored when analysing academic identity as reflecting on community and culture can help to situate an academic in terms of aspirations, interests and values. Like Quigley, Maalouf, (2001, p.20) argues against the idea of a singular 'self', and refers to composite identities which are individual and unique: "Every individual without exception possesses a composite identity". They only need to ask themselves "...a few questions to uncover forgotten divergences and unsuspected ramifications", to uncover that they are "...complex, unique and irreplaceable, not to be confused with any other".

We tend to categorise people together under the same headings, which Maalouf believes can lead to perpetuating prejudices. Even though our identities are composite, they are also singular as we each experience our identity as a whole identity. “A person’s identity is not an assemblage of separate affiliations, nor a kind of loose patchwork; it is like a pattern drawn on a slightly stretched parchment. Touch just one part of it, just on allegiance and the whole person will react...” (p.26). Academic identity within this thesis is perceived as multiple, with the governance and management structures of this particular post-1992 university affecting the construction and maintenance of those identities. Gender, however, cannot be ignored when analysing academic identity and it has a particular resonance in relation to this study.

Gender and identity

The past few decades have witnessed an increased interest in issues related to gender and identity. Theoretical perspectives on gender have penetrated current gender politics, having been associated with a network of debates generated by research studies related to feminism, gay liberation, psychoanalysis and other domains. Such studies have mostly focused on emphasising social expectations for specific categories of gender and on power relations between them. Acker (2004) explains the overall perception of gender, arguing that it is centred around perceived differences between male and female, defined as social disparities, inequalities and differences. Gender involves the way in which individuals see themselves and their identities (p.20).

According to Cerulo (1997, p.387):

Social constructionism informs much of the work on gender identity. Such studies challenge essentialist dichotomies of gender and dismiss notions of gender's primordial roots. Constructionists conceptualize gender as an interactional accomplishment, an identity continually renegotiated via linguistic exchange and social performance.

Cerulo (1997) refers to challenging 'essentialism', which is the belief that there are shared characteristics essential to women that could motivate them to act collectively (Stone, 2004). Postmodernists and post-structuralists, whilst supporting anti-essentialism, highlight flaws in the social constructionist approach, suggesting that it is insufficient and underestimates the role of power.

In the spirit of Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jean-Francois Lyotard, the postmodern-identity scholar deconstructs established identity categories and their accompanying rhetoric in an effort to explore the full range of "being." Works in this tradition call into question models that equate discourse with truth; they expose the ways in which discourse objectified as truth both forms and sustains collective definitions, social arrangements, and hierarchies of power... (Cerulo, 1997, p.391).

Cerulo (1997) refers to anti-essentialism and the role of power in relation to identity, and it is this approach that is used to deconstruct gender identity categories within this thesis. As there is no assumption of gendered essentialism, this approach to identity means that nothing is certain or preordained. By conceptualising gendered identities in this way, one can investigate how those involved in an organisation create their everyday practice from "within the repertoire of identity as they both draw on, and go beyond, the expectations of stereotypes in interaction with others in the (re)creation of identities" (Barry *et al.*, 2006, p.282). My approach to gender is relational, looking at how gender roles and relations work in each particular context, including how gender difference intersects with professional identities (Connell, 2012).

Acker (2009) discusses gender inequalities within an organisation. Work demands for professionals have become even greater, and modern communication tools encourage employees to work longer hours. Despite the increased involvement of men in childcare, women still carry the main burden of childcare and household work within the home. Many female professionals, therefore, have a heavier work burden than most men. Acker (2009), suggests that family-friendly policies, including part-time work, flexible hours, working from home and childcare assistance, are sometimes available, but only offer short term relief. Moreover, these measures may in fact act as a reinforcer of the male organisational model. Female academics who use family-friendly programmes may be seen as not serious or committed enough to a career and consequently not worthy of promotion. The use of family-friendly policies, therefore, can actually increase gender inequalities within an organisation. These gender inequalities will have an impact on the career choices available to women and their identity as a university teacher (Acker, 2009).

Angervall (2018) also discussed gender inequalities in her study of subjectivity, gender and movement among women university lecturers. She interviewed 19 female academic lecturers from six Swedish universities and asked them to reflect upon the directions of their career. All were early career academics and most undertook a predominantly teaching role. Several participants mentioned how heavy teaching workloads restricted them from following other opportunities such as research advancements. These findings also indicated how the teaching work in the 'competitive university' is viewed as less valued. Teaching is somehow transformed into a second career choice instead of its proper value. Furthermore, "these women are defined and placed in an academic institution that is formed by and constitutes

part of the hegemony of masculinity” (p.114). Some participants expressed feelings of being limited on the one hand, yet on the other, they also questioned their own hesitancy. In teaching, they felt reasonably safe, with a sense of belonging, while in research, most expressed uncertainty as to the direction they were heading. They were defined as ‘teachers’ early on in their career, which may be related to how gender influences “both career positions and the way in which professions in academia are made, defined and regulated” (p.115). Angervall concludes by considering how the difficult circumstances described by women academics in this study will influence the professional identity of the future academic lecturer.

Fisher *et al.* (2010) conducted research to investigate the gendered and emotional nature of university-based organisational commitment. Gendered elements of work commitment have illustrated the problems faced by female academics in meeting an organisation's demands, with work, family commitments, and their focus on teaching, often having a negative impact on their careers. The study identified that most women had a high level of commitment to teaching, but the feeling was that the organisation did not recognise or appreciate engagement in these areas. It was the perception of most women that men seemed to pay minimal attention to what they considered to be mundane service work and teaching. “Competing commitment to work and family meant that women were never able to meet the archetypal male construct of the “ideal worker” one who was always ready and available for work, if not already present in the workplace” (p.291). This, and other stories told by academic staff within this study, highlighted the difficulty that primarily women face in achieving a satisfactory work-home balance.

This competing commitment to work and family is discussed by Toffoletti and Starr (2016). They collected data from semi-structured interviews with 31 academic staff at an Australian university, to explore ways in which the participants constructed their relationship to work-life balance. The findings revealed that women tried to construct themselves as successful academics by working long hours and also trying to manage their domestic domains. They managed the roles of both paid and unpaid workers by increasing their overall hours of work rather than challenging the workload model, as they did not want to meet criticism from their colleagues. Despite there being work-life policies, their perceptions were “that in order to demonstrate their commitment to being ‘serious’ academics, their obligation to family should not be mentioned, or if it is discussed, should not impact on their availability to the university and their ability to produce research outcomes” (p.501).

These findings are similar to the views of Morley (2013, p.122), who refers to how academia assumes that academics have no other obligations outside of work. As they have less time to undertake research in their own time, they tend to be deployed as teachers, which is a less prestigious area of academic life (Morley, 2016). Consequently, there is less opportunity to apply for research funding, and they are trapped therefore, in the less respected areas of academic life. Bagihole (2016, p.14) used the theoretical lens of male hegemony to account for why women are marginalised in Higher Education. “At the heart of the male cultural hegemony in HE is the notion of men as knowledge creators and women as reproducers. This is a powerful norm which means that women are expected to take greater responsibility for teaching and learning, including the pastoral care of students, rather than

research”. The limited time to research impacts on female academics’ ability to shift their identity to that of teacher/researcher.

Aiston and Jung (2015) undertook a gendered analysis of the Changing Academic Profession Survey (CAP). The CAP survey is an international survey carried out in 19 countries, which was completed in 1992 and 2008. Aiston and Jung discuss how the gender gap, with respect to female research outputs being significantly lower than their male colleagues, is often explained by reference to “familial status and responsibilities” (p.205). They argue that the gender gap cannot be explained completely by female family and domestic responsibilities. Another problem is the research process itself. Publication rates in predominantly female disciplines such as humanities and social science, are lower than other specialisms. Male academics are also less likely to read female research, resulting in lower visibility of women's academic outputs and less collaboration with their male colleagues. In addition, women are less likely to be on the editorial board of peer reviewed journals. “An over-reliance on an explanatory framework which positions family-related variables as central with respect to the gender research productivity gap has the potential to draw our attention away from other, equally as significant structural and systemic discriminatory practices” (Aiston and Jung, 2015, p.217).

Linked to the argument around lower value research outputs, Leathwood and Read (2013), undertook email interviews with 71 academics from different UK universities and at different stages of their careers. They were asked about their experiences and understandings of the latest research policy trends and their effects on their own

research, and the research culture within their institution. Although there were high levels of disagreement with the demands of research audit and performativity, most saw no option but to comply, because compliance was seen as the only way to carry out the research they valued and also stay in a job. The personal costs for women academics appeared to be particularly high, with far fewer being entered in the Research Audits than their male peers, thus reinforcing gender inequalities within the academy.

Female research identity is discussed by Barry *et al.*, (2006) who draw on elements of Foucauldian post-structuralism, in their research interviewing 60 academics in middle management positions in England and Sweden. Their findings identified that the academics developed 'Academic Shape Shifting' as a response to managerial reforms:

As Academic Shape Shifting is used by social individuals in interaction with others, at particular moments in time and in different circumstances, it is concluded that the implications suggest complexity in the changing character of university life, with female academics in middle range positions facing more difficult compromises than their male counterparts (p.275)

Barry *et al.* saw academics engaging in an assortment of behaviours, both confirming and confusing stereotypical and conventional perceptions. The men in middle management position were more able than the women to retain a research identity. "...whilst for the female academics, the consequences involved ill health, moving job and/or the loss of research" (p.292-293). The reasons for this are complex, but are an acknowledgement of the wider context of inequality within the sector.

The literature highlights gender inequality within the sector, and the challenges for women to develop and preserve a research identity (Barry *et al.*, 2006; Leathwood and Read, 2013; Aiston and Jung, 2015; Morley, 2013; Toffoletti and Starr, 2016; Angervall, 2018). This is particularly the case in post-1992 universities where many female lecturers were employed for their professional expertise (e.g. nursing or teaching) and who were employed with very little research experience. In addition, women seem to be undertaking more emotional labour than their male colleagues, which takes up time and energy (Bagihole, 2016).

Theorising Power and Gender

Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher, psychologist and historian who investigated power relations within society and individuals, and how institutions exert power upon them.

In 'Discipline and Punish' (1991), Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's panopticon as an example of the shifting instruments of social control. The panopticon was part of a prison and "was composed of an annular building circling a tower" (Caluya, 2010, p.622). This watch tower was located in such a way that the prisoners did not know if there were being watched or not, so therefore acted as if they were continually being observed. For Foucault, the disciplinary function in which modern power is exercised is represented by panopticism. It is a mechanism to alter behaviour, and regulate individuals. Foucault reconceptualises power from being solely repressive to a rather productive totalising, and at the same time an individualising force (Van de Poll, 2018).

Foucault, however, does not provide a framework for resistance which led to an onslaught of feminist critique.

According to Fraser (1981), Foucault rejects the idea that power could be possessed by certain persons, classes or factions. Instead he sees it as complex web of shifting relations which is present everywhere.

It is usually the case that strategic military analyses identify the various opposing sides in the struggle. They are capable of specifying who is dominating or subjugating whom and who is resisting or submitting to whom. This Foucault does not do. Indeed he rejects it as a possibility. He claims that it is misleading to think of power as a property which could be possessed by some persons or classes and not by others. It is better conceived as a complex, shifting field of relations in which everyone is an element (Fraser, 1981, p.283).

Fraser, criticises Foucault's conceptualisation of power as it does not offer a suitable framework for resistance (Van de Poll, 2018).

Harstock (1990) arrives at a similar conclusion to Fraser (1981). According to Harstock, the primary flaw in Foucault's analysis is that he delegates the analysis of structural forms of power on the level of large institutions to the analysis of current forms of power at the level of individuals. Foucault overlooks the structural forms of power that exist in society at large, such as female domination and capitalism (Van de Poll, 2018).

The questions raised by Fraser (1981) and Harstock (1990) were resolved with Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which provides tangible possibilities for performative protest. According to Butler gender is not a biological fact or state of being but a performance and active way of 'doing' that convinces us of its existence (Van de Poll, 2018).

... performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration (Butler 1999 p.7).

Butler recognises that gender is constantly performed inside a restricted and very restrictive regulatory framework, but also suggests that this order can be destabilised and resisted. Whilst Butler does not specify what it is to be done, it is worth noting that she publicly calls for destabilisation, discursive deviation, and performative protest, and openly applauds people who transcend, destabilise, reappropriate, and re-articulate what is considered the norm. Whereas Foucault's genealogy of power allows us to move beyond the notion of repression against liberation, he fails to provide a framework for resistance. Butler addresses this through introducing an anti-normative framework in which she advocates discursive deviance and performative protest (Van de Poll, 2018).

The drive to establish a research identity

This section focuses on universities' drive to establish a significant research profile due to government policy and funding directives and the associated impact on the identities of academics working in vocational disciplines.

Boyd and Smith (2016) investigated how academics engage with research activity and researcher identity, particularly those in healthcare professions. Their research targeted the professional fields of nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and radiography across all higher education institutions in the UK offering such provision. They found that most academics in health professions are appointed on the

basis of their successful initial career in clinical practice and their ability to participate in scholarship and research once appointed to their new academic position. They may have passed a master's degree, but many have little or no experience of participation in research. In their study, 39% of lecturers' responses were classified as "subverting research activity and researcher identity" (p.690). The word 'subversion' was deemed appropriate because some did not agree with the accepted notion that research is the most important area of work for an academic in the UK higher education sector. For this group, research was not their priority. These lecturers chose to pursue identity paths that accentuated the exchange of knowledge, leadership or teaching and rejected the privilege of the higher education researcher's identity. This choice could be seen as sensible rather than to try to juggle various areas of work.

The presence of lecturers in nursing, midwifery and the health professions who subvert research activity and researcher identity, even within university departments where research is a high priority, is an important characteristic of higher education. These academics are choosing or being directed to pursue identity trajectories that emphasise knowledge exchange, leadership or teaching and are overturning the privilege given to researcher identity in the higher education sector (Boyd and Smith 2016, p.695).

They described their academic identity as a category that included their professional field of higher education, for example by identifying themselves as a nurse teacher, even after many years as a university-based academic. Their notion of academic identity found room for their former roles and identification with having been a clinical practitioner. Lecturers' workplace contexts may have encouraged them to preserve their past identities as trustworthy clinical practitioners (Boyd and Smith, 2016).

Ennals *et al.* (2016) also involved participants with professional academic roles. They used Wilcock's (1999) 'doing, being, becoming' theoretical framework when they

undertook research in an Australian University involving lecturers whose pathways into academia had been from professional roles such as Occupational Therapists. None of the participants were “productive researchers” (p.438). In the current context of performativity and neoliberalism in Australian Higher Education, the academic role involves both teaching and research. Ennals *et al.* (2016) see the performative environment as having both “strengths and challenges” (p.443), and the pressure on lecturers to engage with both teaching and scholarly activities can become a reality with both appropriate support structures and collaboration. It should be noted that the 13 participants had a personal desire to make the transition from a professional role to an academic role and become productive researchers. Ennals *et al.* point out that there may be a tendency for staff to “overinvest in student welfare and teaching (at the expense of other aspects of the academic role)” due to the therapeutic nature of their previous role (p.435). The findings indicated that the “participants experienced multiplicity and fluidity in their identities” (p.443), and they found the transition from being an expert practitioner to becoming a scholarly academic, troublesome. Their identities, however, were developed through belonging to a support group known as the Growing Scholarship group. This group allowed the occupational academics self-support and collaboration to undertake scholarly activities and the space to reflect on their “doing and becoming” (p.443). Ennals *et al.* saw the challenges in finding the time to be both scholars and teachers and developed the support group to give them a sense of belonging in a context that would understand these challenges. Participants then felt a sense of belonging to the scholarly world, which helped the participants “construct a new scholarly identity” (p.444). This research project emphasises how it is important for lecturers to find space for scholarly activity. However, they need to understand that while the university performative environment has created challenges,

it has also provided the opportunity for individuals to develop their identity as scholarly academics. This research used occupational theorising (Wilckock, 1999), to understand the identity and the actions of the participants. This theoretical perspective sees how a person's occupation interacts with “the physical, social and cultural environments in which one does things” to develop identity (p.436). This research project was voluntary and therefore probably attracted motivated participants who were enthusiastic about undertaking scholarly research, therefore the construction of a new scholarly identity through creating a structured community may not be the answer for all academics who are expert practitioners.

On a similar theme, Billot (2010) undertook a research study in two universities in New Zealand. These institutions were transforming in response to government policy leading to pressures for academics to produce specific research outputs in addition to their teaching and administrative responsibilities. The study findings indicated that:

...there has been little preparation for role changes, resulting in tension as individuals re-assess their responsibilities and develop new ways of working. Staff referred to employment and identity issues that arise from increased workload, the conflict between the need to research while also teaching...(p.719).

Academics working in the vocational disciplines of Education, Nursing and Design viewed their teaching as “critical to the development of student efficacy”. Some acknowledged, therefore, that they could not undertake research “as well as commit professionally to their field of practice and the effective teaching of students” (Billot, 2010, p.716). The project identified that academic professionals were coping with a fluid identity during constant change.

Similarly, Grant and Elizabeth (2015) explored gender and resistance to research activities in contemporary neoliberal universities in New Zealand, particularly female academics' emotional responses to research audits. There were differences between female academics' positioning towards research audits due to the varied and unsettled emotions they produced. Grant and Elizabeth argue that research audit produces emotions that can change practices, shift identities, and also reshape relationships with colleagues.

According to Harris (2005, p.426), teaching is now regarded as secondary to research in importance and is in danger of being reduced to simply managing student learning.

Harris argues:

The relationship between research and teaching has become increasingly complex and problematic within the corporate university...the balance between teaching and research has altered significantly as research has come to dominate and is seen as central to defining professional identity and what it is to be a university.

Harris emphasises how identities are also influenced by a person's beliefs and values as well as by organisational culture and their positioning within it. According to Barnett (2000, p.256) "What it is to be 'an academic' is by no means given but is a matter of dynamic relationships between social and epistemological interests and structures". Beliefs and values can be related to different disciplines and Barnett goes on to suggest that the category of academic is problematic as some disciplines are vocational and related to particular professions whereas others are generally separate from the world of work. This is particularly the case in the university involved in this

thesis, as there are two faculties that offer mainly vocational degrees and one faculty that is distinct from the world of work. It is increasingly becoming expected, however, that academic activity is aligned with the overall strategy of the institution, to retain and strengthen its position within the sector. This places more pressure on academics to construct an identity that is in line with the corporate identity of their institution (Harris, 2005). The current drive by many post-1992 institutions to create a significant research culture creates more pressure for academics in vocational disciplines who have not been research active.

Students as consumers and their impact on academic identity

This section of the literature review centres around the sources that focus on academic perceptions of students as consumers. One of the key aspects identified in literature as the main stimulus that has pushed higher education towards consumerism is associated with the introduction of student fees in 1998 (Nedblalova *et al.*, 2014). Bates and Kaye (2013) undertook research which indicated that in the UK, the tuition fee system has had an impact on some elements of students' expectations. They sampled students before and after the rise in tuition fees and their findings suggested that the fee increase had not increased students' expectation around contact time, resources and support. The aspect where there was a greater expectation was graduate employment and better job prospects as a consequence of their investment in Higher Education.

Nedblalova *et al.*, (2014) argue that increased fees have led to heightened student expectations and increased consumerism, emphasising how government influence has affected the pace at which the sector has become market oriented. Increased fees

have influenced student expectations for higher academic and service standards and “the growing number of complaints from students appears to reflect this trend” (Nedblalova *et al.*, 2014, p.185). The number of public universities has grown considerably in the last 30 years, which has led to HE institutions competing both nationally and globally for students.

Literature indicates that another factor that contributed to the development of consumerism is linked to the ‘massification’ of HE. As noted by Schuetze *et al.*, (2012), neoliberalism has had an impact on education globally. They highlight how the consumerist attitude is:

...partly a consequence of the ‘massification’ of higher education and the growing diversification of institutions and programs. Further, student choice has been enhanced, as students assume part or all of the costs of their own education. Students have become more autonomous and individualist (p.7).

O’Meara (2015) emphasises how consumerism, capitalism, and competition have led to changes in Higher Education Institutions in the United States.

Students have become customers, and colleges have become vendors. Increasingly, class attendance and participation are voluntary, arrival and departure times self-determined, and a passing grade is a student-consumer expectation. Now more than ever before, students believe the chief benefit of a college education is to increase earnings potential (O’Meara, 2015, p 3).

Palfreyman (2013) gives an example of where a UK University has had to respond to the change in student expectations related to academics’ teaching. He discusses a strategic shift by the University of Manchester. In the previous decade, the University had focused on academics engaging with research, as this was something that was

measured in the ranking process, but in doing so they had neglected undergraduate teaching. This led to student complaints about too little teaching, disinterest from academics, and seminars being led by graduate students. The University of Manchester responded by repositioning themselves strategically and invested in an additional 100 academic teaching posts. According to Palfreyman, the student is now a consumer who undertakes a contract for a service. As such, if that service does not meet their expectations then they are likely to complain, even if those expectations are unrealistic. Here is an example of a research-intensive university employing teaching-only posts rather than causing a shift in identity for the existing academics.

Students as consumers was also the focus of Tomlinson's (2017) qualitative research with students across seven different UK higher education institutions. This study "has illustrated that consumerist discourses have certainly become more widespread and are increasingly framing students' relationship to higher education" (p.464). The attitudes of students, however, vary, although there are many collective concerns around value for money. Students ranged from seeing themselves as service-users with a consumer ethic on one end of the spectrum, to the other extreme where students distanced themselves from consumerist views. In the middle was a group of students who understand that they have both rights as fee payers, but also responsibilities if they are going to succeed.

Brooks et al. (2015) highlight how consumerism within Higher Education institutions has had consequences for lecturers through a reduction in their autonomy and increased control over staff. This theme, relating to the changes for university

academics, is mentioned in much more detail by Ball (2012) who sees neoliberalism affecting universities in two ways. Firstly, there is the economic and political element in the reform of Higher Education Institutions, a business element that seeks to benefit from the purchase and sale of educational services. This has led to financial planning and commercial projects involving the “commodification of our academic practice” in various ways (p.18). Secondly, neoliberalism enters lecturers’ minds and souls, affecting the ways they think about their work and their social relationships with others, impacting on their own self-identity.

Managerialist practices have also had an impact on university professionals internationally. Santoro and Sneade (2013) undertook a qualitative research study investigating the experiences of 20 academics across six universities in Australia. They had all previously worked in industry and had vocational qualifications. The participants voiced dissatisfaction with their work mainly due to the difference between the “reality of contemporary universities and their expectations” (p.392). What they thought was an ‘ideal university’ does not exist in the current times of radical change within the sector. Student expectations and demands are high, as they are increasingly seeing themselves as consumers. Furthermore, students are now likely to analyse what their fees are buying. In addition, students expect certain levels of flexibility so that the course delivery can meet their individual needs.

Similar findings emerged from a student survey undertaken by Delucchi and Korgen (2002), who undertook a research project in a Northeast university in the USA to ascertain students’ attitudes towards their university experience. 195 surveys were

returned and the results “support the characterization of a student culture subscribing to the idea that higher education operates as a consumer-driven market place ...42 percent of our sample believe that their payment of tuition “entitles” them to a degree” (p.104). This research dates back to 1998, but a more recent study in a Spanish University by Díaz-Méndez and Gummesson (2012) has findings that go further. These authors’ findings suggest that the current approach of treating students as commercial customers is a total failure and student satisfaction surveys are not reliable ways of assessing lecturers’ performance. Diaz-Mendez and Gummesson interviewed 20 lecturers and distributed surveys to 297 students. The general conclusions were that the lecturers could not understand why student opinions were being used to evaluate their performance as highly qualified professionals. The findings indicated that students accepted that they were unable to evaluate tutors apart from “face to face performance and aspects such as personality, physical appearance or pedagogical skills” (p.585). The research report concluded that student satisfaction surveys are biased in that some of the factors such as age, personality etc. are beyond lecturers’ control.

In 2002, Anderson, Johnson and Saha undertook a study investigating the implications for Australian universities of the changing age distribution and work roles of academic staff over the last 20 years. They undertook group interviews and an internet survey with academics looking at changes to the academic role, changes in academic life, and also the ageing of the academic workforce. This project identified:

Academic life has been affected by a large growth in the number of students without a matching increase in the number of academics, so that the student: staff ratio has risen to unprecedented levels. It has been affected by pressures on universities to raise funds by taking in fee-paying students

at undergraduate and graduate levels and by undertaking educational and research work under contracts with industries (p.ii).

The larger number of students had led to an increased use of casual staff, and according to the survey, “casualisation of university teaching is having an adverse effect on quality and academic standards” (p. 35). The findings indicated that an increased use of casual staff had negatively affected the quality of teaching and learning due to their lack of availability when needed by students and less commitment leading to “less continuity and cohesion in a course” (p.32). Their use has also added to the workload of academics due to the supervisory and administrative tasks involved in their employment. There was also a feeling amongst some respondents that casual staff were exploited and that many should be in permanent academic positions, if the universities were prepared to fund this. The study also, however, identified some welcoming developments over recent years, such as a greater focus on the quality of teaching, more students able to access university education, and a growth in electronic communications and information technology. Generally, though, many academic staff who completed the questionnaire said they would not recommend a career as an academic to others. They saw an increase in the pressure to publish but with a decline in time allotted for scholarly writing, and increasingly their time was taken up with writing research proposals. When questioned about their academic careers, most academics perceived a loss of prestige and a decrease in promotion prospects. Some thought it was becoming more difficult to keep up with developments in their discipline, blaming time and an increase in access to information through electronic media. 97% of academic staff thought that job satisfaction was very important, with two thirds stating that job satisfaction had decreased. Four out of five respondents identified an increase in stress in recent years. Anderson, Johnson and Saha highlighted how “Low

job satisfaction, low morale, stress and burnout” were common responses from respondents (p.96).

This study is relevant to my thesis as it identifies the increased pressures on academic staff under managerialist governance. Low morale and stress can lead to negative emotions (Van Dam, 2018) and as emotions are involved in the development of identity (Winkler, 2018), the next section will review the relevant literature within this area.

Emotions and emotional labour

Emotions are implicated in the development, construction, and performance of identities. Emotions are central to all facets of social life and they incorporate a significant part of how human beings understand themselves and are constituted through social and cultural interaction. The emotions felt when there is an identity change are connected to social relationships and social interactions. If the identity change is constituted as a threat then the emotions feel negative. Identity-threatening situations, such as a change of role or different role expectations, can lead to fear and confusion (Winkler, 2018).

Archer (2008) emphasises how the introduction of audit, and managerialism in higher education has had negative consequences for academic identities, together with low morale and stress. Van Dam (2018) also explains how change is often characterised by “ambiguity and uncertainty”, and most employees will experience “negative

emotions, such as anger, anxiety, and frustration” (p.69). Employees, however, can adapt to the change and the anxiety can decrease over time.

An increase in the caring nature of academic work has led to an increase in emotional labour (Heffernan and Bosetti, 2020). This section continues by focusing on the impact of a caring identity and emotional labour on academic identity.

Hochschild (1983, p.11) describes emotional labour as:

The secretary who creates a cheerful office that announces her company as "friendly and dependable" and her boss as "up-and-coming," the waitress or waiter who creates an "atmosphere of pleasant dining," the tour guide or hotel receptionist who makes us feel welcome, the social worker whose look of solicitous concern makes the client feel cared for, the salesman who creates the sense of a "hot commodity," the bill collector who inspires fear, the funeral parlor director who makes the bereaved feel understood, the minister who creates a sense of protective outreach but even-handed warmth - all of them must confront in some way or another the requirements of emotional labor.

Hochschild accepts that both men and women engage in emotional labour, but it is primarily employed by women who tend to “manage expression and feeling not only better but more often than men do” (p.164). Emotional labour is invisible and unrecognised, and women tend not to talk about emotional work in case it makes them appear too emotional. Women are seen as being particularly capable at this type of work because “they have the skills for it, skills that are linked to constructions of femininity and intuitive knowledge” (Koster, 2011, p.72). Men are less likely to take on emotional labour and in Higher Education, women tend to be pushed towards pathways that involve this kind of emotional work. Hochschild’s work has been criticised, however, as she is accused of not recognising the levels of satisfaction it

can bring. It seems that emotional labour can be satisfying for some and exhausting for others (Koster, 2011).

Berry and Cassidy (2013) collected data examining levels of emotional labour from 61 UK university lecturers, and compared the levels with other occupations including mental health nurses. They used Mann's Emotional Requirements Inventory (MERI) to measure the levels of emotional labour. The findings identified that university lecturers reported significantly higher levels of emotional labour than the other occupations, with less experienced lecturers showing higher levels of emotional labour than their more experienced colleagues. In contrast to Hochschild (1983), whilst female lecturers reported perceived higher levels of emotional labour than men, the difference in levels was not significant. Berry and Cassidy (2013, p.33) explain these high levels of emotional labour as:

...perhaps one symptom of the transformational change impacting higher education in the UK. The transformational change in higher education over the last quarter-century has been dramatic and there is little sign of the slowing or cessation of change any time soon.

Muller (2018) discusses how emotional labour is considered as something that women do because they are naturally more empathetic and more caring. This assumption leads to women taking up tasks that involve emotional labour more often than men, both in the workplace and in their home life. This is quite an essentialist view of the female caring identity. Koster (2011), however, clarifies that women do not have any natural capacity to perform emotional labour better than men. Their emotional labour

skills and subsequent caring identity have come about due to their socialisation within a capitalist, patriarchal society.

Related to caring and emotional labour, both male and female academics are also having to provide a customer service role towards students which often involves providing extra support and guidance. This is in addition to increased pressure to produce research outputs. The following section, therefore, will now review literature related to the customer service role required to produce high scores in the student satisfaction surveys, and the additional student support and accountability it involves for academics.

Academics as customer service providers

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is an assessment of the quality of teaching on undergraduate programmes in higher education providers in England. Student satisfaction in the TEF is measured through the National Student Survey and both the TEF and the NSS, therefore have forced lecturers to “be accountable service providers to their students” (Wong and Chui, 2019, p.220).

The NSS was commissioned in 2005 by the HEFCE as part of a revised quality assurance framework with a dual function. Firstly, it was to make HEIs more accountable for the educational experience they were delivering to undergraduates and secondly it aimed to better inform university applicants about the strengths and weaknesses of the respective HEIs. (French, 2017, p.8)

The findings of surveys such as the NSS are made publicly available to inform applicants' choices. Naidoo and Williams, (2015) argue that there is evidence that

league tables are being used in student decision-making by younger applicants with a high academic and social status. League tables are used less by mature applicants, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those looking for vocational programmes. Mechanisms like student satisfaction surveys do not just provide students with more details on which to base their decisions. Public accessibility of such information gives students the power to affect the way “student-consumers perceive individual universities. In this way, universities are drawn into an interaction with students through which students can apply pressure on institutions to take actions that would not normally be taken” (Naidoo and Williams, 2015, p.214).

It was across two post-1992 universities that Wong and Chui’s research (2019) identified that the consumer discourse has not only penetrated students’ mindsets, but added the role of ‘service provider’ to lecturers’ identity. The ease of email communication has also generated specific expectations and demands of students outside of the teaching sessions. Due to high tuition fees, some lecturers felt that their role should change, adapt, and accommodate students more appropriately. Wong and Chui (2019) make comparisons with a service provider in a consumer culture, where lecturers efficiently serve the needs of demanding students. Lecturers are fully aware of the importance of the NSS metrics such as teaching, assessment, and academic support, which reinforce students’ position as significant consumers. Students have been repositioned as consumers and lecturers accept that they need to give students more academic support, however “There are concerns that academic values and integrity may be eroded by consumerist expectations, as well as the changing identities of lecturers into service providers in light of these changes” (Wong and Chui, 2019, p.229). The notion that the NSS could lead to academic values being eroded is

echoed by French (2017) who highlights how "... students report greater satisfaction when courses are less challenging; this has resulted in many lecturers becoming increasingly fearful of challenging students or taking them out of their comfort zone as it may result in low NSS scores " (p.19).

Wong and Chui (2019) also identified that students are now demanding more entertaining teaching sessions, as opposed to sessions that are intellectually challenging. Some tutors have already included the role of 'entertainer' into their academic identities. "We can certainly learn with joy and enthusiasm, typically around topics that we find fascinating. However, the scenario darkens if lecturers feel compelled to satisfy or entertain students due to external pressures, such as the NSS and the TEF" (p.229). The role of lecturers now sees an increase in supportive and service provider identities, which includes the role of entertainer.

Guilbault (2018) argues that the debate around whether students are customers or not needs to end. According to Guilbault, some lecturers in higher education are still not accepting the fact that students are customers. One possible reason for this is that they see a contradiction between providing a high-quality customer service and academic integrity. "The recognition of the student as a customer stresses the importance of treating students as such in order to succeed in the competitive higher education market place. Students certainly view themselves as customers" (p.297).

Younger academics seem more willing to accept the consumer discourse within academia. Archer (2008) researched identities and experiences of young UK academic staff (under 35) who had grown up within the neoliberal context. Their accounts used language, such as 'business', 'choice', 'products' and accountability. Accountability and improvements in quality were seen as positive developments. As neoliberal subjects they accepted the changing nature of academic roles, but they did feel the "pressures of contemporary academia, detailing their strategies of resistance and practices of protection" (p.265).

The present environment of paid and demand-driven higher education creates a climate in which a sense of consumerist entitlement is a driving force. This has led to academics, who had traditionally been in formal positions of power, facing abuse and harassment, thus changing the power balance between lecturers and students. Lampman *et al.* (2009, p.331) define this harassment as 'contra-power harassment'. Families are investing in university education and expect to see a return on their investment. If students feel the university has not met its obligation, they voice their displeasure to academic staff. The elements that really threaten their investment, however, are poor attendance, being late for lectures, leaving lectures early, and late submission of assessments. A contributing factor to these behaviours is students often having to cope with the competing demands of paid employment to support living costs and university work (Christensen *et al.*, 2020). The relationship between students and academics has changed and many academics now feel they are no longer knowledgeable experts in their field and instead are education service providers (Christensen *et al.*, 2018). In fact, the widely available online subject material now means that some students feel that they no longer need to be actually present at the

university (Christensen *et al.*, 2018). These changes, together with the TEF surveillance, impact on staff identity and their changing status.

Summary

The literature paints a picture of both male and female academics having to provide a customer service role towards students which increasingly involves emotional labour. Student satisfactions surveys have led to more accountability for academics which has led to increased pressure on staff leading to low morale and stress. This in turn can lead to negative emotions (Van Dam, 2018) which have an impact on identity (Winkler, 2018). The relationship between students and academics has changed with academics seeing themselves as education service providers (Christensen *et al.*, 2018). Students now tend to see themselves as service-users who understand that they have rights as fee payers. The increased accountability for academics has led to increased pressure on staff, at a time when they are also being required to produce research outputs. The changes to the REF and the introduction of the TEF impact on staff identity and their changing status.

Much of the research around a drive to establish a research culture and academic research identities, was undertaken in Australia and New Zealand where there was a push to shift teachers into teacher/researchers. There did not seem any evidence, however, of this being mandatory. There is a gap in the literature, however, around professional academics teaching on vocational programmes in UK post-1992 universities, who are now being pressured to undertake research at a time when the

workload has increased due to consumerist expectations. In the institution where my study takes place, research has become a mandatory requirement for most academic staff. There is also little in the literature as to how the TEF has impacted on academic identities specifically within post-1992 universities in the UK. Most post-1992 universities are not research intensive and they have tended to focus on high quality teaching, resulting in some doing well in the TEF. The drive for academics in these institutions to produce high quality research outputs in addition to high quality teaching, creates pressure and stress, which may have an impact on their identities.

The literature around gender inequality within the sector, highlights the difficulties for women to gain and maintain a research identity (Browne *et al.*, 2006; Leathwood and Read, 2013; Aiston and Jung, 2015; Morley, 2013; Toffoletti and Starr, 2016; Angervall, 2018) which cannot be ignored as part of this study. Cerulo (1997) refers to anti-essentialism and the role of power in relation to identity. An anti-essentialist approach to my own research will ensure that there are no assumptions of gendered essentialism and can be useful to deconstruct gender identity categories within this thesis.

Clegg's (2008) study on academic identity in a non-traditional university within the UK involved an approach influenced by post-structural thinking. Similarly, my research into academic identity in a single post 1992 university, recognises the fluidity of identity, which is viewed. as multiple. Academic identity is a nuanced and multi-faceted concept that is continually influenced by the interactions between individuals,

disciplines, and universities through which academic identities are shaped and maintained (Henkel, 2005).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In relation to this research study, my philosophical stance informed my rationale for choosing a post-structuralist perspective, informed by a Foucauldian theoretical framework. This chapter discusses my research approach to the study. The first section is concerned with the characteristics of my chosen methodology, theoretical framework, and a justification of my approach. I then discuss ontology and epistemology from a post-structuralist perspective and my position in relation to these. In this chapter, I explain the rationale for choosing qualitative methods, using semi-structured interviews to collect data from a diverse sample of academics. Towards the end of this chapter there is a discussion around the issues of research validity, and the chapter ends with a sub-section which demonstrates a critical awareness of the ethical issues underpinning this research.

Research approach

The basic tenets of post-structural theory are anti-essentialism, the celebration of difference, the rejection of grand narratives, and the rejection of ideas about one single truth (Dempsey and Rowe, 2004). Post-structuralism sees power operating in discourses rather than structures. Definitions of 'discourse' vary and for the purpose of this research I will be working with a Foucauldian one where discourse is defined "as a system of thought composed of different patterns of action, practices, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that systematically construct the objects of which they speak" (Mohammed *et al.*, 2015, p101). Discourses often mould people's thoughts, behaviours and attitudes, and modify their actions in order to fit behavioural expectations and norms that they internalise to regulate themselves (Mohammed *et*

al., 2015). This is particularly relevant to my study as power relations and self-regulation are central to changes that were taking place within the university. This study, however, is not using discourse analysis to analyse the data, the reasons for which are discussed later in this chapter.

Rejection of one single and universal truth

My study is concerned with post-structural ideas such as a rejection of objective reality and one single and universal truth. According to Fox (2008), post-structuralists reject the notion of a single 'truth', and criticise grand theories or systems of thought that make claims to uncover truth, including religion, science, and social scientific realism. Hodgson, (2009, p,310), explains that "the aim of poststructuralist thought that pervades educational research is predominantly shaped by the rejection both of modernist grand narratives and of the belief in the possibility of universal truth". Claims to knowledge are thus held to be subjective and are viewed with suspicion, with the role of research being concerned with the implicit power relations that sustain individual truths.

Post-structuralists are also required to turn attention on themselves, to examine the objectivity of social theory and the power relations that they reveal. This approach, therefore, requires reflexivity, a readiness to accept multiple accounts from research participants, and a willingness to understand the importance of hearing the voices of those who have been silenced. I am particularly drawn to this approach as it acknowledges the researcher's own involvement in the interpretation of the data (Fox, 2014).

Post-structuralist perspectives see individuals' lives being inseparably intertwined with the social world around them and take the view that identity can be self-regulating in nature. They do not see power and influence as separate, and view influence as a form of power which is a prevalent feature of organisational structures. Identity has frequently been observed in literature as a "singular, unitary and coherent entity" (Collinson, 2006 p.182), however post-structuralists highlight its "multiple, shifting, fragmented, and non-rational character" (Collinson, 2006 p.182). Post-structuralists contend that identity processes are constantly in a state of flux, continually reconstructing.

Post-structuralists and postmodernists, argue that relativism recognises the context-dependency of knowledge and the importance of understanding power relations when making claims to gain knowledge (Fox, 2008). This approach aligns with my positioning and research, which is concerned with power relations within the university, however I am also aware that some have highlighted inadequacies in the ways in which poststructuralist tenets have been adopted in educational research:

There is a tension, then, between, on the one hand, what is considered to be the emancipatory and empowering potential of poststructuralist thought and, on the other hand, a reluctance to be distracted from practical concerns and, hence, a fear of alienating the practitioner by speaking in theoretical or (worse) philosophical terms (Hodgson and Standish, 2009 p.310).

Hodgson and Standish (2009) argue that as there is a policy imperative relating to educational research being useful, "[t]his perhaps indicates a problem with fully engaging with poststructuralist thought in a field where researchers are constantly required to justify themselves" (p.310). For the purpose of this study, I have engaged

with the key tenets of the post-structural perspective, but always bearing in mind that I am striving for the research to be useful. This approach is particularly helpful for accomplishing the research aims of the thesis, which is concerned with subjectivity, identity and power relations, all of which have gained prominence within post-structuralist thought. This research study engages with the idea of identity being fluid which is congruent with a post-structuralist view of the world, where static and inert notions of reality are rejected. Within critical realism, the social world is potentially knowable, but for post-structuralists, knowledge of that reality is always necessarily partial. Here a “disjunction between ontology and epistemology” (Ramazanoglu, 2002: 142) should be observed for as Cain (1993) points out, “to argue that things (in our case relationships) exist independently of knowledge about them does not commit anyone to a quite separate argument that these relations can be known in their ‘truth’” (p. 89).

Post-structuralism and Foucault

My decision to choose a Foucauldian approach was influenced by the relevance of the distinguishing characteristics of this approach to my research objectives, namely the power relationships inherent in the process of governing social groups in a higher education institution.

“For Foucault and Deleuze, theories should be conceptualized as tool-kits. The toolkit metaphor suggests that elements of theories are useful some of the time, and sometimes not” (Dempsey and Rowe, 2004, p.34). For the purpose of this study,

therefore, I have chosen a selection of Foucault's 'tools' that are most relevant to my research, which are outlined below.

Foucault: Power relations

Foucault (1980) sees power as relational and these relationships cannot be established without discourse and the construction of truth. He was one of a group of intellectuals who tried to offer a new perspective on power in order to explain the failure of the Labour movement in the 1960s. He argues that power does not function to repress people. "Foucault rejected the functional totality of ideology, providing instead a detailed investigation of how forms of subjectivity are constituted by material/signifying practices" (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008, p.93).

Foucault referred to 'technologies of power', developed over hundreds of years and which "determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject" (Foucault, 1988, p.18). In this research study, I explore whether the Research Excellence Framework is employed as a technology of power which examines, assesses and grades each academic's research outputs and similarly, whether the Teaching Excellence Framework is employed as a technology of power which examines the outcomes of the National Student Survey.

Foucault: Resistance

Foucault's analysis of power looks at how individuals show resistance to its effects. He argues that wherever there is a power relationship, there is the opportunity for resistance. A system does not have to be oppressive for there to be resistance. Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power (Foucault, 1978).

The aim of power is to impose a set of normal identities on individuals, but resistance works to oppose these identity formations. We must therefore understand the aim of disciplinary and normalising power, which, like all power, is "...to be to produce forms of otherness that are not necessarily knowable but that are compatible with a modern liberal, capitalist society" (Widder, 2004, p.221).

...a certain type of power - distinct from both medical and judicial power - [which] has in fact colonized and forced back both medical knowledge and judicial power throughout modern society...the emergence of the power of normalization. (Foucault, 1999, p. 36)

Norms can be seen as valued standards. Those who abandon, or cannot live up to these standards receive punishments in an effort to pressurise them into reforming. "Foucault contends that the concept of 'norm' is inseparable from the concepts of normativity and normalisation" (Ryan, 1991, p.109). Surveillance is required to ensure that individuals do not depart from the norms. Knowledge obtained by means of surveillance through examinations and compiling documents" makes possible the construction of norms and the supervision of the accompanying abnormalities" (Ryan, 1991, p.110). This model of surveillance resonates with what has been implemented to monitor academic and professional lives, that is the TEF, the REF and all the other examination mechanisms employed by management.

Foucault's (1988) notion of subject constitution identifies how individuals can resist actions that try to control them. Rivera (2018, p.208) explains subject constitution:

...human beings can exercise power not only to control others but to resist some actions that try to determine them, which means to have access to a type of power that makes possible to decide actions, refuse some imposed

roles or adapted them, that at the end, allows them to have a self-governed existence. In other words, the subject has the power to unmask actions that seek its domination and try to change.

Foucault: Disciplinary power

Foucault's approach makes central the notion of self-regulating individuals. This is particularly useful for analysing the responsabilisation of academics in relation to student welfare. Foucault argued that individuals could be shaped using disciplinary technology, which he referred to as 'objectification'. There are different modes of objectification: dividing practices, scientific classification, and self-regulation.

Dividing practices are the processes by which a subject has been objectified. "...the subjects are objectified by a process of separating by a prearranged social and personal identity, depending on dividing practices of ranking, grading and classification, essentially, becoming modes of manipulation..." (Beattie, 2019, p.5).

Scientific classification refers to objectification through the means of classification modes of inquiry, defining the body as an object through the use of different means of classification, for example through using tests or examinations, to indicate the required norms.

Self-regulation refers to the process of subjects regulating themselves through acquiring specific skills and attitudes. These notions of self-regulation can be applied by leaders, through staff development courses and self-evaluation and self-

improvement activities (Beattie, 2019). Foucault argued that disciplinary technology could shape individuals, therefore shaping their identity. Disciplinary technology can shape individuals to become “subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault 1995, p. 136). “Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” Foucault (1991, p. 138). Foucault sees this as a relatively modern form of control. Disciplinary power leads to compliance by individuals, however they possibly could keep their own original beliefs independently (McCauley, 1989).

Foucault: Governmentality

The concept of governmentality was developed by Foucault in his lectures at the College de France in the later years of his life. It can be understood as the practices through which people are governed by intentionally directing how we act.

Governmentality is often connected with the willing participation of the governed, in contrast to a disciplinarian kind of control. The notion of governmentality builds on the definition of government, which is defined as a nation or state exercising organised political authority, by expanding this to include the active permission and desire of citizens to engage in their own governing. The phrase "governmentality" is a combination of the concepts "government" and "rationality." In this context, government refers to behaviour or an activity aimed at shaping, guiding, or influencing people's behaviour. Beyond leading and guiding, conduct has a deeper significance. It also refers to one's "personal conduct," which is guided by a feeling of self-governance. Rationality, refers to a way of thinking that aims to be systematic and explicit about how things are or should be, which suggests that people and things must first be defined before they can be controlled or governed. As a result, the state creates methods for designating populations and making them visible e.g. income, race,

professional categories, and use management and administration mechanisms e.g. work processes, procedures and rules (Huff, 2020).

Emotion and affect were not clearly addressed by Foucault. However, Sauer and Penz (2017) suggest that a focus on affects in developments of state transformation, of governmentalisation and of subjectivation helps us to better comprehend recent forms of governing. Affective labour refers to the human contact and interaction which forms an increasingly important element of almost all work today. It involves features such as emotional resources and communicative skills. (Oksala, 2016). This links to Foucault's reference to the 'entrepreneur of the self' (Foucault, 2006, p.314) when discussing neoliberal subjectivation.

Following on from Foucault's work, therefore, neoliberal subjectivation includes the marketisation of personal cognitive competences and the reconstruction of direct, external control to self-control. Sauer and Penz (2017) refer to this as affective governmentality. The importance of the affective domain as a contribution to this research is that it provides a framework in which to characterise contemporary labouring practices.

Foucault: Technologies of the self

Foucault speaks of self-practices, or ways in which the subject actively constructs themselves. These are not anything the individual conceives on their own. They are models that one discovers in their culture and that one's culture, society, and social

group present, suggest, and impose on them. This is one way in which the subject is not purely creating one's self (Kelly 2013).

Technologies of the self... permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 1988, p. 18).

My methodological decisions

Under the umbrella of the chosen theoretical framework, methodologies are acknowledged as the approach to undertaking the research and “the relative preference of each research methodology depends on philosophical issues related to the question of ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowledge)” (Fekede, 2010, p.99). In relation to epistemology and ontology, I prefer to adopt Crotty's position (1998), which suggests that there are few differences between the two concepts. Thus, the author advises to merge ontology with epistemology, stating that “to talk about the construction of meaning [epistemology] is to talk of the construction of a meaningful reality [ontology]” (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). I argue that in line with Gillett (2009), poststructuralist modes of inquiry help researchers to go beyond onto-epistemological assumptions, helping them to achieve an understanding of the complexity of our dealings with the world and each other that create and inform our multiple understandings of the objects to which we relate.

Post-structuralism is the theoretical framework which has influenced my work on identities. My methodology is qualitative, an interview study of 32 academics. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.2) define qualitative research thus:

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In order for the research to be in context it should take place within the participants' natural setting, which in this study was the university campus. My overall post-structuralist approach, aims to establish links between selected Foucauldian concepts and the dimensions of neoliberal powers within higher education institutions, unveiling the impact of these powers on the academic identities. Therefore, my post-structuralist approach will provide a specific lens through which "to describe the surface linkages between power, knowledge, institutions, intellectuals, the control of populations, and the modern state as these intersect in the functions of systems of thought" (Bove, 1990, p.54). With this in mind, my methodological decisions, as well as any subsequent claims and findings of this study, would be best considered in partnership with my post-structural positional stance.

In the course of my deliberations related to the most appropriate methodological commitments, consideration was given to discourse analysis. The relevant literature presented an array of definitions that ranged from its politically charged intentions of linking discourse to the influences of power relations (Fairclough, 1989), to a more neutral aspiration to "answer questions about the relationships between language and society" (Rogers et al., 2005, p.366). However, as argued by Breeze (2011), one of

the essential elements of critical discourse analysis is its specific interest in the way *language constructions* (my emphasis) contribute to the functions of ideology and power. Georgaca and Avdi (2012) also clarify that critical discourse analysis examines *language in use*, rather than the psychological phenomena, such as attitudes, memory or emotions, which are traditionally presumed to underlie talk and be revealed through it. This, however, created a discord with the intentions of my study to make sense of my participants' comments in conjunction with their attitudes and emotions, as opposed to examining these comments purely in terms of their grammatical and semantic construction and function. Georgaca and Avdi (2012) confirm that, in critical discourse analysis, "data analysis leads the researcher to immerse herself in the data and begin to develop a sense of the flavour and the functions of the text" (p.147). Nevertheless, in contrast to this intention, the focus of my analytical efforts is on understanding the meaning behind the data in the context of a neoliberal university, thus, acknowledging the 'primacy of' context over text" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.428).

The research setting

The research setting was originally a teacher training college and is now classified as a 'post 1992 university'. One of the most significant changes since the institution gained university status in 2005 is related to its positioning within the domain of research. The university's strategic plan (2013-2020) accepted the challenges associated with seeking to establish a significant research profile, particularly as the organisation did not have a significant research culture.

Faculty of Education

At the time this research was undertaken there were three departments, one which was predominantly associated with primary education and children's learning and development, another department which focused on early years, including teacher training, and a third department which focused on secondary initial teacher training. Each department had a head of department and at least one assistant head. The programmes of study all had a programme leader, who sometimes had line management responsibility for the lecturers. Lecturers and senior lecturers had roles that were quite diverse; some with doctorates, completing research as well as teaching, and others who were predominantly teachers. The faculty also employed professors, readers and research fellows who spent much time focusing on research but also supervised PhD students and undertook some teaching duties, but often with fewer teaching hours than other lecturers. The professors were both male and female, the readers were female, the dean was female, and there were two female heads of department and one male. At the time the research took place, the number of female academics made up more than 64% of staff in the whole university with the faculty of education employing senior lecturers who were predominantly female and white British. Most of those who worked within the faculty as academics were over 40 years old, and a very large number were over 50. Previously the faculty had focused on teacher training, but at the time of writing, the faculty was putting a greater emphasis on research outputs, expecting all academics to research in addition to teaching duties.

Faculty of Health

At the time the research took place, the Faculty of Health was one of the largest providers of health and social care education in the North West of England and from

2020 was training undergraduate medical students in the new Medical School. The departments included Nursing, Midwifery, Paramedic Practice, Applied Health and Social Care, Operating Department Practice and Professional Education. The majority of the lecturers were female, the dean was male, but the heads of department were largely female. The programmes of study all had a programme leader, who usually did not have line management responsibility for the lecturers. Lecturers and senior lecturers had roles that were quite diverse, some with doctorates, completing research as well as teaching, and others who were predominantly teachers. Like the Faculty of Education, most of those who worked within the faculty as academics were over 40, and a very large number were over 50 and were predominantly female and white British. The faculty had previously focused on training and educating health care professionals, but at the time of writing the faculty was putting a greater emphasis on research outputs, expecting academics to research in addition to teaching duties.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences had 13 departments, all of whom had a head of department and some also had associate heads of department. The dean was male, and the majority of the heads of departments were male. Each programme had a programme leader; these were mainly female. There was a significant research culture within the faculty, with all staff understanding that there was an expectation to produce research outputs for the Research Excellence Framework. Academic staff were usually recruited with a PhD and had produced research publications. Unlike the Faculties of Education and Health, staff were not recruited for their previous professional expertise, therefore some staff tended to be younger than those in the other two faculties.

Researcher positionality

Managerialist approaches in HE “impose quasi-market, competitive based rationalities premised on neo-liberal managerialism using a policy discourse that is often informed by conviction rather than evidence” (Jarvis, 2014, p155). My positioning on current trends towards managerialism in higher education is that higher education is presently locked into neoliberal thinking, where a form of free-market neo-classical economic theory, with its consequent impact on educational terrain, seems to contradict my own philosophy of education. I have always been an advocate for widening participation and strongly believe that education should be free, so when fees were initially introduced and then raised up to the present level of over £9,000 a year, it was quite disturbing for me to realise that educational institutions were becoming more like retailers, with a menu of programmes from which consumers could choose. My position aligns with Beattie (2019), who argues that:

...the responsibilities of administrative leaders in Higher Education seem to have boiled down to three main aspects, which include their ability and willingness to, first, embrace and externalise the knowledge that is considered operative at that moment of time; second, to create and engage in their own technologies of power to ensure promulgation of that knowledge across the university staff, i.e., through a system of policies, regulations and performance reviews; and finally, to keep the aspirations of academic and student population firmly aligned with the institutional vision and strategic plans. (p.4)

Ball (2012) argues that we need to offer an environment where academics can discuss power relations, articulate their feelings in relation to the changes in HE, and address how the meanings and beliefs they had previously constructed in relation to their role and their practice have been affected. This is what I originally proposed to bring about as a departmental leader following this research project; however, I am no longer a head of department at the university and I no longer line manage any of my colleagues.

I still intend, however, to disseminate my work to my colleagues as I feel it may be useful in helping them to understand the power relations that currently affect themselves and their work.

My personal journey as an academic, someone who is making a huge transition from a teacher/educator identity to a scholarly and academic identity, allowed me to empathise with the participants, particularly in relation to professionals from the Faculties of Health and Education being forced to become researchers. I shared some of their views before I made this considerable identity shift, such as the feeling that I did not have the skills to produce high quality research outputs, and the feeling that teaching appears to have a lower value than research in the eyes of university management. This empathy was important in understanding those participants' stories.

I used elements of autoethnography when undertaking this study. Autoethnography is a research approach "that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Ellis et al., 2011). An author, when writing an autobiography, writes about past experiences which are assembled using hindsight. When using their methodological tools and research literature to analyse the data, autoethnographers use their own personal experience to illustrate elements of the cultural experience. According to Ellis et al., (2011, p.279) this can include "vignettes, reflexivity, multiple voices, and introspection. This influenced my decision to include vignettes within this study in the methodology chapter and also the findings chapters. The extracts were from my reflexive journal which I had written during the research process. Lincoln and Guba (1982) emphasised

how reflexive journals can help check against a researcher's biases. In addition, Smith (1999, p.359) explains how "The researcher's reflexive journal reveals previously hidden contextual information which enhances the prime ethical and methodologic aim of the study". In addition, it allows private thoughts to become public and increases the readers understanding even though it is through "secondhand knowledge" (Britzman, 2000).

My position as a researcher is as an 'insider researcher'. I am an insider researcher as I am a senior lecturer at the university where the research took place. The advantages of being an insider researcher, which are noted by Ross (2017), did apply to all of the data collection:

These advantages include ease of access to the field or participants; expediency of building rapport; nuanced and responsible data collection, taking into consideration community norms and values; and richness in the interpretation of the data in light of deep knowledge of the social, political, and historical context (p.237).

One cannot claim, however, that there are shared understandings between the participant and researcher simply because they both work for the same institution in the same kind of role. Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p.60) state that "holding membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not denote complete difference". This insider role status in my case allowed me to access participants quickly. Many of the participants were very open with me and trusted me due to my insider status, which meant that the data collected may have been more profound than it would have been otherwise. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that being an insider could raise questions of undue influence

from the researcher's perspective. I tried not to influence the participants; however, I am not separate from the study. The stories from the participants were real to me, as in many cases their stories were similar to my story. I did not want to retreat into acting like an outsider researcher, as the research was conceived by me and with my own life/career experience providing the structure.

Acker (2000), when discussing positioning, suggested that the insider-outsider issue cannot be resolved in full and therefore we should bring the issue to a close and find a way to "work creatively within the tensions created by the debate" (Dwyer and Buckle 2009, p.62).

Sources and methods of data collection

Identifying appropriate sampling strategies is an integral part of any research process. Probability sampling, which involves the researcher selecting a random and representative sample from the larger population in order to generalise the research findings, is not always possible. Non-probability sampling is more frequent in qualitative research and according to Patton (1980), *purposeful sampling* seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth. There are limitations to using this strategy, such as distortion due to inadequate numbers in the sample. The sample chosen for this research was convenience sampling, as the sample consisted of all those that responded to my email from the university within which I work. According to Gall *et al.* (1996, p. 228):

Researchers often need to select a convenience sample or face the possibility that they will be unable to do the study. Although a sample randomly drawn from a population is more desirable, it usually is better to do a study with a convenience sample than to do no study at all-- assuming, of course, that the sample suits the purpose of the study.

I hoped to secure a balance of participants from the three faculties within the university. I emailed all the academic staff in each faculty asking for participants. 14 responses were from the Faculty of Education, 10 were from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and eight were from the Faculty of Health. The reason that more colleagues responded from the Faculty of Education was by virtue of me being employed in that particular faculty, and those that responded all knew me.

The sample was diverse. The final number of participants was 32; 10 males and 22 females. It was a requirement that all participants had worked as a lecturer for at least eight years so that they would be able to discuss changes over time and would have been employed as an academic before the £9,000 fees were introduced. Out of the 32 participants there were only 10 men, but this reflects the balance of men and women within the university. Only one participant was from a non-UK background. A breakdown of the sample is shown in Appendix 3.

I have already defined 'academic' in relation to this study, but I also need to make it very clear that all participants had a teaching role, even the heads of department. I did not include research assistants or graduate teaching assistants and none of the participants were on fixed term contracts. Their exclusion was not deliberate, but was due to the requirement that they had to have been teaching in higher education for at

least eight years. The university where the study took place does not separate teaching and research roles in the same way that some other universities have done; however, some of the participants had a predominantly research role but were still supervising PhD students.

I used semi-structured interviews as the key method of data collection in my research. Cohen *et al.* (2011, p.411) refer to the research interview as a “two-person conversation” and it also has an advantage over a questionnaire as it allows the opportunity for more probing questions. According to Patton “...structured interviews would allow for consistency of responses and some researchers prefer closed quantitative interviews with the questions determined in advance and the participants choose from fixed responses” (Patton, 1980, p.206). I chose, however, to conduct semi-structured interviews to keep the interview focused, but still leave me free to explore certain areas that proved interesting, allowing flexibility for the interviewee to discuss issues further. This gave me the opportunity to ask some probing questions in order to gain rich data. “One of the main advantages is that the semi-structured interview method has been found to be successful in enabling reciprocity between the interviewer and participant” (Kallio *et al.*, 2016, p.6), allowing interviewers to follow-up questions based on answers from participants. I undertook semi-structured interviews with a sample of academics of different grades and experience. It was very time consuming; however, Adams (2015, p.504) emphasises “All in all, effectively conducted semi-structured interviews, even though labor intensive, should be worth the effort in terms of the insights and information gained”.

I did consider using focus groups for exploratory research and then interview participants individually later, however there are ethical issues relating to using focus groups in research. The fact that what the participant shares with the research is also shared with the whole focus group raises privacy issues and limits the questioning. In addition, “Group discussion may be inhibited because of an improper mix of intended participants (e.g. employees with supervisors, staff with clients) or when confidentiality cannot be assured when dealing with sensitive topics” (Linhorst, 2002, p.213).

The interviews were a way of exploring academics’ thoughts and understandings of how changes in students’ expectations and the subsequent performance measures had impacted on their role and identity, and the ways in which these understandings were constructed. Part of this exploration was to consider the context in which performativity operates and regulates academic subjects’ perspectives and actions. I included questions around the National Student Survey, Teacher Excellence Framework, and also the proposals following the Stern Review. I relied on the literature to develop my interview questions, but also allowed the participants to reflect on ‘critical incidents’ to enable them to tell their own story. I continued interviewing until saturation of the data occurred. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and the transcriptions were then analysed using thematic coding.

Pilot study

In 2016, I conducted a pilot study to investigate how semi-structured interviews could provide an insight into the meanings and beliefs that lecturers constructed in relation to the changes in Higher Education since the 1980s due to consumerism and an

increasingly performative culture. “The purpose of a pilot study is to learn more about the data acquisition process without investing large amounts of time and resources” (Short and Pigeon, 1998, p.6). The interviews focused on the impact of consumerism and the increasing performative culture on academic identities in higher education. I analysed the data using thematic coding which involved constructing a coding framework.

Following the pilot study, I realised that I needed a sample across all three faculties as taking a wider sample across three faculties would help me understand how constructions vary according to subject areas e.g. because of professional practice status/vocational background in areas such as health and education. I wanted to understand academics’ feelings in all three faculties, in relation to the changes in HE and address how the corresponding effects on the meanings and beliefs they had previously constructed in relation to their role and practice. The university, at the time, was making it clear that being an academic was not just about teaching, but also about researching and writing research papers. These requirements were articulated by the senior management of the university for the purposes of providing research income and for the university’s reputation. The next section moves on from the pilot study to discuss the main study relating to this thesis.

Main study: Interview questions

Following the pilot study, I revised my questions so that they were more specific, but kept the flexibility of the semi-structured approach (Appendix 2). It is considered good practice for the interviewer to minimise their involvement during interviews so that the

narrative can flow (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). if needed. I used active listening techniques to listen to what each participant said, following up with additional questions to delve deeper and explore in detail their “experiences, motives and opinions” (Rubin and Rubin, 2011, p.3).

I conducted semi-structured interviews with just a few structured questions, and asked supplementary questions during the interview which were dependent upon the participants’ responses. During the interviews I felt that we were having a conversation. Longhurst (2010 p.103) explains, “Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important”. I was not prepared for the emotional responses from some of the participants, particularly around the questions related to research.

Reflexivity

An increased emphasis on reflexivity in educational research (Bryman, 2012; Symon and Cassell, 2012; Cohen *et al.*, 2011), highlights the researcher’s role in the process of conceptualising their relation to the way in which they give meaning to data. This process entails “an acknowledgement of the implications and significance of the researcher’s choices as both observer and writer” (Bryman, 2012, p.394) as well as understanding the roles, “values and preconceptions” (Symon and Cassell, 2012, p.74) of researchers, all of which endeavours to help the reader to understand the findings and the claims of the former in the context of their research domain. Therefore, I find it essential to explain how I am connected to the research, emotionally and

through experience, and acknowledge any preconceptions. Throughout this research project I kept a reflexive diary. Below is an extract from this diary.

Extract from my reflexive diary (19 June 2017)

I realised that to be reflexive, I would need to examine my ontological position and make explicit my preconceptions as well as my relationship with the participants of my research, which would contribute towards the accountability for the contribution to knowledge produced. Not all researchers value reflexivity though, and the whole process of reflexive research has been criticised for allowing the authors' voice to become more important than the subject of the research.

Self-reflexivity allowed me to see how my professional history, firstly as a female lecturer who was appointed originally for my professional expertise, and secondly as a head of department within the university, played in giving me the ability to have a deep understanding of the perspectives of those from a professional expertise background and also those having departmental responsibility for the NSS scores and REF audit. I remember the feeling of uncertainty when I started my doctoral studies, wondering whether I would be able to move from manager and professional expert, to academic scholar. I still do not believe that I have an identity as a researcher, but I feel that I am moving towards that identity. Once I have published in a peer reviewed journal then I will know that others see me as an academic, and that will help me think of myself that way.

Finlay (2002) explains below why some researchers avoid reflexivity:

Taking the threatening path of personal disclosure, the researcher treads a cliff edge where it is all too easy to fall into an infinite regress of excessive self-analysis at the expense of focusing on the research participants. In the face of external criticism, researchers might become furtive, sanitizing their accounts of research, or they might retreat, avoiding reflexivity altogether (Finlay (2002, p.532).

Nevertheless, many educational researchers support the importance of reflexivity, as "...reflexivity requires researchers to monitor closely and continually their own interactions with participants, their own reaction, roles, biases and any other matters that might affect the research" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.225).

Data analysis

I chose to use a thematic approach to analysis which made comparisons across all the interviews, looking for experiences shared by a group of people (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). A holistic approach to analysing the data would not have been suitable, as this usually looks at the text from one person's perspective only. I therefore decided to use thematic coding to help me put the data into categories and sub-categories.

Though there are researchers (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012; Marn, 2015), who maintain that traditional forms of qualitative data analysis, such as coding and thematic analysis, do not allow researcher to adequately assess modern social life, there is evidence in research literature that combining post-structuralism with more conventional ways of data analysis can be considered both fruitful and creative. For example, a study by Bowker, (2001) utilises a postmodern methodological approach combining both positivist and interpretivist epistemologies for studying online communities. Similarly, a study by Kavoura *et al.*, (2015) presents a study into athletic identity, using thematic analysis in combination with a post-structuralist perspective. Van der Vaart *et al.* (2018) confirm that using new and creative approaches to methodological tools can generate deep insight by going beyond rational-cognitive ways of knowing and providing new ways of understanding people's real lived experiences and views. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.78) suggest that: "Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data".

Saldana (2015) gives advice in relation to coding:

Be cautious of those who demonize the method outright. And be equally cautious of those who swear unyielding affinity to codes...I prefer that you yourself, rather than some presumptive theorist or hardcore methodologist, determine whether coding is appropriate for your particular research project (p.4).

I made the decision to use codes because I felt it would help me analyse the large amount of data that had been collected. To create the coding frame, my first source was the knowledge I had gained from the literature. My second source was my own knowledge as an academic within the institution. My third source was from the data itself.

Stage 1: Trial coding

Many of the interviews were over an hour long and keeping track of the data was important so I kept all of the transcripts in a password protected folder. The next stage of the analysis process was the trial coding stage, which involved me selecting six transcripts. According to Schreier (2014), "The most important criterion here is to select a suitable amount of material ... so that it reflects the full diversity of data sources" (p.175). I chose two from each faculty. Four were female and two were male and all of the interviews were over an hour long. This gave me the opportunity to select categories that related to staff from all faculties and also from a male and female perspective. I did not choose a male participant from the faculty of Education, as there were only two male participants and both interviews were quite short.

Data was read and re-read for constant comparison. The initial codes were descriptive, so I went back to the data and added some more conceptual codes. I now realised

that there were categories and several different strands attached to these categories. These strands became sub-categories. According to Schreier (2012), sub-categories should be mutually exclusive; however, I found that some quotes referred to more than one sub-category. This was because the passage needed to be of a certain length in order to make sense, and different parts of the passage referred to different sub-categories.

Stage 2: Assessing the quality of the coding frame

I had offered all participants the opportunity to read and verify their transcripts; however, no participants chose to do so. I therefore sent them to three participants and asked them to verify if they were correct. I also gave them the opportunity to make any changes. No changes were made and all participants verified that the transcripts were correct. I returned to my key questions to ensure that the categories and sub-categories in my coding frame were able to help answer these questions. At this point, I modified the coding frame to include a further sub-category. As I had already coded the six trial transcripts without this code, I had to revisit them to analyse them again. According to Schreier (2014), "If only few changes are made to the frame following the trial coding, the frame can now be used for the main analysis" (p.179). I was now satisfied with the quality of the coding frame, confident that no more new categories would emerge during the main coding.

Stage 3: Main coding

This was the main analysis phase of the coding process and I realised the importance of keeping track of the data. I developed a spreadsheet with a separate page and code name for each participant. I then had to make the decision as to whether I should

record the frequency of participants who mentioned the code and the frequency of the number of times it was mentioned in the text that was analysed. According to Maxwell (2010), recording numerical data could help justify conclusions and “deal with potential challenges” (p.478). However, he also goes on to conclude that “... numbers can be used rhetorically, to make a report appear more precise, rigorous, and scientific, without playing any real role in the logic of the study and thus misrepresenting the actual basis for the conclusions” (p. 480). I decided, therefore, not to record frequency data. Maxwell suggests that “the use of numbers can lead to a slide into variance ways of thinking, a common pitfall for students who are just learning to do qualitative research and are more accustomed to thinking of ‘research’ in variance terms” (p.480).

I coded all the material and then after an interval of about two weeks, as suggested by Schreier (2012), I recoded all the material again. The two-week gap ensured that I was looking at the data with ‘a fresh pair of eyes’. This process strengthened my approach to coding because it allowed me to refresh or reconsider the material for a second time and identify anything that had been overlooked. I did find that I had missed some material in the first coding process.

Coding Frame

As seen in the coding frame (Appendix 4), there were seven categories and 18 sub-categories. Creating the themes was not a simple process and it is interesting to note that the categories were helpful for coding purposes, however they were not the final themes which I chose to present the findings. Reading the transcripts several times

and then reading and re-reading the coded pieces of text, helped me to establish the key themes. The themes themselves did not simply emerge from the data or the codes. There was considerable analytic labour involved in creating the themes. Braun and Clarke (2019, p.594) explain:

Themes are analytic outputs developed through and from the creative labour of our coding. They reflect considerable analytic 'work,' and are actively created by the researcher at the intersection of data, analytic process and subjectivity. ... Themes are creative and interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves.

I then went back to the literature and also reviewed further literature to see whether my findings agreed with other research within the field. The themes I created were:

- Managerialism
- The REF and the resultant shift in professional identities
- Academics as service providers

As I wrote the findings chapters, I drew upon certain post-structuralist ideas/concepts to theorise some of the themes that emerged from my thematic analysis. These ideas were:

- Power relations and resistance
- Disciplinary power
- Self-regulation

Reflections on the data collection process

My reflexive diary helped reinforce my approach to collecting data and the interview questions I set.

Extract from my reflexive diary (20 July 2017)

A few of the interviews were quite emotional and I wanted to capture that, and how it made me feel. I also wanted to make a note of the interviews where I felt that the participants were being very cautious in what they said. I tried not share my own feelings with the participants, however in some cases I understood perfectly how they felt, both from those who were managers and also from those who were lecturers and similar to Neal and McLaughlin (2009), I faced the dilemma of whether to empathise and agree with the participant: "As interviewers we were unprepared for the intensity of this emotional recall and were uncertain as to how best, or if at all, to respond and offer any reassurance or words of comfort and empathy" (Neal and McLaughlin 2009, p.700).

I used my own judgement, and in some cases I did empathise with the participants by giving a reassuring nod of the head, or comments such as 'I know how you feel'.

I kept a research diary to ensure that I recorded details of any data that the participants did not want me to use. Some participants were very open, honest and quite prepared to share personal experiences. Others seemed guarded at first, but as the interviews progressed, they seemed to relax and feel more comfortable. Being an insider researcher helped me to put the participants at ease, and when they were talking, they knew that I was empathising, as I was in a similar situation. I think it would be very difficult for an outsider to have gained access to the number and diverse sample of academics that I was able to include in this study. The first few interviews were quite short, about 20 minutes long, and it became clear that the interviews were too structured. I reflected on the experience in my reflexive diary and this helped me to modify my approach. I changed my approach by asking the participants to discuss their background in higher education as the first question. This led to a much richer discussion, and all the interviews that followed lasted for over an hour.

Credibility, Validity and Generalisability

Credibility

According to Korstjens and Moser, (2018, p.121) “Credibility establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants’ original views”. Within this research, strategies to ensure credibility included prolonged engagement, member check and keeping a reflexive diary. Prolonged engagement with the participants meant that most interviews lasted about one hour. I was already familiar with the setting and context, and my insider status helped me to build trust with the participants. Member check refers to feeding back data, to members of the participants from whom the data were originally obtained. I offered all the participants a chance to check the transcripts, however none of them asked to do so. In order to ensure credibility, I randomly chose three participants from the three different faculties and asked if they would read their transcripts and let me know if any changes needed to be made. No changes were requested by the participants.

Keeping a reflexive diary enabled me to examine my own “conceptual lens, explicit and implicit assumptions” (Korstjens and Moser, 2018, p.121) which was part of a critical-reflection process about myself as a researcher reflecting on my own biases and preconceptions. My reflexive diary kept a log of my methodological decisions, personal self-analyses and helped me reflect on the role of the researcher. In addition, it helped me to refine my understanding of participants’ responses. Smith (1999) refers to research journals as “enhancing ethical and methodologic rigour” (p.359), and Koch (1996) suggests that a journal enables the researcher to participate in producing the data.

Validity

Post-structuralism views deny the idea that there is a fixed or objective 'truth' waiting to be discovered, so this forces one to problematise the aspect of validity in one's research (because validity is the extent to which a concept is accurately measured against 'true' picture of the phenomenon). For post-structuralist researchers, "...truth is subjective, multiple and fractured, and the concept of validity as an indicator of truth-value therefore has little meaning" (Rolfe, 2006, p.9)

Validity takes a very different guise in a post-structural context, which negates positivist stance, which has led me to explore the idea of 'trustworthiness' which might be more appropriate to a post-structural study rather than validity. "It is in writing more so than in data collection or data analysis that knowledge is constructed from data. Thus, trustworthiness is concerned not with whether the data have been rigorously collected, but with their interpretation and presentation" (Rolfe, 2006, p.13). According to Rolfe, research involves making value judgements and in the absence of any objective principles, we must draw on judiciousness, our subjective experience and our practical understanding.

Theoretical validity refers to "The degree to which a theory or theoretical explanation informing or developed from a research study fits the data and is, therefore, credible and defensible" (Hannes, Lockwood and Pearson 2010 p.1740). To ensure that my research was theoretically valid I adopted a Foucauldian theoretical framework to help me interpret the data and present my findings.

Generalisability

Hannes, Lockwood and Pearson (2010, p.1740) explain that generalisability is “The degree to which findings can be extended to other persons, times, or settings than those directly studied” The research findings could relate to other post-1992 universities and could, therefore, be potentially useful for informing action in terms of policy, politics and practice.

Ethical considerations

This section discusses the ethical considerations involved when undertaking this research study. Popke (2003, p.311) explains that “theoretical disruption of our ontological and political certainties can be a means to reinscribe a sense of responsibility toward the other, because it implies that we must weigh alternatives, make judgments and intervene in contexts whose complexity will always exceed predetermined formulations”. My ethical responsibility, therefore, involved considering alternatives, making judgements and intervening where necessary. I have acknowledged my positioning and biases and I admit that at times I showed empathy to the participants. This was my ethical judgement in those particular contexts. I explained to the participants at the beginning of the interviews that if they realised that they said something that they did not want me to quote, just to highlight it at the end of the interview and I would ensure that that particular data would not be used. I advised all the participants that they could check the transcriptions against the recordings to ensure accurate transcription.

There were times when participants became upset and I needed to deal with this in an ethical manner. Below is an extract from my reflexive diary discussing one such occasion.

Extract from my reflexive diary (20 July 2017)

On one occasion I had to stop the interview as the participant became emotional and felt that the recording was making it difficult for her to talk. I turned off the recording and let her discuss her feelings, and we then went back to recording the interview, and she was then able to articulate her feelings and experiences in quite some depth.

I followed the guidelines outlined in *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (BERA, 2018) and received the required university ethical approval. All participants were over 18 years of age and did not include any vulnerable adults. Academics were invited to take part on a voluntary basis, through email, and steps were taken to ensure that lecturers would not be recognised in any future write-up. Another important consideration was that of informed consent. Written consent was obtained from all participants who were interviewed, and they were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time up to the deadline date. Before each interview I gave a verbal explanation of the research study after which there was the opportunity for questions from the participants. With only 32 academics being interviewed, care needed to be taken to ensure that the respondents could not be identified.

Burgess (1984, p.188), discusses the importance of maintaining anonymity:

To gain permission to study this area, the researcher promised that no individual would be identified in any report with the result that the residents

felt they were to be the subjects of a social survey. However, when the study was published it was evident that the authors had failed to maintain anonymity. Although pseudonyms were used, individuals could be identified by means of the problems being analysed.

Quotes from the interviews were included when reporting the findings, therefore they needed to be reviewed carefully to avoid the possibility of participants being identified. There was, however, one participant who could have been identified from the data within this study. I approached this participant, therefore, who read the extracts that I used and the discussion around them, and I was then given permission to use the data within this thesis.

Deciding which quotes to include raised issues of accurate representation. Riessman, (2001, p.689) sees these decisions as an interpretive ingredient of the process: "Deciding which segments to analyze...are interpretive acts that are shaped in major ways by the investigator's theoretical interests". Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.123) referred to a "crisis of representation" which questioned the "accepted qualitative wisdom concerning truth, method, and representation. Issues of trustworthiness were problematized, along with our notions of meaning and authority" (Reilly 2013, p.2). Guba and Lincoln (1994), however, recognised that procedures to create accurate representation suggested an inference to positivism, "in that there was an underlying assumption that an unchanging phenomena exists, and can, therefore, be logically and methodically checked and verified" (Reilly, 2013, p.2). In my final study, therefore, I sent extracts of my findings section to particular participants to ensure I had represented them accurately, whenever I had a crisis of representation.

In recognising their entitlement to privacy, I ensured that their names and other identifying features of the situation were not included in the final write up. All recorded interviews and transcripts were kept in a password-protected folder on a computer. All files will be kept for approximately two years after the completion of the research study in order to write papers for publication. At the end of this period, all data will be deleted.

Extract from my reflexive diary (10 November 2019)

Although I had guaranteed anonymity to all participants, it became clear when I was writing up the findings that one participant could be recognised from some of the quotes. This participant held a particular position, in addition to the academic role, that only one person in the university held, and this position was mentioned in the extract. It was very important to the discussion for this data to be included, therefore I sent this participant the paragraphs from the chapter, and asked for permission to use them. The participant agreed, asking for certain revisions. I felt that my decision to include the extracts was ethical, as this participant not only agreed to me including the extracts, but had also agreed to my discussion around them.

Anonymity was a concern throughout this research study, particularly when participants commented on their role (e.g. professor or head of department). Consequently, I avoided all reference to roles when inserting extracts and excluded any mention of the participants ages or age range within the thesis. I therefore only gave information regarding the faculty in which they worked and whether they were male or female.

The theoretical assumptions of poststructuralism present challenges to established ethical thinking. Popke (2003, p.298), suggests “the need for an ethics sensitive to openness and difference”. Grant (2014, p.548) is more specific and highlights how an

“ethical commitment to self-determination, problematizing and deconstructing notions of fixed identity in post-structural inquiry exposes the politics of oppressive practices”. Part of my post-structural ethical approach, therefore, was an openness to difference, and a determination to problematise academic identity within this neoliberal university.

Popke (2003) discusses our ethical responsibility to others in our everyday lives and as a consequence as a post-structuralist researcher, I have an ethical responsibility to my participants. Popke (2003, p.305), explains, however, that our everyday lives “cannot be guided by our one-to-one responsibility for any particular other”, so we are forced to make choices. Below is an extract from my reflexive diary regarding this ethical responsibility.

Extract from my reflexive diary (16 May 2017)

I felt that my research interviews, were able to be guided by my ethical responsibility; however, the philosophical claims of Levinas did not offer any actual guidelines as to how I should act in any one situation. My responsibility to my participants would, therefore, necessitate me to make judgements that I determine are moral and ethical. I therefore took care when questioning, to ensure that participants did not feel threatened, particularly in relation to university politics. As the researcher, I treated the ‘subjects’ as participants of the research and as I am a member of the academic staff myself, it was easier for me to establish trust and rapport during the study and act ethically responsibly.

Whilst having highlighted the importance of reflexivity as an important ethical aspect to this research, I must also consider epistemic responsibility to those that read my work and take my “knowledge claims seriously” (p.134). Code’s (1987) notion of

epistemic responsibility emphasises that our epistemological reasoning is analogous to our moral reasoning.

Different cognitive capacities and epistemic circumstances create situations where experience is structured, and hence the world is known, quite differently from one cognitive agent to another. Each time a moral judgment is made, then, two parts of a situation must be assessed: the way it is apprehended and the action that is performed as a result. The former, the apprehension, is a matter for epistemological assessment, and the moral dimension of the situation is crucially dependent upon this epistemic component (Code, 1987, 69).

Therefore, I needed to consider the notion of integrity as part of the responsibility I have in the formation of my knowledge claims. Reflexivity plays a large part in the knowing process, therefore continued consideration needed to be given to the ethical aspects of my data analysis process and to put in place “...strong enactments of reflexivity throughout our knowing processes” (Doucet and Mauthner, 2007, p.134).

Summary

So far, this chapter has outlined my methodological commitments and has provided a detailed justification for each part of the methodological procedure associated with this study. I chose to work within a post-structuralist perspective and a qualitative methodological approach. I drew upon the work of Michel Foucault, which was enormously instrumental in relation to this study in developing my understanding of power relations, particularly the idea that ‘power is everywhere’. My application of Foucault’s work was based around the interpretation and analysis of the data. In other words, I was seeking out power relations and looking to detect them.

The following three chapters explore the shifting identities of academics as they emerged from the fused analysis of the participants' comments, my reflexive diary, the literature, and the post-structuralist theoretical framework influenced by the work of Foucault. These chapters relate to the data presentation and analysis, and represent the three main themes associated with my attempts to answer the key question of my investigation: How are professional academic identities shifting at a neoliberal university?

CHAPTER 4: NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE AND ACADEMIC IDENTITY

In this chapter, I focus my efforts on examining the data in my endeavour to understand better the impact of neoliberal governance on academic identity. This theme emerged from the data, predominantly as a result of my engagement with the first sub-question of this study, which focuses on the impact of the university's neoliberal governance on academic identities. The initial connection with this aspect of my inquiry has been made through the Foucauldian conceptual lens of disciplinary power. This chapter explores how management practice, as part of neoliberalism, (referred to in literature as 'new managerialism'), has impacted on the roles and identity of academic staff.

Managerialism

Participants discussed how managerialism had brought about a shift in their professional roles, emphasising data collection and data management rather than teaching. There was much discussion around increased targets and an emphasis on 'outcomes':

Are we moving away from that idea of intellectual craftsmanship where you do feel rewarded and you feel it's part of yourself in what you're producing, to an era where we're simply functionaries in a business where actually you're alienated from the product and the outcome? (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Prior to 1992, the idea that university activities and cultures needed managing would have seemed unbelievable, as universities were perceived as communities of scholars, run by academic leaders rather than managers (Deem, 1998). Present day

HE governance includes the adoption of organisational values, technologies, and management practices associated with the business sector known as 'new managerialism' (Williams, 2013; Bates and Kaye, 2014; Tomlinson, 2017).

Targets, reports and ranking in the league tables were discussed by participants in all the different roles, particularly in relation to the importance of the data and positive outcomes in improving the university's ranking in national league tables. The comment below exemplifies the significance of national drivers for the university and the impact of the former on academics' performance:

So whatever our personal views are, as heads of schools you've got to perform in a way that is going to satisfy the university and satisfy these national drivers if you want to keep your place in the rankings (Participant J. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

It is here that we can make links to Foucault's notion of a disciplinary mechanism. Foucault (2002) explained this as a system, designed to direct "the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed...To govern, in this sense, is to control the possible field of action of others" (p.326). Indeed, the data confirms that the techniques and practices adopted by the university were aimed at directing "the conduct of individuals" to ensure compliance of academics in order to satisfy the national drivers. These drivers had been reflected in the university's strategic plan, one of the key aims of which was to gain external recognition through adopting both a teaching and research culture. The strategic plan (2013-2020) recognised the challenges associated with seeking to build a significant research profile, especially as there was not a strong research culture within the institution. The university used

mission and vision statements to help them legitimise and implement these changes (Fumasoli *et al.*, 2015).

The university mission is to increase the research capacity, ... we are going to grow our own talents (Participant T. Female, Faculty of Education).

We are now not only the teachers and lecturers; the university's vision is that we are also required to become researchers (Participant V. Female, Faculty of Education).

Consequently, there was more emphasis on research, and people were expected to take on a different role and move away from the role of teacher/lecturer to the role of researcher.

Staff were recruited and there was never any expectation that they would be doing research. Suddenly the ground shifted under them and there now is an expectation that people should be doing research, or if they are not doing significant research then they are doing something in terms of scholarly activity. They're either engaged in pedagogical practice or something with a professional body, you can't just teach any more (Participant A. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The university's ambitions in this regard were associated with the Research Excellence Framework, which has been used to measure, grade, and categorise research outputs submitted by academics. The principles behind the REF correspond well with Foucault's (1988) concept of a technology of power, as it determines the conduct of individuals and submits them to certain ends, which in this case is the production of suitable publications in peer reviewed journals. The REF was employed as a technology of power which examined, assessed and graded each academic's work numerically. Each research output was "read by a subject-based peer panel and

graded on a 5-point scale (0*-4*), where 0* indicated no research content and 4* indicated 'world leading quality'" (Bornmann *et al.*, 2019, p.332).

We like REFable things... there's always concern about whether they're in green journals or gold journals (Participant C. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The idea that they should prescribe what I do so that it scores on a league table, rather than worthwhile research is fundamentally wrong in terms of what we should be about, ... and this idea that it needs to be peer reviewed, which is from the natural sciences and it's positivistic in parts. It's about peer reviewers that we all know. They then decide we don't like your article because it doesn't include their work or it doesn't look at their work favourably or whatever, it doesn't fall within the remit of the journal particularly, there's all sorts of flaws with that (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Foucault referred to such type of examination as a normalising gaze that makes it possible "to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them" (Foucault, 1991, p.184). Grant and Elizabeth (2015) suggest that such examination can lead to open or concealed warnings to staff deemed insufficiently research active, which in turn influences academics' previous perceptions of their roles and responsibilities. These REF-associated strategies represent one of the main facets of new managerialism, which involves the close monitoring of academics' performance and guiding them into self-monitoring, through stressing the importance of research impact and league tables (Terama *et al.*, 2016). This led to some staff feeling that their position as an academic at the university was being threatened:

It makes me feel a bit insecure about my position and makes me feel a bit stressed but because I know that I work hard and that I give more hours

than I'm contractually bound to (Participant M. Female, Faculty of Education).

They understood the importance of the REF but felt that they did not have the experience or time to write at that level. Torrance (2020, p.776), explains that:

...the REF operates on institutions and individuals in myriad fashion. The general reasons for engagement are played out in many different circumstances and in many different ways—an almost perfect exemplification of Foucault's (1977) notion of "capillary power." A key issue here is that the REF does not take place in a vacuum. If it was a more discrete and delineated intervention it might be more easy to either ignore, resist, or at least manage as a separate activity to mitigate its negative effects.

Post-structuralists are required to turn attention on themselves in order to examine the power relations that their research reveals. I have therefore included an extract from my reflexive diary.

Extract from my Reflexive diary (18 July 2017)

Two participants who I interviewed today became very emotional when discussing the importance that was now being given to research. They felt that research for the REF had become embedded in the expectations of university management. They were frightened of losing their jobs and felt helpless. They both did not feel they had the skills to undertake research and at one point the participant became very upset. I also felt anger from both of these participants as they felt they were not being supported to become researchers.

The capillary nature of modern power is not understood in terms of ideologism and economism but can be understood in terms of the politics of everyday life. Therefore, if power is embedded in every day social practices and relations then efforts to resist become more difficult. This helps to explain the participants' feeling of helplessness and anger (Fraser, 1981).

The challenges posed by the new research agenda as well as the implications of the REF on academic identities are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Managerialism and student data

Another way managerialism has impacted on academic identities relates to what Henkel (1997) called “the management of student learning” (p.138). Academics in post-1992 universities had to internalise the values of neoliberalism in terms of the importance of data, such as student outcomes and income generated by student numbers, as well as students’ levels of satisfaction measured by multiple surveys and evaluations:

I think that’s facilitated a shift in the purpose of what we’re doing, which I think is much less clearly about education anymore and is often about data collection and data management. So increasingly, the focus to me is often on quantitative evidencing of why we exist and the shift I think has moved away from teaching in some ways (Participant K. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The data shows that academics have been put in a position where they felt they had to respond effectively to make sure that the institution was sustainable by bringing in money from students, but also be accountable for students’ satisfaction with the modules and programmes delivered.

I’d even go further and say if it’s not about funding but if it’s about managerialism, the idea that what is valuable is always measurable or even visible I think is fundamentally wrong. Just not the case and there is a tendency for managers to want to measure, to control or have the illusion to control rather than sort of trusting in the values, the integrity and the skills of staff (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Rolfe (2002) notes that since the introduction of university tuition fees, the neoliberal seeds were laid for the full marketisation of universities, part of which involved students presenting themselves as customers. The data below echoes this argument,

suggesting that 'making sure the students are happy' has become one of academics' additional responsibilities, adding to the existing pressures:

I think what's happened is that the role has got so many additional things attached to it like making sure the students are happy come what may, the NSS, the REF and all the targets that we're being measured by, I think that puts pressure on people and there's the time to do those things that people didn't have before and I think the student numbers are going up so much as well (Participant BB. Female, Faculty of Health).

In addition, the issues associated with ensuring student satisfaction have led to a wider variety of administrative tasks related to staff observations and grading of their teaching, additional quality assurance of teaching materials, and careful tracking of student progress. The frustration of academic staff with these increased administrative responsibilities is clearly expressed in their comments below:

There is a lot more, in terms of management it seems a little bit controlling an awful lot of layers of observation and administration that one has to go through in order to do things like section modules, have assessment tests agreed in advanced (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

There's much more administrative work that's being given to us and with that I often find it's quite difficult to justify and rationalise why I get given some of the bits of work that I get given to do, admin wise, when somebody who's got much higher computer skills in the admin department could probably do something a lot quicker than me. People are getting more and more put on them (Participant DD. Female, Faculty of Health).

Deem (1998) explains that the implementation of the organisational practices and techniques of 'new managerialism' requires an amalgamation of professional and administrative regimes, putting at risk established professional academic identities as a means of aligning universities with the neoliberal agendas. The comment from the participant below demonstrates how both students and academics get drawn into such neoliberal culture through such practices:

... when you change the structure of an institution through commodification, managerialism, you get a service sector attitude, focusing on support, which is in itself good, but perhaps over-elaborated. As a result, students' culture changes and that changed culture means that everyone gets into a mindset (Participant A. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Summary

The analysis of this data enables one to detect traces of a shifting identity from academics to administrators, creating a new fused identity of academic-administrator. Olssen (2016) draws on Foucault's elaboration of neoliberalism targets, creating structures of accountability and control. Similarly, Harley (2002) confirms that under these managerial arrangements, academics have to become administrators in the way they are expected to provide regular evidence to managers and their institutions of the contribution they are making to targets, as a form of state power, where models of governance based on public goods have been replaced in HEIs with data, outcomes, key performance indicators, and performance.

The next chapter will continue to explore the influences of neoliberalism on academic identities, drawing specifically on the data related to the Research Excellence Framework as one of the tools for the "neutralization of the university as a centre of independent knowledge creation and learning, and hence as a potential locus of intellectual opposition to the neoliberal hegemony" (O'Regan and Gray, 2018, p.533).

CHAPTER 5: THE PERVASIVE INFLUENCE OF THE REF AND THE RESULTANT SHIFT IN PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

This chapter links directly with the second sub-question for this study, which aims to make sense of the ways in which the university's drive to establish a strong research profile has influenced academics' roles and responsibilities, consequently causing a shift in their identities. The discussion here draws from data related to the challenges posed by the new criteria for the Research Excellence Framework (REF), as well as the implications of the REF on the identities of academic-teachers and academic-researchers as shaped by the increased emphasis on research within an aggressively neo-liberal and commercialised higher education context (Fernando, 2016).

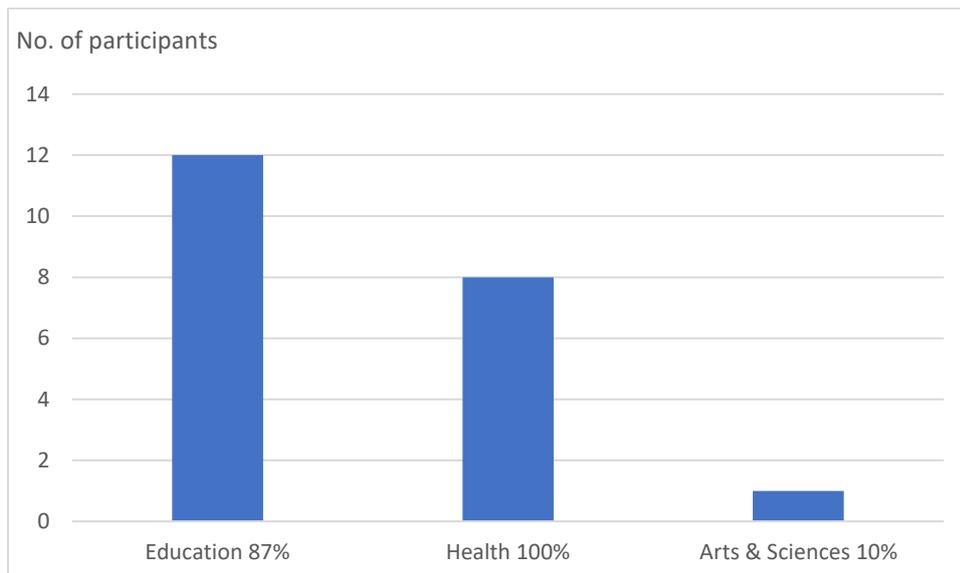
Shifting from academic-teachers to academic-researchers

At the time this research was taking place, Stern's recommendations and the subsequent changes to the REF system (Fernando, 2016), had led to some academic staff whose role has been predominantly teaching, feeling pressurised (their words) to produce research outputs for publication. One of the key themes raised by academics across all three faculties was that the pressure to produce peer reviewed research outputs had increased.

They talk about the 'sandwich generation', I think the post-1992 universities are the equivalent of the millennials who are cutting a sandwich. We are the sandwich generation; we are now caught between two competing demands. We are expected to excel in teaching and student support and now at the same time we are expected to research in the way the Russell group universities research (Participant V. Female, Faculty of Education).

The data shows that for some, particularly those who had not previously researched, this increased pressure was overwhelming. The requirement to undertake research was referred to in all of the interviews with many, particularly from the Faculties of Health and Education, feeling that the pressure to research had increased over the last few years. Figure 1 illustrates that the Faculties of Education and Health were feeling increased pressure to undertake research, whereas only one participant from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences felt the same. This could be explained by the fact that many professionals in the Faculties of Health and Education had previously focused on teaching, seeing themselves as experienced practitioners. Courses in these two faculties were mainly vocational, thereby reflecting the nature of the teaching and academic identity. None of the participants from the Faculties of Education and Health mentioned that research could be essential to practice development.

Figure 1. The pressure to research as mentioned by the participants from the three faculties.



This graph represents the number of participants who mentioned the increased pressure to research. It does not, however, quantify the considerable level of pressure felt, by those from the Faculties of Health and Education who were teaching students for professional qualifications. These participants were conscious of their current status and their individual research expectations, but felt caught between the demands of teaching and research. Some participants went on to discuss the lack of time to undertake research due to the demands of the other aspects of their role:

The reality is I'm working 12-hour days six days a week now so I would have to sacrifice the one day a week off that I get. It means that some days you would get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and not go to bed until two or three in the morning and that's just the reality of the job. (Participant V. Female, Faculty of Education).

The participants below also discuss the difficulty in researching in addition to teaching:

I just feel pressurised and although I can see the benefit of research. I can see that people quite enjoy it, the time element is just not there. I've got to prepare sessions, I've got to deal with issues of students on placement, I've got to teach, I'm a personal tutor and I'm a visiting tutor. Just balancing all that up is the reality. Apparently, we have two day's teaching, two day's research and one day admin. Well that just doesn't happen in reality (Participant L. Female, Faculty of Education).

I think there are some that want to do it (research) and I will try and carve out some time and do what I can, and others are probably saying not on your life because I've got too much on and I've told managers a million times that I have too much on but nobody listens. So no, I'm not going to write that article because there is a sense of game playing I think in this organisation (Participant BB, Female, Faculty of Health).

Evidence from literature (Trahar, 2011; Winter, 2009) similarly indicates that academic staff were unable to conduct research alongside delivering effective teaching due to time constraints. A study by Billot (2010) specifically notes that staff were frustrated at the pressure put upon them and felt that this was not what they expected being an

academic would encompass. The participants in that study voiced similar issues to my research participants, adding also that they did not feel equipped with the adequate skills to undertake research. This is exemplified in the comment below from one of my participants:

I just lack confidence. I just feel pressurised and although I can see the benefit of research, I can see that people quite enjoy it... All of a sudden, you're told you have to do research and we were not given very much support with that and help with that. I've done low-key research, certainly not research that they want for the REF. I think the future of this university is that you are going to need a PhD to be a lecturer... My personal view is that getting a PhD does not necessarily mean you're good at teaching (Participant L. Female, Faculty of Education).

This opinion that staff were ill-equipped to undertake research was expressed by a number of participants in the Faculties of Health and Education. As the comments below show, one participant from the Faculty of Health felt that the increased pressure to research was leading to a higher degree of mental health problems for lecturers within that Faculty:

We have to operate at that level to get 3, 4, 5-star publications for the REF return, ... but I think people are ill equipped for it because certainly in a health care setting and the Faculty of Health, the majority of people weren't historically academics. They were clinicians and they came in because they believed in the vocational ethos of their profession to help people. Now there is a pressure to publish and can you be both? ... We have a high level of sickness here and 40% of that is due to mental health which is far higher. I think that's the pressure to do both (Participant CC. Female, Faculty of Health).

These pressures to undertake research, particularly research that could be accessible to the public, is discussed by Giroux (2013, p.18), who argues that "...many academics find themselves labouring under horrendous working conditions that don't allow for them to write in an accessible manner for the public because they do not have time - given the often almost slave-like labour demanded of part-time academics and increasingly of full-time academics...".

Interestingly, one of the participants links these pressures with micro-management techniques, exercised by the university management:

We are micro-managed in the fact that everyone is told that they must produce a certain number of REF returnable pieces of work if you're full time (Participant BB. Female, Faculty of Health).

Ball (2010) explains how this kind of micro-management “brings the tutelary gaze to bear, making the teacher calculable, describable and comparable” (p.159). These ideas correlate with Foucault’s (1982) perception of educational institutions as disciplinary systems, where the adjustment of individuals’ abilities is regulated

...by the means of a whole series of power processes, such as surveillance, reward and punishment and the pyramidal hierarchy: These blocks, in which the putting into operation of technical capacities, the game of communications, and the relationships of power are adjusted to one another according to considered formulae, constitute what one might call, enlarging a little the sense of the word ‘disciplines’ (pp.787-788).

Furthermore, participants from the Faculty of Health noted more formal disciplinary strategies were being used by the university to push academic teachers towards research activity. One of the participants explained how a memorandum was circulated, stating that staff on grade 10 should now be either research active or leading a programme, whilst previously many staff had been grade 10 lecturers without having the responsibilities of researching or programme leadership:

We had a memorandum come round that was questioning the grade band of staff, and our line manager was very supportive and she explained it all to us very clearly, but it was questioning whether everybody should remain on a band 10 status because not everybody was research active or leading a programme. There was a shockwave that went through the faculty

because some people did not want to be research active (Participant EE. Female, Faculty of Health).

This memorandum ensured that staff were aware of the need to either become research active or face being downgraded. Valikangas and Seeck (2011) see such changes as another exemplification of Foucault's concepts, when the result of these techniques is that "individuals are aware at all times of their status under disciplinary power" (p.820).

Duckworth (Duckworth *et al.*, 2016, p.911) was a colleague at this particular university.

She highlights:

The time, energy and commitment of a working week based on extra hours, compounded by work environments where job security is unstable due to redundancies and restructuring, often leave practitioners fearful of their job security, exhausted and ever more reluctant to challenge the hegemony which is ever present in a curriculum based on quantifiable outcomes.

Some participants felt that the setting's demands around research in terms of the REF, were narrowly defined.

Of course a book chapter doesn't count now and a conference paper doesn't (Participant CC. Female Faculty of Education).

Books, because they are not open access are a bit frowned upon but there are still good ones, I hope they still let them in. There are some journal articles which I have found which are ok but not great, but if a book chapter had been written by somebody quite high brow. I think the REF committee hopefully will still gaze upon them (Participant B. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

I have a number of publications and there in professional journals and text books for example a chapter that I wrote from a seminal health visiting text isn't REFable but that particular text book sold over 4000 copies. I think it's sad that it's got to be (Participant AA. Male, Faculty of Health).

Watermeyer and Olssen, M (2016, p.212) explain that "Some academic managers, for instance, now argue that in responding to the terms of research evaluation, when a

book has equal weighting with a journal publication, academics should abandon the first and focus on the latter because the cost-benefit ratio is more favourable.”

The participant below however, is resisting publishing in peer reviewed journals.

So to me the idea that everybody should be judged in the same way is nonsense, just as the way that the idea that everybody should be publishing in peer review journals is nonsense. Even within the idea that research is important I try now not to publish into journals, I've done peer review journals numerous times but actually it restricts what you can do so actually what I tend to do is book chapters or books is what I'm trying to do now. (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences)

Not only did participants feel restricted to publishing in peer reviewed journals, there was also evidence that some felt restricted to 'impact' journals.

Yes, two pieces of REF returnable work by 2020, by the next REF return, in fact I think it's supposed to be two pieces a year which is impossible. Now this is in 'impact' journals obviously. Now I'm on the editorial board of one of the nursing journals and I actually do quite a lot of opinion pieces and quite a lot of articles for them but it's not an impact journal so that doesn't count, which as far as I'm concerned is ridiculous (Participant CC. Female, Faculty of Health).

The REF now, we've got to look at impact, journals with an impact, 4 star 3 star 2 star (Participant Z. Female, Faculty of Health).

The participant below adds another layer to this disciplinary nature of neoliberal agendas, noting that the research produced as a result of these pressures has no relevance outside the world of academia. He refers to the REF as being entrepreneurial and simply measurable purely in outputs:

I see the REF as entrepreneurial because it positions us in a league table against other universities but again, I think this is where neoliberalism is destructive because we have to publish for publications sake but the

publications don't necessarily need to be life changing in terms of the people they are targeting, they don't need to make a difference to patients' lives, they just need to get out there in good journals and have peer reviews at a good standard by people in that professional ball (Participant AA. Male, Faculty of Health).

Giroux (2013) argues that academics “retreat into a highly specialized, professional language that few people can understand in order to meet the institutional standards of academic excellence” (p.18). This participant felt that research in his area should make a difference to the lives of patients, leading towards a suggestion that participants from the Faculty of Health still see their identity as more closely related to their previous clinical profession rather than that of a university academic researcher.

Resistance to undertaking research

As Radice (2013) confirms, commercialisation and cost allocation had led to a separation of research from teaching, and success in research had now “become the primary yardstick of academic success” (p.416). Some lecturers had recognised an increased value in research compared to teaching and welcomed a shift towards a ‘double’ identity of academic teacher-researcher. Others, however, displayed a level of resistance to undertaking research. These comments came mainly from the Faculties of Education and Health, with only one participant from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences mentioning this subject:

I think neoliberalism and the marketisation and commodification of education are the main developments of my time here, certainly within the last 5 or 6 years. I think they are dangerous and those dangers include dangers for staff and for the student consumer and I think academics in the privileged position we hold, we have responsibility to look out for those and make sure that as far as is possible we hold true to values of education that precede and transcend monetary or target driven values... so we are increasingly focusing, often, on quantitative evidencing of why we exist and the shift I think has moved away from teaching in some ways (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

These comments are expansively reflected in literature, where authors (Sayer, 2015; Chun, 2017; O'Regan and Gray, 2018) raise the question of academics' resistance to the harmful infiltration of neoliberalism into their profession. Specifically, Grant and Elizabeth (2015) consider how emotions circulating around research audit are implicated in reshaping identities and practices. The authors, however, suggest that these emotions are unlikely to lead to collective political resistance.

More comments from the participants from the Faculties of Health and Education indicate that they were resisting undertaking research, as they did not see it as a priority. Boyd and Smith (2016) suggest that such resistance might be due to a perceived lack of time or possible 'subversion'; however, further comments suggest that it is more likely that some participants saw research as an additional responsibility irrelevant to their main role of a teacher. The academics in the Faculties of Health and Education appeared to value teaching over research, probably due to the vocational nature of the programmes:

If the university did try to go down a disciplinary path or would try to go down to firing me for not fulfilling that aspect of my role (research) then I would have to go to the union and I would have a good case to fight (Participant M. Female, Faculty of Education).

Clearly, this participant saw herself as a teacher rather than an academic. There are elements of fear and anxiety in her emotional comments, which, according to Grant and Elizabeth (2015), are a weak foundation for political action, which explains why there was a lack of collective action against the increased pressure to research. "What may be construed as an individual's private emotion (such as stress, anxiety, or fear) may be inseparable from the structural and power relations that produce them and

should, as such, be viewed as both an individual and organizational problem” (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004, p.1188).

Similar views can be detected in the data below, adding to the same line of discussion:

They are basically resisting by not doing. They're not going to commit themselves in terms of research because they don't know what's coming down the track in terms of internal developments and then end up with the research and a stack load more work that I didn't know I was going to get (Participant CC. Female, Faculty of Health).

They have said that they haven't got capacity to actually engage in research above and beyond their workload (Participant BB. Female, Faculty of Health).

The above extracts both refer to workload and the need to protect themselves from the stress of too much work. There are elements of negative emotional feelings of frustration and anxiety leading to their refusal to engage with research, which is an act of resistance. O'Regan and Gray (2018) maintain that academics' emotional dissatisfactions and negative feelings create fertile ground for reform and resistance.

Some of the participants' comments refer specifically to the actions of resistance, as presented below:

It's usually sort of a passive resistance, a non-engagement (Participant Y. Female, Faculty of Health).

I don't work in the evenings anymore and if you like that's my act of resistance. I'm paid to do a job, I do it really well, I've done it for years, I'm skilled at it, this time of year we all get an email and we had it yesterday, send me your research projects that you're going to have your two days a week research time for. So I sent my projects and as ever I'll also send an email saying just to be clear these are not two research days, you get half a day at the most, there's other work (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Interestingly, a few comments from the participants contain a certain feeling of inescapability from such situations. An article by Cederström and Marinetti (2016) also confirms that some academics feel that hoping for a sudden resolution to their problems of academic life are futile. Emotive words and phrases were used to highlight how academics do not have a voice and examples of such discourses from two different participants are shown below:

*I have tried to speak up in certain ways but either A - you're not listened to or B – you are swimming against the tide, I think that your job would be **threatened**. I think the message is you either go with the system or you're **out the door** (Participant V. Female, Faculty of Education).*

*I have been told that actually you put your job in jeopardy if you don't do research. I don't feel I have a **voice** and I know that there was a colleague when their manager raised something at one of the senior meetings was told that that person **doesn't have a voice** so it doesn't count. I would say I'm quite **disillusioned** (Participant L. Female, Faculty of Education).*

This position can be used to create a useful contrast with Foucault's understanding of power as a driving force of resistance (Foucault, 1978). "Where there is power there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978, p.95). I suggest that the position taken by the above participants seems to render resistance for them, as futile. Luke (1974, 24) argues:

...is it not the supreme and most insidious use of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable,...

Many academics with predominantly teaching roles were marginalized by the discourse of the university enhancing its research profile. This dominant discourse was subjugating some members of the academic staff, particularly from the faculties of Health and Education. My interpretation from these particular participants' accounts, was of them being required to be 'silent' or 'silenced'. This is important to my research as a post-structuralist approach involves a willingness to understand the importance of hearing the voices of those who have been silenced.

Research: Gender implications

There seemed to be a fair amount of resistance to undertaking research, however, especially from women which relate to gender power relations vis-à-vis childcare and housework. Some participants spoke about how family commitments made it difficult to fulfil the demands of the job in relation to research. They seemed to suggest that generally, there are areas of work in which women are expected (and may expect of themselves) to take on wider responsibilities than those of their male colleagues. Particularly, one of the female participants discussed how although she and her husband were both lecturers at post-1992 institutions, she did not have time to research due to domestic and caring responsibilities, yet her husband did manage to research and publish in peer reviewed journals:

I think that there's this situation where the majority of females take on the responsibilities at home whether that be children or the house itself. I know for me, my husband is also an academic and I don't have the free time to research that he does. I take on greater responsibilities, taking the kids to gymnastics, sorting out what's for tea, doing the shopping, than he does (Participant O. Female, Faculty of Education).

The notion that women still carry the main weight of childcare and other caring roles relating to family is confirmed by Acker (2009), who argues that there appears to be

an acceptance that childcare and other caring responsibilities tend to be, for financial and other reasons, the responsibility of females. Significantly, the above participant seemed to accept the unfairness of the situation, while acknowledging that family commitments made it difficult for her to fulfil the demands of the job. Another participant found it difficult to undertake research in the evenings due to childcare responsibilities:

I am absolutely clear on the remit around research. I absolutely know that each and every one of us have to take responsibility to be research active. I do find it difficult to get my research because if I don't carve the time out in my diary during the day then I have no chance when I get home of an evening. I drive 45 minutes to my home, pick my daughter up and then its bedtime stories etc and by the time I have made my tea its 9pm and I don't want to start researching at that time, my brain isn't switched on enough at that time (Participant Q. Female, Faculty of Education).

In this extract, she described her feelings of resistance; a determination to spend time with her daughter despite the pressure to be undertaking research. Here she identified her subjective motivation, as she feared not being good as a 'mum' more than she feared not being a good enough researcher. Her personal priorities were more important than the priorities of the REF.

Another female participant spoke about how there was little support for those with caring responsibilities for elderly parents:

In my knowledge it's the women that pick up the pieces. In my own situation I have that dilemma of being a sandwich academic both in my personal life and my academic life, you just stretch twenty-four/seven. There are HR policies in place for people with children but they're absolutely no HR policies in place for people who are caring for elderly parents. There is not the same degree of understanding and there is no HR policy that you can fall back on (Participant V. Female participant, Faculty of Education).

Caring for elderly parents adds another layer of responsibility to female professional roles. According to Bom et al., (2019, p.6) “female caregivers experience larger caregiving effects on mental health than male caregivers” when caring for elderly relatives. In addition, “...females are more often the primary caregiver and more likely to experience social pressure to become a caregiver”. There did not appear, however, to be support for this group of females as there were no university Human Resource policies in place for carers of elderly parents at the time this research was undertaken.

Most of the male participants accepted that there were challenges for women to find the time to produce research outputs:

One of my colleagues who taught here for a very long time said she'd always felt that she wouldn't do any large amounts of research because she felt that you could either run a family or do a great amount of research but not both. That doesn't surprise me much in the slightest I have to say. Basically, I think, pretty brutally I think this is going to be the case until men start having babies. If only one sex of our species produces children and is primary nurturer in the early years this is always going to happen (Participant C. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The participant below discusses how he can research at night as his wife will look after his son if he wakes up:

I work at night, I work on weekend so I'm doing research all the time basically. I might find that I get up in the night and do three pages of work then. My son luckily is either a good sleeper or he sleeps with his mum, if he wakes in the middle of the night he wants his mum. He has told me that he finds that my torso is not as soft as his mums and he doesn't like my spiky beard (Participant D. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

One male participant from the Faculty of Health, (Participant AA) however, felt he was disadvantaged because he is male. He was a single parent of four children, and was also a foster parent, the only foster parent in the North West of England who was male and single. He had fostered three children, and also part-time fostered two others.

So I've experienced engaging in the university support mechanisms which I guess would be conventionally targeted at women who look after children, but I've also experienced being disadvantaged because I'm male I think, both personally, but also structurally.

He discussed the challenges when one of his children was seriously ill in hospital:

No job's secure now. The university sector is right out there in a competitive neoliberalist market, so those pressures are very strong and bids often come in with a two-week deadline with no warning and they are all about different subjects, subjects that I don't know anything about. So, I often find myself in hospital, sat next to my daughter's bed, writing the bids overnight with a laptop because I have to.

We operate in a neoliberal political arena and the above participant felt he was at the sharp end of it. In the higher education sector, there is now “dependency on additional external funding for research activities” (Bleiklie, 2018, p.3). That brings additional pressures. He had to write and win bids, and everything he wrote had to be peer reviewed. His teaching load and research load had not been reduced and he was still expected to publish. He was responsible for bringing in business for his faculty and when a bid fails, there are consequences; he indicated that he took that responsibility seriously, because he did not want to be responsible for not securing business that paid wages.

Gender socialisation which discriminates against and oppresses men is very powerful and it's got very serious consequences, the statistics bear that out. Personally I experienced that, so yes this is very important. Universities don't recognise the problem; they can see that there are vulnerable populations but they don't recognise men as one of them. It's not really on the political agenda and where it raises its head it's laughed at primarily.

This participant's views were that society has a set of norms to which people are expected to adhere. These norms, he felt, dictate the role of men and women and are oppressive. He saw gender-based socialisation as very strong and destructive. He believed that it accounts for a lot of men's mental health problems, because it is not seen to be a positive male trait to need to discuss emotions, therefore they are not able to share their distress. He discussed how far more men commit suicide than women, because they are desperate and they see no way out. This view is supported by Thompson (2018, p.1). "The male suicide problem is often expressed in terms of masculinity; men are taught not to talk about their emotions as a sign of weakness and are less likely to form 'meaningful' relationships outside of their romantic ones".

Another male participant voiced difficulties concerning operating as a man within the interpersonal politics of the university:

I'm a big guy and quite ferocious looking and the assumption is that I have always been if you like hyper masculine. People see me as they see me and therefore when I do show stress they seem to think that's far less of an impact on me so I precisely do get 'well you can deal with it, you can cope with it', when others, this includes men who represent themselves from the start as being sensitive, get away with it. So in that respect it's gendered, but it's also about performativity within groups. I think Butler would see it as

a performance of gender cross-sectioned with a performance of emotion. I have sometimes thought if I went into an office and threw a few chairs about and cried, I would probably get an awful lot of people listening because they would think 'he must be close to breaking down' (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

This data can be looked at through the lens of Foucault's notion of power. This offers a way to understand how his identity is constituted in relation to emotional rules in the context of the university, in which a 'hyper masculine' looking male is expected to not show his emotions. From a Foucauldian perspective, there is no freedom from emotional rules, but using Foucauldian theory, "we can problematize how one's relation to oneself is marked by self-policing of emotional conduct" (Zembylas, 2005, p.946).

The participant discussed how we should not lose sight of the fact that in general women have a hard time in universities and he discussed how there is plenty of evidence for that, including the glass ceiling. According to this participant there are men who get more recognition for being sensitive, but likewise:

...there are women who suffer from the fact that because they don't want to be seen in the classic feminine weak role, they are then almost seen as honorary men and then their emotions are not respected, so it's gendered but it's sectional as well (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Whilst I have provided evidence from two men, these are not representative of the wider male academic population that I sampled. Whilst the REF acts as a 'disciplinary' technology of government (Foucault 1995) which subjects both male and female academics to panoptic gazes and the ratings of any outputs published, the negative

impact on women is disproportionate compared to men. The main difference is the expectation that research is undertaken in one's own time, when women are often involved in caring responsibilities.

So far, the data in this chapter has revealed important gendered themes and also indicates that neoliberal agendas have been pushing academics, whose primary roles and responsibilities were associated with teaching, towards new requirements for research, resulting in a gradual shift of their identities from academic-teachers to a dual role that combines teaching and research. The result has been the development of what I call a 'double identity'. As confirmed by Lankveld *et al.* (2017), those from a professional background initially felt insecure when they realised that their former teaching expertise was not enough for their university role, but most, after two or three years, began to see teaching and research as equally significant parts of their identity.

Shifting from academic-researchers to academic-teachers

Academics whose responsibilities had previously been primarily associated with research showed a more complex picture. Theirs was associated with a 'reversed' shift of identity from researcher to academic-teacher, resulting nonetheless in a similar 'double identity'. This group of participants saw themselves primarily as researchers and supported the idea of strengthening the university's research profile:

I would make sure that research accounts for more. I would put more money into research, so the research pot that's allocated, I would at least quadruple that. I would build more buildings for research and I would definitely buy more equipment that we need. (Participant D. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

This correlates with Lankveld *et al.*'s (2017) findings in that some academics saw themselves as primarily researchers and felt that the research should be prioritised. Some, however, readily embraced both research and teaching as the key components of their academic roles. In the participants' narratives, several lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences suggested that to be a good teacher, one also needed to be a researcher:

Universities are places where teaching should be led by research and they are, and always have been places where knowledge is produced (Participant G. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

I have a very strong conviction that you cannot be the best kind of lecturer unless you are engaged with the field. Reading a few journal articles doesn't cut it. The fact that I go to conferences every year, I'm asked to speak at conferences every year, I go around the world, all my best friends on Facebook are the people who students are reading about in textbooks, it changes the learning experience (Participant J. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

This argument finds support in Giroux (2013, p.24), who argues that:

Academics have a distinct and unique obligation, if not political and ethical responsibility, to make learning relevant to the imperatives of a discipline, scholarly method, or research specialization. But more importantly, academics as engaged scholars can further the activation of knowledge, passion, values, and hope in the service of forms of agency that are crucial to sustaining a democracy in which higher education plays an important civic, critical, and pedagogical role.

In contrast, however, Cadez *et al.* (2017, p.1470) argue that an "...academic's ability, motivation and time for teaching, appear to be more important predictors of teaching quality than research activity". This paradox is reflected in the comments from some of the participants, who saw teaching and research as 'two different worlds':

I spent the first 16 years of my academic career working in a research-focused university, so I was forced to become a researcher... It was only when I moved into the post 1992 sector in 2006 that I realised that they are two completely different worlds, and they are cultures apart and I thought oh how nice it must have been to have a career for all of these years and

to never be troubled by deadlines or rejections and when you notice that the salary grade is the same regardless of the sector it's quite interesting actually (Participant J. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

There is an argument in the above comment indicating that those with teaching duties only, received the same high salaries as those who researched. This is explained by the fact that in the post-1992 period, universities needed to rapidly attract experienced vocational professionals for teaching and offered them high salaries.

Nevertheless, the changes experienced by the academic-researchers were not limited to added teaching responsibilities. The next participant's comments indicate that there was not only an increased pressure to produce research, but an expectation that the research would meet the criteria for specific outputs and suggested university themes:

You're almost like a filter or a prison, where the regulation wouldn't take place unless the discourse wasn't guiding you. Part of that in that respect is this whole notion that, we talk about doing research, actually the way we do research often has no relationship to actually seriously thinking about the world and producing new knowledge. Often it is a mechanistic 'technologised' process by which we fulfil certain functions and produce certain outputs almost as if they were automatic (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Ball (2012) describes this process of regulation as "making the individual into an enterprise" (p.141). He explains that the researchers at a neoliberal university are perceived as productive rather than truthful individuals, who are considered the new subjects and a central resource in a reformed, entrepreneurial public sector. This process of regulating academic-researchers' activity is directly associated with the REF, in which knowledge is rated according to the value of the potential funding it can attract. This idea is reflected in the data below:

The bidding for funds and indirectly through the research excellence exercise, everyone is concerned with the impact of research and getting measurable impact, so letters from people, testimony, being able to quote

figures, being able to quote how many people went to this consultation, how many people used this artefact becomes more and more important (Participant C. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Another participant reflected on the difficulty in measuring impact:

What they really want is policy which fits in with a conventional model and therefore can be funded for impact. It's harder to measure whether or not the research is going to have any impact at all, particularly in areas where people are sensitive (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Impact, is defined broadly “as the effect of the research on the economy or other aspects of society, i.e. ‘beyond academia’” (O’Regan and Gray, 2018, p.2). Impact is one of three dimensions of assessment: outputs, impact, and environment. Olssen (2016) confirms that research has been redefined. What is permitted, and perhaps more crucially what is not permitted, is now precariously subject to interpretation by the dominance of powerful and influential groups (Olssen, 2016). O’Regan and Gray (2018, p.2) see the REF as a:

...neoliberal economic mechanism designed to force institutions to compete for finite amounts of public money and as an instrument of neoliberal governmentality and subjectification (Foucault, [1982] 1988; [1978-79] 2008) designed to produce (paradoxically) docile yet highly individualistic academic workers

However, despite these critical comments, the data sets below show that some academic-researchers perceived the REF as a positive tool and engaged with it in a more optimistic way:

However, on a positive note, I feel like, specifically in our faculty, there is a stronger emphasis on research now, and it is an exciting opportunity for me

and also for my colleagues to get involved in research. I feel like it might help us to make a positive change through critical evaluation of what is happening around us; we might be able to impact on government policies and government initiatives to make universities a more creative place where there is less emphasis on managerialism and the government's agenda (Participant P. Female, Faculty of Education).

I think actually this university is very encouraging and supportive of research, much more so than my previous institutions they are certainly more generous with staff development (Participant B. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences participant).

Yes, I think it's a positive to expect engagement with it [research] (Participant N. Female, Faculty of Education).

This evidence suggests that a few participants, welcomed the increased pressure to research and saw it as a positive move that has enabled individuals to become much more research active. Indeed, the data confirms that the neoliberal power operates and shapes the shifting of academic identities in different ways; for some it is oppressive, but for others, it is enabling. From a Foucauldian perspective, however, productive power needs to be seen as shaping desires and actions which did not come through in the data. From the Faculties of Health and Education in particular there was considerable evidence of resistance, especially from the women which needs to be considered in my overall interpretation of the situation.

Summary

Analysis of the data as presented in this chapter has revealed a number of directions shaping the new identities of academics as a result of increased pressures to research. These pressures are associated, mostly, with the requirements of REF,

involving HEIs' accountability to produce a certain number of eligible outcomes within a specific period of time. There was also the expectation that the research outputs would meet explicit criteria within suggested university themes.

The reduced power of academics in driving forward specific research, is discussed by Feyerabend (2010) who launches highly critical attacks on the government for the ways, in which they use higher education institutions to prioritise certain forms of knowledge over others, on the purported basis that they offer surer knowing (read rational or observable/measurable knowing), while other ways of knowing are relegated to the margins of education. In these conditions, the path to becoming a good employee or a successful academic in Higher education, as explained by Garratt (1998), is partly prescribed by the code of the institution and prevailing culture, but also partly inscribed by the subject exercising power on him/herself through the 'technologies of the self', where the subject, in Foucault's (1991a, p. 203) words, 'inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection'. Indeed, the majority of academics have been put under an obligation not only to internalise the entrepreneurial agendas of the government, but also to promote this 'approved' knowledge through their research, thus, both exercising power and becoming objectified by the same power. As explained by Foucault, technologies of the self are about looking at how an individual acts upon himself. It is here that we can trace once again how the academics in higher education become objectified through engaging with the 'technologies of the self' in an active fashion (Foucault, 1988), as they engage in research and conduct the research that is prescribed by their institution.

My detection of shifting identities allies with my comparison to the literature and my Foucauldian analysis of power and discipline, with participants seeming to acquire a 'triple identity', merging the roles and responsibilities of both teachers, researchers and administrators, suggesting the possibility of the emergence of a 'tripartite academic'. (Cummings, 1998; McFarlane, 2011; Hodgson, 2017). Foreman and Whetten (2002) explain that HE institutions' attempts to sustain traditional academic cultures while simultaneously promoting and developing corporate ideologies and structures result in the appearance of multiple or hybrid identities. A study by Winter (2009) also confirms that neoliberal agendas have advanced a view on academic identities as not unitary and fixed, but pluralistic and fluid, which creates the context for different expectations as to the roles and obligations of the former.

The position of some female academics seems to be undermined by identity confusion. They are feeling a devaluing or loss of identity in some ways, and are hanging on to professional practice identities and teaching identities. The acts of resistance seem to suggest that their identities lie within their professional skills and values. Other gendered practices of resistance which shaped the identities of various professionals were due to caring commitments.

The next chapter aims to explore how neoliberal perceptions of students as customers have impacted on academic identities.

CHAPTER 6: STUDENTS AS CUSTOMERS, ACADEMICS AS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Care, caring responsibilities, and expectations within and beyond the academy are central to configurations of professional identities (Morley 2013; Toffoletti and Starr 2016; Bagihole, 2016). This chapter marks a distinct digression from the previous chapter in that it is less about the axis of being a researcher and teacher and more about staff responsibilities and identity in relation to caring for students.

‘Emotional labour’ and a shifting identity

The concept of ‘emotional labour’ originates from Hochschild’s (1983) work on the “commercialisation of human feeling” (p.ii). This section will apply this to the ways academics sell their capacity of engaging their emotions alongside selling their labour. Parker (2014) explains the concept of emotional labour as a mode of neoliberal operation presented as a template for how all employees should perform at work, with a focus on commitment to customer satisfaction. ‘Emotional labour’ is often described as a potential mismatch between the genuine emotions of the individual and that which the organisation desires (Mauno, 2016). Data analysis indicates that some female participants felt that their male colleagues were actively trying to avoid emotional labour involved with caring for students, through their body language or simply by not being available:

I think the female staff, time and time again, are either given pastoral roles or they are approached by students, as they are seen as being nurturing and caring...Male academics have a way of putting things into compartments, or their body language, or language is such that they send out the signal ‘do not approach me, do not cross that barrier’ (Participant V. Female, Faculty of Education).

Muller (2018) confirms that there is an assumption that women should undertake pastoral roles as they are naturally good at it, however women are not compensated for the energy and time that emotional labour takes. Indeed, the data pointed at an assumed acceptance amongst some female participants that women are more emotionally sensitive and nurturing than men, and thus, the volume of emotional labour delegated to women was greater compared to their male colleagues:

I think it is partly how we are as women. I think a lot of us do take that sort of nurturing role, we are emotionally sensitive to our children and I don't know whether men can just detach themselves a little bit easier and see themselves still as the bread winner (Participant CC. Female, Faculty of Health).

However, Berry and Cassidy's (2013) study, which focused on investigating differences in levels of emotional labour between male and female university lecturers, found that even though female lecturers reported higher mean emotional labour levels, the difference from their male colleagues was not significant. These overestimated female perceptions of their levels of emotional engagement were explained by an essentialist view, where social agents report gender being essential to them and claim that they would be a different person were they of a different sex/gender (Witt, 2011). Aiston and Jung (2015), however, point out that female academics are more likely to be involved in pastoral care, quality assurance, committee work and teaching than their male colleagues. In the extract below, a female participant observes that all the programme leaders in her department are women, suggesting that men are more interested in carving out time for their research:

I think fellas are better at carving out their research time. So if they have a day off it's pretty much set in stone, whereas we will sort of say well there is a meeting that day so I'll have to go and do it. I think it's the same everywhere, having seen the way other places work there is definitely a gender divide. I went to a programme leaders' meeting a few days ago and

it was just like the 'handmaid's tale', the programme leaders were all female (Participant B. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The expectation for female lecturers to display more caring features seems to also be having an impact on students' expectations. The extracts below identify how the students themselves often see female staff as more approachable concerning personal issues:

Students are coming in and they know who the mummy figure is to come to (Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Now I've got one of those faces that people feel they can talk to. There're some chaps in my department and they never have to deal with anything like this because they're quite buttoned up and they come across as unapproachable. I'm not like that, I've always got students knocking on the door (Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Amongst the female participants, there was much discussion around the trend for females to take on, or be given, the pastoral roles. Hochschild (1983) argues that emotional labour is primarily employed by women who are skilled at managing expression and feelings. Ogbonna and Harris's (2004) study agrees with this argument. Their research identified that female academics were skilled at emotional labouring, but these skills were often undervalued by predominantly male management. Koster (2011, p.67), argues that "This is not to suggest that women have some innate female ability which enables them to carry out emotional labour better than men, rather that it is part of their oppressed and subordinated position in patriarchal capitalist society".

Interestingly, albeit that female lecturers predominantly undertook the pastoral roles, male lecturers were now also being forced to take on some emotional labour. Male

staff were aware of the importance of the National Student Survey (discussed further in this chapter), and they were also aware that their teaching performance was being monitored through retention, achievement, and student evaluation data. In the extract below, the male participant discussed how this monitoring forced him to feel that he had to be accessible and friendly with the students all the time, acting as if they were his mates:

My experience with my previous lecturers were that you would just respect them and try not to bother them. So, I think we're losing a bit more respect, we're becoming much more mates than we should be... it's become this kind of thing where you've got to be accessible at all times (Participant D. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The issue discussed here is not just about emotional labour, but also the devaluation and de-professionalisation of academic work, which affects both men and women. 'Losing respect' was affecting his identity; he felt compelled to shift from being a traditional academic lecturer to becoming more of a 'mate' to the students. He felt that his professional authority and status had deteriorated. Besbris and Petre, (2019, p.2) define de-professionalisation as a "diluting of professional identity, a loss of autonomy from clients and organizations, increasing labor market instability, and an overall weakening of professional authority".

Despite male academics having to engage with emotional labour, there was evidence of prejudiced perceptions within the university's culture. The following extract identifies how men were treated differently to women if they refused to undertake something that was part of their normal job:

I've worked with men who flatly refuse to do anything they were asked to even if it was perfectly normal and within their job and they would throw a tantrum and say if you're going to make me do that then I'm going to look

for another job and that would be in the staff meeting. They would be really rude and arrogant and then the discourse about that person would be yes but he's marvellous at his research, he's so focused on his research, he sets a real example. Whereas if I were to say no I don't want to do that then I'd be being awkward or difficult or maybe I'm a bit lazy, maybe I'm letting my family responsibilities take away from my workplace role (Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The extract above refers to gender constructions and indicates that men are privileged, not only in the workplace but also at home. Men are privileged in the workplace through structural discrimination such as gender bias (Morley, 2013) which means, for example, that certain behaviours may be considered acceptable for men, but not women. The data also highlights the view that men are privileged at home, in that family caring responsibilities are largely the responsibility of women. The participant discussed how women can be accused of allowing family responsibilities to affect their workplace role. The following extract, from a male participant, proposes that women regulate themselves in this respect, rather than any patriarchal power being imposed upon them:

One of the problems with a feminist perspective is that there isn't an overarching patriarchal power imposed on women, though actually to a degree I think there is. Often women impose it upon themselves and regulate it themselves. There is an instrumental part to this, people thinking this through and self-regulating but actually I think the cultural thing gets under your skin, drip drip drip and moves you and it's not until there's a rupture that you think what on earth am I doing? (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Bagihole (2016) argues that self-regulation still falls within a framework and culture that is determined by men, meaning self-regulation is brought about by male hegemony. The notion of men as the creators of knowledge and women as reproducers is at the heart of male cultural hegemony in higher education. This is a powerful paradigm which expects women to take greater responsibility for teaching

and learning, including student pastoral care, rather than research. Foucault, however, does not see power as simply one area of domination over another. He sees power being “exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault, 1978, p. 94). This indicates that there are diverse ways in which gendered identities are constituted and the effects of male domination produced (Macleod and Durrheim, 2002).

While highlighting women’s care work and emotional labour it is important to recognise the affective domain as a site of injustice (Lynch, 2010). According to Oksala (2016, p.285), “affective labor is disproportionately required of women, both at work and at home... it is in an important sense feminized labor—but it is important to acknowledge that is not performed exclusively by women” Affective labour is a gendered form of labour that is important for comprehending capitalism. It has the potential for subversive anticapitalist critiques “However, by treating very different kinds of experiences, activities, and services as the same, the notion ends up obscuring the forms of oppression and exploitation at stake and leaves feminists unable to formulate concrete proposals for forms of resistance against them” (Oksala, 2016, p.301).

The above discussion suggests that emotional labour falls unevenly and excessively on female academics. One area of caring in which both male and female participants agreed that their workload was increasing, however, was the time spent counselling students with mental health issues.

Responsibilisation for students with mental health issues

The increase in students with mental health issues was mentioned repeatedly by participants. The extracts below identify how students' mental health issues were important in creating new responsibilities for academic staff, within a changing context of increased accountability and emphasis on research productivity:

Over the past couple of years, I've had a few with not just day to day anxiety but anxiety as a crippling disability, they feel 'I can't do this'. This makes me sound unsympathetic and I'm not, but I do think are you on the right pathway? (Participant B. Female, Arts and Sciences).

I don't know whether students are changing or whether I'm just noticing it more, but I feel a lot of the time that I'm in a counselling session with students because students seem to be having more issues whether that be mental health or they've been victimised by crime or sexual assault or whatever (Participant F. Female, Arts and Sciences).

This highlights the shifting identities of academics in the changing context of Higher Education, and in this post-1992 institution, in terms of a history of student-led service and a current customer-led culture. The above participant's identity now included counselling, a task which previously would have not been part of her duties.

Within neoliberal policy contexts we are also responsibilised for our health and wellbeing as demonstrated by the proliferation of the discourse of 'resilience' in organisational contexts. The idea of the neo-liberal (self-regulating) subject (Foucault, 1982) who takes responsibility for maintaining their own health could be an aspect of the students' behaviour in terms of increased attention to their own (potential) mental health issues.

Participants were aware that they could refer students to the university counsellors, but some did endeavour to support the students themselves. This raises issues around whether they should have become involved if they were not trained counsellors.

We recently had a number of mental health issues and we have to invest a huge amount of support to work with them and there's lots of conversations around what's too much support and don't get involved, and manage your boundaries (Participant O. Female, Faculty of Education).

Broadbent *et al.* (2017) discuss the increased number of students with mental health issues in the United Kingdom. The data from this study identified that the responsibility for counselling these students seemed to be falling to academic staff. Student mental health issues were mentioned frequently in the interviews by participants from the Faculties of Education and Arts and Sciences. Interestingly, there was no mention of mental health issues amongst the participants from the Faculty of Health. Most of the comments referred to either not feeling qualified to counsel these students, or the amount of time it took trying to deal with their issues. According to Thorley (2017), increasing levels of mental illness and low well-being among UK higher education students are high in relation to other sections of the population. Universities have experienced substantial increases in demand for counselling and disability services over the past five years. The mental health of young people is a growing concern. Broadbent *et al.*, (2017) conducted a research project investigating how the world's young people think and feel. Indonesia (56.2) scored the highest on the wellbeing scale, whereas Japan (41.3) scored the lowest, followed by the UK (47.3), indicating that the UK has one of the lowest overall levels of mental wellbeing in young people.

The increased expression of mental health problems to academics could be explained by the consumer-therapeutic culture (Bartram, 2015, 2018), involving changes in student subjectivity and an associated broadening of what are considered to be mental health problems. This raises the question as to what power the student has within the consumer-therapeutic educational environment. Bartram (2018, p.273) discusses how we now have "a cultural climate which unites broader tendencies towards greater emotionality with a trend towards more conspicuous invocations of victimhood". He highlights that "emotions can be used as powerful bargaining mechanisms, or indeed as a form of affective strategizing" (p.274). Emotional bargaining, can include strategies for, attention, resources and concessions, in a climate where students' satisfaction is monitored and prioritised. Here we can draw on Foucault's notion of subject- constitution (1988) where students could be shaping themselves to include mental health issues as a function of power within a university neo-liberal context.

One participant within this study was given the role of mental health champion for her department because she had an interest in mental health issues. The extract below highlights how the mental health champion felt responsabilised when undertaking this role:

We've had roles where we've had in our faculty a mental health champion, who has felt responsabilised in a couple of cases, where she felt out of her depth because she was dealing with a student who was explicitly saying I'm going to harm myself (Participant I. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The mental health champion felt out of her depth, which raises the question of whether she should have been given this responsibility in addition to her role as lecturer. She

originally took on some mental health training voluntarily, but the mental health champion role was forced upon her. This created a significant additional workload, as evidenced in the extract below:

Nothing has been removed from me. That side of my job has swelled but nothing has been taken away from me. I still do everything else that I always did, I have two big modules, I do teaching and other modules as well and marking. This bit whereby I feel like I've got students coming to me and I feel responsible for their welfare because I've got this mental health role, that's just got massive (Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

O'Malley, (2009, p.276) explains responsabilisation as:

... the process whereby subjects are rendered individually responsible for a task which previously would have been the duty of another – usually a state agency – or would not have been recognized as a responsibility at all. The process is strongly associated with neoliberal political discourses, where it takes on the implication that the subject being responsabilized has avoided this duty or the responsibility has been taken away from them in the welfare-state era and managed by an expert or government agency.

It is here that we can make links to Foucault's notion of self-regulation using disciplinary technology, which he referred to as 'a mode of objectification' (1982, p.783). According to Peters (2015), the responsabilisation of academics in relation to student mental health is an intensification of tutors' moral self-regulation. There is further evidence from the data (see extracts below), however, that responsabilisation of this nature was not always related to tutors' moral self-regulation to support the students. The mental health champion role was forced upon the participant, and the responsabilisation for students' mental health was being forced on other academic staff without any training. Emotive words such as 'forced' and 'dragged' were used to highlight how these participants had been expected to become counsellors:

*I never agreed to be a counsellor but I was **forced** to act as one without training. I do think that is a time bomb. I think I'm fairly resilient but some days after I've dealt with certain things, I do think god I need a drink. The horrific things that have happened to some of our students, who do I talk to, who am I supposed to go and talk to? (Participant B. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).*

*None of us are trained in the kind of counselling role which we tend to get **dragged** into (Participant H. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).*

In the extracts above, the participants stated that they were 'forced' or 'dragged' into acting as counsellors without training. Their roles were being forced to change, with a possible negative impact on their identity and their own health. There is a risk of vicarious trauma if these professionals are doing this without support of their own training in boundaries and appropriate signposting/referral. (Canfield, 2005). All three of the participants were female, so this also highlights how female staff were being imposed upon for many of these roles. Foucault, however, explains that the exercise of power does not force individuals to comply. He defines the exercise of power as "a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions" (Foucault 1982, p340). Therefore, individuals are not forced into compliance. Instead, power "is exercised in interactions in the most literal sense of the word, as an action on another action, thus producing an interlocking set of actions or practices, which together constitutes the power relation. Thus, power is exercised, while simultaneously constituting a relationship between actions" (Flohr, 2016 p.42). This exercise of power upon the participants resulted in them taking on the counselling role, rather than sending students to the university counselling services. The data, however suggests that in some cases some individuals were forced to comply and adopt a counselling role.

According to Storrie *et al.* (2010) many students do not seek help from the relevant counselling services as they feel that this would label them as ‘weak’ and “could have implications for successful career progression” (p 4). There was evidence within the data to suggest that students preferred to go to the tutors they knew when they had problems rather than being supported by a qualified counsellor, thereby adding to the weight of responsibilities and workload for the tutor that possibly impacts on their changing identity.

I’m not a counsellor and I hear that quite often from a student that they don’t want to go to counselling and I don’t know if that’s because they don’t want the label or because they just know who I am so they want to talk to me (Participant K. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Students may have preferred to call upon academics for support rather than the appropriate counselling services because academics represent, for students, a familiar person within the institution. Counselling, however, is confidential except if there is serious risk of harm to self/others, whereas the support academic staff provide does not and cannot come with that, due to the dual role.

The participants’ views on how informed they felt they were to help students with mental health problems were contradictory. The extract below identifies an academic who was happy to help with personal issues and felt that the nature of his subject area made it easier for students to talk to him:

I’ve made a lot of dances in the past with students where I kind of invite them to go into what I call the dark territory and we use our experiences of failed relationships to make dance, to make drama ... Now in terms of stepping away from the dance studio and rehearsals, coming in for a personal tutorial I’m talking to you about their sense of stress or their family life then yes they’re much more willing to talk to you about that and I suppose they’re not so much wanting you to do something about it but to be available to them to be a shoulder to cry on or perhaps to offer some

referral to services here and I don't mind that at all. Again, it comes with the nature of our territory, you know we roll around on the floor with our students, we know them very well (Participant K. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

It is not just the nature of the subject area that makes some academics more willing to help students with mental health issues. Gulliver *et al.* (2019) undertook a study which highlighted how many academics appeared to have relatively high literacy and low levels of stigma around mental health problems such as depression. Those who had higher depression literacy felt more confident in helping a student with a mental health problem. It seems, therefore, that whilst many academics may have high literacy and low levels of stigma around mental health problems, there needs to be more guidance around how much support should be given and also an acceptance that such support adds to the workload of the staff. There is also the need to consider their competence, including risk to the staff themselves from secondary trauma and burnout.

The changing power balance between academics and students

Over recent years, academics have found themselves in a completely new environment. Students' requirements and expectations are changing dramatically because students see themselves more like customers. This section explores students' service-user attitudes and how the university was giving a great deal of attention to the student satisfaction survey known as the NSS. It also considers the phenomenon of students challenging marks in order to achieve a better degree classification. At the heart of this section is the way the power balance between academics and students was changing, and how this was affecting lecturers' professional identity. This chapter argues that the changing position of staff identities results from three influences:

- Service-user attitudes

- Contra-power harassment
- National Student Survey

Service-user attitudes

Students are now paying over £9,000 a year in fees; therefore, they are starting to behave more like consumers. This participant identified examples of students seeing themselves as 'paying customers':

I find that these days the students see themselves as a customer. So basically because they're paying their fees they have much higher expectations from the actual person. They can come in your office whenever they want, send me emails in the middle of the night and expect very quick responses (Participant D. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The extracts below highlight how consumer culture has penetrated higher education so deeply that students now see universities from a consumer viewpoint:

...if you say to a student you need to read more or you need to go across to student services and concentrate on your writing skills, then there is very much a sense from the customer that the lecturer should provide all that is required in the lecture so basically they are given the answers to the questions, the essays and any help that the student requires they look to the department rather than look to themselves (Participant BB. Female, Faculty of Health).

Anecdotally, I can tell you that a student was messing about on her phone in a class in the business school last year and she'd been completely disengaged. It was only a small group workshop and they were talking about examples of so and so. The tutor leaned over, not in an unpleasant way, and said can you think of any examples, to try and get the student back. The students said you get paid £80 an hour to teach me so you don't have the right to ask me that. So there is a bit of that attitude, I'm paying for my degree so you have to teach it to me (Participant J. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

*At times I feel like asking "**Would you like fries with that?**" when students are putting forward some unreasonable requests for extending even further*

submission date or requesting even more additional assignment guidance
(Participant P. Female, Faculty of Education).

The comment 'Would you like fries with that?' provides an example of lecturers' feelings in relation to the increased consumerist demands from students. Increased consumerism within higher education was discussed by Ritzer two decades ago in 1998, when he referred to the 'McUniversity'. The metaphor is still powerful today, but is now a reality, not a warning. Ritzer's four features of a McUniversity were *efficiency, predictability, calculability* and *control*. *Calculability* refers to measuring performance such as in the REF, but also the NSS. *Control* refers to standardised tutors controlled through performance targets. The fear of complaints from students due to the NSS and associated performance targets meant that academics were behaving in accordance with being a customer service provider. The NSS is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The quote from the participant below suggests that students would complain if they did not receive immediate replies to emails.

...your emails pop up at 2am and if they don't get an answer they will complain about you to the NSS saying they didn't get an answer to their email. You did, you got it the next day, because I was sleeping at 2am
(Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The general view that student expectations had increased within undergraduate programmes is reflected in the following comment. Academics were now using strategies to manage student expectations:

Well, yes, they come in and say I wanted a 2:1 in this and I say did you, well I want to be a size 8 and a natural blonde so what you want and what's

appropriate and what's achievable for you aren't necessarily the same thing (Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Some lecturers used the gym metaphor at the beginning of the programme to manage expectations and explained they cannot just pay for a degree. This was discussed by participants in both the Faculty of Health and also the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

I often hear students saying what am I getting for my £9500 and sometimes I try and use the gym metaphor which is 'just because you join the gym you don't become fit. We can help you become fit but you have got to do some of that work yourself but there is an expectation of I'm paying, what can you do for me? So the whole philosophy of education is coming to university for personal growth and you make mistakes and you fail, you go off and try and do better.' We are losing that and I think that is really sad (Participant CC. Female, Faculty of Health).

The participant displayed a genuine sadness at the way the whole philosophy of education has changed, but there was a realisation that expectations had increased and there was a need to manage these increased expectations.

There is also a structural strand to the change of culture in higher education.

So the structural element here, means that staff and students and managers change together. I think if you could get a selection of senior managers, lecturers who were working 20 years ago, put them in a time machine and actually have them looking at themselves 20 years ago, the shock of seeing what we were like would make us think have we gone too far down this culture. It isn't just all instrumental and nor is it commodification. The reason why neoliberalism has been a successful construct is because it has promoted within agents of social change that shift from quality to quantity, that shift from a notion of service and consumption, which becomes engrained in the person, so we all think that way (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Structural changes leading to a service sector attitude have led to concerns about autonomy and accountability. Furthermore, there is a realisation that structural changes are usually irreversible. The academy has been transformed into a corporate

business (Avis 2003; Ball, 2012; Deem *et al.*, 2007; O'Meara 2015), and management are positioning themselves as customer service providers. The implication for staff is that they are reluctantly having to position themselves as individual customer service providers, mainly due to fear of student complaints. Many participants were concerned about the way in which the institution had responded to change within the sector, particularly the increased prominence of the National Student Survey. As a consequence, participants felt that the power balance between students and academics was changing. Foucault (1978, p.2) explains that "It's clear that power should not be defined as a constraining force of violence that represses individuals, forcing them to do something or preventing them from doing some other thing. But it takes place when there is a relation between two free subjects, and this relation is unbalanced, so that one can act upon the other, and the other is acted upon, or allows himself to be acted upon". This power imbalance between students and academics was shifting and leading to contra-power harassment.

Contra-power harassment

The extract below highlights how tutors were harassed over and over again by students, even when the tutor had already justified the mark given:

I have encountered a few that have come in, sometimes either crying in anger and they are convinced that their high 2:1 doesn't reflect their ability and I'm always able to say well let me show you a paper that gets 80, here's why yours gets 60, we'll just compare. They are just about ok with that ... but I have found recently that they will come back again and again and ask well what more can I do? (Participant B. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

There was pressure from some students to increase their mark to a 'first':

If people are demanding firsts that doesn't impress me much in the words of Shania Twain. I just think to myself oh do you, well carry on wanting but there needs to be ability and a huge amount of work and effort (Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

'Contra-power harassment' (Lampman *et al.*, 2009) in higher education refers to the way that the power imbalance between lecturers and students has shifted significantly. Academics face harassment by students who are not in formal positions of power or authority. Consumerism is the driving force for this phenomenon, with contributing factors such as gender (sexual harassment) and increased fees, giving students a sense of entitlement. In addition, many students now have paid employment to help support their living costs, so they are having to juggle competing demands. This leads to poor attendance, being late for lectures, leaving lectures early, and late submission of assessments (Christensen *et al.*, 2018). Whilst there was no evidence of sexual harassment from my data, there was evidence of lecturers being harassed due to students not being happy with the grades they were given. There were also behaviours such as lateness, absence, and challenging marks. Female participants from both the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty of Health discussed how students had challenged the marks they were given, however none of the male participants related such incidents. This could indicate a form of gendered bullying by students against female academics.

Christensen *et al.* (2020) researched contra-power harassment in nursing education, and discusses how students can harass academics when they are desperate for good grades.

...because of the current demand-driven environment, 'grades mean jobs' is slowly becoming the panacea of the alternative nursing image and it is unfortunate that some students will do whatever it takes to secure good

grades and employment upon qualifying often at the expense of the nursing academic teaching them. (Christensen *et al.*, 2020, p.6)

The extract below is an example of a lecturer being harassed. Students can be deeply concerned that they have not gained a first-class mark in an assignment:

The trouble is, I have students that do a top up programme ... some of them say on day number one 'I want to get a first', no pressure, so I say well that's fine I'll help you do that but then if they get 65% or something for an assignment they're back at you like a ton of bricks, 'why did you not give me more marks' (Participant CC. Female, Faculty of Health).

This is obviously an issue at other institutions, as one participant recalled a critical incident at her previous university:

I actually had a group of students harass me in my last job because I was running a module and I didn't give them all first-class marks and a group of them were very aggressive, very vocal, actually were really rude and aggressive in a lecture and actually upset me more than I have ever been upset in my entire academic career. I actually received in writing a letter saying, "my father is a solicitor and if I don't get a first we are going to sue you" (Participant J. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Christensen *et al.*'s (2020, p.5) research revealed that academics "feel powerless in reporting the behaviour because of fears of not being believed and the potential repercussions if it is pursued". There was evidence in the data that agreed with these findings, as highlighted in the extract below.

Even when there's contradictory evidence there's a culture of the student is always right even when we know, and I think this is serious, this is the devaluing of our own professional experience (Participant G. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

If there is a culture of 'the student is always right', this leaves academics powerless to resist negative comments from students. The consumerist culture means that staff now have to deal with overdemanding students, who do not treat them as experts or with respect. Here we see evidence of de-professionalisation in higher education.

Academic identities in this study had shifted towards customer service and education service providers. In addition, contra-power harassment had affected their identity as professionals, as their professionalism was constantly being questioned by students. The emotions resulting from these changes were fear, and the sense that their professional status was being devalued.

Contra-power harassment can be anonymous. Students can use module evaluations and the National Student Survey as a way to make personal attacks against tutors and their modules. Many comments by participants indicated that the National Student Survey had become a more prominent driver and that there was a culture of over reaction to the NSS comments. From a Foucauldian perspective, the NSS can be seen as a form of surveillance that has resulted in lecturers becoming more accountable for the experience of their students (Foucault, 1991; 2008). According to Carey, (2013, p.74) “The focus on satisfaction is indicative of the notion of the student-as-consumer”. Carey also sees the increased focus on student voice being related to consumerism within the sector. My data agrees with Carey’s (2013) arguments.

I would say in the last four years the NSS has become a prominent driver in terms of student satisfaction, and are we getting it right? There seems to be more effort and energy channelled into people actually looking at that and looking at the outcomes. I can't speak for all institutions. But definitely I think there's been a big increase in the importance of that (Participant P. Female, Faculty of Education).

The participant below identified that the power balance had changed in favour of the students:

The NSS has certainly become a stick that you can beat academic staff with. It's changed the power balance; academics have now got one hand

...tied behind their back. It's given student the leverage which at times I don't think benefits them (Participant V. Female, Faculty of Education).

The NSS has begun to operate as a surveillance mechanism. It is here we can make the links with Foucault's notions of surveillance and disciplinary power. The anonymity of the NSS enabled this disciplinary power to be "everywhere and always alert, since by its very principle it leaves no zone of shade and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising; and absolutely 'discreet', for it functions permanently and largely in silence" (Foucault, 1991, p.177). This surveillance is invisible and offers possibilities of further interrogation and punishment for those whose scores are below average. It is this importance that the university had given to the NSS that made it stressful for participants.

The university believes in the NSS as though it's readings from some highly tuned medical equipment, it's actually utterly subjective. Increasingly what you've got is students whose attitudes are I've just handed over £9250 I want my tea warm (Participant B. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

The same views on the NSS were expressed by undergraduate tutors across all faculties and departments, male and female staff. Some referred to the way that the NSS had made them feel accountable for any negative comments. This participant recalled a critical incident when a student wrote a comment on the National Student Survey that staff were 'aggressive':

Seemingly at least one person has said on the NSS on the qualitative stuff, that staff are aggressive. Our heads of department sent that round saying obviously this is important and we need to address it. I'm thinking, that person is allowed to make actually quite a serious suggestion, that somebody's been aggressive towards them. I can't imagine that any of my colleagues would be aggressive towards a student (Participant F. Female, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Some participants felt that the NSS gave the students power to write negative reviews just to 'get back' at the lecturers. There were many comments about the way that the university reacted to the comments and scores on the NSS. The staff felt accountable.

Management has an idea or several different ideas about what the consumer wants. It's sometimes evident, it's sometimes not, but it's usually over simplistic. There is a culture particularly in this university of over-reaction sometimes to a comment that's deemed to be negative (Participant E. Male, Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

According to Naidoo and Williams, (2015):

...there are indications that senior university managers take the results of student surveys extremely, seriously...the importance attached to league tables has led to senior managers perceiving their primary role as enhancing the university's position in such tables rather than adding real value from the perspective of students and faculty (p.218).

One comment, however, suggest that the NSS was quite useful as academics should be responding to what students say:

I think that certainly if you're a programme leader, if your scores are low then there's going to be a conversation with your line manager and in a way I actually think that's quite useful because I think that programme leaders should be responding to what students say (Participant BB. Female, Faculty of Health).

Lecturers may have felt that there was contra-power harassment when they received negative comments, however they did accept the positive comments without questioning them. There were obviously some benefits to the NSS, as it can be useful to responding to students' issues; however, the importance the university had placed on the NSS had caused stress to many of the participants. As discussed in the literature review, the post-1992 universities cannot rely on prestige to attract students, therefore the NSS and associated league tables are vitally important to them.

Summary

As the data analysis presented in this chapter confirms, increased fees have influenced student expectations for higher academic and customer service standards (Nedblalova *et al.* 2014, p.185). Indeed, much of the discussion on consumerism in the interviews was around universities being obligated to treat students as consumers following the introduction of tuition fees, and the students themselves expecting value for money, with female academics taking on more of the pastoral support than their male colleagues.

Specifically, participants from all faculties commented on how the NSS had become a more prominent driver and they felt accountable for any negative comments. These comments concur with the argument from Bell and Brooks' (2018) study, which suggests that there are two main reasons why universities are interested in student satisfaction. Firstly, student satisfaction results in greater retention and academic achievement and secondly, good satisfaction ratings lead to good public rankings, which enhance the university's prestige, enabling them to attract more students. Therefore, there is pressure from university senior management to achieve high scores.

Many participants mentioned having to support students with mental health issues, however there was no mention of this from participants within the Faculty of Health. This could be explained by the stigma of self-disclosure of mental health issues for student health professionals, particularly for those working in mental health-related professions (Ross and Goldner, 2009).

In relation to customer service, my findings align with those of Wong and Chiu (2019) in that the lecturers' identities had shifted to include the role of service provider. Similarly, O'Meara (2015) identified that a passing grade is now a student-consumer expectation, but students had gone further by challenging marks in order to increase their grade.

My analysis around contra-power harassment identified how the power balance between academics and students is changing. This links with Foucault's writings about power, not only in terms of top-down enforcement of rules and regulations and compliance, but he also talks about power as transitory and something that ebbs and flows between people, depending upon the circumstances. "Power can thus never be simply present, as one action forcibly constraining or modifying another. Its constitution as a power relation depends upon its re-enactment or reproduction over time as a sustained power relationship" (Rouse, 2005, p.11). The data identified that the relationship between tutors and students had changed, with consumerism being the driving force and this in turn was shifting academics' professional identity to that of customer service and education service providers.

I propose that a new post-structural academic identity is emerging throughout higher education subject to neoliberal policies, a 'multifarious academic' embracing the multiple 'selves' of teacher, administrator, researcher, service provider and carer, where each 'self' contracts and expands undulating in response to external forces. The following conclusion chapter is going to focus upon this new emerging identity.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis presents the concept of academic identity in a post-1992 UK university as a fluid and ever-changing entity. It draws on my interest in the development of professional academic identity and its expression within a post-1992 north-west of England institution, noted for offering professional qualifications relating to health and education. It critically explores aspects of the political project of neoliberalism and its expression in areas of policy around higher education in the UK. In particular, the introduction and deployment of the concept of *multifarious academics* (my term) as explored in relation to the political narrative of neoliberalism, presents the main focus of this study. These ideas have been born out of the data, constructing a firm conviction that academic identities in this post-1992 institution are inextricably bound by the interplay of powers within the neoliberal political field, through the university's engagement with league table exercises like the REF and the TEF. Thus, the main conclusion from the study is that academic identities are shaped by the broader relationship between the university's adoption of neoliberal agendas and the impact of this commitment on the lives of the academics, resulting in the emergence of a multifarious professional identity which combines layers of multiple identities in one fluid and unstable self. Many academics no longer seem to know where they stand anymore, resulting in uncertainty and instability.

Deploying Foucault's theoretical 'tools' of power relations, and self-regulation using disciplinary technology, enabled me to understand the experiences of the participants, through grounding them in a post-structural theorisation about the interplay of power relations in the context of a neoliberal environment. This fusion of the data through a

post-structural lens, as presented in the three themes below, enabled me to critically evaluate a few ways of addressing the main question of my study: *How are academic identities shifting in a post 1992 university?*

The associated research questions were:

- How do new models of HE governance impact on academic identity?
- In what ways has the university's drive to establish a significant research profile, influenced academic roles and responsibilities and what are the associated gendered implications?
- How do student expectations and the associated performance measures impact on gender, academic roles and their identities?

How do new models of HE governance impact on academic identity?

In Chapter 4, the data analysis was based on Foucault's view of disciplinary power, where data, outcomes, key performance indicators, and performance targets have replaced models of governance based on the public good. As the data indicates, the pressures brought about by neoliberal agendas have created additional need for accountability and control, forcing academics to become administrators and to provide evidence of their progress towards targets (Harley, 2002). This analysis indicates a shift in identity from academics to taking on increased administrative duties, creating a fused double identity of academic-administrator. However, the concept of double identity is not new. Beaty (1998) used the term 'double professionalism' to refer to lecturers' knowledge in both their subject or discipline area and their approach to

theories of learning. The 'double', in that case, referred to a teacher who had the capability to apply teaching skills to their particular subject and the needs of the students. Beaty's observations on multiple identities generally support the notion of shifts in identity and support the existing arguments related to shifts in academic identity that lead to the appearance of a "dual identity" (Lorenz, 2012), "double identity" (Ritacco and Bolivar, 2019) and "hybrid identity" (Crawford *et al.*, 2014). These studies, however, are based on a two-dimensional view of academic identity, whilst disregarding the multiplicity of the academics' experiences across the neoliberal university. Thus, my post-structural approach to the data as a layered, multi-faceted and fluid identity has offered the possibility of considering more than two identities simultaneously, as well as examining the complex relationships between these multiple identities. Indeed, despite the heterogeneity of the participants' comments, the first overarching theme of academic identity as a hybrid of an 'academic' and 'administrator' served as a stepping stone towards a further exploration of the layers of identity to my concluding notion of a multifarious academic identity. These deliberations contribute to the first question of my study: *How do new models of the university neoliberal governance impact on academic identities?* As the data analysis suggests, one of the influences of managerialism as the new model of university governance can be seen in the shift towards the aforementioned 'double identity' of 'academic-administrator'. In addition, my engagement with the Foucauldian notion of disciplinary power, (Foucault, 2002) has specified the precise mechanisms that have afforded neoliberal universities the authority and power to monitor and steer the activities of academics. The data suggest that the strategies and policies adopted by the university were aimed at directing the professionals' conduct to ensure their compliance in order to satisfy the national drivers in relation to the REF and the TEF.

In what ways has the university's drive to establish a significant research profile, influenced academic roles and responsibilities and what are the associated gendered implications?

Further analysis of the data presented in Chapter 5 revealed the pressures associated with the requirements of the REF, involving HEIs' accountability to produce eligible outcomes. My analysis centred on the influence of the REF on both academic-lecturers and academic-researchers. In this part of the thesis, I drew upon Foucault's (1982) notions of power and discipline, where the adjustment of individuals' abilities is regulated by power processes, such as surveillance, reward and punishment, which enabled me to identify another trend towards shifting identities. Both groups of participants merged the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and researchers, adding another layer to their 'double identity' and resulting in the appearance of a 'tripartite academic'. The notion of a 'tripartite academic' (Bennett *et al.*, 2016) has been mentioned in literature in different contexts and variations, with a general reference to a type of academic who combines the roles of teacher, researcher, and administrator (Cummings, 1998; McFarlane, 2011). Chapter 5 highlights how academics become objectified (Foucault 1988) by actively engaging with the "technologies of the self" when they engage in research and undertake the prescriptive research that their institution demands. So, essentially, neoliberal higher education institutions tell academics which knowledge to convey, but whilst conveying this knowledge, the academics ultimately shape themselves, creating a new form of identity of a 'neoliberal' academic-researcher.

Analysis of the data revealed gendered implications of the REF. The Faculties of Health and Education predominantly offered vocational degrees and the academic

professionals who were predominantly female, had previously focused on teaching, seeing themselves as experienced practitioners.

The increased pressure to research had a negative impact for many female academics, who found it difficult to draw on their weekends or evenings to embark on research as they had to fit in their domestic labour and family commitments. Many interviewed, particularly from the Faculties of Health and Education, saw their roles as teachers being undervalued. My findings are congruent to those of Fisher *et al.* (2010) whose study identified that most women had a high level of commitment to teaching but the feeling was that the organisation did not recognise or appreciate engagement in these areas. The findings revealed that participants had generally merged the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and researchers. Some female professional academics, however, have been unable to shift their identity to teacher/researcher and are left in teaching roles with low esteem. My analysis of the data identified that changes to develop research activity within the university affected academics with caring responsibilities (predominantly female academics) disproportionately and unfairly, due to the expectation that research is undertaken in one's own time. Any future initiatives around research in the setting may also affect those with caring responsibilities negatively.

The Foucauldian (Foucault,1980) notion of 'resistance' allowed me to identify resistance strategies amongst staff in the Faculties of Health and Education. There was an unwillingness by some to position themselves as researchers. Some used resistance strategies by prioritising teaching, claiming that it was more important than research. There was evidence of resisting through symbolic compliance, with staff

avoiding producing research outputs, but with the pretence of enthusiasm for research, reacting to changes at a “superficial or cosmetic level” as their “traditional values” were ‘deeply embedded’ (Teelken, 2012 p.272). My findings agreed with Shah *et al.* (2019, p.9929) who warn that

...any major change of this sort is likely to be opposed by members of staff who wish to protect the status quo and their own power. As such, experience in many universities that have not historically prioritized research is that creating a research culture is often fraught with difficulty.

One of the impacts for leadership is the resultant varied emotional responses to shifting from a teaching culture to a teaching and research culture, ranging from feeling fulfilled to feeling isolated. A further impact for the institution is that many academics feel that teaching is being regarded as secondary to research. This could have an impact on the university NSS and TEF ratings if teaching becomes reduced to merely managing student learning (Harris, 2005).

How do student expectations and the associated performance measures impact on gender, academic roles and their identities?

Finally, in Chapter 6, my analysis of the participants’ comments allowed me to suggest that another shift in academic identity has been associated with their new roles as service providers and carers. The data here revealed how universities have been compelled to treat students as consumers following the introduction of tuition fees. Here, participants’ comments grouped tightly around the notions that students are now seen as consumers and/or customers and that increased emphasis has been placed on students’ views on academics’ performance. Both male and female participants discussed the trend for females to take on, or be given, the pastoral roles. These roles involved, what Hochschild (1983) calls, considerable “emotional labour” (p.7). This extra time involved in emotional labour is in addition to any home responsibilities.

Many of the female participants discussed how they had significant caring responsibilities at home which, as discussed earlier, made it difficult to draw on their weekends or evenings to undertake research. Morley (2013) discusses how academia makes the assumption that academics have no other obligations than those to their profession.

My engagement with the concept of 'contra-power harassment' (Lampman *et al.*, 2009), helped me to see how the relationship between tutors and students has altered, with consumerism being the driving force. These developments have triggered a further shift in academic identities associated with their new 'service provider' and 'carer' roles. These additional layers of identity are discussed by Foreman and Whetten (2002), who explain that these multiple identities are a result of HE institutions endeavouring to maintain long-established academic cultures, but at the same time developing corporate ideologies and structures. Building on these arguments, I suggest that a possibility of a new post-structural academic identity emerging at a neoliberal university – a multifarious academic professional, who is forced to embrace the multiple 'selves' of a teacher, researcher, administrator, service provider, and carer, where each individual 'self' contracts, expands and fluctuates in response to external powers. These deliberations contribute to the third sub-question of my study related to the impact of student expectations and the associated performance measures on academics' roles and their ever-changing identities. A number of authors argue that poststructuralism rejects the existence of identity as fixed, stable, predictable, and controllable (Giroux, 1988; Ball, 1990; Lather, 1991; Frie, 2011; Winter, 2009). Thus, my findings align well with post-structural attempts at problematising the quest for identity through decentring its claims for stability and

constancy. In addition, I suggest that applying Foucault's views on disciplinary technologies to neoliberal universities contributes to the existing line of inquiry in contemporary literature, which exposes the incongruities and fractures within neoliberal agendas, such as the erosion of academic autonomy and the emergence of authoritarian governance, whilst proclaiming the expansion of democracy into key areas of social life (Ayers and Saad-Filho, 2015).

Contributions to knowledge

My study contributes to existing bodies of knowledge on a theoretical level by making an original contribution to the current debates around the shifting professional identities in higher education, using data from one post-1992 university. Specifically, my research enabled me to detect multiple layers of academic identity, resulting in the concept of a fluid multifarious academic identity. This finding challenges a body of literature which presents a static and stable view of academic identity in the neoliberal environment of higher education (Henkel 2002; Winter, 2009). Even the studies that suggest the existence of multi-layered (Vieira, 2014), composite (Maalouf, 2001) or amalgamated identity (Zembylas, 2003c), refer to these identities as relatively fixed fusions of multiple beings, as constructed through continuities and discontinuities of internal and external influences. Indeed, these perceptions of identity suggest a certain continuity and coherence in time and space in terms of individuals' development as a neat linear trajectory, where one layer of identity is mechanically added to the next layer. In contrast, I present the concept of 'multifarious identity' as a post-structural notion, where unifying structures of stability and permanence become discrepant. Instead, my view of multifarious identity suggests *a constant change* (my emphasis), where multiple selves are seen as shifting, liquid, fluid, dissolved, mediated, short-

time-oriented (Rorty, 1989). This post-structural perception of academic identity enables a deeper engagement with the question ‘Who am I as an academic?’ Hence, my interpretation of multifarious academic identity encompasses it as a fluid and ever-changing process that involves multiple perspectives; first, as one's responses to the requirements and demands of a neoliberal university being forced to operate within a political climate of neoliberalism, and second, as academics' perceived views of themselves

The key differences between the multifarious academic, and multi-layered composite or amalgamated identities	
Maalouf (2001)	Identity is composite. Maalouf emphasises the hybridity and multiplicity of identities. One's identities, however, is also singular as each individual experiences their identity as a whole identity.
Zembylas (2003c)	“Identity construction takes place in relation to diverse discourses, sometimes competing ones” (p.232) Zembylas offers a poststructuralist account of emotions and teacher identity.
Clegg (2008)	Academic identities are expanding and proliferating in response to university structures and also external environments. There is hybridity in relation to discipline. “The newer emerging identities, or hybrids, were mostly not shaped by a reference to nostalgia for an elitist past, but were based on different epistemological assumptions derived from other professional and practice based loyalties” (p.340). Clegg, adopted a post-structuralist influenced analysis.
Vieira (2014)	Identity is multi-layered, an amalgamation of composite identity and superimposed identities. “This complex process of cultural metamorphosis—the fruit of interweaving subjective and objective forces—reveals a new dimension: the truly composite nature of personal identities” (2014, p.1).

<p>Leibowitz <i>et al.</i> (2014)</p>	<p>Academic identity is influenced by discipline. Academic identity is fluid, and may change over time, as academics position and reposition themselves. “Collective identities depend on how individuals perceive themselves, as well as how they are perceived and positioned by others” (p.1266).</p> <p>Leibowitz et al. adopted an exploratory approach</p>
<p>Multifarious academic identity (Walton, 2021)</p>	<p>The above interpretations of identity stress the composite nature (made up of several detectable parts), while the multifarious academic identity stresses its layered nature, not parts, but layers that fuse together.</p> <p>The previous interpretations emphasise different levels of permanence, whilst the multifarious academic identity stresses fluidity and impermanence, where each layer expands and contracts depending on the context. Identity is constantly shifting, with each individual ‘self’ contracting, expanding and fluctuating in response to external powers.</p> <p>Identity is in a state of constant change. A fluid and ever-changing process that involves multiple perspectives; (teacher, researcher, administrator, service provider, and carer) in response to the requirements and demands of a neoliberal university together with academics’ perceived views of themselves.</p> <p>This interpretation fits with a post-structuralist view. Foucault (1982), identified ‘the self’ as an ever-changing concept that is defined by a discourse on oneself with others.</p>

Seeing the modifications of academic identity from multiple perspectives using a post-structural lens could potentially help scholars spark novel research questions, extending the current research beyond its original scope. This, particularly, applies to the explorations of academic identities as fluid ‘layered’ entities, as well as questioning the existence of academic identity as such. This, specifically, is related to the debates on ‘selfhood’ versus ‘identity’, where the concept of selfhood seems to be more relevant to the social construction of the self, as “partially shared representations of

the self and its relation to others, created and maintained through interactions and practices within a given cultural context” (Vignoles *et al.*, 2016, p. 969).

Whilst this research has identified the different ‘selves’ of the multifarious academic from this research study, ie. administrator, researcher, teacher, carer and customer care provider, it is important to note that the neoliberal academic will always be mutating into something different due to the marketisation of the Higher Education. Skea (2021, p.1) explains that “The neoliberal governmentality of the university thus influences and shapes academic subjectivities, such that what it means to be an academic is confined to this marketised logic”. The marketisation of the university involved in this study, and other similar institutions no doubt will influence future changes, resulting in the hybridity, shapeshifting and mutability of academic identity and the institutions.

Recommendations for practice

My literature review allowed me to identify a gap in the literature, around professional academics teaching on vocational programmes in UK post-1992 universities, who are now being pressured to undertake research. The similar studies within the literature were from Australia and New Zealand. My analysis of the data identified that changes to develop research activity within the university affected female academics disproportionately and unfairly. The data suggests that many female academics have been unable to shift their identity to teacher/researcher and are left in teaching roles with low self-esteem. This has led me to recommend that a community of practice (CoP) for those required to transform their identity to

teacher/researcher would allow a critical space for professionals to articulate and share, tensions allowing “for a certain kind of freedom”. This would allow a refuge for those who are “frustrated, silenced, alienated or marginalised in the context of researchers’ discourses and practices of patriarchal managerialism and performativity” (Duckworth *et al.*, 2016, p.915).

According to Wenger (1998) a community of practice is a shared domain of interest where practitioners participate in activities and debates, sharing resources, understandings, and ways of solving problems. Wenger’s notion of a CoP would apply to this situation. Social connection, rather than individual intellectual endeavours, improves learning and intellectual functioning. The group or groups could become an important vehicle for learning to take place. The CoPs would provide ongoing debate, individual and group reflection, methodical action, and mutual respect and foster a culture of deep learning and rigorous thought that engages community members and supports their professional development in relation to research. (Hadar and Brody, 2010 p. 1642) Such a community would encourage and sustain a more include research community, providing mentoring and a safe but challenging space to write for publication. In order to reach colleagues who are resisting engaging with research there may need to be sub-groups with separate goals, allowing those who have never engaged with research an opportunity to discuss its increasing significance within the institution. Such discussions need to be in a safe space with a no-blame culture so that members can openly discuss any reluctance to undertaking research.

There was evidence from the data that there was some confusion around what might qualify for inclusion in the REF, and some felt that the settings’ demands around

research in terms of the REF, were narrowly defined. This leads me to the following recommendation:

Ensure that there is clarity amongst academics around what might qualify for inclusion within the Research Excellence Framework with better organised and credible research structures and support networks.

The data identified that academic-researchers were being regulated with research outputs expected to meet specific criteria within recommended university themes. This process of regulating academic-researchers' outputs is directly associated with the REF in which the research is rated according to the value of the funding it can potentially attract. O'Regan and Gray (2018) maintain that academics' emotional dissatisfactions and negative feelings create fertile ground for reform and resistance, as academic, managerial and administrative staff are all being required to 'regiment' themselves to the demands of the REF. The authors urge academics to engage in a resolute and vocal resistance, which consists of continuing to research and write in meaningful ways which oppose the ongoing degradation of the university and the lives of its employees, as well as openly challenging "the very assumptions upon which the REF is based" (p. 546). This has led me to recommend that academics within this post-1992 university research and write in areas they deem to be worthwhile, even if this means resisting the demands of the REF.

The data also revealed that many participants felt responsabilised for students with mental health issues. At present there does not appear to be any guidance of how much support should be given, particularly as such support adds to the workload of academic staff. This has led me to recommend that there needs to be more guidance

around how much support should be given to students with mental health issues. There is also the need to consider the competence of academics giving such support, including risk to the staff themselves from secondary trauma and burnout, if these professionals are doing this without training and with no boundaries or guidance for appropriate referral. (Canfield, 2005).

Limitations of the research

One of the limitations of the study is related to the uncertainty as to whether the views of participants are presented fairly within research. This uncertainty is discussed by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.123), who refer to it as a “crisis of representation”. Deciding which segments of data to examine are interpretive actions which are primarily influenced by the theoretical interests of the researcher. The constant doubt as to whether the participants’ views are represented fairly always remains, as noted by Reilly (2013), who argued that qualitative researchers undergo crisis of representation as a particularly challenging part of their praxis, accepting that their interpretations can never fully resonate with the participants’ voices. Secondly, I acknowledge the appearance of some gendered dimensions that emerged. I decided to remain with a post-structuralist perspective but acknowledge that for future studies a feminist interpretation should be considered.

Female participants’ comments articulated that women are more emotionally sensitive to the needs of students than men and many students preferred to turn to a female member of staff for pastoral support. The data suggests that there are clearly gendered patterns of work at the university and gendered divisions of labour. This

assumption that women should undertake pastoral roles as they are naturally good at it, is discussed by Muller (2018), who argues that female academics are not compensated for the time and energy that this additional emotional labour takes. This data could be the basis for further research.

By looking at the gender implications at this particular post-1992 university I was able to see that despite the university's links to the suffragette movement and its gendered faculties of Health and Education, women are still "frustrated, silenced, alienated". (Duckworth *et al.*, 2016, p.915).

Recommendations for further research

There is a range of potential areas for further research emerging from this thesis, with the obvious starting point being to conduct a similar study on a larger number of post-1992 universities to realise a more representative picture. The personal histories of academics could be further explored, in addition to the different approaches and disciplinary powers their institutions have exerted, particularly in relation to developing their research profiles. In addition, this research identified some gendered issues and gender inequalities which could be explored further.

Examples of potential future research might include:

- **Examining how post-1992 universities have developed systems to employ the identities of academics to achieve a significant research profile.** Studies have shown how "subjectification can be mobilized through a wide range of systems in contemporary organizations, with the result that the

very identities of organizational members are enlisted to achieve certain political ends, such as productivity and efficiency” (Holcke *et al.*, 2016, p.57).

- **To examine how performativity in a post-1992 university poses new challenges for women.** The discussion around female academics taking on more of the pastoral support than their male colleagues is well documented in literature, including Aiston and Jung, (2015) who point out how female academics are more likely to be involved in pastoral care, quality assurance, committee work and teaching than their male colleagues. Because of these gendered views and expectations, women are expected to do the caring. Now, moreover, sometimes even the students expect that. As emotional labour is invisible to the institution, women are not compensated for the effort and time that it takes (Muller, 2018). This data within my study highlights an opportunity for further research to explore this subject in more depths. As noted by Tzanakou and Pearce (2019), feminism and neoliberalism can be understood as potentially mutually constitutive. Problematizing gender relations can help researchers to “demonstrate both limitations and potential for transforming the power relationships in the academic sector, within the UK and beyond” (p.1192).

Update on the Stern Review and the TEF

At the time of this study it was thought that all academic staff would need to be included in the REF, however, in 2019, the guidance on submission for the REF 2021

(REF2021, 2019) clarified that universities could apply their own criteria to determine which member of the academic staff would be included in the REF.

In implementing the recommendations of the Stern review, informed by consultation feedback, the funding bodies have sought to strike a balance between continuity and development, introducing changes where it is judged they can bring demonstrable improvements, while recognising the efficiency gains in maintaining continuity where possible... We will require HEIs to develop, document and apply an internal code of practice on their processes for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, for determining research independence, and for selecting outputs.” (REF2021, p.5).

Most members of academic staff at the setting had responsibilities for teaching and research which theoretically made them eligible for inclusion, however, the code allowed HEIs to apply an internal code to determine which staff had significant responsibility for research.

Since the research was undertaken there have been reports of changes in the TEF. In January 2021 the Department for Education published an independent review of the TEF. The review (Pearce, 2021, p.11) stated that “We judge it to be in the public interest to have a subject-level exercise as part of the provider level assessment and ratings, but not to move, at this stage, to ratings at subject level. At provider level, with a strong focus on subject variation, we believe the public interest case is strong”. The review acknowledges that there may be “consequences related to reputation, teaching morale, reduced collaboration and risk to innovation”. However, it is argued that these unintended consequences are justified as the changes will enhance the provision for undergraduate students. proportionate and justified by the potential benefits of enhancing educational provision for undergraduate students.

Concluding thoughts

This research highlights issues arising from the commercialisation and commodification of higher education in the UK, making the associated power relations and struggles more visible.

In relation to identity, the adoption of a post-structural approach revealed how academics at a neoliberal university can be seen as the subjects of hegemonic discourses that form and enforce their identities (Holck *et al.*, 2016). Significantly, this research identifies how ever-changing organisational requirements have led to the layering of multiple identities, creating new challenges for academics and impelling new coping strategies. I have identified how academic identities in this post-1992 university are in a state of constant change in response to the requirements and demands of the university.

Whilst there was no evidence within the data of collective resistance to the neoliberal university, the data provided evidence of varied individual acts of resistance, including refusal to change existing practices through symbolic compliance. “Resistance is not always a commitment to radical action but may involve holding on to the status quo through refusal to change” (Tett and Hamilton, 2019, p.142). These individual acts of resistance seem to be counterproductive to both the individual and the institution. Those required to change from teacher to teacher/researcher, who are mainly female academics, therefore, require a critical space to express and share, concerns,

anxieties and apprehensions allowing for a form of self-determination in relation to their academic practice.

After this study was completed, there was strike action across 74 universities in the UK. Whilst it was related to pay and conditions, there were banners on picket lines with the words 'Education, not marketisation' (Robinson and Weale, 2020). This action may bring about a "new sense of solidarity and community" within UK higher education institutions (Tett and Hamilton, 2019, p.147). Indeed, despite the overwhelming presence of neoliberalism within higher education in the UK, these collective actions expose fractures in neoliberal agendas and managerial practices. "Social changes are not simply determined by structural conditions. The history of social movements is a history of people operating in the cracks of superstructures" (Thompson, 1997, p.146). The cracks exposed through the strike action create new hopes and opportunities for changing academic identities through developing new modes of resistance and counteractions.

Covid post-script

There were no challenges from Covid in relation to collecting my data, as this was all collected before the pandemic began. My findings, therefore do not contribute to this landscape. There were challenges related to meeting my supervisors, however we were able to meet on line using Microsoft teams. In addition, all the doctoral meetings and research conferences were held on line.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information and consent form

Information and Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study that is being undertaken by Anita Walton at xxxxx University as part of a study for her doctorate at xxxxx University.

Anonymity will be maintained at all times.

Please take the time to read the following information.

Project Title *Shifting staff identities in a post 1992 university*

This is a study to investigate how interviews can provide an insight into the meanings and beliefs that lecturers construct and these construction have evolved over time.

My research is related to the changes in Higher Education since the 1980s and the impact these changes have had for academic staff. Central to the literature in this area is neo-liberalism and its associated economic and management principles, which has led towards a consumer-driven market within the sector (Avis 2003; Ball, 2012; Deem, 2007; O'Meara 2015).

This theme relating to the changes for university academics is mentioned in much more detail by Ball (2012) who sees neoliberalism affecting tutors' social relations with students and colleagues, and the new courses and forms of pedagogy in which they become involved, as the performance of professionals themselves is now audited. Tutors now need to be more accountable and are required to report and record their practices, and are also responsible for their own performance and the performance of their students.

This study will give me an insight into the meanings and beliefs that academic construct about their professional identity and how these constructions have evolved over time.

The aim of this study is that it will contribute to the body of literature around neo-liberalism and academic identities.

If you agree to take part in this research, interviews will take place on campus and will last for up to an hour. These interviews will be recorded, extracts from which will be included in the thesis and any subsequent publications. All participants' accounts will be anonymised and any copies of transcripts will be stored on a computer will be password protected. You will have the opportunity to read the transcript after the interview if you wish to do so.

Before the interview I will discuss the aims of this study and give you the opportunity to ask any questions before starting the interview.

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Outline of Proposal

This study will give me an insight into the meanings and beliefs that lecturers construct and these constructions have evolved over time.

1. What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You will take part in a one-to-one interview in person, the duration of which will be approximately 30 minutes to an hour. The interviews will take place on xxxxx University Campus.

2. How is confidentiality maintained?

All participants' accounts will be anonymised and any copies of transcripts stored on a computer will be password protected.

3. What happens if I want to withdraw?

You will be free to withdraw at any time during the duration of the project. You will be notified of the deadline for withdrawal.

For further information please contact Anita Walton xxxxx or email xxxxxxx

Consent

I have read the information above and agree to take part in an interview for the above study to talk to the researcher about my experiences.

I am happy for the researcher to record my interview.

I understand that I do not have to answer all questions and can leave at any time.

I give permission for my words to be used in publications and understand that my name will not be used.

Participant name

.....Signature.....Date.....

Researcher name

.....Signature.....Date.....

Researcher:

Anita Walton
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Education
xxxxxx University

Title of Project: *Shifting staff identities in a post 1992 university*

Name of Researcher: Anita Walton

I, confirm by initialling the boxes below, that:

1.	I have read and understood the Participation Information Sheet dated 31st July 2018 for the above project	
2.	I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily where applicable	
3.	I understand that this study involves being interviewed and that this will be audio recorded	
4.	I agree to my words being used as quotes in publications/presentations and that these will be anonymised so I won't be identifiable.	
5.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to leave the study at any time.	
6.	I understand that if I leave the study it is possible to withdraw my research data up to 30 days after the interview.	
7.	I understand that data collected during the study, may be reviewed by individuals from the University of xxxxx or from regulatory authorities for audit purposes where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my anonymised data.	

8.	I understand that the information collected from me may be used to support other research in the future, and I agree for my research data to be shared anonymously with other researchers.	
9.	I agree to take part in the above study	

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Tell me about your experience as an academic in higher education.

What were your expectations when you started working as an academic in higher education|?

How specifically have things changed over time?

Explain how you see your identity as an academic working at this university?

What changes have you seen in relation to student expectations?

What changes have there been in relation to requirement to produce research outputs?

Have you noticed any gender issues in relation to academic work at the university?

Summarise how your identity has changed from when you first started working in higher education, to now.

Appendix 3: A typology of participant characteristics

Participant Code	Background	Gender	Discipline	PHd or Prof. Doctorate	Research Active. Publishing in Peer Reviewed Journals	Years in organisation
A	Academic	M	Business School	Dr	Yes	5
B	Solicitor	F	Law	Dr	Yes	3
C	Academic	M	English	Dr	Yes	14
D	Academic	M	Biology	Dr	Yes	1
E	Academic	M	Social Sciences	Dr	Yes	Over 20 years
F	Student	F	Criminology	Dr	Yes	13
G	Academic	M	Biology	Dr	Yes	1
H	Academic	M	Creative Arts	Dr	Yes	10
I	Social Worker	M	Criminology	Dr	Yes	15
K	Academic	F	Business School	Dr	Yes	2
L	Dancer	M	Performing Arts		No	5
M	Teacher	F	Education		No	2
N	Teacher	F	Education		No	2
O	Teacher	F	Education	Dr	Yes	8
P	Teacher	F	Education		No	13
Q	Teacher	F	Education		No	10
R	Teacher	M	Education		No	9
S	Teacher	M	Education	Dr	No	Over 20 years
T	Teacher	F	Education	Dr	Yes	8
U	Teacher	F	Education		No	6
V	Teacher	F	Education		No	6
W	Teacher	F	Education		No	9
X	Teacher	M	Education		No	13
Y	Teacher	F	Education		No	8
Z	Nurse	F	Health	Dr	Yes	Over 20 years
AA	Nurse	F	Health	Dr	Yes	3
BB	Nurse	M	Health	Dr	Yes	Over 20 years
CC	Nurse	F	Health		No	1
DD	Nurse	F	Health		Yes	17
EE	Nurse	F	Health		No	14
FF	Academic	F	Health		No	8
GG	Academic	F	Health		No	1

3 Lecturers
17 Senior Lecturers

3 Professors
1 Head of Department/Professor
1 Reader
3 Assistant Heads of Department
2 Heads of Department
2 Programme Leaders

Appendix 4: Coding Frame

Categories	Sub-categories	Code
Research	Importance of having a PhD	1
	Importance of research	2
	Time to do research	3
	Confidence to research	4
	Need support to research	5
	Pressure to research	6
Student expectations	Students as consumers	7
	Increased expectations	8
Pastoral care	Increased support required	9
	Mental health issues	10
Gender issues	Caring responsibilities	11
	Caring roles	12
	Family time	13
Targets	Retention	14
	Achievement	15
Resistance		16
Accountability	NSS negative comments	17
	Accountability as a professional	18