Disciplining and Governing Headteachers? Exploring Headteachers' Administrative Placement in the Local Education Department in Taiwan

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Declaration

I, Hung-Chang Chen, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to investigate the newly developed aspiring headteachers' administrative placement (AP) across several local educational departments in Taiwan, a topic under-addressed in most studies of Taiwanese headship preparation. It mobilises qualitative case studies of three AP schemes in three different local districts to explore the rationale, structural content, practices and effects of the AP schemes. Through a number of Foucauldian conceptual lenses, this research aims to question the role of the AP schemes by critically examining the interrelated issues of power relations, discursive meanings and subjectivity within the AP practices.

The research reviews the relevant concepts and practices of headship preparation and administrative placement. In addition, Michel Foucault's thinking tools are used to critically investigate the field of headship preparation and then to form the theoretical framework of this study.

The central finding demonstrates that although the AP schemes make contributions to developing several aspects of aspiring heads' capabilities, they also subject them to a range of disciplinary and dividing practices that on the one hand increase their capabilities and on the other hand strengthen their compliance to and cooperation with the local authority. Their participation in the AP also secures the local delivery capacity which chiefly serves to accomplish organisational and political ends. The thesis argues that the finding adds to what we know about headship preparation and moves us from viewing it as simply a developmental and progressive preparatory programme, to reading it as both a disciplinary and a governmental technology that renders participants knowable, administrable and governable, one that ultimately serves to effectively manage the population of heads at both micro and macro levels.

This thesis holds significance for providing an alternative conceptualisation of the AP scheme through a robust theoretical framework which is sorely lacking in much of the headship preparation literature.

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List of Acronyms

AP	Administrative Placement in the local education department
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CFP	Certification for Principalship
DEA	Diploma in Educational Administration
ISLLC	Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium
LED	Local Education Department
LEP	Leaders in Education Programme
NAER	National Academy for Educational Research
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
POE	Provincial Office of Education
SREB	Southern Regional Education Board

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Setting the context

In introducing this thesis, I want to emphasise what motivated me to study this area and describe how I place myself in the research. To begin with, I have an academic interest in training headteachers (abbreviated as heads), which has been reflected in my Master dissertation (Chen, 2005) and other writings on the topic (Chen and Chen, 2006, 2014; Chen, Chen and Wen, 2012). Additionally, my personal background as a civil servant in charge of headship recruitment and selection in a local education department has prompted a professional interest with the process through which an aspiring head could attain a headship in the context of a local district. That is to say, investigating the selection and preparation of heads and how the local government might influence this process has been central to my professional and academic life.

In fact, this research has a direct link to my work experience in a local government in northern Taiwan from 2005-2009. At that time I witnessed an alternative mode of headship training, namely aspiring heads' **Administrative Placement** in the local education department (abbreviated as AP). This AP scheme requires qualified reserve heads (or aspiring heads) to undertake a year-long administrative placement in the office of the local education department as part of their headship

preparation before they could be considered as heads by a headship selection committee. Some of these aspiring heads became my colleagues in the same division office of the local education department. Consequently, I had the opportunity to know what they were required to do, and I was also privy to discussions in which they shared their thoughts and feelings on the training process. While at that time I mostly took their AP experiences for granted, there were some perplexing questions which sometimes sprang to mind, such as: 'Do aspiring heads really need to learn these administrative functions in order to assume the headship?', and 'For what purpose has this AP scheme been created?'

My life's journey took me in a different direction from that administrative district office, as I was granted a scholarship from the Taiwanese Ministry of Education to do my doctoral research in the UK in 2011. During my first year study at the Institute of Education, my pilot study (see Appendix 1), investigating the headship preparation programme in Taiwan, revealed an unintended but interesting phenomenon, namely, that the AP scheme that I witnessed in my own professional context was in fact very popular across every local district. This finding evoked the unanswered questions which had emerged during my previous work experience, and sparked my interest in looking further into the possible implications for both practitioner heads and academic researchers. As my PhD study proceeded, I became increasingly interested in Michel Foucault's work. Reading Foucault led me to rethink some of the things that I had taken for granted and helped clarify and confirm that which I had long suspected or 'knew'. Applying his work to the study shifted my research's focus from 'how to prepare' to 'preparation for what and for whom'. Thus, my personal background, empirical journey and academic

perspectives and stances have led me to this point: to seek not to take the aforementioned AP scheme for granted but to critically consider it and its role in local districts in Taiwan.

Expressing the overall purpose of the research is the main aim of this introductory chapter. Throughout the thesis, there is an emphasis on the importance of both questioning the pervasive AP scheme and providing an alternative understanding of it both for practitioners and academics in the area of headship preparation studies.

This introductory chapter also provides a guide for the reader to the overall structure of the thesis. The problems from both the practical and research aspects of the AP scheme as part of the Taiwanese headship preparation are stated, and the rationale for the study is briefly described. The aims and objectivities that the thesis seeks to achieve are then laid out, leading onto the research questions. The main methodological considerations of the research as informed by its theoretical underpinnings are then outlined, aligning it firmly in the qualitative approach. These sections show how the study was progressively focused, not just by gathering empirical data through interviews and documentary analysis, but also by using Foucault's concepts as thinking tools for interacting with the key themes. By applying new ideas to problematise an under-researched headship training scheme, the significance of the research on the empirical, theoretical and practical levels is then outlined. The final section of the introduction presents an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Stating the problems

In the following subsections, I attempt to explicate two key problems; firstly, the inadequate awareness of the emerging AP scheme in the context of Taiwan, and secondly, the deficiencies in the present way of doing research in the field of headship preparation. These issues are the driving forces behind this research.

1.2.1 The deficient understanding of the emerging AP scheme in Taiwan

Interest in school headship preparation has been a global trend over the past two decades. It has been also increasingly recognised that headship is a specialist occupation that requires specific preparation (Bush, 2012). Many countries across the world place headship preparation as a high priority on their policy agendas (Bush and Jackson, 2002; Huber, 2004a), and this emphasis has increasingly formed a converging policy trend at the international level (Leithwood, Jacobson and Ylimaki, 2011). Nevertheless, as Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis (2008) argue, and which others have echoed (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008b; Møller and Schratz, 2008; OECD, 2008), the focus on headship or leadership preparation is by no means uniform in definition or practice throughout the world. Rather, national conditions and local contexts ensure that preparation processes play out differently in each national context. As Bolam (2004) aptly argues, models of headship preparation, selection and on-going development are deeply rooted in national and local contexts, and these models are 'the product of unique, and dynamically changing, sets of circumstances – political, economic, social, cultural, historical, professional and technical – in that country' (p. 251).

Central to Bolam's observation is the need to recognise the rich and complex variety of headship preparation deriving from diverse local contexts and conditions. As regards this recognition of local contexts and conditions, the present thesis endeavours to understand an emerging headship training approach, namely the administrative placement (AP) in the local education department (LED), within its local district context, and critically examine the relationship between the AP and its district contexts in Taiwan.

Headship preparation in Taiwan has been tightly aligned with the political reform and structural changes of local governance. Since 1965, aspiring heads in Taiwan were required to pass a written examination and then undertake a short-term pre-service training (i.e. eight-weeks long) before they could assume the headship post. After undertaking these stages, aspiring heads would be directly appointed to the new post by the provincial government. Both processes of headship examination and training, and appointment followed a centralised approach (Chen, 2009b). However, given the democracy movement and political reform in the 1990s, this centralised approach was shifted to a decentralised one after the downsizing of the provincial government in 1999. Since then, headship examination, preparation and appointment are all implemented at the local district level within a centralised regulatory system (Walker, Chen and Qian, 2008). In other words, local governments which were previously marginalised in the area of headship preparation and appointment now wield more authority and legal sovereignty than the central government. Chan (2009) describes such changes as 'the decline of the central and the rise of the local' (p. 53).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that this does not mean that all local districts are involved in the delivery of pre-service training courses for their aspiring heads. Research has shown that only eight out of the total 22 local governments implemented their own headship preparatory programmes in 2011, and the rest commissioned their headship preparation to the National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) (Chang, 2012), which was responsible for delivering the centralised pre-service headship training programme before 1999 and now provides the service for local governments. Thus, even though headship preparation had been developed by local governments in 1999, a decade later more than half of the local districts have not provided preparatory programmes to heads themselves but have instead choose to rely on an external agency to deliver the programmes.

By contrast, however, a specific training approach known as *aspiring headteachers' Administrative Placement in the local education department* (AP) seems to have been pervasively adopted by most of the local governments in Taiwan. Unlike the school-based placements or internships used in many other countries where aspiring heads are placed in school settings (Huber, 2004a), the AP scheme places the aspiring head in the local education department office for administrative training which seeks to enhance policy and administrative capabilities. The collected government documents which prescribe the implementation of headship examination and preparation have shown that nearly every local government introduced a similar sort of AP scheme for their aspiring heads within less than a decade (see Appendix 2). Since 2012 more than a half of the 22 local governments have made the AP compulsory, which is discussed in more detail in section 1.5 (p.

27). These accounts and figures manifest the widespread and soaring reception of the AP across local districts.

In addition to being widespread, newly developed AP schemes have a long-term timeframe, usually lasting for one to two years. From the perspectives of socialisation theory (Crow, 2007; Greenfield, 1985; Hart, 1991), it could be argued that the long-term AP might produce significant organisational socialisation in its participants, i.e. AP heads. As this AP scheme is embedded within the hierarchically bureaucratic context of the local education department, its normative settings in the workplace might produce strong socialising forces in shaping, guiding, and directing the AP head to fit certain norms, requirements and expectations. However, how this socializing process effects the AP head is less researched.

What is more, followed by headship selection, the AP scheme locates aspiring heads in the local education department office to work in front of government officials who are usually deemed 'powerful' in the context of Taiwan (Wang, 2004) and tend to have decisive influence on headship selection (Chien, 2006; Hu and Liu, 2012; Pu, 2012). Given that to succeed in headship preparation would be the most important thing for the aspiring head's career mobility, it would be reasonable to argue that the AP forms asymmetrical power relations between AP heads and government officials. In this sense, how such asymmetrical power relations influence their interaction, how the official's expectation and requirement would shape AP heads' conduct, and how AP heads try to fit such requirements are crucial questions both for head practitioners and researchers in the field of headship studies.

To date, however, there has not been sufficient research that investigates the AP in the local context of Taiwan. While prior work has mentioned the tendency of adopting this alternative placement approach in various local districts (Chang, 2012), no study in the field of headship preparation has gone further to empirically investigate and examine such new training approaches. Thus, little has been known about its structural content, practice, effect and role in local settings, in particular within the context of the local government. For example, questions like what are the AP heads required to do and what expectations are they meant to fulfill, as well as why such an AP scheme was created in the first place, for whom are these AP heads preparing, and what exactly the AP scheme may be aiming to achieve are all important. If we can better understand the role played by this pervasive AP scheme within the context and condition of local districts, we might be able to better understand the meaning and function of headship preparation programmes in the political and structural contexts of Taiwanese local governments under the decentralisation system.

1.2.2 The deficit of critical perspectives in headship preparation studies

This study also emerges from a discontent with the present way of doing headship preparation research and a desire to disrupt the status quo by using social theories as 'a vehicle for "thinking otherwise"' (Ball, 1995, p. 266). Research on headship preparation practices is still largely descriptive. As pointed out by Crow et al. (2008), the literature has largely focused on descriptive accounts of 'idiosyncratic programmes and modes of delivery with evaluations largely based on participants' satisfaction' (p. 3). However, this has then resulted in substantial critiques of doing

headship preparation research in a 'theoretical vacuum' (Greenfield, 1985, p. 99) and with a lack of theoretical, sociological and philosophical engagement (Eacott, 2011a; English, 2006; Niesche and Gowlett, 2014). In this regard, the socially informed critical approach, through using social theories or theorising, has been regarded as being useful both to question the uncritical adoption of assumptions, aims, or practices of headship preparation programmes, and to provide alternative understandings and practices (Eacott, 2011a; Gunter, 2001). This critical approach has been increasingly, though slowly, adopted in the field of headship preparation studies.

For those who seek for more socially informed critical analysis of headship preparation, Michel Foucault's work has proven to be useful and fruitful, both for critiquing from within and opening up new lines of analysis beyond traditional approaches and frameworks (see English, 2008; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003a; Niesche, 2014). For instance, Anderson and Grinberg (1998) have argued that Foucault's work can be of use to expose the dangerous characteristics of administrative practices that can result in more effective technologies of control, rather than the espoused progressive nature of administrative preparation programmes. The perspective provided by Foucault's notion of governmentality shows how power is not all repressive but productive in guiding, directing and managing individuals' conduct so that certain goals on a broader level can be achieved. I believe that these Foucauldian concepts have significant implications and relevance to the analysis of headship preparation, as they all relate to how individuals or groups are directed through themselves or others to acquire or produce certain forms of knowledge, skills, behaviours, attitudes and thoughts – a

process similar to that of preparing individuals to become qualified for a certain role.

However, empirical applications of Foucault's work in headship preparation research are still rare. As far as this study is concerned, in order to critically examine the role of the AP in Taiwanese local contexts and to look at the effect of potentially asymmetrical power relations circulating within the AP training process, my study is rooted within the critical perspective informed by a number of Foucault's thinking tools. Consequently my research has at its heart the argument that the role played by the headship preparation programme (the AP scheme in this thesis) should be critically examined and conceptualised through the application of social theories.

1.3 Rationale – why study this area?

The rationale for this research, therefore, was threefold. Firstly, to empirically investigate the emerging AP scheme that has not received much attention in the literature in terms of both headship preparation and headteachers' placement or internships. Secondly, to explore and use Foucault's concepts to critically investigate the field of headship preparation. Lastly, my aim was to refocus attention on the structural and political contexts of local governments, because their influence on headship preparation practices is less often considered in the literature, while they are arguably salient in shaping the structure and practice of the headship preparation programmes.

1.4 Aim and research questions

In setting out to research in this area, my primary aim is not to add to the knowledge base with regards to descriptions of models of headship preparation. Nor is my aim merely to investigate the head's personal life experience in a newly developed field-based or experiential learning approach. Instead, based on the rich data gathered from multiple groups' opinions and perceptions of the AP as well as relevant government documents from AP scheme case studies, my aim in the current thesis is to call into question this emerging AP and to critically examine the role played by the emerging AP in the unique context and conditions of the local district.

In order to achieve this goal, I aim to fulfil the following objectives. Firstly, I will seek to understand the structural content of AP schemes through the analysis of collected documents in relation to the AP and pre-service headship training in each of the local districts in Taiwan. Secondly, multiple case studies will be conducted to approach the nuanced details of AP practices, the relational character of power circulating in the AP, the discursive meaning of the AP, and the rationale and function of the AP in the local district (that is about how the AP is perceived and spoken about, why the AP is exercised and how, and how power relations operate within the AP). Thirdly, in interpreting the empirical data, this study will problematise the AP in terms of the stated purpose, practices and circulating power relations through Foucauldian analytic sensibilities. In doing so, this study challenges the mainstream assumption in much headship preparation literature that preparation programmes are a positive aspect of education. It attempts to persuade (aspiring) heads and researchers that the enactment of the AP scheme

is as a form of government through providing a critical analysis of the emerging AP as part of preparatory programmes in Taiwan. As Lumby notes when speaking about the value of preparatory programmes, 'it is not so straightforward' (2014, p. 320).

Based on the aims noted above, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the structural content of aspiring headteachers' administrative placement (AP) in the local education department in Taiwan?

2. What practices are AP heads involved in during their AP in the local education department?

3. How do these practices within the AP shape the constitution of the AP head's subjectivity?

4. What may the AP be aiming to achieve and how? Why are AP heads invited or required to undertake the AP training, and what kind of head does it aim to prepare?

In order to make clear boundaries around the research, it is necessary to outline the aspects of my research topic I have covered and those I have not at the beginning of the thesis. Studies on headship development have made a clear differentiation between preparation and development programmes for school headteachers (Bush, 2012; Lumby, 2014; Moorosi and Bush, 2011). Preparation programmes refer to training prior to or sometimes for a limited period after taking up a headship role. Development programmes, on the other hand, refer to continuing learning after they have taken up an appointment. As far as this thesis is concerned, the focus is on the *Administrative Placement in the local educational*

authority as part of preparation programmes in Taiwan. That is to say, the focal point of this study is the AP scheme which has been incorporated into headship preparation, rather than any pre-service training course or the programme as a whole, nor the on-going development programmes.

This study concentrates solely on the role of the school head and the headship, rather than leadership in general or the various levels of school leaders. I acknowledge that the term 'leadership' has a broader conception, as this term in the school leadership literature has been used to encapsulate the leading practices from various roles, such as school heads, assistants, deputy heads, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and students. My study centres more specifically on headship preparation at the elementary and secondary levels. That is heads from primary and junior high schools. Nursery and senior high school heads are not included in this study. This is mainly because currently there has been no prescribed pre-service preparation offered to nursery and senior high school heads in the Taiwanese context yet.

1.5 The Taiwanese context

Before moving on to the theoretical underpinnings and methodological issues, it is necessary to briefly introduce the context of Taiwan in order to ground this research in its empirical setting.

1.5.1 Societal and political contexts

The Republic of China, Taiwan, an island on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean, lies off the south-eastern coast of mainland Asia, and is one of the smallest

independent nations in the world. The size of the island is 36,000 square km and the total population is roughly 23 million. Over 98% of the population are Han Chinese (native Taiwanese) whose ancestors migrated from Mainland China to Taiwan during the 17th – 20th centuries.   Due to its long history of colonisation, having been owned by Holland, Spain, China and Japan, Taiwan has been influenced by various cultures. Nevertheless, Chinese culture still has a dominant role in Taiwanese society; of particular significance is Confucianism, which stresses the basic principles that regulate human relationships. In terms of its economy, Taiwan is renowned for having turned its agricultural and labour-intensive economy into a developing industrial economy in the 1980s, and managing to keep pace with the global market in the realm of information and communication technology in the 1990s (Law, 2002). Its quick industrialisation and rapid growth has been called the 'Taiwan Miracle', as Taiwan is one of the 'Four Asian Tigers' alongside Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore.

Taiwan is a republic with a parliamentary democracy. Although the republic was founded in 1912, making it the first democratic republic in Asia, it had been dominated by authoritarianism and the populace lived under Martial Law from 1948 until 1987. In this period, no opposition party was allowed to organise, the mass media and freedom of speech were supressed, and elections were dominated by the ruling party. In respect to education at that time, the educational budget and personnel, school admissions, curriculums and textbooks were tightly controlled by the state. However, following political reforms in the late 1980s and the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan drastically opened up the polity and society, transforming into a multiparty democracy. It has been argued that the political reforms since the lifting of Martial Law in 1987 have led to the establishment of four

major foundations of a democratic civil society (Law, 2002). First, the electoral system and a multi-partisan policy in Taiwan have been fully institutionalised to allow people to exercise political rights of participation and opposition at various levels. Second, both print and electronic mass media have bloomed. Third, rule by a ruler has been replaced with the rule of law. Fourth, numerous civil organisations have emerged, through which people can exercise freedom and rights of association and speech.

1.5.2 Democratisation, educational reforms and headship selection

The advent of democratisation movements in the late 1970s which were carried on through the early 1990s liberalised not only the political realm but also other aspects of the society, in particular the education system (Pan, 1999). From the late 1980s, the central government began to deregulate education by sharing control with other agencies, which it then encouraged to contribute to educational reforms. Educational authority was thus decentralised from the central to local governments and to schools as well. Moreover, civil and public concerns about education continued to mount and eventually prompted a series of social movements calling for radical systemic restructuring of education (Pan, 1999; Pan and Chen, 2011; Walker, Chen and Qian, 2008). After a landmark public demonstration in April 1994, Taiwan embarked on a series of educational reforms which drastically changed the nature of school ecologies and how they were governed. These changes also effected headship preparation and appointment and local educational governance as well.

In response to democratisation and deregulation, changes in school governance were one of a variety of reform initiatives. School-based management, teacher empowerment, and parental engagement have since become key elements in school restructuring in Taiwan (Pan and Chen, 2011). The promotion of school-based management has resulted in a shift in the power structure of school governance from hierarchical dominance to multiple-participation. In other words, the participatory involvement of various stakeholders in school decision-making has replaced the dominance of a single strong leader – the headteacher. Power relationships and the roles of teachers, parents and headteachers have changed in such a way that the teachers and parents are now empowered whereas heads' legal authority has been largely reduced, as several Acts were promulgated. For instance, the teachers review committee and the school-level teachers' association have significantly reduced school heads' authority over many aspects of personnel matters and internal management.

More specifically, since 1999 the head's authority has been limited by the *new headship appointment system*. In the past, headteachers were officially appointed by the Provincial Office of Education (POE). Once appointed, headteachers could keep the position as long as they wished, barring serious mistakes and infractions (Lin, 2003). Their transference, if needed, was also arranged by the Provincial government authority. Meanwhile, the enactment of the *Education Fundamental Act* in 1999 has resulted in radical changes to headteacher selection and tenure mechanisms. Firstly, the new appointment system requires all aspiring heads to pass written examinations and a selection process by a headship selection committee organised by the respective local educational authorities (Hsiao, Lee and Tu, 2012; Lin, 2003). The selection committee must consist of at least one-fifth

parent representatives, whilst the rest are usually comprised of representatives from the teacher association, the school headteacher association, and officials.

Secondly, the new headship is no longer a 'life-long career' (Lin, 2003, p. 192), but instead, a contracted post for four year terms with contract renewal dependent on the performance judgement by local district-level committees (Walker, Chen and Qian, 2008, p. 414). Serving headteachers who are seeking reappointment need not retake written examination, but are required to go through the same selection process. If they fail the selection, according to the Law, they are forced to be demoted to teacher status. It has been argued that the new headship appointment system produces various problems. It weakens heads' legal authority in school and decreases their morale (Wu, 2006), and in effect places more pressure on heads' shoulders (Chen, 2008). It also leaves headteachers in a dilemma that headteachers are required to take the responsibility to lead teachers to achieve school improvement and facilitate school management, while ironically they need to earn teachers' support and approval for their headship selection (Wu, 2006).

1.5.3 Decentralisation and local educational governance

The political democratisation movement continued in the late 1990s and significantly influenced structural changes in local educational governance as well. The enactment in 1999 of both of the *Local Government Act* and the *Educational Fundamental Act* were particularly important for local educational governance for two reasons. Firstly, the new laws increased the sovereignty of local governments. As for educational affairs, education up to junior high school level was from that point on under the jurisdiction of local governments. It should be noted that school headship preparation and appointment which was previously centrally controlled

by the Provincial Office of Education (POE) has been devolved to the 22 local governments across the country. This will be discussed in more detail later.

With the decentralisation and devolution movements, the elected mayor is now the official leader of local city/county. The mayor of the city government now has direct control over the local education department, as he or she is responsible for local education policy-making, resource allocation, and personnel decisions. What is more, the director-general of the local educational authority is no longer appointed by the POE, but instead, appointed by the local city mayor. In her research on Taiwanese local educational governance, Wang (2007) argued that since the enactment of local self-governance, the model of local educational governance in Taiwan has shifted from a 'professional-bureaucratic' to a 'political' model (p. 219). As such, Wang (2007) suggests that mayors working in a more political context primary concern might not be education but being 're-elected' (p. 212). She goes further to explain that in order to win the election, they need some accomplishments that come quickly and obviously. Wang's suggestion is important in that the demand of political consideration might change the priorities of education policy in local settings.

1.5.4 School headship preparation in Taiwan

School headship preparation in Taiwan has now been implemented at the district level within a centralised regulatory system (Walker, Chen and Qian, 2008). The local governments take over the headship examination, pre-service training, induction and professional development so as to fit their local needs. The process of headship preparation includes three basic steps: first, in order to be considered for the pre-service headship training courses required to apply for a headship,

leaders must qualify to sit and pass the headship examination. The examination is set by the local education department following central guidelines, and includes written and oral components. Second, aspiring headteachers who successfully pass the examination are required to attend officially prescribed pre-service training. Although local governments are responsible for providing such pre-service training courses for their aspiring heads, many choose to commission the training courses to the National Academy for Educational Research (NAER), as noted earlier, which was responsible for delivering the centralised pre-service headship training programme before 1999 and now turns to provide service for local governments. Third, if candidates successfully complete this course they will be certified as *qualified reserve headteachers* who may be considered by the headship selection committee organised by local government when positions become available.

1.5.5 The emerging Administrative Placement (AP)

Recently local governments have increasingly introduced a similar sort of administrative placement in the local education department (AP) as part of the headship preparation process. After pre-service training, aspiring heads (or qualified reserve heads) are then placed into the local education department, rather than schools, to undertake administrative training for one to two years, depending on the district's requirement. After going through the AP, AP heads are eligible to apply for headship positions. For instance, the AP in Miaoli County in 2014 was officially documented as below:

8-5. Administrative placement: those who have passed the headship examination and succeed in the pre-service training should start the educational administrative placement in the education department from 1st July 2014. The duration of the placement is at least one year, up to two years at the most. The duration may be prolonged if necessary.

(The 2014 General Regulations for Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Preparation

in Miaoli County)

The preliminary documentary analysis in this study reveals a soaring growth of the number of AP schemes across local districts in Taiwan. Figure 1.1 shows both the rise of the number of APs and that of compulsory APs in the past 15 years. In 1999 there was no AP scheme because the authority of headship preparation was just devolved to the local, while in 2015 this alternative placement had been adopted by every local district. With regard to the compulsory AP scheme, there is a marked increase of such compulsory prerequisites from 2010 to 2015. As of 2016, 19 of the total 22 local governments have made their AP scheme compulsory for aspiring heads.

The growth of the AP in Taiwan

◆ Number of the AP ■ Number of the Compulsory AP

	22
	18
15	
3	7
0	1

Year 1999   2005   2010   2015
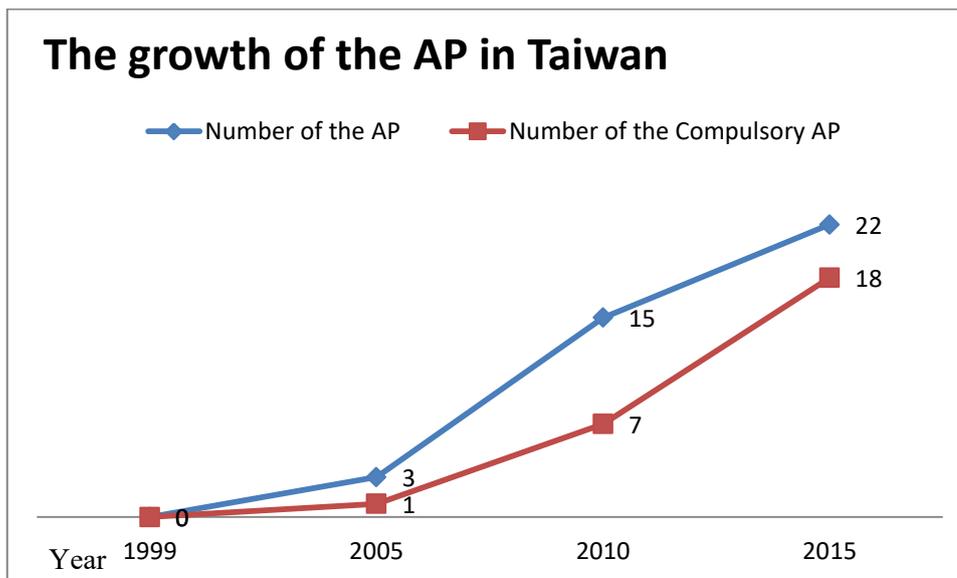
Figure 1.1 The growth of the AP schemes in the 22 local governments in Taiwan

What the descriptive statistical figure cannot reveal are the changes in how the AP is stated in public documents. Documentary analysis reveals the discursive shift in the meaning of the AP from assisting the local education department in completing work responsibilities to developing and fostering aspiring heads' capability in the domains of administration, policy, and leadership. This is notably the case in New Taipei city, Yunlin county, Chiayi city, and Hualien county. For instance, the AP in 2009 was documented as an approach in support of the local education department in New Taipei city, but it was rephrased in 2012 to become a *headship* training approach to offer a chance for broader visions and deeper policy understandings. What is more, documentary analysis of official statements about the AP also indicate a tendency to link the AP training to headship selection or headship certificates. This new linkage has been found in eight local districts. Take, for example, *The 2013 General Regulations for Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Preparation in Miaoli County:*

8-4. Those aspiring heads who do not complete the administrative placement are not eligible to attend the headship selection in this County.

8-6. The assessment results of the administrative placement of aspiring heads are subject to be considered by the headship selection committee.

Essential to these prescriptions is that the aspiring head's performance in/during the AP is subject to evaluation and examination. Thus the results of the performance evaluation are related to their career mobility.

1.6 Theoretical underpinnings

As this research aims to call into question the emerging AP scheme in order to problematise its stated purpose, practices and circulating power relations within the preparation practice, a critical stance that seeks to critique the status quo and question mainstream assumptions as to the role and purpose of headship preparation (Grogan and Simmons, 2012; Lumby, 2014) is adopted. This critical stance manifests how I view social reality and meaningful knowledge, and also informs the present choice of theoretical perspectives or theoretical underpinnings.

The theoretical underpinnings within which this thesis is situated are greatly informed by Foucauldian lenses, in particular the notions of power-knowledge, discipline and governmentality. Michel Foucault was one of the towering critical theorists and intellectual thinkers of the twentieth century (Ball, 1990b; Gillies, 2013). His work was critical and his conceptual notions, such as power, discourse, discipline, panopticism, or governmentality, have been frequently applied to critical research in education, for instance in the field of educational leadership (see

English, 2008; Grogan and Simmons, 2012; Gronn, 2003b; Lumby, 2014; Ryan, 1998), though they have been less often applied in the area of headship preparation. This research thus hopes to make a contribution to headship preparation studies by empirically grounding Foucault's notions in this study. The adopted conceptual tools are described in detail in the literature review but, in brief, argue that developments in certain profession's training (headship preparation in this thesis) that may be regarded as enlightened or progressive can actually be read as simply representing much more sophisticated and efficient means of population control and government of people (Foucault, 1979; Foucault, 1991b; Gillies, 2013).

These thinking tools are social theories that function as 'analytic frameworks' (Murphy, 2013, p. 4) or 'advocacy lenses' (Creswell, 2009, p. 62) enabling me to focus the study, to extract meaning, and more importantly, to think 'otherwise' and to dis-identify the things we take for granted (Ball, 1995, p. 266). That is to say, beyond merely framing and conducting the research, these thinking tools have enabled me to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about how and why aspiring heads should be trained in certain way in Taiwan, and to reveal the insidious power relations that are productive but dangerous in normalising individual heads (Foucault, 1979). From the perspective of this research, the placement of aspiring heads in local education department offices can in effect be viewed as a strategy to shape, train, guide and normalise the conduct of individual aspiring heads on the one hand and effectively manage the population of aspiring heads on the other.

1.7 Methodology and methods

A relevant and well thought out methodological approach is always important in research. In order to examine the complex interplay of discourse, power effects and subject revolving around the AP training, this study adopts a qualitative methodological approach and mobilises qualitative research methods in order to investigate 'how' practices and discursive meanings within the AP training process could shape aspiring heads' subjectivity and conduct, and 'why' these aspiring heads are required to undertake such AP training. It has been extensively argued that a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate when research questions aim to study 'how' and (implicitly) 'why' questions within processes emerging in a 'real life' context (Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2013).

Multiple case study design was utilised to investigate three AP schemes in three different local districts in Taiwan. In order to gain rich information of the phenomena of interest, the three cases were selected through 'purposeful sampling' (Patton, 2002, p. 40) with the consideration of the variety of AP schemes across local districts. One case study AP was characteristic of the optional training approach, while the other two APs were compulsory schemes. Within each case study, data about (1) contextual information from each local district; (2) policy texts and written documents as to headship training and selection at the national and local level; and (3) semi-structured interviews, were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. This encompassed an analysis of 33 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with educational officials from local districts (n=6), heads (n=22), and school inspectors (n=3) in 3 local districts, and 2 academics. The multiple interview data sources from diverse

groups allow for the drawing together of multiple accounts and (partial) representations of activities, voices, creations, actions, and interactions of the carriers of *practice* (Miles, 2015) in this study.

1.8 Significance of the study

The research undertaken for this thesis is intended to generate new knowledge about the recently developed AP scheme in the local context of Taiwan. Moreover, it seeks to adopt a critical perspective drawing upon Foucault's thinking tools which have to this point not been generally applied to the area of headship preparation studies. Thus, through bringing some new literatures and alternative ideas to the area, I believe this study can offer some insightful analysis and present a cogent problematisation to the mainstream understanding of headship preparation. Ultimately I hope this study could make an original contribution to knowledge that offers the reader (both practitioner heads and local district officials, and academic researchers) a chance to re-view and re-think the headship preparation phenomenon in question.

The intended significance of this study can be threefold. Firstly, this study will be an important empirical contribution to the scant literature on the emerging AP scheme in Taiwan. On the aspect of knowledge advancement, the first intended outcome is to present the understanding of the AP through investigating its basic structural content in the local context of Taiwan. In so doing, this research will advance knowledge in the area of headship preparation research in Taiwan.

Secondly, on a theoretical level the contribution is intended as part of an effort to illustrate the usefulness and viability of applying Foucault's thinking tools (social theories) to the study of headship preparation. It attempts to make known things strange and unfamiliar, through Foucauldian analytic sensibilities which are rarely applied in the area. Thus it is not to evaluate the effectiveness of the AP scheme, nor is it to sort out the best practice of administrative placement, rather it seeks to think of the AP *differently* by looking at the potential disciplinary techniques, power effects, and governmental practices within a profession's training scheme. The implications of such a Foucauldian study in headship preparation might not be limited simply within the context of Taiwan but may also have resonance for other countries as such approaches offer useful thinking tools which enable researchers to de-familiarise the familiar, to think 'otherwise' (Ball, 1995, p. 26), and to question the taken-for-granted but also to provide alternatives (Gunter, 2010).

Finally, on a practical level the third intended contribution of this Foucauldian research is to provide practitioners with an alternative understanding of the role played by the AP. It hopes to remind (aspiring) heads and local district officials of the danger of power effects and the associated disciplinary mechanism within the AP to the powerful and productive normalisation of heads. On the other hand, it also hopes to provide tools of social critical thinking to practitioners through which there are possibilities for alternative action.

1.9 The structure of the thesis

This thesis consists six further chapters. Its structure is set out as follows: In Chapter 2, I discuss the theoretical perspectives of headship preparation research

to guide the enquiry. This includes a critical review of the historical context, current practices, and issues and debates relevant to headship preparation as well as aspiring heads' administrative placement in practice and policy. The review in Chapter 2 then leads this study to adopt a critical perspective and also to help further identify the possible theoretical underpinnings.

Chapter 3 continues to form the theoretical underpinnings of this research by drawing upon Michel Foucault's thinking tools, in particular the notions of power-knowledge, panopticism, discipline and governmentality. Combing these insights, Chapter 3 argues for the fruitfulness of applying Foucault's concepts both to the area of headship preparation studies, and more specifically, to the research focus of the AP. Based on that, the most pressing gaps in the literature are identified and research questions are posed accordingly.

Chapter 4 deals with the methodological issues and research design providing description as to how this research was conducted. I provide logical explanations for the choice of the theoretical framework, the qualitative case research methodology and the related methods by tracing them back to my epistemological and ontological beliefs. In this section I also evaluate the methods used to generate the data and the argument in the headship preparation studies with Foucauldian approaches. The discussion leads to a detailed account of the case study design, and a theoretical and procedural description of the methods used in the study to gather, present and analyse data. What is more, I also undertake a critical self-scrutiny of my own position, work experience, values and bias that would shape the research, and consider the ethical issues related to others.

Chapter 5 and 6 presents the research findings, and it is structured in four sections. The findings from the data analysis of three case studies are presented in the first three sections. Within each case study, the structural content of the AP scheme, the practices in which the AP head was involved, and the AP's effect and rationale are analysed. The last section provides a cross-case synthesis in which the significant features and the common themes and relationships among these three research cases are summarised in order to present an overview of the overall findings.

Chapter 7 contains the discussion of the current study. In this chapter the key findings are used to hold a conversation with the relevant prior studies and literatures, and are expanded and deepened through a number of Foucauldian lenses. The chapter engages in a dialectical process that moves back and forth into the interview data, prior-research-findings, and Foucauldian theoretical tools. An alternative understanding of the AP is generated.

Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the study with a reflective evaluation of the study, and revisits the proposed contributions in Section 1.8 above before offering some suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 School Headship Preparation

Introduction

There is a large and impressive body of information that could be presented in a literature review about school headship preparation. As this area has been placed at the core of many educational reform agendas, and has been the subject of much research, a great quantity of government documents and research work have been published. Such a large amount of published research work makes it impossible to provide a comprehensive review. So, rather than attempt to do so, I will focus on an overview of the development and perspectives in the research literature on headship preparation. The purpose of such an overview is to locate this study within the broader developments and debates of headship preparation studies.

In this chapter I will begin with an overview of the literature on the development of headship preparation study, locating the current research debates, focusing on the placement learning approach, and giving a synthesis of perspectives in theorising headship preparation. In analysing the literature on headship preparation from a range of theoretical perspectives, emphasis will be placed on the importance and necessity of a critical perspective for headship preparation research. This examination of the literature begins the process of identifying the possible

theoretical underpinnings, which is continued in Chapter 3 by exploring the work of Michel Foucault illustrating its relevance to headship preparation studies.

2.1 The rise of school headship preparation

In recent decades there has been increasing global interest both in the policy and research domains of school leadership preparation. Many governments across the world have placed school leadership preparation as a high priority on their policy agendas (Huber, 2004a), and invested large sums of money in more systematic provision of leadership preparation programmes in order to prepare effective school leaders (Bush, 2012), particularly school heads. This emphasis has formed a converging policy trend at the international level (Leithwood, Jacobson and Ylimaki, 2011).

Although this global trend is relatively new, as Hallinger (2003a, p. 3) noted, looking back to 1980s, 'no nation in the world had in place a clear system of national requirements, agreed upon frameworks of knowledge, and standards of preparation for school leaders'. Its influence during these past three decades is profound and extensive. For example, major investments have been made in England; the first national qualification for aspiring heads, the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), was set up in 1997 and became mandatory in 2009 (Bush, 2013; Riley and Mulford, 2007). The English Government also created the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in 2000 to take responsibility for developing and conducting all state-run qualification programmes for school leaders (Brundrett, Fitzgerald and Sommefeldt, 2007; Bush,

2008b; Day, 2003). In the United States of America, millions of dollars were expended in recent years by a range of agencies including the US Department of Education, a number of state education departments, and major private foundations to better understand the preparation and practice of school leaders (Leithwood, Jacobson and Ylimaki, 2011). A nation-wide catalogue of principal standards was set up by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in 1996 and redesigned in 2008 for helping state policy-makers strengthen selection, preparation, licensure, and professional development for education leaders. In 2008, 43 US states had accepted these standards (CCSSO, 2008).

Countries or areas in Asia, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, also launched more centralised frameworks and mandatory programmes for preparing their school heads. In Hong Kong, the mandatory headship qualification system, Certification for Principalship (CFP), was introduced in 2004 for all aspiring heads (Walker and Dimmock, 2006). In Singapore, the Leaders in Education Programme (LEP) was set up in 2001 to replace the previous preparation system, the Diploma in Educational Administration (DEA), which had operated since 1984 (Gopinathan, Wong and Tang, 2008; Lim, 2007). Both programmes are full-time for six months with aspiring heads receiving full salary during the preparation period (Bush and Jackson, 2002). Back to the context of this study, headship preparation in Taiwan is mandatory and implemented by a decentralised approach with a centralised regulatory system. A national certification system for aspiring heads was put on the central policy agenda in 2011 (The Education Research Committee of the Ministry of Education, 2011). Thus it is increasingly acknowledged by many countries and regions that headship is a specialist occupation that requires specific preparation prior to the appointment (Bush, 2008b; Bush, 2009).

There is driving impetus for this converging interest in headship preparation. Heightened expectations of those who assume the role of a head is deemed the most prevalent cause necessitating the rise of leadership preparation programmes (Lumby, 2014). The political inclinations to raise educational standards and to compete internationally in educational outcomes have put more accountability and pressures on heads and have also placed heads within the regime of performance management (Crawford and Earley, 2011; Gronn, 2003b; Mulford, 2005). In many Western countries, the introduction of school-based management in effect produces increased accountability pressure, leading to intensified work for the head. For instance in England, the emphasis on performativity has led to what Ball (1994) called 'new headship' which requires heads to devote more time to budgeting, public relations, employer/employee relationships with staff and client/consumer relationships with parents (p. 84). Furthermore, the increasing complexity of school contexts, such as demographic and technological change, affects leadership practices and also impacts the nature of leadership preparation (Crow, 2006). Faced with these added responsibilities and demanding challenges placed on heads, it has been argued as a 'moral obligation' (Bush, 2012, p. 3) to prepare classroom teachers with the needed knowledge, skills and disposition so as to assume the expanded role of headship.

The research findings in the area also discursively serve to the great interest in headship preparation. A large body of research work holds a widespread assumption that leadership preparation contributes to school improvement and pupils' achievements. This assumption is based on research work on successful school leadership and school effectiveness which indicate that school leadership

has statistically significant impacts on school effectiveness and student achievement (Hallinger and Heck, 1998; Leithwood *et al.*, 2006; Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008; Mulford and Silins, 2003). Researchers then link such studies to that of leadership preparation effectiveness (for example, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008; Levačić, 2005; Pounder, 2011; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2009). Huber's (2004a) descriptions captured this phenomenon:

> The pivotal role of the school leader as a factor in effective schools has been corroborated by findings of school effectiveness research for the last decades. Extensive empirical efforts of the quantitatively oriented school effectiveness research – mostly in North America, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, but also in the Netherlands and in the Scandinavian countries – have shown that the leadership is a central factor for the quality of a school (p. 1).

However, it should be noted that this assumption is far from uncontroversial. Others argue that the empirical evidence of preparation effects on student achievements and school improvement is still limited (Bush, 2009; Bush, 2012; Lumby, 2014) and that there are some methodological limitations obscuring the more robust justification of this causal linkage. I do not intend to enter into this debate here, since it is not the focus of this research. The point I want to stress is that whether these quantitative research findings are debateable or not, they in effect have formed strong discourses about the effect of headship preparation, about how people speak of and think of headship preparation; and simultaneously, they have significantly contributed to fostering the driving impetus for the interest in headship preparation internationally.

2.2 The international-level research into headship preparation

The growing and impressive body of international-level literature on school headship preparation provides a general overview of the development of headship preparation. Reviewing and examining these studies is very useful and effective in capturing the general developmental tendency of headship preparation at the international level and can help to locate the focus of this research in the area.

Research on headship preparation has continuingly been involved in cross-regional or cross-national comparative studies. Many volumes have been dedicated to headship preparation issues in international contexts. For example, *Reshaping the landscape of school leadership development: A global perspective* edited by Hallinger (2003b), which comprehensively covered different continents in the world including Europe, Australia, East Asia, North America (though no African or Latin countries were included). Following this, several volumes from international perspectives have been published by scholars, such as Huber (2004a), Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis (2008), Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008), Brundrett and Crawford (2008a), Young *et al.* (2009), and Bush (2012).

As one of the most important figures in the area, Huber's (2004a) work utilised a comprehensive analytic framework which covered various themes of preparation programmes, including purpose, framework, content, delivery, and operational features. Based upon this, he then provided perhaps the most extensive and detailed research on the subject to date, covering 15 countries across Europe,

Asia, Australia/New Zealand, and North America. In spite of differences in cultural and institutional traditions, he identified the internationally common trends in leadership preparation, which are summarised as follows:

- central quality assurance and decentralized provision;
- new forms of cooperation and partnership;
- dovetailing theory and practice;
- preparatory qualification;
- extensive and comprehensive programmes;
- multi-phase designs and modularisation;
- from administration and maintenance to leadership, change and continuous improvement;
- qualifying teams and developing the leadership capacity of schools;
- experience and application orientation;
- new ways of learning: from workshops to the workplace (Huber, 2004a);

While Huber's work (Huber, 2004a, 2008, 2010) has been and continues to be an inspiration for those interested in international patterns in headship preparation, other researchers have also made meaningful impacts on the field. For instance, in Pont, Nusche and Moorman's (2008) OECD study of school leadership across 22 countries and regions in the world, school leadership preparation and development was identified as one of the four policy levers which can improve school leadership practice. They suggested several methods and content elements which were believed to contribute to a successful programme, including 'proposing workplace learning opportunities', 'designing research-based programmes', and 'focusing on mentoring and peer learning' (pp. 134-136). Similarly, in their analysis of

leadership preparation and development from 15 leadership centres in seven countries, Bush & Jackson (2002) found that the content of leadership programmes shared considerable commonalities which focused on leadership and were coupled with administrative and managerial tasks, such as human resources, finance, external relations and curriculum (p. 421). More specifically, Walker, Bryant and Lee (2013) specifically focused on major international patterns of high-quality leadership programmes across five high-performing education systems. They delineated both the commonalities and variations in terms of frameworks, common content areas, and operational features in pre-service programmes. Their conclusion indicated that the commonalities may be the result of international policy-borrowing; in addition to the professional expertise of providers, social-cultural differences were suggested to explain the variations in their programmes.

There are two points that I want to follow up on from the above discussion about the research with an international perspective. First, the comparative studies show not merely the internationally common tendencies or patterns in the development of headship preparation, but a more complex configuration. Understanding this complex configuration might help to identify the position of Taiwanese headship preparation in the international context. Second, the studies indicated that one of the common emphases among these worldwide preparatory programmes is to offer aspiring heads workplace learning opportunities. This has particular implications for this study since it focuses on a sort of workplace learning, namely aspiring heads' administrative placement (AP). I continue to discuss these implications in detail in the following subsections.

2.2.1 The implications of the 'global trends and local models'

Apart from common trends across many countries, cross-regional comparative studies point to the salience of local factors on shaping headship preparation programmes. As noted earlier, Walker, Bryant and Lee (2013) concluded their research on high-quality leadership programmes by saying that although there are many commonalities existing these leadership programmes, the professional expertise of providers, national culture and local differences may explain the variations in their programmes. Their conclusion reinforces Bolam's earlier claim, as he tellingly argued:

> Models of preparatory training, certification, selection, assessment, induction and on-going development for school leaders are necessarily rooted in specific national conditions and contexts. They are the product of unique, and dynamically changing, sets of circumstances—political, economic, social, cultural, historical, professional and technical—in that country (Bolam, 2004, p. 251).

In much the same way, Bush (2012) reviewed an extensive body of literature from an international perspective and drew the reader's attention to the salience of national conditions and local contexts by providing a manifestation of a number of these local influential factors:

- The salience of culture and context;
- The resources available to shape a development model;
- The extent and nature of centralisation in the education system;

- Preferences for certification, or leader choice (Bush, 2012, p. 670).

His analysis led to a convincing conclusion that 'the trend towards specific headship preparation is global but that approaches vary widely in response to local contextual factors' (p. 663). Bush (2012) then aptly put it as 'global trends and local models' (p. 673). Bush's conclusion is well supported by Brundrett and Crawford (2008a, p. 3) and Møller and Schratz (2008, p. 348). The configuration of headship preparation programmes in their studies were conceptualised as 'glocalisation' development, a neologism which depicts how global trends of headship preparation are subject to the disposition and features of the local (social, historical, political and economic) context. In line with this argument, Walker highlights that the success of headship preparation programmes is dependent on the cultural fit and sensitivity to cultural contexts (from Lumby *et al.*, 2009, pp. 168-169). A later study by Lumby (2014) shed light on a more sophisticated understanding of the structural and political context when looking at the development of preparation programmes. These accounts and argument seem to lead to a more complex configuration of preparation programmes that would be inextricably shaped through an interplaying process between global flows and local factors..

The idea of 'global trends and local models' implies that there is international recognition that in the context of the development of headship preparation, local contexts and regional conditions are crucial factors that need to be considered, in particular in empirical research. How these local factors shape the configuration of headship preparation (the AP scheme in this thesis), what purpose they might aim to achieve, and/or what kind of heads that might fit with the local, are questions that need further analysis.

2.2.2 The tendency of integrating workplace learning into preparatory programmes

The tendency of integrating workplace learning approaches (e.g., school placement or internship) into preparation programmes has been highlighted by the cross-national comparative studies mentioned above. For example, again, in Huber's (2004a) international comparative study, the workshop model is increasingly replaced by the authentic workplace learning pedagogy. This tendency is predicated on the assumption that, as he argued, 'only the authentic working context can assure adequate complexity and authenticity leading to the learning processes required' (Huber, 2004a, p. 64). Similarly, Bush (2012) claimed that the emphasis of preparation delivery in the twenty-first century has shifted from content-led to process-led approaches which include school placement or internships. In Bush and Jackson's (2002) international study, such workplace or field-based learning approaches (e.g., internship or mentoring) were extensively adopted and integrated to most of the programmes they researched. These authentic workplace experiences as common features in headship preparation programmes provide aspiring heads with opportunities to engage in the real-world workplace through experiential learning approaches.

As far as this research is concerned, the emerging administrative placement (AP) scheme in the education department in Taiwan can be viewed as following a workplace learning approach such as those mentioned above. According to the preliminary documentary analysis, AP schemes in local districts place the aspiring head in the office of the local education department for training and developing

participants' policy and administrative capabilities (see sections 1.2.1 and 1.5.5). The terms *training, fostering* or *developing* which are frequently used in the current public documents about the AP are in effect referring to the progressively developmental character of a learning-like approach in the workplace. Thus it would be reasonable to assert that the AP scheme in Taiwan can be viewed, at least *literally*, as one example of a workplace learning approach.

Thus far, I have reviewed the literature on headship preparation in terms of the global interest in this preparation issue, and the driving forces that support this interest. I also examined the international comparative research in this area. Doing so enables me to contextualise my research focus, i.e., the AP, in the terrain of the development of headship preparation. In the next sections I concentrate on the review of the literature on heads' administrative placement or internships as this directly links to the AP, the research focus.

2.3 Administrative placement and workplace learning

Research evidence on school headship preparation proves the importance of authentic workplace or field-based learning (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow and Glascock, 1995; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2007; Earley, 2009; Jackson and Kelley, 2002; Milstein and Krueger, 1997; Perez *et al.*, 2011; Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009; Zhang and Brundrett, 2010). However, having examined the literature, different terms are used to refer to the similar pedagogies of workplace learning, such as administrative internships (Clayton, 2012; Thessin and Clayton, 2013) or practicum (Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2004) in the USA, and school placement

(National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2014), leadership apprenticeship (Earley, 2009) and work-shadowing (Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009) in the UK. Despite the variety of descriptions, all of these terms stress the importance of acquiring experiential knowledge and skills by situating participants in the real-life field for learning.

As far as the literature and indeed this thesis is concerned, 'administrative placement' is a term used in Taiwan both to stress the *administration*-oriented work that aspiring heads undertake, and to refer to the *placement* of aspiring heads in the local education department office. Therefore, I decide to continue to use the term 'administrative placement' in the study, rather than other terms like administrative internship or school placement, while the terms placement and internship are used interchangeably in the following sections.

2.3.1 Placement as effective learning experiences

There is emergent evidence that school placement or internship, as the main approach of workplace learning, is among the most highly valued headship preparation experiences (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Clayton, 2012; Crow, 2005; Earley, 2009; Huber, 2004a; Simkins, 2009; Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009; SREB, 2005; Sung, 2011; Thessin and Clayton, 2013). For instance, In their Stanford project study of eight exemplary pre- and in-service headship development programmes in the USA, Darling-Hammond and her colleagues (2007) found that well-designed and supervised administrative internships/placement were one of the common features among the effective programmes. Their finding echoed what Milstein and Krueger (1997) earlier noted:

In short, internships provide the hands-on learning that cannot be gained if preparation is limited to theory and information giving. They are unique, important, and irreplaceable aspects of effective preparation programs (p. 107).

The adoption of placement is predicated on the assumption that adults learn better through authentic experiences and skill application in real-life situations (Earley, 2009, p. 319). It is believed that adult learning best occurs in the problem solving and in the relevant real-time situations to her or his workplace. Placement or internships enable participants to develop their leadership qualities and management skills in the 'real' contexts of schools (Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009, p. 392), clarify their roles and responsibilities (Heck, 2003), and increase their confidence as leaders and change agents (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Perez *et al.*, 2011), so as to reduce the possibility of reality shock (Clayton, 2012) and successfully assume the duties of headship (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009). It is also viewed as an 'integrating factor' which enables a synthesis of what has been learned (knowledge) and what has been put into practice and then leads to a 'holistic learning process' by motivating meta-cognitive processes (Huber, 2004a, p. 67). Research evidence also shows that placement/internships also benefit not only the mentor who supports aspiring heads but also schools where aspiring heads are located (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Thessin and Clayton, 2013). In terms of its advantages, perhaps the most persuasive work is offered by Crow (2005, pp. 74-77):

- Placement provides widening opportunities for participants to learn about themselves – their learning styles, leadership styles and strengths and weakness;

- Placement offers participants the opportunity to develop reflective learning skills;

- Participants may gain personal confidence from placement experiences;

- Placement provides the opportunity for participants to broaden experiences that encourage new ideas and creativity, and to encourage risk-taking;

- Participants can also benefit by gaining networks, which provide visibility that is critical for later career appointments and promotions.

The benefits of placement have led more programme designers to strengthen the structure of internship programmes, in particular adopting the long-term schemes. For example, in their study of exceptional and innovative school principal preparation programmes in the USA, Jackson and Kelley (2002) indicate that a common characteristic is the heavy emphasis on the revision of internships which tend to be much longer than that in a typical programme. For example, an 18-month-long field internship that constitutes the centrepiece for aspiring headship preparation was conducted in California in the USA, and Perez and her colleagues' (2011) research indicates that this long-term internship has marked positive effects on aspiring heads' perceptions of leaders' work and role and their ability to enact leadership practices.

2.3.2 Placement as a strong socialisation process

Research evidences also indicates that school based placement can contribute to the socialization process of entering into the headship (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Crow, 2006; Cunningham and Sherman, 2008). As Browne-Ferrigno (2003) argued, the key headship socialisation experience is working directly with school heads in real settings. Other studies closely looking into the socialisation experiences revealed that through placement approaches aspiring heads not only learn the obvious or manifest requirements of the job, for example, how to assess teacher performance, but also the more latent or subtle values, assumptions and beliefs, for example, the appropriate social distance between teachers and leaders or heads (Crow, 2001: p.8). For instance, it is argued that administrative placement might tend to perpetuate the power hierarchy and unequal relationships between teachers and administrators (cited from Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009, p. 383) through strengthening certain existent power relations. Such negative aspects of socialising effects of administrative placement are particularly important, although less documented in the literature.

Greenfield's (1985) earlier but still important work warned us three decades ago that aspiring heads' socialisation experiences through the school internship might finally have the effect of normalisation. According to Greenfield, the strong normalising forces derived from the structural characteristics of the organisation, dominant work activities that interns undertake, and the role expectations of superiors on interns, would heavily constrain interns' socialisation processes. Interns learn the sentiments, norms, and values of the role by observing and interacting with the immediate supervisor or mentor and then internalise these

norms consciously or/and unconsciously. It is through these normalising forces that aspiring heads are *socialised*: 'what is acceptable and valued'; 'what is important and what may be ignored'; 'what is viewed as problematic and what is not'; what requires attention and what does not; 'how things are handled by the superior' (p. 104). Central to his statement is that the normalising forces from people (superiors), practices (main work activities) and working settings (structural characteristics) have been internalised by interns, as he notes:

> Over time, as one becomes socialised to the requirements of the role, values and attitudes become internalised and taken for granted as a function of habituated responses to situations viewed as "problematic," and motivated by the desire to perform one's role in a manner that will be viewed favourably by superiors or other influential. (Greenfield, 1985, p. 107)

Greenfield's (1985) critical illumination of the socialisation effects of school internship is still invaluable and important, as his work reminds us of the aspect of normalising socialisation in headship placement. Nevertheless, this perspective remains under-discussed in the relevant literature. Perhaps one of the reasons is that many studies in this field adopt the structural-functionalist approach and overlook examining the potential dark side of heads' socialisation experiences. Greenfield (1985, p. 99) critically notes that the study of preparation programmes has 'proceeded in a theoretical vacuum' and has primarily emphasised the acquisition of sets of rational-technical skills required to manage the school and conform with the pre-determined national or regional goals.

Following this line of inquiry, a more critically informed approach into the study of heads' socialisation would be useful and insightful. This will be expanded in more detail by focusing on a critical perspective in headship preparation studies in section 2.5 (p. 71).

2.3.3 Forms of placement in practice

Internships or placements have a long history for the preparation of school leaders in the USA and were first introduced into university-based preparation programmes in the 1940s (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009). Milstein and Krueger (1997) earlier identified three types of internship experiences: long-term, multiple and alternative internship. Carr, Chenoweth and Ruhl's (2003) typology includes: independent, interdependent, embedded, and apprenticeship. More recently, Barnett, Copland and Shoho (2009) in their review of 40 internship preparation programmes in the USA, found three types of internship experiences: (1) full-time, job-embedded internships, (2) detached internships, and (3) course-embedded field experience in lieu of an internship. Their typology deals with the substance and duration of the internship experience. In the following, I briefly introduce their typology (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009) and supply it with Milstein and Krueger's (1997) alternative internship.

- *Full-time, job-embedded internship*

This design allows aspiring heads to be immersed in on-the-job learning during their extended internship experience (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009, p. 378).

A full-time, year-long, job-embedded internship, with well-arranged and supported mentoring, has been considered the ideal model for aspiring heads (Carr, Chenoweth and Ruhl, 2003). This design can also be associated with multisite and multidistrict experiences through which participants learn more about differing organisational cultures and their operating norms.

Such full-time, extended internships can be found in Singapore and the USA. The *Leaders in Education Programme* (LEP) which was launched at the National Institute of Education in Singapore in 2001 is a six-month school attachment. During the period, participants who are specially selected vice-principals receive full salary during their full-time LEP programme (Bush and Jackson, 2002). Their preparation fees are fully subsidised by the Ministry of Education. Participants have to work with school staff to undertake an innovation project that is of value to the school community (Ng, 2008). Similarly, North Carolina State University in the USA provides a full-time, year-long, job-embedded internship with funding (\$ 35,000 per intern) to support selected interns to participate in this internship (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009).

- *Detached internship*

The detached internship is usually dispersed to the process of preparation. In some cases there are minimal hourly requirements while in other cases the internship is a multisite experience requiring several days or months (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009, p. 380). In most detached internships, participants are asked to document their experiences following a list of required activities and write

reflective journals. This detached internship is still the most prevalent internship model adopted in principal preparation programmes in the USA (SREB, 2005). This design is also used in the English NPQH (the National Professional Qualification for Headship) programme which requires a short-term school placement in different school contexts for a minimum of nine days (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2014). It is worth noting that this scheme arranges participants to undertake school placements in different contexts from their own.

An evaluation study on the NPQH by Crawford and Earley (2011) found that participants from the primary sector may face difficulties in dealing with their absence from school and experience problems owing to time away from family responsibilities. On the other hand, the researchers' evaluation also found a number of benefits participants gain and which are likely to inform their future work as a head. These include communication skills, community engagement, developing leadership strategies and personal development (such as resilience, working with new teams, learning new school structures, strategic thinking, time management, confidence, and flexibility) (p. 111). Nevertheless, in the evaluation report, Crawford and Earley (2011) call for a lengthy school-based internship design with multisite internship experiences, exposing aspiring heads to a range of different leadership styles and school contexts, in place of the current short-term placement.

● *Course-embedded field experiences*

This course-embedded field experience does not require a stand-alone internship arrangement. It breaks down the internship activities contained in a detached internship and locates the required field experiences in appropriate courses. The course-embedded field experiences are part of the formal course work and these field experiences inform course content. The school visit used in headship pre-service courses in Changhua County in Taiwan is one such scheme. The visit is part of the formal course (e.g., school management). Through visiting different school fields, the visiting experience in lieu of an internship is expected to enrich aspiring heads' practical knowledge about how to manage a school. This kind of school visit has been extensively adopted by many local districts in Taiwan (Chang, 2012), while the more extended school internship is less frequently adopted.

- *Alternative internship*

Alternative internships are rare and therefore a less researched design. According to Milstein and Krueger (1997), this design allows participants to intern in social service agencies to gain a broader range of perspectives and experiences of educational enterprises and to increase knowledge about the operation of other agencies that impact students and their learning. As far as this study is concerned, this alternative approach that places interns in an institution beyond the school is important and necessary to be further discussed.

The French placement model is one of the few alternative internships that can be found. The headship recruitment, preparation and selection are strongly centralised in France, and school heads are viewed as the 'director of a public

institution and a representative of the state' (Huber and Meuret, 2004, p. 167). Headship preparation is designed according to standards and guidelines provided by the central government, but preparation programmes are delivered in a decentralised way by state-run academies. Embedded within the preparation training is an intensive internship which consists of a 12-week internship in a school, a 4-6-week placement in a company, as well as a 2-week placement at a local authority or a regional administration office. During the first basic part of the development programme, before taking over the first school leadership post, there are various internships at different institutions (Huber, 2004a, pp. 65-66). Essential to the alternative internship approach is to provide participants with a chance for 'helpful analogies' about the decision making process, procedures, and multiple resources beyond the school settings.

To sum up, the majority of heads' internships fall into the category of school-based placement whether the design is extended, full-time, or short-term detached, whereas there are only few cases of alternative internships. It should be noted that for school-based placement, the field of school is the 'clinical faculty' (Huber, 2004a, p. 91) where aspiring heads can gain hands-on leadership experiences (Clayton, 2012; Thessin and Clayton, 2013), deal with technical operations and real-life responsibilities, and also learn from the experienced head by shadowing her or him. The alternative internship, however, echoes Crow (2006) call for a broader notion of socialisation to cover 'not only a particular school, but also social, mental, and health agencies; community religious and governmental entities' (p. 318). Of these rare cases, the alternative internship in France has several features in common with the emerging administrative placement (AP) in Taiwan. For

instance, both countries integrate alternative internships into headship preparation and place their aspiring heads in local authority offices, and school heads in both educational systems are represented as public service agents (Chan, 2009; Huber and Meuret, 2004). Nevertheless, the AP in Taiwan seems to be a dominant internship design and aspiring heads there seem to have fewer chances to undertake authentic school internships or shadow the experienced head. Due to the lack of research on alternative placement in the literature, my thesis seeking to investigate the alternative placement in Taiwan will make a contribution to filling the gap in this area.

2.3.4 Limitations of current placement schemes

Recent research on heads' placement has revealed a number of criticisms about the placement. The aim of this section is to focus on the downsides of current placement programmes. I examined these issues in order to enrich my research sensitivity as I was setting out to do fieldwork.

The lack of actual tasks and clarifying of the meaning

Barnett, Copland and Shoho (2009, p. 377) argue that many placement programmes have been criticised because *the tasks* aspiring heads engage in are not linked to meaningful problems of practice. Similar dissonance between coursework and practice is also reported in Clayton's (2012) study. It is worth noting that the actual tasks for aspiring heads and the meaning of those tasks are highlighted as two characteristics of placement experiences which influence the satisfaction of aspiring heads (Clayton, 2012). More specifically, a placement study

of 61 headship preparation programmes in 16 states conducted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2005, p. 3) in the USA finds that in too many cases the internship is still far from well-designed and that few programmes require their participants to get involved in the activities in relation to instructional practices and student achievement (pp. 5-6):

- Fewer than one-fourth require aspiring heads to lead activities that implement good instructional practices;
- Only about one-third of the programmes require aspiring heads to lead activities that create a mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices;
- Current placement participants are more likely to follow than to lead.

The paucity of support during participants' placement experience

Recent research on school placement has prompted questions about the lack of on-going support and mentoring for participants. Although mentoring has been hailed as an important aspect of the placement experience, for example, in their analysis of field-based internship programmes, Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) find that the meaningful engagement of mentor heads with trainee heads can foster development of collegial relationships which contribute to supporting new and aspiring heads during the often difficult early years of new headship. Research evidence on mentoring support has drawn readers' attention to a number of shortcomings in terms of the lack of opportunity for each participant to work with high qualified mentor heads (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009), mentors overloaded with the number of participants they are expected to supervise (SREB,

2005, p. 6), and even the haphazard selection and preparation of mentors (Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2004; Jackson and Kelley, 2002). These downsides have led to a paucity of adequate mentoring support during trainees' placement experience. More specifically, the lack of support mechanism for securing the placement process is documented in the SREB report, which notes that less than half of the investigated placement programmes held regular meetings between university, trainee heads and cooperating heads to clarify the expectations and experiences (SREB, 2005, p. 6).

The neglected clarification of the role and title of interns

The *title* given to aspiring heads can be a subtle but forceful indication of role expectations, authority, and role assignment, according to Crow (2001, p. 4). Crow (2005) goes further to deliberate the importance of role assignments and the preferred title of aspiring heads. As he notes, how interns are introduced to the school and mentored by heads depends upon the preferred title, and this might influence the effectiveness of the learning situation (p.71). For example, some titles and role assignments emphasise the interns as an additional deputy rather than a head in training. In other cases, intern placement at school divisions are often viewed as a way to supplement 'unfunded quasi-administrative roles' (Clayton, 2012, p. 368). The importance of clearly defining the role and the title of interns has been evident in the literature (Clayton, 2012; Crow, 2001, 2005). In this sense, titles and assignments should serve to enrich the learning opportunities beyond aspiring heads' prior administrative experiences.

The expensive operation of placements

Another limitations of placements is the financial expense. Although placements and internships have proven to be powerful learning tools (Cunningham and Sherman, 2008; Earley, 2009), research on this field also indicates the difficulty of sustaining such a high-cost model over time, in particular the full-time and paid placements (Crow, 2005; Earley, 2009; Perez *et al.*, 2011). Placement is an expensive learning tool and its costs include the salaries of aspiring heads and project administrators in addition to the large amount of time mentors and senior management teams must give to the programmes. In addition, they take qualified leaders out of other schools and create vacancies that may not be easily filled (Crawford and Earley, 2011; Crow, 2005). These financial issues may hamper the conduct of placement programmes or cause participants difficulties.

Thus far in this section I have critically examined the literature on heads' placement and internships, factors which play a crucial role in the process of developing a headteacher. In order to identify my stance and to clarify my inquiry focus, I now want to explore respectively in the next two sections the different foci and stances in researching headship preparation, that is to say, the debates and theoretical perspectives in this area.

2.4 The debates in headship preparation research

The focus on headship preparation is far from an uncontested debate. As the notion of 'global trends and local models' might imply, there is consensus that the

role of the school head matters and that headship preparation is important, while there are widespread and on-going disagreements about what kinds of heads are needed, what skills and attributes they should possess, for whom they are prepared and how they should be prepared (Crawford and Earley, 2011). In order to make discernible these contested debates, I paraphrase them into three different inquiry foci: 'preparation for what?', 'preparation for whom?' and 'how to prepare?' Each of them is discussed in turn.

The first focus, 'preparation for what', is usually connected to larger debates on leadership per se, particularly the different models of leadership (Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis, 2008, p. 3) and the purpose of leadership. For example, distributed leadership (Harris and Spillane, 2008; Lumby, 2013), sustainable leadership (Fullan and Sharratt, 2007), learning-centred leadership (Earley, 2013), instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2010) and the aim of leadership for social justice or student achievement. As Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis (2008) argue, these wider debates about leadership have permeated into questions as to headship preparation and development. For instance, some have argued that headship preparation should build the capacities of social justice leaders in demographically changing schools (Jean-Marie, Normore and Brooks, 2009; Miller and Martin, 2015), while others have held the view that enhancing student achievement should be the first priority of preparing headship (González, Glasman and Glasman, 2002). Earley (2013) emphasises that the focus on any headship preparation should be on learning-centred leadership and how to influence people to achieve this. What is more, Huber (2004b) argued for aligning leadership preparation programmes to the core purpose and values of school. We can also find that some researchers called for preparing heads for specific types of school

structures or circumstance, e.g., leading challenging schools (Crow, 2005) or leading professional learning communities (Stoll and Bolam, 2005), while others draw our attention to preparing globally minded school leadership to better address the impact of globalisation and intercultural exchange on student learning in schools (Easley and Tulowitzki, 2013).

Central to the second focus, 'preparation for whom', is the contested debate about who actually benefits from headship preparation (Lumby, 2014) and for what purpose the training provision is deployed to achieve (Wallace, Tomlinson and O'Reilly, 2011). These inquiries usually derive from research that has adopted critical perspectives to interrogate, challenge, and problematise the status quo of headship preparation. Although quite few in number, there have been some excellent studies which have probed these questions. For instance, Lumby's (2014) work has provided a very different point of view from much of the other headship preparation literature, having attempted to persuade us that the goals of preparation programmes seem not to relate to learners' learning and school outcomes (see Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008), but instead, to maintaining power at international, state and individual levels. Similarly, Tomlinson, O'Reilly and Wallace's (2013) interesting research illustrates how centrally initiated leadership preparation operates as a covert means of perpetuating elites political domination. They further argue that this covert means serves a confluence of interests between school leaders' concern with 'self-advancement and expanded positional power and the central political elites' interest in this advancement as a means of achieving their political goals' (p. 94). Research involving such critical inquiry analyses state political purposes and tends to view headship preparation as a political process.

Lastly, disagreement about 'how to prepare' is also evident in the bulk of research on headship preparation. As Bush (2009, p. 386) argues, 'there is continuing and ongoing debate about the nature of the provision' of systemic preparation and development of school leaders. Namely, there are conflicting views on a range of issues, such as whether or not the delivery of headship preparation should be a national centralised or decentralised system (Bush, 2008b), a school-based or university-based programme, follow a coherently standard-based approach or an ad hoc provision (Bolam, 2004), apply content- or process-oriented learning approaches (Bush, 2009; Zhang and Brundrett, 2010), and be personalised or follow a one-fit-for-all design (Huber, 2010), etc. However, although a great deal of research has shown that there is no one best way of preparing school heads, recent studies have increasingly drawn attention to the usefulness of workplace learning or field-based learning approaches, such as school placement, school attachment, or administrative internships (see section 2.3, p. 54).

It should be noted that the intent of this thesis is not so ambitious as to settle the above mentioned debates. It is instead informed and inspired by these inquiry foci, that is, to start from the debateable, to look at the problematic, and to consider the unanswered. Examining these contested debates in headship preparation studies sharpens my research's inquiry focus to probe into the questions: 'preparation for what' and 'whom'?

2.5 Theorising school headship preparation

Many researchers have been trying to map the field of school leadership and headship preparation. Gunter (2001) presents four epistemological positions on leadership studies in education territory: critical, humanistic, instrumental and scientific positions. She and her colleague (Gunter and Ribbins, 2002; Ribbins and Gunter, 2002), in their mapping of a typology of knowledge domains, suggest 'five key knowledge domains' for educational leadership: conceptual, critical, humanistic, evaluative and instrumental. Gunter and Robbin's typology in this area has been and continues to be an inspiration to those who have taken an interest in theorising the development of headship preparation. Simkins (2012), building on Gunter and Ribbins (2002) and Hartley's (2010) discussion of sociological paradigms within leadership research, clearly identifies three theoretical perspectives in theorising the development of school leadership preparation, bundling 'two consensual paradigms of *functionalism* and *constructivism*' and a third '*critical perspective*' (p. 630). His useful and heuristic theoretical frames are then adopted by Lumby (2014) to critically consider the interests of stakeholders of headship preparation programmes. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of these different perspectives and then focus on the discussion of critical perspectives.

2.5.1 The functionalist perspective

Much of the research on headship preparation has adopted a functionalist perspective (Eacott, 2011b; Lumby, 2014; Simkins, 2012). This body of research embodies the functionalist approach in three ways. First, it assumes that

knowledge revolves around headship and preparation can be objectively determined and empirically informed. Through the application of scientific methods (Hartley, 2010), 'hard evidence' can be sought and then translated into preparation programmes (Pounder, 2011, p. 259). For example, the aims of preparation programmes are objectively settled and accepted to be unproblematic, 'detailed standards' that describe effective leaders' qualities, skills and competences are prescribed, and 'best practices' are sought (Lumby, 2014, p. 310). This perspective can be easily found in the standards-based preparation programmes, not only in the UK and USA, but also, more internationally, in many European countries (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008a; Møller and Schratz, 2008) and Asian educational systems (Walker, Bryant and Lee, 2013).

Second, the functionalist approach, usually adopting scientifically statistical methods, seeks to explore the *causal impact* of headship preparation on student learning, teachers' teaching and school improvement, and so enables statistical evidence to provide a link between policy and practice (Gunter, 2001). In fact, this scientific position has been largely preferred by policy-makers and has often been drawn upon in policy-making. For example, in an English Government-commissioned assessment study on the effects of school leadership and preparation programmes on pupil learning, Leithwood and Levin (2005) proposed a normative model seeking to build a linear link from leadership development, modified leadership practices, enhanced teaching, to improved learner outcomes. Statistical models of such quantitative research suggest to focus on the investigation of leader effects (Pounder, 2011). Other studies have sought

to investigate the relationship between preparation programmes and headship practices.

However, in their quantitative research on principal preparation programme effects on student achievement through the mediate variable of the improvement of teacher teams, Fuller, Young and Baker (2011) concluded that their results were not able to prove the effect at preparation programme level that influences principals' abilities to improve overall teacher-team qualifications. Criticisms of this scientific approach research by Lumby (2014) are very important in enabling us to consider differently the preparation programme effects. After her detailed review of the evaluation of preparation programmes done by Orr and Barbara (2009) and of other relevant literature, Lumby (2014) concludes that there might be no evidence to support the assumption that preparation programmes benefit student learning.

More fundamentally, functionalist perspectives have been challenged from a number of directions. Firstly, functionalist perspectives tend to promote de-contextualising the development of headship preparation as best practice (Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis, 2008). This has been criticised for disregarding the importance of context (see Lumby *et al.*, 2009). Secondly, critiques on functionalist approaches also highlight the problem of their over-preoccupation with instrumental knowledge, which causes them to largely ignore major issues such as ethics, values and personal experiences in human relations. With these issues in mind, we will turn to more constructivist approaches in the study of preparation programmes.

2.5.2 The constructivist perspective

The second normative approach advocates the constructivist perspective. The constructivists tend to believe that there is no fixed, reified reality and that knowledge can only be understood within a particular context, that is to say, knowledge is constructed and is contingent upon a particular time and place (Hartley, 2010). From this point of view, personal experiences and contextual knowledge play a crucial role in the process of learning to be a school head. These two emphasises have been embodied in the approaches to headship preparation programmes. Firstly, there has been an increasing focus on 'personalisation of provision' (Simkins, 2012, p. 629) which provides either more direct personal support, especially through coaching or mentoring, or more personal choices in the activities potential heads engage in, such as modularisation of content. Concomitantly, this leads to concerns about multi-perspectives on headship preparation activities (Simkins, 2009; Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009); different participants may not share the same interpretations of their experiences.

Secondly, more attention has been paid to process-led orientation and workplace models, using the school as a clinical faculty and placing participants in real work settings to help them acquire experiential and contextual knowledge (Huber, 2004a). As noted earlier, the field-based learning approach has been increasingly valued as an effective learning pedagogy, and techniques, such as school placement, shadowing, administrative internships, apprenticeships, school-led work, or other practice-based activities have been put into action in a variety of national contexts (Earley, 2009; Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009). For instance, in the UK, a minimum nine day school placement in a context different from the

participants' own is emphasised in the NPQH programme (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2014). While there appears to have been a global shift towards process-led orientation, Bush (2009, p. 382) reminds us that 'finding an appropriate balance between content and process remains a very real challenge' for both programme providers and participants. Due to the fact that recently local governments in Taiwan have put more emphasis on aspiring heads' administrative placement, this issue is likely to increase in importance and require further investigation.

Much headship research champions a constructivist perspective, primarily adopting qualitative methodology, drawing data from case studies, interviews or observation to explore participants' narrative perspectives of how they have experienced preparation activities in particular settings over time. This work, challenging simple functionalist assumptions, views participants as subjects rather than objects of preparation programmes and sees preparation as a constructive process (Simkins, 2009). Such perspectives have been explored in a number of ways: for example through concepts of socialisation (Crow, 2006; Crow and Glascock, 1995; Greenfield, 1985; Hart, 1991), role transformation (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Rhodes, Brundrett and Nevill, 2009), or following the career stages of leaders (Gronn, 1999). Central to these explorations is the issue of *identity construction*. For instance, in their study on the national training programme of NPQH, drawing on Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) framework for professional growth and transition to headship, Rhodes and his colleagues (2009) explore role conceptualisation, initial socialisation, role-identity transformation and purposeful engagement. Lumby and English's (2009) work challenges the singular

self of a leader which underpins the functionalist identity perspective. Drawing upon the concepts of the self, myth, and identity, they posit that the nature of headship identities is 'constantly and iteratively changing' (p. 111) and thus should be constructed as plural rather than singular. They strongly argue that headship preparation programmes in such case are an initiation into identity construction and not merely the acquisition of managerial and technical knowledge and skills, nor the adoption of an unproblematic set of values and norms. Their argument echoes the acknowledgement of the 'knowledge dynamic' in headship preparation (English, 2006, p. 465) as opposed to a 'knowledge base' which manifests a functionalist epistemology.

Simkins (2012) argues, following Hartley's (2010) discussion, that perhaps most of the writing on headship preparation falls within the 'two consensual paradigms of functionalism and constructivism' (p. 630). As such, they are concerned with social regulation, aimed to reproduce rather than radically change the normative order. For instance, these writings either seek to make heads more effective by following a set of prescriptive standards, or interpret a narrative biographical story of becoming a head within a particular context. Lumby (2014, p. 310) notes that both the functionalist and constructivist perspectives might represent the 'compliance with a normative construction of leadership'. Both perspectives fail to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions and discourses of preparation programmes and the roles that preparation programmes play in society. Likewise they fail to examine the rationales which underpin training programmes and the interests camouflaged behind them. Lumby and her colleague goes further to indicate that the vast majority of preparation programmes are more about the 'acquisition of sets of

rational-technical skills required to manage schools and an acceptance of national aims and values as ritually presented' (Lumby and English, 2009, p. 108). Critiques also stress that this 'management by ringbinder' approach (Halpin, 1990, cited in Gunter, 2013, p. 4) of leadership preparation should be decentred, and a more crucial and 'socially critical' (Foster, 1989, p. 46) approach needs to be integrated. Among these criticisms, it is the critical perspective of headship preparation taken by some scholars that I will now address.

2.5.3 The critical perspective

Writing with a critical scholarship on headship preparation is not merely to interpret the context of headship training, but to either challenge the normative order of the dominant discourse of headship or promote the new order whereby alternative thinking or practices are provided (Eacott, 2011a). The concern here is to 'reveal and emancipate practitioners from the various forms of social injustice and the oppression of established but unjustifiable structures and processes of power' (Gunter and Ribbins, 2003a, p. 133; Ribbins and Gunter, 2002, p. 374). Gunter's (2001) work of the contributions of the critical leadership approach is heuristic to explore headship preparation programmes, as she points out the purpose of a critical leadership approach as aiming to:

1. question the common sense view within the literature that organisations are objective realities that can be controlled towards particular goals;
2. emancipate those who are disciplined through objective power structures by questioning the power base of those located within privileged elite positions;

3. problematise language, practice, beliefs and what are current and taken for granted assumptions about organisational realities and structures;

4. reveal the existence of contradictions and dilemmas within organisations and the productive contribution of conflict;

5. provide alternative ways of understanding organisational reality as a means of supporting critical evaluation;

6. support practice through moving beyond tasks and techniques by conceptualising action within a social and political context (Gunter, 2001, pp. 96-97).

As we can see from Gunter's (2001) accounts, the contribution made by critical theorists is not only to reveal taken-for-granted assumptions, contradictions, and hidden power relations, but also provide alternative thinking or practical action by drawing upon social sciences to both apply theories and to theorise. In relation to the study of headship preparation, this critical perspective helps us to reveal power relations at either micro-, meso- or macro-sociological levels (Hartley, 2010; Ribbins and Gunter, 2002), to problematise unquestioned discourse, and to unpack identity construction. Meanwhile it could also provide us with an alternative way of considering and (re)conceptualising the role played by preparation programmes (Lumby, 2014).

An interwoven net of power, discourse, and subjectivity in critical thinking

Having examined the literature, a number of themes that have been extensively discussed in the critical headship preparation terrain are that of *power, discourse*, and *identity/subjectivity constitution* within the interplay between the agency of heads and the structure that uplifts or limits that agency. For instance, Simkins (2012) raises the question 'who controls headship preparation?' which focuses on a more concrete manifestation of power in relation to headship preparation. Lumby (2014) engages the different forms of power and control exercised by governments and argues that the real goals of preparation programmes may be 'camouflaged by the stated functionalist and normative aims and content'. Thus, preparation programmes might in fact serve to maintaining power at state and individual levels. Similar work related to governments' power and control can be found in Bush (2013, p. 459), echoed by Thrupp (2005, p. 18), who notes that headship preparation in England has been used as 'a vehicle for ensuring compliance with national imperatives'. Zheng, Walker and Chen's (2013) work indicates that the strong state control of headship preparation in China remains but has been disguised through, for example, inserting 'a large ideological component' (p. 499) into the preparation curriculum and content. Other writings emphasise issues of discourses and identity/subjectivity formation. For instance, Anderson and Grinberg (1998) challenge the functionalist socialisation perspective and argue that headship preparation programmes (i.e. internships), in effect, reproduce 'discourse-practices' contributing to the formation of obedient subjects (p. 339). Others examine how discourses of leadership standards function as a legitimation strategy for enhancing the field's declining legitimacy (Anderson, 2001), or form a particular disciplined subjectivity through the regime of 'designer-leadership' (Gronn, 2003a, p. 283) to strengthen self-identity in a pre-framed construction of headship.

We can witness complex ways in which power, discourse, and identity/subjectivity constitution are interrelated and interwoven in the making of school heads. This has been tellingly summed up by Grace (2000), who points out:

It is no surprise therefore to find that various political agencies who wish to change the culture and ethos of schooling realise the strategic importance of changing the consciousness, values and behaviour of headteachers and, more fundamentally, of changing ideas about the nature of the headship role itself. (p. 232)

Essential to Grace's (2000) words is the manifestation of the intervention of political agencies with their own political goals in preparing heads through the discursive strategy of promoting certain headship discourses where heads' consciousness, values and behaviour are then subject to be shaped, guided, and reconstructed. This is supported by Rhodes and Brundrett (2009, p. 364), as they note that 'central intervention in directing how school leaders are developed and what they are expected to do will foster the formation of particular identities along with the types of thinking and priorities seen as appropriate'. Both Grace's (2000) and Rhodes and Brundrett's (2009) work help us catch an important glimpse at how power relations, discursive strategies, and identity/subjectivity formation are interwoven together in the process of making 'the' heads.

Gunter and Thomson (2009) adopt the metaphor of a 'makeover' from TV media to depict how policy-makers expect heads to lead their schools and how the reform agendas that heads are expected to achieve are associated with the national headship training in the UK. Subject to the headship preparation, the promotion of transformational and distributed leadership discourses, and direct expert control, heads are cast as 'reform-ready leaders' and 'tactical implementers and deliverers' (p. 478) who are normalised and required to deliver and implement government-driven reforms within schools. In their argument, makeover training programmes operate as 'a remediation to secure local reform delivery' (Gunter, 2012, p. 4).

Also germane to this is the observation by Wallace, O'Reilly, Morris and Deem (2011) that English national leadership development programmes function as *control technologies*, encouraging and acculturating the senior staff in education and health service organisations to perceive themselves as 'change agents' (p. 66), who adopt a proactive role in the instigation and implementation of reforms in their own organisations. Their empirical findings, drawing upon the qualitative interview data, indicate that this acculturating process would shape, direct, and form senior staffs' identity towards a 'change agent' for reform and independent agendas; however, this attempted acculturation is moderately mediated by recipients' existing cultural allegiances. Their conclusion integrates a strong sense of personal agency that is able to interplay with the acculturating force. In their later work, Wallace, Tomlinson and O'Reilly (2011) find that the external 'hard' policy levers (p. 278), such as performance measurement and regulatory accountability mechanisms which have the potential to produce higher degrees of behavioural

compliance, need to be taken into accounts of the interplay of acculturation-mediation. The personal agency and external policy structures are those that Gunter and Thomson (2009) did not address.

A key point shared by these writings is the suggestion that headship preparation could be deployed by political agencies as a control technology (or a political tool) coupled with the promotion of certain types of leadership discourse, as to produce a specific type of leader through directing, shaping, and conducting their identity construction. In this sense, the purpose of preparation would be to achieve political ends; its ends might not be for school-level stakeholders but for political agencies; in order to do this headship preparation programmes have been deployed as normalising mechanisms to acculturate participants, and as control technologies to produce a certain type of leader. However, the above studies also suggest that this normalising force would be mediated through participants' personal agency, cultural allegiances, or the external policy structure.

Towards a Foucauldian inquiry

There are those who may feel that the critical researchers are often lacking in alternatives and deem their work unproductive (Davies, Popescu and Gunter, 2011). This might be the main reason why critical approaches have remained at the margins of the field (Gunter, 2001; Niesche and Gowlett, 2014). However, the contribution made by critical theorists is not only to reveal power structures, but also to provide alternative thinking or practice by drawing upon social sciences both to use theories and to theorise. Notably, the *post-structuralist approaches* are

often drawn upon by critical theorists (Simkins, 2012). Perhaps the reasons for this are that on the one hand the field of educational leadership studies has long been criticised for being a 'conservative' field that remains in a 'theoretical vacuum' (Greenfield, 1985, p. 99) or 'theoretically weak' (Niesche and Gowlett, 2014, p. 3) lacking theoretical, sociological and philosophical underpinnings; on the other hand, post-structuralist studies which take on issues of power relations, discourses and subjectivity have been deemed very useful and generative in interrupting prevailing discourses, and leading to a productive (re)thinking of leadership and headship preparation (Niesche and Gowlett, 2014).

Although the application of post-structuralist ideas to headship preparation are still rare (Simkins, 2012), they have shown a strong potential for providing alternative conceptualisations of headship preparation to the mainstream work. Among these earlier post-structuralist critical accounts of headship preparation are those that have been based on Pierre Bourdieu (Eacott, 2011a; Eacott, 2011b; Gunter, 2012; Tomlinson, O'Reilly and Wallace, 2013), Derrida (Niesche, 2013a) and Michel Foucault (Anderson, 2001; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003b). For example, by using Bourdieu's conceptual tools, Tomlinson, O'Reilly and Wallace (2013) are able to illustrate how centrally initiated leadership preparation operates as a form of 'symbolic violence' (p. 86) – a covert means of perpetuating political elite domination, through which both central policy leaders and organisational leaders accumulate their own capitals. These studies have paved the way for arguing that the post-structuralist ideas can provide different theoretical tools for analysis of headship preparation and create possibilities for problematising unquestioned

discourses and fixed identities, and thus can be very fruitful for headship preparation studies.

Among the post-structuralists, Foucault's work has been less applied to educational leadership (Niesche and Gowlett, 2014) and headship preparation as well, while his work has proved relevant and useful to the studies of these areas (see Anderson, 2001; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003b). Although the direct application of Foucault's work to the analysis of headship preparation or leadership development is very rare, his notions of discipline and governmentality, which conceptualise how individuals are shaped and managed and how they shape and manage themselves, are highly relevant to the training or preparation of school heads (Gillies, 2013; Niesche, 2011; Niesche, 2014). For instance, while applying these frameworks to headship preparation studies is rare, some researchers have adopted Foucault's notions of discipline, normalisation and governmentality in their analysis of the preparation of teachers (Hall and Millard, 1994; Holligan, 1999; Wilkins and Wood, 2009). The bulk of this research on teacher education provides a similar and heuristic research approach to a Foucauldian study of headship preparation. It is the relevance of a Foucauldian approach to headship preparation, coupled with the aim of this thesis as a critical examination of the administrative placement of headship preparation that I adopt Foucault's work as theoretical underpinnings to analyse the empirical data. The following chapter expands on such Foucauldian theoretical underpinnings in more detail.

2.6 Summary

The literature on headship preparation is of considerable quantities. Drawing consciously upon this literature has the advantage of extending thinking on the headship preparation in Taiwan. Looking at this literature contributes to headship preparation studies in various ways. In terms of literature on the preparation programme, much writing has indicated a pattern of interplay of 'global trends and local models' in the configuration of headship preparation programmes. This pattern is very useful for the study of the administrative placement of headship preparation in Taiwan, as the Taiwanese educational system seems to be located within this interplay of global forces and local context factors. Furthermore, examining the literature on the common trends of headship preparation at the international level sheds light on the emergent school placement and internships for aspiring heads. Interestingly, these studies reflect the distinctiveness of the administrative placement in Taiwan where participants are placed in local educational authorities for a long-term placement, rather than being based in school as most of countries do. This distinctiveness will lead this study to pay more attention to the local context factors. It also drives this study to consider the role played by this administrative placement by addressing the following contested questions: preparation for what, preparation for whom, and how to prepare through this administrative placement.

This chapter has outlined the different ways that headship preparation are theorised in the literature, and has drawn distinctions in the literature between the functionalist, constructivist and critical perspectives. It is clear that such distinctions

are helpful for understanding and also for adopting a definite research stance. The result of my initial literature review leads me to adopt socially critical perspectives, informed by post-structuralist ideas, to both challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions in headship preparation and seek for alternative thinking tools. The next chapter will continue the process of identifying theoretical underpinnings. It will begin to add knowledge in the area of headship preparation by exploring and linking Foucault's work to the preparation of school heads that is not often accessed in this field.

Chapter 3   A Foucauldian toolbox

Introduction

The previous chapter provided a background to locate this study in the area of school headship preparation with a particular focus on aspiring heads' placement. It also addressed the main debates in this area and discussed the different approaches of theorising headship preparation. Through this careful examination, I then adopted a more socially critical approach, which is not often employed in this area, aiming to both question the role played by the headship preparation programme (referring to the AP in this study) and provide alternative ways of thinking. In order to achieve this, identifying the potential theoretical underpinnings for this research is necessary.

This chapter therefore aims to identify the appropriate theoretical underpinnings that I can apply empirically through the approach and methods set out in Chapter 4 (p. 135). To this end, I bring Foucault's work to the study of headship preparation by highlighting the strong relevance of his work to the preparation of the head. As the literature review in the last chapter identified, ideas of power, discourse and subjectivity/identity are of great importance in headship preparation studies, and these themes are also the fundamental ideas in Foucault's work.

Structurally, this chapter consists of five thematic sections with relevant sub-sections. In the first section, the reasons I bring Foucault's work to the area of headship preparation are articulated. Next, I address Foucault's notions of power-knowledge, discourse, and subjectivity. Then, I lay out the notions of disciplinary power and governmentality and discuss how these concepts form the main theoretical underpinnings of my analysis. In the last section I develop my own research questions informed by these theoretical insights.

3.1 Why bring Foucault to headship preparation studies and how?

School headship preparation is an area which has long been dominated by structural-functionalist approaches. To introduce alternatives or look for more socially critical approaches to this conservative field, Michel Foucault's work can prove very useful both for critiquing from within and for opening up new lines of analysis beyond traditional approaches and frameworks (Niesche and Gowlett, 2014). Thus as I will argue and demonstrate, Foucault's thinking tools have strong relevance to the area of headship preparation. I use this section to specify the reasons I bring Foucault to the study of headship preparation with an empirical focus on the administrative placement (AP) in the Taiwanese context. And also, I outline the way in which I *use* Foucault in this study.

3.1.1 Foucault and making sense of experience

My previous professional work experience as an administrator in a local education department to a large extent led me to conduct this Foucauldian study. During my four-year local civil service career, I happened to have an opportunity to work with some AP heads in the same division office. Through this engaging experience I got a fundamental understanding of the lives of the AP heads in my division, such as what they were required to do, and how they talked, thought and learned. All of these initially were just things that I took for granted, as they were very much similar to my own daily work experience. However, later I became aware that these aspiring heads were in fact surrounded, observed and evaluated by senior officials, and that in order to succeed in their headship selection, their subjugation to the asymmetrical power relations was crucial. I, as a civil servant, was given charge of the job of headship selection and I was quite aware of this power asymmetry and the insidious observation on AP heads. Therefore, there were questions constantly crossing my mind: 'do aspiring heads really need to learn such administrative duties in order to assume the headship?', 'for what purpose was this AP scheme created?' and also 'what does this headship placement really mean?' It was these inquiries that finally led me embark on this Foucauldian research project.

Nevertheless, I was not able to make sense of my experience and these emerging questions in an intellectually satisfying way until I read Foucault's (1979) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*. His work provides novel insights into power, more specifically power relations, to understand the so-called training process of a certain profession, for example, soldiers in the military camp, workmen in the factories, or students in the classroom. These ideas and other concepts from his

works functioned for me as thinking tools, stimulating me to think differently about the training process of 'the AP head in the department office'. It was this Foucault reading that gave me useful means to make sense of my experience, facilitate my thoughts and analysis, and then led me to *use* Foucault in this study.

3.1.2 Filling the gap by using Foucault in headship preparation studies

The use of Foucault's work in the field of education is vast (some examples include Ball, 1990a, 2013; Marshall, 1996; Peters *et al.*, 2009; Peters and Besley, 2007; Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998). More specifically, Foucault's ideas have been extensively applied in critical management and organisation research (Barratt, 2004; Bergström, Hasselbladh and Kärreman, 2009; Brewis, 1996; Carter, McKinlay and Rowlinson, 2002; McKinlay, 2006; McKinlay, Carter and Pezet, 2012), and have also seen increasing popularity in critical leadership studies in education (for example, Anderson, 2009; Cohen, 2013; Ehrensal, 2014; Gillies, 2013; Gobby, 2013; Niesche, 2013b, 2014; Perryman, 2005; Ryan, 1998). There have also been applications in the field of teacher preparation (Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Hall and Millard, 1994; Holligan, 1999; Wilkins and Wood, 2009).

However, surprisingly, Foucault's work has to some extent been under-utilised in studies of headship preparation or development (some exceptions include Anderson, 2001; English, 2003, 2006; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003a). Perhaps this is because headship preparation has long been a 'conservative' area (Niesche and Gowlett, 2014, p. 3) which has traditionally marginalised or discarded the more

socially critical approaches and narrowly focused on the standardization and normalisation of what constitutes good headship through the development of standard-based headship training programmes (Gunter, 2012, 2013). Nevertheless, for those who seek for more socially informed critical analysis of headship preparation, Foucault's notions, such as power-knowledge, subjectivity, discipline, and governmentality, have been deemed relevant and useful (see Gillies, 2013; Niesche, 2011, 2014), although such applications are still rare. Thus, I would like to contribute to filling this gap by both conceptually articulating the relevance of Foucault's ideas to headship preparation and empirically applying these ideas to the study of headship preparation.

3.1.3 Bridging Foucault and headship preparation

Bringing Foucault to the area of headship preparation is meaningful and inviting. It is meaningful because we can find great relevance in his work connected to the key concepts of heads' preparation (this will be articulated in the following sections); it is also inviting as Foucault always invites readers to be critical, to think differently, and to see the dangerous (this is what I found most tempting). The spirit of Foucault's analytic framework has been encapsulated as three concrete tools: scepticism, critique, and problematisation (Gillies, 2013, p. 22). Scepticism is the stance to doubt, critique is the activity to probe and challenge, and problematisation is the raising and identifying of problems by which improvement and change become possible and necessary. Therefore, it should be noted that bringing Foucault to issues related to headship preparation is not to be negatively or pessimistically critical, but to problematise actively so as to make possible the

change of dominance and subjugation. This is also the spirit I embraced in doing this research.

Throughout his *oeuvre*, Foucault was concerned with the interrelation between power, knowledge, and the constitution of individual subjectivities. As he stated in a 1983 interview, he was profoundly and consistently interested in how 'human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1983b, p. 208). The key concepts in his analysis of the problem of the subject are those of power and knowledge, or that of power-knowledge, 'the single, inseparable configuration of ideas and practices that constitute a discourse' (Ball, 1990b, p. 5). Thus, using such a framework, through the examination of the practices and ideas of how power operates, it is possible to understand how the individual subject of aspiring heads is placed and constructed in the complex power relations within the regime of the preparation programme (the AP scheme in this study).

In *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*, Foucault (1979) further details such 'productive' effects of power relations on the production and construction of human subjects through various disciplinary techniques, such as panoptic surveillance, organisations of space and persons, timetables, normalising judgements and the examination. In his genealogical analysis of disciplinary power, he shows how developments in punishment and training, which may be viewed as progressive and enlightened, can actually function as a much more efficient and insidious form of control over individuals' bodies and souls, and a means of efficient and effective government of people. Foucault's concept of *governmentality*, as a macro framework, stresses the formation of a whole series of governmental

technologies and the development of a system of reasoning that together work to govern the population for the purposes of social administration. Thus within his governmentality framework, he intelligently integrated discipline, a micro indispensable technology for managing the population in its details and depth, into a macro-level analysis of governmental practices. This framework has been regarded as particularly fruitful and useful in examining both leadership training techniques and the broader reasoning in supporting, legitimising, rationalising the practices that aim to achieve certain goals (Brewis, 1996; Gillies, 2013).

3.1.4 Using Foucault as a conceptual toolbox

Foucault once suggested that his work should be viewed as a 'toolbox' from which others can extract those parts that are useful to them and apply them to other diverse areas. He did not attempt to provide a 'general system', an overriding theoretical framework that would be applied to different fields in a 'uniform way' (Foucault, 2002a, p. 240). Rather, he offered a set of tools, a toolbox of concepts, which he hoped others would use and develop further (Ball, 2013, p. 18). As Foucault explicitly claimed:

> I would like my books to be a kind of tool box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area… I would like [my work] to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, nor readers.

<div align="right">(Foucault, 1974, p. 524-4, cited in O'Farrell, 2005, p. 50)</div>

Based on this, therefore, I use the term 'toolbox' (also see Niesche, 2015, p. 5) to refer to how I take particular concepts from Foucault's work to construct the theoretical underpinnings of my thesis.

However, it is also this piecemeal approach to his work that contributes to the misreading, misuse, and abuses of Foucault's ideas in many studies, such as educational studies (Butin, 2006). As Peters and Besley (2007) assert, 'in the field of education scholars and theorists deform him … they abuse him in countless ways; they unmake him and remake him; they twist and turn him and his words …' (p. 3). Ball (2013) has made similar observations and critiques, noting that in many Foucauldian studies in education 'power is reduced to domination and knowledge is detached from power' (p. 190). Such misreading might mainly derive from a misunderstanding of what Foucault really means by power relations (Taylor, 2011, p. 4). Power, for Foucault, or more precisely power relations, is intertwined with, rather than opposed to, freedom, as they are 'mutually constitutive'. Foucault does not see power relations as always repressive. They might be oppressive sometimes but they are productive and essential in producing knowledge and constructing subjects. No doubt, there is no single true or correct reading of Foucault, and it is problematic to demand how Foucault's work should or should not be used (Niesche, 2015, p. 5), however, it is not at all the case that we can arbitrarily make anything of his work to suit our position.

Thus it is important to recognise the potential defect of adopting such a piecemeal approach when forming theoretical frames for research. In order to avoid

misleading interpretations of Foucault, I follow both Ball's (2013) and Allen's (2012) suggestions to carefully understand Foucault's intention and what he really meant in the context of his work. To this end, I consciously draw more heavily on Foucault's original works than interpretations of his work by others. Furthermore, making reference to his different forms of work such as interviews and lecture transcriptions is also helpful to approach his intention, as Ball (2013, p. 8) observed, Foucault 'was a speaking scholar as much as a writing scholar'.

In this section I have already highlighted the reasons I bring Foucault to the study and the ways I use Foucault's concepts as a toolbox in order both to avoid misleading interpretations and to maintain flexibility in my approach. In the following sections I will concentrate on discussing those concepts that I view particularly relevant to researching administrative placement in this study.

3.2 Discourse, power and subject

Foucault's project is to investigate how certain discourses and practices have transformed human beings into the subject of a particular kind within the exercise of power. In respect to this study, these interrelated notions of discourses, power, and subjects are useful in understanding how aspiring heads are transformed and constructed as particular subjects through certain discourses and power relations in the daily practice of their preparation programme.

3.2.1 Discourse

The concept of discourse is central to any analysis and applications of Foucault's work, in particular his notions of power-knowledge and discipline, which will be discussed later. This is because for Foucault power is exercised through discourses, as he states:

> In a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse
>
> (Foucault, 1980e, p. 93).

Thus, I begin this literature review with the concept of discourse. Foucault defines discourse as the 'group of statements which belong to a single system of formation' so that we can have various discourses in different systems, such as, educational discourse, political discourse, or headship discourse. By discourse, Foucault is concerned with the structure and rules that construct a discourse rather than the texts and ideas produced within it (Ball, 2013, p. 19). It is important to recognise that discourse is more than just language and speech; discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972). Discourse does not appear in the object, but enables it to appear, forms it. As Ball (2013, p. 20) tellingly notes, 'we do not speak discourse, discourses speak us'.

Furthermore, discourse is also the location where power and knowledge intersect. 'It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together', says Foucault (1978, p. 100). Discourses create a system of exclusion mechanism in which power relations are exercised to approve and privilege some sort of knowledge, and also exclude and reject other sorts of knowledge. Therefore, examining discourses is essentially important for those who attempt to analyse and apply Foucault's notion of power-knowledge and disciplinary power (Niesche, 2011; O'Farrell, 2005). Niesche's (2011) and Gillies' (2013) works are important in enabling us to think of educational leadership as discourse and how certain leadership discourses and policies have been privileged over others and create problematic constructions of heads' leadership. In respect of headship preparation, leadership and headship discourses would frame the way people think of headship preparation, i.e. what kind of head they are to prepare, how to prepare, and for whom heads are prepared. In short, it is discourses that form the headship, and shape our understanding of the headship. This is why Ball (2013, p. 19) notes discourse 'constrains or enables, writing, speaking and thinking'.

However, we should not think of discourse as a coherent, static or fixed system of statements; rather we should view it as a complex net of 'discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable' (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Foucault is referring to a multiplicity of discursive elements at play in various strategies rather than a binary division between the dominant discourse and the dominated one. Gillies' (2013, p. 31) 'discursive struggle' nicely captures this dynamic, unstable and complex process in which discourse 'transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it

fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). It is impossible to understand this discursive struggle without understanding Foucault's notion of power relations, in particular the productive aspect of power relations in producing knowledge and making individuals subjects.

3.2.2 Foucault's notion of power

Foucault's fame is tightly and famously linked with his notion of power. He provided a new and an important analysis of power by rejecting the traditional Marxist idea that power is something that is being possessed, or exists as a form of repression. In brief, Foucault's notion of power is a complex component which contains relational, resistive, and productive characters, and is tightly intertwined with knowledge production.

Relations of power

Foucault's notion of power can be manifested in the following four essential features. Firstly, for Foucault, power is not a 'substance' or a 'capacity' which can be owned or possessed by someone, but rather, power is a 'relation' or 'a relation of force' (1980e, p. 89) between individuals and groups of individuals (2002b, p. 324) and only exists when it is being exercised or put into action (1978; 1980e). In 1984 interview, he articulated that he uses the term 'power' merely as a shorthand for the expression he generally uses: '*relations of power'* and that this 'power' is 'mobile, reversible, and unstable' (Foucault, 2000b). Thus power for Foucault is a 'multiplicity of force relations' throughout the entire social body (Olssen, 2006, p. 19). It is also important to notice that power is not something which is located in governments, administrative institutions or a headship preparation centre. Instead,

governments and administrative institutions are simply the 'ossification' of sets of complex power relations which are rooted deep in the system of social body (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 99). In relation to the case of headship preparation, for example, power refers to sets of relations between aspiring heads, experienced heads, mentors, instructors, or government officials. Thus, it is these power relations between individuals and groups that need analysis in this study.

Secondly, power only exists when it is put into actions. Power exists in 'a way in which certain actions may structure the field of other possible actions' (1983b, p. 222). It is a relationship in which one tries to control the conduct of the other (2000b, p. 292). It is a mode of action which acts upon other individuals' actions, upon existing actions or upon those which may arise in the present or the future (Foucault, 1983b, p. 220). As Foucault deliberates below:

> [the exercise of power] incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions.
>
> (1983b, p. 220)

Thirdly, essential to this exercise of power is the existence of freedom. This is because, for Foucault, power can only be exercised insofar as the subjects are free (2000b, p. 292). The free subjects are those who are faced with a number of

possibilities of reacting in different ways (2002c, p. 342). Since freedom is the precondition of power and it must exist for power to be exerted (Foucault, 1983b, p. 221), this brings the very possibility of resistance within the exercise of power. Foucault describes resistance as being intertwined with power relations, as he claims that 'where there is power, there is resistance ... consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power' (1978, p. 95). Foucault's idea that 'resistances are inscribed in relations of power as an irreducible opposite' (1978, p. 96) provides a methodological insight. That is to say, by analysing the forms of resistances we can approach what power relations are about.

Finally, power is not simply repressing an individual or 'simply saying no' (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 100), but rather, power can be *productive,* as exemplified in his main work *Discipline and Punish* (1979)*,* in the production of soldiers and students. In the book he claimed that 'power produces: it produces reality' and went further to detail how power produces certain behaviours by regulating the way school students hold the pen, and how power generates certain types of knowledge by operating surveillance and the examination over individuals (Foucault, 1979, p. 194). These students, indeed, are normalised; while this is not to say that what they will do has been pre-determined, but that they have qualified to be a student, and will likely function like a student according to norms and expectations (Marshall, 2009). As Foucault wrote, power 'reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (1980c, p. 39). This productive character of power, therefore, has significant implications to headship preparation. It facilitates the researcher to examine how power produces certain behaviours, and how power

generates certain types of knowledge through the detailed practice in preparation programmes.

Power-knowledge

This productive capacity of power also leads to the mutually generative relationship between power relations and knowledge, namely, Foucault's famous notion of 'power-knowledge' (Foucault, 1979, p. 27). By this hybrid term, Foucault emphasised the 'fundamental intertwinement' between power relations and the formation of social scientific knowledges (Ball, 2013, p. 13). As he asserted,

> Power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.
>
> (Foucault, 1979, p. 27)

Knowledge and power are inextricably linked and operating almost interchangeably (O'Farrell, 2005). In short, the exercise of power relations is irreducibly associated with the production of truth. It is important to recognise that truth for Foucault is a discursive construction where 'an ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true' (1980d, p. 132). This question of truth is particularly important in Foucault's notion of power-knowledge, as he states, 'each society has its own regime of truth'. This regime of truth operates as a form of power relations through a range of discourses, mechanisms, means, techniques and procedures

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and the status whereby certain forms of knowledge can be constructed, distinguished, sanctioned, acquired, or said as truth (Foucault, 1980d, p. 131). Therefore what is important for researchers or intellectuals is to ascertain the possibility of a new regime of truth by detaching the power of truth from the discourses within which it operates, says Foucault (1980d, p. 133).

3.2.3 Subject and subjectivity

Foucault in his later work reflects that it is *subject* that is the real focus of his research rather than power. He was concerned with the ways in which human beings are made subjects through being located in complex networks of power relations. Foucault analysed the forms of power that are applied in everyday life, as he noted:

> This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subjects to.
>
> (Foucault, 1983b, p. 212)

For Foucault, the term subject is not simply referring to 'person', rather this term

captures the possibility of being a certain kind of person, which is typically a contingent historical product rather than an essential truth of human nature (Heyes, 2011, p. 159). Thus subjectivity is not something we are, but an activity that we do; subjectivity is relational, dynamic and restless, rather than fixed. Both terms are important in Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power within which he asserts the modern subject emerges.

Foucault's analysis of subject offers a methodological implication that we can approach the constitution of subjectivity by the careful examination and analysis of relations of power which flow through a series of practices and mechanisms, and then 'come to be written onto bodies and into our conduct' (Ball, 2013, p. 6). This is because, for Foucault, the 'subject is placed in power relations which are very complex' (1983b, p. 209), and as noted earlier, it is these relations of power that make individuals subjects (1983b, p. 212). To put it simply, the subject is shaped and constituted by and through power relations. Therefore, examining these power relations becomes extremely important in the analysis of subjects. To this end, Foucault provided us with various methodological imperatives for the analysis of power. He suggested that we analyse power 'at its extremities, at the points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions' (1980e, p. 96). This derives from his assertion that power 'comes from below' (1978, p. 94). Thus Foucault also called for an '*ascending* analysis of power' starting from its lowest level of 'real practices which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, and dictate our behaviours' (1980e, pp. 99, 97). From this position, Foucault's methodological imperatives on the analysis of power enable this study to approach the constitution of AP heads' subjectivity through examining power at

the most basic levels, locally contextualised and in daily practice.

3.3 Disciplinary power

Disciplinary power and disciplinary society are the most popular and widely used ideas among Foucault's opus. In a series of lectures in 1973 entitled *Truth and Juridical Forms*, Foucault has earlier outlined the formation of disciplinary society by which he argues we are living at the 'age of social control' (2002d, p. 57). He extends this focus further in his well-known book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979) in which he is particularly interested in a whole range of practices and techniques that involve objectivising human beings and turning them into particular kind of subjects. In his book he examines the genealogy of various forms of punishment and the development of the modern penal institution, discussing in turn torture, punishment, discipline, and the prison (Peters and Besley, 2007), however his main target in this book is the history not of the prison as an institution, but rather, of the social 'practice of imprisonment' (Foucault, 1991c, p. 75). It is this 'practice' or 'regime of practices' that is his target; for him, practices are the intersecting ensembles of 'what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted' (1991c, p. 75). It is through these practices that the modern subject emerges in the context of disciplinary power.

Disciplinary power first began to develop at the end of the eighteenth century and onwards (Foucault, 1979). Foucault argues that forms of sovereign power which

operated in feudal societies began to become less and less efficient as a way of regulating the behaviour of populations in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century leading to the development of new techniques of social control, namely, disciplinary power. The techniques of this form of power were first developed in the army and the school, and then were soon applied to hospitals, factories and prisons (O'Farrell, 2005). By tracing the history of the practice of imprisonment, Foucault found a shift of punitive methods away from punishing individuals' infractions against sovereign power in the way of public spectacle of torture to correcting their potentialities using new and more efficient forms of punishment (1979; 2002d). This new form of punishment in fact is a part of an overall system of discipline in society.

3.3.1 The conception of the disciplinary power

Discipline, for Foucault, is a 'technology' (1979, p. 215), which aims for:

> [h]ow to keep someone under surveillance. How to control his conduct, his behaviour, his aptitudes, how to improve his performance, multiply his capacities, how to put him where he is most useful: that is discipline in my sense.
>
> (cited in O'Farrell, 2005, p. 102)

Central to the above extraction is the manifestation of three important issues in relation to the notion of discipline. Firstly, the conception of discipline concerns 'individuals', in particular individuals' bodies and souls, that is, their conduct,

behaviour, aptitudes, and performance. More specifically, Foucault argues that 'discipline, "makes" individuals; it is a specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise' (1979, p. 170). The individual body thus is a specific focus in Foucault's analysis of the exercise of disciplinary power. As he asserts in *Discipline and Punish*, the chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train' individuals, training their bodies, aptitudes and souls, 'in order to levy and select all the more' (1979, p. 170).

Secondly, discipline produces a dual effect in that it makes the individual body 'more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely' (Foucault, 1979, p. 138). This is what Foucault terms '*docile bodies*'; 'a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (p. 136). This notion of docile body is highly relevant and useful to the examination of the 'making' of school heads, as Gillies (2013) argues, the net effect of discipline is to maximise the productivity and potential of school leaders, while at the same time, through a highly structured regime, to increase their obedience and minimise deviation. In short, discipline creates a subject who is self-monitoring, developmental, and an object which is useful, productive, at the intersection of numerous forms of management and coercion.

As Foucault highlighted several 'how to' questions in the above extraction, the third issue that I want to address relates to a series of techniques related to the production of docile subjects. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault exemplified a number of techniques and mechanisms of the regime of control that contribute to create this new form of subjects (1979, pp. 141-167). These are usually meticulous,

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minute techniques, but they are important because they define a 'micro-physics of power' that concerns how power is exercised on the body (1979, p. 26). These occur for instance through the organisation of space by locating individuals within an 'enclosure' which is a protected place of disciplinary mechanism or through the organisation of persons by distributing them to their own space, organising them into partitioned and functional spaces so as to maximise the efficiency and obedience of bodies and tasks.

Furthermore, equally important is the regulation of time-activity. For example, the control of activity through timetables is important as time can be used more efficiently and exhaustively. Foucault notes that 'time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power' (1979, p. 152); time thus becomes a means of controlling bodies. This leads to a disciplinary penalty which is based on time, for instance, lateness, assentation, and interruption of assigned tasks (Niesche, 2011). In brief, disciplinary power functions through a range of techniques and mechanisms, such as, distributing individuals, controlling activities, organising geneses or combining forces, with its aim for surveillance, controlling behaviour and improving performance of individuals as well.

3.3.2 The success of the disciplinary power

The success of disciplinary power, according to Foucault, stems from the use of simple instruments: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgements, and their combination into a central technique of disciplinary power – the examination (Foucault, 1979):

Hierarchical observation

Foucault (1979, p. 172) uses the term *hierarchical observation* to refer to that the 'spatial nesting of hierarchised surveillance' work from top to bottom, bottom to top and also laterally. This 'dense network of multi-directional gazes' (Hoffman, 2011, p. 31) secretes a machinery of control and induces effects of power that function like 'a microscope of conduct' (Foucault, 1979, p. 173). As Foucault noted when describing the disciplinary institutions like prisons, 'the fine, analytical divisions that they created formed around men an apparatus of observation, recording and training' (1979, p. 173). Thus, the essential purpose of hierarchical observation is not only to see everything constantly and to make individuals visible, but also to transform them. As Foucault asserts, such an apparatus of observation acts 'on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them' (1979, p. 172) and make them more efficient, orderly, and internally disciplined.

Such multi-layer or multi-directional observation can be seen in not only the school system but also the government administrative office. For instance, Gillies (2013) links such hierarchical observation to the vertical mode of line management in the local education authority. He noted that in such a hierarchical system where staff are organised from the un-promoted to the most senior and affairs are managed all the way up to Director of Education, 'at all stages each person is both observer and observed' (pp. 58-59). As far as this study is concerned, such hierarchical observation is also central to the empirical context in this study – the local education department in Taiwan. In this sense, it can be argued that the AP head situated in the education department is both observer and observed. This would

imply that AP heads might not merely observe how to do things right but also be observed how they do things.

Normalising judgement

Foucault terms *normalising judgement* 'a small penal mechanism' that functions at the heart of all disciplinary systems (1979, p. 177). Individuals can be judged in terms of their distance from the norm. The adherence to norms in terms of rules, regulations and expectations is rewarded, and any deviation from correct and recognised behaviour is subject to punishment in which disciplinary techniques can be used to homogenise and normalise (Allan, 2013). This deviation includes minor infractions and also the failure to or the inability to carry out assigned tasks. Thus, disciplinary power judges according to the norm. However, what Foucault means by the norm is far from a form of legal regulations, but rather is a standard that details aspects of everyday behaviour which then allow for the measurement of forms of behaviour as 'normal' or 'abnormal'. Such judgements or measurement bring normalisation which aims at conformity: 'the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instance in the disciplinary institution compares, differentiates, hierarchises, homogenises, excludes. In short, it normalises' (Foucault, 1979, p. 183). Its function is to reduce gaps, and so is essentially *corrective* (Foucault, 1979, p. 179). It is this corrective effect that training aims to produce.

The concept of normalising judgement is relevant to the process of headship preparation as aspiring heads are subject to a range of measures which seek to socialise and normalise them. In order to be a qualified head, aspiring heads are submit to or are subjected to a number of judgements through preparation

programmes within which they are compared, graded and accredited (by programme examiners) according to the same set of headship standards or blueprints of headship. By this, they are then 'disciplined to become aligned with what is expected of them' through a range of practices, rituals and regimes of truth in headship preparation programmes (Gillies, 2013, p. 59). That is to say, those who conform to the norm of being a head are in effect accredited and disciplined as what Gronn terms 'designer-leadership' (2003a, p. 238), while those who do not are excluded, rejected, and proscribed. In order to become a head, aspiring heads are inescapably subject to this judgmental process that both socialises and normalises them into certain acceptable mode of subjects. They become qualified but also normalised.

The examination

The *examination* is a particularly important and effective instrument in Foucault's (1979) 'means of correct training', for it not only combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of normalising judgement (p. 184), but also turns people simultaneously into objects of knowledge and power. Foucault elaborates the examination as:

> A normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them…the examination is highly ritualised. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected.

> (1979, pp. 184-185)

The power of the examination is based upon the production of truths through the objectification of individuals as well as their comparison with each other (Niesche, 2011). It is through the examination that individuals are 'individualised' and become 'cases' so as to uncover specific abilities and features while at the same time it allows for a comparative mechanism to be established through documentation. Here, Foucault refers to an administrative form of examination that not only puts people 'in a field of surveillance', but also 'situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them' (1979, p. 189). Through examination and document writing the individual is not only able to be described, judged, measured, and compared with others in his or her very individuality, but also subject to be trained, corrected, classified, normalised, or excluded (Foucault, 1979, p. 191).

The examination is obviously embedded within the making of school heads. For instance, before taking up the role of headship, aspiring heads need to go through numerous formal and informal examinations, such as the pursuit of formal qualifications, as well as judgements made by mentors or assessors in terms of their potential of becoming a school head (Gillies, 2013). What is more, after the training period, aspiring heads are also subject to regimes of examination through job interviews by either school governing boards or headship selection committees. On this account, I suggest that the journey of becoming a school head can be seen as a long-term examination consisting of a series of assessments, judgements and selections through which individual heads would be objectified and subjected.

Thus far, I have outlined Foucault's concept of discipline, the fundamental instruments that serve to the successful exercise of the disciplinary power. I have also highlighted the implications of the notion of discipline to the study of headship preparation. In the next section I concentrate on a visual form, a symbol of disciplinary power which facilitates this study to capture the way in which power operates in the AP regime.

3.3.3 Panopticism: the crystallisation of the disciplinary power

Foucault claims that we are now entering the 'disciplinary society', living at the age of 'social control' or 'social orthopaedics'. He utilised Jeremy Bentham's prison model of the Panopticon (see Figure 3.1) as a symbol to depict this totally disciplinary society (1979, p. 200). The Panopticon, which is the architectural model of a prison, for Foucault, is an 'ideal type' to explore how discipline was utilised by the State in the mid-nineteenth-century France (Hope, 2013). The Panopticon, according to Bentham's design, consists of a multi-floored central watchtower surrounded by a circular structure containing cells on the periphery. Due to the ingenious arrangement of widows and light, the guard in the central watchtower can see every inmate without ever being seen.

Figure 3.1 The Panopticon.

Resource from Foucault, M. (1979). Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison. p.166.

What distinguishes this structure is an architecture designed to maximise the visibility of inmates who are to be isolated in individual cells to such an extent that they are unaware moment-to-moment whether they are being observed by the guard in a central tower. Since they cannot see into the watchtower, they must assume that they are being watched and thus they start to regulate their own behaviour. That is to say eventually modified and regulated their behaviour to act as though they were being watched at all times (O'Farrell, 2005). This makes possible the effect of the Panopticon that assures the automatic functioning of power by placing the inmate in a state of conscious and permanent visibility (Foucault, 1979, p. 201). Thus, Bentham's innovation of the Panopticon, for Foucault, was to ensure an asymmetrical gaze, or rather deploy uncertainty as a means of social control (Hope, 2013). Foucault terms this form of power 'panopticism' (1979, p. 58; 2002d, p. 208). It is about, as O'Farrell (2005, p. 104) articulates, 'preventing people from doing wrong and indeed taking away their very will to do wrong'. In brief, the Panopticon is a device that allows individuals to

internalise the external gaze into an inner gaze and move from disciplining to self-disciplining:

> There is no need for arms (weapons), physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself.

> (Foucault, 1980a, p. 155)

Moreover, Foucault also encourages us to extend the panoptic surveillance beyond a negative repression to the machinery of producing new selves. As he argues, 'the Panopticon was also a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals' (1979, p. 203). More than this, such panoptic surveillance also entails 'a productive soul training' which encourages people to reflect upon every trivial matter of their own behaviour in subtle effort to transform their selves and manage themselves in the light of discursive truths (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000, p. 607). Discursive truths here function as a set of statements or beliefs. Surrounding surveillance practices seek to classify certain behaviours as 'normal', label some individuals as 'abnormal', and attempt to shape self-perception. Consequently, in responding to potential surveillance, individuals may not only be engaging in self-surveillance, but also in a normalising process whereby they come to accept certain sorts of behaviour as (in)appropriate and behave in a normative manner with the on-going replication of normalising judgements (Hope, 2013).

In relation to the preparation of heads, aspiring heads are subjected to this panoptic surveillance all the time during their preparatory period. It is the awareness that their behaviour, speech and activities may be assessed that causes aspiring heads to behave as if under constant assessment and to self-discipline in accordance with certain standards or rules. The assessor does not act directly upon aspiring heads but it is the consciousness of being watched, being gazed upon that causes them to comply (Gillies, 2013). Anderson and Grinberg's (1998) work is important in enabling us to re-conceptualise the headship training programmes as the Panopticon that contributes to the construction of headteacher subjects as 'docile bodies' (p. 339). Similarly, in his examination of the national standards for the preparation of school leaders in the American context, English (2008) warns that the prescribed, unquestioningly constructed headship standards have been considered as essential 'facts' and form the 'regime of truth' that exercises 'the normalising gaze' (p. 194). What is significantly important is, as Edwards (2009, pp. 98-99) reminds, that the panoptic mechanism, as noted above, is a powerful tool of subjectification that deploys an invisible gaze to demand compliance or other behaviours from those subjected to the gaze.

The aforementioned studies have effectively applied the idea of panoptic surveillance to headship preparation studies; nevertheless, what is missing is an empirically detailed study of such a disciplinary process of headship preparation. As far as this study is concerned, the notion of the Panopticon seems to be very pertinent to the context of the AP as this study's focus. As I noted earlier, AP heads who are placed in the office of the local education department would be

surrounded, observed and evaluated by senior officials as if they were placed in the Panopticon. Thus I will use this notion of Panopticism in my toolbox.

3.4 Governmentality

Foucault's notion of governmentality is a useful concept for understanding how aspiring heads are governed and govern themselves so that certain goals can be completed. Throughout governmentality, Foucault shifts a bit from disciplinary power that normalises individuals and restricts individuals' freedoms to the incorporation of these freedoms into the governmental rationalities and techniques that guide individuals' behaviour. However, this does not mean that the notion of discipline becomes ineffective; on the contrary, discipline as an effective governmental technology is integrated into the macro-level framework of governmentality (Foucault, 1991b). This concept of governmentality can enable this study to extend beyond the narrow focus on the preparation programme per se to exploring the ways in which certain headship preparation programmes are rationalised and mobilised, and also the ways in which aspiring heads are governed and govern themselves. It can also be helpful in considering the role played by the preparation programme in the broader context of governmentality.

3.4.1 The conception of government

Foucault's concept of governmentality is an attempt to analyse the problematic nature of government and to trace its historical emergence. The term itself is a combination of 'government' and 'mentality' so that the coined term can be

translated as 'rationalities of rule' – the way in which government is understood, justified, and rationalised (Gillies, 2013, p. 66). In order to have a clear understanding of what is at stake with governmentality it is first important to focus on how Foucault considers government (Simons and Masschelein, 2006).

Government as conduct of conduct

By government, Foucault does not merely mean the political structures or the management of states, but rather he uses this term in a broad sense to refer to 'the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick' (1983b, p. 221). To put it another way, government refers to a set of 'techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour' (Foucault, 2000d, p. 81). It is a set of actions upon other actions. It can also be explained as a whole series of techniques and procedures which control and guide people's conduct. Elsewhere, Foucault refers to government as the 'conduct of conduct'[1] (2002c, p. 341), meaning the way in which individuals attempt to steer, shape, direct (conduct) the behaviours (conduct) of others.

It has been argued that this notion of government – conduct of conduct – is extremely pertinent to the concept of leadership which can be construed as the creation of a vision, associated with the exercise of influence on others to achieve certain goals (see Bush, 2008b). As Gillies (2013) stresses, influencing others is clearly an example of seeking to shape others' conduct (p. 69). In this sense, I

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[1] By using this phrase 'conduct of conduct' Foucault is playing the double meanings on two French verbs: 'conduire' meaning to lead, to drive; and 'se conduire' meaning to behave or conduct oneself (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p. 221)

want to go further to suggest that the notion of the 'conduct of conduct' is informative for the study of headship preparation. The reason is that the training for heads is about shaping, directing and changing their behaviour and attitude as well. However, it is important to recognise that this is far from a coercive control of aspiring heads' conduct, but rather this occurs when they are free to act in one way or another (Gordon, 1991, p. 5). As Foucault says, to govern means to 'structure the possible field of action of others' (2002c, p. 341). It is important to recognise that here Foucault incorporates an important element into the exercise of power; namely, freedom. He argues that:

> Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are "free". By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realised.
>
> (Foucault, 2002c, p. 342)

Since freedom must exist for power to be exerted, power also contains freedom's refusal to submit. Resistance then becomes an integral part of power relations, as Foucault notes, 'where there is power, there is resistance ... consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power' (1978, p. 95). Later, on the notion of the conduct of conduct Foucault moved away from the term 'resistance', developing the notion of '*counter-conduct*' in the sense of 'struggle against processes implemented for conducting others' (Foucault, 2009, pp. 200-201). That is to say, *counter-conduct* exists in opposition to the forms of conduct which are imposed by the exercise of governmental power. Here, the question about how to

analyse the conduct of conduct and counter-conduct is important for this study. For Foucault, the main target of his analysis of the exercise of power, whether it is disciplinary or governmental power, is not the analysis of the actual person but of 'practices' or the 'regime of practices'. Practice here is understood as 'places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect' (1991c, p. 75). From this position, it is the practice in which aspiring heads are involved and the way in which they actually act in the field of the AP that is important for analysis.

Government as a continuum from governing others to governing the self

Government, for Foucault, is not only a concept of governing others in the political domain, but also that of governing the self at an individual level. In particular in his later work on technologies of the self and ethics, he further examines how individual subjects are governed and govern themselves, as well as how they seek to control and work on their conduct, so as to 'transform' themselves (2000e, p. 225). Here we can see a *continuum* which ranges from 'governing others' to 'governing the self' (Lemke, 2002, p. 51), that is to say, not only governing states and populations but also how one governs oneself that is essential. As such, Gordon (1991) interprets this notion of government as activities potentially concerning 'the relation between self and self, private interpersonal relations involving some form of control or guidance, relations within social institutions and communities and, finally, relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty' (pp. 2-3). Similar points are made by Dean in relation to the analysis of government:

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Government concerns not only practices of government but also practices of the self. To analyse government is to analyse those practices that try to shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups.

(Dean, 2010, p. 20)

Some researchers have applied this notion of government to the analysis of how trainees are governed and govern themselves within the regime of the preparation system. Gillies (2013) has argued that the headship qualification in fact requires aspiring heads to position themselves in certain ways, to shape their lives, to develop a whole number of technologies of the self, all to act upon their own conduct in such a way as to meet the required headship criteria. Through the pursuit of headship qualifications, the training course and programme, Gillies says that aspiring leaders 'have to subject themselves to this form of discipline in order to be accepted as educational leaders' (2013, p. 79). Brewis (1996) provided an empirical study of the manager preparation programme drawing upon the *continuum* notion of government. Her research findings indicated that through undertaking the preparation programme, new managers come to think of themselves and then behave in certain ways. She argued that as a result these new managers are constituted as self-regulating subjects who strive to become competent managers. What is problematic for Brewis (1996) is that such programmes do not leave individuals room to question the ways in which they think and behave. Brewis' (1996) work is particularly important in enabling us to see how the manager training programme functions as what Foucault terms 'government'.

These trainee managers are inductively expected to direct their behaviour in accordance with the objective of that government so that the link between trainees' personal objective and the objective of government can be established and the gap between the two can be shortened.

Government as the right disposition of things

In his lecture at the College de France in 1978, Foucault (1991b) adopts a working definition of government from La Perrière who defined it as 'the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end' (p. 94). He utilises this definition to show that what government is 'a sort of complex composed of men and things' (1991b, p. 93). That is to say, what government concerns is the imbrication of men in their relations with things. Foucault illustrates this dimension of government by using the metaphor of 'governing a ship' to manifest how government means taking charge of not only the sailors but also bringing the boat and its cargo safely to port through the dangers connected with winds, rocks and storms (1991b, pp. 93-4). Governing the ship is to be done by forming a relationship between the sailors, the ship, the cargo and all the eventual dangers. It is the establishing of a relationship between men and things that are essential to Foucault's description of government as a 'complex composed of men and things'. It is for achieving a convenient end that Foucault argues that 'things must be disposed' (1991b, p. 95). He turns away from concerning the laws with sovereignty to concerning tactics with government:

> With government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics – to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be

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achieved.

This metaphor of governing a ship can easily be transferred to that of governing the local education, whereby it involves taking charge of the school heads and establishing a relationship between the heads, schools, local educational authorities and the processes of leadership and management at the school and local levels, to ensure every head will lead their school and bring students and teachers to achieve and enhance educational standards, that is, to a convenient end for the things that are to be governed (1991b, p. 95). Therefore, I want to suggest that governing in the realm of local education inescapably involves governing heads applying certain tactics, which are themselves important for analysis. This point will be taken up in the next section.

3.4.2 The notion of governmentality

A genealogy of governmentality

Foucault (1991b) traces a genealogy of government in his essay *Governmentality* where he notes that from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, political studies shifted from a predominant concern with 'advice to the prince' to a concern with the 'art of government' in relation to a series of problems of 'how to be ruled, by whom, to what extent, and what methods, etc.' (1991b, pp. 87-88). What interests Foucault is how the 'problematic of government in general' have been rationalised over time. In his genealogy study, Foucault starts his investigation of government with its preliminary form as the management of the

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family (*pastoral power* as the mode of government). He then moves to government's concern with territory and principality (*sovereignty*) and to its concern with population (*reason of state* and *police*), and finally to its concern with civic society (*liberalism*) (see Foucault, 1991b; 2002b; 2009; Olssen, 2003).

The art of government emerged at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries and was organised around reasons of state (Foucault, 1991b, p. 97). '*Reason of state'* at the time was a 'rationality specific to the art of governing states' (Foucault, 2002b, p. 314). The aim of such an art of government was to reinforce the state's strength, to in Foucault's words, 'increase this strength within an extensive and competitive framework' (2002b, pp. 316-7). The governing technique of the *reason of state* was the rational knowledge, an understanding of the state's and other states' strengths and capacities through the development of statistics. Such knowledge was 'indispensable for correct government', says Foucault (2002b, pp. 316-7). The subsequent mode of government was *the police* which at that time meant 'a set of means for bringing the internal growth of the state's forces' (Foucault, 2009, p. 365). Like the *reason of state*, the police governmentality was also concerned with the full and accurate knowledge of all the details of the state, but it added to that a concern with the individual person as well. Thus Foucault defines the rationality of police governmentality as aiming 'to develop those elements constitutive of individuals' lives in such a way that their development also fosters the strength of the state' (2002b, p. 322). In this sense, this governmental power of the state is both 'individualising and totalising', and is activated through disciplinary power at an individual level (Foucault, 2002b, p. 325). These two effects of governmental practice would later be seen as over-intrusive

and excessive by the later liberal thought in the nineteenth century. As a type of 'critical reflection on governmental practice' liberal thought, or *Liberalism*, also challenges the roots of political rationality which are brought into play when human conduct is directed via a state administration (2000a, p. 77). Liberal thought breaks with the push to maximize state governmentality and instead justifies its governance by asserting the rights and liberty of individuals.

Governmental rationality and technologies of government

A key point of Foucault's genealogical trace of different modes of governmentality, as shown above, is to suggest that governmentality expresses a certain type of political rationality associated with a set of specific techniques of government within a given historical period (Bonnafous-Boucher, 2010). Foucauldian scholars have attempted to distil two related aspects that cover the notion of governmentality: *the governmental rationality* and *technologies of government* (Foucault, 2009, p. 285; Gillies, 2013; Olssen, 2006). Firstly, governmental rationality refers to 'the broad discursive frame of reference through which political problems and solutions are identified and considered and which determines the focus and objects of government' (Olssen, 2003, p. 197). Secondly, technologies of government relate to the operational level and encompass a range of techniques, tactics, and procedures by which government is exercised or particular policies are devised and implemented (Olssen, 2003, p. 197).

Foucault reminds us that governmental practice involves a certain type of rationality while it is the form of rationality that needs to be questioned, rather than the violence or institutions (2002b, p. 324). To question the governmental rationality is to ask questions of, for instance, how such relations of power are

rationalised (Foucault, 2002b, p. 325), what forms of thought, knowledge, or rationality are employed in practices of governing, and how certain political rationality seeks to render particular issues, domains and problems governable (Dean, 2010). To sum up, through this examination of political rationality throughout the history of Western societies, Foucault's governmentality in the political domain can therefore be best understood as 'the rationalisation and systematisation of a particular way of exercising political sovereignty through the governing of people's conduct' (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 107). Or put it simpler, 'governmentality is the reasoning behind the conduct of conduct, the rationality which is being applied to this activity' (Gillies, 2013, p. 15).

A triangle of 'sovereignty–discipline–government'

It should be noted that issues of discipline and sovereignty, while playing a lesser role under this art of government, are still important aspects of governmentality. Foucault (1991b) suggests that rather than seeing them as displacing or superseding each other we instead have to notice that sovereignty is even more acute in providing a generally juridical principle of government through which an art of government can be defined, and the same as discipline:

> Discipline was never more important or more valorised than at the moment when it became important to manage a population; the management of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena in its aggregate effects, it also implies the management of population in its depths and its details.
>
> (Foucault, 1991b, p. 102)

Therefore, Foucault argues that we need to view the issue of governmentality and the population as its target in this triangle of 'sovereignty–discipline–government' (1991b, p. 102). As such, discipline, as a micro power technology at the individual level becomes indispensable and complementary to the management of a population at the macro-level of governmental practice.

This triangular assemblage provides this thesis with a broad theoretical frame to situate the analysis of the AP scheme within the broader context of governmentality. In doing so, this study can be linked to the analysis of governmental technologies and rationalities that are employed in practices of governing. The triangle of 'sovereignty–discipline–government' provides a useful lens to critically examine the role played by the AP scheme at both the individual level (heads) and the local district level. While the central state plays a main role in Foucault's study of governmentality, such a study of governmentality at its local level has been suggested by researchers (Masschelein *et al.*, 2006; Simons and Masschelein, 2009).

Furthermore, this concept of governmentality provides an analytics of government which helps this study not merely to look at how aspiring heads are governed and govern themselves within the regime of APs, but also at the conditions under which such a regime emerges, continues to operate, and is transformed (Dean, 2010). In short, these conceptual tools enable this study to consider a range of themes, including: problems of techniques and practices, rationalities and forms of knowledge, and identities and agencies by which the governing operate.

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3.5 Critiques of Foucault's work

Whilst Foucault's social theory has appealed to so many scholars, it has also earned him criticisms in equal measure. This study has shown his concepts as illuminating and useful work which can be effectively applied to critique and make sense of the practice of headship preparation. However, his work is far from uncontroversial. In this section, some of the most common criticisms of Foucault will be raised and discussed with the intention of both defending the Foucauldian perspectives and of acknowledging any weakness.

3.5.1 Foucauldian critique and lacking alternative possibilities

The most common criticism of Foucault's work perhaps is that it offers no alternative but is purely negative criticism without any suggestion of how to take action otherwise. For some critics of Foucault, his approach is limited by the fact that it has nothing to recommend. His scepticism expresses doubts as to the nature and status of knowledge, and doubts about the nature of reality. As a general rule, the Foucauldian perspective is deeply suspicious of utopian thought. Consequently, any recommendations that are made from this position are likely to be thin on content and emancipatory potential (Allen, 2011, p. 368). A further complaint against Foucault is that he is seen as nihilistic (see Martin, 1988, p. 13) that there is no ideal to work towards and no vision that can offer a solution to any social problem, and that the best we can do is to critique and re-critique, to challenge and re-challenge. The claim is that this gives people nothing to aspire to and they can only sink into despairing inaction. This has earned him criticisms that

his work is overly pessimistic (Chisholm, 1991).

There are three points can be made in defence of Foucauldian criticism. The first is that Foucault denies the claim that pure criticism without offering alternative recommendations is invalid. He sees a fundamental, discrete role for critique, as he views critique not as the premise of a reformatory action but 'an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is' (1991c, p. 84).

The second point is that criticism is capable of opening up possibilities for resistance and for other alternatives to be enacted. It is just that Foucault himself is unwilling to offer a vision of alternative futures to fill the space (Allen, 2011, p. 367). Foucauldian critique is not about declaring one thing to be right and another wrong, nor is Foucauldian theory designed to tell us what to do (Wang, 2011). Rather, it is about probing, questioning and problematising discourses and practices; others might use the space created to make recommendations and advance alternative strategies.

The final point is that 'criticism is utterly indispensable for any transformation' (Foucault, 2002d, p. 457). For this, criticism is productive in creating the opportunity for deep transformation to be enacted. Foucault's 'optimism' (2002d, p. 457) is founded on his understanding that so much change is possible, that so many things that surround us have a very fragile foundation, and are arbitrary and contingent rather than inevitable and constant.

3.5.2 Succumbing to relativism and avoiding normativity

Foucault's unwillingness to take sides with normative questions has led critics to question his inclination to relativism, which is a view that all beliefs are equally valid and that no rational grounds can be found for preferring one to the other (Butin, 2001; Olssen, 2006). As a result, new alternatives brought about new problems and new disciplinary practices against which to struggle (Butin, 2001, p. 165). Some Foucauldian studies have adopted such relativistic perspectives in the analysis of educational administrative practices. For instance, Anderson and Grinberg (1998, p. 343) maintained that 'the point is not that one or the other disciplinary practice is better or worse but that neither is inherently good or bad'.

Furthermore, Foucault has also often been found wanting on normative grounds by critics who argue that he fails to provide motivation or reason to resist, which is a necessary condition for revolt. For some critics (amongst whom Habermas is the best known), this refusal to adopt a position is unsustainable. Habermas (1985/1994) has criticised Foucault for his failing to make any 'normative validity claims' and 'abstains from the question of whether some discourse and power formations could be more legitimate than others' (p. 94). Elsewhere, Habermas (1987) pinpointed that Foucault's critique offers no reasons as to why one is to be preferred to the other. He went further to argue that without a solid normative foundation, Foucault's critique could not be voiced and is unable to answer the question 'why fight at all? Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted?' (1985/1994, p. 96). Others, like Allen (2007, p. 69), seem to echo the criticisms of Habermas in calling for normative criteria that enable us to distinguish 'disciplinary practices or technologies of the self that

reproduce and reinforce existing relations of power from those that resist and transform such relations'.

However, in spite of his rejection of providing normative principles, Foucault does have some foundational elements to his work and these are centred on the question of freedom (Butin, 2001; Gillies, 2013; Pignatelli, 1993; Simons, 2013). Foucault states that 'domination effects' must be avoided and refused (2000b, p. 299) and that 'nonconsensuality' must be against (1991a, p. 379). This suggests that Foucault's critique is founded on support for freedom – not to be governed this way or that way – and an opposition to domination. As Simons (2013) tellingly argues, Foucault is not neutral about domination and he does evaluate modes of power relations according to their openness to resistance and practices of freedom, although he is neutral toward power itself.

Nonetheless, it is still problematic that Foucault opposes domination and supports freedom. For Habermas's argument about having no basis for preferring one form of power relation to another is hard to reject. Perhaps the best point that can be made in reply is that 'these sorts of questions was not what Foucault was aiming to address' in his history of systems of thought (Gillies, 2013, p. 110). He was not interested in what discourse was right and wrong, or what should be done morally; he was examining how discourses construct their worlds, how discourses were shaped and through which how power relations have been exercised.

3.5.3 Denying the possibility of agency and resistance

Foucault's concept of power earned him acclaim but also brought him disdain.

Foucault's detailed analysis of the disciplinary mechanisms of our society has generated a reactionary criticism that claims Foucault invalidates all possibilities for agency (Butin, 2001, p. 160). Many of Foucault's critics take him to be committed to 'the death of the subject' and thus to 'a denial of the possibility of agency' (Allen, 2002, p. 136). Notably, those who view Foucault as solely representing the modern individual as a 'docile body' (1979, p. 138) argue that he fails to allow for resistance and struggle. This is particularly the case where some educational studies have drawn upon Foucault's work to depict and interpret the constraining and disciplinary nature of power relations and the panoptic surveillance within educational settings (for instance, Hall and Millard, 1994; Wilkins and Wood, 2009). Under such totalising structures, little resistance and freedom could be exercised. Therefore, Foucauldian analysis has been criticised for being too dark, too nefarious (Allen, 2002).

However, this is a misreading and misinterpretation of Foucault. These comments on Foucault might sound reasonable if people just merely make reference to Foucault's earlier work, e.g. the 'Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison' which was first published in 1975. However, after 1976, Foucault twisted his concept of power (Gordon, 1991; Patton, 2014). The themes of subject, subjectivity, freedom and resistance have been integrated into a more systematic elaboration of a concept of power in Foucault's later work (1978, 1983b, 2000b, 2000c, 2002c). By abandoning viewing power as a matter of conflict between opposing forces, Foucault's conceptualisation of power is essentially of power relations – relations which are mobile, reversible, and unstable (2000b, pp. 291-292). Foucault explains that there must be freedom on both sides of the relationship for power to be

exercised, and so there is always the possibility of resistance: it is a constitutive part of relations of power. He insists that individuals continue to be understood as acting subjects, because resistance may take the form of running away or standing still, of saying no or not saying anything at all (Butin, 2001, p. 168). Power, therefore, is a condition for the possibility of agency.

By drawing upon Foucault's notion of resistance within relations of power in his later texts and interviews, many studies have demonstrated that Foucault can be interpreted and used productively within an activist stance (Ball, 2015; Butin, 2001; Cohen, 2014; Lorenzini, 2016; Niesche, 2013b, Patton, 2014; Simons, 2013). In general, Foucault saw his work as analysing how individuals are made, and make themselves, into subjects. For Foucault, resistance was inherent within relations of power, and resistance was itself predicated on the existence of a free subject. This is why Foucault saw resistance as the most viable way to practice freedom and self-transformation under contemporary conditions.

3.5.4 Failing to analyse macro-level power issues

Foucault's analysis of the specifics of power relations and the detailed texture of the particular techniques and practices is criticised by the Marxist left for failing to address or shed light on the global issues of politics, namely the relations between society and the state (Gordon, 1991). As a response to these criticisms, Foucault introduced his later lectures on the concept of 'governmentality' (1991b, 2002b, 2009) to study techniques and practices for governing populations of subjects at the level of a political sovereignty over an entire society. The notion of governmentality has been used to address the microphysical and macrophysical

approaches to the study of power (Gordon, 1991, p. 4). Foucault's notion of governmentality is concerned with exploring the techniques and procedures whereby governments govern the conduct of individuals, groups and whole populations (Niesche, 2014, pp. 148-9). Within this framework, individuals were no longer understood merely as 'juridical subjects' within the regime of sovereignty nor as isolated individuals whose conduct was to be shaped and disciplined, but as 'existing within a dense field of relations between people and people, people and things, people and events' (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde, 2006).

3.5.5 Seeing discipline and surveillance everywhere

A further critique to Foucauldian research relates to its efficacy by arguing that Foucauldian analyses too often merely end up with the presence of discipline and surveillance within the social practice under study. The criticism is that the Foucauldian research seems to be 'too uniform and predictable and lacking in either novelty or practical application', according to Gillies (2013, p. 112). That is to say, Foucauldian studies seem to see discipline and surveillance everywhere and, as soon as such argument has been raised, have little else to offer.

In response to this accusation, Gillies' (2013) remark is useful. He argues that the fact that practices of discipline and surveillance can be identified so readily in the current social sphere is not a comment on the nature of Foucauldian theory, but a comment on the very nature of modern life. It has been argued that we are living in an 'audit culture' (Shore and Wright, 2015) where performance of individuals and organisations are rendered to be visible to the scrutiny of the externals. For instance, the use of performance monitoring in workplaces or the adoption of

league tables of school performance in educational governance; and most of us just accept this as normal. Thus, issues of performativity, ranking and accountability are so prevalent that we make ourselves into an object of gaze and subject for improvement. On this basis, as Gillies (2013) notes, it is no wonder that issues of discipline and surveillance emerge so frequently in Foucauldian studies.

Foucault is not intended to provide some kind of practical guide for us, but instead he wants us to use his theoretical concepts as thinking tools, a kind of tool-box. The main ethos of his work is to critically problematise discourses, practices, and power, as he has repeatedly stressed:

> My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do... I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make each day is to determine which is the main danger.

(Foucault, 2000c, p. 256)

He also noted elsewhere that 'for me, nothing is very good; everything is dangerous; but everything is not equally dangerous'. By equipping with Foucauldian thinking tools, we are not seeing everything discipline and surveillance, but we are intellectually and reflexively to examine what is more dangerous. I think this is a most powerful weapon as an intellectual.

Having discussed the criticisms of Foucault's work, this section is not ambitiously to evaluate the validity of such criticisms. Rather, in acknowledging the criticisms, it

seeks to have a better understanding as to how to use Foucault and put his key notions to form the research toolbox of this study. Despite such Foucauldian might be criticised for being too predictable and lacking in novelty, I would also like to apply a Foucauldian approach to the study of headship preparation. The reason for this is because that very little analysis of the dangerous characteristics of practices within the headteacher preparation has so far been undertaken. It would be fruitful to reveal disciplinary mechanisms and governmental rationalities through a detailed empirical analysis. Thus I hope this Foucauldian study would create alternative spaces that allow 'problematisation', rather than normalisation in the area of headteacher preparation research.

3.6 Making up a Foucauldian toolbox

Thus far, I have presented and discussed some key Foucauldian ideas and critiques of Foucault's work. The result of this literature review enables me to suggest that Foucault's notions of the power-knowledge, discourse, disciplinary power, and governmentality can be effectively applied to this study as it concerns the discursive shift of the AP scheme, power issues, and the constitution of heads' subjectivity. I argue that their discursive and relational characters are fruitful in analysing: how AP practices shape the AP head in terms of, for instance, the subjectivity constitution, what the AP aims to achieve and how, and then what role the AP plays in the local district. Thus, the notions that I take up to form my research toolbox in effect work as my analytical tools in the study.

For the first item of this toolbox, Foucault's notions of discourse, power, and subject can pave the way for understanding the discourse shift of the AP scheme, and also the constitution of AP heads' subjectivity. The idea of discourse which is inescapably associated with notions of power and knowledge is important in understanding the way people think of headship, headship preparation, and the AP scheme as well. Discourse frames the way in which, for instance, the AP is talked about, thought about, and implemented through the exercise of power relations that approves, privileges and also rejects knowledges. Foucault's notion of power enables this study not to view power as entirely repressive, but also productive of certain types of knowledge and behaviour through the work relationships and practices of the preparation programmes. What is more, Foucault suggests that by carefully examining and analysing relations of power that flow through a series of practices and mechanisms, we can approach how certain discourses and practices have transformed human beings into the subject of a particular kind. These interrelated notions of discourses, power relations, and subjects are very useful in examining the discursive practices and power relations embedded in the preparation programme, and understanding how aspiring heads are transformed and constructed as particular subjects through certain discourses and power relations in the mundane practice of the preparation programme.

Furthermore, I also include the notion of discipline as another thinking tool to investigate the operation of the AP scheme. From Foucauldian point of view, how aspiring heads are directed, shaped, and trained to become a certain kind of head with the required skills, knowledge and attitudes in conformity to what they are expected, is discipline. This proposition is echoed by Gillies (2013, p. 79), as he

notes that through the headship qualifications, training courses and programmes, aspiring heads are required to position themselves in certain ways, to act upon their own conduct, to develop a whole number of technologies of the self so as to meet the required headship criteria. Therefore, they have to subject themselves to this form of discipline in order to be accepted as heads. In this sense, it is impossible to research headship preparation without considering such disciplinary effects on individual aspiring heads. Although this notion has been gradually applied in the research on the preparation of school leaders or teachers (Anderson, 2001; Anderson and Grinberg, 1998; English, 2008; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003a; Hall and Millard, 1994; Holligan, 1999; Wilkins and Wood, 2009), much less work is empirically grounded. Given this, I take up the notions of *disciplinary power* and *subjectivity* to explore the disciplinary mechanisms within the AP regime and to examine the potential effects on the constitution of AP heads' subjectivity.

The last conceptual tools in the research toolbox are those informed by Foucault's notion of governmentality. These concepts help me situate the AP scheme in a broader framework of governmentality, to consider the political rationality and range of techniques, tactics, and procedures by which government operates. The analytics of government would enable this study to explore how aspiring heads are governed and how they govern themselves so that certain goals can be completed. By using these notions in the analysis, I will argue that the AP scheme functions as a technology of government by which the governing of AP heads is exercised, and through which certain goals that are deemed important in the local district context can be achieved.

3.7 Developing the research questions

Four specific areas are chosen for the study, and it is from these that the research questions are drawn. These areas are drawn both from prior readings and research on headship preparation, and an innovative application of Foucault's work as my theoretical underpinnings. These areas are based on the aim of this study which is to critically examine the role played by the AP. On this basis, the research questions used to facilitate this critical examination are:

1. **The structural content of the AP in local settings.** School heads' placement or internships have been regarded as an effective workplace learning approach for socialising heads into their future workplace. In Taiwan there has been widespread and increasing adoption of the AP scheme across local districts. Unlike the school-based placements or internships in many other countries where aspiring heads are placed in school settings (Huber, 2004a), the AP scheme places the aspiring head in the local education department office for administrative training which seeks to enhance policy and administrative capabilities. To date, however, there has not been sufficient research that investigates the AP in the local context of Taiwan. As a result, little has been known about its structural content, such as its developmental process, mandatory status, name, duration, or title assigned to participants. Although these are descriptive components of the AP, they have their importance; because they form the fundamental information about the object researched. Thus this study sought to investigate the structural content of the AP in local settings.

2. **The practice within the AP.** The practice that I want to investigate extends beyond the actual tasks for aspiring heads as part of their placement/internship experiences (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Clayton, 2012; SREB, 2005) to the mundane and minute practices that are the intersecting ensembles of 'what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted' (Foucault, 1991c, p. 75). These are discursive and administrative practices, such as discourses, ideas, norms or routines (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998), enacted within the regime of the AP. The practices in which the AP head is involved in local settings remain relatively under explored.

3. **The effect of training heads through the AP**. It has been argued that disciplinary power reaches its strongest and most efficient peak when it operates through administrative practices and rules (Morgan, 2005). This form of power relations originated in the army and school and was soon applied to administrative institutions. The Taiwanese local education department where AP heads are situated can be viewed as such a bureaucratically administrative institution which is suffused with administrative practices and rules. How these practices within the AP regime in the local education department affect the AP head, and how practices and power relations shape their subjectivities have thus far been unexamined.

4. **The rationale of training heads through the AP**. Much of the research on headship preparation merely focuses on the structural content of preparation programmes per se or on effective learning approaches (Hartley, 2010; Simkins,

2012), while little has been done to re-examine, question, or problematise the rationale of the preparation programme and the role played by the programme (Lumby, 2014). Nevertheless, some researchers have sought to problematise the role of the preparation programme, for instance, viewing it as a 'political tool' (Wallace, Tomlinson and O'Reilly, 2011), a 'control technology' (Wallace *et al.*, 2011), or a 'remediation to secure local reform delivery' (Gunter, 2012). What role the AP scheme plays and what the AP scheme may be aiming to achieve have also been under examined. To this, Foucault's concept of governmentality is a useful theoretical frame in analysing the underlying reasoning of the deployment of the AP and technologies by which AP schemes are devised or implemented in local district settings.

Identifying these areas led to the development of the research questions. These questions are:

1. What is the structural content of aspiring headteachers' administrative placement (AP) in the local education department in Taiwan?

2. What practices are AP heads involved in during their AP in the local education department?

3. How do these practices within the AP shape the constitution of the AP head's subjectivity?

4. What may the AP be aiming to achieve and how? Why are AP heads invited or required to undertake the AP training, and what kind of head does this training aim to prepare?

3.8 Summary

This chapter aimed to develop the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual tools which I can apply empirically through the approach and research methods set out in the next chapter. Having carefully examined some of Foucault's key notions, the relevance of these notions to the analysis of headship preparation emerges. This strong relevance leads me to suggest that Foucault's notions of power-knowledge, disciplinary power and governmentality can be fruitfully applied to the study of headship preparation. Given the rare applications of such Foucauldian lenses to this area, this study seeks to fill the gap by both conceptually deliberating on the relevance of Foucault's ideas to headship preparation and also empirically applying these ideas to the study of headship preparation.

Informed by this literature review on the relevance of Foucault's work to headship preparation, this study is to extend beyond the current research which has tended to narrowly or technically focus on aspects within headship preparation programmes, to explore the relationship between preparing heads and managing the population of heads through the Foucauldian lens of governmentality. From this position, I make my argument that the AP as a headship preparation programme might be deployed as a political tool through which school heads can be made manageable, governable and administrable. Moreover, it is the underlying reasoning and the aims of the deployment of the AP that is important for further examination. To this end, I applied the above Foucauldian research toolbox as the main theoretical underpinnings and then developed the research questions, based on the results of this literature review and my argument.

Chapter 4 Methodology

Introduction

Crotty (1998) suggests that any research process contains four hierarchically related elements: *methods* – the tools or techniques used to gather and analyse data; *methodology* – the strategy lying behind the use of methods which links this use of methods to the desired outcome; *theoretical perspective* – the philosophical stance informing the methodology; *epistemology* – the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and also the methodology. He goes further to argue that 'justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work' (Crotty, 1998, p. 2). Central to Crotty's (1998) argument is that our choice and use of methodology and methods should be compatible with our philosophical stance and epistemological position.

Thus I will begin this chapter by examining my choice of methodology and methods and explain the ontological and epistemological positions that have informed this choice. In doing so, I examine the implications of my chosen theoretical underpinnings and the analytical processes employed to make sense of, organise and interpret the data generated via my methods. I will argue why I felt these were the most effective as a means of answering the research questions. I then address

the issues related to my choice of methods; in particular those of credibility, rigour, resonance and reflexivity and also of my position as a liquid researcher. Finally I outline the study's ethical considerations.

4.1 Epistemology and ontology

A fundamental way of looking at research is to consider the researcher's own ontology and epistemology. Ontology is 'the study of being' (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of reality, and what there is to know about the world. Epistemology deals with 'the nature of the knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis' (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). It is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world. Crotty (1998) notes that ontological and epistemological issues tend to emerge together. Creswell (2009, p. 6) uses the term 'philosophical worldview' to include ontological and epistemological assumptions. Others, like Guba and Lincoln (1994), call these a 'paradigm', meaning 'a set of basic beliefs' based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions (p. 107). Their well-established typology of paradigms includes: positivist, post-positivist, critical, and constructivist (p. 109). Waller, Farquharson and Dempsey (2016, p. 8) use the term 'criticalist' rather than 'critical' to avoid confusion with the ordinary meaning of 'critical'. Different paradigmatic positions will inevitably lead to different kinds of research.

In my case, my paradigm position primarily falls within the 'critical' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 109) or 'criticalist' (Waller *et al.,* 2016, p. 8), believing that reality is 'a product of human consciousness' and 'social reality is shaped by a whole range of human values and biases which sediment over time' (p. 10). I tend to view

existing social realities critically, that is to say, to think about their implications rather than take them for granted. My ontological leanings, therefore, are towards 'historical realism'; an approach which asserts that:

> *A reality is assumed to be apprehendable that was once plastic, but that was, over time, shaped by a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gendered factors, and then crystallised (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as "real", that is, natural and immutable. For all practical purposes the structures are "real," a virtual or historical reality.*

<div align="right">(Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 110)</div>

Realities are historically constructed entities that are under constant internal influence in connection to power. This means that ontologically, I see reality as something that exists independently of those who observe it but is only accessible through the perceptions and interpretations of individuals. To put it another way, an external reality exists but is only known through the human mind and socially constructed meanings. That is to say, I accept that there is a distinction between the way the world is, and the meaning and interpretation of that world held by individuals (Ormston, Spender, Matt and Snape, 2014).

My own epistemological perspective is interpretivism in nature, but with critical shadings. I hold a view that accepting things in the world existing independently of our consciousness of them does not imply that meanings exist independently of consciousness (Crotty, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, my epistemology in interpretivism would not be incompatible with my ontology in

historical realism, as Crotty (1998) and Morrison (2012) have clearly argued. My epistemological assumptions are straightforward in the sense that I see knowledge as value-mediated reflectively through the perspective of the researcher and the researched. My critical stance takes it that knowledge is never value neutral and there is not only one truth which can be discovered through objective measures. My views align with the statement that knowledge is 'value-mediated' and composed of 'a series of structural/historical insights that will be transformed as time passes' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). This leads me to value the importance of 'understanding' and of studying people's 'lived experiences' which occur within a particular historical and social context (Ormston *et al.*, 2014, p. 11).

My epistemological perspective also relates to my Foucauldian theoretical perspective where knowledge is always shaped by political, social and historical factors – by 'power' – in human societies. Foucault (1979) coined the notion of 'power-knowledge', where power and knowledge directly imply and generate each other in endless cycles (p. 27). This connects to my ontological and epistemological assumptions, and leads clearly to the ways in which I collect and analyse data through people's 'lived experiences' within a particular historical and social context. It also ties into my assumptions about human nature, power, truth, and social environments and the way that I might view this worldview through reflective dialogic and personal accounts, which allow the participant and myself to uncover subjugated knowledge and link it to social critique. To approach such reflective dialogic and lived experiences would rely on dialogic methods that foster conversation and reflection, such as interviewing. Any perspective that I adopt will be reflected in my methodology. I hope to make these assumptions even more

discernible, as I examine how the research was framed, drawing upon the research methods employed in this study.

Both my ontological position and my epistemological assumptions, whilst being integrally connected to the study at hand, are also true for my research position as a whole. This also partly explains my choice of the Foucauldian theoretical underpinnings.

4.2 The implications of Foucauldian theoretical underpinnings

As mentioned in the literature review chapter (see Chapter Three), Foucault's thinking tools have been applied in this study and form the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Such theoretical underpinnings have played a key role in conducting and framing the form of this research, as they have been linked to all aspects of developing and conducting the study, including the adopted methodology and methods, and the development of research questions, data generation and data interpretation. That is to say, they were applied as 'advocacy lenses' (Creswell, 2009, p. 62) to study phenomena and enable me to focus the study (to avoid being overwhelmed with data), to 'extract' meaning (Murphy, 2013, p. 14) from the research site under examination, and to situate the research in an academic conversation. More than this, these Foucauldian social theories played a role in this research in a similar fashion to what Ball (1995) calls 'a vehicle for "thinking otherwise"' (p. 266). I used them as thinking tools helping me to start from another position, that is, to look at what has been normally excluded in headship

preparation studies and to work 'on and against' (Ball, 1995, p. 267) prevailing practices within the AP under study.

The adopted thinking tools, drawing on Foucault's notions of power-knowledge, disciplinary power and governmentality, have a discursive character in that they aim to analyse **changing discourses** of headship preparation, **power issues** and **subjectivity constitution** of aspiring heads within the regime of the AP. Thus the nature of the adopted theoretical underpinnings influence the adopted methodology and methods, since such a Foucauldian toolbox requires attention to the discursive meaning attached to the concept of AP training and the mundane practices through which the power relations circulating within the AP regime could be approached. Analysing **changing discourses**, **power** and **subjectivity constitution**, therefore, involves adopting a certain mode of analysis which involves tracing discursive and disciplinary practice, and investigating how individuals conduct themselves and how problems related to heads' pre-service preparation were constructed, made visible and addressed. This mode of analysis influenced the research methodology and methods adopted in this study. In order to examine the complex interplay of discourse, power and subject revolving around the AP scheme, a qualitative methodology is considered to be the most appropriate. As this research mobilises a qualitative case study design with methods of in-depth interviews and documentary analysis, these are further discussed in the next sub-section.

4.3 The methodology employed – Qualitative case study

The aim of this research is to explore and better understand the structural content and practices of the AP scheme by investigating how the AP scheme operates in local districts in Taiwan. Additionally, it seeks to better understand how these AP practices shape AP heads' subjectivities and what purpose such AP schemes may aim to achieve and how, as such AP schemes have been pervasive across several local settings. In order to explore these questions, a qualitative research methodology was employed. The choice of a qualitative methodology was made for two reasons. First, the focus of the study is mainly on 'how' (and 'why') questions within processes emerging in a 'real life' context (see section 1.4); a focus that makes a qualitative research methodology the most appropriate methodology to adopt (Creswell, 2009; Mason, 2002; Silverman, 2013; Yin, 2009).

Second, the critical perspective that I held and the Foucauldian theoretical lenses that I used lead to my subsequent choices of a qualitative methodology and case study design. It has been argued that the methodology should fit with the theoretical framework or the research tradition (Creswell, 2009; Silverman, 2013). Within the critical writing tradition in school headship and headship preparation, a qualitative research methodology is considered especially appropriate (Hartley, 2010; Ribbins and Gunter, 2002; Simkins, 2012). Ribbins and Gunter (2002, pp. 378-9) acknowledge, as Grace (2000, p. 237) emphasises, that critical studies in leadership or headship call for greater use of theoretically informed case study work with qualitative data through interviews or biographical methods, and more attention to power relations, the changing discourses of educational leadership, and the interplay of agency and structure. Such a qualitative inquiry strategy has

also been employed by most of the Foucauldian studies in various areas, such as critical studies in school leadership (Cohen, 2013; Gillies, 2013; Gobby, 2013; Meadmore *et al.*, 1995; Niesche, 2010; Niesche, 2013b; Niesche, 2013c; Niesche and Haase, 2012), teacher education (Hall and Millard, 1994; Holligan, 1999; Wilkins and Wood, 2009), or educational policy (Ball *et al.*, 2012; Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Morgan, 2005).

Moreover, this study responds to more calls for empirical studies that adopt a qualitative research methodology in order to study aspects of power issues in the training process of heads (Grace, 2000; Gunter and Ribbins, 2003b; Ribbins and Gunter, 2002; Simkins, 2012). Having carefully examined the relevant literature, the majority of the literature on headship preparation from the critical perspective falls within theoretical discussions, while very few are detailed, empirically grounded studies (for example, Tomlinson, O'Reilly and Wallace, 2013). Given that much less attention has been paid to the critically empirical examination of headship preparation, this study employs a qualitative research methodology that fits with the Foucauldian analysis of power relations and subjectivity formation in headship preparation. By doing so, it can also contribute to addressing the lack of empirical studies in this research field.

4.3.1 Case study

Part of the challenge in research design was to decide how most effectively to approach or to capture the 'practices' that AP heads were involved in during their AP training. As noted earlier (in chapter three), practices were the main focus in the research inquiry of this Foucauldian study. For Foucault, practices are the intersecting ensembles of 'what is said and what is done, rules imposed and

reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted' (1991c, p. 75). He also asserts that it is through these practices that the modern subject emerges in the context of disciplinary power. Practice, therefore, is complex, and the research of practice must necessarily also encapsulate this complexity. To explore the complexity of practices qualitative case study has been deemed effective and appropriate. Miles (2015) argues that case study is 'a method and methodology that seeks to embrace complexity in the accounts and analysis of practice', because it provides 'context-dependent knowledge and accounts of practice that are drawn together from the voices, actions, interactions and creations of the carriers of practice in a site' (p. 311).

The overall method adopted in the study was that of case study, a very broad term that is used loosely in the social science literature. The method can very generally be described as, 'study of the singular, the particular, the unique' (Simons, 2009, p. 3), or as Bassey (2012) expresses it, 'an empirical enquiry which is conducted in a localised boundary of space and time… into interesting aspects…' (p. 156). A major proponent of the approach is Yin (2009). He argues that a case study should be considered when: (1) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (2) the behaviour of those involved in the study cannot be manipulated; (3) the contextual conditions are deemed relevant to the phenomenon under study; (4) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. These elements were particularly relevant to this study, as the present research questions revolved around 'how', 'why' and 'what' questions as to the rationale, practices and effects of three AP schemes in the context of local districts. The context of local governments in this study was also important because this research sought to critically consider the role of the AP played in the local government setting. Thus,

to capture or approach the holistic and meaningful characteristics of 'real-life' contexts and events of AP schemes through a case study design were crucial and appropriate. As such I am able to state that the qualitative case study approach fit with both my research questions and the theoretical tools that underpinned this study as well.

More specifically, qualitative case study design has already been considered appropriate and been extensively applied in many critical writings, especially those drawing upon Foucault's theoretical tools. For instance, in their case-study work drawing upon Foucault's analytical tools of disciplinary power, Ball *et al.* (2012) explored the performance pressures encountered by four English schools. Cohen's (2013) Foucauldian study collected data from interviews and public documents through multiple cases of school principals to illustrate how discursive practices constituted principal subjectivities within the performing culture. Similarly, Niesche (2010) undertook case studies of two school principals to illustrate the normalising process that shaped heads' subjectivities within heads' daily administrative practices. His case studies were supported by empirical data from interviews and observation. Other Foucauldian studies with the topic of school headship, like Perryman (2005), Niesche (2013c), or Gobby (2013), also used qualitative case study design with qualitative data through interviews, documents or observation methods.

Stake (1994) identified case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Similarly, Yin (2009) categorised case studies as: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. He also differentiated between single, holistic, and multiple-case studies (multiple-case studies being equal to Stake's (1994) collective case study).

My research is exploratory as it seeks to understand an under-researched topic in the field of headship preparation in Taiwan. It adopted a multiple-case study approach (three AP schemes in three local districts), supported both by interview and document analysis. The choice of multi-case design in this research follows Yin's (2009) suggestion that a multiple-case design has more analytical benefits and is more robust than a single-case design.

To define what the case is in the study is equally important to the decision of research methods. Many have asserted the importance and necessity of using discretion in selecting which particular case to study. According to Robson (2011), case studies can be done on a group, on an institution, on a neighbourhood, on an innovation, on a decision, on a service, on a programme and on many other things. It cannot be determined without careful consideration and the ultimate determination of a case should be clear from the research questions. The case is, 'in effect, your unit of analysis' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 25), or 'a functioning specific' (Stake, 1994, p. 236). Therefore, the constitution of the case or, the unit of analysis, in the present study is heavily shaped by the research questions that are being asked. As noted earlier, my research questions had a focus on the subject of the AP as part of the headship preparation programme in Taiwan. Accordingly, I used the AP scheme as the case, the unit of analysis. The focus of the study was the AP scheme within the local district as its indeterminate boundary. That is to say, I defined the AP as the 'heart' of the study, and the local district context as the study case's 'bounded context' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 25) within which 'the real-life, complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 289) were resources of my analysis.

4.3.2 Selection of the cases

Sampling of cases was purposive in this study in order to select cases that might be particularly informative. In his definition of purposeful sampling, Patton (2002, p. 40) notes:

> Purposeful sampling cases for study (e.g. people, organisations, communities, culture, events, critical incidences) are selected because they are "information rich" and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalisation from a sample to a population.

Thus purposeful sampling is quite distinct from purely personal selection as it entails the researcher to think critically about the parameters of the population they are studying and to choose their sample case carefully on this basis (Silverman, 2013, p. 148). For this, Stake (2000) stressed the variety of potential cases and suggested setting up a *typology* that offers variety across the cases that give us the best opportunity to learn about the issues under study.

Following Stake's suggestions, I created an AP scheme typology (see Table 4.1) based upon the documentary analysis. Having examined the local government regulations about headship preparation across 22 local districts, the AP schemes were categorised into two main areas. One was termed compulsory AP scheme, and the other optional AP scheme. The first category consisted of 19 AP schemes in 19 local districts where aspiring heads were required to undertake some sort of administrative placement or training in the office of local educational authorities. If

they failed to complete the AP, they would either not be awarded the qualification of headteacher certification, or they would not be eligible for headteacher selection. Notwithstanding these varieties, what was common was the compulsory nature of such a placement or training being necessary for each aspiring head. On the other hand, only three AP schemes fell into the second category, namely the optional AP scheme, where aspiring heads were not required but invited to undertake some kind of administrative training or placement in education department offices. For the aspiring heads in these AP schemes, they had the right to choose the AP as part of their pre-service training.

Table 4.1 A typology of AP schemes across the 22 local districts in Taiwan

	Number of APs	Selected cases	
		Municipality	Local county
Compulsory AP schemes	19	1	1
Optional AP schemes	3	1	0

Based on this typology, a total number of three AP schemes were selected as study cases and fully investigated in this study (see Table 4.1). One case was selected from the optional AP category and two cases were selected from the compulsory AP category within which one study case was at the Municipality level and another at the local county level. The reason for the sampling was mainly theoretically grounded. It was not expected that the AP schemes chosen were themselves representative of the population but rather that they possessed rich information about the population. This was an important consideration in this

research as much attention was given to the variety of AP schemes across local districts.

4.4 Research tools

4.4.1 The use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews

Robson (2011) advises that research tools must be appropriate for the research questions. My research questions called for a research method that can approach the context-dependent and situated knowledge in the real-life context and provide accounts of practices situated in time and space, contributing to the epistemological representation of practices. Furthermore, my choice of methods used to collect and analyse data in fact connects to my epistemological assumptions and theoretical perspectives. That is to say, my interpretivist epistemology and Foucauldian theoretical perspectives led me to value and approach participants' lived experiences and real-life practices within a particular historical and social context (Miles, 2015; Ormston et al., 2014). This would rely on observation or dialogic methods that foster conversation and reflection, such as interviewing.

Observation seems to be the appropriate technique for getting at real life in the real world (Robson, 2011). It has great advantages of its 'directness' to gain a first-hand experience with participants, while it also leads to a concern with 'the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation' (Robson, 2011, p. 316). Researchers may be seen as intrusive on certain occasion (Creswell, 2014). This

was why I finally gave up using this method. When I attempted to do observation in the LED office in Case A, I was told euphemistically by the LED official that observation in the administrative office would give them intangible pressure. Finally, I could only observe the office and the environment when I came to interview LED officials in their offices.

Interviews then formed the main data collection tool of the research. Interview is useful when participants cannot be directly observed, participants can provide historical information, and that allows researcher control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2014, p. 191). As I was interested in people's experiences, opinions and practices of the process of the AP scheme in their lives, that is, peoples' concrete, practical, and context-dependent knowledge, I came to believe that these can be only *reconstructed* in interviews.

The usual typology of interviews that one sees is that of structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Brundrett and Rhodes (2014, p. 80) describe the central characteristics of the semi-structured interview in the following way: 'the interviewer has a series of predefined questions under main headings, but allows some degree of latitude in what is discussed'. I felt that the semi-structured interview fashion, with its qualitative, conversation-like nature, provided a greater breadth of data rooted in, and tailored to, the context of the interviewee and the interview situation. At the same time, the use of a common set of questions or subject issues enables a comparability of findings that can be used to construct thematic summaries across respondents. Thus by setting the framework in a semi-structured fashion, I addressed major themes as key questions, allowing for greater flexibility and possibilities in exploring details and related issues.

Sampling for interviewees

As the purpose of this doctoral study was to understand the effect of AP practices on participating subjects, namely AP heads, and to explore what the AP serves to achieve in the local district context, the sample was of necessity people who had experienced the AP and were willing to speak about their experiences or opinions of the AP training and engage in dialogue with the researcher. In this sense, these informants were expected to provide rich information and that was situational, contextual, and interactive through which the relevant contexts can be brought into focus and contextual knowledge can be generated (Mason, 2002, p. 62). Thus the interview participants were those information-rich or specifically critical informants (Patton, 2002, p. 237), and they were also an opportunity sample in the sense that these were informants who agreed to the researcher access, and were relatively easy to contact.

Due to the fact that the number of potential informants was limited and based on the selection criteria, sampling of interviewees was purposive in this study (Waller *et al.*, 2016, p. 67). To identify my participants, my sampling criteria were thus chosen to ensure that the following groups were represented within each case study AP scheme:

1. Heads who have or/and have not undertaken the AP;

2. Officials who work as superiors in the local educational authority, such as the Director-general or division-chief;

3. School inspectors who have supervised both heads with AP experience and heads without AP experiences;

I chose heads who have undertaken the AP because their lived experiences and perceptions of their AP training were invaluable resources to understand the practices they were involved in during the AP and headship selection. I also interviewed heads who were identified via 'snowball' sampling (Mason, 2002, p. 142; Patton, 2002, p. 237), that is, via suggestions made by participants for other potential participants who might also be informative. This sampling technique helped me include within each case study, heads who have not undertaken the AP but have become heads, and aspiring heads who are undertaking the AP in the Case A.

These could be activities they were involved in, the ways in which they interacted with others, the feelings they had, the meaning they extracted, the work they conducted both on others and themselves, etc. Officials' opinions about the design, rationale and expected purposes of the AP scheme were equally important. Their interaction and relationships with the AP head, and their expectation or requirements both on AP heads themselves and on their performance were also analysed. School inspectors' viewpoints provided insights into the potential difference between heads with AP experience and those without AP training.

For complementary purposes, four additional face-to-face interviews were carried out. These are supplementary groups:

1. Academic researchers in favour of headship preparation or local educational governance;

2. The Director-generals of two local educational authorities;

There were two interviews with academics in the field of headship preparation and two interviews with Director-generals in local educational authorities. The first supplementary group of interviewees were HE-based, which is to say that they were professors whose research areas fell into local educational governance and leadership preparation and development. In order to expand the sample, I also interviewed a further two Director-generals in the local educational authorities that did not belong to my case study contexts. Due to the failure to interview the Director-generals of local educational authorities within the three case study settings, this second supplementary group was expected to provide complementary insights both into exploring the rationale of introducing the AP scheme in local governments and into understanding the way in which the leading superior viewed roles of the AP head and AP scheme.

In total, 33 people were interviewed for the study. In doing these multiple sets of interviews, these multiple perspectives revolving around the AP scheme were used as a mode of 'crystallisation' (Richardson, 2000, p. 934) to understand the potential inconsistencies in findings across different types of data as so to deepen insight into the phenomenon under study (see section 4.7). Overall, the sampling in this study aimed for an in-depth exploration from the multiple perspectives of complexity and uniqueness of a particular AP scheme in a real life context (Simons, 2009).

To ensure anonymity, the interviewees have been assigned letters and numbers rather than names. The letters 'A', 'B', 'C' means the three cases in this research; 'M' and 'P' are used to represent the two counties which are outside of my case study contexts. The letter 'O' refers to officials, 'S' refers to school inspectors, and

'H' refers to headteachers or aspiring heads. The group of headteachers was divided into three categories:

1. H-withAP: heads who had undergone the AP training;

2. H-noAP: heads who did not undertake the AP;

3. H-inAP: aspiring heads who were undertaking the AP in the LED.

With regard to the supplementary groups, the letters 'DG' refer to the Director-General of the LED; the letter 'A' refers to the academic who was the HE-based professor.

Following the above naming rules, the assigned name 'O2-A' refers to the second official I interviewed in Case A; 'S1-B' refers to the first school inspector I interviewed in Case B; 'H3-withAP-C' refers to the third head I interviewed in Case C and he or she had undertaken the AP; 'H7-noAP-B' refers to the seventh head I interviewed in Case B and he or she had no AP experience; 'H9-inAP-A' refers to the aspiring head I interviewed in Case A who was conducting the AP training.

Table 4.2 shows the profile of interviews with informants across the three case studies and the supplementary groups. The more detailed basic demographic information for each of the participants is summarised in Appendix 5. In addition, I will also provide an overview of the groups of interviewees at the beginning of each case study analysis (see Chapter 5 and 6).

Table 4.2 Profile of interviews with informants

(1)　Formal group of case study interviewees

Cases	Officials in the LED		Headteachers			Total
	Division-chief	School Inspector	With AP	Without AP	Doing AP	
Case A	O1-A O2-A	S1-A	H1-withAP-A H2-withAP-A H3-withAP-A H4-withAP-A H5-withAP-A	H6-noAP-A H7-noAP-A	H8-inAP-A H9-inAP-A	12
Case B	O1-B	S1-B	H1-withAP-B H2-withAP-B H3-withAP-B H4-withAP-B H5-withAP-B H6-withAP-B	H7-noAP-B	–	9
Case C	O1-C	S1-C	H1-withAP-C H2-withAP-C H3-withAP-C H4-withAP-C H5-withAP-C	H6-noAP-C	–	8
Numbers	4	3	16	4	2	29

(2)   Complementary group of interviewees

Interviewees	Code	Title	Institution	specialty
Senior officials	O1-DG-P	Director-General	The LED in County P	Policy and administration
	O1-DG-M	Director-General	The LED in County M	Policy and administration
Academics	A1	Professor	Department of Education, HE based	Educational policy, educational politics, local educational governance
	A2	Professor	Faulty of Education, HE based	School leadership development

The interview process

Mason (2002) reminds us that qualitative interviews, whether they are loosely (un)structured or semi-structured, require a great deal of *intellectual preparation* so as to handle the social dynamics existing in the interview. This was particularly so for this study, as the interviewees were either government officials, school inspectors, or school heads. In other words, they were those who have been described as 'influential individuals' (Wang, 2004, p. 100), or what Walford (2012, p. 111) has termed 'the powerful'. It has been argued that researching the powerful presents particular difficulties for the researcher in terms of access to research respondents and sites and the interview techniques that are needed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Walford, 2012). Thus it was never an easy task to access the interview site and to contact and interview the informants in this study.

Utilising pre-existing links with those in power has been viewed as an effective way of easing access (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Walford, 2012). Taking advantage of my professional network in the Ministry of Education and in one of the local districts where I was previously employed as a civil servant, I gained access to interview the division-chiefs of the three local educational authorities and other school heads. Nevertheless, I failed to access their Director-generals in these three local districts.

I started my multi-case studies from Case A where I previously worked as a civil servant in the local educational authority. The reason for this was twofold: firstly, I thought that due to my personal links with previous colleagues who were still working in the local district, there were more possibilities to access officials and

heads who would like share with me their opinions and lived experiences of the AP. Secondly, I possessed much more contextual information from Case A than in the other cases. Thus I was much better prepared for the interviews in Case A. As many have argued, careful planning and preparation are essential for qualitative interviews (Mason, 2002; Yeo *et al.*, 2014). When I moved on to the fieldwork for Case B and then Case C, I studied the contextual information about each study case, including the demographic information of the local district, main initiatives and regulations about heads preparation and development, and background information of each interviewee, etc. The purpose of this was to prepare myself so as to able to ask follow-up and clarification questions, to divert from any set ordering of questions, and to be ready to 'make "on-the-spot" decisions' about the interview content and sequence as the interview progresses (Mason, 2002, p. 67). The time I spent on the fieldwork varied between the cases. I spent two months on Case A (January to February 2013), then one and a half months on Case B (March 2013), and finally three weeks on Case C (April 2013). The reason that the time I spent on the later cases was shorter than the Case A was that I gradually felt the data were incrementally reaching the saturation point (Coleman, 2012, p. 260). That is to say, 'informational redundancy' (Waller *et al.*, 2016, p. 70) occurred when I heard the same information over and over and further interviews yielded little new knowledge.

For the recruitment of participants in each case study I contacted educational officials in the local district office, school inspectors and heads either by phone or e-mail or both. I sent participants all a written request email in which I explained the context of my research and outlined the questions that I intended to use in the interviews (see Appendix 4 for the information sheet) for them to prepare for the

interview (Coleman, 2012, p. 260). A total of 33 interviews in the three cases were selected and these included 22 heads, nine education officials, and two academics (see Appendix 5 for a list of interviewees). In obtaining informed consent (see Appendix 6 for the consent form) from the participating informants, I explained that I would protect their confidentiality in all drafts of the research process through the use of pseudonyms, and that any geographical or demographic information that might render their districts identifiable would not be reported.

At the beginning of the interview itself, I introduced myself and provided a broad outline of the scope of the study and briefly explained the rationale of researching such an emerging AP training scheme before starting the main part of the interview. The purpose of this was to relate my research inquiry to participants' personal lived experiences (Coleman, 2012). I also reminded them that their responses would remain confidential, the steps I was taking to protect their anonymity, and that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time (Yeo *et al.*, 2014). The interview then began with a number of similar opening or warm-up questions, such as their job titles before they started their AP. The participants would be asked to share their experiences, perceptions or/and opinions of their AP practices in the office of the local educational authority, and so they needed to feel comfortable to speak freely and candidly. To this end, I conducted interviews in private office rooms or meeting rooms selected by the participating heads and officials to ensure the interviews were not interrupted (Coleman, 2012).

It is argued that the location of an in-person or face-to-face interview is significant. Waller *et al.* (2016, p. 83) note that the interview topic will suggest an appropriate location for the interview. Accordingly, interviewing local officials in their office

rooms enabled me to observe relevant architectural arrangements within each local educational authority in the three cases. As the architectural arrangement is essential to Foucault's analysis of power relations, entering the local district office was very important for me to observe the distribution of space and people, and also to experience the atmosphere of the workplace where AP heads were located. As the interviewees were in different local cities, I had to travel to the north, middle, and south of Taiwan. It was never a short journey to conduct the interviews.

The aim of the in-depth interview is to achieve both 'breadth' of coverage across key issues, and 'depth' of content within each (Yeo *et al.*, 2014, p. 190). As noted earlier, the interviews were conducted in a *semi-structured* fashion so that a few basic major questions with sub-questions were decided upon beforehand but new ideas and follow-up questions were acknowledged as they emerged through the interviews (Coleman, 2012, p. 252). In the interviews of this study, prompts and probes are used (Yeo, *et al.*, 2014). Prompts were issues to which I explicitly directed the interviewee's attention so as to cover the major questions. These have been listed in the interview schedules (see Appendix 7-10). Probes were follow-up questions used to elicit more information, description or explanation, and to surface underlying values, views or assumptions that I wanted interviewees to go deeper, such as 'How?', 'Why was that?', 'Can you say it a bit more?', and 'In what way?'.

My engagement with the literature on headship preparation, Foucault's thinking tools and the relevant documents had helped me generate a set of interview themes. Before the fieldwork I had already conducted initial document analysis of the development of AP schemes across the local districts; this examination of relevant documents helped further refine the key themes and topics to be

addressed in the interview questions. Due to the different positions and engagements of participants in the AP scheme, I designed four sets of interview questions for each of the groups (see Appendices 7, 8, 9, and 10 for interview schedules for officials, heads and academics). For division chiefs, inspectors, and the Director-general, the focus of interview questions was more on their opinions about the design, rationale and expected purposes of the AP scheme, and their relationships with the AP head. For heads with AP experiences, the focus of interview questions was more on their lived experience and perceptions of AP practices. Finally, for academics the primary focus was on their critical insights into the pervasive AP phenomenon across local districts in Taiwan. Although there were different focuses of concerns in these three sets of interview questions, exploring the practice of the AP scheme was the common thread running through them. The same issues were raised in each interview and ensured the 'general consistency' (Coleman, 2012, p. 252) in the questions of the semi-structured interview schedule.

This thesis embraced a critical perspective (Grogan and Simmons, 2012) in looking at the effect of power relations generated through the new design of the administrative placement in the governmental bureaucratic department. However, the respondents were not asked directly about their perceptions of power relations or discipline; those are theoretically abstract concepts and practically embedded within the minutiae of everyday practices. Instead, an attempt was made to shed light on their live experiences and perceptions of the AP through their narratives and the dialogue between them and me as the researcher. More importantly, through interactive interviews, it is possible to know their explicit interpretations and understanding of events (Yeo *et al.*, 2014). This sort of 'responsive

interviewing' (Rubin and Rubin, 2012, p. 36) required the building of a reciprocal relationship of trust and also the establishment of sufficient 'rapport' (Waller *et al.*, 2016, p. 88) with the interviewee that he or she would feel comfortable providing full and honest responses. Some of the informants were known to me. I found that people who knew me were more willing to talk deeply about potentially difficult areas, perhaps because they viewed me as trustworthy. For those who were not known to me, however, I consciously disclosed my 'insider status', including the fact that I myself had been working for/in a local education authority, as a way of seeking the 'power balance' between informants and me (Coleman, 2012, p. 262; Waller *et al.*, 2016, p. 89). In so doing, I felt that these interviews felt more equal and the feeling of having something in common between interviewees and myself, the researcher, led to an effective dialogue. In general, each semi-structured interview took about one to three hours and all of them were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

4.4.2 The use of documents

In the field of educational leadership, documentary research was primarily used as a data collection strategy for case studies (Fitzgerald, 2012), so as in this research. As already mentioned, interviews are the primary method of inquiry in this study, placing documents as a secondary, though important, source to inform the research. Qualitative documents, such as minutes of meetings, official documents, official reports or e-mails, are one of the basic types of qualitative data and can capture useful information that interviews may miss (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). Although documents may not be authentic or accurate and materials may be incomplete, documents can be seen as written evidence (Creswell, 2009). This

information provides 'a form of voice'– a voice on the past, such as names, dates, specific details, that offers a level of insight for the reader into these events, activities and participants (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 297). Such past information from documents was important and had significant meaning for this study to understand the basic structural content of the AP scheme and to trace its discursive development.

The rationale of using documentary evidence in this study was threefold. First, it provided valuable information about the context of local education authorities, and the structural element of the AP schemes in the studied cases. Second, using documents enabled me to read between the lines of 'official discourse' about the AP in the local district context, and then 'triangulate information through interviews' within case studies (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 297). Third, at the macro level, documents of policy statements, regulations and legislation provided a level of insight of public narration and insight into how the local education authorities and the AP schemes work, and what values and practices guide decision making (Fitzgerald, 2012).

The documents used in this research are mainly of two types. The first category is central policy texts (see Appendix 11). These texts highlight the main regulations of heads' qualification, training and selection, and shed light on the development of headship preparation policy at the central level. The nature of these texts makes them particularly important for the examination of the development of headship preparation and the broader educational context for this thesis. Issues relating to these policy texts were discussed mainly in Chapter 1, the introduction to the thesis.

In the second category were documents which can be called local public documents, such as policy texts from local education departments and local authorities (see Appendix 12). These documents mainly revolved around the development of the AP scheme in the case study's city, such as policy documents, statutory texts, and minutes of meetings from local education departments or local authorities. For instance, the regulations of primary and secondary heads' examination and training in each of local districts, which helped me to identify the main characteristics of the AP scheme, were particularly important for this research, as the AP scheme was usually documented in these statutory texts. To ensure anonymity and well management of documents, the collected documents were assigned letters and numbers as assigned names. Take the assigned name 'Doc-A-02' for example, 'Doc' refers to the document and 'A' represents Case A and '2' means the second piece of documents in Case A.

The documents in this second category not only shed further light on interviewee's comments but also play an important role in providing the local contextual information of each case city for this research. Most important of all, these documents produced the description of the basic framework of each AP scheme which partly increased the understanding of the first research question. Last but not least, I used these local-level documents and other information about the AP scheme in each city as one way of 'triangulating' interview data (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 297), thus increasing its credibility (see section 4.7).

4.5 Data analysis

4.5.1 The transcription process

As Mason (2002, p. 77) suggests, we should not over-estimate the representational qualities of interview transcripts, as 'a transcription is always partial partly because it is an inadequate record of non-verbal aspects of the interaction'. As such, video or audio recording have to be regarded as partial reconstructions of interview rather than full records of them. Transcription thus involves analytic judgements about what to represent and how to represent. Transcription of the interview data should be viewed as an initial but integral part of the analytical process, which firstly translates audio recorded data into a written form, then acts as a guide to that reconstructed and re-contextualised data.

All of the interviews were digitally recorded and the gathered data was transcribed in Mandarin Chinese. In all, I generated 401 pages of transcripts (436,513 words) in Chinese with the help of a transcribing machine. I paid careful attention and listened repeatedly to each of the interview recordings. My requirement of the transcription process was that it should provide an understanding of the ideas, key themes and arguments that emerged from each interview, rather than that it should provide a detailed account of the interactive dynamics between interviewer and informants. The process of producing transcripts word by word between sections was laborious and time-consuming. On average, 10 minutes of interview recording involved attentive listening and typing for one hour. However, later I realised that through the painstaking transcription process, I was able to immerse myself in the data and familiarise myself with it.

4.5.2 Thematic analysis and coding process

Thematic analysis was employed to enable me to identify and analyse the themes that emerged from the data. Thematic analysis has been described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data', or a process for 'encoding qualitative information' and can be used with most qualitative methods (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). 'Codes identify and provide a label for a feature of the data that is potentially relevant to the research question' (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 61). A theme 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 63)

For doing thematic analysis, Boyatzis (1998, p. 11) suggests four stages in developing the ability to use thematic analysis: (1) sensing themes; (2) doing it reliably; (3) developing codes; and 4) interpreting the information and themes in the context of a theory or conceptual framework. More specifically, Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 63) suggest a six-phase approach as guidelines for producing thorough, plausible, and sophisticated thematic analysis. They are summarised as follows:

1. Familiarising yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

These suggestions or guidelines were therefore considered in the study. After transcribing the interview data of the first case (Case A), I began the process of analysing data by reading each interview transcript verbatim twice, thoroughly and carefully, jotting down some ideas as they came to mind, trying to get a sense of the whole and looking for potential patterns and regularities. The purpose was to familiarise myself with the data so as to sense potential themes. Then I made notes on the margins of transcripts and produced the initial, tentative codes. With this initial coding across every transcript in the first study case, I then developed a code list which facilitated me to generate the themes and sub-themes. This was a process of turning my interviews into data and then empirical codes. This process, as Mason (2002) warns, should not be regarded as self-evident but instead should be the result of effective application of qualitative analysis approaches.

For this, I created a set of codes following Boyatzis's (1998) 'hybrid approach', which includes 'theory-driven', 'prior-research-driven' and 'data-driven' codes to categorise and locate themes in the data (pp. 33, 37, 41). For the hybrid approach, Boyatzis argues that all these approaches for thematic analysis have something meaningful to offer to qualitative data analysis and essentially get the same rigour. The theory-driven codes in this study mainly derived from my Foucauldian theoretical lenses, such as notions of power relations, discipline and governmentality; prior-research-driven codes were codes based on the existing literature on headship preparation, heads' administrative placement or internship; finally, the inductive (data-driven) codes derived bottom-up from my reading of the data, including the codes that were surprising and not anticipated at the beginning

of the study. As the lists of codes grew they were abstracted into larger categories, which could then be attributed to larger numbers of occurrences or themes.

Boyatzis's (1998) approach to the analysis in some way corresponds to Mason's (2002, p. 180) definition of 'abductive' themes/codes where 'theory, data generation and data analysis are developed simultaneously in a dialectical process'. This is the process of 'moving between everyday concepts and meanings, lay accounts, and social science explanations' (p. 180). Mason's definition of an 'abductive' approach accounts for the way I iteratively moved back and forth into the interview transcript throughout the coding, theme analysis, interpreting and writing phases. The analysis process in this study was a recursive relationship between the data and the literature. I related the codes emerging from the data back to the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. Throughout my analysis and writing, I also worked closely with data and attempted to relate generated themes with theoretically consistent resources. These included drawing upon Foucault's notions of power-knowledge, disciplinary power, and governmentality. In a simple sense, theories worked as my analytical tools in this thesis; they were used simultaneously with data generation and analysis and were incorporated into my arguments to inform and enrich my understanding of the phenomenon of governing and disciplining headteachers.

I used the qualitative computer software programme QSR NVivo 10 to organise, sort and locate qualitative data. As noted earlier, I made notes on the margins of transcripts and produced a tentative set of codes. Based on this, I decided to utilise the NVivo programme to re-examine and review the codes and themes as the computer software enabled me to do data analysis in a more systematic and

efficient way. After importing the interview transcripts into the NVivo programme, I went through each line of text as in transcriptions, assigned codes, located text segments coded the same, and then generated themes across the interviews in the same study case. In order to visually depict how themes and sub-themes related to each other, I also created 'theme maps' for each study case on the one hand, and aggregated particular interview texts from the three AP cases into an overarching table, enabling the cross-case comparison of the empirical data. Doing so allowed me to visualise the coding patterns and key themes between the three study cases.

4.5.3 Translation after the transcription

This research was conducted in Chinese. The language of both the researcher and respondents is Mandarin Chinese, which is the official language in Taiwan. In the interviews all questions were asked in Mandarin Chinese and all interviewees spoke Mandarin Chinese or the Taiwanese dialect which I could fully manage. Thus, all interview dialogues and narratives were firstly transcribed in Chinese, and later translated into English when being quoted in the analysis report.

While every translation was taken to be faithful to the original Chinese texts, it needs to be acknowledged that some nuances and even aspects of meanings could be lost in translation. There are many reasons for this to occur. First, Mandarin Chinese and English are two very different language systems which have developed within their respective cultures and heritages. I am fully aware that a perfect sort of translation is impossible and that there are many ways to translate any Chinese sentence into an English one. Second, in particular, there was slang spoken in the interview conversation, some in Taiwanese dialects. To find the

English equivalents could sometimes be difficult. Third, English is my third language, after Chinese and Taiwanese dialect. Although I have lived in England for four years, my proficiency in English is obviously lower than in Chinese. This undoubtedly has had an impact on my translation of the interview transcripts and the reader is kindly asked to bear this in mind.

4.6 Reflexivity – My position as a 'liquid' researcher

I also believe that it is important to indicate the significant role of the researcher, whose individual experience may affect the outcome of the research. I clearly recognise that my previous role as an administrator and my research conducted within my previous work settings may potentially influence the whole research process. Moreover, as the subjectivity of the researcher is part of the research process, my own reflections on actions, observations, impressions and feelings all became part of the data and produced the interpretation of the data. This is to self-reflect about how my bias, values, and personal background shape my interpretations formed during a study. Reflexivity and its implications for researchers and their work has been described by Mason (2002, p. 7) in the following way:

> Qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or *active reflexivity*. This means that researchers should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their 'data'. This is based on the belief that a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or detached, from the knowledge and evidence they are generating. Instead, they should seek to understand

their role in that process. Indeed, the very act of asking oneself difficult questions in the research process is part of the activity of reflexivity.

In the following, I think critically and reflect about how my position, work experience and my associated values and biases would shape my interpretations formed during this study.

By the time fieldwork had commenced, I had moved from a civil servant role in Taiwan to a new academic role as a doctoral student at the Institute of Education in the UK. Due to the fact that I was an administrator in a local educational authority and then in the Ministry of Education for six years, I was acutely aware of my role as providing me some privileged access to heads and officials in local districts and opportunities for interviewing them. However, my previous position produced complex responses from interviewees. For some civil servants and heads who have undertaken the AP in the office of local education department, I was deemed a *trusted insider* where we were included in the day-to-day flow of administrative activity and we were used to organisational regularities of people, procedures and timetables. I felt I was regarded as 'harmless' as I had left the bureaucratic system so that I could be informed without scruple. I also found that interviewees who knew me were more inclined to speak in depth about sensitive issues or difficulties, perhaps because they viewed me as trustworthy. On the other hand, I was also aware of the influence of power effects deriving from my previous civil servant role both at local and central levels. Specifically, I could feel that my previous role somewhat seemed to obscure the conversation during the interview with some heads. These heads, although not many, would invalidate or nullify lines of inquiry

or deflect away from questions to which they were reluctant to respond. Perhaps the reason for this was that they viewed me as someone who owns (or will own) higher positions within the power hierarchies of their place of work.

For academics I interviewed, my position might be also complex and fluid. I was regarded as an insider as well as a novice researcher who was doing doctoral research, learning to ask critical questions about the field of headship preparation research, and embarking upon an academic career. Meanwhile, I was also a practitioner researcher who had been working as an administrator outside of academia. Within the conversation with academics, I was aware that my position was at times closer to the world of academia while at other times closer to the world of practitioner heads. Thus I realised that my position was not fixed at one place or site. Rather than viewing myself as an insider or outsider of the research site with an insider/outsider binary, I viewed myself as being neither inside nor outside the study field, but instead as being engaged in messy, continuously shifting relationships.

As a consequence, my position then corresponded to Thomson and Gunter's (2011, p. 26) 'liquid researcher' role, a notion referring to the recognition that a researcher's identity is highly liquid, porous, and unbounded rather than something singular, possessed, and fixed that promotes an illusion of stability. There were advantages of being a liquid researcher: I was close enough to benefit from freer access and from understanding the life-world of those being researched, and distanced enough to feel able to probe or critically challenge those being interviewed. That is to say, my own experiences and knowledge have been a

resource and source for exploring the ideas of others (Holloway and Biley, 2011, p. 972).

Mercer (2007) suggests that one of the big challenges for researchers from the inside lies in their ability to contend with their own pre-conceptions and those their informants have formed about them as a result of their shared history. This was true as well in this study. My previous work experience in the local education department and the associated value-orientation to a large extent had initially drawn me to view the AP as a practical, progressive, and necessary training scheme for aspiring heads, as many interviewees also felt. However, reading and drawing upon Foucault's notions during this research process helped me critically question and challenge both my own assumptions and my informants' responses. The Foucauldian lenses made the familiarity of the AP practice and its associated discourse unfamiliar, and ensured that I questioned rather than assumed the reasons behind why answers were given. Through such Foucauldian conceptual tools, I was able to translate the participants' own practically oriented interpretations of their everyday meanings into theoretical-level knowledge which enabled me to theorise.

4.7 Rigour, credibility, and resonance

How to assure and judge the quality of qualitative research has long been a contested question (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The literature is brimming with criteria for qualitative quality, including concepts such as validity and reliability (Creswell, 2009; Mason, 2002), crystallisation (Richardson, 2000), credibility (Tracy, 2010), or transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, many

qualitative researchers argue that validity and reliability are inapplicable for and irrelevant to qualitative research, and that a set of criteria specifically for qualitative research is necessary. For instance, Golafshani (2003) notes that while the terms reliability and validity are essential criteria for quality in quantitative paradigms, in qualitative paradigms the terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are to be the essential criteria for quality (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Healy and Perry (2000) assert that the quality of a study in each paradigm should be judged by its own paradigm's terms. Following this line of inquiry, Tracy (2010, p. 843) tellingly argues that:

> Like notions of reliability and validity, triangulation does not lay neatly over research from interpretive, critical, or post-modern paradigms that view reality as multiple, fractured, contested, or socially constructed.

Central to these arguments are that the paradigm researchers hold would inevitably influence both how they view reality and truth and how they judge the quality of the generated data. As this research adopted a qualitative paradigm drawing upon Foucault's work which tends to be labelled as post-structuralist (Murphy, 2013; Niesche and Gowlett, 2014) or post-modern (Ryan, 1998), I believe that even though data all converge on the same conclusion, this does not assure that this specified reality is correct because findings are value mediated (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). As the result, I followed Tracy's (2010, pp. 841-845) suggestion to use terms like 'rich rigour', 'credibility', and 'resonance' as criteria for assuring my research quality, rather than *reliability*, *validity* and *generalisability*. Each is articulated in the following sections.

To enhance the *richness* of this study, a rich complexity of abundant descriptions and explanations in terms of contexts, theories, data sources and samples has been sought (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). For this I provided descriptions of contexts of the AP focus, and detailed discussions as to how and why various theories (in Chapter 2 and 3), informative cases, and diverse groups of participants were chosen (in sections 4.3 and 4.4).

With respect to *rigour* of this research, attention had been given to the care and practice of data gathering and analysis procedures (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). This had been detailed in section 4.4 where I articulated the number and length of interviews, the appropriateness and breadth of the interview participants given to the purpose of this study, the types of questions asked, the level of transcription detail, the practice used to ensure transcript accuracy, and the resultant number of pages of interview transcripts. In section 4.5 I provided an explanation about the process by which the raw data was transformed into codes, categories, themes, and the ultimately the research report. The purpose was to make transparent the process of sorting, choosing and organising the data. All this was presented to demonstrate the rigour of the study.

Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of the research findings. The need for credibility is noted by many qualitative researchers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that good qualitative research is dependable. For quantitative research, credibility is ensured through reliability, replicability, consistency and accuracy; however, as Tracy (2010) argues, 'qualitative credibility is instead achieved through practices including thick description, triangulation or crystallization and multivocality and partiality' (p. 843). These practices have been considered in my

study. In applying these practices, I have illustrated the data's complexity to *show* the details, specificity and circumstantiality of case study data through thick description.

Rather than using triangulation to examine the convergence of multiple sources of data or methods on the same conclusion or coherent themes (Creswell, 2009), *crystallisation* practice was chosen in this study. The term crystallisation was coined by Richardson (2000) as a method of analysis that transcends the 'rigid, fixed, two-dimensional' triangle (p. 934). She poetically explained that a crystal:

> combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach… Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose – not triangulation but crystallisation… Crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know (Richardson, 2000, p. 934).

The notion of crystallisation is motivated by post-structural assumptions that knowledge is far from value neutral and that so-called singular, 'correct' reality does not exist. Thus, although both triangulation and crystallisation encourages researchers to gather multiple types of data sources and employ various methods, multiple researchers, and various theoretical perspectives, the goal of undertaking crystallisation is 'not to provide a more valid singular truth, but to open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial understanding of the issue' (Tracy,

2010, p. 844). Thus I gathered multiple views from heads, officials, school inspectors, and people outside the AP scheme, i.e. academics and heads without AP experiences; I also employed different methods to generate data through interviewing and document analysis. By immersing myself in such multiple voices or 'multivocality' (Tracy, 2010, p. 844) and striving for crystallisation, I have come to recognise that the aspects of the AP are complex and my conclusions are always tentative.

Furthermore, I am unwilling to attempt to make empirically statistical generalisations from an analysis of three AP scheme case studies to the wider population (AP schemes in other local districts) – the data generated from three case studies makes such a task problematic. Instead, the purpose of this study was to identify evidence of the specific fashioning of the heads' subject positions as a result of the AP training. Some qualitative researchers argue that despite the inapplicability of statistical generalisation in qualitative case study design, knowledge generated through qualitative methods can still transfer and be useful in other settings, populations, or circumstances. For instance, Yin (2009) feels that qualitative case study results can be generalised to some *broader theory* (theoretical generalisation). The generalisation occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalise findings to the new cases. Alternatively, Tracy (2010, pp. 844-5) uses the term '*resonance'* to refer to a study's potential to be valuable across a variety of contexts or situations through providing vicarious experience (naturalistic generalisation) or providing research reports that invite readers to feel as though the story of the research overlaps with readers' situation so that they intuitively transfer the research to their own practice (transferability). It is in this sense of *resonance* that I hope this research project has

a contribution to make. This entails providing the reader with thick descriptions of the voices, events, practices, power relations, and discursive reasons within the case study AP regime.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Before the fieldwork, the research project of this study has been subject to the ethics review committee of the Institute of Education, and has received the ethics approval in the year of 2012. The main ethical considerations for this research were based on the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). In this research the particular concern is for the persons (headteachers, officials, inspectors, and academics) involved. BERA suggests that researchers must take clear steps to get voluntary informed consent, and this research followed that advice. Before conducting the interviews, I provided potential respondents with a consent form to ensure that they were fully informed about the nature and coverage of the research and its associated outputs. I also requested that respondents provide written consent to their participation in the research and for the use of the data generated. Respondents were also informed about their right to refuse to participate, to withdraw from the interview at any time or to participate without being recorded. A particular issue was to consider the need of all respondents to feel safe and secure in interviews. Thus, respondents were informed in their interview invitations and within the interview itself that any information they provided would be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Confidentiality was assured by anonymising results, that is, by ensuring to the best of my ability that findings cannot be traced back to individuals. BERA proposes that the respondents' data should be treated in a confidential and anonymous manner, and this has been done through the giving of pseudonyms and obscuring place details to ensure that findings cannot be traced back to individuals. As part of this process, I have changed the real names and the location of the case study AP schemes to A, B and C, classified respondents as either 'Head', 'Division Chief', 'Director-General', 'Inspector' or 'Academic', and allocated a number to each respondents (e.g. Head, H1-withAP-A, Head, H2-withAP-A…Head, Axx etc.). In some cases, when names of people have been quoted, they have been re-named pseudonymously to maintain the research confidentiality. Thus, the case study, location and respondent have been anonymised. Finally, all the interview data was stored in a password-protected file. The purpose for this, again, is to ensure the research confidentiality.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter I have tried to lay out the manner in which I have conducted this study into the disciplinary and governmental practices within the AP regime in Taiwan. I have stated my critical position in relation to knowledge and research and described the Foucauldian theoretical underpinnings. I have also identified my qualitative methodology and methods based on this critical perspective and a Foucauldian approach. How my position, experiences, and values shaped the research process and issues of research quality were also discussed.

The next chapter moves into the presentation and analysis of the three AP scheme case studies. The three case studies are presented chronologically as the fieldwork was conducted. Within each case study, the structural content of the AP scheme, the practices in which the AP head was involved, and the AP's effect and rationale are analysed. The last section provides a cross-case synthesis in which the significant features and the common themes and relationships among these three cases are summarised in order to present an overview of the overall findings.

Chapter 5 Research findings (1)

Introduction: a guide to the structure of the findings

The Chapters Five and Six report the findings of the data-gathering phase. The data generated and information collected from interviews, documents, photography and my own professional experience is analysed in relation to the overarching research questions posed in this thesis:

1. What is the structural content of aspiring headteachers' administrative placement (AP) in the local education department in Taiwan?

2. What practices are AP heads involved in during their AP in the local education department?

3. How do these practices within the AP shape the constitution of the AP head's subjectivity?

4. What may the AP be aiming to achieve and how? Why are AP heads invited or required to undertake the AP training, and what kind of head does this training aim to prepare?

The aim of the findings chapters is twofold. First, it attempts to present the findings of a detailed investigation into the newly emerging AP schemes in three local districts of Taiwan in terms of their structural content and practices. Second, this chapter also seeks to analyse the operation and effects of AP schemes. The

preliminary analysis in this chapter, following a Foucauldian approach suggested by Anderson and Grinberg (1998), Gillies (2013) and Niesche (2014), is informed by Foucault's thinking tools of power-knowledge, panopticism, disciplinary power, and governmentality.

I will begin by outlining and presenting the findings chronologically as the fieldwork was conducted from Case A, B to C. The findings in each case will be generally organised in terms of the aspects of contextual information, descriptions of the groups of interviewees, structural content, work practices, effects, and rationales and purposes of the AP scheme. I then provide a section of cross-case analysis to synthesise the overall findings. The final section is a summary of the chapter.

5.1 Findings of Case A

5.1.1 The context and structure of the AP in Case A

The context of Case A city

The first case, City A, is one of 5 municipalities in Taiwan, and is relatively affluent compared with other local governments. The LED of the City A Government is in charge of all educational affairs, such as higher, secondary, primary, early childhood and international education etc. It has nine divisions and seven offices as its organisational structure (see Figure 5.1). Among the nine divisions, the Primary Education Division is mainly in charge of about 150 primary schools while the Secondary Education Division is in charge of about 90 secondary schools.

Owing to the city's affluence, the LED in City A is less understaffed and has more financial resources compared with other LEDs.
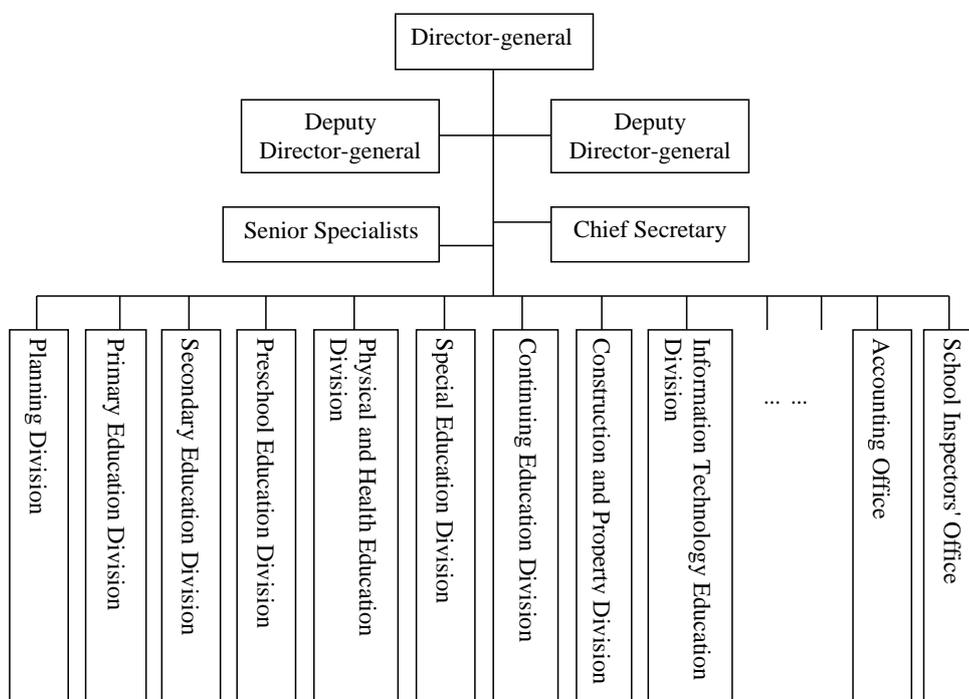
Figure 5.1 The hierarchically organisational structure of the LED in Case A

As a municipality, City A has a long tradition of preparing their own heads. The heads' preparation is mainly conducted by the Teacher's In-Service Education Centre. Aspiring heads are required to pass the headship examination before attending the official government-subsidised pre-service training. The preparation programme in 2013 lasted for 13 weeks and all the aspiring heads had to reside centrally at the Teacher's In-Service Education Centre (Doc-A-05). After successful completion of the preparation programme, participants are certified as qualified reserve heads who are eligible to attend headship selection interviews. Nevertheless, some qualified reserve heads choose to receive the one-year

administrative training in the LED before they move on to attend head selection (Doc-A-08).

The LED organises a head selection committee for new recruitment and for in-service transfer. According to the Headteacher Selection Self-regulations of Primary and Secondary School in [Case A] City (Doc-A-06, Doc-A-07), the selection committee is composed of three representatives each of parents, teachers, heads, government and one scholar representative, thus totalling 13 members. Among them, one each of the teacher and parent representatives who are from the school with the headship vacancy (also called fluid members) can represent their school needs in the committee and vote for their preferred candidates. At the same time, each head candidate has the option to apply to the committee for their preferred schools. Then the committee members vote for the appropriate candidate to the headship. The head selection in City A is regarded by interviewees as much more rigorous and competitive than other cities, partly because of the involvement of fluid members in the selection committee and the introduction of competition mechanisms.

An overview of the groups of interviewees

I interviewed 12 participants in Case A. Interviewees can be divided into three main groups, including superiors in the LED, school inspectors and heads. Both the two division-chiefs from the LED were female and senior officials; one from secondary education division (O1-A), another from primary education division (O2-A). The school inspector (S1-A) I interviewed had experiences of supervising both heads with AP experience and heads without AP experiences.

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With regard to the group of heads, I interviewed five heads who had undertaken the AP training and were all novice heads in their first headship. Three of them were primary heads and two were secondary heads. In order to understand how heads without AP experiences would view the AP, I also interviewed one experienced head (H6-noAP-A) and one new head (H7-noAP-A). Two AP heads, from primary and secondary schools, who were undergoing their AP were also interviewed as they were recommended by division-chiefs. Table 5.1 shows the profile of interviewees in Case A, and the more detailed basic demographic information for each informant was summarised in Appendix 5.

Table 5.1 The profile of groups of case study interviewees in Case A

Cases	Superior (Division-chief)	School Inspector	Headteachers		
			With AP	Without AP	Doing AP
Case A	O1-A O2-A	S1-A	H1-withAP-A H2-withAP-A H3-withAP-A H4-withAP-A H5-withAP-A	H6-noAP-A H7-noAP-A	H8-inAP-A H9-inAP-A

The structural content of the AP

The year-long administrative training in Case A is optional and non-mandated (Doc-A-02, Doc-A-03, Doc-A-08). After completing the pre-service preparation programme and achieving the qualifying certificate, the qualified reserve heads can choose to undertake the one-year placement in the LED office, or simply return

to their schools. Furthermore, the division chief's accounts revealed that division chiefs would usually select '*proper*' qualified reserve heads to work in their division. Those who are selected to go through the administrative training are allocated to LED divisions and work with officials. The division chief in the LED is their direct superior and site-supervisor or mentor as well.

Rather than using the term 'administrative placement' adopted by Cases B and C (Doc-B-02, Doc-C-07, Doc-C-16), the placement of aspiring heads in Case A is termed *administrative training* (Doc-A-08). In fact, both of these terms refer to a similar workplace training approach that places qualified reserve heads in the LED to receive the hands-on administrative training. Thus, for greater clarity and continuity, I will substitute the term administrative placement (AP) for the term administrative training throughout the discussion.

There is no fixed or formal title, nor individual placement plan, for individual AP heads in Case A. Heads told me that they were usually called 'Mr Headteacher' in the LED even though they had not assumed the headship yet. As for their tasks during the AP, data showed that they were assigned to take charge of and were responsible for educational policies, projects and administrative bureaucracy. However, it should be noted that there was not any placement plan which delineated the learning content, procedures, or methods, being provided to these participants. Heads reported that they did not know what they were going to learn, which division to stay in and how they were being assessed.

After completing the one-year AP, most AP heads will apply to head selection for the headship. Those qualified reserve heads who do not undertake the AP and

continue working as senior school leaders are also eligible to attend head selection. Thus, it was also the case that some aspiring heads who did not undertake the AP were successfully selected and appointed to a headship.

5.1.2 The work practices of AP heads

For heads, the working environment of the LED was extremely different from that of the school. Working in the LED was described as being a very busy experience by most of the heads interviewed. They highlighted several distinctive features of working in the LED office, including the rapid pace, heavy workload, high pressure, the hectic workplace, and the rigid bureaucratic hierarchy. Heads reported that the workload for them was challenging. They were busy multitasking in the office. Also, the pace of working in the LED was quicker than that in the school. They also had to pick up a lot of phone calls which kept them constantly distracted from their main tasks during office hours. Thus, they worked very long hours and also stated that they worked at home and on weekends. As a head expressed, '*you couldn't just knock off at 5.00 pm and you're finished, it was just getting started there at 5.00 pm*'. Facing an unfamiliar bureaucratic hierarchy, they tried hard to adapt themselves to this new environment.

Data showed that the AP heads in Case A seemed not to be viewed as head trainees, nor were they provided with the according professional training. Heads reported they were aware of their role in the LED office only as an official clerk or case officer, because they were allocated to divisions to work with civil servants and were assigned educational project work and administrative bureaucracy. One head indicated that he '*was just part of the supplementary manpower*'

(H4-withAP-A), they were '*used*' as civil servants in the LED rather than treated as trainee heads.

There was no formal title for the AP head in this case. When I asked the heads how their colleagues in the LED referred to them when they were there, the answers were either 'Mr/Mrs Head' or 'school director'. They were not specifically titled as 'administrative interns'. Interestingly, however, they tended to view and call themselves 'seconded teachers' through which they humbled themselves and kept learning in front of LED officials, as one current AP head put it:

> *So, like me, I learnt to start over from zero, to start afresh, to humble myself and to learn anything by asking my colleagues. Whether it was about how to write official documents or how to use the photocopier, I needed to ask my colleagues.*

> (H9-inAP-A)

Heads noted that during their AP they were mainly involved in administrative work. In particular, they spent considerable amounts of time dealing with official documents, drafting various forms of official documents such as education projects, policy texts, or regulations. Facing the rigid demands of official document writing, heads' accounts revealed that they struggled with the genre, technical terms and formats of the formal official documents with which they were unfamiliar. Very often, they would be required to redraft several times until superiors were satisfied with the quality of documents. Furthermore, this paperwork was tightly controlled by an Official Documents Management System through which the performance of each

staff member and each division could be identified and compared. Any delays would be subject to blame and require improvement. Thus the System put the AP heads under high pressures, as one head noted:

Right, we got a huge amount of documents to do every day, a huge amount. And we always felt that every day was very rushed, and we had documents due every day. So, we were quite scared our documents would be overdue. If we didn't meet deadlines, we didn't know how to face our superiors … I was told that one colleague had an overdue document last year and that he was severely reprimanded by the division chief.

(H4-withAP-A)

Therefore, it is not surprising that some heads revealed their concerns about working on such a great deal of official paperwork during the AP. Their comments indicated the dissonance between the tedious practice of documentation and the real practice of school leadership. For instance, one reported that '*this [paperwork] drove me to think reflectively on a question: whether this sort of AP is necessary for us?*' (H4-withAP-A), and others said that the tedious procedures and processes of documentation took them away from the more innovative tasks that they would like to get involved with.

Findings in the study indicated that AP heads in Case A had great opportunities to learn and contribute to policy through their AP. It seemed that AP heads tended to be assigned to take charge of important policy or project work. For example, among the seven heads I interviewed, everyone undertook multiple district-level educational policies and/or projects, and three of them also took charge of

national-level educational policy work. Thus they had many chances to participate in national- or district-level policy meetings on behalf of the LED, and they were able to discuss policy issues, draft policy texts and implement policies.

The heads in Case A also reported that they could make a great contribution to the policy-making and policy consultation process due to their rich school teaching and leadership experiences. Most of the policies, initiatives and projects in the LED are in relation to the work practice of schools; however only a few of the public servants in the LED have in-school working experiences as they were not required to do so. For the LED, AP heads' practical knowledge in both teaching and school leadership are helpful, as a division chief of the LED stated that '*I like to* **use** *AP heads because their maturity and practical background are very useful to us*' (emphasis added). This division chief continued by stressing that these AP heads '*can provide a lot of assistance, including administrative and professional aspects … (they) can put their professional experiences and knowledge into our projects*' (O2-A). The comments suggest that with AP heads assistance in the policy domain, the resultant policy would be more feasible at the school level.

The heads interviewed highlighted accessing various schools or school cases during the AP as important in learning how to be a head. They reported that by working in the LED they had the opportunity to visit various schools through either cooperating with school staff in working together on the educational projects, or inspecting schools with inspectors. They learned both the positive and negative sides of school leadership and management by observing *'how school staff worked on a project', 'how school leaders built up the learning capacity',* or *'how a school failed in some aspects of management'.* Heads told me that this was a precious

learning experience because they would not have many opportunities to visit other schools throughout their teaching career. As one head put it:

> *One thing very important is that you can have access to other school leaders when you are working in the LED. You have an opportunity to get into schools, to observe schools, in terms of how they deal with issues, and how the school culture is presented… Before being a qualified reserve head, I stayed at the same school for eighteen years. So, I probably just have a very superficial understanding of other schools.*
>
> (H1-withAP-A)

Moreover, they also had the opportunity to team up with experienced heads to run educational projects and thereby learn how experienced heads exercise their leadership and how they conduct educational projects. Thus, this experience of collaborating with experienced heads could be viewed as a sort of shadowing through which AP heads could also widen their professional networks.

5.1.3 The disciplinary techniques in AP practices

When I arrived at the LED office to interview two division chiefs and a current AP head, I had the opportunity to observe the office. As can be seen from Figure 5.2, the main structure of the LED was a large open-plan layout and was divided without partitions into several divisions. About 20 staff including AP heads were allocated into one division. The division chief's table was set at one end of the division allowing her/him to clearly see every staff member, to know who is present or absent. Next to the open-plan office (on the right hand side of the figure) were

the enclosed, separate rooms for senior officials' offices, such as the Director-General, Deputy Director-General and Chief Secretary (see Figure 5.3). In other words, people who were working in the open-plan office were subject to the observation of division chiefs or other senior superiors. As a current AP head put it, '*the officials are closely watching over us whatever we're doing*' (H9-inAP-A). Many heads interviewed pointed to their awareness of superiors' observation.

Figure 5.2 The open-plan office in the LED in Case A

(Division chiefs' places are located on the left of the figure)

Figure 5.3 The enclosed and separate office rooms for senior officials in the LED

However, the exposure or visibility to superiors was not always avoided but sometimes desired by some AP heads. Heads' perceptions revealed that maintaining a high level of visibility in front of officials may contribute to maintaining relationships between the two and that these mutual relationships may bring AP heads more support in their head selection. This was acknowledged by many heads, for example:

Ok, you see, if you are placed in the division, would the Division Chief give you more support [to your head selection]? I think so, to be honest, more or less he/she would support you.

(H7-noAP-A)

This visibility to officials in effect would motivate aspiring heads to enter the LED to participate in the AP more voluntarily. For example, two heads in this study who had failed their first round of head selection did not succeed to the second round of head selection until they entered the LED and completed the AP. One head who shared this view explained: '*many AP heads still have a presumption that when AP heads maintain more visibility in front of officials, they will be more advantageous in headteacher selection*' (H4-withAP-A). This perspective was also supported by a division chief, as she noted that '*I have to say that when AP heads came to work here, they have already gained points for their own headship selection*' (O2-A). In other words, AP heads would utilise their physical visibility as a strategy to earn more support from LED superiors so as to succeed in their head selection.

It is worth noting that, a teacher and a representative from the school with a headship vacancy are allowed to attend the head selection committee and vote for their preferred candidate in Case A. These two representatives were called 'fluid members' who changed with vacancies in different schools. Therefore, in order to succeed in the head selection process, AP heads have to market themselves to not only officials but to school staff and parents as well. Once these teachers had a good impression of the AP head, their school representatives were more likely to vote for this AP head as their head. One head demonstrated this by saying that '*when I was going to leave the LED to assume the headship, many aspiring heads competed for my previous AP position in the LED*' (H4-withAP-A). As a result, being visible to school staff prior to head selection was viewed as one of advantages for AP heads in the Case A district.

However, visibility could also reveal AP heads' weakness to officials or school teachers. Visibility, in effect, functions as a *'double-edge mirror'*, as mentioned by heads. Many heads were aware of the negative effect of being so visible as it put them under risk of being judged 'unqualified'. For instance, a head noted:

> *We knew that if you maintain a high level of visibility in front of officials, then you would probably encounter two situations. First, if you offered a good impression, you would be rewarded. Second, if you performed badly, you revealed your true colours … So, to be honest, we were working under stress. During that period of time I just hoped that I could put my best foot forward.*

> (H4-withAP-A)

Similarly, a senior head highlighted that '*it is very hard to hide your weaknesses for a half a year or an entire year… you will reveal your true colours*' and '*your superiors soon will know your real habits and behaviours*' (H6-noAP-A). Both the comments suggest that the AP in some sense reveals AP heads' characters, capabilities and dispositions and makes AP heads subject to officials' judgment and ensuing rewards or punishments.

In order to know how such judgments were made in terms of the good and bad performance, I also asked two division chiefs questions about their expectations of AP heads and what a good AP head should look like because the division chiefs' descriptions of so-called 'good AP heads' could reveal the criteria they used to judge AP heads. A division chief who had three AP heads in her division at the time provided a vivid account:

What does a good headteacher look like? I think it is easy to see, to observe in the office. For instance, if I have something urgent that needs to be completed today. I see at a glance that one is a good head whom I can turn to for help. Why? … This is because he or she has good executive ability and understands my administrative language. The work has to be done efficiently because I am in hurry. I need to find someone experienced to help me.

(O2-A)

These descriptions reveal the productive and administrative characters of expected AP heads, such as administrative capabilities, obedience and efficiency.

Heads noted that they were well aware that they were examined by superiors in terms of their executive ability on the assigned tasks, how they managed their emotions under high pressure, the quality of the official documents they produced, the way they interacted with colleagues and superiors, and their attitude to responsibility. One head succinctly pointed out that '*it is the full, comprehensive image of the AP head which includes her/his appearance, character, attitude, capability, efficiency, and the role s/he played in the team*' (H1-withAP-A) that are subject to officials' observation and judgment and that would influence their headship selection.

According to respondents' accounts, there seemed to be an implicit link between the officials' judgment on AP heads and their selection of heads. By making a hierarchy of good and bad AP heads, the LED official judged and compared the AP

heads' performance with each other in competition for head vacancies. Here a head's account presents a convincing explanation:

> *I knew that Julia's [pseudonym, an AP head] performance did not satisfy the superiors. They didn't like her performance. The unsatisfactory impression she made impacted her final headteacher selection … So, the question you asked whether there is a direct or indirect link [of AP performance with head selection], I would say: yes. There is. When the LED officials are voting for headteachers, at least they know who you are, how you performed in the LED…So, the good AP performance would benefit the subsequent headship appointment.*
>
> (H2-withAP-A)

However, although other heads pointed to a more implicit link between officials' judgment on AP heads and their selection of heads, they admitted that if the performance of the AP head was deemed poor, the AP head would lose the support of the three LED representatives in the selection committee. Therefore it seemed to be impossible for AP heads to go through the LED without pressure. As a head revealed, she worked intensely and rigorously to avoid mistakes and cope with the everyday challenges of the LED.

This study found that AP heads tended to regulate their behaviour, emotions and conduct under the observation and examination by superiors and the pressure from head selection. In order to become a recognised 'good' head so as to succeed in head selection, AP heads worked hard to maintain their 'word of mouth

reputation'. The term 'word of mouth' was highly valued and repeated in the interviews by heads. For them, this term refers to their own personal image which represents a wide range of knowledge, capability, and temperament, such as their appearance, characters, attitude, capability, efficiency, professional ability, and even the role they played on a team. As a head noted earlier, this is '*a full, comprehensive image*' of the AP head (H1-withAP-A).

Heads also revealed that their 'word of mouth reputation' from their AP performance would largely determine whether they could become a head (e.g., noted by H2-withAP-A; H1-withAP-A). For instance, many heads stressed the importance of *self-effacement* in the LED, and detailed how they humbled themselves in order to have harmonious interactions with other officials and maintain a good relationship with each other. Others stated that they worked hard for long hours, performed to the best of their abilities, managed their emotions, and completed what was assigned to them. For instance, one head went further to express:

> *The LED superiors expect of you a high level of performance in leading the school. Due to this, we don't dare slack off in [school management] … we won't take advantage of our private connections with the superior. Instead, I push myself to work harder and not to bother superiors.*

> (H5-withAP-A)

Central to this head's descriptions is that even though heads have completed the AP training and been appointed to the post, they keep working on their conduct to

better manage their school so as '*not to bother superiors*' (H2-withAP-A), and not to stigmatise their own reputation.

5.1.4 The AP effects on AP head's subjectivity formation

Findings indicated that AP practices benefited AP heads in several aspects, including their administrative and leadership capacities, policy understandings and implementation capabilities, as well as their personal networks and relationships with the LED.

Through the year-long engagement in high-stakes administrative work in the LED, most heads reported that they had a better understanding of the operation of the LED, such as administrative procedures and educational projects in LED divisions. Also, their administrative capabilities improved in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, precision and coordination. In addition, evidence also showed that AP heads would go to help their subsequent school to strengthen its administration and management capacity. For instance, many heads noted that they transferred the rigidity of the official documentation system into their school, as they learnt how to '*maintain the efficiency, the rigour and carefulness*' and to '*be very careful on lots of works*' (H2-withAP-A).

Furthermore, due to their AP work experiences, AP heads learnt how and where to access resources and funding for their schools. For instance, one head said he became more capable of applying for competitive-oriented educational projects and competing with other schools, as he claimed that '*I would more precisely and effectively get my application done*' (H1-withAP-A). Others noted that they now

knew where to find resources for their school from different government departments:

> *The job of a school head is not just managing the school per se, but also finding resources for the school ... if I didn't go through this [AP], and just come from being a school teacher, I would not know where to find these resources.*

> (H9-inAP-A)

Heads' accounts also suggested that their AP experiences benefited not only their administrative capability but also their leadership capacity. Their enhanced understandings of LED operations, administrative procedures, and knowledge about resources and educational projects in the LED would help early appointed heads build up the authority and trust they needed in leading their school staff. For example, by providing school leaders with *more information and knowledge about LED initiatives or administrative procedures*, heads asserted that they became more *authoritative* and *reliable* to their colleagues.

An almost unanimous response from respondents indicated that heads had a better understanding of policy and the process of policy-making by situating themselves in the LED's policy-making apparatus. As noted earlier, many of them had experience in policy discussion by attending the district- or national-level meetings. It is worth noting that their better understandings of policy formation and intention would subsequently not only reduce their resistance against policy implementation but also help them *'more clearly deliberate the intention of policies*

to school colleagues' (H5-withAP-A). This would enable them to deliver or contextualise policies at the school level.

What is more, these heads identified their *widening horizons*, or *broadening visions* as one of the benefits of their AP experience. As one head reflected, he gained '*a holistic view on the policy and the initiative*' and his '*thought patterns expended to a whole city scope, a wider horizon*' (H4-withAP-A). Such widening of horizons enabled heads to '*consider and deal with problems more thoroughly*' (H3-withAP-A), or '*integrate the capacities from different and various sub-organisations, such as the parent community, the volunteer community and the teacher union et al*' (H1-withAP-A).

This study also found that the AP provided AP heads with unique chances to expand their personal networks by interacting directly with various public officials or city councillors, attending district- or national-level meetings and teaming up with experienced heads. They reported that these experiences could enrich their '*social capital*' which would benefit their subsequent school management. More specifically, heads reported that they could more easily acquire information by '*just making a phone call to the previous LED colleagues*' or '*asking for division chief's guidance when [they] got a difficult school problem*'. As the school inspector noted (S1-A), the heads with AP experience would more easily get along with officials.

Therefore, heads also noted that these AP practices provided them with specific training which was quite different from the general school placement guided by experienced heads. They viewed the AP training as a supplementary programme

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that made their administrative experiences more consummated. As one head summed up:

> *So, you see, the people in the administrative system of the LED are quite different [from the people in schools]. If you like, you can see their actions, their horizons, and their decision-making…These everyday practices are very different from the school placements at schools where you shadow your mentor.*

<div align="right">(H2-withAP-A)</div>

As noted earlier, there are often strong bonds formed between AP heads and officials after the AP. As one head used the term '*Maiden home*' to refer to the division where she undertook the AP, this might imply that the relationship between heads and the LED seemed to be analogised from an administrative affiliation to family ties.

The data showed that after their AP some heads seemed to become more aligned with the LED officials' instructions. This can be exemplified in the following three aspects. First, the AP ways of thinking appeared to be closer to that of the LED officials, as a current AP head noted that '*at least we can see what the LED emphasises in terms of its activities or the spirit of those activities*' and that *'we are influenced when we see these emphases'* (H8-inAP-A). This current AP head went further to reveal that due to the one-year long AP in the LED coupled with previous administrative experiences; his thoughts became *'more in accord with that of the*

LED, rather than that of school teachers' (H8-inAP-A). Similar claims were also reported by other heads.

Second, following the above, heads indicated that this consistency of thought between the officials and themselves would shape the way in which they led their schools and teachers forward to fit the expectation of the LED. This was particularly the case where the foci or the main tasks of the division were adopted by heads to be the distinctive features of their schools. As a head detailed:

> *I would try to understand the thoughts of the LED officials during the AP ... I would also try to understand their educational projects and the operational procedures as a whole. I think that this is beneficial to my headship. I think that I became better at time management. How I conduct the administrative task and how I present the activity have been more consistent with the LED's practices and expectations. Thus, I am more able to guide my school colleagues to move towards that direction.*

> (H1-withAP-A)

Third, given that the relationship developed between AP heads and officials, AP heads would be more likely to be requested to assist the LED in administrative tasks or projects after they were appointed to schools. Moreover, these heads tended to accept the LED's request, as one head stated that it is '*very necessary*' for him (H5-withAP-A) to do so. However, some new heads viewed the LED's request as negative, due to the fact that these added administrative tasks would

take heads and their school teachers away from their other tasks in relation to curriculum development and teaching.

5.1.5 The rationale and purpose of the AP

Before 2004, very few school teachers were seconded to the LED for assisting in specific educational projects. Since the launch of a government downsizing policy during the 2000s, the LED has faced the inevitable problem of understaffing. Sending school teachers and qualified reserve heads to the LED was regarded as a useful solution to the understaffing issue and was therefore adopted. However, with the increasing competiveness of head selection, more and more qualified reserve heads strived to enter the LED office prior to the head selection process. It was believed that for qualified reserve heads, assisting in the administrative tasks in the LED office would earn the support of officials in head selection. However, this would also lead to unfairness in head selection.

In order to maintain a fairer head selection, the School Headteachers' Association in Case A city appealed to the LED in 2008 requiring all qualified reserve heads to undertake assistant work in the LED. This suggestion was not entirely adopted though. In 2009 when the new Director-General took his position, the School Headteachers' Association advised the LED again but from a different angle, this time arguing that the AP was part of headship preparation. Although the LED did not make the AP compulsory, more and more qualified reserve heads were engaged in the AP. In 2011, in order to hold an international activity in Case A city, more manpower was urgently needed. Thus the city government decided to place all the qualified reserve heads in the LED and mobilised all the school heads to

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assist in this international activity. It was at this moment that the term 'administrative training' (Doc-A-03) was gradually applied for 'legitimising' this policy expediency which deployed the AP to deal with the manpower problems in the government department.

It was not until 2012 that the term 'administrative training' was formally documented (Doc-A-10). In that year the central government proposed corrective measures to each LED on the issue of over-seconded school teachers in the LEDs. Qualified reserve heads were also counted as teachers and attributed to this problem of over-secondment. In the report responding to the central government, the expediency of seconding qualified reserve heads to work in the LED was disguised as a kind of 'administrative training' for aspiring heads (Doc-A-10). A head interviewed for this study who was the former President of the Headteachers' Association happened to be the co-author of this report. He was able to reveal the shifting rhetoric of heads' administrative training:

> *I was asked to draft the report to the Control Yuan at that moment, and the report is now completed. When [director-general of the LED] asked me what rationales can be put into the report, I told him a reason, that is, 'in order to provide aspiring heads with an opportunity to experience administration and understand policy so as to implement policies effectively'. I thought that this was the best reason, the administrative training.*

> (H6-noAP-A)

When the respondents in the study were asked about the rationale of the AP, their unanimous response indicated that it was for both providing more manpower to the LED and for headship training as well. Heads explained that the human resource of qualified reserve heads can make a great contribution to the governmental administration in terms of policy planning and policy delivery, so the LEDs maintain seconded qualified reserve heads to the LED but give this practice a more expedient name.

This research found that the AP heads could be used more flexibly and in many different roles. As noted by the division chief, the heads were viewed as policy implementers and policy executives who were '*distributed to every school*' by the LED. In this regard, many heads pointed to the LED's arrangement of the headship for AP heads, as one head expressed that '*the LED officials would seek to know what kind of school fits what kind of head*' and '*they would deploy the adequate headteacher [to the school]*' (H5-withAP-A). And this arrangement of the positions of heads would largely rest on the understanding and examination of AP heads. That is to say, it is the long-term AP that provides the LED with the understanding of and knowledge about AP heads.

In this sense, the role of the division chief is important in such arrangements, as the division chief was the site-supervisor and could best understand his/her supervised AP heads. The senior head who was the former president of the School Headteachers' Association tellingly described how he worked together with the division chief to deploy AP heads into different schools:

I asked the Director-General whose opinions I should listen to follow. Once the Director-General gave me a clear instruction then I could manoeuvre [the disposition of AP heads]. Afterwards the Director-General said that it is the [XXX] Division Chief that I should work with … Then the Division Chief told me, 'Mr Headteacher, try to let the seven AP heads succeed [in headteacher selection]'. I replied that 'no problem but you have to trust me and follow my arrangement'.

(H6-noAP-A)

Although the headship selection mechanism was designed for selecting adequate heads based upon the *collective decision* of the head selection committee, the above comments from the former president of headteachers' association revealed how the head selection process was dominated and interfered with by the LED, and how AP heads were tactically deployed to schools. The 'fluid members' of the head selection committee can vote for their preferred head candidate for their own school, however the LED could still influence the result. The data indicated that whether the LED intervened on head selection would depend upon the director-general, as one head expressed that the current director-general would respect a schools' choice while '*people believed that the previous Director-Generals strongly dominated the headteacher selection*' (H7-noAP-A). Hence, different Director-Generals seem to exercise a different degree of intervention in head selection.

An almost unanimous response from respondents indicated that the head was regarded as *'a policy implementer'*. Both heads and division chiefs consistently

agreed that heads must implement education policy. As one division chief expressed, '*of course the head has to implement the education policy of the LED … what I'm saying is that the education policy must need to be done*' (O2-A). As for heads themselves, they also embraced this idea by saying that '*headteachers are the policy implementers … If we don't get the policy done, how could policy be delivered to schools?*' (H2-withAP-A) and '*for the LED officials, the highest priority for a headteacher is rightly policy implementation*'. 'Headteachers as policy implementers' seemed to be taken-for-granted by both heads and officials. As a head explained:

The headteacher, to a great extent, is an education policy implementer… For an implementer, I think that after the AP we can more precisely understand the intention and spirit of the policies promoted by the LED. When you understand the original intention, you are more likely to transform them into strategies and put steps into practice. I felt that this is a connection that AP heads make as they undertook the AP and then become school headteachers.

(H1-withAP-A)

It is noteworthy that several heads stated that the AP experience would help them to persuade their colleagues of policy and put policy into practice in schools. Therefore, it is not surprising that that those heads who had undertaken the AP in the LED were very willing to deliver and implement policies at the school level.

5.2 Findings of Case B

5.2.1 The context and structure of the AP in Case B

The context of Case B city

The Case B city is a newly upgraded municipality in Taiwan. It has a large population in local regions, and also has a high degree of diversity in its student body as well as its geographic conditions. The LED in this city consists of 9 divisions and 6 units (see Figure 5.4), taking charge of about 330 primary and secondary schools. However, according to respondents' comments, the capacity of the LED in this city faced problems of high turnover and understaffing.
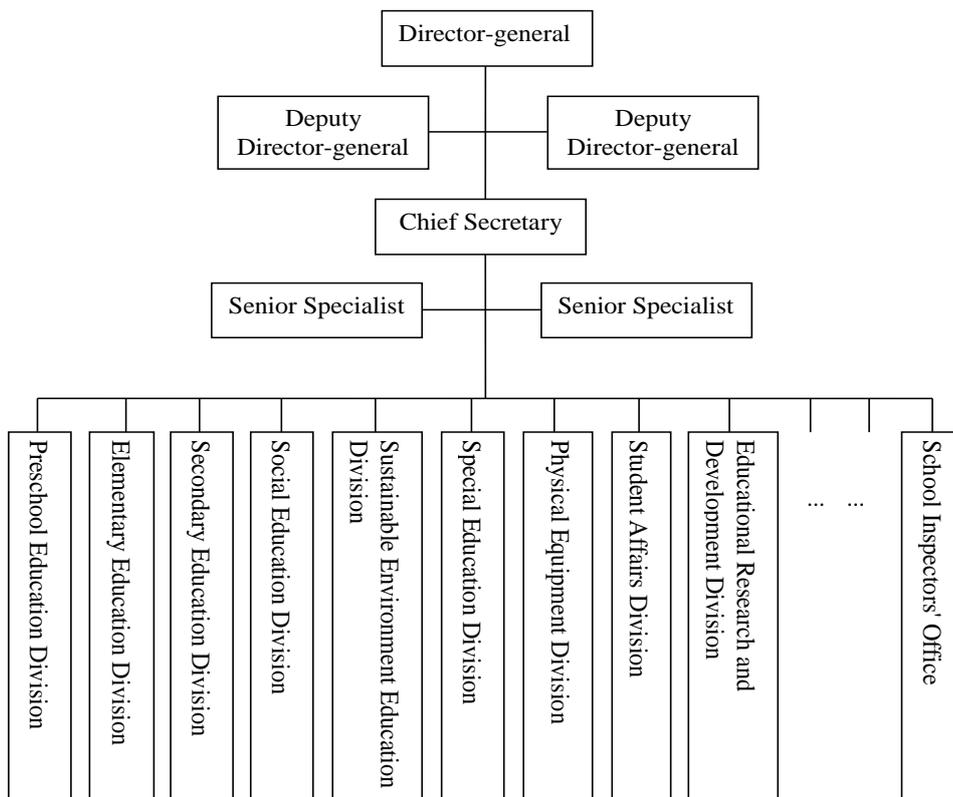
Figure 5.4 The hierarchically organisational structure of the LED in Case B

The headship preparation in Case B is divided into three stages. Firstly, having passed the head exam, aspiring heads have to join an eight-week pre-service training course at the National Academy for Educational Research (NAER)[2] where they are trained with colleagues from different local districts. Secondly, they have to attend a three-week training course run by the LED itself to explain the local education policy issues. Finally, unlike Case A, aspiring heads are required to complete a one-year administrative placement (AP) in the LED office, prescribed as mandatory since 2011 (Doc-B-02, Doc-B-08, Doc-B-09, Doc-B-10, Doc-B-11, Doc-B-12). According to the official document *The 2011 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City* (Doc-B-08), the aspiring head would not be qualified and certified until they have completed the one year AP. Thus, the AP in Case B is prescribed as part of the headship preparation programmes.

As for the headship selection in this city, the LED would yearly organise a head selection committee for new recruitment and in-service head transference (Doc-B-03). The committee is composed of three representatives each of parents, teachers and heads, two representatives of scholars and four of government officials. Of the four government officials, two are the director-general and deputy director-general of the LED, while the other two could be division chiefs or other senior officials. The 'fluid members' (Doc-A-06, Doc-A-07) that operate in Case A where teacher and parent representatives from the school with the headship

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[2] The National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) was the central organisation in charge of the centralised pre-service training programme in the previous era of Taiwan Provincial Government. Since the organisational downsizing of the provincial government in Taiwan in 1998, the provincial government was no longer responsible for headship pre-service training. The headship pre-service training becomes the local city/county affair.

vacancy can be involved in the committee are not adopted in Case B (Doc-B-03). Every head candidate has options to apply to the committee for their preferred schools. Then the committee representatives would vote for the appropriate candidate to the headship vacant school.

An overview of the groups of interviewees

I interviewed nine participants in Case B. Interviewees can be divided into three main groups, including superiors in the LED, school inspectors and heads. The division-chief (O1-B) from the LED was female and had wide experiences of working for different local education departments. The school inspector (S1-B) who previously worked for Case A city had also experiences of supervising both heads with AP experience and heads without AP experiences.

With regard to the group of heads, I interviewed six heads who had undertaken the AP training and were all novice heads in their first headship. Three of them were primary heads (H1-withAP-B, H2-withAP-B, H3-withAP-B) and three were secondary heads (H4-withAP-B, H5-withAP-B, H6-withAP-B). I also interviewed one new head (H7-noAP-B) who did not need to undertake the AP due to the sudden shorthanded headship in 2012. Table 5.2 shows the profile of interviewees in Case B, and the more detailed basic demographic information for each informant was summarised in Appendix 5.

Table 5.2 The profile of groups of case study interviewees in Case B

Cases	Superior (Division-chief)	School Inspector	Headteachers		
			With AP	Without AP	Doing AP
Case B	O1-B	S1-B	H1-withAP-B H2-withAP-B H3-withAP-B H4-withAP-B H5-withAP-B H6-withAP-B	H7-noAP-B	—

The structural content of the AP

According to headship preparation regulations in 2012 in Case B (Doc-B-10), the AP aimed to widen heads' visions and enhance their understanding of education policy in a practical way. The regulation also requires aspiring heads to undertake the AP in the LED office for at least a half of the year, while many interviewed heads undertook their AP for a full year. The aspiring heads will be certified only after they undertake their AP. In other words, the AP has become a prerequisite for headship in Case B.

Once aspiring heads complete the pre-service training, they will be allocated to LED division offices where they work with civil servants and senior officials. The division chief is such a senior official who also acts as both AP heads' direct superior and the site supervisor during the AP. There was apparently no formal supervision for these AP heads in this case. The AP heads in this case had to do laborious and time-consuming administrative tasks which were usually educational project and policy work and administrative bureaucracy. The AP heads in Case B

are called *counsellors,* a title often given to the curriculum advisor in a district-level curriculum development advisory group.

5.2.2 The work practices of AP heads

Respondents indicated that although AP heads were titled *counsellor* in the LED, in fact they were treated as case officers. They were actually in charge of a wide array of administrative tasks, such as drafting official documents or educational projects, accounting, and routines; in other words, the typical mechanistic bureaucracy of the LED. Therefore, it is this wide range of day-to-day administrative tasks, and the laborious bureaucracy that form AP heads' work practices in the LED. As one head put it:

> *When we were in the LED, we were counsellors, but we were really case officers. That meant that we had to do everything on our own, which equated to a generic civil servant. So, to be honest, we had to answer phone calls and deal with the details in terms of paperwork, documentation and budget cancellation.*

> (H5-withAP-B)

It is worth noting that working in the LED office is quite an unfamiliar task for aspiring heads. AP heads needed to cope with the challenges such as facing different working cultures, unfamiliar colleagues, and different tasks, roles and demands. Furthermore, they had to be efficient and productive in handling official documentation, to work very long hours, to follow their superior's command, and to

present themselves at their best so that they were more likely to succeed in head selection. When talking about their experiences of working in the LED, many heads in this case described it as e*xtremely busy, tough, challenging, stressful, or painstaking.*

Moreover, in addition to the administrative routines, the data showed that these AP heads were more likely to be assigned important policy work and interim tasks, due to their experienced administrative capacities and well-established local networks with various schools and leaders. As an inspector in this case noted, for the LED officials, these AP heads were '*more reliable*' than initial civil servants. For instance, one AP head in this study was assigned to take charge of an entirely new project that was the Mayor's flagship policy in education, investing about 30 million pounds for the secondary school educational reform.

Among the various work practices, perhaps the most overwhelming task was the official documentation. This great deal of documentation was mainly the paperwork of various forms of official documents, such as educational regulations, projects, policies, funding and budget, which need to be drafted firstly by AP heads, and then examined by superiors. However, most AP heads were not proficient in drafting these formal government documents, in particular using the right official genre, technical terms and format. Therefore, they were very often required to redraft them several times until their superiors were satisfied, as one head described:

If you are drafting an official document for the mayor, this document will need various countersignatures by different officials… You would find that this is really a waste of time and energy, but you have to get it done... I was not used to this culture, because we produced our official documents in a very simple way when we were in schools.

(H6-withAP-B)

Heads' perceptions showed that the paperwork of official documents in a highly hierarchical organisation was time-consuming and laborious and such paperwork required rigid forms and procedures of official writings that AP heads needed to adopt. This work thus took a great deal of time in their daily practices in the LED.

Heads pointed out the lack of time and the constant pressure of deadlines for official documentation. The use of timetables in the LED is distinctive from that in schools. In the LED, each official document has its deadline that varies according to its different attributes. And, like the Case A, each staff member's official documentation paperwork was tightly controlled by the digital official documentation management system through which the process, procedure and progress of each piece of document can be tracked, and the performance of each staff member and each division can be compared and ranked. Any delay of document paperwork would be visible and knowable through the system, and subject to blame, as the following comments revealed:

I felt that I needed to be very careful and conscientious on everything. For example, we had a limited timeframe for conducting official documents. If

you were to delay ... you would probably be [blamed]. So, when I was there,

I was quite stressed out … The official document system in the LED was a

digital system, so I knew the deadlines of every one of my documents…I got

a huge amount of documents every day, nearly 60 or 70 pieces, so every

day I was worried whether I would be able to meet deadlines.

(H5-withAP-B)

The data also reveals that the majority of AP heads worked very long hours at the office and additionally worked at home or on weekends. They remarked that although they worked very long hours, they felt that the tasks were never done and the constant distractions in the office meant that they had to allocate some time for certain tasks in particular, drafting official documents and projects outside of office hours, for instance, '*before 9.00 am* or *after 5:00 pm until 9 pm or 10 pm'*. Here, we can see that the exhaustive use of time and the extraordinary workloads placed significant pressure on AP heads.

5.2.3 The disciplinary techniques in AP practices

When I interviewed the division chief in her office in the LED, I had the opportunity to observe the office layout (see Figure 5.4). What intrigued me was its large open-plan structure of the division office where several sections were arranged in that space without partitions. This office layout of the LED was very similar to that in Case A. As I walked into the division to interview the division chief, I noticed that the staff member's desks were arranged in the two rows just in front of division chief's desk and that only her desk was equipped with a higher shelf which kept her

less visible. Due to such an arrangement of space and seating, every staff member and AP head can be seen from the division chief's desk.

Figure 5.5 The open-plan office of the LED in Case B

Heads' accounts revealed their awareness of surveillance from the LED officials who might have strong influence on their selection. When talking about the function of the AP, more than half of the interviewed heads used the terms '*close observation*' or '*close surveillance*' referring to how they were closely examined by officials through which their ability, capacity, attitude and performance can be exposed and evaluated, as the following comments reveal:

> *On the other hand, I felt that the placement in the LED can be understood in different ways. The purpose of this placement in the LED, in effect, is aimed*

at closely observing these aspiring heads, to know whether you fit this headship or not. Ha-ha-ha! (Laughed loudly) This is true. Right, it is aimed to look at probably, such as, your communication, your endurance, and administrative traits. Because, this observation would have an influence on the result of your subsequent headteacher selection.

<div align="right">(H4-withAP-B)</div>

Observation came not just from division chiefs, but also other lower-ranking officials, and colleagues for example. Some stressed that the case officers, their colleagues in the LED, could be observers as well, due to the fact that they were able to influence division chief's impressions of AP heads.

Under such observation, an unfolding visibility of AP heads' abilities, skills and dispositions was established through the daily practices of the AP in front of officials, the observers. This wide range of abilities, dispositions and skills of AP heads was not only subject to officials' observation but also subject to their judgements. For instance, the school inspector stressed '*emotional intelligence and the ability of handle crises'* for AP heads (S1-B) and the division chief particularly emphasised on their '*problem-solving ability', 'oral expression',* and *'the way in which the AP heads interacted with others*' (O1-B). In addition, the data showed that the way in which AP heads conducted their work was also subject to officials' judgements. It was particularly the case of the production of official documents where AP heads needed to complete the drafting on time, to use the correct official genre, technical terms and formatting, and to revise the drafting in compliance with their superiors' marked corrections. Through the examination of

this paperwork their efforts, capability, efficiency, productivity and obedient conformity were revealed and assessed, compared, and corrected by officials. However, the production of official documents was just one of the various forms of the examination that AP heads were subject to.

Heads' accounts also revealed that AP heads were judged and compared with each other in competition for subsequent head selection, and that the outcome of this competition represented the reward and punishment for AP heads' performance. The data indicated that the LED seemed to support those AP heads who were perceived as 'good' by 'allocating' them to 'larger' schools as a sort of *reward*, and conversely may oppose those who were deemed 'failing' by failing their head selection as a kind of *punishment,* or assigning them to remote and small schools when the selection was not competitive, as one head summed up:

> *For example, headteacher Peter [pseudonym] was assigned to a 130-classroom school, and mine is 50-classrooms. Basically, it is only the experienced headteacher who has been given headship in one or two different schools that can have the opportunity to take charge of this kind of [large] school. The practices and experiences in the LED in effect are very important and can demonstrate your capacity to the LED. Not all of the AP heads can be appointed to such a large-scale school… we did know that some AP heads were appointed to smaller schools.*

> (H3-withAP-B)

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When I went further to ask this head what the headship appointment to a 'large' school meant, he explained that *'being appointed to a large school is usually regarded as a sort of recognition of your capability'* (H3-withAP-B). On this account, schools seem to be viewed hierarchically by their scale and geographic location, and in line with this, the AP heads in the LED are also being ranked hierarchically according to judgements of their capability and AP performance by officials.

5.2.4 The AP effects on AP head's subjectivity formation

An almost unanimous response from interviewees indicated that the proceeding of head selection in Case B seemed to be dominated by the LED superiors rather than being decided collectively and democratically by headship selection committee members, and that AP heads' performance during the AP was deemed decisive to their headship. Many heads highlighted this explicit connection between their AP performance and the subsequent possibility to be 'appointed' to the headship despite their inability to justify it. When I was interviewing heads about their selection experiences, instead of using the term '*being voted*' they would rather use terms like '*assigned by the LED*', '*distributed*', '*allowed to be*', and '*appointed*' to refer to their designation of headship. These terms have explicitly indicated the dominance of the government authority on head selection. More obviously, one head noted that the LED officials '*had already manoeuvred the result of headteacher selection in advance*' and *'the headteacher selection committee was often merely a superficial formality*' (H7-noAP-B). The data also showed that it was the division chiefs who had a strong(er) influence on head selection in Case B:

We don't have 'fluid members' in our headteacher selection committee. To be honest, it is the education LED that dominates headteacher selection. Ok, who has the decisive power in the education LED? It is division [chief]! The director-general would tend to ask division chiefs for their opinions because the director-general couldn't know every aspiring head.

(O1-B)

Therefore, for AP heads, working in front of these division chiefs would be uneasy since these officials could greatly influence their headship selection. As the interview with the division chief was conducted in her LED office, I happened to have the chance to observe how AP heads interacted with the division chief. My observation was that when discussing an educational project with the division chief, the AP head was answering the division chief's questions very cautiously. As a bystander, to be honest, I could feel the tension between the two.

Data also showed that AP heads seemed to become more aligned with what was expected of them because what did not conform to the expectation or the norms seemed to be excluded and rejected through the head selection mechanism. It was apparent that in this highly hierarchical LED, there it was a latent norm that superiors demanded obedience from inferiors and also from AP heads. Many heads pointed to this normality by explaining that *'you have to do what you are told to do by officials when you are there'* or that a *'superior's orders will absolutely be fulfilled'*. Such obedience which is usually inscribed onto civil servants' ethic, now seems to have been internalised as a norm into the AP heads' body and soul as a

norm, as the following comment suggests, '*so in this situation I just completed what the superior assigned to me, and I didn't think too much*' (H6-withAP-B).

However, this research also found an interesting phenomenon that AP heads were not just passively obedient to superiors but in effect actively expected themselves to perform as best as they could, to '*set their standards high*' and to value '*self-regulation*'; in short, they self-disciplined themselves. They work hard to reshape their behaviour and attitudes in order to be recognised as '*competent heads*'. As some heads remarked, working in front of or with these officials would also place great pressure on them and force them to obey their superiors' instructions or '*fulfil what superiors order [them to do]*' on the one hand and yet on the other hand they had to make a good impression on the officials:

> *Thus, during this period of time I must present my particular merit and perform at my best in order to make sure of the next headteacher selection. So, it turned out that you had to try to perform at your best.*
>
> (H6-withAP-B)

The data showed that in order to be successfully appointed to the headship, AP heads seemed to tend to humble themselves, carefully manage their emotions, thoughtfully interact with superiors, actively perform at their best, and pay lots of attention to their word of mouth reputation in the LED. In brief, they pushed themselves to become a competent head, and not the least to satisfy their superiors' demands.

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Heads reported that they had better understandings of the administrative operations, standards, and procedures of the LED. For instance, they learnt the crisis management in the LED which they found relevant to their school-level crisis management. Moreover, the data also showed that AP heads in the LED had more opportunities to be involved in the policy-making process. They would have chances to attend national meetings on behalf of their local educational LED through which they could understand the complexity of the policy-formation process or '*the rationale underpinning of certain policies*'. Through observing or being involved in the decision-making process in the bureaucratic LED, heads noted that they not only better understood the process of policy-making and became more willingly to execute policy implementation. These practical experiences and improved understandings of educational policy seemed to ease AP heads' '*resistance to the implementation of policy*' and helped them '*get the momentum*' (H6-withAP-B) to implement district or national policies at the school level and further persuade their teachers to accept policies.

Respondents also commented on the contribution of the AP training to the widening of their professional networks with central and local officials, long-serving heads, media journalists, local politicians and that it was most effective in helping them with issues of '*school problem-solving and resource accessing*' (H6-withAP-B). Also some heads characterised these valuable interpersonal relations as a '*social account book*' (H6-withAP-B) that refers to the accumulation of social capital through building up interpersonal connection with other professionals. As the division chief stated (O1-B) and was echoed by many heads after their AP training, '*heads more easily gained resources from the LED*' due to their intimate connection with LED officials.

Immersing themselves in administrative or policy work in the LED would also widen AP heads' horizons and visions and change their perspectives on educational issues. Several reported that they would have '*a bird's eye view of the education policy*' of the whole city, or that via their work practices they learnt how to thoughtfully consider opinions from different groups of people. A secondary school head nicely noted how this experience changed her thought pattern:

The expanded horizons made me change my educational thinking about learning equality. I was focused on an individual child's learning at the class level, but now I tend to care about the equality issue of a bigger student population in this city, not just only a small classroom of students.

(H6-withAP-B)

Leadership is an important aspect identified by many heads as a benefit of the AP. Many stated that they either learnt leadership from LED superiors or built up a leadership capacity in their subsequent schools with the nourishment of AP work experiences. Heads reported that readily accessing the policy information contributed to earning the trust of school teachers. As one head expressed that she was more able to '*convince her teachers of what she said and then lead*'. Earning more resources or funding through their network connections with LED officials seemed to have a similar advantage over trust building and school leadership. Besides, heads were able to identify the changes to their personal attitudes and leadership skills; for instance, some pointed out that they became

better at working under stress, and others noted that they learned to be more courteous in their school leadership.

5.2.5 The rationale and purpose of the AP

The data showed that before 2009 the LED in Case B City tended to rely on seconded teachers working in the LED due to the understaffing problem. At that time, qualified reserve heads tended to return to their school rather than be required to enter to the LED. However, a version of the AP started to emerge and can be documented from 2009:

> The qualified reserve heads who have completed the pre-service training but not yet been appointed to headship are subject to undertake educational administrative placement in the education department. The qualified reserve heads will be transferred to the education department if the education department needs the assistance of the qualified reserve head in certain work responsibilities.
>
> (Doc-B-06: *The 2009 regulation of headteachers' examination, recruitment and training in [Case B] City*)

It was not until 2011 that the compulsory AP was introduced. The AP immediately became a prerequisite for headship in Case B city, as the official regulation documented:

In order to broaden the vision and enhance the understanding of education policy, the aspiring headteachers who have passed the headship examination are subject to undertake the administrative placement in the education department for at least one academic year. After the completion of the stage three training programme, aspiring headteachers will be certified as qualified reserve headteachers.

(Doc-B-8: *The 2011 regulation of headteachers' examination, recruitment and training in [Case B] City*)

The above two extracts, taken from the official regulations from 2009 and 2011 respectively, have revealed discursive shifts in relation to how the AP was thought about and discussed officially. From the regulation text in 2009, the AP was utilised for importing more workforces to assist the LED in dealing with administrative work responsibilities. While in the 2011 policy document, it shifted to become a part of headship training programmes (stage three) with a strong developmental character in the policy domain. More than this, only those who have completed the AP can be certified as qualified reserve headteachers after 2011 (Doc-B-09, Doc-B-10, Doc-B-11, Doc-B-12). However, the interview data revealed that the AP was not authentically designed for the progressive preparation of the head. Instead, it was created to supplement the workforce in order to deal with the understaffing problem, as the division chief admitted that the '*main reason of the AP was for the workforce alone*' and '*therefore, it came about to create an [AP] scheme by which all aspiring heads are required to come in [to the LED]* (O1-B)'.

In addition to this, heads also revealed that it was because of the LED's dissatisfaction with the '*low cooperation and inability of the policy implementation of some in-service headteachers'* (H1-withAP-B) that led the LED to require all aspiring heads to come to participate in the AP. This was particularly the case when the LED found that the heads did not clearly understand the LED's policy initiatives. Therefore, the AP was created and functioned as a quality management mechanism which includes and excludes AP heads through examining, improving and selecting individuals; one head analogised the AP to '*close examination and management*' (H6-withAP-B).

It seemed to be evident that the 'retraining' mechanism for AP heads was used by the division chief as a tactic for rendering AP heads more compliant. This was conducted through the endorsement of selected AP heads, who had previously failed their first round head selection, in their next round of head selection. Here, as the division chief identified below, the motive was to make AP heads obedient to work harder through the strategy of 'retraining':

> *My strategy is that when there are, for example, twenty headship vacancies but there are fifty AP heads waiting for headteacher selection, definitely, thirty of them will be unable to be appointed this year…therefore, my strategy is that after the head selection I will only pick some of them from these thirty AP heads and let them stay in the LED, but let the rest go back to school. By doing this, it is very clear that people will see the consequences in the next headteacher selection. This is the strategy. So,*

after you replicate this [retraining model] once or twice more, AP heads will

know whether they need to work intensely and rigorously or not.

<div align="right">(O1-B)</div>

This retraining was an efficient tactic to manage the group of AP heads as it worked through intervening in their career mobility.

Many heads stated that their headships were decided by the LED superiors and arranged or deployed to certain schools. The data revealed that it was mainly the director-general and other senior officials who arranged and decided who could become heads and to which schools they would be appointed. Both the division chief and a head used the term '*moving a chess piece'* to refer to the way in which the head was deployed to certain schools. Failing to understand the aspiring heads and arrange them properly to suitable places (schools) was deemed '*very dangerous*' for the LED, as the division chief's accounts revealed (O1-B).

There seemed to have been a bonding relationship between the LED and heads who successfully completed the AP and were appointed to the headship, as heads in this study referred to their previous AP division of the LED as the 'mother division'. The relationship that derived from their cooperative experiences in the AP would help heads gain resources, funding and crucial information from the LED. Heads would also be more likely to assist the LED in undertaking additional administrative tasks. This relationship would bring both sides benefits through reciprocity, as a head commented that '*if the school headteacher helps [the LED] more, then the school would probably get more resources'* (H6-withAP-B). Facing

the LED's request, many heads in the study noted that they always said '*Yes*' or '*spare no efforts*' in order to cooperate with the LED. One head detailed the situation:

> *Because we had stayed in the LED, the deputy director-general and director-general knew quite well what kind of headteachers we are. Hence, if they had certain important tasks which they needed help with, of course they would allocate them to us. For example, they wanted to establish a Fitness Test Unit in my school which has to offer services on weekends. A sort of unit providing services for all secondary schools, and that they pick me/my school up. I definitely said yes! Definitely yes! Definitely do it!*
>
> (H5-withAP-B)

Moreover, heads reported that the AP practices, coupled with the later bonding relationship would affect their subsequent school management. For instance, the division's main tasks, for which the AP heads had a better understanding, would also become their school's development activities in the end. A head explained by noting that after the AP he was invited to be part of a team that undertook certain educational projects set up by the LED, and accordingly had more chances to lead his school '*to be more aligned with the LED's main focuses*' (H1-withAP-B).

The AP not only produced an emotional connection between AP heads and the LED, but also provided a base for officials to deliver certain intended tasks or policies to schools through AP heads. This was especially the case when the AP

head was going to be appointed to a school, he or she might be assigned certain tasks to undertake in that school. A division chief revealed this delivery process:

> *When the AP head is appointed to that school, the AP head brings the superior's assigned tasks to the school, such as a certain specialist programme. Gosh! The AP head himself/herself becomes that certain specialising feature [for the school]. So this specialising feature was imposed on the school by the will of superiors rather than through school's own development. The school itself has been part of policy implementation and aligned with the policy will. Would this harm students' learning? Yes, it would. It would entirely blur the school's original function. You know!? ...this is true, this is exactly happening... I think this is negative!*

> (O1-B)

The division chief's comments suggested that the imposition of government will on school development has had negative effects on students' learning and school development as a whole. This division chief went further to identify two similar case. For this division chief, this sort of imposition of government will through AP heads as implementers eradicated the school's essential nature to develop its own features. Here, as the division chief suggested, the AP was functioning as '*a base for the delivery of policy will*' and a vehicle for carrying out a number of governing mechanisms through which local government can shape schooling.

Heads in this study also expressed that after their AP, they were more willing to follow up the LED's policies at the school level due to their bond with the LED and

also their broadened policy knowledge. They attributed their willingness to their participation in policy formation and their understandings of administrative operations in the LED during their AP. On the one hand they understood the rationale of the policy so that they were more likely to persuade their school teachers to implement the policy; on the other hand, as a former member of the LED, the bonding relations would lead them to accept the commands from the LED. It seemed that the AP experience would help to reduce their resistance to policy implementation. As one head clearly articulated, if aspiring heads did not undertake the AP in the LED, they would be *'quite unfamiliar with the policy-maker … and would be more resistant to policies'* (H1-withAP-B)*.* This head went further to take as an example a Mayor's newly announced policy. This new policy, which was about requiring schools to release the spare space for social care service, was disagreed with by several experienced heads. The Mayor was then forced to publicly criticise them for their lack of cooperation. This head continued by saying:

> *Instead, I did do that policy in my school. As I said earlier, we are more likely to coordinate with policies. This is a genuine bonding. First, we have a relationship [with the LED]; and secondly, we know why this policy looks like this…We understand this policy as a political commitment needs to be put into practice. In fact, it was one of the mayor's electoral promises, so the LED needs to get this promise done… However, other headteachers [who did not undertake the AP] called us into question by asking 'why do you coordinate with the LED so much?'*

> (H1-withAP-B)

Central to this comment was two things. First, the head drew a distinction between heads who completed the AP and those who did not go through the AP. The group of heads then could be divided by their AP experience. Second, the political pressure deriving from the city mayor seemed to be eased through the support of the heads who had undertaken their AP. As a city mayor, re-election might be their major concern. Thus, the mayor needs to show his/her accomplishments to catch the voters' eyes and win the next election. On this basis, the pressure was also placed on the director-general of the LED who was designated directly by the mayor. It is here that the political considerations were taken into account for the role of the AP in the local political context. It implies that the emerging group of heads with AP experience is implicated in the broader political terrain of the local government.

Chapter 6   Research findings (2)

6.1   Findings of Case C

6.1.1   The context and structure of the AP in Case C

The context of Case C County

Case C County is a small county in Taiwan located on the west coast. As for its educational authority in the local county government, there are 8 divisions under the LED (Figure 5.6). The Compulsory Education Division is in charge of about 180 primary schools and 60 secondary schools, with total student numbers of about one hundred and sixty-five thousand. The LED website indicates that due to the county's agricultural focus, Case C County has relatively fewer educational resources and a more limited financial budget compared with metropolitan areas.
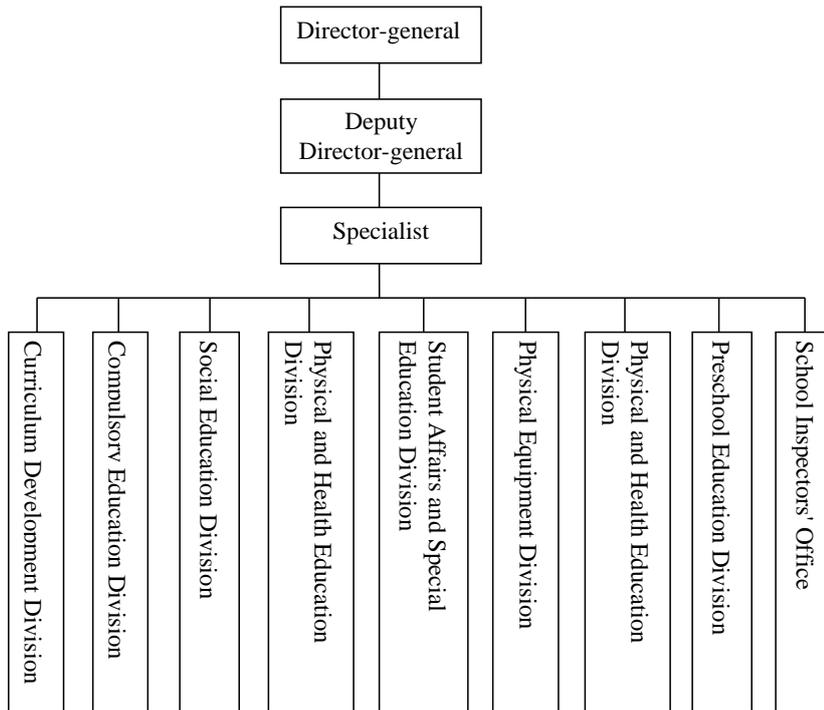
Figure 6.1 The hierarchically organisational structure of the LED in Case C

Case C County, like Case B City, commissions its head preparation programme to the National Academy for Educational Research (NAER). Aspiring heads in Case C have to join an eight-week pre-service training programme at the NAER where they are trained with other candidates from different counties or cities (Doc-C-05, Doc-C-13). Since 2011, the LED made the AP compulsory for all of the aspiring heads as part of the headship pre-service training (Doc-C-06, Doc-C-14). Aspiring heads are required to undertake the AP in the LED office for at least one year. After the successful completion of the NAER training programme and the AP in the LED, aspiring heads will be certified as qualified reserve heads who may be considered by the headship selection committee when positions become available.

The LED in Case C organises a head selection committee yearly for new head recruitment and for in-service head transference. According to the official

regulation (Doc-C-17), the head selection committee in Case C is composed of at least two representatives from the county chief-secretary and the director-general respectively, and five representatives from the LED, scholar, parent association, teacher, and community. The process of head selection is that every candidate can apply to the committee for their preferred schools and then the committee would interview the candidates and then vote to fill the relevant vacancies. But the head selection in Case C has the distinctive feature that the head selection process is less competitive and that every qualified reserve head will be sequentially appointed to a headship through their assessment scores in the head examination. Before the committee, the qualified reserve heads will negotiate their preferred school and try to reach a consensus with each other. Also, the qualified reserve head who had higher scores in the exam could have priority in choosing the school with a headship vacancy to which they would like to be appointed. Only when the vacant school is large and important for the LED will the officials intervene in the discussion. A head in the study proved this by saying that *we have the 'ethics' in [Case C], and we are appointed to headship according to our scores. Although the headship selection still proceeds, everyone gets a headship in that order* (H4-withAP-C). Heads and officials referred to this as '*ethics*', that is, the unwritten rules and norms among the qualified reserve heads, in-service heads and LED officials.

An overview of the groups of interviewees

I interviewed eight participants in Case C. Interviewees can be divided into three main groups, including superiors in the LED, school inspectors and heads. Both the division-chief from the LED and School inspector were male. The division-chief

(O1-C) of the Curriculum Development Division I interviewed was relatively young, about in his late 30s, and had been working for his current post for three years. The school inspector (S1-C) was senior and had 21-year-long experience in the local government in Case C. He previously acted as a division-chief as well and had worked with AP heads for many years. With regard to the group of heads, I interviewed five heads who had undertaken the AP training and were all novice heads in their first headship. Three of them were primary heads (H1-withAP-C, H2-withAP-C, H3-withAP-C) and two were secondary heads (H4-withAP-C, H5-withAP-C). In order to understand how heads without AP experiences would view the AP, I also interviewed one experienced head (H6-noAP-C). He previously served as the President of Heads' association in the Case C County. Table 6.1 shows the profile of interviewees in Case C, and the more detailed basic demographic information for each informant was summarised in Appendix 5.

Table 6.1 The profile of groups of case study interviewees in Case C

Cases	Superior (Division-chief)	School Inspector	Headteachers		
			With AP	Without AP	Doing AP
Case C	O1-C	S1-C	H1-withAP-C H2-withAP-C H3-withAP-C H4-withAP-C H5-withAP-C	H6-noAP-C	—

The structural content of the AP

The compulsory AP in Case C is relatively new and associated with headship qualified certification. Since 2011 the local government regulated that all the

aspiring heads had to undertake the one-year AP in the LED following their pre-service training. LED regulations require a one-year AP as a part of the headship pre-service training, thus making the AP a prerequisite for headship (Doc-C-06, Doc-C-14). If aspiring heads rejected the AP, they would lose the headship qualification. However, surprisingly, data from interviews and document analysis (Doc-C-07, Doc-C-16) indicated that there was no specific training plan or placement guidance provided for these AP heads.

Every year the LED in Case C prepares around 10-20 newly qualified reserve heads, depending on the number of retired heads. For instance, there were 12 headship candidates doing the administrative placement in the LED in Case C County in 2011-12, but each year the numbers of AP heads fluctuates slightly. Each AP head will be allocated to one division and work under the division chief's supervision. Like Cases A and B, the AP heads in Case C have to deal with bureaucratic tasks and educational policy work. During the period of the AP they are called *curriculum inspectors*, which is a title often granted to retired outstanding heads who are invited by the LED to assume positions inspecting the curriculum and pedagogy of schools.

6.1.2 The work practices of AP heads

The heads interviewed in Case C reported that they tended to take charge of more administrative tasks and less professional educational project work. This meant that the AP heads in Case C shared more administrative routines. They had to deal with a great amount of official documents, the accounting and the bureaucratic routine. Many were therefore viewed and treated as *civil servants*. In particular,

most of the interviewed heads pointed to the complicated accounting work as the most difficult and time-consuming task in their AP. Several heads even complained that '*learning the accounting in the LED is useless*' due to the fact that they do not need to do so such accounting work in their school. Therefore, the heads expressed that they preferred educational projects to bureaucratic tasks:

> *We AP headteachers in [Case C] County were the same as civil servants. We were doing a similar type of work …We spent too much time on administrative procedures. Frankly, I thought that they occupied too much time.*
>
> (H4-withAP-C)

The AP heads in Case C tended to be assigned more important tasks due to their experience in school administrative duties. Many of the AP heads had a heavy workload that was usually comprised of district- or national-level projects which were high-stakes. Heads also reported that the division chief tended to rely more upon them than the general civil servants, in particular in dealing with pressing and interim tasks, for instance, the urgent demands from local councillors. This reliance on AP heads was echoed by the interviewed inspector who was a division chief years ago. Therefore, it is no surprise that heads reported that they were multitasking, overloaded, under constant pressure and usually working overtime during the AP:

> *Because my work was a large district-level project, I spent a huge amount of time on it. I felt very tired and stressed until I finished that project…There*

was more and more work piled [on me], more and more, more and more... I
was up to my ears in work. I felt I was going mad during the busy period.

(H3-withAP-C)

As noted earlier, AP heads in Case C took charge of educational policy projects and administrative routines as their main work in the LED, including the work of accounting and budget cancellation. These administrative routines were associated with the official documentation, as every piece of accounting and budget cancellation would be turned into official documents, and the same went for the urgent demands from the mayor's office or local councillors. Official documentation is the fundamental medium for communication in the LED. Heads' accounts indicated that the AP heads had to spend the majority of their time preparing, drafting and revising official documents which demanded the formal genre, terms and format that they were not familiar with.

Moreover, the heads reported that when they entered the LED in 2011, the LED started to adopt the online official document system. Like Cases A and B, this digital audit and management system can track the progress of every single official document and compare the performance of every division. Many heads complained that they did not have any pre-training on official documentation and had to learn everything on their own and that they were very fearful over causing any delay of the official documents which would normally '*cause the official's blame*' (H3-withAP-C).

The research found that AP heads would have unique opportunities to interact with various public officials, attend district- and national-level meetings and to contact with county councillors and the media. These opportunities could expand their networks and thereby enrich their social capital. Some reported that they had opportunities to attend national-level meetings on behalf of their LED. As one head put it, '*although the AP was very painstaking, I found that I had a wider horizon and broader vision through my interaction with the Ministry of Education… so I think I have a better understanding of the education system as a whole*' (H4-withAP-C). And then they had access to the latest policy news and could participate in the process of policy formulation by participating in the meetings.

6.1.3 The disciplinary techniques in AP practices

The LED office in Case C was also a big open-plan layout where the open-plan office is divided into several compartments for divisions without panels. The AP heads are allocated into divisions and work within their division. Some heads reported that they were aware that the open-plan office in the LED, which was very different from their offices in their school, deprived them of privacy:

> *Furthermore, when we talk in the office, we never got any privacy. When the superior reprimanded someone, everyone could hear and see it. Then we felt, umm… we didn't have any privacy there, and everyone could see what we were doing.*
>
> (H3-withAP-C)

Figure 6.2 The open-plan office of the LED in Case C

(The view from a division chief's desk)

And also, have been placed in such a space, they noted that their behaviour could be overseen and examined:

In fact, your every move was visible, as if you were naked. Everyone there would see what you were doing and how you were acting. You were almost under examination.

(H2-withAP-C)

As the above quotation indicated, AP heads in that open-plan office were not only observed but also usually judged and examined by the officials. This judgement

was usually in relation to the range of personality and performance that a potential leader may have. For instance, the division chief in this study revealed how he observed heads, as well as what he valued and did not value and the impact of these judgements:

I would observe them to see whether they could bring their professional influence into full play in the office… so, I would observe them privately to see whether they would be consulted by our colleagues or not… or cooperate with other colleagues. So, [I] observe whether this AP head's personality is appropriate or not and thereby report this to the headteacher selection committee. This does have some influence on the headteacher selection.

(O1-C)

Central to this division chief's accounts is that he linked his judgment of AP heads' attitude, conduct and performance to their headship selection. While, as noted earlier, every qualified reserve head would sequentially be appointed to headship through their examination scores. How this judgement functions in AP heads' headship selection is more interesting and will be discussed below (see section 6.1.5).

What is equally important is that through such judgmental processes, AP heads seemed to become closer to what was expected of them, and more aligned to the norms existing in the workplace, such as the demands of efficiency, precision and compliance in school administration and management. As a consequence, AP heads seemed to be shaped in such a way that they could easily been

differentiated from those heads who did not undertake the AP, as the school inspector aptly indicated:

Right, there is a difference. The difference between those who have undertaken the AP and those who have never done it… It is because those who have gone through the AP know how the LED operates, what we expect, such as precision and the speed, and they tend to do better in these aspects.

(S1-C)

It was evident that AP heads were aware of officials' observation and judgements of their work, conduct and attitude and then tended to work on their behaviour. As a head said, when she (as an AP head) was required to prepare the news release or reply to the councillors' interpellation, she knew that the deputy director-general would see her work, and, thus she had to '*prepare those documents carefully*' in order to display her efforts (H4-withAP-C).

6.1.4 The AP effects on AP head's subjectivity formation

Although some revealed concerns about the irrelevance of certain AP work practices to the headship, most AP heads generally viewed the AP as positive for their headship preparedness. Many could identify a range of benefits, such as acquiring proficiency in administrative operations and procedures, better access to the LED's funding, wider horizons and networks, and greater confidence in their school leadership.

It is apparent that after the AP, heads have better understandings of the operation of the LED, such as administrative procedures and projects in each LED division. Heads reported that the understanding of these administrative procedures, resources and officials could largely benefit their subsequent school management and leadership. They were more aware of where to find funding, who to contact, and what projects they could apply for. Beyond these managerial aspects, the AP experience also benefited their school leadership, as one head noted that she could '*earn the trust from her leadership team and teachers by providing them with timely information or resources from the LED*' (H1-withAP-C). As such, she thought that building trust and reliability in her leadership team is particularly important for a newly appointed head.

Broadening one's horizons was a unanimous response from the heads interviewed. Through the AP practices, these heads had more opportunities to interact with LED officials, participate in the district- or national-level meetings, visit other schools, and work with other experienced heads. These AP experiences, as reported and echoed by the division chief, enhanced their '*vision*' and '*understandings of educational policies and education as a whole*'. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, this experience also extended their professional networks. What was more, the one- or two-year AP practices tended to strongly connect the AP heads with LED officials. The co-working experience and the trust built between each other produced a greater connection. Several pointed to this relationship transformation after their AP, as one head noted that *'the relationship between the LED officials and us is not only the relationship of leader-follower, but a partnership'* (H5-withAP-C). The original hierarchical relationship between the superiors and the AP heads seemed to be transformed into a 'partnership'.

Through multitasking in different high-stake tasks, interacting with various kinds of officials, and participating in lots of policy meetings, these heads felt they became more confident in school leadership and management than before. In addition, many heads noted that they had better communication with LED officials and inspectors after the AP, particularly in dealing with crisis events. Due to the mutual trust they built, they were more likely to report a crisis event immediately to the LED and inspectors rather than cover it up. For instance, a head shared his experience and noted that '*if someone is not familiar with superiors, she/he might be afraid to respond to the LED directly because they never interacted with each other*' (H2-withAP-C). This would help the LED to manage risks and to guide the school heads to solve the crisis.

6.1.5 The rationale and purpose of the AP

In the 2000s the education LED in Case C County invited only a few qualified reserve heads to assist the LED's educational projects. These qualified reserve heads had completed the pre-service training and had been waiting for head selection. Although they were invited to assist in the LED's project work, they basically stayed in their own schools and continued to act as school senior leaders rather than being placed in the LED office. Since 2009, however, a sort of administrative placement with a purpose to increase the manpower of the LED was documented in the regulation of headship exam and preparation (Doc-C-12). This newly created AP scheme was optional. Only when the LED needed the additional support, the qualified reserve heads were seconded to be based in the LED office. It was not until 2011 that the LED announced that the AP was part of headship

pre-service training and at that point the AP became mandatory, according to the 2011 regulations of primary and secondary headship examination, recruitment and training (Doc-C-06, Doc-C-14).

The rationales of driving the government to make the AP compulsory seem to be multifaceted. First and foremost, it was for the manpower supplement. Since 2011, the Case C County sequentially '*undertook several national-level events'* in that the government adaptively needed more workforce to support those events. It was about this time that the AP was turned compulsory according to the official regulations in 2011 (Doc-C-06, Doc-C-14). Besides this, more and more educational projects and initiatives were launched by the central government. The LED needed more staff to implement this increasing number of tasks. Thus, the qualified reserve heads who had extensive school administration experiences naturally became the '*best choice'* (S1-C).

A second rationale for making the AP compulsory was to narrow the gap between school heads and the LED on the issues of policy delivery, administrative task implementation and mutual relationship. The school inspector's comments indicated that the LED found that some new heads did not coordinate well with the LED. Thus, to help their aspiring heads understand the key points of administrative work and the rationales and procedures for the LED's work became necessary. Therefore, in order to resolve this problem, the AP was introduced into Case C setting. In so doing, the new heads were expected to be more productive and more willing and able to coordinate with the LED. As such, the LED would be more likely to put its policies into schools, as the school inspector noted:

We found that there was a gap between headteachers' performance, policy implementation and cognition, and the LED's expectation of their administrative work. Basically, the reason of introducing the AP is that on the one hand they would better understand the current educational administration tasks, and on the other they could understand the operation of the LED.

(S1-C)

However, this study found a contradiction between heads' and the division chief's perspectives on the function of the AP. As the division chief claimed that the AP was a part of headship training and '*the aspiring headteacher has to fulfil their obligation to undertake the AP*' (O1-C), while the interviewed heads stated that the purpose of the AP was for resolving the understaffing problem, rather than preparing aspiring heads. This was why some heads reported that they '*nursed a grievance*' against the AP for feeling that they were exploited during their AP (H4-withAP-C), and others harboured suspicions about the necessity of being involved in that laborious administrative bureaucracy (H1-withAP-C).

As noted, the Case C government undertook several national-level events and activities during 2011-2012. For an elected mayor intent on his or her own political survival, these sorts of large scale activities that yield meritorious results quickly can win electoral favour. However, these events and activities cannot be realised without the mobilisation of large groups of people. Very often heads or aspiring heads who are usually experienced administrators with good local knowledge and networks are deemed perfect for accomplishing these activities. The heads in this

study revealed several cases, not limited in Case C County, in which such national- or district-level activities, not necessarily education related, were assigned to the LED and then put into practice by hundreds of heads. Respondents also noted that it was because of the '*usefulness*' of aspiring heads that the local county decided to make the AP compulsory in 2011, so as to require them to assist in national level events. As aptly explained by a senior head, who was the former president of the Headteacher Association:

> *The reason that so many qualified reserve heads immediately entered the LED at that moment was because the changeover of the director-general. Furthermore, our County undertook large national-level activities that year … These activities needed a lot of administrators and volunteers, while the original manpower of the LED was insufficient ... However, the qualified reserve headteachers were the best human resource and leaders. So, our new director-general then decided to require these qualified reserve heads to enter the LED to do 'placement'. To be honest, this was our director-general's idea. I want to put it more straightforwardly that if the LED loses schools' cooperation, it cannot operate on its own.*

> (H6-noAP-C)

Essential to the above quotation is that the coordination with schools, in particular with school heads, is so important for the functioning of the LED and for the governing of the local education. Thus, how to maintain this relationship with heads then becomes crucial.

In order to deliver and complete administrative tasks efficiently, the right deployment of AP heads to certain 'right' schools was important for the LED. The interview data showed that the LED would intervene in head selection in Case C and appoint their preferred heads to the schools that were deemed to have more potential to assist in the county's or the LED's activities. As a division chief admitted, they will normally intervene in the head selection by '*singling out those larger schools and discussing with them the potential candidates in advance, because large schools have much greater impact*' (O1-C). In other words, once a 'good' AP head was appointed to such a school either with an effective administration team or in the proximity of the LED, the head and school could assist the LED in additional administrative tasks or activities. The following excerpts revealed this calculated deployment, as the division chief expressed firstly:

> *Let me give you an example, like headteacher Johnson (pseudonym) in Pine Hills school (pseudonym). That school is not a small one, but how could a new headteacher be appointed to that school? You know, we used to appoint new headteachers to small schools, rather than to a large one, like Pine Hills. It is because Johnson, he is very outstanding and we believed that he can handle the Pine Hills well. Thus, I recommended him to our director-general. I advised that he is very proper for the large or medium school. And the director-general agreed with me.*

> (O1-C)

In order to prove the issue of calculating deployment of AP heads, I also made contact with this '*outstanding*' head who came in first in the examination. In the

interview with this head, he noted that his '*division chief by all means wanted [him] to be appointed to this school*' and '*it is because once [he] arrive[s] at this school, [he] can help him (division chief) a lot, help him deal with more tasks* (H2-withAP-C).

And, it is noteworthy that prior to this calculated deployment, AP heads were subject to careful examination through which the 'outstanding and efficient' heads were produced and selected. As a head explained, previously once the aspiring heads passed the exam and completed the pre-service training, they were appointed to a headship. However*, 'no one really knew whether they could take the role'* because there was no examination mechanism before. Now, undertaking the AP has made the AP head visible and knowable, thus '*the officials know how they work and where they are best appointed to*' (H2-withAP-C).

Like Cases A and B, a close relationship between LED officials and AP heads who had successfully completed the AP and been appointed to the headship was normal after the AP. Heads noted that this relationship helped heads gain more resources, funding and crucial information from the LED. Due to this bond, the LED would also tend to request these heads to assist in undertaking more administrative tasks. This was clearly illustrated by the division chief:

> *They [AP heads] always said that I gave them the "bottom drawers". There are two kinds of bottom drawers. One is the resources. I would give them more resources, of course they have the priority. I always said that they were my own clique, they had the priority to receive the resources… I would*

no doubt allocate resources to those who I was familiar with. The second is the task, for example, like Andy, Amy, and Rose (pseudonyms), they usually take charge of administrative tasks… Hum, they would always give me help when I needed them. We have good collaboration because at least we understand each other. They know quite well what I expect.

(O1-C)

The *'bottom drawer'* here meant either the funding (resources) to heads or the administrative tasks assigned to them. In terms of the former, preferentially allocating resources and funding to the division chief's 'cliques' may lead to the issue of unequal distribution. Heads reported that this has resulted in tension between 'clique' heads and other senior heads who did not undertake the AP.

It was very surprising that in the respective interviews with six heads in Case C, two of them happened to be phoned with requests for assistance by the LED during their interview. The data indicated that the administrative tasks which were initially undertaken by AP heads were very often continuingly attached to them after they became school heads. For the LED, these school heads who had undertaken the AP and understood the administrative operations of the LED were perfect for assisting in these administrative tasks. As a head explained, '*we would try our best to help by taking charge of the task because we had done the AP in the LED and knew the [officials'] difficulties*' (H5-withAP-C). Their acceptance seemed to be driven by their bond with the LED officials and out of concern for their own reputation as an AP head:

The AP heads usually dare not shirk their work. Although we don't have AP performance assessment, reputation is still very important. Since I came here (school), what a huge amount of additional tasks I have received! I've received many assigned tasks from the LED … It is because one's reputation is so permanently influential that most of the AP heads do not shirk their tasks.

(H2-withAP-C)

However, some of the interviewed heads revealed their concerns with being overloaded with too many additional administrative tasks from the LED. They were concerned with the impact on school development, or wary of pressures on school operations and also the tensions that had emerged between heads and their leadership team. In particular, they were all newly appointed heads who needed to build up mutual trust with school colleagues. This caused a dilemma with which they were struggling, as was revealed by the 'outstanding' head who had accepted many assigned tasks from the LED:

But I feel that I am still struggling with [the acceptance of the assigned tasks from the LED], and my teachers are also struggling with it. No, in fact teachers are not struggling, they're resisting it. However, I'm still talking to them about how I am thinking about whether it is good or bad for our school.

(H2-withAP-C)

It is very apparent from above accounts that the obligation imposed by word of mouth reputation about this AP head himself drove him to work hard on the LED's

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assigned work. He spoke further on this aspect of self-governing *during the period of his AP*:

> *Furthermore, most of the people [the AP heads] pay attention to what others say about them, their reputation. That is to say, once you get into the LED, you must keep an eye on your behaviour. And, you don't dare to fail to complete the assigned tasks.*

<div align="right">(H2-withAP-C)</div>

In order to be recognised as a 'good and qualified' head, AP heads' word of mouth reputation is essential. AP heads then have to regulate themselves, to work on their 'image' in regard to their behaviour, attitude and capability during the AP. As a head noted, '*the AP heads set their standards high, so they won't slack off*' (H5-withAP-C). Even though they have been appointed to a school, they still keep a watch on their own conduct, taking care   in particular, not to offend the LED, as one head noted:

> *So, I tell you, since I have muddled through the LED and gotten to know its ecology, I would deal well with things, do my best, and not get on the LED's nerves. Some headteachers don't know when they have gotten on the LED's nerves. That is because they didn't undertake the AP and then they never know what makes the LED unhappy with them. However, we know. So we don't get on the LED's nerves with our school management. We keep a good relationship with the LED.*

<div align="right">(H2-withAP-C)</div>

When I was doing my fieldwork for Case C, I found that the AP was being re-examined and re-discussed by the LED and the heads. Just one week before I started my fieldwork there, the LED organised a meeting for reviewing the AP, as the inspector told me that '*it's very interesting that we were just discussing this issue [of the AP] last week and now you are coming to do research on this same issue*' (S1-C). The division chief, the school inspector and one head in this study happened to attend that meeting where the AP was questioned as to whether it was relevant to and necessary for headship preparation. Therefore, I queried the division chief and the attending head about this meeting in the hopes of uncovering some essential issues, for example, the possibility of resistance to it. The attending head mentioned some important information discussed in the meeting and expressed that the meeting materials reflected that '*some AP headteachers were aware of the AP's irrelevance to the authentic practice of school headship*' and '*they reported that the routines that they had done were irrelevant to and useless for their school leadership and headship… moreover, they thought that to some extent they were "exploited" during the AP*' (H6-noAP-C).

Such a voice of resistance was not directly delivered from the AP heads to the LED officials. It was instead delivered through the Headteacher Association to the officials. The LED then organised the meeting to respond to this challenge. The main concern of the meeting was surrounding the issue of the orientation of the AP. After the meeting, several new adjustments were put into place for the next year's AP. These include: a one-year maximum period for the AP; reducing the AP heads' routine work; introducing authentic school placement for AP heads; providing

mentoring during the AP; arranging regular rotation in different divisions; placing AP heads according to their preferred division.

In fact, when I was interviewing the heads in Case C, some heads had revealed their suspicions about the necessity of undertaking the AP training and questioned its relevance to their headship and school leadership. One senior head spoke on issue:

> *What is the purpose of the training in the AP? Is the AP head like a civil servant? We don't want them to be treated as civil servants, because that will be too much for them. We really hope they are doing a genuine administrative placement in school.*
>
> (H6-noAP-C)

These kind of interrogations found in Case C seemed to be less significant in Cases A and B. It showed that the necessity of the AP was called into question and resisted in some way by AP heads and in-service heads as well. In a sense, the AP heads in Case C did not want to be treated in such a way, and they sought to resist the dominance of the AP regime through the support of their Headteachers' Association. This raised another question: What makes the AP heads in Case C more inclined to resist, to change the situation they don't prefer? The following head's account perhaps could help to explain:

> *So, the AP heads in other cities or counties must be more obedient as they have rigid headteacher selection systems. But our headteacher selection*

is much more humanistic, the AP heads in our county can have a bit more free will…Once the headteacher selection system is more rigid (more competitive), you, if you are the selection committee member, you must vote for the AP head who can make more of a contribution to the LED, right?

(H2-withAP-C, emphasis added)

This head compared the different degrees of compliance of AP heads in different cities by linking it to the pressures put on AP heads in different head selection systems. If this is reasonable, it might imply that the less competitive head selection process that puts less pressure on AP heads also provided them with more room for resistance to dominance.

6.2 Cross-case synthesis

Having presented the findings of each research case, I use this section to provide a cross-case synthesis to highlight the significant features and summarise the common themes and relationships among these three research cases. The purpose of this cross-case synthesis is to present an overview of the overall findings which will foreground the further discussions in Chapter Seven. The following sections are addressed in relation to the research questions of this study.

6.2.1 The structural content among the three AP cases

In this study, all of the three LEDs commonly introduced similar AP schemes where aspiring heads were identically placed in LED offices to undertake the

administrative placement or training, and required to learn hands-on knowledge and skills by doing administrative and policy work.

Within the three cases studies, we can find a similarly discursive shift in the literal meaning of these APs from supporting the LED to developing the aspiring heads through workplace learning. It is apparent that the three APs were just emerging in recent years. In Case A, the 'administrative training' for qualified reserve heads first appeared in the 2010 amended regulation of teachers' participation in administrative training in the LED. In both Cases B and C, the 'administrative placement' for aspiring or qualified reserve heads first appeared in 2009 and it was rephrased as part of headship training and later made compulsory in 2011. It is worth noting that the three case study APs emerged and then transformed to a more institutionalised placement scheme within a very short period of time. Nevertheless, paradoxically, there was no placement plan that detailed the placement content, procedures, or methods being provided to AP heads among these three cases.

Despite the similar time period when the programmes emerged, there were also differences among the AP cases, as can be seen in Table 6.2. These variations include names, mandatory status, duration, and titles of AP heads. Unlike the optional and voluntary position in Case A, the AP in both Cases B and C were made compulsory and obligatory from 2011 and were respectively tied up with the qualified reserve head certification and the eligibility for head selection. In other words, undertaking the AP became a prerequisite for headship in Cases B and C. Additionally, the duration of the AP in the three local districts also varied. According to government regulations, the duration of the AP was two-years long as its

maximum in Case A, it was at least a-half-year long in Case B, and generally one-year long in Case C. Nevertheless, those AP heads who had failed their first-round of head selection might decide to stay on in the LED. Moreover, the final assessment of the AP could only be found in Cases B and C, as the AP was mandatory for every aspiring head in both Cases B and C.

Table 6.2 The summary of the AP structures across the three cases

	Case A	Case B	Case C
Pre-service training courses	13 week courses	8 week NEAR courses	8 week NEAR courses
School-based internships	2 week shadowing	1 week school visiting	1 week school visiting
Formally documented	In 2010	In 2009	In 2009
Names of the AP	Administrative training	Administrative placement	Administrative placement
Status of the AP	Optional since 2010	Compulsory since 2011	Compulsory since 2011
Result of the AP	_ _	Certification of qualified reserve head	Eligibility for head selection
Duration of the AP	One to two years	A half year	One year
Title assigned to AP heads	No specific title, 'headteacher'	Counsellor	Curriculum inspector
AP plan for individual AP heads	None	None	None

Another significant variation is the title of AP heads. In Case A, they were not given any specific title, although 'headteacher' was the title that they usually adopted. In Case B, AP heads were named *counsellors* which is normally a title given to the curriculum advisor in the district-level curriculum development advisory group. In Case C, they were called *curriculum inspectors*, a term that very often refers to retired heads who are held in high regard and who are invited by the LED to assume positions inspecting the development of school curriculum and pedagogy. However, whatever these AP heads were called, their accounts of their experience in the AP pointed to a dissonance between their actual work practices and the title they assumed.

6.2.2 The work practices of AP heads in the LED workplace

While the structure of the AP varied slightly across the three cases, the practices which AP heads were involved in were fairly similar. The evidence showed that AP heads were all required to take charge of a wide array of administrative tasks in the LEDs, such as official documentation, administrative routines, and important educational project or policy work. While all were immersed in administrative or policy work, some had to perform more bureaucratic functions, in particular in Case C, and others did more project-oriented work. Their school leadership experiences, administrative capabilities, and local networks were in particular valued by officials. Thus, compared with the standard employees, AP heads tended to be assigned important project or policy work, as they seemed to be more reliable in officials' eyes. It is no surprise that many of them indicated that they were treated as generic '*case officers*', something akin to low-ranking civil servants mainly responsible for preparing and conducting administrative work rather than managing, leading, and making decisions.

Again, very similarly, AP heads across these three cases had to undertake a considerable amount of official paperwork that consumed most of their time. This included various forms of official documents, such as proclamations, decrees, regulations, educational projects and policies, funding and budgets. They were under continuous pressure writing of such laborious official documents.

In Case A, B and C heads interviewed unanimously reported the extremely heavy workloads of the LED and noted that everyone was busy in the LED office. Many of them had to find extra time to get their official documents done. Thus, the majority of AP heads worked very long hours and very often had to work at home or on weekends. In this hectic and busy environment they reported that they did not receive appropriate support and guidance from their site-supervisors and the division chiefs as these officials were also busy.

When AP heads started their AP in the LED most of them experienced cultural shock. Heads in the three cases could identify a number of differences between their school and the LED. Faced with the hierarchical superior/subordinate relationships, rigid and bureaucratic administrative procedures, and different work cultures, colleagues, and task types, they felt that they had so much to learn and many new things to get used to. They did not have their own leadership team in the LED, nor were they a school leader. On the contrary, they were 'invited' to adopt the work persona of '*case officers*', to remake themselves as '*followers*' as the normative workplace required them to obey superiors' instructions and dictates and complete whatever they were told.

6.2.3 The disciplinary techniques in AP practices

Another significant similarity among these three cases is the architectural arrangement of the workplace in the LED. Although their interior layouts were slightly different, these three LED offices shared a similar open-plan layout which was a large office without partitions and within which several divisions and sub-divisions were arranged. Within each division, the division chief's desk would be arranged at the end, where the bulk of the staff's desks were. However, the higher-ranking superiors had their own enclosed and separate rooms as their offices. Such an arrangement of spaces, seats and people rendered the staff visible to the view of senior superiors while making these superiors less visible.

Observation or surveillance emerged as a common theme of the AP practices in these three cases. Heads from each case highlighted that they were subjected to officials' surveillance and gaze in the LED office as they were undertaking their AP there. More specifically, heads from Cases B and A frequently used the term '*close surveillance*' as a deliberate practice by which AP superiors can understand heads' capability, personal character and attitude. AP heads in Cases B and A seemed to experience a higher degree of surveillance, while such observation in Case C seemed to be less intensive.

Many heads noted that they were not only observed by superiors such as their division chief, but also by lower-ranking officers, that is, their colleagues in the same section or division. The amount of influence by the division chiefs, to swing the result of headship selection, was admitted by the division chief in Case B, corroborated by the division chief in Case C, and voiced by the former president of

School Headteachers' Association in Case A. It is this wariness of being judged or deemed inadequate that put heavy pressure on AP heads to regulate their conduct in the LED. However, the high level of visibility of AP heads had a very different meaning and function in Case A than that in Cases B and C. AP heads in Case A would utilise their visibility to build a good connection with LED superiors and schools so that they might earn the endorsement and support of the LED or schools in their headship selection process. Nevertheless, their high visibility also meant that their weakness could be revealed in front of officials.

The findings from Case A, B and C also similarly revealed that those AP heads who were situated within the network-like surveillance of the office were inescapably subjected to external and internal judgments. The data also indicated that such judgements were also linked to norms of the hierarchical workplace in the LED where compliance, obedience, efficiency, exactitude, and productivity were highly expected and valued.

In fact, it should be noted that these AP heads were very sensitive about their '*word of mouth reputation*' in terms of how others evaluated them as a school leader and how they wanted others to view them. Accordingly, as data revealed, AP heads would tend to conform to the correct practice of duties, to superiors' requirements and expectations of them, and even try to understand what superiors would expect and think so that they could prepare in advance.

An almost ubiquitous response from interviewees across the three cases indicated that the AP functioned as an extended examination of aspiring heads. This perspective was also echoed by two director-generals of the LED in M County and

P County and the interviewed academics (A1, A2). Their AP performance had to be formally examined, and thus they were inevitably working under pressure. This long-term examination process ended with the most ritualised examination, i.e., headship selection.

Respondents' comments suggested that knowledge about each AP head that was accumulated through the extended examination of the AP was deemed particularly important for head selection. This is because such examinations provided LED superiors with an understanding of individual AP heads from which they could thereby decide whom to support in head selection and where the AP heads who gained their endorsement would be best appointed to. Thus, those AP heads who were perceived as *good* tended to be supported and consequently allocated to larger schools as a sort of reward. This outcome contrasted with those who were deemed *failing* and were unsuccessful in their head selection or possibly were sent to remote and small schools.

6.2.4 The AP effects on AP head's subjectivity formation

All of the heads across the three cases in this study who had gone through their AP recognised the necessity of the AP for aspiring heads. Even though they raised concerns about the heavy workloads and bureaucratic routines, they tended to view their AP experiences as *'worthwhile', 'useful'* and *'beneficial'* to their subsequent school leadership and management. In particular, compared with other newly appointed heads who had not undertaken the AP, their perceptions revealed that they were more inclined to endorse the necessity of the AP and to view it as a prerequisite for the headship. These heads could identify a range of positive

changes from undertaking the AP, such as acquiring proficiency in administrative operations and procedures, gaining better access to the LED's resources, acquiring wider horizons and networks, retaining bonding relationships with the LED, and building confidence in their school leadership skills.

This research found that there was a difference of the perceptions of the AP between heads without AP experiences and those with AP experiences. The interviewed novice heads who did not go through the AP tended to less value the necessity of the AP and envisage the AP effects in technical terms, such as the acquisition of administrative skills and procedures, better networks and ready access to resources. However, heads with AP experiences tended to more value the necessity of the AP and could also highlight the subtle and 'implicit' changes in their thoughts and mind-sets. As the data showed, the long-term placement in the LED would shape AP heads' thinking, behaviours and identities, rendering them more aligned with the LED's expectations and practices. These closer ideas, thoughts, conducts and practices suggest a *homogeneous consistency* between the LED and the heads with AP experiences.

Moreover, across the three cases, it was evident that heads with AP experiences were more likely to be continually requested to assist the LED in additional administrative tasks or educational projects. The reason for this was perhaps twofold. First, LED officials had known these AP heads' capabilities and areas of special interest through the long-term examination. Thus, as division chiefs noted, they felt assured to assign tasks or activities to these heads. Second, the bonding relationship also contributed to such task delivery.

However, heads' acceptance of the delivery of the LED's administrative tasks did not mean they did so unquestioningly. This was particular true in Case C, where heads made their concerns about being overburdened by administrative tasks known. Some of them argued that this added workload took them away from their own work in relation to pedagogy and curriculum development for their schools. Others highlighted the tension between the head and the leadership team who might not want to take on the additional work. In particular, this would become a difficult dilemma for novice heads whose priority is to build trust inside their school. More than this, evidence from Case C also revealed AP heads' resistance to the bureaucratic work practices in the LED. These interrogations and resistances made Case C distinctive from the other two cases. Perhaps the reason for this was the less competitive head selection process that put less pressure on AP heads.

6.2.5 The rationale and purpose of the AP

The rationales of introducing the AP in each case city would be multifaceted, however, it was evident that a common reason in all the cases was to enhance the workforce or supplement manpower. Although the contexts and problems in the three case study districts were different, placing aspiring heads in the LED did immediately solve the manpower shortage problem. Respondents' accounts in Cases B and C revealed that it was in order to enhance the workforce of the LED to cope with increasing workloads that the AP was made compulsory for all of the qualified reserve heads in 2011. Similarly, during 2011-2012 the manpower for assisting in national- or international-level activities was urgently needed in Cases A and C. Thus, the LED in Case A decided to make the AP compulsory to increase the pool of AP heads. On this basis, therefore, the existence and aggrandisement

of the AP across the three cases must be closely interwoven with issues of the LED's workforce and of the local district's capacity.

Respondents also claimed that the reason for introducing the AP was for dealing with heads' capability issues. For example, heads and inspectors in Cases B and C identified the problems of weak collaboration between in-service heads and the LED, and the inability of policy implementation. Thus the AP was taken as a solution to bridge the gap between prospective heads' practices and LED officials' expectations of policy understanding and delivery, and mutual relationships.

Moreover, others also indicated that the reason of introducing the AP was for observing and examining the qualified reserve heads so as to secure the quality of heads. This was particularly notable in Cases A and B, where the headship selection was deemed competitive. Since the decentralisation movement in 1999, the authority of preparing, assessing, selecting and appointing heads was allocated out to the local district. Although the selection of heads should operate through the participatory head selection committee as the law prescribes, LEDs appeared to be able to easily dominate the committee. On this basis, as an academic suggested, the LED incrementally used the AP as a technique of *risk control* which was equivalent of '*a long period of examination*' (A2) for aspiring heads, helping them to understand their capabilities so as to make an accurate decision in the head selection.

Findings from Case A, B and C similarly demonstrated that the AP as a long-term examination enabled the three local districts to not only select prospective heads but also arrange heads to certain schools to suit their own needs, although to

varying degrees in each case. By so doing, the LED could benefit from the correct deployment of AP heads to specific schools. Deploying AP heads according to the strengths and abilities observed in them over the span of the extended examination seemed to be a common strategy for the three local districts.

In this study, the idea of '*heads as policy implementers*' seemed to be commonly shared by officials and heads with AP experiences in the three cases. Delivering and implementing policies was regarded as an essential duty of heads, as a head in Case B stated that '*the head is a very important policy implementer, and he or she is also a very important policy canvasser who needs to persuade and convince teachers why to do so*' (H6-withAP-B). This sentiment was also captured by the director-general of the LED in M County, as he said:

> *The AP heads will become more cooperative when they're implementing the district-level policies. Put it more bluntly, they became more obedient!*
>
> (Director-General, O1-DG-M)

This director-general's comment revealed that through the AP, new heads seemed to become more cooperative, useful for the LED, and at the same time, more compliant as well. This would draw a division between heads with AP experiences and those without such experiences. A convincing instance of such division was evidenced in Case B, where the novice heads with AP experience were more inclined to follow up a new policy promoted by the city mayor, while some senior heads without AP experiences tended to oppose it. This strong contrast suggests

that the AP experience could strengthen the policy delivery chain from the LED downwards to school heads and teachers.

6.3 Summary

Chapters Five and Six have presented the findings of each of the three case studies, drawing upon the data generated from interviews, documents and my professional experiences. Each case encompasses findings of the AP's structural content, work practices of AP heads, effects, and rationales of the AP. Following the three individual case studies is a cross-case synthesis in which the significant features and the recurring themes or issues are summarised and contradictions are highlighted. Findings contribute to the further understanding about the newly developed AP scheme.

The next chapter will focus on providing an overall interpretation of the data and extracting meanings through theoretical lenses. It will also move the study towards a crystallisation discussion of what all this adds to the understanding and the conceptualisation of the AP.

Chapter 7 Discussion

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the empirical findings drawing upon a cross-case study of three local governments in Taiwan were reported. This chapter aims to further conceptualise the operation of the three case study AP schemes. The overall findings of the present study are interpreted through a number of Foucauldian conceptual lenses and discussed by linking to the relevant literature. The Foucauldian theoretical perspectives have been 'set against' (Holligan, 1999, p. 147) the apparently common sense perspective of headship preparation.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of this chapter primarily discusses the structural features and operation of the three AP schemes with the earlier relevant literature on headship preparation and administrative placements. The result of this part will be to answer the first research question. In the second part of the chapter, research findings are interpreted through Foucauldian lenses presenting what practices AP heads were situated in, how their subjectivities were shaped, and what the AP aimed to achieve. In the final part of this chapter, I link the findings and interpretations to the earlier reviewed literature on school headship preparation in relation to the on-going debates in headship preparation research. This discussion also proceeds corresponding to the research questions.

The purpose of doing so is to attempt to undertake 'crystallisation' (Richardson, 2000, p. 934) to open up a more complex, in-depth understanding of the issues of the AP regime.

7.1 The structural content of the AP in the LED

Previously, in Taiwan once aspiring heads passed the headship exam and completed the pre-service training course that normally lasts two or three months, they were eligible to attend head selection. This has been changed since local education departments have introduced the AP for their aspiring heads. Aspiring heads now are required or invited to undertake a long-term administrative placement at the LED office before they can be considered by the head selection committee. Having examined the government regulations of heads' examination, recruitment and training, the emerging AP scheme has been widely adopted in less than a decade by nearly every local government in Taiwan.

The data indicated that the three local governments in this thesis adopted a similar sort of administrative placement or training scheme which places aspiring heads in the office of the LED for long-term workplace learning. This experiential approach of headship preparation corresponds with the international tendency of integrating workplace learning into preparatory programmes (Bush, 2012, Bush and Jackson, 2002, Huber, 2004a). This new approach of the AP also reflects what Milstein and Krueger (1997, p. 110) term 'alternative placement', a programme which places participants in government agencies that focus on education. Nevertheless, the AP scheme in this study is characterised of three content features. First, the LED office

is used as the 'field' or 'workplace' for aspiring heads' experiential learning. It differs from the school-based internship which takes the school site as the 'clinical faculty' (Huber, 2004a, p. 91) and enables aspiring heads to experience a schools technical operations and the real-life responsibilities which they will face when they take on headship positions.

Second, the emerging AP is devoted to the development of policy capabilities, administrative skills and widening potential heads' horizons – therefore it can be characterised as an *administrative orientation* (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2007; Huber, 2004). Instead of merely observing or participating (Clayton, 2012), the AP scheme requires aspiring heads to fully engage in undertaking administrative tasks and policy work in a real administrative field so as to enhance their professional knowledge and skills of educational administration (in case A), or to strengthen their policy understanding and implementation abilities (in case B). However, such administrative approaches diverge from the internship tasks that focus on learning-centred leadership emphasising student learning and school improvement, as suggested in recent studies (Cunningham and Sherman, 2008; Earley, 2016, Jacobson et al., 2015; Lochmiller, 2014).

The third distinctive feature of the AP is its long-term time frame (Milstein and Krueger, 1997). It is a full-time, job-embedded placement (Barnett *et al.*, 2009). Although there are variations in AP durations across the three cases, ranging from at least six months in case B, to 12 months in case C, and to 24 months at most in case A, the AP is a relatively long process. By contrast, the pre-service training course lasts for only two to three months while school internships or visits last just one to two week in the three cases. The AP is also longer than the generic

alternative placement found in the literature. For example, the French alternative placement at the public administration department only lasts for two weeks (Huber and Meuret, 2004). Although the long-term scheme of aspiring heads' placement has been preferred and demonstrated as being more effective (see Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2007; Jackson and Kelley, 2002; Perez *et al.*, 2011), these placements or internships are in general school-based.

7.1.1 Socialising AP heads into the administrative realm

Findings indicated that the APs across the three cases provided AP heads with opportunities to engage in real-life situations and the operations of the LED. These AP heads were required to engage in the LED's work responsibilities, including managing administrative bureaucracy, educational policy and project work, and the daily office routines. More specifically, they also had opportunities to draft educational projects or policy texts, attend policy meetings, visit schools or review school cases, and deal with administrative tasks in relation to local schools – all of these jobs relate to the district- or national-level work. Many heads particularly highlighted and valued that AP heads had opportunities to learn about areas of education beyond their own previous experience. It is such system-wide work practices that make the AP distinctive.

Heads could identify a number of benefits emerging from the participation of the AP. Key benefits included enhanced administrative skills and leadership capacities, broader visions and horizons, wider professional networks and stronger public relationships, not to mention greater confidence. These findings reaffirm existing research that points to the benefits of real-world, hands-on experiences during

placements as essential to headship preparation. In agreement with the argument of Milstein and Krueger (1997), placement in the public service agency provides AP heads with benefits through developing *wider perspectives and horizons* of the educational enterprise and increased knowledge about the operation of the LED and educational policies. AP heads are required to immerse themselves in a wide range of administrative tasks through which they gain *proficiency in administration and management* (Simkins, Close and Smith, 2009; Thessin and Clayton, 2013). These various experiences then contribute to their greater *confidence* and *resilience* when assuming school headships. Similar findings have been identified in recent studies (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow, 2005; Cunningham and Sherman, 2008; Earley, 2009; Perez *et al.*, 2011).

Heads' accounts indicate that their AP experience helped widen their *personal networks* These networks not only provide them visibility critical for their later head selection, career appointments and promotions (Crow, 2005; Earley, 2009), but, perhaps even more importantly, also offer *ready access* to additional funding, resources and guidance. These positive effects were highly valued by the majority of heads interviewed. Research on school-based management in Taiwan (Lo and Gu, 2008; Sheu, 2000) has indicated that even though school-based management has been implemented since 2002, the key factor of financial autonomy has not been delegated to school institutions and the LED still possesses the authority to manage and control school budgets[3]. Furthermore, research on educational finance policy suggest that current Taiwanese local governments tend to adopt a

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[3] For instance, in their research on school-based management in Taiwan and South Korea, Lo and Gu (2008) find that school autonomy in terms of personnel and curriculum has been strengthened in Taiwan. However, the financing autonomy has not really been delegated to the school level.

competitive funding approach to encourage schools to compete for funding, due to fiscal austerity (Chen and Chen, 2013b; Chen, 2009a). A director-general's account in this study also corresponds to the above research findings. On this basis, it is no surprise that the AP was highly valued by the heads interviewed as it could provide them with opportunities to learn how to make better funding applications to the LED by reviewing plans submitted by schools in the past. Their widening networks would also help them receive application information or resources from the LED or other government departments. Thus, these educational finance background and conditions might also pave the way for the widely positive reception of the AP.

However, there is emergent evidence that such competitive funding approaches result in negative impacts on school development in Taiwan. Research from Chen and Chen (2013b) and Chen and Chen (2013a) find that school leadership teams now have to spend more time and efforts on not only the preparation of competitive funding applications but also the subsequent laborious project management and audit work that distracts from the most important parts of their jobs, namely teaching and learning. Chen and Chen (2013a) also indicate that the fiscal austerity measure tied to education funding has also led to the changing of the school head's role. For instance, they have to pay more attention to fundraising and make efforts to widen their professional *networks* and strengthen their *connections* to external agencies and communities. The AP, which equips heads with the tools to widen their networks and enhance their administrative skills, is implicated in the educational financial system at both the school and local levels.

Nevertheless, the officials and the LED itself can benefit from having the AP scheme. The LED officials in this study make positive reference to the role of the AP, context-rich school perspectives of AP heads, the richer and more diverse set of skills, and the introduction of new ideas. These findings are consistent with current studies (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Earley, 2009; Thessin and Clayton, 2013) where administrative placement benefits not only the mentor and site-supervisor who support aspiring heads but also the organisation where aspiring heads are located. As the data indicated, AP heads are used as free 'quasi-administrative roles' (Clayton, 2012, p. 368) to fulfil the workforce of the LED and share officials' work responsibilities. AP heads could also add to the LED's governance capacity by contributing their school experiences, administrative skills, and local context knowledge and networks. This might explain why their school expertise was particularly valued by LED officials because the latter usually do not have such school experiences. However, even though mobilising AP heads could contribute to solving the staffing problems and the increasing administrative workloads in LEDs, it was by no means thought of as a panacea by the heads interviewed. Their main concerns revealed the *misuse* of the AP, and this will be discussed in the upcoming section.

It is important to note that findings from this study also uncovered some unique contributions with specific implications for alternative placement. Respondents in this study particularly highlighted the following key AP experiences as contributing to their headship and leadership:

- gaining better understandings of policy and the policy-making process through fully engaging in policy meetings of the LEDs

- establishing better relationships between the heads and the LED

The first unique benefit is about acquiring the system-wide policy knowledge and capacity through engaging in the policy-formation process and policy work. In the research on heads' administrative internships in the USA (Thessin and Clayton, 2013), gaining an opportunity to observe and participate in meetings has been identified as being beneficial to aspiring heads, while most of these meetings and issues discussed are school-based, rather than district level. However, what is distinct in this study is that AP heads could acquire better knowledge about national- and district-level policies through their AP training. More specifically, heads viewed this enhanced policy knowledge as contributing to better policy implementation. They noted that they would be more willing to articulate and present the spirit of the policies with school colleagues and ultimately implement the policies in their school. In other words, their hands-on experiences of systemic policy work gained from the AP contribute to the strengthening of policy delivery from the central or local to schools.

The second distinctive feature of AP experiences is the resultant *close relationship* between the LED and the heads who completed the AP. Researchers have recognised that the relationship between the two are very complex (Addi-Raccah and Gavish, 2010; Bennett and Anderson, 2005). However, little is known about how the headship preparation would shape this relationship, or, more specifically, how the headship preparation programme could be enacted to re-position this relationship between school heads and (local) governments. This study found that as a LED workplace training scheme, the AP shortens the distance between the bureaucratic LED and school heads and encourages the formation of affectivity

between them through the co-working experience. This affectivity can be seen in the way that these heads referred to their AP division, many calling it the '*mother division*' or '*maiden home*'. These terms reveal the re-positioning of the relationship between the two from an administrative affiliation to a sort of familial bond.

After the AP, this affectivity maintains *a bonding* contributing to future reciprocal collaboration and support. For example, heads reported that they would more readily gain additional information, resources and guidance from the LED and that they were more willing to assist the LED. Thus, it is no surprise that they evaluated their mother division as an '*important resource*' that would benefit their school management and leadership. In short, the AP in this study seems to be able to shorten the distance between school heads and the LED, and could also amplify the possibility of collaboration between them through the 'making' of new generations of heads.

7.1.2 Questioning the authenticity of the AP training

Although some heads embraced the positive effects of the AP, others revealed their concerns with the drawbacks of the AP. In particular, their perceptions suggested that the AP seemed to have not been well organised as an authentic field-based learning scheme for aspiring heads.

The first and foremost criticism revealed by heads was the irrelevance of AP work practices to their subsequent headship and leadership practices. Although AP heads could gain various opportunities to engage in hands-on administrative tasks and policies in a real-life situation, some heads viewed their AP practices as less

directly relevant to real practices of school leadership and headship. This leads to a concern about the lack of real engagement in authentic leadership and management tasks which would be required of one when assuming the headship (Clayton, 2012). Working in such workplaces could not help them acquire the specific experiential and contextual knowledge needed for leading or managing schools (Earley, 2009, p. 319). This is simply because the LED office is not their genuine workplace, but it is the school site that is their authentic field and that should be the 'clinical faculty' (Huber, 2004a, p. 91) for a long-term placement. Huber's (2004a) argument was supported by many interviewed heads, as they either preferred the AP that featured school-based placement and shadowing or expected to have authentic school-based placement.

Evidence also showed that AP heads acted as *civil servants* as they were required to take charge of educational projects and administrative tasks that were the work responsibilities of the LED's civil servants. However, the research by Thessin and Clayton (2013) has shown that the job responsibilities of district officials are very different than that of school heads; the former focus on budgeting, staffing, conducting district events and building capacity, while heads put more attention to leading curriculum, enhancing student achievement, ensuring teaching quality, managing discipline, and maintaining student safety (p. 799). This is also true in the context of Taiwan. The main focus of AP heads' practices in the LED office would be district- and national-level policies and projects and mechanical bureaucracy, and less attention was given to student learning, teaching and curriculum. This dissonance and irrelevance to headship practices reveals that AP heads would not have enough opportunity to experience leadership practices and engage in tasks in relation to instructional practices and student achievement. In

fact, many studies (Barnett, Copland and Shoho, 2009; Clayton, 2012; SREB, 2005) have pointed to such dissonance as existing in many placements.

Furthermore, it was also evident that there seemed to be no adequate titles for AP heads and no clear clarification of their role in the LED as heads pointed to their role confusion during their AP. Research evidence (Crow, 2001, 2005) has indicated that having a clearly defined role and title for interns is crucial to their effectiveness in the learning situation. Crow (2001, p. 4) argues that the title given to the head trainees can signal 'a subtle but forceful indication of role expectations, authority, and role assignment'. However, whether the AP heads were named *counsellors* (case B) or *curriculum inspector* (case C), the titles given to AP heads across cases did not fit their actual role and identity in the LED, as they neither assumed curriculum advisor nor curriculum inspector responsibilities. These unsuitable titles, in combination with the lack of clear clarification of role expectations and assignments resulted in confusion over their role and identity during their AP. They expressed that they were not sure whether they were to act as genuine head trainees or simply supplementary 'quasi-administrative roles' (Clayton, 2012, p. 368) in the LED.

Finally, the paucity of supervisors' support and the lack of placement planning were also evident in this study. For instance, heads noted that their site-supervisors (roles usually assumed by their division chiefs) were too busy to provide on-going support and mentoring for them, and some site-supervisors were even deemed incapable. Similar findings are identified in recent studies (SREB, 2005; Thessin and Clayton, 2013). Also, a lack of deliberate mentor/mentee pairing, and the paucity of careful selection and preparation for site supervisors (mentors)

were evident (Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2004; Jackson and Kelley, 2002). Moreover, what have been identified as meaningful reflective learning skills, such as regular meetings, seminars and journaling, in research evidence (Crow, 2005; Earley, 2009; Huber, 2008), were deficient in the AP. Even the placement plan and induction programme which help aspiring heads understand the placement procedures and work tasks were likewise found to be lacking.

In this section, I have discussed the structural content of the AP schemes in the three cases. This discussion shows several unique features of the AP, such as the long-term scheme and the strong administrative orientation that make it distinct from other placement approaches. Although much of the work in this section is descriptive or based on self-perceptions of heads interviewed, it paves the way for the further work of critical analysis, interpretation and conceptualisation drawing upon Foucault's conceptual tools. In the next sections, I will try to demonstrate that these AP heads are in effect situated within disciplinary regimes that normalise their conducts and then shape their self-perception.

7.2 Situating AP heads within disciplinary practices

Foucault describes discipline as a political anatomy of detail in its creation of docile bodies *(1979, p. 139).* The docile bodies, according to Foucault, may be subjected, used, transformed and improved, and their docility joins together the analysable body and the pliable body *(1979, p. 136).* By discipline, he is referring to a 'mechanics of power' that produces subjected and practised bodies by defining

'how one may have a hold over other's bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but also that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines' *(1979, p. 138)*. For the control and use of people, says Foucault, discipline operates through a range of techniques and instruments with the aim of surveillance, controlling behaviour and improving performance. Such techniques and instruments include the distribution of individuals in space, organisation of time, activity and behaviour, the calculated combination of forces; Bentham's Panopticon; hierarchical observation, normalization and the examination.

Findings in this present study showed that several of the above mentioned disciplinary techniques and instruments were discernibly present in AP heads' day-to-day practices. In this section, therefore, I attempt to draw upon Foucault's concepts to interpret and discuss how AP heads were situated within disciplinary regimes.

7.2.1 Distributing the AP heads into a disciplinary space

Findings from the three case studies indicated the very similar techniques of arrangement of space and people that were used across the three LED offices. Each LED office was located in the main building of the local city/county government. Although these three government buildings were built at different times, i.e. in 1981, 1994, and 2003, they shared similar architectural arrangements. First, each LED office is a specific form of 'enclosure' (Foucault, 1979, p. 141) within which the space is divided for various functional divisions and sub-divisions. Through such 'partitioning' (Foucault, 1979, p. 143), each division and sub-division

is created to be responsible for its own specific tasks so as to maximise the efficiency and advantages of work.

Second, each LED office shares a very similar open-plan outlay. AP heads are placed within such an enclosed open-plan to undertake their AP. More specifically, the AP head, like other LED staff, is distributed into the division and sub-division, where one has his/her own desk. Each staff desk generally has partitions which separate it from other desks and then form a small '*functional site*' (Foucault, 1979, p. 143). According to Foucault, it has a function to fit the need of specific tasks and to increase the workforce, efficiency and surveillance as well. What is more, the arrangement of seats or offices is according to the 'rank' of civil officials. Senior superiors would have their individual, enclosed and separate room as their personal office (see Figure 5.3, p. 184). The division chief's desk tended to be arranged at the end of where the bulk of the staff's desks are and only his/her desk is equipped with a high shelf which offered him/her privacy. In front of the division chief's desk is usually the sub-division chief's desk, and then the desks follow the order of the lower-ranking official and AP heads.

Foucault argues that such arrangements and distributions of space and people can be viewed as disciplinary techniques. Thus, the LED offices then can be read as disciplinary spaces which aim to efficiently regulate individuals' bodies and activities. That is an efficient space for not only concentrating on specific tasks but also supervising and analysing individuals simultaneously. As Foucault argues:

> Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to

be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organises an analytical space. (1979, p. 143)

The organisation of space and individuals in the space of the LED draws a distinction between observers and the observed. It then allows AP heads and other staff to be closely seen and supervised, as it imposes 'compulsory visibility' over them and renders them visible, and knowable (Foucault, 1979, p. 187). One head provided a vivid account from when he began his AP. He and other AP heads were invited by their division chief to sit nearby her because this division chief believed that this would facilitate communication between them. While this head actually felt reluctant to do so, because he knew that sitting nearby the division chief would also enable the division chief's even closer supervision, which would likely cause the head stress.

7.2.2 Controlling activities through time, procedures and document writing

Power does not just flow through the architecture and organisational arrangements but also through timetables, procedures, official paperwork; it comes to be inscribed onto individuals' bodies and into their conduct (Ball, 2013, p. 6). Evidence in this research case showed that AP heads' work activities in the LED to a great extent were controlled by timetables and regulated by standardised operating procedures. Take, for example, the paperwork of official documents which was the main work activity in which AP heads were involved. For conducting various kinds

of official documents, they are subjected to a number of regulations, demands, and forms of power relations. First, they had to subject themselves to fit the rigid demands of official document writings. Whether it is to write a meeting minute, draft an educational project, revise a policy text or conduct a school case report, all of the paperwork had to be turned into forms of official documents. Such documentation paperwork requires AP heads to use the right format, the official genre and accurate terms, and what is more, to later be revised according to their superiors' marked corrections. Through the repetitive corrections and revisions, asymmetric force relations are exercising through AP heads to increase their obedience to superiors' corrections, opinions and thoughts.

Second, their official paperwork is tightly controlled by a similar official document audit systems across the three cases. As noted in chapter five, such systems set the timetable for each document, track the progression of each document, show the performance of each individual and division, and mark down any delay and incompletion. Any delay of documents would subject the head to blame or punishment, inevitably placing disciplinary pressures on the AP head. Third, AP heads are also subjected to a series of standard operating procedures tied to the administrative work that aims to maximise efficiency and accuracy. For this, a series of sub-activities needed to be ensured in time. Such laborious paperwork, therefore, establishes a correlation between the correct activities or actions and the efficient use of time. The use of time became an important issue for these AP heads, as many heads pointed to the lack of time, being overloaded with work, and the extremely busy pace in the LED office. As a consequence, they sought to intensify the use of even spare moments and tended to draft official documents and projects outside of office hours so that they could avoid interruptions and

concentrate on writing official documents that needed a great deal of discretion and concentration. They were subject to 'maintain maximum speed and maximum efficiency' (Foucault, (1979, p. 154).

It should be noted that the paperwork of official documents is just one of various administrative practices in which AP heads are involved with. Similar standardised operating procedures can be found in many other administrative tasks in the bureaucratic LED office. As heads in the study noted, they were shocked by how much more rigid and demanding the LED's operating procedures for administrative tasks were than those found in their schools.

7.2.3 Training through the successive exercises

Heads' accounts showed that it was through the repetitive practices of administrative tasks in the LED that their administrative capabilities were improved. This repetitive practice is what Foucault terms 'exercise' (1979, p. 161), as he states that exercise trains the individual bodies by 'segmentation, seriation, synthesis and totalisation' (p. 161). Whether it is conducting an educational project, a policy consultation or a producing an official document, each is composed of a series of successive sub-activities within which each of them is indispensable and needs to be secured. For instance, one head in case B detailed how she conducted the mayor's flagship educational project which contained a series of successive sub-activities, such as, the pre-consultancy meeting, data collection and analysis, drafting the project content, making project announcements, selecting school collaborators, allocating funding to collaborators, meeting with schools, and final budget cancellation. For ensuring each sub-activity and reducing

the possibility of risks or mistakes, the AP head needs to receive the approbation of a number of officials through laborious official paperwork. As noted earlier, writing each official document also comprises a series of sub-actions that need to be completed in time.

Through such detailed and repetitive exercise, heads noted that they learnt to handle the required standards rigorous procedures and standards of administrative tasks, such as the requisite efficiency, accuracy, rigidity, and productivity. As each sub-activity is overseen by superiors, AP heads unavoidably need to subject themselves to the proper administrative ethics, such as compliance. Such repetitive exercise then ensures 'a growth, an observation, a qualification' (Foucault, 1979, p. 161). In other words, such successive activities and constant examinations on the one hand train and improve AP heads' forces in administrative skills, knowledge and attitudes, and on the other hand also provide the opportunity for officials to observe, supervise and assess AP heads.

7.2.4 The composition of forces

Findings revealed that the LED usually assigned more important and high-stake tasks to the AP head. It was because these AP heads, for the LED, were particularly reliable and useful in terms of their leadership and administration experiences, local knowledge and networks, and more importantly, their strong willingness to cooperate with the LED. Thus, in addition to improving AP heads' capabilities, the LED also attempted to utilise and deploy their knowledge and skills. For instance, the city mayor's flagship policy as well as a project in case B was

assigned to one AP head. Some national-level on-going policies were also assigned to AP heads across the three cases.

For Foucault, in addition to controlling conduct and improving capacities, how to place individuals where they are most useful is essential to discipline (1981, p. 191, cited in O'Farrell, 2005, p. 102). He terms this kind of technique 'the composition of forces' that treats individual bodies/forces as mobile elements to be connected to other individual bodies/forces as well as the totality of bodies so as to obtain an efficient machine (Foucault, 1979, p. 162). As can be seen in this study, AP heads are viewed as being more reliable than general LED staff to afford high-stake tasks, and so their forces are invested in crucial work responsibilities. In so doing, the product of the various forces of AP heads and other staff is increased by their 'calculated combination' (Foucault, 1979, p. 167). The LED's capacity then benefits through such ingenious compositions of forces of individuals.

By drawing upon Foucault's concept of discipline, I have demonstrated how AP heads were situated within a number of disciplinary techniques, including the organisation of space and people, the control of activity through time and procedures, the successive exercise and supervision, and the tactical combination of individuals' forces. That is to say, as Foucault would argue, it is through these innumerable and capillary points of mundane practices that disciplinary power is circulating and flowing within the AP regime. By illustrating these detailed techniques and mechanisms, I am able to argue that AP heads across the three cases are similarly situated within the disciplinary regimes when they are undergoing their AP.

7.3 AP as a disciplinary technology: disciplining the AP head

In this section I examine how AP heads are subjected to a range of dividing practices that combined the examination, normalisation and observation and which ultimately guaranteed the success of disciplinary power (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 103). It should be noted that this AP scheme is followed by the head selection process in which a district-level selection committee will vote and select heads for the schools with a headship vacancy. As this selection committee is legally organised by the LED and part of its members are LED superiors, the aspiring heads' placement in the LED in combination with the latter selection process would inextricably produce asymmetrical power relations between LED superiors and AP heads. How the dividing practices influence AP heads and how these power relations shape the constitution of their subjectivity are the key focus of the following discussion.

7.3.1 The self-surveillance under the panoptic gaze

Findings showed that qualified reserve heads tended to care very much their reputations as it was very crucial to their subsequent head selection; that is to say, how they were perceived, viewed, or evaluated would influence their career mobility trajectories. Nevertheless, when these qualified reserve heads were invited or required to undertake the administrative placement or training, they were in fact exposed to the observation and examination of LED superiors. This superiors' observation was fully supported by the evidence in this study. To bear in mind, some of these superiors were members of the head selection committee or

those who could influence the decision-making of that committee. Thus, as noted by a director-general, being placed in the LED office to undertake the AP in front of these 'influential' superiors is equivalent to being subject to *a long-term examination*. Thus, it is no surprise that several heads in the study referred their AP experience to a process of '*close observation*' and '*close surveillance*'. It is this idea of close surveillance that I want to further analyse.

Any examination of contemporary surveillance and gaze needs to pay tribute to Foucault's notion of panopticism (Hope, 2013), as it is the ideal feature of the functioning of disciplinary power. Foucault (1979) used Jeremy Bentham's prison model of the Panopticon as a symbol to describe the way in which power is exercised in a disciplined society. The purpose of the design is to maximise surveillance, to ensure an asymmetrical gaze and a state of permanent visibility so that there is an automatic functioning of power. For Foucault, the distinct principle of such power exercise is both visible and unverifiable (p. 201): visible because the inmate will constantly see the figure of the central tower from which he is spied upon, and unverifiable in the sense that he is never sure whether he is being watched and so assumes that he may always be so. It is this uncertainty and the awareness of being watched that makes inmates self-regulate their own behaviour. In consequence:

> There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself.

In Foucault's notion of panopticism, the Panopticon was a disciplinary institution that 'would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them' (p. 172). As he states, 'stones can make people docile and knowable' (Foucault, 1979, p. 172).

The open-plan LED office in each case of this study (see Figure 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 6.2) can be seen as such a disciplinary institution for it, functioning as a panoptic architecture, makes it possible to not only constantly observe and know AP heads' conduct, but also train their conduct. The partial privacy allowed by the organisation of space in their school office, whereby one has his/her own individual separate space, would be forfeited as AP heads are located in such an open-plan office in the LED. Their ability, emotion, personal character, and the way they interact and communicate with others are subject to their superiors' observations. More than this, as heads reported, their colleagues who were lower-ranking officials would also be involved in this network-like surveillance. This clearly demonstrates the communication of gaze from the top to the bottom or laterally (Foucault, 1979, p. 176).

It should be noted that my focus here is not merely how AP heads are observed but how self-surveillance can be engendered in institutional settings (Hope, 2013, p. 43). It is because rather than being hidden, watching from a darkened central-tower, division chiefs are equally subjected to panoptic scrutiny. Likewise senior superiors find themselves subject to the operation of panoptic power, such

as the scrutiny they receive from the city mayor and the electorate. Thus, I follow Hope's (2013) suggestion that a more meaningful investigation is to look at the process that encourages individuals to reflect upon and monitor their own behaviour.

I would suggest that *uncertainty* is the means that keeps individual AP heads vigilant and self-monitoring. The fieldwork data showed that the division chief's desk was separated in the office by blocks or shelfs, or set at one end of the division allowing him/her to clearly see every staff member, and senior superiors were arranged to their own separate rooms that made them much less visible. Through such arrangements, the observer and the observed are made, and AP heads as the latter are exposed to 'multiple and intersecting observations' (Foucault, 1979, p. 171). Though they are able to see superiors in the LED office and are aware that their speech, emotions, behaviour and activities may be observed, they are uncertain who is watching them and who would influence their later head selection. Notably the uncertainty of head selection and of the headship position would render the AP head more vulnerable. I suggest that it is such uncertainty and awareness that compels AP heads to act as though being watched all the time, to modify, regulate and structure their own conduct in accordance with the power mechanism. As Foucault maintains, 'it is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection' (1979, p. 187).

There was tangible evidence of such self-subjection in this study. For instance, one head from case A revealed her anxiety of being observed by saying that '*due to the fact of everyone being my superior, I was struck dumb with fear, cautiousness and*

conscientiousness, and so afraid of making mistakes' (H2-withAP-A). Another head in case B expressed that she had to '*mind her Ps and Qs*' and to '*be cautious on every activity*' (H5-withAP-B). It was this awareness of constant visibility that found AP heads caught up in a power situation of which they were themselves the bearers (Foucault, 1979, p. 201), that is, that the AP head then exercised this gaze over, and against, himself or herself. Panoptic surveillance assures the automatic functioning of power exercising over and through AP heads' bodies and makes them self-discipline their conduct.

7.3.2 Normalising judgments on AP heads

In such a panoptic architecture, these AP heads were not only engaging in self-surveillance but also in a normalising process through which they were constantly judged, corrected, labelled, compared, and normalised, and in which they came to accept certain types of behaviour as (in)appropriate and certain knowledge as (un)true. The data revealed that these normalising forces circulated within multiple domains, such as the superior to AP heads relationships, the situational requirements of organisational structures and the associated work activities that AP heads undertook. Findings also showed that this normalising process could not only put high pressure on AP heads but also guide them to behave and act in accordance with how they were expected to be.

The normalisation of individuals is one of the main aims of disciplinary power (Niesche, 2011). It is through the norm that discipline exercises its power (Foucault, 1979, p. 183). 'Norm' in the Foucauldian sense is far from the form of legal regulations, but rather it is 'an element on the basis of which a certain exercise of

power is founded and legitimised' (2003, p. 50). To be clear, it is a standard which details aspects of everyday behaviour and allows for the judgements and measurements of forms of behaviour as 'normal' or 'abnormal' (Hoffman, 2011). More specifically, at the centre of disciplinary power is what Foucault terms 'the penalty of norm' (1979, p. 183) through which the individual's minor infraction, failure or inability to carry out assigned tasks is punishable. It is certainly the case that AP heads in the LED are inextricably subject to officials' judgements and measurements. As interview data from division chiefs and inspectors revealed, AP heads tended to be judged as either *good/appropriate* or *bad/inappropriate* by various criteria or standards. The failure to fit to the criteria or standards would make these AP heads confront various forms of punishments. For instance, one head exemplified that '*if the AP head was deemed incapable, s/he would not be treated with superiors' respect and would very often be "fixed" by superiors*' (N46-22). Here, being disliked, blamed and corrected by superiors would negatively influence AP heads' career mobility, that is, their headships. Respondents from both case A and B could attest that there were AP heads who were considered '*inappropriate*' by superiors and who subsequently failed in their head selection. Greenfield (1985, p. 105) came to a similar conclusion. He claimed that head trainees who 'fail to act in a manner that is viewed as "acceptable" by superiors' might lose superiors' support in aiding their career mobility or directly block their headships.

The power of normalisation also imposes homogeneity and exercises over AP heads 'a constant pressure to conform to the same model' (Foucault, 1979, p. 182). Within AP practices, LED superiors' expectations, beliefs, values and work-world orientations would wittingly or unwittingly lead, guide and shape the conduct of AP

heads. It should be noted that these superiors were particularly held in high regard by AP heads, due to the fact that they controlled assessment criteria, distributed rewards (Hart, 1991) and would have decisive influence on AP heads' head selection. As Greenfield (1985) argued, the aspiring head is extremely vulnerable to influence by such superiors and is very dependent on superiors' support in their career mobility. Therefore, superiors' expectations of AP heads, such as the '*good attitude to responsibility*', '*executive ability on assigned tasks*', '*efficiency*', and '*emotion management*', would have far-reaching effects on AP heads' behaviour, attitudes, and self-perception. Heads expressed that during their AP, they learned from superiors by observing the way in which superiors thought of things, acted and judged, such as, how things are handled by department superiors, what is important and what could be ignored, what requires attention and what doesn't, what is viewed as problematic and what is not, what is and is not acceptable, etc. All function as a set of norms that would shape AP heads' thoughts, behaviours and practices. As one head acknowledged that '*I better understood what the superior needed and expected, and this then serves my school leadership and management*' (H5-withAP-A). This manifests that the knowledge and experiences that AP heads learned have been internalised as part of their values and principles of actions.

Furthermore, such homogenising, normalising forces could also come from the situational requirements of the LED organisational culture. Being placed in a bureaucratic officialdom, AP heads became socialised into a conforming culture which pressured them to behave as a compliant and obedient subject. It was apparent that AP heads were subjected to the chain of command and were required to comply with ethical codes of administrative behaviour through their

work activities. As many heads revealed that they had to '*obey superiors' instructions*' and '*fulfil what superiors order*'. One head shared his experience and noted that '*you have to do what you are told to do by officials when you were there*' (H4-withAP-B). According to the observation of a Director-General of the LED in M County, the AP would render AP heads more compliant with officials' instructions even though they have been appointed to school headships. As he highlighted, '*to put it more bluntly, they became more obedient*' (O1-DG-M). Research evidence (Greenfield, 1985; Marshall, 1985; Marshall and Greenfield, 1987) similarly indicates that demonstrating allegiance or expressing conformity to the norms and values of the administrative group is important to make the transition from non-group member to central group member. In this study, it seems that it is the LED officials whom AP heads need to demonstrate their allegiance to.

Finally, the immediate needs and emphases of work activities in the LED would forcefully subject AP heads to an array of normative standards and requirements of administrative work. As Crow (2007) similarly argues, organisational socialisation learning often emphasises on 'how things are done here' as well as its norms, values and normative requirements (p. 52). These normative requirements or standard operating procedures were highly valued by AP heads in this study. Many heads also noted that, when they became heads, they also applied these '*rigorous*' standards and requirements to their school administration and management so as to enhance the efficiency. Their descriptions in effect revealed that through the normalisation process of the AP, heads have come to accept certain knowledge as (un)true and certain types of behaviour as (in)appropriate.

7.3.3 A long-term examination of AP heads

Research suggests that there are a series of examinations that aspiring heads need to go through prior to taking up a headship role (Gillies, 2013). Some are formal examinations through initial and final assessments in the preparation programme, the pursuit of qualifications, or job interviews and head selection (Chien, 2006). Others are less formal, for instance, 'judgements made by superiors in relation to the range of professional activities a potential leader may be involved in' (Gillies, 2013, p. 61). Such examinations have been one of the most pervasive and effective disciplinary techniques in headship preparation.

It would be apt to argue that the process of the AP is in effect a long-range examination through which disciplinary power is exercised over and through AP heads and a bulk of knowledge and certain 'truths' about individual AP heads can be established on a continual basis. To put it clearly, prior to head selection, the AP scheme provides LED superiors with an opportunity to examine AP heads across a wide range of characters, capabilities, attitudes and allegiances, and so on. Therefore, the examination of AP heads and their daily practices, such as through the administrative writing of official documents, constitutes each individual AP head as a 'case' – a describable, analysable, and comparable object. At the same time, this long-term examination also constitutes 'a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena' of the *population* of AP heads (Foucault, 1979, p. 190). Thereby, it is possible to make collective descriptions of the AP head *population*, and make general a calculation of the gaps between individual AP heads, while also being able to compare, judge, evaluate, reward or

punish individuals according to their individualities. This was best summed up by a Director-General of the LED in P County:

If [the AP head] had an excellent performance during the AP in the Department, we would let him have priority over where to be selected as a head. Also, I would feel quite relieved to leave certain schools to him, because we did really understand him. This [AP] is more important than the [NAER pre-service training]. Because we couldn't see them, we don't know how they performed in the NAER training. However, here (in the Department), I can see you (the AP head) for a long time … the one-year placement in the Department will reveal your (AP heads') every aspect, including shortcomings. (O1-DG-P)

The comment from the Director-General revealed the way in which the AP examination served to give an extensive evaluation of these AP heads and then influence the officials' decision-making in headship selection. It is through the AP, a long-term examination of individual AP heads and the generated knowledge about the individual AP head, that the LED superior is able to selectively support or exclude certain candidates.

Moreover, the headship selection process which followed the year-long AP was viewed by the heads interviewed as the most crucial examination that they were subjected to. This supports the argument by Chien (2006), based upon her personal experience of attending head selection, that the process of headship selection in current Taiwanese local contexts has located aspiring or in-service heads within a panoptic mechanism (p. 51). Furthermore, as the data revealed, the

three LEDs were inclined to endorse and select those AP heads who were deemed '*good*' or '*adequate*' and might allocate those to larger schools as a sort of reward. This outcome contrasted with those who were perceived as '*inadequate*' and so were delayed or excluded from headships or were assigned to remote and small schools. The Director-General of the LED in M County described the AP as *'a very good final filtering mechanism … a practical examination as well as a very long test* (O1-DG-M)*.

Such findings also reflect and complement recent studies of headship selection in Taiwan. As studies (Hsiao, Lee and Tu, 2013; Hu and Liu, 2012) have revealed that through the interference with head selection, the LED would tend to select and nurture those aspiring heads who seem to best fit the LED's expectation, support the government educational policy, most willingly contribute to the LED's efforts, and have professional administrative capability to solve school problems. The findings of this study make a complementary contribution to the current research by adding that it is this long-term examination of the AP head that makes this filtering process possible and effective.

7.3.4 Resistance against the disciplinary effects

Thus far, I have discussed how the AP scheme provided LED officials with an opportunity to observe, judge, and evaluate AP heads' performance so as to select and/or filter out certain heads. Within which AP heads were subjected to numerous dividing practices that combined panoptic observation, normalising judgements, and the labelling and classifying of individuals. In order to become a school head, AP heads needed to subject themselves to these dividing practices, to be

observed and examined, and to act in accordance with the requisite norms, values, expectations and requirements, so as to demonstrate their fitness for the head position. In consequence, AP heads were 'trained' to become more efficient, effective and productive, while at the same time their obedience was maximised and any contrary behaviours were excluded. These dividing practices in effect made AP heads a sort of new head subject: they were more useful and at the same time more obedient, as what Foucault terms 'docile bodies' (1979, p. 138). Respondents in this study could draw a distinction between those initial heads who had completed their AP and those who had not. It seems that through this AP scheme a new population of heads are generated.

The above discussion seemingly suggests that these AP heads are conditioned to be made into a certain type of 'docile bodies', without agency to be able to act in other ways. However, this study does not contend that the individual AP heads entirely lost the possibility of agency or resistance. Instead, the study finds various forms of resistance or struggles against the operation of the AP, some more explicit than others. For example, in the optional AP scheme of case A, there were aspiring heads who chose not to undertake the AP because they viewed it as *'a form of submission to the corridors of power'*. Among them, one head who initially resisted against the LED's invitation as she knew that her ability would be '*examined by superiors*' and that would be an '*ordeal*'. Hence, she did not choose to undertake the AP until she failed her first head selection. These examples of personal resistance echo what Foucault argued in his late interview from 1984, that 'in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance, there would be no power relations at all' (2000b, p. 292).

Moreover, a wealth of evidence from case C also revealed a more forceful resistance against the AP scheme exerted by AP heads and in-service heads, which eventually led the AP scheme to be subjected to scrutiny and revised. What makes case C distinctive from the other two cases? The work practices in which AP heads were involved are similar across the three cases. The AP structures in both case B and C are very similar. However, as one head in case C contended, the head selection in case C was less cutthroat, quite different from the other two cases where the head selection was deemed '*ruthless*' and much more selectively competitive. The head continued to say that '*the AP heads in other cities or counties must be more obedient as they have a more competitive head selection system*' (H2-withAP-C). His comments suggest that the more rigid and intense the examinations of heads vying for head selection, the greater extent to which disciplinary power would suppress the possibility of participants' resistance to the AP. This seems to corroborate the findings in case A and B. These cases show that more competitive head selection systems seem to produce less explicit resistance to the AP. The disciplinary regime of the AP coupled with the rigid head selection operates as a detailed examination that puts more pressures on AP heads and renders them compliant to authority. Nevertheless, as indicated by the data, although subjected to the disciplinary regime of the AP, there is still room for individuals to resist against the power mechanism.

7.3.5 **Some rival challenges**

However, people might argue that it would be arbitrary to presume that the LED has such an insidious conspiracy to control, repress and discipline their aspiring

heads as docile subjects through the AP. Indeed, among the LED officials and inspectors interviewed in this study, none of them explicitly pointed to such a deliberate conspiracy. As Gillies (2013) aptly argues, the application of Foucault's notion of surveillance and discipline could easily and mistakenly be applied to produce 'a sort of paranoia that everything in the social sphere is designed to control and monitor us as individuals and as a mass' (p. 52). Gillies (2013, p. 53) goes further to explain by saying that whether it is military training or school education, there are elements of improvement and corrections and elements of control and discipline interlinked in many domains. In relation to the AP in this study, the way in which AP heads' capabilities, knowledge, and attitudes are developed and improved in the LED in general follows the norms of the LED workplace and corresponds to superiors' expectations and requirements of them that serve to discipline and control. Without going through these training activities of the AP, one might not become recognised as a legitimate head; and by going through this mode of AP training one is also shaped in approved ways. They become much more manageable and predictable and, thus, docile.

Others might argue that the AP has its own significantly positive effects at individual and organisational levels and thus it should be positively recognised and supported. Indeed, the data in this study showed a number of such positive perspectives, such as individual AP heads acquiring better understandings and capabilities of administration and policy, widening networks and vision, and the LED benefiting from AP heads' local knowledge and networks. However, the point is not that the AP does not have positive effects but that the effect of such AP regimes could be 'dangerous' because it constrains the development of individual heads' subjectivity, shrinks the possibility individual struggles for freedom, and

might be manipulated to achieve other political interests or institutional goals that are not the focus of schooling nor the aim of school headship.

To articulate these dangerous aspects of the effect of the AP, I will extend the discussion beyond the micro analysis of the disciplinary mechanism of the AP to look at how the AP scheme could be employed as a technology to manage the population of aspiring heads by taking account of the broader structural and political contexts in the local setting.

7.4 Governing heads through the AP scheme

Foucault argues that in our modern societies, discipline has been integrated into the macro-level framework of governmentality within which it functions as an effective governmental technology, particularly in the management of a population in its depths and its details (1991b, p. 102). Foucault's notion of governmentality is concerned with exploring the techniques and procedures whereby governments govern the conduct of individuals, groups and whole populations (Niesche, 2014, pp. 148-9). This concept of governmentality facilitates this thesis to extend beyond the narrow focus on the preparation programme per se to explore the ways in which headship preparation programmes could be incorporated into broader governmental rationalities and techniques that serve to govern the *population* of heads through the governing of individual AP heads' conduct.

7.4.1 The normalisation of delivery rationalities

From my first day of conducting interviews in the field the notion of *the head as a policy implementer* was very common of respondents' comments across the three cases. Its frequent presence in individuals' statements seemed to reflect an ingrained discourse embedded in the perception of the role and practice of a school head in the local context of Taiwan. For instance, an experienced head who was a former president of the School Headteachers' Association in case A city acknowledged that, in the LED officials' view, '*the first priority of school heads' work practices is policy implementation*'. He went further to point to the correlation between heads' policy implementation and their appointment/reward and removal/punishment. A newly appointed head in case B city also echoed this linkage by stating outright that '*as a head, I am very aware that what the head has to do is to implement policy*'.

Findings also suggested that the role of heads had been well incorporated in the delivery chain of administrative tasks in the local context. These added tasks included educational projects, large activities, or part of the departmental work responsibilities and were assigned or commissioned by the LED to schools heads. In fact, the heavy load of these administrative tasks has been reported by heads of primary and secondary schools in Taiwan (Chang, 2013; Chen, 2014). This delivery chain can also be found in several interviewees' comments in this study, as they used the delivery language, such as '*the line linking schools and the Department*' or '*delivering from the top to the bottom*', to refer to the LED–heads relationship. One head in the case C County provided a graphic description, if a bit exaggerated, that '*if the Department loses the supportive cooperation of school*

heads, it would become dysfunctional' because '*both the County Government and the Education Department relies upon the assistance and support of schools*'.

The evocation of delivery and implementation language was pronounced among heads and officials who frequently used terms such as *implementer, deliverer, delivering, mission* and *hierarchy*. This language appears to be powerful indicator of the normalisation of *delivery rationalities* in the role of heads and of the extent to which heads are imbricated with this deliverer identity that requires them to imagine themselves and understand their relationship with the LED in delivery terms. These delivery rationalities, thus, appear inextricably woven into the ways in which aspiring heads are prepared and trained before they can assume their posts. This was nicely pointed out by a school inspector, who previously was a former division chief in case C County:

> *There was a wide gap between the Department's expectations of heads' work and heads' real work practices in undertaking administrative tasks, in understanding the departmental work responsibilities and in recognising the entire educational administration. <u>There was still a gap in the aspect of implementation</u>. <u>In consequence, we wanted the qualified reserve heads to come to the Department</u>; by undertaking the AP, on the one hand, they would understand current administrative work responsibilities, and on the other, they could understand the operation of the County Government.*
>
> <div align="right">(S1-C, emphasis added)</div>

The quote illustrates a perception from a government insider that the employment of the AP in the local district is underpinned, at least partly, by the need of mutual

cooperation and of effective delivery of tasks or policies. Such delivery rationalities on the one hand render important the role of heads in a delivery chain, but on the other hand also make necessary a specific training approach by problematising heads' capabilities and attitudes in delivering tasks and implementing policies. As a result, the current heads' practices, such as their inability to deliver policies and tasks, their unwillingness to implement policies, or their reluctance to collaborate with the LED, have become 'a problem' (Foucault, 1983a, p. 75) for the effective delivery and implementation chain. Therefore, heads become the target group of government and the object that needs to be trained, improved and reformed. To put it differently, it becomes *a problem of the conduct of heads' conducts*. That is to say, the ways that the LED shape, guide or train heads' conducts and that heads conduct themselves are called into question. This is the point where the AP scheme that focuses on equipping aspiring heads with the 'necessary' knowledge, skills and dispositions of administration and policy is considered as a solution for the identified problems. Due to this, the AP should be employed to strengthen the delivery chain through the detailed training of individual AP heads.

7.4.2 Governing and re-shaping oneself as 'a deliverer'

Findings in this study showed that the effects of the AP scheme not only led AP heads to become more competent but also more aligned with the LED's expectations and practices. Heads pointed to several positive changes from the undertaking of the AP, in particular the enhanced capability of administration and policy, better access to the LED's resources, wider networks and horizons, and increased confidence. The data also revealed that after their appointment of headships, their thoughts, conduct, and practices seemed more consistent with the

LED's expectations and practices. For instance, they appeared to more willingly implement policies and deliver or undertake additional administrative tasks. As a director-general noted, these AP heads would become more cooperative and obedient after their AP.

The AP seems to function as a normative mechanism of 'orthopaedics' of the population of aspiring heads (Foucault, 2002d, p. 57), aimed to strengthen heads' abilities in policy and administration domains and reduce the gaps between the LED's expectations and their actual practices. It should be noted that this orthopaedic normalisation in itself is far from a coercive control of AP heads' conduct, but rather it occurs when they are free to act in one way or another (Foucault, 1983b). This is what Foucault calls 'government' (1983b, p. 221; 2000c, p. 81) or a 'conduct of conducts' (2002c, p. 341). By government, Foucault refers to the exercise of power to direct the conduct of individuals or of groups, to structure the possible field of others' action (1983b, p. 221). This power in itself is seductive rather than repressive. As Foucault claims in his later work:

> [the exercise of power] is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions.
>
> (Foucault, 1983b, p. 220)

Therefore, it is this *seductive* feature of power exercised in the AP practices that makes AP heads willingly conduct their conducts and push themselves. For

instance, the relationship of site-supervisor and the AP head often takes on a learning character in which the AP head is invited to cooperate in a certain way within the day-to-day practices in the LED. That is to say, the AP head is invited to observe, to learn, to undertake the administrative or policy work. Through these workplace learning practices, AP heads are conducted according to requested norms, as they are to be induced, incited, and trained to assimilate administrative skills, knowledge and capacities. As an AP head noted in case A, his mentality also '*became more aligned with that of the Department rather than that of teachers*'. A homogeneous consistency of thoughts and conducts between AP heads and the LED officials then seemed to be formed.

It is this certain freedom that is essential to the AP practices and that enables the AP head to not only follow up all the procedures but also guide themselves in certain ways as self-governing subjects who strive to become a 'recognised' good head. Because it is through personal choices, desires, aspirations, needs, and wants of individuals that governmental practices try to shape, sculpt, and work on individuals (Dean, 2010, p. 20). In this sense, it is through the individual AP head's career choices, their desires to demonstrate their preparedness, their needs to be recognised and promoted, and intentions to take headship posts that they are governed or govern themselves. As many heads interviewed revealed, they work hard to '*remake themselves'* to adapt to the new requirements, '*perform at their best'*, '*make the assigned tasks well done'*, '*follow what superiors have ordered'*, demonstrate themselves as '*reliable headship candidates',* and position themselves as cooperative *middle managers, deliverers,* and *implementers,* etc. – all of these rational activities display a whole number of technologies of the self.

This research reflects a number of studies of leaders' or managers' preparation programmes (Brewis, 1996; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003b) suggesting that participants in preparation programmes are not enforced but induced, directed and led to subject themselves to question themselves, to act and position themselves in certain ways so as to meet the required criteria or systemic approval. Gillies argued that the modern development of the preparation programme, especially those based upon established standards, in fact requires potential leaders to be subject to discursive requirements and to consciously work on particular skills and behaviours, that is, to work on their selves so as to become 'acceptable' leaders (2013, p. 78). As he continued, this is 'a form of government in that it is the self working on the self, the self shaping its own conduct' (Gillies, 2013, p. 79). However, less attention had been paid to how these 'acceptable' leaders also conduct others' conduct.

During my fieldwork in the three case cities/counties, a wealth of evidence emerged to support this study, suggesting that these heads who have undertaken the AP should not be seen as mere 'implementers' or 'deliverers' of tasks and policies, but instead as 'adopters' or 'co-producers' (Savage, 2013, p. 95) of delivery rationalities. That is to say, for these heads who have undergone their AP, they are not merely governed or governing themselves but act to govern others as well (Foucault, 1991b). In Foucault's words, they are not only the object of power but also the vehicle of it (1980e, p. 98). One of heads in the study provided a convincing explanation:

The head is a very important policy implementer, and he or she is also a very important policy canvasser who needs to convince teachers why to do so.

Other heads echoed this statement by noting that due to the fact that they knew what the LED expected and needed, and they could then '*guide school leadership teams and teachers to move in that direction*' or '*persuade school colleagues to follow up policies*'. This suggests that the head could also encourage his/her leadership team members and teachers to undertake policies or added administrative tasks, to view their responsibilities as extending beyond their school terrain, to broader implementation or delivery concerns. Their accounts present far-reaching effects of the AP that incorporate not only heads but also school leadership teams and teachers into delivery rationalities.

7.4.3 Alignment between personal and governmental objectives

There is also evidence of alignment of governmental and individual AP heads' objectives. The AP was very often viewed by most of participant heads and AP heads as fulfilling their needs for development and therefore as a positive and rewarding process on the way to their headship. The data showed that they could identify a range of benefits of the AP training and that participation had allowed individual AP heads to become competent heads. However, evidence also showed that as they were immersed in the AP, their work practices were also contributing to the accomplishment of organisational and political goals.

Evidence suggests that the AP practices renders these participants as *subjects* who are more capable of and more willing to deliver tasks and implement initiatives and policies. Many interviewees' accounts can be read to exemplify the success of government. For instance, as the Director-General in M County expressed, after the AP these heads *'will become more cooperative in implementing the district-level policies'*. In Case C, one school inspector's observation suggested that, after the AP, heads '*would more willingly cooperate with the Department to promote policy ideas'* at the school level. Similar descriptions can also be found among the heads across the three cases. For example, a head, who happened to be phoned by the LED to give assistance when she was interviewed, expressed:

> *We would tend to assist the Department as much as we could in delivering and undertaking additional administrative tasks. Thus, I think, the administrative placement benefits the interaction between the Education Department and us, and also benefits the progress of the Department's administrative work.*

Therefore, AP heads could directly serve to replenish or increase the governance capacity of the local education department, and stabilise the operation of the LED. In their quantitative study of the performance of an LED in Taiwan, Fan and Liang (2015) found that the understaffing problem, the heavy workload, and the paucity funding were the three most significant obstacles in enhancing LED's organisational performance. The first two obstacles were frequently highlighted by the respondents in this study. The increasing workloads of the LED deriving from the increasing number of educational reforms and initiatives, and the associated ensuing high staff turnover have been deemed crucial factors that weaken the local

governance capacity. However, by enacting the AP as a *training scheme* in the LED, AP heads acting as free high-quality human resources could then alleviate the workforce problems in the LED and secure its systematic operation. As many heads expressed, the rationale of introducing the AP was for easing the understaffing problem of the LED. When these AP heads later become heads, their willingness to deliver tasks and implement policy could also ease the workload of the LED.

Moreover, the AP could also simultaneously contribute to the achievement of political goals in local settings. Findings indicated that the AP scheme had been 'extended' or 'misused' to serve non-educational affairs and thereby it may contribute to the consolidation of politicians' political interests in local districts. This was particularly the cases in case A and C where both the respective AP schemes were aggrandised in 2011 due to the urgent needs of manpower to undertake national- or international-level activities which were held by the local government. In order to well organise these activities, the two AP schemes were institutionalised as a prerequisite for headships, and both AP heads and in-service heads were mobilised to deliver and assist required tasks.

However, these sorts of large activities that yield meritorious results quickly can catch the electorate's eye and possibly serve to consolidate certain political elites' political survival. For example, Hsu (2008) finds in his study of Taiwanese local educational governance that such activities have been used as a political means for 'marketing' local mayors' or politicians' accomplishments (p. 66). A head in case C who was assisting one national-level activity during his AP provided a convincing example. Due to the successful completion of national-level activities,

the LED's Director-General decided to make the AP compulsory in 2011 so as to recruit more AP heads to support the activity. This Director-General was later promoted to be the County's Deputy Mayor. The head in case B city provided a similar example that the heads who had undergone the AP were '*more likely to coordinate with [the mayor's] policies*', because they could understand that these policies represented the city mayor's election political commitments and therefore needed to put into practice by the LED. Having been a member of the LED during their AP, they would '*more willingly cooperate with the LED to implement these policies*'.

It is apparent from the above cases that the AP scheme has extended beyond a training placement to a matter of 'expediency' of local governments for increasing their organisational capacity, or for 'covert means' of fulfilling certain political goals and interests (Tomlinson, O'Reilly and Wallace, 2013, p. 94). As a result, when AP participants feel they are achieving self-development through their AP they also become *politically useful* in working towards government objectives. Findings in this study then support arguments by Brewis (1996) that individual participants who are imbricated within the governmental rationality of competency development are induced to conduct themselves to become competent managers while they are in effect constituted as self-regulating subjects. As participants usually experience the training process as 'positive' and 'helpful' (Lumby, 2014, pp. 318-319), they might be less able to perceive that they are induced, seduced, or produced to abide by particular governmental regulations through which certain ends of government may be achieved. As Foucault (1991a) would suggest, these individuals accept government because they experience its effects as a drive within themselves to achieve particular ends, and therefore they are less aware of

being governed. In this study the ends that the governmental practices of the AP serve to achieve were the LED's organisational stabilisation, and the political elite's consolidation of political survival.

7.4.4 Tactics to govern AP heads

However, governing the population of heads through the AP scheme might not be fully successful without employing particular tactics. Findings indicated that through the AP a tight-coupling relationship between the LED and AP heads was established. After the AP, this *bonding* was reinforced through the *reciprocity* that the LED benefited from heads' assistance in undertaking or delivering additional administrative tasks or activities, and heads benefited from readily receiving '*more resources'*, '*guidance'* and '*support'* from the LED. Moreover, findings also revealed that the LEDs in the three cases would interfere with the head selection process to arrange AP heads to certain schools so as to suit their own needs. In the frame of governmentality, these tight-coupling relationship and tactical deployments of AP heads can be argued as tactics for governing the group of AP heads so as to achieve its government goals.

Foucault uses the metaphor of governing a ship to manifest that it is the establishing of a relationship between sailors and their relations with various things that is essential to government, as he explains government as the 'complex composed of men and things' (1991b, p. 93). The forming of relationships between individuals and their relations with tasks, groups, and institutions are also significantly important in this study. The long-term co-working experience in the LED office creates the *bonding,* or the 'tight-coupling' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 514)

between the LED officials and AP heads. Managing such relationships, for the LED becomes a sort of tactic that is important for the governing of the population of heads. As a General-Director in the M county neatly summed up, the AP helps build a relationship of AP heads with LED officials, with all sorts of administrative and policy work, with local political actors, and with the operation of the LED, and then such relationships would render AP heads '*more cooperative in implementing policies'* (O1-DG-M) when they are appointed to school headships.

Such composed relationships productively lead to not only the re-positioning of AP heads as a *delivery subject* but also the 'win-win' effects which serve to what Barber and his colleagues (2011) termed *'deliverology'* (p. 221)*.* That is, the win-win effects as the product of the 'alchemy of relationships' between delivery leaders and the delivery units would ensure the success of the delivery process by building high-quality relationships with every staff in the system (Barber, Moffit and Kihn, 2011, p. 213). In effect, such delivery rationalities intention is to manage AP heads through relationships, or 'a move from having relationships towards doing relationships and towards relationship management' (Wittel, 2001, p, 72, cited in Fielding, 2006, p. 305). In the above case of the M county, the bonding which is formed through the AP has been further managed and used as a means or tactic to achieve certain governmental ends.

In addition to managing relationships, making the 'right' arrangements of AP heads to schools is equally essential to the governing of heads. Foucault (1991b, p. 95) argues that 'with government it is a question of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics … to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved' and that it is for achieving a

convenient end that 'things must be disposed'. Thus, the task of government is understood to ensure the proper distribution of humans and things (Dean, 2010). This was particularly evident in Case C where the LED officials were inclined to appoint their preferred heads (i.e. those they perceived as competent, efficient and cooperative) to the specific schools that would have the most potential to assist in the local district's or the LED's activities and tasks. Through the 'right' arrangement of AP heads to the schools where they could be most useful for the LED, the delivery capacity from the LED to schools could be multiplied, as tasks, projects or activities could be conducted, delivered and implemented effectively and efficiently. It is through the observation, examination, and normalisation of the AP that the AP head is not merely an applicant in head selection, but also an object of knowledge and a unit of power (Foucault, 1979, p. 191) that can be selected, refused, or deployed like '*moving a chess piece*'.

However, the research also found that when these new heads become more willing to deliver, accept the added administrative tasks, tensions emerged between the head and the leadership team or teachers. The delivery subject of the head does not only put this head into a dilemma but also distracts the head and leadership team from the real matters of teachers teaching and students learning. This is where the danger lies.

7.5 Undertaking crystallisation of the discussion

Having re-interpreted the research findings through Foucauldian lenses, I will now link the findings and interpretations to the earlier literature review on school

headship preparation in relation to the on-going debates in headship preparation research. By doing this, the discussion will also proceed corresponding to the research questions. This section then attempts to undertake crystallisation to open up a more complex, in-depth, although partial, understanding of the issues of the AP regime.

7.5.1 How to prepare: preparing aspiring heads through disciplinary socialisation

In this research, the highly recommended administrative placement/internship of aspiring heads in the prevailing literature on headship preparation has been re-conceptualised through Foucauldian analytic lenses. By adopting such Foucauldian perspectives, this research drew people's attention to a wide range of disciplinary practices within the workplace of LEDs and how these practices shaped aspiring heads' subjectivity formation. It demonstrated, through empirical and interview data from participants' lived experiences, that the workplace learning in the emerging AP scheme of the LED can be better understood as a disciplinary process (Foucault, 1979) or panoptic socialisation (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998). Similar findings have been identified in several Foucauldian studies (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998; English, 2008, Gillies, 2013, Gronn, 2003a). However, such an administration-oriented approach of headship training found in this research stands in contrast to the current research argument that 'the focus on any preparation for a headship qualification should be on learning–centred leadership – how leadership will improve learning, leadership impact or the leadership of learning – and how to influence people to achieve this' (Earley, 2013, p. 141).

The Foucauldian tool-box approach used in this study makes it distinctive from other mainstream research of headship preparation. It is worth noting that although this study does acknowledge the fertility of the socialization theory of headteachers (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Crow, 2005, 2006; Greenfield, 1985) in the analysis of headship placement, such socialisation perspectives tend to overlook broadly structural and political issues that have been argued as being salient in shaping preparation programmes (Lumby, 2014). Therefore, by kneading Foucault's theoretical notions of power, subject, discipline and governmentality into the analysis of aspiring heads' preparation and socialisation, then this thesis is able to not merely look at how individual aspiring heads were trained, guided, and normalized, but analyse how and why the *population* of aspiring heads was made administrable and governable through governmental practices of AP schemes.

7.5.2 Preparation for what: shaping AP heads as delivery subjects

The debate of 'preparation for what' is usually in relation to the larger debate on the model and the purpose of leadership that headship preparation programmes promote (Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis, 2008). The previous research has shown that there is a great variety in terms of models and purposes of leadership, as noted in Chapter Two.

My research found that the new AP scheme focuses on developing what Bush (2008, p. 20) terms 'managerial leadership' of headship. It emphasises the heads' role on the implementation of policy and the delivery of administrative tasks determined outside the school by national and local governments. It is evident that the AP was rarely focused on the key task of leading teaching and learning, but

instead it stressed policy implementation, administrative operation, resource management and personal network. Research evidence also indicated that AP schemes that function as disciplinary and governmental technology integrate delivery rationalities to shape, guide and construct aspiring heads as self-regulating, 'delivery subjects' in the local setting. This acculturating process through discursive strategy of promoting certain headship discourse is echoed in other studies (Grace, 2000; Gunter and Thomson, 2009; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2009).

However, these new heads are not as docile as simply 'reform-ready leaders', 'tactical implementers and deliverers' (Gunter and Thomson, 2009, p. 478). This attempted disciplinary process is moderately mediated by the design of headship selection which has the potential to produce higher degree of behaviour compliance and mental alignment. This was particular the case where my interviewees in the Case C were able to enact much agency and revealed a more forceful resistance against the AP scheme, as their headship selection was less selectively competitive. This is a very good example of Wallace, Tomlinson and O'Reilly's (2011) argument that external policy structure and the personal agency need to be taken into accounts of the interplay of disciplining-mediation.

7.5.3 Preparation for whom: who benefits and for what purpose the AP aims to achieve

As noted earlier, 'preparation for whom' in headship preparation research is a debate about who actually benefits from headship preparation (Lumby, 2014) and for what purpose the training provision is deployed to achieve (Wallace, Tomlinson

and O'Reilly, 2011). This question of 'preparation for whom?' is rarely asked, for preparation itself has been taken as self-evidently a good thing (Lumby, 2014). The costs involved for aspiring heads in achieving greater policy- and task-delivery through the AP (intensification, closer surveillance and normalising judgement, compliant culture, and lack of personal leadership development) are rarely considered. Thus, my concern about discourses of the AP scheme relates to the question of whose interest is fulfilled, what to achieve, and aspiring heads' consequent loss of autonomy – the loss of their role in the authentic socialisation process of headship.

By using Foucault's notion of governmentality, my study is able to reveal that the AP contributes to 'an alignment of objectivities' between individual AP heads' concern with achieving self-development by guiding themselves towards becoming an effective delivery leader and recognised headship candidates, and the local government's organisational goals in stabilising the workforce, and local political elites' interests in perpetuating their political power. This 'alignment of objectivities' is similar to what Wallace and his colleagues (2011, p. 94) term 'confluence of interests' between individual aspiring leaders and the central political elites in the context of English national leadership development programmes. It is this 'alignment' occurring between individual AP heads' objectives and governmental objectives that makes possible the governing of the population of heads. The ends that the governmental practices of the AP serve to reach would be a cadre of effective delivery subjects, the LED's organisational stabilisation and the political elite's consolidation of political survival. Consequently, as Lumby (2014) tellingly argues, the goals of the headship preparation through such AP schemes relate

less to learners' learning, teaching and school outcomes, but instead, to maintaining interests at state and individual levels.

In conclusion, what the AP scheme aims to prepare would be the efficient and managerial delivery subjects which are productive, obedient and politically useful. This has been achieved through the administrative placement that is seemingly a sort of experiential learning. Such AP schemes, coupled with headship selection, in effect train, guide, and shape aspiring heads through a range of mundane normalizing techniques and governmental practices and tactics. Through such AP schemes, aspiring heads own their self-advancement and career mobility, LEDs temporarily stabilise governance capacity, and local political actors retain their political interests. As a consequence, much attention has been paid to guiding and shaping aspiring heads' capability of implementing and delivering, and little effort has been made to cultivating heads' capacity of 'leadership for learning' (Earley, 2016, p. 26) that sees 'leading learning as main responsibility and one which takes priority over other aspects of the role'. Under such AP schemes in the LED, aspiring heads are made delivery subjects at the expense of learners' learning.

7.6 Summary

In this chapter the overall findings of the present study were interpreted through several of Foucault's thinking tools and discussed with the earlier reviewed literature on school headship preparation. It engaged in a dialectical process that moves back and forth into the interview data, prior-research-findings, and Foucauldian theoretical tools. The chapter concluded with a crystallisation

discussion by linking the overall findings, Foucauldian interpretations to the on-going debates in headship preparation research literature, that is, 'how to prepare', 'preparation for what' and 'preparation for whom'.

Having critically examined and analysed the three AP schemes in three cases, this study found that such AP schemes had a specific and strong focus on improving participants' capabilities, knowledge and capacities of administrative and policy work. When AP heads were placed in the LED offices to undertake their AP, they were in effect subjected to a range of disciplinary and dividing practices that on the one hand increased their administrative and policy capabilities and on the other hand strengthened their compliance to and cooperation with the LED. This AP scheme, coupled with the ensuing head selection, produced forceful disciplinary power consisting of productive and seductive power relations that made possible the constitution of new headship subjects and also the formation of bonds between the LED and new heads.

This research also found that such APs could also function as a governmental technology that aims to well govern the group of heads and then render them administrable, manageable, and governable. AP participants perceived that they were achieving self-development through their AP, at the same time they were also guiding themselves towards becoming an effective, recognised delivery leader and implementer. Their participation in the AP secured the local delivery capacity which also contributed to the accomplishment of organisational and political ends. In brief, their preparation for headship also made them politically useful.

This study has provided an *alternative* interpretation of the AP scheme by drawing upon Foucault's thinking tools to make sense of an emerging headship preparation approach. It should be noted that this does not mean this is the only or the best way to approach the complexity of the AP. Instead, it shows that we *could* think about it differently.

Chapter 8   Conclusions

Introduction

This thesis was framed as a journey through headship preparation and Foucault, in order to investigate, understand and conceptualise the emerging AP in Taiwanese local districts through the voices of both heads and local district officials, and thus to contribute to the knowledge development of this area. The purpose has always been to seek to understand more clearly the role played by the AP in the local context. The study has explored the literature on headship preparation and Foucault's notions of power-knowledge, disciplinary power and governmentality, incorporating and synthesising literature from research into headship preparation and Foucault's work. I have located respondents' perceptions and experiences of the AP in Foucauldian theoretical frameworks and argued for the close relevancy between the two, viewing the headship training programme through the AP as a disciplinary regime and a sort of governmental technology.

This final chapter examines the research questions in light of the study and set out the key findings of the empirical work. The research has drawn together new perspectives from Foucault's work, the Foucauldian research and the present empirical work with heads and officials. This has entailed identifying the potential theoretical underpinnings; collecting the case study data and applying the

theoretical underpinnings to it; reading the data across the whole; and mapping and interpreting the data. Specifically the four key research questions and the findings of the research are discussed as a stimulus for further conceptualising and research. Finally, I will sum up the thesis by providing some final thoughts. These will include where I feel the research has importance and originality, and what I perceived as the limitations in the research and what further research could continue to explore. I will also outline some reflexive comments to indicate the impact of this research on myself as an author.

8.1 Research findings

Firstly, I want to return to the research questions related to the structural content, practices, effects and purpose of such emerging AP scheme in LEDs, which were posed in Chapter One. Specifically, these were:

1. What is the structural content of aspiring headteachers' administrative placement (AP) in the local education department in Taiwan?

2. What practices are AP heads involved in during their AP in the local education department?

3. How do these practices within the AP shape the constitution of the AP head's subjectivity?

4. What may the AP be aiming to achieve and how? Why are AP heads invited or required to undertake the AP training, and what kind of head does this training aim to prepare?

These will be addressed in turn followed by an overall reflection on all four research questions in the context of headship preparation research.

8.1.1 What is the structural content of aspiring heads' AP in the local education department in Taiwan?

The documentary analysis in this study revealed that almost every local district in Taiwan has already introduced a similar sort of the AP scheme of placing their aspiring heads in the educational department office during the past decade. By contrast, only 7 out of the total 22 local districts in Taiwan conducted the headship preparation programme by themselves in 2013; the rest of the local governments commissioned their preparation programmes to the national agency (i.e. NAER) which run collectively a short-term headship preparation programme for local districts. In this sense, the spread of the AP across Taiwanese local governments seems to signify a significant shift in the meaning of AP for the local districts. However, little research has been done on such emerging and prevailing AP schemes and little is known about what their structural content is, how they influence aspiring heads, what purpose they serve and what effects they would produce.

By investigating three AP cases in three local districts in Taiwan, the findings could identify a number of commonalities and differences among these APs. First, these three case study districts all introduced a similar sort of administrative placement which places aspiring heads in the LED office for long-term workplace learning. These AP schemes reflect what Milstein and Krueger (1997) term 'alternative placement' which is less documented in the literature. Furthermore, all three APs required the AP head to take charge of the LED's work responsibilities as a mode of experiential learning. As the majority of the heads noted, rather than as a leader,

they were treated as a case officer during their AP. It might be reasonable to argue that such long-term AP schemes were essentially administration-oriented and aimed at preparing public administrators rather than school leaders.

However, these AP schemes were far from identical models. Rather, they varied in terms of their names, mandatory statuses, duration, final assessment, and titles given to the AP head. Many of the variations related to the specific local conditions and contextual features. Thus these variations, which have been clearly articulated in Chapter 5, suggest that although the similar APs are introduced in different local districts, the salient local features have made them divergent. This concurs with Bolam's (2004) argument that models of headship preparation are unique and necessarily rooted in specific local conditions and contexts. My work then contributes to the literatures on the 'glocalisation' configuration of headship preparation (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008a; Bush, 2012; Møller and Schratz, 2008).

8.1.2 What practices are AP heads involved in during their AP?

Drawing upon the data from the three case study APs, this research found that AP heads were engaged in similar administrative practices across the three cases. They were mainly involved in the LED's work responsibilities, such as administrative bureaucracies, official paperwork, and educational project and policy work. Heads reported that they were usually busy at multitasking in administrative bureaucracies in the LED office and spent considerable amounts of time doing official paperwork. They stated that the over-bureaucratic nature of the

administrative work and the excessive level of detail required made it burdensome. As a result, most of AP heads had to work very long hours.

Furthermore, due to the fact that the AP was enacted in the LED office, AP heads had various opportunities to interact with LED officials, to work on district- or national-level policy, to know how the education department operates, to familiarise themselves with required administrative procedures and skills, and most of all, to get a big picture of educational administration and policy at the district level. Following this, as being situated within the hierarchical relationships, rigid operational procedures, bureaucratic culture, unfamiliar work tasks and new colleagues in the LED office, these AP heads more or less experienced 'culture shock'. More specifically, aspiring heads were faced with a confusing re-construction of their self-perceptions, as heads reported that when they were in the LED they were not leaders but were treated as 'case officers' and had to remake themselves as 'followers' as the normative settings required them to do so. In brief, all these practices signify a strong, normative socialisation which socialises the participating AP heads into the administrative realm.

Applying Foucault's thinking tools enabled me to dis-identify, to re-consider and re-examine these practices in which AP heads were involved. By attending to the capillary form of power, this study was able to reveal the less visible, insidious disciplinary trajectories in AP heads' day-to-day practices embedded in the administrative realm of LEDs. For instance, the findings have illustrated how power flowed through LEDs' architecture, organisational arrangements, asymmetric relationships between officials and AP heads, knowledge and skills about official documents, administrative procedures and how it came to be written onto AP

heads' bodies and into their conduct (Ball, 2013). To put it another way, with the discursive emphasis on heads' administrative capabilities, AP heads were in effect being situated within the disciplinary regimes through the organisation of space and people, the control of activity, time and procedures, the successive exercise and supervision, and the tactical combination of individual forces. These different techniques and tactics employed to the training of individual AP heads are, as Foucault (1979) claims, forms of disciplinary practice.

By adopting a Foucauldian analysis, my study is divergent from the mainstream research on headship preparation that focuses on issues of effectiveness or best practices of preparation programmes. My work instead focuses on issues of power relations and discursive practices and then provides an alternative perspective to examine power and practices in the headship preparation programme. Examining such practices and power is important as Foucault asserts that it is these complex power relations and practices that shape individuals' subjectivity formation. Therefore my study locates the practices within the concept of power and seeks to distil the disciplinary trajectories within the AP practices.

8.1.3 How do these practices shape AP heads' subjectivity?

The empirical data in this study showed the complex effects of the AP on individual AP heads. On the one hand, heads reported that they became more competent, efficient, and proficient in administrative terrains. As many heads interviewed could identify a number of benefits from the AP, such as better understandings of educational policies, policy implementation and the operation of the LED, enhanced administrative skills, broadened visions and horizons, and widened

personal networks. On the other hand, a considerable amount of evidence also revealed their increased obedience and compliance to the LED and officials. For instance, some expressed that their thinking became '*more in accord with that of the LED, rather than that of school teachers*' or they became more willing to cooperate with the LED, to deliver added administrative tasks, or to implement policies. The critical analysis of these findings led me to argue that the *training* of aspiring heads through the AP could indeed enhance, improve, maximise aspiring heads' capabilities, skills, and knowledge on the aspects of educational administration and policy, while at the same time through this highly structured regime it could also increase their obedience, docility and compliance to the local authority, and minimise deviation of head candidates. The dual effects of such training produce is what Foucault (1979, p. 138) terms 'docile bodies'.

Moreover, my research also found that AP heads placed in the LED were in essence being located in a panoptic institution as they faced the pressures deriving from their later headship selection. In order to succeed in their headship selection, they were inextricably subjected to superiors' normalising gaze and examination in the LED office; they were constantly observed, judged, compared, examined, labelled, improved, and selected or excluded. Through this subjection process, they kept working on their self and conduct and through which they acted as self-regulating subjects. Therefore, it is through such a range of *dividing practices* which combined the examination, normalisation and observation that AP heads were qualified but also normalised.

In this sense, I make my argument that the AP should not be merely understood as a developmental and progressive preparatory programme for developing aspiring

heads. Rather, it could more accurately be described as a highly structured disciplinary regime with the aim to create *new subjects, disciplined subjects* through normalising and disciplining individual aspiring heads. The research findings that underpinned my argument support the critical scholars' research work (such as Anderson, 2001; Anderson and Grinberg, 1998; English, 2008; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003a) where the normalising effects of headship preparation programmes on individual participants are called into question.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that agency of headteachers is not impossible or fully negated under AP realms. This research revealed the empirical existence of aspiring heads' resistance to AP realms. The findings showed that some aspiring heads demonstrated the capacity to act to respond, contest and resist to the disciplinary practices that can normalise them under regimes of governmentality. Some aspiring heads chose not to undertake the AP, and some adopted a more inexplicit way to reconcile themselves to the AP. Some enacted more explicitly their agency through the support of the headteachers' association to press the LED for a renewal of the AP. Such empirical cases are significant for practitioner heads and aspiring heads to consider their response to such AP realms, although the extent to which aspiring heads were allowed to enact their agency varied among research cases.

By drawing on Foucault's notions of discipline and panopticism, this research has demonstrated the ways in which AP heads become more capable and at the same time more compliant to the LED's requirements, expectations, and practices. The AP scheme, coupled with the ensuing head selection, produced forceful and productive disciplinary power relations that made possible the constitution of new

head subjects and the re-positioning of the relationship between heads and the LED. In applying Foucault's thinking tools, this study goes beyond the rational-technical focus on 'how to prepare' to a more socially critical concern with the question: 'preparation for what?'.

8.1.4 What may the AP scheme be aiming to achieve and how?

This research found that at the intersection of various interests, the AP was regarded as a solution to the problem of the management of heads' conduct. The management of head's conduct had been problematised for several reasons, such as in order to replenish the workforce of the LED, to rectify heads' capabilities to address the Central Government requirements of policy delivering, to enhance their understanding of the LED and their willingness to cooperate with the LED, and to manage the quality control of new heads. The creation of the AP scheme that functioned as a micro orthopaedics in shaping, guiding, and managing aspiring heads' behaviour, skills, and knowledge in details could serve to these various intentions. Such intentions which render the heads' conducts problematic seemed to be built upon the delivery rationalities which aim for effectively delivering policies, initiatives, and tasks from the central or local governments to schools. By such delivery rationalities, the role of heads was to be firmly incorporated into this delivery chain, and the role of the AP made a contribution to well-governance of the population of heads.

The findings also revealed an alignment occurring between individual AP heads' objectives and governmental objectives. On the one hand heads pointed to the 'win-win' effects from doing the AP by noting that they felt it fulfilled their needs for

development and career mobility. On the other hand, their work practices during and after the AP in effect contributed to the goals of government. This is because they became a subject who is competent, obedient, and more willing to assist the LED in delivering tasks or implementing policies, and their work practices directly contributed to the governance capacity of the LED, and in other cases, helped consolidate the political interests of local political elites. Therefore, they are important delivery subjects in the local setting. The AP these aspiring heads are required to undertake should be better viewed as a technology employed to make them administrable, manageable, and governable subjects.

In conclusion, as the findings have shown, the AP functions as a governmental technology in dealing with the problem of the management of heads' conduct and, through which, aspiring heads would become administrable, manageable and governable subjects. With such newly replenished and rectified workforce of aspiring heads, both the manpower requirement in LEDs to address the Central Government's requirements and the assurance of the political survival of local political elites could be better achieved. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, through such administrative placement, what has been marginalised and neglected in the preparation of heads are student learning, pedagogical innovation and teaching. What the AP may aim to achieve is more about outcomes of convenience under governmentality regime (Foucault, 1991b) than leading learning in schools which is the main responsibility of a school leader (Earley, 2016). This is what I find a most dangerous effect of such AP regimes.

Thus far, I have reviewed the findings from the data drawing upon the three AP schemes in three case study districts. From this critical approach I have sought to

call the AP into question. Through carefully and critically examining the language used to talk about it, the assumptions underpinning it, and the practices and power relations circulating within it, my work contributes to the literature on headship preparation by providing an alternative understanding or conceptualisation of the so-called aspiring heads' administrative placement in Taiwan. This thesis adds to what we know about headship preparation and moves us from viewing it as simply a developmental, progressive, preparatory programme, as most mainstream literature would do (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Clayton, 2012; Crawford and Earley, 2011; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2007; Leithwood and Levin, 2005), to reading it as both a disciplinary and a governmental technology that serves the well management of the population of heads at both micro and macro levels. My Foucauldian analysis of the AP scheme corresponds to the emerging critical research on headship preparation, such as English (2008), Gronn (2003a), Gunter (2001; 2012), Eacott (2011a; 2011b), Gillies (2013), Niesche (2011; 2014), Wallace and his colleagues (2011), and Tomlinson et al, (2013) etc. The implication of such an alternative understanding of the AP in my study could be of interest to head practitioners, local officials, and also academic researchers.

8.2 Research contributions and implications

This study could be viewed as innovative in many respects. In the following section I highlight where I feel the research has importance and originality.

8.2.1 Empirical contributions to existing research on heads' preparation

Much research on the Taiwanese headship preparation has focused on issues directly related to the short-term, pre-service government-subsidised headship training courses. For instance, these include issues of curriculum design (Chen, 2009b; Lin, 2001), learning approaches (Sung, 2011), the headship qualification system (Lin, 2001; Lin, 2009), or structures of the training courses. (Chin, 1999; Chin, 2011). However, it is surprising that no prior work has attempted to investigate the emerging AP scheme which follows the short-term training courses. As a result, little has been known about this peculiar AP scheme which is embedded within a bureaucratic government department.

Therefore, firstly, this study contributes to this area by investigating the structural content and practices of such an under-researched headship training approach. In doing so, it leads to the second empirical contribution that provides an in-depth understanding of the operation of an alternative placement in Taiwanese local district settings. Due to the less attention given to the issue of alternative placement (Crow, 2006; Huber and Meuret, 2004; Milstein and Krueger, 1997), the detailed descriptions of the AP schemes in three local districts in my work then contribute to the knowledge of this topic.

Thirdly, this study responds to the calls for empirically grounded studies that adopt a critical stance in researching headship preparation (Grace, 2000; Gunter and Ribbins, 2003b; Ribbins and Gunter, 2002; Simkins, 2012) by employing a qualitative case study methodology that fits and incorporates Foucauldian analysis.

Thus my work is significant in the field where there has been much theoretical discussion in the critical literature but not enough empirically qualitative investigations.

8.2.2 Theoretical contributions to headship preparation studies

In addition to the empirical contributions outlined above, this study also provides several theoretical contributions to the headship preparation literature. First, as noted earlier in the review of the literature on headship preparation, very little work in this area was conducted by adopting a socially critical perspective which seeks to use theories or to theorise the preparing of heads. Nevertheless, this research follows the suggestions by critical scholars, such as Gunter (2001), Lumby (2014), Gronn (2003a), and Eacott (2011a), that a critical approach to headship preparation enables us to question the assumptions about the purpose of preparation programmes and to probe the taken-for-granted organisational goals that can be controlled towards particular goals. Drawing upon critically informed theories, this study provides an empirically qualitative investigation to reveal the camouflaged purposes of the AP scheme in the local context, and to examine the effect of power relations on shaping the subjectivity of aspiring heads.

More specifically, this study is also innovative in that it applies a Foucauldian approach to the study of headship preparation. In terms of the literature on headship preparation, very limited work has specifically grounded Foucault's concepts in the analysis of headship preparation. While previous research on leadership has adopted similar theoretical lenses (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998; English, 2008; Gillies, 2013; Gronn, 2003a), very few have a specific focus on

headship preparation and much of them lie within theoretical discussion rather than empirically grounded applications. Therefore my work is unique in that it empirically applies Foucault's thinking tools to problematise real-world practices in which AP heads were involved. In so doing, this study provides an alternative understanding of the AP scheme by re-conceptualising it as, rather than simply a preparatory approach, but instead, both a disciplinary regime and governmental technology through which the population of heads can be manageable, governable and administrable. Such Foucauldian analysis enables us to think differently of headship preparation by examining disciplinary techniques or governmental rationalities embedded within the preparation process.

Third, in examining the role played by the emerging AP scheme in the local settings of Taiwan, this study addresses Greenfield's (1985) and Niesche and Gowlett's (2014) critiques that theoretical, sociological and philosophical underpinnings are often absent from headship preparation studies. Through taking up a number of Foucault's notions to form the underpinnings of the study, this research has provided alternative conceptualisations of a headship training approach to the mainstream work, and has led to a productive (re)thinking of the AP scheme within the terrain of headship preparation.

8.2.3 Practical implications

Alongside the empirical and theoretical contributions, my work can also offer practical insights for a wide range of practitioners, including aspiring heads and in-service heads. By adopting new literatures from Foucault's work, this research provides practitioner readers with alternative ideas of and new insights on how and

why aspiring heads are trained, shaped, and directed through the long-term AP in the LED office. It demonstrates how a positively stated AP approach could function as a disciplinary technology incorporated within the broader governmentality context through which individual heads were constituted as delivery subjects. On the other hand, it also shows the possibility and capacity of aspiring heads to act to respond to and resist the disciplinary and governmental practices of AP realms. This is where Foucault's notion of power is important to demonstrate how power can be disciplinary as well as productive. This thesis makes an original contribution to the field of headship preparation through the use of social theories. As such, it provides readers with resources to stimulate thinking about and within headship preparation research and practice, and it also offers readers a chance to re-view and re-think the AP in question.

Gunter (2010, p. 520) tellingly argues that theory 'enables socially critical thinking that generates agency and possibilities for action'. In her argument, theory is never separate from practice, but could contribute to productive practice. As such, this research attempts to provide resources and tools to enable both aspiring heads and incumbent heads to be aware of the insidious disciplinary techniques and the previously made assumptions that have been reasoned and rationalised within the regime of headship preparation and could otherwise be merely taken for granted. This research illustrates to aspiring heads and heads that the role of preparation programmes should not be only regarded as a significant force for the good in education, but rather, it should be carefully and critically re-considered (Lumby, 2014). The task of this research is not as ambitious as to propose *alternative actions* to guide practitioner aspiring heads, but instead, following Foucauldian criticism approach, it aims to probe, question and challenge the very concept of the

AP, and to examine critically and reflexively 'which is the main danger' (Foucault, 2000c, p. 256) within AP practices. Then practitioner leaders might use the space created to make recommendations and enact alternative strategies according to their conditions and contexts. I believe that once they reflect and notice the techniques, power relations, and discourses within their practices, they would be more able to put certain practices to work to resist normalisation and resist the form of governance they are under.

What is more, I also want to encourage practitioner aspiring heads by noting that we are still free subjects even in such disciplinary institutions. We are all docile bodies in one way or another. However, as revealed by my research, even though the aspiring heads inescapably subjected themselves to the AP regime which functioned as both a disciplinary and governmental technology, there were possibilities of resistance and counter-conducts. This was particularly so in the case C AP scheme where a larger scale of resistance emerged through the cooperation between individual AP heads and the heads' association. And their counter-conduct efforts finally triggered the reform of the AP, though there is still more to be done. This concurs with Foucault's view that 'There are no relations of power without resistances' and 'hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies' (1980b, p. 142). Finally, I want borrow Gillies' words to end this section. In his discussion of Foucault's principal tools, i.e. scepticism, critique, and problematisation, Gillies tellingly argues:

If one is aiming at improvement, at making things better, howsoever these terms are understood in their specificities, then there is an end and indeed, a

virtuous end. It is not just about being negative and critical, it is about using these tools to help clear a way in which improvement can be effected.

(Gillies, 2013, p. 23)

It is this ultimately virtuous end towards improvement and change that is the goal of this Foucauldian research project. I expect that practitioner readers could not only realise the implications of such methodological and theoretical considerations in the study, but also utilise these tools and resources in their own practices so that change and improvement can become possible.

8.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

It is important to note what I did and what I did not do in this research. When I started this study, the research design was greatly informed by Foucault's notion of discipline focusing on illustrating how the AP head would be normalised through the long-term AP scheme. Although the analysis has also found a certain extent of aspiring heads' resistance against the AP regime, in particular that in case C, less attention was given to the agency of aspiring heads. In other words, this research put more weight on looking at how disciplinary practices produce normalisation in the AP regime. The reason for this is partly because the aim of this research is to critically examine the role played by the AP scheme and to problematise the AP practices. Therefore, how one uses such productive nature of power relations to go against the disciplinary normalisation and to shape his/her relationship with the self is less fully addressed in this study. The notions of counter-conduct and resistance for Foucault are indivisible to the concepts of government and disciplinary power,

and future research could go further to explore the practices that individual aspiring heads could undertake to shape their selves in particular ways so as to resist normalisation. Thus, I would suggest that Foucault's notion of technologies of the self (2000e) which is a concept that Foucault sees as complementary to discipline and domination, and the notion of ethics (2000b) in relation to the idea of self-formation, could be further applied as thinking tools to analyse heads' subjectivity construction in the area of headship preparation.

The second limitation that I want to address relates to the way in which I used Foucault. I accept the fallibility of using merely one scholar's thinking tools, i.e. Foucault's work, in the face of complex and highly differentiated institutionalised arrangements (Murphy, 2013, p. 8). This research's theoretical underpinnings mainly derived from Foucault's work, although socialisation theory was also integrated. The reasons for this are twofold. First, as this research was set up as a Foucauldian study, I wanted to explore the potential for applying Foucault to the area of headship preparation. Second, to use Foucault's and other theorists' work at the same time in the research was more than I could accomplish given my time and resources. Foucault's work is abstract and has been deemed difficult to read and understand. Thus in this thesis I decided away from being overly ambitious but instead to better understand Foucault's notions and his usefulness in analysing headship preparation. This also relates to the third limitation, which is that I did not challenge or deconstruct thinking tools that were used in this research. Rather, as I noted, I tried to *do* a Foucauldian research, rather than analyse or critique it.

Furthermore, if I were to do this study again, there are things that I would change. The major change that I would make is to add different types of interviewees to the

case study. In my present study, my interview participants included: heads who have undertaken the AP and those who have not, current AP heads, LED officials and school inspectors, and academics. Those who had once been AP heads but failed to become a head and school leaders who work with heads who have completed the AP were not included in this study. However, their voices are important and could provide 'multivocality' (Tracy, 2010, p. 844) resources to crystallise the generated data. What is more, due to the inability to gain access to the Director-General of the LED in the three case studies, the analysis paid no attention to the perspectives of these three Director-Generals. Their role in enacting the AP scheme and the decision-making in headship selection would be more decisive than other officials, such as division chiefs. Thus, further research could consider including the Director-General of the LED, the school leadership team or teachers, and the AP heads who failed their head selection, as meaningful informants.

The final note of caution relates to the issue of generalisation. Due to the fact that this study involves only three out of the total of 22 AP schemes across local districts, they cannot be seen as representative of all the AP schemes across the local districts in Taiwan. These three AP cases were selected not for the empirically statistical generalisability across all the districts but for the variety of the potential cases by which they were informative to the understanding of the AP phenomenon. That is to say, they were selected by their own specific features, and therefore the data generated from these three case studies could not be read as generalisable. I did however make efforts to seek for '*resonance'* (Tracy, 2010, p. 845) by providing detailed, thick descriptions that depict the environment where AP heads got involved, presenting the tensions and conversations between AP heads

and officials, conveying AP heads' emotions about the AP, and capturing the officials' expectations of AP heads. By doing so, I hope to offer a vicarious experience that could invite readers to feel as though the research story overlaps with their experiences or situations so that they would intuitively transfer this research to their own practices.

8.4 The impact of this research on the author

Undertaking this research has fundamentally affected how I view the process of preparing the head, with its biggest impact being to enable me to critically address both how I approach academics and how I understand what I do or have done in my past public service. As a civil servant at both the central and local level, I had always tried to accept what I was assigned as necessary and strove to implement it, whether it was an educational policy or an activity. While I held an awareness of being constrained in one way or another, I did not know how to react against it nor did I have any resources to do so. Thus, it was usually the case that although I was a bit reluctant to undertake certain tasks which for me were problematic, I would always complete what I was assigned.

Now, however, as I immerse myself in academe, in particular informed by Foucault's thinking tools, and attempt to embark on my academic career, I have developed an ability to think differently: I can now critically assess my assigned tasks and my own original opinions and have begun to question previously formed assumptions which I long held, in the past, believing them to be simply the 'way things are'. Foucault's concepts are fruitful and productive in that I can use his

work as tools to enrich my understanding of practice so as to generate actions for improvement and his insightful concepts can also be applied to academic research. I regard this thesis as a vital step in my academic development and I hope to be able to build upon its foundations.

A particular influence has been, through the adoption of a reflexive approach, to understand how disciplinary and governmental practices constitute human subjects, and in the case of this thesis, how individual AP heads are subjected to dividing practices and the disciplinary power in the local education department where I worked for about four years. Therefore, this thesis is not a study that merely investigates AP heads who are being placed in the LED office, but rather, to some extent, it is also a personal journey that reflects how I deconstructed and re-understood my own previous work experience in the LED office by questioning various taken-for-granted thoughts, assumptions, and practices. I gradually realised that as I was researching the lives of AP heads, I was also unwittingly seeking to make sense of my previous practices and working conditions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: A Pilot Study in the First Year of the PhD

This quantitative preliminary survey was conducted as a pilot study in my first-year PhD research. The data was collected and analysed in October 2012. It was aimed to investigate the current practices of school headship preparation across all the local governments in Taiwan. By doing this, it sought to provide generic information about the distribution of a whole range of characteristics of headship preparation in the local context of Taiwan. This work drew my attention to the pervasive AP scheme and then helped me narrow down my research focus on such a less-researched topic.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

I.   Census sample description:

This local policy-maker survey relates to the current practice and perception of school headship preparation and research utilisation in Taiwan. The respondents were 26 section managers from 20 local governments (5 Municipalities, 12 Counties and 3 Cities) across Taiwan. 22 usable questionnaires were retrieved, representing a response rate of 85.6%.

II.   Data description:

Q1. What is your opinion of the function of school headship preparation (SHP)?

In terms of the local policy-makers' perception of the function of SPH in their local setting, improving head teachers' skills and knowledge of school leadership and management obtained the highest mean score (M=5.1), while enhancing students' outcomes and achievements, and taking care of the disadvantaged and facilitating social justice obtained the lowest mean score (Mean=4.1).

1. SHP can improve head teachers' skills and knowledge of school leadership and management (Mean=5.1);
2. SHP can contribute to school improvement. (Mean=4.9);
3. SHP can implement the policy initiatives of local bureaus of education (Mean=4.8);
4. SHP can enhance teaching practice (Mean=4.2);

5. SHP can enhance students' outcomes and achievements (Mean=4.1);
6. SHP can take care of the disadvantaged and facilitate social justice. (Mean=4.1).

Q2. How is headship preparation implemented in your city/county?

As illustrated in Table 1, the majority of local bureaus (n=15, 68%) commission short-term pre-service training programmes (usually 8 weeks duration) at the National Academy for Educational Research (NAER), and almost one in four (23%) of them conduct their own short-term pre-service training. Interestingly, one county adopts both long-term and short-term preparation.

Table 1. Approaches to school headship preparation across local governments in Taiwan

	Approach	Numbers	Time of Training
Approach 1:	Commission 'short-term pre-service training' at the NAER	15	(8 weeks, except for Taitung County 12 weeks)
Approach 2:	Conduct 'short-term pre-service training' by local government	5	(4, 10, 12, 14, 9 weeks)
Approach 3:	Approach 1 + Approach 2	1	item 1 (3 weeks) + item 2 (8 weeks)
Approach 4:	Approach 2 + long-term preparation in cooperating with HE	1	item1 (20 weeks) + item 4 (6 months)

Q3. What does the local education department introduce to the preparation programme?

Table 2 shows that, 'administration placement in the local education department' (n=21, 31.3%) is the most popular contribution of local governments to the headship preparation programme. However, some of the global tendencies of headship preparation, including headship standards (n=1, 1.5%), extensive and comprehensive preparation programmes (n=2, 2.9%), head teacher licensing systems (n=0), and a specific institution for headship preparation (n=0), are not at all popular in Taiwan.

Table 2. Contributions to the headship preparation programme

Elements	Total	Percentage
1. **Administration placement in the local education department**	21	31.3%
2. Design of site-based placement/internships to provide exposure	14	20. 9%
3. Introduction of mentoring learning	11	16.4%
4. Introduction of multi-phase design programmes, in-service development	10	14.9%
5. Introduction of multi-phase design programmes, induction development	6	8.9%
6. Transfer to extensive and comprehensive preparation programmes	2	2.9%
7. Others	2	2.9%
8. Establishment of headship standards	1	1.5%
9. Construction of a specific institution for headship preparation	0	-
10. Introduction of head teacher qualifications/licensing systems	0	-
Total	67	100%

Q4. Please indicate which of the following approaches you use to plan your annual policy of school headship preparation

In terms of the approaches used to plan the annual policy of school headship preparation (see Table 3), it is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents chose 'mainly followed previous or routine policies' (n=20, 55.6%), while relatively few (n=3, 8.3%) chose 'referred to relevant research information'.

Table 3. Approaches to planning the annual policy of school headship preparation

Items	Total	Percentage
1. Mainly followed previous or routine policies	20	55.6%
2. Arranged consultancy meetings to discuss	8	22.2%

3. Cooperated with higher education institutions to re-design it	3	8.3%
4. Referred to relevant research information to re-design/revise it	3	8.3%
5. Other (please briefly describe)	2	5.6%

Q5. Who is invited to meetings to discuss school headship preparation?

Table 4 shows that school head teachers (n=9, 29.0%) and academic scholars (n=8, 25.8%) are the two groups most frequently invited to consultancy meetings in relation to the policy planning of school headship preparation.

Table 4 Groups invited to consultancy meetings

Items	Total	Percentage
1. School head teachers	9	29.0%
2. Academic scholars	8	25.8%
3. Teacher representatives	4	12.9%
4. Representatives from preparation and training centre (i.e., Headship Training Centre in the HE, Educational Centres of local authorities)	4	12.9%
5. Other official departments in your government	4	12.9%
6. Parent representatives	2	6.5%
7. Others (please briefly describe)	0	0.0%
Total	31	100%

Table 5 Perception of importance of research utilisation and researchers' advice

	The Majority	Mean
Q6 How important do you think research is for informing the policy-making of school headship preparation?	Fair important (5) (59.1%)	5.1

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Q7	How important do you think scholars are for providing policymakers with research findings or advice about school head teacher preparation?	Fair important (5) (59.1%)	4.6

With regard to research utilisation, the results revealed a positive perception of the importance of research in informing policy (see Table 5). As can be seen from Table 5, the mean rating of the importance of local policy-makers on the item 'research informs the policy-making of school headship preparation' was 5.1 on a six-point scale, with more than 86% of the respondents choosing Fair to Very important. Similarly, the mean rating of local policy-makers on the item 'scholars are important for providing research findings about school head teacher preparation for policy-makers' was 4.6.

Table 6 Circumstances of research utilisation and researchers' advice

		Yes	No
Q	Have any research projects been commissioned or conducted based on the need for the local educational bureau to inform policy-making?	n=7 31.81%	n=15 68.18%
Q	Have any research projects been commissioned or conducted with regard to school headship preparation and development?	n=0 0%	n=22 100%
Q	Do any scholars actively propose recommendations to the Bureau of Education for the improvement of headship preparation or professional development?	n=10 45.45%	n=12 54.55%

In terms of commissioning research, 31.81% (n=7) of the local policy-makers noted that the Bureau of Education commissioned or conducted research projects to inform policy-making. However, no research projects about school headship preparation and development (n=0) had ever been conducted within the above commissioned research projects. In spite of this, 45.45% of the local policy-makers noted that some scholars always actively proposed recommendations to the Bureau of

Education for the improvement of headship preparation or professional development.

III. Summary and Implications

The preliminary survey data contained some interesting features that provide implications for the design of further research. Firstly, in terms of the circumstances of school headship preparation, most local governments (68%) commission short-term pre-service training at the NAER, rather than conduct their own training programmes. This result is unsurprising and accords with existing literature. These training programmes tend to be short-term; most of them are only 8 weeks long. Only two local governments adopt a long-term (extensive and comprehensive) preparation approach, which corresponds to the current global tendencies. Other global tendencies of headship preparation, including headship standards, extensive and comprehensive preparation programmes, head teacher licensing systems, and a specific institution for headship preparation, are not at all popular in Taiwan. In contrast, the administration placement in the Local Bureaus of Education, rooted in the Taiwanese bureaucratic context, is the most popular element of the headship preparation programme. This appears to indicate that some global trends are not followed in the Taiwanese context; rather, some local features have been embedded in the development of school headship preparation. This has a meaningful implication for this study.

Appendix 2: The AP Schemes across the 22 Local Districts

Below is a list of the AP schemes across the total 22 local districts in Taiwan. The names, statuses, and descriptions of the AP in the list were excerpted from the respective local government documents in relation to headship preparation and the AP. In order to maintain the research confidential, the names of the local districts have been anonymised in order not to be identified through the descriptions of the AP.

Local districts	Name of the AP (AP status)	Description of the AP	Year
No. 1	Placement in the LED (Compulsory)	• In order to broaden the vision and enhance the understanding of education policy, the aspiring headteachers who have pass the headship examination are subject to undertake the administrative placement in the education department for at least one academic year. • After the completion of the stage three training programme (the AP), aspiring headteachers will be certified as qualified reserve headteachers.	2011
No. 2	Placement in the LED (Compulsory)	• When aspiring headteachers are certified as qualified reserve headteachers, they should undertake the placement in the education department for one year (or at least ten months) before they are eligible for attending headship selection.	2015
No. 3	Secondment to assist the LED	• Qualified reserve heads are unable to refuse the department's request for assistance in administrative affairs, before they attend headship selection.	2013

Local districts	Name of the AP (AP status)	Description of the AP	Year
	(Compulsory)		
No. 4	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• Qualified reserve heads should undertake the administrative placement in the education department for one year. • Due to the business needs, the education department should give priority to selecting qualified reserve headteachers to assist the department's work responsibilities, so as to enhance headteachers' administrative capabilities.	2013
No. 5	Administrative & practical placement (Compulsory)	• Aspiring headteachers should complete both the training courses offered by the NAER and the administrative and practical placement in the education department for at least one year. Once they passed the above training, they will be certified by the County as qualified reserve headteachers.	2013
No. 6	Educational administration placement (Compulsory)	• Aspiring headteachers who have completed the preservice training but not been appointed to the post, are obligated to undertake the educational administration placement in the department; • The performance during the placement is subject to the review process of the headship selection committee.	2012
No. 7	Educational administration placement (Compulsory)	• Qualified reserve headteachers who have completed the preservice training but not been appointed to the post, are obligated to undertake the educational administration placement in the department; • The performance during the placement is	2012

Local districts	Name of the AP (AP status)	Description of the AP	Year
		subject to the review process of the headship selection committee.	
No. 8	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• Those who have completed the preservice training should start undertaking the administrative placement in the education department on 1st July 2013. The duration of the administrative placement is one year at least and two years at most; • Those who fail the preservice training and not undertake the administrative placement are ineligible for headship selection; • Qualified reserve headteachers' performance of the placement is subject to the review process of the headship selection committee.	2013
No. 9	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• Aspiring headteachers should both undertake the training courses and the one-year administrative placement run by the education department. Those who do not undertake the placement would not be certified as qualified reserve headteachers.	2012
No. 10	Secondment to the LED (Compulsory)	• In order to broaden the vision and enhance the understanding of education policy, the aspiring headteachers who have passed the headship examination will be seconded to the education department for at least one academic year. This does not include those who have successfully been selected as headteachers.	2013

Local districts	Name of the AP (AP status)	Description of the AP	Year
No. 11	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• After the completion of the preservice training courses, qualified reserve heads should go through the placement in the education department. Failing to do so will not be eligible for headship selection.	2012
No. 12	Secondment to the LED (Compulsory)	• Aspiring headteachers who have completed the preservice training but not been appointed to the post, are obligated to be placed in the education department for at least one year; Their performance during the placement is subject to the review process of the headship selection committee.	2012
No. 13	Secondment to the LED (Compulsory)	• Qualified reserve heads are obligated to be placed to the education department to offer their service for at least one year.	2012
No. 14	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• In order to strengthen headteachers' leadership capacity, school management skills, educational profession and practical knowledge, all qualified reserve headteachers are subject to the administrative placement in the education department. • Qualified reserve headteachers should undertake the administrative placement in the education department for at least one year.	2013
No. 15	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• Administrative placement: those who do not go through the administrative placement (including full-time and part-time responsibilities and educational projects) in the education department are ineligible for headship selection.	2012

Local districts	Name of the AP (AP status)	Description of the AP	Year
No. 16	Educational administration placement (Compulsory)	• Aspiring heads who have passed the headship examination should undertake the educational administrative placement in the education department.	2015
No. 17	Administrative placement (Compulsory)	• In order to improve headteachers' administrative capacity, aspiring headteachers who have passed the headship examination should go through the preservice training courses and the administrative placement organised by the County government, so as to complete the preparatory training.	2013
No. 18	Service learning (Compulsory)	• Qualified reserve headteachers are unable to reject the obligation of seconding to the education department for service learning.	2015
No. 19	Educational administration placement (Compulsory)	• Qualified reserve headteachers who have completed the preservice training but have not been appointed to the post, are obligated to undertake the educational administrative placement in the education department. • Qualified reserve headteachers unable to reject the secondment.	2012
No. 20	Administrative training (Optional)	• The qualified teachers who have been serving in this city for three years can participate in the administrative training in the education department. Whereas the qualified reserve headteachers are subject to this administrative training so as to meet the needs of the	2010

Local districts	Name of the AP (AP status)	Description of the AP	Year
		department. • Department divisions should give priority to selecting qualified reserve headteachers to participate in the administrative training.	
No. 21	Administrative placement (Optional)	• In order to facilitate the administrative experience of qualified reserve headteachers, the education department can place qualified reserve headteachers to the department division to assist in the educational administrative work as their administrative placement.	2013
No. 22	--	No explicit prescriptions.	--

Appendix 3: Basic Demographic Information for Each of the Participants

(1) Formal group of case study interviewees

Cases	Officials in the Education Department			Headteachers			Total
	Director-General	Division Head	School Inspector	With AP	Without AP	Doing AP	
Case A	—	2	1	5	2	2	12
Case B	—	1	1	6	1	—	9
Case C	—	1	1	5	1	—	8
Total	0	4	3	16	4	2	29

(2) Complementary group of interviewees

Interviewees	Title	Institution	specialty	Total
Senior officials	Director-General	LED in County P	Policy and administration	1
	Director-General	LED in County M	Policy and administration	1
Academics	Professor	HE based	educational policy, educational politics, local educational governance	1
	Professor	HE based	school leadership development	1

Appendix 4: Information Sheet for Participants

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August 2012

Research Information Sheet

Information for Headteachers/Officials/Academics

My name is Hung-Chang Chen, a current doctoral student in the Institute of Education, University of London. The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you about my research. I hope the leaflet will also be useful, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you have.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this research is to explore the emerging headship training approach in Taiwan, namely the administrative placement (abbreviated as AP) in the local education department. The ultimate goal is to facilitate the dialogues between scholars, practitioners and policy-makers in the field of school headship preparation.

Who will be in the project?

The participants of the study are comprised of 4 groups:

(1) Local officials in the education department of the local government, who are senior superiors, such as division chief, and who have worked with AP heads in the same division;
(2) School inspectors in the education department, who have supervised the head who has undertaken the AP;
(3) School heads, both who have undertaken the AP and who have not undertaken the AP;
(4) Academics whose research focuses on headship preparation or local educational governance;

What will happen during the research?

In-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interview will be conducted durting the research. You will be interviewed usually no more than twice, unless it has something necessary. Each interview will last one to two hours.

What questions will be asked?

Questions for senior officials and inspectors include:

(1) Describe your understanding of the developmental process and the structural content of the AP in the district.
(2) How did you supervise AP heads? What made you value or disvalue the performance of AP heads? Can you give examples?
(3) What do AP heads usually learn or acquire in their AP? Would this influence the relationship between the head and the Department?

Questions for heads include:

(1) Can you share your lived experience of undertaking the AP? How is this AP training exercised in your district?
(2) What did you learn or acquire from your AP? To what extent would this AP experience influence your subsequent school leadership, management and administration?
(3) When you look back on the AP experience, how do you view the AP? What role does it play in the headship preparation process?

Questions for academics include:

(1) What kind of heads would the Department attempt to prepare through the introduction of the AP? Likewise, what kind of heads would the enacted AP produce?
(2) How would the AP shape the relationship between the Department and schools/heads?
(3) Who would benefit most from the AP, and why?

What will happen to you if you take part?

If you take part in the research, you will be invited to interview. If you agree, I will schedule the interviews and ask you where we can hold the session. I will tape record some of the sessions and type them up later. I am not looking for right or wrong answers, only for what everyone really thinks. If possible, you can provide voluntarily some relevant documents.

Could there be problems for you if you take part?

I hope you will enjoy talking to me. Some people may feel upset when talking about some topics. If they want to stop talking, we will stop. All what you said will be keep confidential and anonymised by the use of the aliases or pseudonyms for individuals

and places to protect identities. If you have any problems with the project, please tell me (see my contact information in page 4).

Will doing the research help you?

I hope you will enjoy helping me. The research will mainly collect ideas to help researchers, practitioners and policy-makers in future. I also hope we can have some inspirations, exchange ideas and share practical and research information through the research. I think that it will be very helpful and meaningful for constructing our future work on school headship preparation.

Who will know that you have been in the research?

Based on the administrative ethics, your direct manager (for officials) will know you have been in the research. But I will not tell her/him or anyone else what you tell me unless I think someone might be hurt. If so, I will talk to you first about the best thing to do.

I will keep tapes and notes in a safe place. After the transcription, the recording data will be discarded. I will change all the names of interviewees in my reports – and the name of the local city governments, institutions, and schools– so that no one knows who said what.

Do you have to take part?

You decide if you want to take part and, even if you say 'yes', you can drop out at any time or say that you don't want to answer some questions.

You can tell me that you will take part by signing the consent form.

Will you want to know about the research results?

If you want, I will send you a short report when completing the research.

The project has been reviewed by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for reading this leaflet.

Contact Information:

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Appendix 5: List of Interviewees

A1. Officials and their background in Case A

	Official	Gender	Service Division	Years as official	Years as current post	Number of AP heads in the service division
O1-A	**Division Chief**	F	Secondary Edu. Division	16	3	0
O2-A		F	Primary Edu. Division	20	6	3
S1-A	**School Inspector**	F	Inspectors' Office	15	6	0

A2. Headteachers and their background in Case A

	Head	Gender	Placement Division	Months as AP head	Years as Head	School type
H1-wiAhAP-A		M	Primary Edu. Division	12	2	Primary school
H2-wiAhAP-A		F	Primary Edu. Division	12	3	Primary school
H3-wiAhAP-A	**Head with AP**	M	Primary Edu. Division	24	1	Primary school
H4-wiAhAP-A		M	Vocational Edu. Division	24	1	Secondary school
H5-wiAhAP-A		M	Vocational, Secondary Edu. Division	12	2	Secondary school

H6-noAP-A	**Head without AP experience**	M	—	—	22	Primary school
H7-noAP-A		F	—	—	1	Primary school
H8-inAP-A	**Head undertaking AP**	M	Continuing Edu. Division	8	—	—
H9-inAP-A		M	Primary Edu. Division	8	—	Primary school

B1. Officials and their background in Case B

	Official	Gender	Service Division	Years as official	Years as current post	Number of AP heads in the service division
O1-B	**Division Chief**	F	Primary Edu. Division	18	4	5
S1-B	**School Inspector**	F	Inspectors' Office	11	3	0

B2. Headteachers and their background in Case B

	Head	Gender	Placement Division	Months as AP head	Years as Head	School type
H1-withAP-B		M	Primary Edu. Division	4	2	Primary school
H2-withAP-B		F	Primary Edu. Division	12	1	Primary school
H3-withAP-B		M	Primary Edu. Division	4	2	Primary school
H4-withAP-B	**Head with AP**	M	Special Edu. Division	4	2	Secondary school
H5-withAP-B		F	Student Affairs Division	4	2	Secondary school
H6-withAP-B		F	Secondary Edu. Division	12	1	Secondary school
H7-noAP-B	**Head without AP experience**	M	—	—	1	Primary school

C1. Officials and their background in Case C

	Official	Gender	Service Division	Years as official	Years as current post	Number of AP heads in the service division
O1-C	**Division Chief**	M	Curriculum Development Division	8	3	3
S1-C	**School Inspector**	M	Inspectors' Office	21	3	0

C2. Headteachers and their background in Case C

	Head	Gender	Placement Division	Months as AP head	Years as Head	School type
H1-withAP-C		F	Curriculum Development Division	6	1	Primary school
H2-withAP-C		M	Curriculum Development Division	18	1	Primary school
H3-withAP-C	**Head with AP**	F	School facility Division	9	2	Primary school
H4-withAP-C		F	School facility Division	12	1	Secondary school
H5-withAP-C		F	School facility Division	9	2	Secondary school
H6-noAP-C	**Head without AP experience**	M	—	—	20	Primary school

S1. Officials in the Supplementary group

	Official	Gender	Service unit	Years as official	Years as current post	District type
O1-DG-M		M	Education Department	21	4	County
	Director-general					
O1-DG-P		M	Education Department	7	7	County

S2. Academics in the Supplementary group

	Interviewee	Gender	Age	Institution	Main Area
A1		F	45	Department of Education, University	educational policy, educational politics, local educational governance
	Professor				
A2		M	50	Faulty of Education, University	Educational leadership, Principalship, leadership development

Appendix 6: Informed Consent Form

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Informed Consent Form

Research topic:

Disciplining and Governing Headteachers? Exploring Headteachers'
Administrative Placement in the Local Education Department in Taiwan

July 2011 ~ June 2014

I have read the information sheet about the research. ☐ (please tick)

I agree to be interviewed.   ☐ (please tick)

Name _____

Signed   date

_____   _____

Researcher: Hung-Chang Chen

Signed   date

_____   _____

Appendix 7: Interview Schedule for Officials & Inspectors

Opening questions

- How many years have you been working for this Department?
- What are your main responsibilities within the Department?

Preparing school headteachers

1. How would you describe a good headteacher?
2. Briefly describe the headship preparation programme in your city/county.
3. How is aspiring heads' school internship exercised? What is the role of the internship in the preparation of headteachers?

The development of the AP

4. Describe your understanding of the AP in the district. How does the AP work in your Department?

   Prompts:

     - The name
     - The timeframe
     - The statutory status
     - The associated requirement
     - The title assigned to participants

5. Could you describe the AP's developmental process in your district?
6. Why aspiring heads in your city are required to undertake the AP?

The process of the AP

7. What is the role of the AP head in the Department?
8. How are aspiring heads invited and assigned to the department division?
9. What work responsibilities do AP heads usually take up during their AP?
10. In your experience, how did you arrange AP heads' work responsibilities?
11. How did you supervise AP heads? What made you value or disvalue the performance of AP heads? Can you give examples?

The effect of the AP

12. What do AP heads usually learn or acquire in their AP? Would this influence the relationship between the head and the Department?
13. Are there advantages or disadvantages over headship selection for aspiring heads who have undertaken the AP? Why?
14. How do you view aspiring heads who come to the Department for the AP? How do you expect of them?

Appendix 8: Interview Schedule for Heads

Opening questions

- How many years have you been headteacher?
- In what year did you undertake the AP in the education department?

Preparing school headteachers

1. Could you describe your experience of becoming a school headteacher? Prompts:

    - The impetus to become a head
    - Headship exam
    - Pre-service training programme
    - Headship selection

2. Can you share your experience of undertaking school internship? How is aspiring heads' school internship exercised in your district?

The participation of the AP

3. For what reason did you decide to enter the Department to undertake the AP?
4. How did you enter the Department and start your AP?
5. Why aspiring heads in your city are required to undertake the AP?

The work practice of the AP

6. What was the work content of the AP in which you were involved? How was it arranged?
7. What were your activities as an AP head within and outside the office?
8. During your AP, whom did you interact with? How did you interact?
9. Could you share a few difficult incidents, or dilemmas which you would describe as having been critical and which you have dealt with and either solved or tried to solve in your AP?

The effect of the AP

10. What did you learn or acquire from your AP? To what extent would this AP experience influence your subsequent school leadership, management and administration?
11. From your experience, would the AP e influence your headship selection?
12. From your experience, how would the AP influence the relationship between the Department and heads who have completed the AP?

The reflexive points

13. How did you adapt or adjust yourself to the AP life?
14. When you look back on the AP experience, how do you view the AP? What role does it play in the headship preparation process?

Appendix 9: Interview Schedule for Heads without the AP Experience

Opening questions

- How many years have you been headteacher?
- In what year did you undertake the AP in the education department?

Preparing school headteachers

1. Could you describe your experience of becoming a school headteacher? Prompts:
    - The impetus to become a head
    - Headship exam
    - Pre-service training programme
    - Headship selection
2. Can you share your experience of undertaking school internship? How is aspiring heads' school internship exercised in your district?

The non-participation of the AP

3. For what reason did you _not_ enter the Department to undertake the AP?
4. In your opinion, for what reason did other aspiring heads choose to undertake the AP?

The opinions of the AP

5. In your opinion, why aspiring heads in your city are required/invited to undertake the AP?
6. In your opinion, what are the participant's activities as an AP head within and outside the Department office?
7. In your opinion, what can learn or acquire from the AP? To what extent would this AP experience influence the participant's subsequent school leadership, management and administration?
8. In your opinion, would the AP experience influence the participant's headship selection?
9. How would the AP shape the relationship between the Department and schools?
10. How do you regard the AP? What would be the difference between those who have undertaken the AP and those who have not?

Appendix 10: Interview Schedule for Academics

Preparing school headteachers

1. How would you describe a good headteacher?
2. In order to prepare such a good headteacher, what approaches and methods can be employed?
3. What is the role of the internship or workplace learning in the headship preparation?

Questions about the AP

According to my preliminary survey, nearly every local district in Taiwan has required or invited their aspiring heads to undertake a sort of administrative placement (AP) in the education department before they could assume the post. Could you please share your opinion about this emerging training approach?

1. Describe your understanding of the AP in the local district.
2. In your opinion, what is the potential meaning of the AP within the Taiwanese local context?
3. For what reasons are the AP emerging at the moment? [the reason of the emergence within the historical context]
4. In what way would the AP experience of AP heads influence their subsequent school leadership, management and administration?
5. How might the AP experience influence the AP head's headship selection?
6. What kind of heads would the Department attempt to prepare through the introduction of the AP? Likewise, what kind of heads would the enacted AP produce?
7. How would the AP shape the relationship between the Department and schools?
8. Who would benefit most from the AP, and why?

Appendix 11: Central Policy Documents

Below are the main legal documents and policy texts from the central government which were used in the preparation of this study.

Title of policy texts	Amending year
Act of Governing the Appointment of Educators. (1985)	2013
Education Fundamental Act. (1999)	2013
Local Government Act. (1999)	2010
Primary and Junior High School Act. (1979)	2011
Regulations of Governing the Recruitment, Training, Transference and Appointment of Educators in Primary and Secondary School. (1982)	2013
Regulations of Parents Involvement on Elementary and Secondary School Affairs. (2012)	2012
Teachers' Act. (1995)	2013

Appendix 12: Documents Collected from the Study Cases

The following is a list of the main documents pertaining to the study cases which were involved in this study. The real names and the location of the case study AP schemes have been changed to A, B and C to maintain the research confidentiality.

Cases	Document no.	Documents (policy texts, policy address, meeting minutes)
Case A	Doc-A-01	*The 2005 Plan for Teachers' Participation in Administrative Training in the Education Department of* [Case A] *City Government.*
	Doc-A-02	*The 2010 Plan for Teachers' Participation in Administrative Training in the Education Department of* [Case A] *City Government.*
	Doc-A-03	2010 Policy Address of the Education Department of [Case A] City Government (November, online publication).
	Doc-A-04	*The 2008 General Regulation of the Qualifying Examination of Primary School Headteachers in* [Case A] *City.*
	Doc-A-05	*The 2012 Guidance Notes of the Qualifying Examination and Training of Junior High School Headteachers in* [Case A] *City.*
	Doc-A-06	*The 2013 General Regulation of the Primary School Headship Selection in* [Case A] *City.*
	Doc-A-07	*The 2013 General Regulation of the Junior High School Headship Selection in* [Case A] *City.*
	Doc-A-08	*The 2014 Guidance for Teachers' Participation in Administrative Training in the Education Department of* [Case A] *City Government.*
	Doc-A-09	*The 2015 Guidance Notes of the Qualifying Examination and Training of Junior High Headteachers in* [Case A] *City.*
	Doc-A-10	*The Control Yuan of Republic of China Gazette, Vol. 2843*
Case B	Doc-B-01	Meeting Minutes on the Review and Consultation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in [Case B] City (Date: 25 Sept 2013).
	Doc-B-02	*Operation Directions Governing Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City in 2014.*
	Doc-B-03	*Operation Directions Governing Headteachers' Selection*

		Committee in [Case B] *City in 2011.*
	Doc-B-04	*The 2006 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *County.*
	Doc-B-05	*The 2008 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *County.*
	Doc-B-06	*The 2009 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *County.*
	Doc-B-07	*The 2010 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *County.*
	Doc-B-08	*The 2011 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City.*
	Doc-B-09	*The 2012 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City.*
	Doc-B-10	*The 2012 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City* (2nd).
	Doc-B-11	*The 2013 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City.*
	Doc-B-12	*The 2014 Regulation of Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case B] *City.*
Case C	Doc-C-01	*Directions Governing the 5th Scheme of Primary School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2006).*
	Doc-C-02	*Directions Governing the 6th Scheme of Primary School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2006).*
	Doc-C-03	*Directions Governing the 7th Scheme of Primary School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2007).*
	Doc-C-04	*Directions Governing the 8th Scheme of Primary School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2008).*
	Doc-C-05	*Directions Governing the 10th Scheme of Primary School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2010).*
	Doc-C-06	*Directions Governing the 11th Scheme of Primary School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2011).*
	Doc-C-07	*Directions Governing the 12th Scheme of Primary School*

		Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in [Case C] *County. (2012).*
	Doc-C-08	*Directions Governing the 4th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2004).*
	Doc-C-09	*Directions Governing the 6th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2007).*
	Doc-C-10	*Directions Governing the 7th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2007).*
	Doc-C-11	*Directions Governing the 8th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2008).*
	Doc-C-12	*Directions Governing the 9th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2009).*
	Doc-C-13	*Directions Governing the 10th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2010).*
	Doc-C-14	*Directions Governing the 11th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2011).*
	Doc-C-15	*Directions Governing the 12th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2012).*
	Doc-C-16	*Directions Governing the 14th Scheme of Junior High School Headteachers' Examination, Recruitment and Training in* [Case C] *County. (2014).*
	Doc-C-17	*Operation Directions Governing Primary and Junior School Headteachers' Selection in* [Case C] *County in 2009.*