

**An empirical examination of knowledge and
community within the higher education
matrix**

Cat Edera

UCL

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2019

Acknowledgements

There are numerous friends and colleagues whose support was invaluable to me throughout my PhD and who encouraged me to stick with it when the going got tough. Special shout-outs go to Clare Brooks, Jo Pearce and the long-standing members of the Ladies' Hot Beverage Club.

In particular, grateful thanks to David Guile for his guidance and insight throughout my studies. Many thanks also to Michael Young who inspired me to start this thesis, and for his help in the development of the theoretical basis of my thesis.

Thanks also go to those who were willing to be part of the research and who gave up their time willingly and with such openness.

Gratitude is also due to Richard Goodey for his proof-reading skills and encouragement towards the finish line (who said STEM academics couldn't punctuate?) and, last but not least, Bridget for her patience and provision of beer over the years and to Muffin who just wanted Dreamies...

Declaration

I, Cat Edera, 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.

Abstract

This study is a conceptual and empirical investigation into the knowledge base of university administrators and thus their position as an emerging profession, which has been a hitherto neglected area of research. The aim is to examine what this knowledge consists of and how it is configured across academic and administrative staff working together on academic activities.

I begin by discussing the changing nature of academic work in response to evolving external influences and show that it is now process-based. It involves academic staff and administrative staff working together, with the latter providing a different type of expertise in response to external sector needs. This knowledge base has been neglected up to this point by researchers.

I go on to use the principles arising from Bernstein's concepts of knowledge structures (Bernstein, 2000) and Adler's concept of the collaborative community (Adler et al, 2006; 2008) to formulate a theoretical framework which I use as a lens to explore the knowledge held by university administrators working with academic staff in two different academic departments within a multi-faculty university.

My research finds an increasingly identifiable knowledge base alongside a more generic type of expertise which is born of experience and tacit learning, but this group's professionalisation and development is currently limited. I elaborate on how this knowledge has been acquired by the administrators interviewed and identify that it is situated on the axis of the organisation, as opposed to being part of academic subject expertise; academic activities such as delivering a degree programme are a product of these different type of knowledge. I conclude the study by defining the knowledge base utilised by university administrators, clarify the organisational relationship between this group and academic staff and thus the contribution of the former and then make suggestions for their professional development.

Impact statement

My thesis is an original contribution to the field of higher education studies and is the first study to examine university administrators as a potential profession in the context of the community of academic and administrative staff in two different departmental disciplinary settings.

My research has identified an area which has been neglected up to now. Its novelty lies in exploring the nature of the knowledge held by university administrators working on academic activities, particularly around degree provision; this has previously been unrecognised and under-researched.

I have identified the way that academic work has moved to a process-basis involving both academic and administrative staff in a collaborative community. Consequently, it now involves not only academic expertise but another type of knowledge which is the result of external influences on higher education institutions, to which they must respond. Firstly, using the analogy of the graph, I articulate the position of the administrators' knowledge in relation to subject specialist knowledge as located on different axes of the organisation. Secondly, I identify this group's knowledge base as a new type of region, which is generated entirely from the field of practice – the institution.

My research is also unique as it combines the theoretical concepts of Bernstein in relation to knowledge and Adler et al in relation to community and uses these as a lens to investigate these aspects of university administration across two disciplines. The difference in perspective indicates the importance of consideration of local departmental culture in the development of these staff and how this might be managed while not compromising their commitment to their work and their locality but ensuring their impartiality in how they utilise their knowledge in practice.

It could be extended to a larger-scale study to either examine administrative roles and their knowledge and position within other types of academic departments in a university or to examine similar types of departments or units laterally across different universities but also hospitals and other organisations. This might have

consequences for the articulation of organisational structures as some may develop staff more effectively.

The significance of my study is twofold. Other researchers have explored the professionalisation of this group, notably Celia Whitchurch whose work has already had impact and evidences the relevance of this area of study. However, her contribution, the 'third space', consisted of the interface between the academic and administrative staff domains. However, my study breaks new ground by looking in more detail at the content of this group's knowledge base and its relationship to the collaborative community in which it is utilised.

My work also formulates the way forward in terms of the professional development of this group, the articulation of organisational structures and has generated interest in the sector. For example, I have already been approached by a member of the HR department at UCL with regard to developing a curriculum for university administrators and look forward to working with them; this is an early indication of relevance of my research which would extend beyond one institution.

Table of contents

An empirical examination of knowledge and community within the higher education matrix.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to this Study.....	10
1.1 Introduction to this study	10
1.2 Origin of this study	10
1.3 Focus of this study	13
1.4 Clarifying the level of administrative role.....	14
1.5 Professional knowledge and identity	15
1.6 Community	16
1.7 The type of institution under view	17
1.8 Thesis outline	19
1.9 Terminology used.....	20
Chapter 2: Academic Work: Knowledge and Process.....	23
2.1 Introduction to chapter.....	23
2.2 How academic staff work now.....	24
2.3 Challenges to the influence of the academic disciplinary group	32
2.4 The impact of the knowledge economy on academic work	36
2.5 Funding and marketisation	40
2.6 New managerialism.....	44
2.7 New roles in universities.....	47
2.8 Moving from the academic-administrative dichotomy to the third space	48
2.9 The development of new administrative roles and their ‘problematismation’	50
2.10The positioning of the new administrative roles in universities	54
2.11The issue of knowledge and qualifications for new administrative roles	59
2.12Summary of chapter	66
Chapter 3: Knowledge, Professional Identity and Community: Bernstein and Adler et al	69
3.1 Introduction to chapter.....	69
3.2 A framework for understanding changes to the disciplinary group and professional identity: Bernstein	70
3.3 Professional identity	73
3.4 Bernstein’s principles applied to the new administrative occupations	75
3.5 Communities within universities: organisational structures	77
3.6 Collaborative communities and professional knowledge: Adler et al.....	80
3.7 Collaborative communities in higher education	85
3.8 Relationship between Bernstein and Adler et al.....	86

3.9 Summary of chapter	88
Chapter 4: Researching the Emerging Professions in Universities: the Issue of Knowledge and Community	91
4.1 Introduction to chapter.....	91
4.2 Themes and Issues	92
4.3 Issues about knowledge and identity	94
4.3.1 Knowledge.....	95
4.3.2 Community: changes in the way academic and administrative staff work.....	98
4.3.3 Identity vs community: using the concepts of regions and collaborative community to explore new administrative roles	101
4.4 Researching the knowledge and community of higher education administrators.....	104
4.5 Research questions	107
4.6 Methodological approach: principles and methods	109
4.6.1 Theoretical approach to the research design.....	109
4.6.2 Researching new university occupations and their knowledge base: methods for a case study investigation.....	113
4.6.2.1 Documentary research	117
4.6.2.2 Interviews	118
4.6.2.3 Access.....	123
4.6.2.4 Insider researcher and related issues.....	124
4.6.2.5 Ethical issues.....	126
4.7 Summary of chapter	128
Chapter 5: University Departments: Identifying Academic and Professional Knowledge	129
5.1 Introduction to chapter.....	129
5.2 Contextualising the university, departments and roles	130
5.2.1 Description of social science department	132
5.2.2 Description of science department	135
5.2.3 Roles within both departments	136
5.3 Access issues in carrying out the research	138
5.4 Design of the investigation	143
5.5 Emerging themes and issues	154
5.5.1 Career trajectories	155
5.5.2 Knowledge involved in roles	163
5.5.3 Internal and external networks.....	172
5.5.4 Working with colleagues.....	177
5.5.5 Summary of themes and issues	188

5.6 Interpretation of data	189
5.6.1 Knowledge in the collaborative community.....	191
5.6.2 Departmental differences	194
5.6.3 Boundaries between roles	195
5.6.4 Using Bernstein and Adler et al's theoretical frameworks.....	199
5.7 Summary of chapter	201
Chapter 6: Professionalising University Administrators – A Way Forward	204
6.1 Introduction to chapter.....	204
6.2 Summary of findings and my contribution	204
6.3 Research outcomes	205
6.3.1 New knowledge base	205
6.3.2 How I established these findings	221
6.4 Implications of my findings	225
6.4.1 Knowledge.....	226
6.4.2 Axis of the organisation/community	227
6.4.3 Professional development	228
6.5 Limitations of this study and suggestions for further work.....	233
References.....	234
Appendix 1 – Interview questions	251

List of tables and figures

Table 4.1: Contentions between Bernstein vs Adler et al.....	104
Table 4.2: Examples of subject types	112
Figure 5.1: Example of faculty structure.....	131
Figure 5.2: Example of faculty management structure:.....	131
Figure 5.3: Relationships between staff and students in social science department.....	134
Figure 5.4: Relationships between different staff and students in science department.....	136
Table 5.1: Interviewees by role and department	147
Table 5.2: Example of key words or phrases used for initial coding exercise	152
Table 5.3: Outline of grid used for initial coding exercise.....	153
Figure 5.5: Links between knowledge and community.....	190
Table 5.4: Comparison of framing of concepts of identity and community	201
Figure 6.1: Degree provision as the product of subject specialists and administrative expertise	208
Figure 6.1a: Degree provision with additional examples of administrative expertise highlighted.....	208
Table 6.1: Timeline for the development of new knowledge	216
Figure 6.2: External and internal factors affecting the development and delivery of a degree programme	220

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to this Study

1.1 Introduction to this study

This study is an empirical investigation into how knowledge is configured across different groups of staff within a higher education institution. It focuses, in particular, on what has generally been termed ‘the administration’, as opposed to academic staff, and what this potentially means for the professional identity and development of this occupational group which has emerged in a new form over recent decades.

In this thesis, the term ‘the administration’ refers to those administrative post-holders who work directly with academic colleagues on academic activities such as teaching accredited programmes, supervising research students and carrying out research and related activities. The central research question of this thesis is this: what does this knowledge consist of and how it is configured across these administrative post-holders within universities? Related to this enquiry is a sub-question: are the newer administrative roles emerging in universities potentially new professions and how do they articulate with the work of others within their organisation? I also aim to explore the implications for the development of this group with this professional identity in mind. It should be noted at this point that I use the term ‘identity’ in this study in relation to this context.

As I will show, both academic and administrative staff work together on teaching and research activities. I will explore the involvement of both groups of staff in order to clarify how and what knowledge is now used. The way that these staff work together within the institution is also salient. As is the case with many professions in modern times, these staff are located in the context of both an employing organisation and the group of people who require their knowledge - to all intents and purposes, the market.

1.2 Origin of this study

The study that follows was inspired by the diversity of newer administrative (and by this term I include non-academic management) roles that have proliferated

within universities over the last two decades, evident through the pages of the THES and www.jobs.ac.uk.

At the start of this study, I was a manager working at faculty level in learning, teaching and quality assurance in a university and prior to that post I had started as a departmental administrator in another institution and worked up to a departmental manager role. Since then, I have had two more roles, one in central quality assurance at a large multi-faculty university and then my current post as faculty Head of Academic Services at another multi-faculty institution. In my first two roles, I had the opportunity to create my own space (echoing Dearing, 1997).

As my own career progressed, I recognised that my identity within the university was changing; more specifically, I realised that I was acquiring knowledge which I was utilising in my job and that my role – and those of my peers – was developing into something akin to a profession rather than a simple support function.

Starting in the higher education sector in the late 1990s, in a very general role which encompassed clerical work within an academic department, I showed myself to be capable of learning how the department worked and started to identify tasks which I could take on (and were willingly given to me), freeing up academic colleagues to concentrate on teaching and research. These tasks were as diverse as webpage editing, co-ordinating student recruitment processes and collating data for the then-upcoming Research Assessment Exercise. I noticed that my peers, working in similar positions within the institution, were also developing their roles beyond the initial remit; in some cases, overt secretarial roles were transforming into posts involving finance management and examination administration, which had previously been configured in roles undertaken by academic colleagues in the context of positions such as principal investigators on research projects or chairs of boards of examiners. This shift of responsibilities became more explicit in the early 2000s with the formalising of these roles into higher-grade posts in more explicit management structures and with specific remits incorporating more direct involvement in the process or facilitation of academic work than in previous job descriptions.

During this time, the relationship between academic and administrative staff also developed into one of partnership rather than of lower-level clerical support, ostensibly changing the dynamic and power relations between these groups within the institutional communities in which they worked. It was this evolving interplay between administrative and academic staff which proved both frustrating and fascinating to me as I was able to be part of a community – in my case, a series of academic departments – undergoing these changes while I was employed in posts which were developing as described above.

While this development has been liberating in many ways for those of us working in such roles, it has not been without its problems. Professional autonomy, recognition, developing knowledge, and finding a way to work with academic staff as well as other administrative staff have all been major issues for myself and my peers. This is particularly apparent as roles have taken on aspects of work formerly the reserve of academic colleagues, such as quality assurance of teaching and financial management of degree programmes or research activities.

There are several moments that stand out, however. One was being asked in an MA module seminar whether we all thought we were professionals – all but one (working in quality assurance) put up their hands. The second was an e-card which was circulated to a group of university administrators one Christmas, with the tagline ‘Which hat are you wearing?’ (obviously the answer at that point was a Santa hat). I think that both of these instances illustrate the issues behind this research: many of us could describe ourselves as a ‘Jack/Jill of all trades’, fitting ourselves into whatever context we have to deal with as the sector and our institutions change, and accumulating knowledge through various means in order to perform our jobs. This echoes the fluidity described by Whitchurch throughout much of her work (Whitchurch, 2007; 2008; 2008b; 2013). As many of our roles are relatively new, or recently configured, there is still a lack of clarity around how and what we contribute to academic activities and how we are perceived by others within our organisations (by academic colleagues, in particular). This perception is slowly changing with some researchers looking at areas such as research administration (for example, Allen-Collinson, 2006; 2007; 2009). It is

interesting to note, however, that there has been little research addressing emerging professional roles in learning and teaching. In essence, there has not been enough in-depth research looking at any of these roles as potential new professions with their own body (or bodies) of expertise, how they realistically work within organisations and they interact with other staff roles. Kolsaker (2014) made an inroad to this area in her study on the professionalism of university administrators but there has been no examination of the knowledge involved. I want to address this deficit within this study, explore these new roles in more depth than in previous studies and with a clearer theoretical framework. In order to do this, I want to investigate the knowledge that these roles utilise, how this is configured across the matrix of the institution in which they work and what this means for the identities of the staff undertaking these roles.

1.3 Focus of this study

I set out my central research question at the start of this chapter: what does the knowledge utilised by university administrators consist of and how is this knowledge configured across these administrative post-holders within universities? I also set out a sub-question: are the newer administrative roles emerging in universities potentially new professions and how do they articulate with the work of others within their organisation? This enquiry has been ignited through my own experiences and those of my peers as we have accumulated expertise and worked to find a place within the institutions that employ us.

I will show that these newer administrative roles cannot be examined in a lacuna: they need to be considered within the context of their relationship with academic roles, organisational structures and the changed and changing nature of academic work as further reform comes online with all that it brings¹. Hence, the study that follows involves both the new administrative occupations and academic roles as they are now interdependent and are predicated on this symbiotic relationship rather than on a zero-sum basis with an assumed binary

¹ This thesis was started in Spring 2012 so has endured through the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and consequent evolution of HEFCE to the Office for Students in Spring 2018.

opposition (which has been evident in a significant proportion of the literature on higher education as I will describe in Chapter 2).

Although the initial theme of the first substantive chapter involves changes to academic work and the impact on academic identity, I should be clear at this point that the focus of this study is not the identity of academic staff or perceptions of any loss of professional academic autonomy that may be at the heart of much recent higher education commentary (e.g. Henkel, 2000; 2007; Churchman and King, 2009). My emphasis is on changes to the ways academic staff work and the knowledge now used in teaching and research and what this means for the newer administrative roles that have evolved. I am therefore interested in the modern connotations of what it means to be a profession.

Traditional definitions of a profession relate to a specific body of expertise, objectivity and an autonomy of judgement which may be argued to privilege members of that profession and thus insulate them against the forces of their market and organisation (e.g. Freidson, 2001; Evetts, 2003). However, in a modern context these are complicated by the reality of working alongside other occupational groups, the requirements of the employing organisation and the market which provides the demand for the expertise in question. In this sense, what it means to be a profession (or an emerging profession) is multifaceted and needs to take into account these other influences.

1.4 Clarifying the level of administrative role

The term 'administration' covers a wide variety of occupations with differing levels of knowledge and responsibility required whereas 'academic' roles are normally those which are classified as lecturer, senior lecturer, reader or professor and are appointed at a certain minimal salary level².

With regard to the academic and administrative post-holders in this study, I am only looking at those working above a certain level, where tasks are carried out autonomously, staff have responsibility for their own work and utilise a type of

² For example, at UCL lecturer posts are usually appointed at salary grade 8.

knowledge as the basis for the service they provide. In other words, I am not looking at research assistants, administrative assistants and others whose roles could be considered as directed or simply low-level procedure-driven, for much of the time. This is not to belittle the importance of these roles but they are simply outside the scope of this study, which seeks to clarify the nature of posts which might be considered as emerging professions and how they interact within the organisational structure of higher education institutions, as well as with academic staff posts. By the same logic, other (perhaps established) professional roles such as accountancy and human resources, which have a place within higher education institutions but which are also identifiable as independent fields across all sectors, are not included within this study. That it not to say that they do not have their own issues as professions working in universities, but this falls outside the scope of this study.

In terms of actual occupations, it is important to note that the terms administrator and manager are often taken to be analogous or inter-changeable: both may manage or co-ordinate processes, people or both; both work with academic staff and others to help deliver academic activities of teaching, research, consultancy and knowledge-transfer. For the purposes of this study the terms will be mildly inter-changeable but, as posited above, rely on those posts which involve a significant degree of autonomy. The range of work covered by these terms should also be recognised; one issue which has been identified is how the binary positioning of academic and non-academic roles denies the existence of more complex 'third space' work which may cross these boundaries (Whitchurch, 2013). In Chapter 2, however, I will propose that the reality is more complicated than this in terms of what this means for different occupational groups.

1.5 Professional knowledge and identity

As I have stated, the administrative knowledge used for the production of academic activities in universities has been neglected in research up to this point and therefore there is a lack of clarity around this notion in the literature. This neglect is problematic for the newer administrative occupations under examination, as without any exploration of this knowledge, it is impossible for them to claim any basis as an emerging profession (or potentially a group of

emerging professions). The identification of a body of knowledge that serves a particular need is fundamental to a profession; other characteristics include objectivity and the regulation of the occupational group via a regulatory body and the consequent normalising of the behaviour of practitioners in the profession via a process of socialisation (Evetts, 2003; Beck and Young, 2005).

However, as commented above, professional identity needs to take into account the other forces at play: the organisation, other professional groups and the market requiring the knowledge provided by the profession. In this study I will focus on the knowledge required for academic work and how this plays out between the different groups. I will examine what this means for the emerging professional identity and development for the newer administrative groups in question.

1.6 Community

In section 1.2 of this chapter I commented on the development of the administrative roles under investigation and their changing dynamic with the community in which they are based, particularly concerning academic colleagues whose work they may be in part assuming.

Although I use the terms 'academic' and 'administrative' to describe different roles in higher education, I want to be clear that the context for these roles is also no longer predicated on the dichotomy of academic-administrative delineation, prevalent in much of the higher education literature. Instead, I will show that the actual labour processes for academic work have evolved from a more private activity carried out unilaterally by those designated as academic staff and supported at a relatively low level by clerical staff, to a process-basis involving different academic and administrative role holders, each contributing a level of expertise to the output. This implies that the knowledge base utilised in universities has expanded to encompass not only disciplinary (i.e. subject-specific) expertise but also other types of knowledge; this in turn implies the possibility of new professions emerging within these institutions. The disciplinary aspect is also complicated by the influence of the knowledge economy and the (external) societal demand for 'transdisciplinary' (Scott, 1997) solutions-based

research, which responds to a context rather than the interests of an academic group or predicated on the parameters of that group.

With the emergence of new roles, changes in the processes of academic work and the context-driven demands of the knowledge society, the make-up and dynamic of the communities within universities has changed: knowledge has become dispersed across different groups (Knorr Cetina, 1997, p.1) and this has impacted on the identities of academic staff as well as administrative staff. I will show that the primacy of the disciplinary group as the main source of community for academic staff has been challenged by the increased interaction with other types of staff in the production of research and teaching. The influence of these other occupational groups may cause tension with the interests of the subject group and prove problematic for the professional identity of academic staff (ibid. p.5).

1.7 *The type of institution under view*

It is important to remember that the different types of higher education institution have impacted differently on those working within them. Pre-1992 (the 'older' institutions) and post-1992 (the 'new' universities, i.e. ex-polytechnics and colleges of higher education) institutions have differed in their responses to changes in their relationship with the state, the advent of more control and accountability to external agencies and the development of a more explicit management structure within institutions. More specifically, polytechnics were already subject to a more explicit managerial structure due to their previous control via local councils (or the Inner London Education Authority, in the case of five London institutions) (Pratt, 1997; Shelley, 2005 pp.36-7; Whitchurch 2008b, pp.70-1). Local authority management governed budgeting, procurement and staffing, which in turn required a particularly managerial structure in order for these institutions to respond to these constraints (Pratt, 1997). Hence, the resultant culture implies that the impact over the past few decades of wider higher education reform and the consequent changes to roles within the sector would be felt more explicitly by those working in the pre-1992 universities which had operated, in effect, autonomously due to insulation from the state provided by the former University Grants Committee (UGC) (Shattock, 1994) and the historic

separation of the academic and administrative functions within these institutions. This latter delineation had relied on the pretext that

...universities had essentially academic functions, and that academics needed administrative support in sustaining them. However, as universities acquired more complex functions, they needed staff with more diverse and more specialised knowledge and skills. These staff would also be required to move into areas previously presumed the preserve of others.

(Henkel, 2000, p.61)

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 which allowed polytechnics to seek university status and the subsequent release from local authority constraints resulted in most new universities moving towards a managerial ethos (Pratt, 1997, pp.294-5). In this sense, the organisational effects in these institutions were not dissimilar to those arising in older universities. The cultural shift for many staff, however, may not have been so prominent as hierarchical structures and overt management had already been in place as a result of their previous control by local authorities (ibid. p.297).

In this sense, this study will focus on the established, pre-1992 multi-faculty universities where organisational and cultural changes would be expected to be more pronounced due to the scope of change experienced compared with post-1992 institutions. I am not claiming that there may be very different issues between the two, but the culture and organisational structures of the newer institutions have come from a different place compared with the pre-1992 universities. It would no doubt be interesting to draw up and analyse a comparison of institutions coming out of either side of the former 'binary' system of universities and polytechnics, but that makes for an alternative piece of research other than this one. Besides this, as I have worked only for pre-1992 institutions myself these are a particular point of personal interest.

The following chapter will look at the impact that reform and consequent sector change has had on the process of work carried out by academic staff, particularly

with pre-1992 institutions in mind, as well as how this interacts with the subject knowledge and disciplinary group.

1.8 Thesis outline

The aim of the next chapter is to illustrate the changes to academic work which have arisen due to higher education reform, the proliferation of the knowledge economy and how this work is now configured for those who have traditionally been termed academic staff. This is with the above premise in mind and the intention to explore how academic work within universities is now carried out. I will then discuss the development of new administrative roles in light of higher education reform and in response to the changing demands of society as access to higher education expands and responds to tighter state control via funding and external agencies. I go on to expand on the 'problematism' of these roles in terms of their position in relation to academic staff, the knowledge involved in these posts and qualifications needed.

In the third chapter, I will show that the work of Bernstein (2000) facilitates an understanding of academic identity and its basis in a disciplinary group; the principles developed offer a means of understanding the varying vulnerabilities of different academic subjects and how this can be extrapolated to understanding the position of other occupational groups which may develop. At the core of this understanding is the importance of knowledge in these new groups and the impact this has on how teaching and research are carried out. I will show Heckscher and Adler's (2006; 2008) concept of the collaborative community provides a framework to illustrate how the process of academic work has changed and the challenges that occur as a result.

In the fourth chapter, I will discuss the themes and issues which have been identified up to this point and use the basis provided by Bernstein and Adler et al to develop a piece of empirical research to examine the knowledge held by university administrators and the context in which it is utilised, and whether this group is a profession. I will then set out my methodological approach and my research design.

In the fifth chapter, I will detail the context of the university chosen as a focus for the study and describe the two departments in which I carried out the research. I will then discuss access issues in carrying out the research and set out the design of the investigation. Also in this chapter, I will go on to detect emerging themes and issues and go on to contextualise these in relation to the basis of my study; I will also look at the departmental differences and their significance. I will then review the findings of the research and set the scene for the way forward in terms of developing university administration.

In the final chapter of this study, I summarise the outcomes of my research and discuss my contribution to the field of higher education research. I set out the implications for research moving forward including the limitations of my study and concluding comments.

1.9 Terminology used

Certain terms will be used in this study and it is important to be clear about their meaning in this context.

‘Academic department’ is a unit within an institution that encompasses a group of academic staff working in a particular subject area or discipline.

‘Academic staff’ refers to staff who usually hold appropriate higher qualifications, normally including a doctorate, who plan and undertake teaching and research activity within universities. Some may also hold leadership positions relating to teaching or research or in relation to university governance.

‘Academic work’ generally refers to provision of degree programmes at all levels in higher education i.e. developing and delivering teaching and assessment, developing and carrying out research and related activities such as consultancy and knowledge-transfer and the supervision of research students.

‘Administrative staff’ refers to those staff who hold specific administrative positions, working in faculties on academic activities such as teaching or research alongside academic colleagues. This term encompasses substantively

managerial posts but not those academic posts which have a leadership remit. I differentiate this group from other administrators who work in central roles within institutions, e.g. within student services/registry roles. This is simply because the focus of this study is on those working in academic departments or faculties.

'Bureaucracy' is used to refer to the administrative or organisational governance system of an institution and can be taken as synonymous with these terms. It is implicitly hierarchical.

'Community' in the context of this study refers to the group of staff who work together in a particular unit, e.g. an academic department within a university.

'Faculty' is a group of academic departments grouped together within an institution for purposes of management. Normally, these groupings involve departments with common themes, e.g. humanities or science subjects.

'Hierarchy' refers to bureaucracy and is used in this sense by Adler et al.

'Identity' in this study is used in the context of the characteristics of a profession.

'Knowledge', in the context of this thesis, is the expertise which is provided by post-holders within a university, specifically focusing on academic and administrative staff.

'Managers' refers to administrators who work above a certain level within an institution and with a degree of autonomy, having acquired knowledge and experience to the extent that they work on degree provision or research activities directly in partnership with academic colleagues. For the purposes of this study (and because there is a huge diversity in job titles from manager to officer) I will use the term 'administrator' to describe this group.

'Process-basis' refers to an activity which has been divided into separate elements which inter-relate, e.g. the delivery of a degree which may involve programme development, delivery of teaching, quality assurance, assessment

and development of online pedagogy amongst other activities. These elements are all related to each and contribute to the degree as a whole but may be carried out by separate individuals who may be academic or professional staff.

'Profession' refers to an occupation which is predicated on a defined body of knowledge which is acquired via training and qualifications. Objectivity and an autonomy of judgement are also associated with this term.

Chapter 2: Academic Work: Knowledge and Process

2.1 Introduction to chapter

The aim of this chapter is to explore how academic work takes place within a university, the process of learning and teaching-related activities, how academic staff work now and the issues associated with this state of affairs. My initial emphasis is on academic staff working, in that they are normally the originators of research and teaching activities and, as I will argue, this work has shifted in process over recent decades to encompass administrative staff.

I will then look at the drivers behind the current state, the changes that have taken place in higher education via state intervention and the impact of the knowledge economy. I will discuss how new managerialism has been perceived to be used as the ideology of control and the effect of this usage on research in the field, which has primarily focused on the position of academic staff and – with some notable but problematic exceptions – neglected the newer (administrative) roles which have emerged over the past few decades. While new managerialism is a response to the changes in the sector and reflects issues around knowledge and ways of working, it does not recognise that changes are more fundamental than the imposition of a management culture on an organisation.

In response to the above-noted neglect, I will consider how administrative staff work now, the newer roles which have developed and the associated issues around their development and emerging professional status.

My intended outcomes for this chapter are to show that:

- Academic work has transformed into a non-individual activity which is effectively process-based;
- The knowledge needed to carry out academic activities has changed;
- There is an organisational issue: academic staff now need to work with different groups of staff who may bring another type of expertise to the table;

- These other groups – and here the emphasis is on administrative groups – have been neglected in terms of their knowledge-base and development;
- The research undertaken to date with respect to these administrative groups falls short of addressing their status as an emerging profession.

As teaching and research activities have always been associated primarily with academic staff, I will start by looking at how this group now carries out this work.

2.2 *How academic staff work now*

As the focus of this study is on the actuality of academic work – the production and facilitation of teaching for students and the development and execution of research - I will start by looking at the way academic work is produced and the connected issues for academic staff. This is the main group traditionally associated with these activities but this same group has been cited as decreasing in the power it holds over academic work (Halsey, 1992).

The nature of academic work has fundamentally changed over the past few decades as a result of reform, particularly in the light of the Thatcher era and the associated changes to the relationship between universities and the state (Henkel, 2000). Halsey (1992), surveying academics at three separate points between 1964-1989, argued that the power distribution in higher education has shifted from academic staff towards the state, students and other external stakeholders which has changed the nature of how academic work is carried out. Over the decades since Halsey's work, this has become more pronounced, culminating most recently in the creation of the Office for Students, with the increased emphasis on students as being both the measure and judge of institutional quality. Academic work has shifted, in effect, from an autonomous, solitary or small group activity carried out by academic staff, to one which has had to respond to external organisations and sector influences and demands. In response, this work has grown to involve other stakeholders who participate in the process of these activities.

My point here is not to critique these changes to academic work or produce a detailed history of their origin; rather, this study is predicated on the acceptance

of the reality that academic work has changed. What follows charts the developments which have influenced how the administrative roles within universities have changed.

Miller (1995), carrying on from Halsey, notes the “intensification of effort” needed for the activities of teaching, research and administration (Miller, 1995, p.54). This is as a result of increasing undergraduate class sizes causing a shift in teaching style; the changes to employment in terms of the increased use of short-term contracts; the relative decline in pay compared with other professions as well as the centralisation of management decision-making while certain responsibilities are devolved to academic departments (ibid. pp. 54-57). Miller notes that:

Through their command of discrete expertise, academics can still largely influence the processes of both their research and teaching, but the raw material (students or problems to be investigated) is increasingly determined by the combined influences of the state, institutional managers and the market. The outcomes of research and teaching are being similarly influenced..... [W]hile they may retain quite high degrees of technical control, they can be seen to be losing ‘ideological’ control of their work.

(Miller, 1995, p.56)

This shift in the locus of academic work is evident though other instances of research and is a feature that can be traced through the literature to the present day. A little later than Miller, Martin (1999) looked at the impact of sector changes to academic work. Her survey of academic staff in Australia and the UK reveals the impact of the massification of university provision such as teaching larger classes (presumably at undergraduate level) and of higher education being opened up to groups from a wider range of backgrounds. One respondent cited a lowering of their own self-esteem due to not being able to teach as effectively as they would like due to class size. This is coupled with the challenges lecturers face from students who may not be as prepared for higher education as previous generations due to their wider diversity of background and education (Martin,

1999, pp.8-9) and the increase in international students for whom provision needs to be made in the curriculum (ibid. p.12). The interviews with academic leaders and non-leaders show that there is a division between these groups, each with widely different perceptions of the issues at stake and each (in effect) blaming the other for the current state (ibid. p.24). What is clear from these researchers is the fundamental change to the way academics work as a profession: the loss of ideological control cited previously by Miller; the potential loss of control over pedagogy cited by Martin as modes of teaching increasingly need to respond to mass class size and different learning needs and so forth which have in effect been enforced by sector demands and institutional management. However, I should acknowledge that while the impact on academic staff is perceived as a loss, these changes may have a positive effect on students in terms of increasing inclusivity and widening participation in higher education.

The consequent change to academic identity is also clear, and – although the notion of this type of identity is not the crux of this study – it has obvious affinities with the changing concept of academic work. It is interesting to note that Taylor (1999) viewed the identities of academics as fragmenting in response to institutional changes and the increasing fluidity of these organisational structures. He suggested that academic identity is a multi-layered cosmopolitan concept, negotiating between the demands of the external world and those of the disciplinary group to which they belong. However, it is also subject to the site of their work – the university – and the cross-disciplinary construct of being ‘an academic’, with its implication of academic autonomy (in terms of disinterested enquiry) and academic freedom (in terms of the sovereignty of the disciplinary group over the process of education) (Taylor, 1999, pp. 40-43). Taylor contextualised this as a possible product of myths and stories which has in turn contributed to a shared culture which bought into this identity. However, the recent external context has meant that academic roles have needed to develop in line with sector changes as well as challenges brought about by technology and changing pedagogies. What can be seen in Taylor’s research is that there is a need for academic staff to see their work as more fluid, which may involve engagement with other academic staff and an extension of their expertise beyond their own discipline, as the underlying ideology of academic work evolves and

institutions need to show their accountability to society as well as external agencies of the state. As a result, the tension between the normative influences of the academic group and the external arena is clearly shown. Interestingly, I note that this tension is one that can be traced through other professions in recent times (Freidson, 2001).

This fluidity is reflected in the transfer of aspects of academic work from academic to other staff roles. Over the past few decades newer, mainly administrative, roles have taken on the management of budgets, contributed to the development and delivery of accredited teaching, and played significant part in research, from application to award and completion; I will explore this in more depth shortly. The relationship between the groups categorised as academic and administrative has changed as the nature of academic work has transformed. Kogan (2007) described the impact of the state's intervention in higher education as increasingly bringing administration to the "boundary of the academic domain" (ibid. p.166). He shows how the interface between academic and administrative work is converging and alludes to the normative influence of each group as a means of producing identity; the (informal) function of the professoriate is to set a standard for academic work via "invisible colleges":

Whether a head of department or dean or not, professors are expected to set the norms for teaching and research in their subject area. They should, but do not in all systems, take a key role in curriculum development as well as setting the themes and standards for research and scholarship. They should actively mentor junior staff. They should be responsible for ensuring that new areas of their subject are covered and that new teaching methods and advances in subject knowledge are pursued.

(ibid. p.167)

Thus, through this professorial leadership, which requires an element of bureaucracy for its implementation, the work of senior academics approaches management. However, Kogan also implies that the values associated with academic work (i.e. the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake) are opposed to those of the administration/management which seeks to satisfy the state's

accountability requirements and those of the institution itself (ibid. pp. 169-70). Nonetheless, he acknowledges that bureaucracy is an essential element of academia and positions these aspects as inextricably entwined and he raises the issue regarding the recruitment and training of the administration in light of this co-dependence (ibid. p.171). Kogan poses the question – but does not follow up on - whether the academic leadership of the professoriate actually happens? If so, it is not clear how this realistically interacts with the professional management that has come to more prominence in institutions. He does not address the more recent structures of academic groups and mentoring and whether they are now flatter than they should be. As professorial appointments may no longer rely on research leadership, but instead on institutional service such as managerial leadership (Henkel, 2000, p.149), it is clear that the status of professor may indicate another sort of seniority based on non-academic achievement.

Interestingly, Kogan (very) incidentally questions the administration as a *profession* in relation to academics, in terms of its management of the activities of others instead of control of its own contribution to the organisation (ibid. p.168), but does not follow through to any conclusion. In terms of the professional status or contribution of the administration/management, he interprets this only in relation to its interaction with academic work and the organisation.

The work of Kogan and others sets the scene for how academic work has changed and thus impacted on academic staff, with external factors changing the professional nature of their work at all levels as they have needed to respond to these. In terms of the detail of this work, there has been a decided transformation in terms of how and where this lies. For example, a thought-provoking paper by Musselin (2007) starts from the point of the limiting power of the academic group as a profession. The changes undergone by universities have resulted in a diversification of academic tasks including such activities as writing proposals or developing e-learning. Management skills are now a core component of academic work as is interaction with external fields (ibid. p.177). However, what may be termed the 'de-professionalisation' (my word) that academic staff may experience as a result of the loss of control over what they do and how they

organise their work is not simply down to external (state) forces, but the demands of the peer group. Musselin points out that:

The decisions made by editorial boards, hiring and promotion processes, or assessment procedures remain largely (if not entirely) controlled by academics.... Rather than a decrease in academic power, there is an emergence of other forms and other actors of control on top of academic regulations. As a result, academics are no longer evaluated only by their peers, but also by their own institution or through national devices that public authorities develop in order to control, rank and benchmark their activity.

(ibid. p.181)

This can be seen through exercises such as the institutional review processes carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). These reviews are undertaken mainly by academic peers, and academic judgement however is not purely subject-driven and may be affected by external forces such as social relevance or the influence of non-peers (ibid. p.181). Academic work has thus evolved in terms of diversity of tasks and has moved towards a process-basis involving different types of specialist staff. In the example of e-learning, development of a course may involve not just the academic input to the curriculum, but also technological skills provided by other staff; these actors need to cooperate in order to produce the final result (ibid. p.182).

The impact of this evolution on academic staff has been widely documented. For example, Smith (2010) depicts a crisis in academic identity, illustrating the issues associated with the fragmentation of academic identity in the context of universities as complex organisations involving many types of roles and many drivers or pressures on staff, both internal and external. However, the detail uncovered by analysing the nature of academic work over the last decade provides some notable contradictions. Universities UK produced an interesting report (2010) which unpicked some of the perceived notions regarding academic work, as well as identifying the real nature of this labour, through a 2007 survey of academic workers at different stages of their careers. What is clear from this

research is that, contrary to the impression one may glean from other literature in the field and the media, despite the fact that job satisfaction overall among academics had fallen by 2 percent since 1992 (in line with other professions), the levels of *dissatisfaction* had also fallen by 13 percent (UUK, 2010, p.5). This is juxtaposed with a decline in the amount of time spent on teaching and an increase in the time spent on research over the same period; however, this sits in the context of an increased *primary* interest in research over teaching (from 15 percent to 24 percent) (ibid. p.10). This puts a different slant on how these workers feel about their position. The authors, citing Watson (2009) (ibid. p.12), seem to explain this as concurrent dissatisfaction with institutional and sector issues alongside a commitment to their department/grouping or their own academic teaching and research. This is consistent with the findings that UK academic staff feel that they have less personal influence on determining policies for either their department/unit (down by 23 percent to 37 percent) or faculty/school (down 19 percent to 19 percent) than they did in 1992. Conversely, their perceived level of influence on institutional policy remained low but consistent at 9 percent (ibid. pp.16-17). The views on the management of their institutions reflected these responses: the majority of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that their organisations had “a cumbersome administrative process” and a “top-down management style”. Less than half agreed or agreed strongly that administrative staff had a “supportive attitude” towards teaching (38 percent to 47 percent, depending on gender and BME status); even less felt the same about the attitude of administrative staff to research activities (31 percent to 43 percent depending on gender and BME status) (ibid. p.35). This indicates a strong cleft between academic staff and management/administrative structures, but unfortunately the survey does not *sufficiently* offer up how this may vary between academics at different stages of their careers. The report notes that the expansion of the sector over recent decades has not only increased the flow of younger people via the direct path of a PhD but also a rise in those entering academia at “mid-level”, coming from another career (ibid. p.21). It is remiss that the relationship between the organisational structure or management and UK academics is not surveyed in as much detail as other aspects of the report, as one speculation could be that those entering academia later in their careers are more accepting of the demands of their organisation and the possible constraints

of its structure, possibly due to coming from sectors which have experienced similar professional constraints. Interestingly, this is a complexity which has remained neglected until approached in a more recent study looking at competing institutional logics within universities (Shields and Watermeyer, 2018).

As well as dissonance with their institution and administrative colleagues, a feature that is clear from the report is what the authors term the fragmentation of the academic role (as implied by Musselin (2007), Taylor (1999) et al previously). Teaching is divided into tasks ranging from delivery, assessment of students and course leadership; research into elements such as analysis and interpretation, and project management. This suggests that these fundamental academic activities have transformed into a different type of work, with individuals – both academic and other - carrying out different aspects of the work instead of the former delineation between academic and non-academic – or support – work. The implication is that the division of labour is now more democratic with various actors playing a less hierarchical role. The authors also comment (but do not necessarily expand) on the professionalisation of the research proposal process³ with dedicated units within institutions to maximise achievement. Additionally, with the advance of technology in pedagogy, the processes around learning are also being “disaggregated” among teams (ibid. p.38). This all illustrates how teaching and research have been transformed from individual or small group-based activities to large processes, of which different individuals (as post-holders) carry out aspects which cohere together to form a whole. Boundaries between traditional academic roles and other (classed as non-academic but significantly administrative) roles have thus become less delineated, allowing opportunities for new roles to emerge.

How this transformation of teaching and research processes has affected academic work and its relationship(s) with other post-holders, as well as the disciplinary expertise of traditional academic units, is unresolved in the above literature. The shift from a more individual basis for academic activities, with one

³ One issue to bear in mind is that it is unclear what type of institutional background – pre- or post-1992 – the respondents in the paper are from. However, the prevalence of references to research activity suggests that many were from pre-1992 institutions.

or few academics working on a course or developing a research proposal, to a process-basis is very clear. The centrality of the disciplinary group to academic work has altered and now involves other actors, whether administrators or other types of post-holders (which will be examined in more depth shortly). As seen above, this has evidently caused disquiet from the academic perspective but little progressive work seems to have been written about how these other actors have developed a professional identity in relation to academic work. Instead, the focus has been on the negatively-perceived impact on ways of working for academic staff and the effect on their professional identity, often at the cost of failing to recognise other (non-academic) occupational groups which have emerged.

Before looking at these new groups, I will now briefly look at the influences of these changes on academic identity. This is a connected issue as I believe that it is this effect which has caused – however inadvertently – an obstruction in existing research on the new occupations which have emerged. Obviously, as my argument rests on the premise that both academic and other groups of staff, particularly administrative, now work together on academic activities, it is important to understand the position of the former. As the source of research into higher education and the issues at hand (which implies a certain conflict of interest) this informs the perception and development of the alternative administrative occupations which are the focus of this study.

2.3 Challenges to the influence of the academic disciplinary group

The principle defining unit of the university structure is the academic disciplinary group (Becher, 1989). This is the source of academic identity for subject experts and, in terms of the normalising influence of the professional group (Evetts, 2003), provides the site for the socialisation of students. In order to understand the extent of the changes discussed in the previous section in relation to academic work and university management, it is useful at this point to conceptualise the origins of academic identity and the impact this has on producing further experts in a specific field.

As Henkel (2000) points out, echoing Bernstein (2000), the literature on higher education depicts academia as strongly bounded, accessible only to an intellectual elite. Induction to a discipline is via:

...a community of scholars who develop and apply epistemic rules of enquiry and testing, and evaluative criteria such as logic, use of evidence, conceptual and theoretical rigour and creativity, and the disinterested pursuit of truth.

(Henkel, 2000, p.16)

The importance of the individual's commitment to their subject is clear and the norm is a form of apprenticeship through progression from undergraduate study to research degree, often (particularly in the sciences) taking place in research teams. However, increased regulation of postgraduate education and higher education teaching have resulted in this becoming a more managed process (ibid. pp.150-54). The clear centrality of knowledge production is retained, but this is now more regulated than previously in some disciplines. The academic work undertaken by staff is also open to scrutiny in terms of external audit and assessment and professional practice can now be challenged by not only other academics but also by administrators. As a result, the institution has become a more dominant factor in academic life and its power relations with the academic unit have become more unstable. To explain, a strong, resource-generating department may command more reputational impact (with the implication that weaker departments are more subject to the demands of the institution). Structures around academic units have become more formalised and management of staff more explicit (ibid. pp.252-4).

Research shows that the site of this identity formation – the university – has become a more corporate enterprise:

Vice-chancellors effectively became chief executives, supported by a team of senior academic managers. At the same time, universities became more multi-professional organisations, recruiting new forms of expertise to manage new functions. Administration had an increasingly high profile in

institutions, even if the work entailed was taken up not only by administrators but also by senior academics and other professionals.
(Henkel, 2000, p.252)

The influence of (at least some) disciplinary groups is now weaker in the face of forces of the institution and market (Trowler, 2012); this is coupled with the recent diversification in degree subjects offered and it is interesting to note how this arises in practical terms. To exemplify this, Kleiman (2012), looking at the performing arts in higher education, notes the standardisation of programmes and modules as well as their subjection to external demands of QAA, RAE/REF and government influences such as the Browne report. He also explores the change to the individual disciplines that comprise what may be termed 'performing arts' – dance, drama and music - and reveals that they are interconnected, unbounded, particularly as 'dual identity' academic and practice-based disciplines where staff move into alternative roles and practices:

There is a strong sense that we have moved, or certainly are moving, beyond a period when there was a single identifiable discipline, e.g. drama, and a shared understanding of what that discipline was. One senior lecturer in drama... viewed this as an indicator of 'a splintering of a shared understanding of what the focus/content/values of a degree programme might be, making it difficult to talk of a single subject area nationally
(Kleiman, 2012, p.135)

This 'splintering' has consequences for academic identities of those in these areas. It also gives a taste of what other less-established academic groups might be experiencing in terms of their original disciplinary base fragmenting as their position in higher education (in terms of teaching and research) evolves in response to external pressures. This implies a lack of academic group control over the disciplinary areas, with the locus of this control moving towards external standards. Along with the previously-mentioned transferral of academic work to a process-basis, the loss of authority over ways of working, influence over

curriculum choice⁴ and pedagogy and the increase in alternative roles to support the requirements of academic work, signify a change for the academic role as a profession. This loss is juxtaposed, however, with the increase in accountability and transparency, which arise from the external requirements levied on institutions; in ethical terms, this is entirely appropriate as funding for institutions and their work is still mostly derived from public funds (source: HESA website). There is also the unsubstantiated assumption that all academic activities are delivered at the appropriate level when regulated by individuals or internal mechanisms.

It is clear from earlier in this chapter that the influence of the disciplinary group has been challenged by the diversification of knowledge needed to carry out teaching and research. As will be seen in the next sections, this is the result of changes to the way that higher education is funded, making it more explicitly subject to state directives and the external influences of the knowledge economy, where the need for more qualified 'knowledge workers' and for problem-based research which transcends disciplinary boundaries has prevailed. The resulting proliferation of new roles (not subservient to, but working alongside academic staff) and the impact of external requirements cannot but affect the identity of academic practitioners. However, the need for engagement with the external field has become more crucial. This is not simply a matter of stakeholder involvement but the advance of the knowledge economy and the need to source and compete for funding for teaching and research.

From the available literature, it is not certain what the fragmentation of academic work means for the vocational 'calling' to the subject area that commits academic experts to their practice for its own sake and the consequent primacy of the discipline (Becher, 1989). The suggestion from Martin (1999) and Taylor (1999), as well as salient commentators such as Henkel (2000), is that their identity as academics and also as a professional group has undergone some degree of transformation over the past few decades. The influence of the external environment has become more prevalent and the structure of institutions has

⁴ Curriculum is generally less prescribed in UK higher education than in school-level education but this varies according to the subject area, e.g. due to accrediting body requirements.

evolved in response to policy and pressures on funding (Deem, 1998; Henkel, 2000) resulting in the emergence of new posts to support its demands and work alongside subject experts. The dynamic of the administration supporting academic colleagues has changed in principle, to one of partnership with academic colleagues as well as external agencies and students (Whitchurch, 2013, p.xii). It is this emergence of new roles which also needs to be looked at alongside the current role of academic workers in order to understand the status quo.

The keys to this understanding are the external drivers in the last few decades. I will now explore the main external influences on the university sector, institutional organisation and ways of working.

2.4 *The impact of the knowledge economy on academic work*

It is important to note that the source of the changes to universities and their organisation is not simply a result of the impact of external agencies such as HEFCE and the QAA acting unilaterally. Wider societal changes have undermined the position of universities as the sole producers of knowledge but they still have a major role to play in this production (Delanty, 2001). It is the case that the edict for much research undertaken is no longer derived from academic or peer group priorities per se, but from external contexts and funding. Universities have had to respond accordingly and, consequently, organisational structures and ways of carrying out academic work have changed (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997).

To expand on this, the economical context has evolved from an industrial basis to a knowledge basis, with an increasing dependence on human capital in terms of services involving technology and management (Naidoo, 2011, p.44). Accounts of the knowledge economy share the assumption that advanced economies have evolved structurally, due to knowledge and human capital, as well as the availability of information and technology. Education is obviously significant to this evolution but it is complicated by the manner in which information can now transcend borders and structures and the implications this

has in terms of legal, political and ethical concerns (Peters, 2009, p.66). The latter of these are obviously important but not for discussion here.

The result has been an increased emphasis on the importance of knowledge as a commodity and this has fed through to how research is originated and funded within higher education, particularly in the present context of competition for grants and consultancy. The need for an up-skilled workforce of 'knowledge workers' has resulted in a mass – as opposed to (formerly) elite – education system and the production of workers with transferable skills (Naidoo, 2011, p.44). This was formalised in Tony Blair's 2001 promise to achieve a target of 50% of young people entering higher education by 2010⁵. This has had consequences for the provision of teaching. As mentioned previously, teaching staff have had to adapt their pedagogies for large groups of undergraduates and for more diverse needs within the classroom. The expertise valued by the knowledge economy is no longer derived solely from disciplines and the implication is that the knowledge valued by the current climate is more generic, or rather needs to have the flexibility to be applied to multiple situations. External emphasis is on practical research and work-based learning alongside an increase in other sources of knowledge outside the university and there is emphasis on the increasing legitimisation of new forms of knowledge, based in functional contexts (Olssen & Peters, 2000).

The university as the main or sole site of knowledge production has been usurped by the advance of the 'knowledge society' and the increase in occupations which rely on knowledge (Stehr, 1994). This has brought the university into the world of work out of necessity. In terms of responding to external economic or industrial needs from this knowledge society, universities have shifted to accommodate this and it has been recognised as interdisciplinary in nature (Barnett, 2000). To expand on this, Scott (1997) charts the distribution of (Mode 2) knowledge which is generated from the field of application and comes about through the need to solve practical problems. As such, it is not interdisciplinary (where disciplines collaborate but maintain their separate identities) but transdisciplinary (Scott,

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/may/23/labour.tonyblair>

1997, p.10), where the boundaries between subject areas are discarded as the priority is to find a solution. As the context for the knowledge is in the field of practice, it is accountable to external agencies and the market. This has consequences for students: teaching risks being separated from research due to its required fluidity rather than being informed by it (Delanty, 2001, p.110). There are also consequences for academic staff in terms of navigating their way between the demands of their disciplinary group, their institution and external opportunities for research or (increasingly) consultancy and knowledge transfer (Solomon & Usher, 1999). These assumptions about the differentiation between Mode 1 (academic-led, subject-based) and Mode 2 (context-based, problem-focused, interdisciplinary) types of knowledge raise some issues relevant to this study. However, the separation of these types anchors Mode 2 knowledge in real-world problems and implies that Mode 1 knowledge cannot be applied to the real world. As raised by Etzkovitz and Leydesdorff (2000), Mode 1 is a construct; there has always been Mode 2 knowledge but Mode 1 was constructed by those who were concerned for pure research. It is short-sighted to assume that the context for research is always externally-driven, as the relationship between academy and market is more complicated and iterative than perhaps considered. For example, consider many innovations (such as Google) which have arisen from the academy rather than industry or market contexts.

The underlying issue that is not widely addressed is how different types of disciplinary groups respond to these demands for context-based research and the possible variances in how some subjects retain their relative autonomy against the influences of the market and also their institution. To elaborate, it seems logical that subjects such as chemistry or engineering will be more prone to involvement in problem-solving and transdisciplinary work than history or philosophy (Mode 1 knowledge areas, produced by a clearly-delineated disciplinary community) although that is not to say that these disciplines may not have real-world application. This is a factor which needs exploring but in the context of the effect on different disciplines rather than on Mode 1 and 2 knowledge types, in the light of this current study. I will return to the differences between types of disciplines later in this study in the context of the theoretical framework I will set out in Chapter 3.

It should be acknowledged that the past few decades have seen a transformation in the way that knowledge is produced and accessed by members of society. Knowledge production has moved out of universities and external users have become involved in its determination; this has obviously affected the status of higher education institutions (Delanty, 2001, p.102). As implied previously, the context for knowledge creation has changed, with increasing emphasis on knowledge production being problem-oriented, resulting in the breaking-down of disciplinary boundaries. Research thus becomes more focused on solutions, causing the separation of teaching and research (ibid. p.110). The former is important, Delanty points out, as universities are still the main providers of credentials, conferring cultural capital on awards. Despite, however, the undermining of their status as the main source of knowledge, they have a new role serving the needs of society more fully, linking the requirements of industry, technology and the market with citizenship (ibid. p.113). How this latter perspective is ingrained into the mission of institutions is unclear without referring the function of higher education to an ethical position (aligned to that of the professions, as per Freidson, 2001), pitted against the influences of the market and bureaucracy. In this sense, the synergy between the university and the genesis of professional education becomes interestingly clear: as set out by Delanty, the role for the university could be focused on integrity, serving social needs by linking industry and technology with citizenship (Delanty, 2001, p.123). However, there is also a role for universities in terms of providing the basis on which inter/transdisciplinary work can take place; higher education provides the training and theoretical grounding in subjects from which other practical application can develop. I will return to this aspect later in this chapter.

If this view is juxtaposed with the impact on institutional structures and the changes to work within institutions already discussed – the shifted nature of academic work, the acquisition of new roles in response to changing external pressures – it suggests a sector in a state of flux. The essence of the problem is that, in a sector where academic identity has relied on disciplinary areas for its origins and for peer-led moderation of its practice, the knowledge needed within the institution has grown to encompass non-disciplinary areas. In addition, the

requirement for academic staff to work across these groups has been a response to the demands of the knowledge economy. Ironically, the proliferation of new roles within universities is indicative of the symptoms of the knowledge economy: knowledge is now more context-derived so it is natural that this may be reflected in the way institutions operate and how they are structured with dedicated units or teams to manage teaching or research both within departments and faculties. Delanty neglects this aspect of university development and his discourse is predicated on the status quo of academic work as the only expertise within institutions. The changes to structure and knowledge utilised are largely ignored and the old status quo of academic/administrative split is assumed.

The discussions with academic staff previously referred to indicate the way in which academic work has changed in that it is no longer a unilateral undertaking; instead academic staff may work across disciplinary boundaries and with other groups of staff. This suggests a new iteration of community is afoot within universities. As will be seen later in this thesis, the work of Allen-Collinson (2006; 2007, 2009) and Adler et al (2006; 2008), who show how this work is now configured across different staff groups, undermines Delanty's assumption. Boundaries across disciplines have been broken down, but so have boundaries between academic and administrative groups. As a result, the categories of Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge appear simplistic; these types of academic knowledge would need to be supplemented by other types of knowledge in a modern university such as finance management, quality assurance or e-learning development. While some of these are symptoms of the knowledge economy, others are the products of changes exerted by the state on higher education. I will now look at these changes in further detail and explore the impact they have had on the sector and institutional management.

2.5 *Funding and marketisation*

The investment in funding for research in the second half of the twentieth century (via the dual funding system from the UGC for general or infrastructure funding and research councils for specific areas of research) for the advancement of the economy was reduced in the era of the Thatcher government in order to reduce dependence on public expenditure (Halsey, 1992, pp.176-9). This changed the

framework for research funding and shifted infrastructure costs to the funding councils (ibid. p.178). In many cases the institutions themselves took on the cost of research as other funders, such as industry, in effect utilised institutional infrastructure to carry out their research (Delanty, 2001, p.124).

The site of disciplinary subject groups – the university – has undergone a transformation in terms of its management structures and the necessity to move to a more corporate organisation in response to external forces (Henkel, 2007, pp.191-2). This has opened it up to the (other) market forces, in the loose sense of the word. Competition for resources internally, as departments vie for a share of income from HEFCE/the Office for Students and tuition fees, as well as the need to respond to stakeholders as service-users has increased the need for transparent management (Henkel, 2007, p.194). The interdependence between the internal and external fields means that institutions have had to open up to opportunities in terms of markets for research, funding generation and so forth. In terms of research:

There are clearly significant overlaps between the management of research and the management of knowledge transfer and innovation-oriented work. Policies in the latter area feed back into the institution's research capacity and *vice versa*: the identification of potential new collaborators, academic or industrial, new applications, new customers or other new sources of funding may mean some researchers taking new directions, joining new networks. Such developments might generate new types or levels of research achievement and persuade the university to increase its capacity in particular disciplines or fields.
(Henkel, 2007, p.195)

University management – both academic and non-academic - shapes the direction of academic work through resource allocation and organisational structures (ibid. p.196). In the latter case, disciplinary groups are reorganised into larger, looser groups:

Few are focused in single disciplines, the differential scale of their activities is huge and their rationales a combination of the extrinsic and intrinsic: the institutionalisation of the university's core priorities; the concentration of researchers working in a highly specialised field; demonstration of the university's commitment to strategic research; bringing together disciplines into an interdisciplinary framework that provides them with a visibility that they might not otherwise have , as well as facilitating new working relations, new research directions and new opportunities for boundary crossing.

(ibid. p.197)

Such interactivity can also be read into the teaching activity within institutions. Increasingly, programmes are delivered in response to directives from the state for increasing provision in certain areas (e.g. the call for training in quantitative social sciences – see HEFCE, October 2012; the call for an engineering conversion course pilot scheme 2015⁶).

The student experience is a much-mooted phrase within university management discourse and student input is being more explicitly sought. For example, the most recent iteration of institutional review at the time of originally drafting this chapter, Higher Education Review (HER) implemented by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, February 2013), included a significant role for the student as part of the review panel. This heralded the shift in the role of the student from consumer to partner in the higher education process, as consolidated by the current assessment methodology, the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (or TEF). Additionally, the outcomes of surveys such as the National Student Survey feed into institutional strategies for developing learning and teaching as well as other service provision, particularly as NSS outcomes feed into the TEF. The Office for Students and TEF have thus made this recognition more of a requirement for higher education providers as these data are used to generate league tables and to control funding via grant allocation and tuition fee levels. The student experience has become not just a

⁶ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/CL_252015/

matter between individual academics and those they teach, but an institutional matter as well as a public matter via rankings, survey outputs and official inspections. Those stakeholders involved in its management include the (non-academic) administration, which has assumed authority in this area as well as others (Henkel, 2000; 2007 pp.200-1).

Logically, one may assume that the effect of all these changes has been to dilute the cohesion of the academic group as interdisciplinary work, in terms of working with experts from other subject areas, has become more prolific. However, it is not as simple as this. As discussed earlier in this chapter, pure subject knowledge has been joined by the need to understand pedagogy, prepare students for the labour market and understand the diversity of students' learning needs (Henkel, 2007, p.201). This is pertinent as students are no longer recruited from a particular sector of society where they have been prepared for higher education (Scott, 1997, p.9). This resonates with the experiences relayed by Miller (1995), Martin (1999), Musselin (2007) and others that I discussed earlier in this chapter.

These external state influences and consequent institutional responses in terms of organisation, situate the basic academic disciplinary group in a complicated matrix of organisational forces, determining its relation to other academic groups as well as its interaction with management/administration. It is no longer, in effect, a discrete unit within an institution and its insulation from these other forces and boundaries is in doubt. As a consequence, the challenge to academic identity from external societal and political influences is entirely understandable in light of how academic staff have traditionally been socialised into their subject groups.

These forces have culminated in a certain interpretation of the new structures which have developed within universities as a necessary response; this has often been termed 'new managerialism'. I will now discuss how this has been articulated in relation to higher education research.

2.6 *New managerialism*

The impact of these external influences such as the needs of the knowledge economy, the changes to funding and the marketisation on universities has been construed by many commentators under the heading of 'new managerialism' (Deem and Brehony, 2005). This is interpreted as the imposition of an explicit management structure (in terms of manager-academics and administrative managers) on an organisation, over-ruling professional (academic) knowledge and autonomy through means of control and accountability. In light of the recent changes, much of the focus has been on the detrimental effect on academic autonomy, which is depicted as declining in the face of more explicit management control (e.g. Rowland, 2002; Harley et al, 2004; Deem and Brehony, 2005; Churchman and King, 2009). The new managerial ideology is described as causing a breakdown in trust, with academic staff feeling that they can no longer carry out their jobs with confidence (Deem and Brehony, 2005). Academics who have taken on management roles have found themselves moving away from teaching and research and into more business-focused activities such as budgetary management (ibid. p.229).

This reading reflects the main issues around the ways of working which have developed in universities, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and the issue of knowledge; however, the focus is on academic staff and their relationship to academics-as-managers rather than the development of new ways of working and new roles within institutions. Deem and Brehony (2005) draw attention to the issue of academic staff moving into academic management roles and the consequent ideological impact on how their staff worked in terms of control over their activities, rather than pursuing an alternative perspective. This alternative is that the intervention of the state and the influence of the knowledge economy have changed ways of working in a university: the widening of student access, the creation of internal markets for income and increases in accountability have all necessitated the development of organisational structures. As I have commented, these changes may not be for the worse and, I might also add here, are not out of line with the experiences of other professions operating in the public sector. I note that there doesn't seem to be any commentary from the other perspective: more explicit management may deal with issues around poor

academic practices or lack of engagement and there is an implicit assumption that academic staff, as professionals, will tend to work effectively and with the best of intentions as a result of self-regulation. This is an immense supposition to make about a huge sector.

There is now another sort of knowledge that is needed to ensure that these organisations run effectively in the current external regulatory context and this is where the space for new roles has opened up. The literature around higher education as subject to the new managerialism focuses instead in the main on the loss to academic freedom and the risk to academic identity, with its basis in the disciplinary group, although Whitchurch's work on the 'third space' is a notable exception. The extent to which a more profound change may have occurred between academic and administrative roles has received little attention. The new administrative roles emerging out of the last half-century or so have been discussed to an extent in higher education literature and problems have been hitherto identified in terms of the wide range of tasks undertaken, clarity around the knowledge base and possible professional status. The relationship of these roles with academic staff has also been perceived as problematic. As previously mentioned, many commentators have set them up in binary opposition to academic roles (Gornall, 1999) or as a deficit model (Allen and Newcomb, 1999; Warner, 1999), with some laying the perceived blame for the current state of affairs at the feet of the new managerialism (Lauwreys, 2002, p.94). Rowland (2002), Deem (1998) et al all identify this occupational group as causing the constraints that seem to be felt by many academic staff. This may be an understandable conclusion, although as others (e.g. Whitchurch, 2007) have pointed out, as it could be said to be the complicity of senior academic staff at the head of certain institutions that has moved the sector – or at least the older universities – from their once protected state to one at the mercy of external drivers (Kok et al, 2010). This blame or deficit positioning is not a productive stance. There has been some work which has looked more positively at the emergent non-academic roles which have developed over the past few decades in the sector, but it has been sparse.

To explicate this point, Deem (1998) sets up the dynamic by commenting on academic leadership being “subsumed by a greater concern with the overt management of sites, finance, staff, students, teaching and research” against demands for quality and standards (1998, p.48). She conveys explicit management of institutions as denigrating the professional autonomy of academic practitioners (ibid. p.51). In her account of changes at Lancaster University in the mid-90s, the imposition of managerialism against a culture of collegiality is shown to be problematic both culturally and in terms of academic performance (ibid. p.67):

There is yet little other than official senior management rhetoric which provides cultural support for the organisational forms and technologies which point the way to ‘new managerialism’. Trust between staff at different levels is being replaced with requirements for hard data and business plans and collegiality is strained by increasing internal and external demands for more form-filling and bureaucratic consistency in procedures. Professional autonomy and discretion is thus steadily being eroded.

(ibid. p.65)

In a more recent study, Deem and Brehony (2005) depict what they term ‘new managerialism’ as an imposition on institutions, “emphasising the primacy of management above all other activities” (Deem and Brehony, 2005, p.220). It is a concept associated with “new kinds of imposed external accountability” (ibid. p.220) but the focus of their discussion is on new managerialist ideology rather than consideration that any degree of such accountability might be desirable in a context where mainly public funds are being utilised and the student voice is now listened to. In this sense, new managerialism is a response to the changes exerted by the knowledge economy and intervention of the state in terms of funding and other drivers. Deem and Brehony’s perspective reflects the issues around knowledge and ways of working which doubtlessly prevail; however, they are drawing attention to the ideological impact of more explicit management structures on longstanding academic ways of working. As a result, there is less concern in relation to exploring the theory that the variations to the ways of

working within universities may have generated more change than the argument about the imposition of a management culture on an organisation fully captures. These changes are closely bound with the emergence of new posts, which will be the focus of the next sections.

2.7 *New roles in universities*

The senior administrators whose roles have grown over the recent couple of decades have been neglected as an emerging (potentially) professional group working alongside academic experts. In contrast, the focus has been on the erosion of the professional autonomy of the latter group, as reflected in the discussion in the earlier sections of this chapter. In effect, what has taken place could be termed the democratization of the academic hierarchy, as multiple actors have started inputting to the academic process, which may now involve academics and dedicated administration/management alongside also other emerging roles such as learning technologists⁷. However, it may be fair to say that much has been written over the past few decades on the latter, emphasising the shifting flavour of academic practice and the impact of a more explicit management structure on how academic staff work. What has been written about management itself within higher education over the past few decades has concentrated on academics as managers, with administrators as managers as a distinct, possibly professional, group neglected for the most part and set up in dichotomy with the academic profession. Where this has been addressed more recently (for example, in the work of Witchurch, 2008; 2013), the progress in analysing this group has been stilted in terms of occupational – possibly professional – identity as I will explore in the following sections of this chapter. Coupled with this, any examination of the relationship between the academic expert and ‘new’ administrator has been focused on these roles as diametrically opposed rather than actors in the same process. What this means for either group as a profession remains to be seen at this point.

⁷ For example, digital literacy is an area of teaching that several institutions are looking at and the role of digital technologist is becoming more embedded in institutional structures (e.g. Clive Young at UCL is leading a project involving accreditation for administrators working with technologies – see <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/the-digital-department/>).

The existing research involving these new administrative (and often management) roles unveils some interesting issues but, as I will argue, it does not provide any robust revelations which might underpin progress in the identification or development of these roles as a profession. As I will show shortly, the issue of what knowledge they are imbued with is neglected and there is little address as to their position as potential professions, particularly as potential professions working in organisations alongside other occupational groups and thus subject to influences other than their peer group.

2.8 Moving from the academic-administrative dichotomy to the third space

In their focus on ideology, Deem and Brehony do not explicitly discuss 'career' managers as a group (ibid. P.221) and in fact portray this administrative occupational group, which is not clearly singled out from academic-managers, as uninvolved with academic activities (ibid. p.223) and hence there is little discussion of their contribution to academic activities. However, this is not the case if one looks at the detail of the work of administrators as 'career' managers today, as will be seen. It should be noted that in a later paper of Deem's (2010), the contribution of the administration to research is recognised in terms of changes to how research is now carried out, with the emphasis on impact, i.e. the social and economic contribution made (Deem, 2010, p.39), the diversification of academic activities to include entrepreneurial work (ibid. p.38) and the consequent need for the more overt management of research which "can no longer be just left to the whims and fortunes of individual academics" (ibid. p.39). She cites Whitchurch's description of these post-holders working in a 'third space', a permeable conceptual area at the interface between academic and administrative work.

Whitchurch (2013) takes her own concept further, elaborating on the types of role that sit within this (increasingly wide) range across the UK, US and Australian sectors; from learning technologists and learning and teaching managers to those working in enterprise or partnerships. Her data shows those in roles such as planning and policy management are crossing the boundary to academic work, leading bids and working in partnership with academic colleagues or developing

programmes, which may be reflected in contractual changes to reflect this diversification (Whitchurch, 2013, pp.40-2).

However, in terms of this study, the disadvantage of Deem's later position is that it hardly ventures sufficiently into the detail of the knowledge utilised by research administrators, rather focusing on academic capital. Her proposal of recognised qualifications in research administration suggests the way forward is to professionalise this group but while such accreditation may achieve some legitimisation, it falls short of discussing a way to solve the issues of recognition by other actors within and across institutions. It also falls short of acknowledging the wider implications of the discourse around the professions, the essential nature of professional knowledge and the tension between this expertise in the face of the influences of market and organisation (Freidson, 2001). Whitchurch's approach (2013) has the same limitations: she looks at qualifications but not in terms of their relevance to the role being undertaken, but more as a matter of accumulating academic capital. In Whitchurch's study, knowledge is not related to a professional body of expertise but more focused on skills such as data analysis and familiarity with one's institution; Whitchurch describes it as fluid (*ibid.* p. 62). Relationships are less about an assumption of professional trust, but more about building it up on a personal basis with academic colleagues and maintaining this dynamic (*ibid.* pp.63-67). While the study unveils an interesting (but not surprising) level of complexity in the type of roles that now exist within university structures and how these configure more fluidly with the work of (more overtly) academic colleagues, it does not set up a clear theoretical basis for developing the professional identity of these post-holders or for re-imagining how knowledge or expertise is now distributed within higher education institutions.

Whitchurch does however make a very interesting point in that the landscape of the academic community may need re-thinking as institutions continue to respond to the changing external requirements, requiring a different type of work to ensure their endurance (*ibid.* pp. 141-3). The old categories of academic and non-academic obviously need revisiting which is where the main issue lies with Whitchurch's concept of the third space. It maintains – if not a deficit position of the administration compared with academics – then a static position which

doesn't allow for the new organisation of work within institutions and leaves in place the binary divide of academic versus administration. A more responsive way forward may be to redevelop this third space as an entirely new area, where the binary roles of academic and administrator (which includes management) are discarded in favour of a new paradigm which reflects the way that academic work has changed and has made the binary divide a thing of the past. In effect, the reconfiguration of academic work as a process of research (which increasingly incorporates consultancy and knowledge-transfer) or delivering taught programmes highlights the inadequacy of the divide. In light of this, the third space becomes a new holistic space replacing this divide, albeit one which is still problematised.

I will now look more specifically at the new occupations which have developed over recent years within universities and examine the issues around them.

2.9 The development of new administrative roles and their 'problematization'

To recap: with the influence of the knowledge economy and intervention of the state more overt in university provision, academic work is subject to external scrutiny via such mechanisms as HEFCE/OfS, TEF, the Quality Assurance Agency and the Research Excellence Framework which either directly or indirectly influence funding and governance. It is these external agencies which have resulted in the development of more overt management structures and hence new roles opening up within institutions to service these structures. These roles ensure the (external) demands of audit, efficiency and quality are met, rather than any other natural evolution within universities or the simple expansion of generic administrative roles (Henkel, 2000). As mentioned previously however, the response of many commentators to these new roles distracts both from the value that they may bring to institutions and from deeper discussions around issues such as the quality of degree provision (Watson, 2006). However, an exploration of the research involving these new roles proves frustratingly peripheral. It is clear that these are prolific with 'professional staff' making up

23% of staff in UK universities in 2014/15 (95,870 staff members) (Gander, 2017), rising to over 101,000 ('professional and technical') in 2016/7⁸.

The changes to the sector impacted on organisational structures and created new market spaces which had previously been unheard of. Whitchurch (2007) describes these professional management roles as fluid, with the boundaries between these and traditional academic roles blurred; the result being that the academic community has been superseded by a 'community of professionals' (ibid. p.53). To illustrate this in more detail, Gornall's small-scale study identifies specific posts to support academic activities, none of which existed prior to 1991 but for whom status within their organisations is problematic (Gornall, 1999). This problematising occurs across the new roles, where there is a lack of clarity around their definition, whether they are of a generalist nature or more specifically bound up with particular areas of academic work such as learning and teaching (Conway, 2000). Other commentators reflect this: for example, Laurwerys (2002) further comments on these posts in the context of how they interact with what was formerly more 'personalised' academic work:

The previous reliance on an individual professionally driven approach to core academic and supporting activities has been overtaken by externally imposed highly complex sets of requirements which control more and more of the central processes of a university. This change has necessitated the engagement of ever-growing numbers of specialists to interpret and operate this plethora of formal rules, regulations and legislation.

(Laurwerys, 2002, p.94)

As well as shifting attention from debate about the intrinsic value of these requirements, the neglected element in this literature is that the configuration of work per se in universities has changed and moved away from an individual endeavour to a process which involves various actors. It is this that has had a dramatic impact on roles and knowledge.

⁸ In 2016/7 HESA recorded over 101k managerial/professional and technical staff against nearly 207k academic staff. Source: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/employment>

This rise has coincided with a change to the essence of academic work, with the primacy of specialised subject knowledge as the focus of academic institutions shifting to accommodate a more explicit management structure as already discussed. As seen earlier in this chapter, academic roles encompassing teaching and research have transformed in response to organisational and external market factors such as the knowledge economy and increased drive for more young people to enter higher education as well as more explicit state intervention. The priorities of stakeholders, from funders to students, have shifted; institutions have had to respond to these influences which require them to be more managerial and cost-focused. In addition, the newly configured, management-focused organisational structures of (predominantly older) higher education institutions have generated their own internal markets as disciplinary areas compete with others for the pool of resources available within each institution. As a result, the once effectively autonomous subject-specific activities have been displaced in order to respond to the priorities dictated by funders such as research councils, the demands of management and the outcomes of external requirements such as student surveys, as well as state-driven agencies such as QAA and more recently the TEF and OfS.

What could be termed a natural evolution of some work-based roles within institutions, such as secretarial work giving away to more administrative roles as technology enabled academic staff to carry out their own personal clerical work (e.g. drafting their own correspondence), coincided with the need for academic roles to take on more of an institutional focus and engage with new administrative processes. This is due to universities becoming more formally accountable for their activities and research responding to the advance of the knowledge economy, causing inter/transdisciplinary collaboration. For example, a lecturer wanting to apply for a research grant would now need to liaise with administrative and/or managerial staff working in this area who would offer guidance on the institutional process, proof-read drafts of the proposal, provide qualitative input, cost the work to ensure that it is financially viable and liaise where relevant with

the funding body⁹. Final sign-off for the submission of the proposal would be from a member of university management and would be subject to financial and resource viability as well as the institution's strategic priorities. The diversification of funding and how to respond to and negotiate these opportunities also involves an element of expertise from the administration. Once the application is awarded, such colleagues would be involved in monitoring the research and reports as well as helping to manage the finances; they and other colleagues in human resources would be involved in the recruitment and appointment of any researchers and so forth. Where once the interactions with *non-academic* staff may have involved a top-down, master-servant (sic) relationship, with clerical work being passed to a secretary for typing up, posting or photocopying, the distribution of power has changed along with the tasks. As universities' activities have become more complex, they have required staff with both different and specialist knowledge and the skills to sustain them (Henkel, 2000, p.61; Laurwerys, 2002).

The detail of the new administrative roles discussed by Henkel, Whitchurch and others suggests the main issues are focused in the changes to the organisational structure of universities and to relationships between academic and, what are now usually termed professional, staff (but who I will continue to call administrative staff) who contribute to and support teaching and research (as well as related activities such as knowledge transfer and consultancy). These latter roles are normally examined in binary contrast to academic roles with the emphasis on managerialism and how this has affected the academic role (Henkel, 2000; Rowland, 2002). However, the actual change to the configuration of academic work - or how these new roles fit into the concept of academic work as a process involving others apart from academic staff - is neglected with the focus mainly on the impact to academic staff.

As I have commented above, the change to a process-basis also has consequences for the way that knowledge is configured. To examine this, I want to look at these newer roles in more detail, in terms of what the work involves,

⁹ Examples are numerous but include those in operation at the Institute of Education, 2015

their identity, how it fits in with the work of other colleagues and how effectively their import is captured in current research, such as in the concept of Whitchurch's 'third space' which is widely used to describe these roles.

I will now explore what (comparatively little) research there is which throws some degree of light on these new administrative roles.

2.10 The positioning of the new administrative roles in universities

Having looked at the recent state of academic work, it is interesting to note that the roles emerging to support and manage academic work show a move towards taking on activities which are associated more with academic roles than with the administration. Allen-Collinson's work (2006; 2007; 2009) looks at research administrators working in universities and their identity formation places these workers as "[straddling] the supposed academic-administrative divide, incorporating considerable academic elements within their routine work tasks" (Allen-Collinson, 2007, p.295). She notes the wide range of roles that the term 'research administrator' may cover and the "fluctuations" within individual roles:

...at one moment they would find themselves firmly cast in the role of administrative support worker (even office junior); at another time they would be required to participate as a full colleague in academic affairs. With regard to this latter mode of action, interviewees mentioned providing professional advice for such tasks as: the drafting of articles for high-level committees; contributing to the committee meetings and working groups themselves; analysing publications and output for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE); undertaking teaching and instruction; advising students on academic matters; and even giving supervisory advice to research students. For many, their role involved providing an interface or buffer between an academic department and the central university administration, requiring great flexibility, adaptability and tact. (Allen-Collinson, 2006, pp.274-5)

She notes the marginalisation experienced by many of these post-holders; however, while these roles exemplify the 'third space' between academic and professional domains described by Whitchurch (2008a), they could be more readily construed as boundariless, often inhabited by would-be academics who want to remain close to the academic world and subject to the antagonism of academic staff who see the administration per se as obstructive while also appreciating the support provided (Allen-Collinson, 2006, pp.278-81; 2007, p.300). This places research administration in a precarious position, unaligned with any base of expertise (although the research undertaken would suggest that the range of activities carried out by these staff incur a certain knowledge base) and at the centre of an unstable relationship between academic colleagues and administration.

In further research, this group are clearly contextualised as arising out of the need for institutions to diversify their research funding in response to reduced state grant income from the funding councils and the need to compete with other institutions in what was the Research Assessment Exercise (now replaced with the Research Excellence Framework) (Allen-Collinson, 2007, p.296). What is particularly noteworthy is her conclusion that "...it was difficult to distinguish elements of their portfolio from those of research managers, research fellows and assistants" as well as the lack of a standard definition for the role (ibid. p.296-7). Indeed, her research shows the feeling of marginality experienced by these administrators, despite many of them holding qualifications which would otherwise place them on a level with their academic colleagues, if not above (ibid. p.297). It is interesting to note that what Allen-Collinson shows us is the commitment these administrators have to their work, their adherence to the cultural values of their institution (ibid. p.307), and their desire for recognition for their input to research activities. Much of this overlaps with that which may be expected from academic colleagues, such as writing research proposals or drafting papers (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p.951) and sits consistently with the changes to academic work I have already discussed in this chapter, with these staff members becoming contributors in the wider process of academic research.

Whitchurch (2008b) comments on this reorientation of administrative function towards a partnership with academic staff and her research describes the previously-mentioned 'third space' where new roles, such as research administration, have emerged which cross boundaries between academic and administrative work. Whitchurch (2008a; 2009) describes this group as 'blended professionals', with loose identities that can span the academic/professional (as in administrative) divide. Such role holders work within hierarchical structures as well as laterally across an institution, networking with colleagues and using these personal relationships as a means of establishing their professional authority, enabling them to fulfil their remits (Whitchurch, 2009, p.409). The loose boundaries and lack of belonging to either the professional or academic domain, however, result in "ambiguous conditions" (Whitchurch, 2009, p.408).

While it is clear, however, from the work of Whitchurch and Allen-Collinson that the responsibilities involved in these new roles covers areas traditionally familiar to each category and suggests sources of identity, there is little to build on in terms of defining these as a profession with a distinct body of expertise or indeed, where this may lie. Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2009) try to remedy this, examining the knowledge and practice necessary for research administration. They acknowledge that this is a combination of formal and informally acquired knowledge, with institutional rules, regulations and training complemented by 'on the job' know-how (ibid. p.143). Academic capital in the form of university qualifications enables effective writing skills and an understanding of methodology as well as building acumen with academic colleagues (ibid. p.155). However, the tacit aspect of this group's expertise relies on more local and personal knowledge and is thus dependent on the local community of research administrators or – if this is lacking – inventing the position (ibid. p.146). The work itself is shown to combine the more mundane tasks with less cognitive effort, such as arranging meetings, with more complex activities such as writing research reports and costing proposals (ibid. p.149), but is multi-layered in terms of the relationship dynamics with other parties, particularly academic staff with whom a relationship needs to be built in order for the administrators to work effectively. As Hockey and Allen-Collinson point out, what is needed for such roles is a holistic approach which combines 'how to' knowledge with tacit

understanding and academic capital. This implies a level of development approaching the status of a profession. However, these administrators are shown to be struggling to assert control over their work, which is at odds with the discourse on the professions, where control is a key criterion of professional status (Hockey and Allen-Collinson, 2009, p.156).

This is where Whitchurch and Allen-Collinson diverge: Whitchurch's approach is predicated on maintaining the binary divide between academic and administrative work, with the interface between these polarities meeting within the concept of her 'third space'; Allen-Collinson, on the other hand, is less set on this divide, allowing the move of (in her case) research to a collaborative process involving academic and administrative staff in partnership. Whitchurch's approach is more an ontology of current roles and relationships, while Allen-Collinson ascertains the problems inherent in this status quo for research administrators as an emerging professional group. What is still lacking is an approach which resolves these problems on an organisational or professional basis and considers both academic and professional roles as part of an organisational whole where academic work has moved to a process involving different role holders. In essence, both commentators retain to some extent the binary divide of academic and professional staff with the concept of the third space as the meeting-place for these divides, where the polarities move towards each other. This fails to allow for the changes that have occurred to the work being undertaken and the organisational structures in which these posts are articulated. The nature of the overall scope of knowledge needed for academic work – not only academic expertise but also other knowledge - is neglected.

Having said that, the status of administrative staff is still often unclear in relation to academic colleagues and qualifications or academic capital are sometimes identified as the solution to this issue, although this ignores some wider issues. For example, Langley (2012) reflects on the current lack of pathway for research managers and administrators as a professional group, situating their expertise as essential to higher education institutions in the current climate but without recognition as a professional group. He points to the lack of development of consistent framework structures, curriculum, career pathways and scholarship

despite the recognition of the importance of these roles for institutions and the identification of these staff as a professional group (ibid. pp.74-5). As for Deem (2010), the way forward for Langley appears to be the mobilisation of professional associations such as the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) and the development of higher degrees, but this does not deal with the longer term issues around how such expertise fits in with that held by academics, or the difficulties an occupational group may find in trying to establish itself as a profession.

While the research discussed above clarifies the problematisation of these roles, it also provides a clear indication of the nature of the relationships between these administrators and the academic groups with whom they work. The importance of these relationships provides an insight into why workers may choose to undertake these jobs and how they may want to develop the roles.

The clear outcome of the literature examining the new administrative occupations is that there is a will to progress in these roles and potentially a will to professionalise; the propulsion of professional commitment to one's post alongside the urge to take control of one's development are both very clear. In Gander's research (Gander, 2017), it is clear from her sample of UK administrators¹⁰ that all but a minority had at least a first degree and nearly 48% had a master's degree. However, in terms of career development, there is little structured progression in a sector where this is crucial in order to ensure staff are able to confront increasing change and, despite a desire to do so from the staff concerned, they are left to manage their own progression (Wild and Wooldridge, 2009).

However, what is very unclear is how a career trajectory for these posts could be formulated. The research cited presents a static view of research administrators and their work and relationships; it does not necessarily chart their history or how they plan to move forward with their roles. If I compare the academic trajectory for junior research staff, it is clearer: their posts would be expected to accumulate

¹⁰ This study included AUA members at spine point 30 or above.

knowledge and experience, as well as qualifications such as a research degree, with a view to progressing to an academic role which would then enable progression through the ranks of lecturer, senior lecturer, reader and to the realms of professorship (Henkel, 2000). There is currently no clear trajectory for junior research administrators (Langley, 2012). This is similar for other functional areas, such as for administrators working in learning and teaching activities or in more general roles across activities such as faculty management. What progress is available is more incidental than planned and this is reflected in the jobs that are available. There is a clear leap between the lower-level administrative roles and higher-level management roles, but with little scope for building-up progression via small management responsibilities (NB: it would be interesting to note whether the lower-level roles involve elements of academic work, but there is no space for this in this study). The impact of this issue is one which is worth exploring in the context of research on this group as an emergent profession.

Alongside the lack of career trajectory there is still a lack of clarity around the professional basis of these roles, how individuals qualify for these roles, how they are trained and how they are integrated into an institution alongside academic staff roles, the nature of which has changed as has been seen. The qualifications required for these new roles are problematic in the face of a lack of clarity over the knowledge involved. I will look at this issue in more detail in the next section.

2.11 The issue of knowledge and qualifications for new administrative roles

There is no doubt that the research carried out by Whitchurch, Allen-Collinson and Hockey has publicised the profile of those in 'third space' roles who carry out work which interfaces between the academic and administrative. In the case of research administration there is clear analysis of the level of the labour processes involved and their dynamics with academic staff; however, it only goes so far. There are hints of the desire to move to professionalisation in the studies of Allen-Collinson and Hockey and this is more explicit in the study undertaken by Wild and Wooldridge (2009), but what this means for such an occupational group as an emerging profession and how this sits with the academic role as another profession working in the same arena will be seen. A major issue is a lack of

understanding of the knowledge utilised in these new roles and consequently the qualifications and training required. As mentioned previously, this is touched on by Deem (2010), Whitchurch (2013) and several others as a means of legitimising research administration but the principle is not examined in terms of developing an occupational identity, nor in terms of what a curriculum would look like.

The disparate status of these jobs is heavily reflected in their detail in the recruitment pages, which at any one time will reveal criteria quite different to the level of responsibility involved, with degree and other qualifications often being vague. The emphasis is usually on experience such as budgetary management and skills such as knowledge of regulations or legislation; generic skills are particularly flagged, such as problem-solving. Conversely, a search of job details for HR or accountancy posts in the public sector displays a more specific set of requirements from applicants, including qualifications from the fields' professional bodies and a commitment to professional development in the field. While there is evidence of demand for the knowledge and skills held by research administrators and other non-academic staff in HE, there is a startling lack of clarity over titles, roles and the qualifications needed for a post.

Looking at the industry-wide website www.jobs.ac.uk at intervals from spring 2012 to spring 2018, there are high-level non-academic leadership posts such as academic registrar which seem to require very little qualifications while covering a large and high-risk remit. For example, Harper-Adams University College, an agricultural institution located in Shropshire with approximately 6000 students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, advertised (in April 2012) for such a post covering a wide range of strategic and managerial responsibilities but the recruitment criteria simply requires a degree or equivalent qualification and knowledge of higher education regulations, legislation and funding. The emphasis is on experience – of academic administration, managing budgets – and skills – computer-literacy, communication and leadership. Likewise, a 'School Manager' post for the University of Northampton advertised in April 2012: the recruitment criteria also asks for a (unspecified) degree or equivalent (or equivalent experience) but also marks as desirable a professional qualification in administration, finance, human resources *or* marketing (my italics). This lack of

specificity indicates the extensive remit this post covers. There are some knowledge requirements listed, relating to health and safety, IT and human resources, but the emphasis again is on relevant experience and generic skills such as flexibility, problem-solving and management. A perusal of the requirements for another academic registrar post, for the University of Westminster, show that a master's degree and management qualification are considered essential and that a professional qualification (unspecified) and membership of a professional body such as the Association of University Administrators is desirable. This, a senior post at a large post-1992 institution, shows that qualifications appear more important than in the other roles mentioned. This may be due to the seniority of the post and level of responsibility incurred, as well as ensuring that the appointee has some academic capital (as per Allen-Collinson, 2007). The same may be said of the criteria for a departmental manager at King's College London, requiring a first degree (again, in an unspecified subject) but also citing a higher research degree as desirable. Although this is only a small sample of middle and senior management posts (April 2012), it does incidentally suggest similarities between the requirements of both pre- and post-1992 institutions.

Moving on to posts being advertised in spring 2018, the picture is pretty much unchanged: a Departmental Administration Manager post at the University of Sheffield involves oversight of the student lifecycle – from marketing and recruitment through degree programmes to examinations and assessment – as well as research management and resource deployment. The person specification includes a first (unspecified) degree or equivalent, as well as “knowledge and understanding of the higher education sector and how the core business areas of HE institutions relate to each other” (University of Sheffield, 2018). However, the other requirements are again related to experience (e.g. “operating at a managerial/strategic level”) and skills (e.g. project management; interpersonal and communication). Similarly, a Research Support Manager post at the University of Cambridge in May 2018 requires a ‘relevant’ first degree or equivalent but it is not clear what constitutes a relevant degree. The specification for the role sets out what are termed “Specialist Knowledge and Skills” but the emphasis is again on generic skills such as initiative and problem solving or time

management and experience. Interestingly, the only specific criterion is an “[understanding] what constitutes effective research grants administration in the higher education sector”, which suggests something more substantial and measurable. A Faculty Education Manager post at Queen Mary, University of London in February 2018 asks for a “Good knowledge of policy and best practice around enhancing the student experience and employability” and “Good understanding of academic teaching in Higher Education” which again suggests more significant knowledge. Other posts were less focused, e.g. a Department Manager post at the University of Essex (February 2018).

What is clear is that many of the job descriptions for the ‘professional’ higher education posts require specific knowledge and expertise (e.g. knowledge of QAA and Ofsted requirements) which are necessary to higher education institutions; this aspect suggests a clear professional basis for these roles. The emphasis on skills and experience at quite senior levels suggests that there is a more latent aspect to what is required within these roles that is acquired through ‘doing’. I propose that this is actually a form of tacit learning that is accumulated through experience in related posts and I will return to this later in this study.

As discussed above it is unclear how the recruitment criteria for these posts fit into the discourse around the professions. The training and qualifications expected of applicants are inconsistent and vague in terms of curriculum or area; any expectation of professional development, while it may be intuitive to a post-holder, is not made explicit. Indeed, there is little available in terms of a discipline to develop this expertise or a curriculum to provide training. While there are pockets of activity, e.g. the UCL Institute of Education’s MA in Higher and Professional Education and MBA in Higher Education Management, these are not mandatory in recruitment to management roles.

Although used to illustrate the position of academic roles, Bernstein’s concepts (Bernstein, 2000) can be used here to situate this group of administrative roles. In terms of his discourse around professional identity, the framing and classification of this work as professional knowledge is practically non-existent and the work is situated entirely in the type of organisation where their

professional education may be provided, albeit one complicated by also comprising the recognised site of professional knowledge for other sectors. In Muller's terms, these roles are:

...generally speaking more diffuse, fluid and less organised, and consequently sends out more ambiguous, frequently contradictory signals about professional requirements to the academy.

(Muller, 2009, p.214).

As Muller, following Bernstein and Durkheim, explains, a strong disciplinary basis – which can be found in some established subject areas such as medicine and engineering – produces individuals with strong academic (and by extension professional) identities. These identities are insulated from excessive external influence through the unity exerted by the site of education – the university – and the profession as a group working in the field of practice (ibid. pp.214-5). Although Muller does not expand on this, one can envisage that this encompasses the professional groups and associations which control entry into the profession as well as peer groups. Where there is no foundation in higher education and no professional grouping to support an occupational group, there is no basis for professional identity.

This entails a threat to the research administration group discussed above, as their identity sits entirely within their organisation (which is also their field of practice). They are unable to develop as commented by a former fellow IOE student Hamilton in her interesting MA dissertation (Hamilton, 2012, p. 28-9). This is a danger which has been identified in other emerging (or recently emerged) professions such as Human Resources (HR) (Hamilton, 2012). Taking HR as an example, its position within organisations has been problematised by a negative perception by other occupational groups, with some voicing doubts about HR's contribution and perceiving a lack of connection with the organisation (Ulrich, 1998). While it is obviously worth clarifying the role of HR, it is important to note that there is a need for this group to maintain a certain detachment from the organisation in which it is based, to ensure the balance between both legal/legislative frameworks and 'good practice' and the objectives of the

company. So, although HR needs to be engaged with an organisation, it must retain a balance or else risks compromising the organisation. In this sense, it needs the normative influence of a professional framework to moderate practice outside of the organisation. Ulrich states that “[HR practitioners] will need to shed their traditional image of rule-making policy police” (Ulrich, 1998, p.3) and offers a re-positioning of HR that focuses it not on traditional HR undertakings, such as recruitment, but on organisational objectives which contribute to the company. While Ulrich’s proposal offers an interesting expansion of the HR remit and builds on areas such as employee engagement (ibid. p.4), it implies a symbiotic relationship between the organisation and HR which may nullify the expertise and objective advice that one might expect of a profession. It is this aspect that relates back to the need for a new profession to have a solid knowledge base and a professional framework outside of the place of employment.

In her investigation into human resources (HR) as a profession, Hamilton argues that there is a need for a (budding) profession to have a body of knowledge which is attached to a university education, which is itself valued by the wider field including the employer and other professionals in an organisation (Hamilton, 2012). For a profession to lack this attachment, it may be overawed by organisational forces. She gives the example of how HR practitioners undervalue their respective qualifications, accredited by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (ibid. p.29-30), with experience being preferred as a measure of worth. Hamilton uses Bernstein’s concepts of knowledge structures, as previously discussed, to illustrate the precarious position of this group of occupations as a profession. The lack of theoretical knowledge to underpin practical knowledge removes the basis which allows for recontextualisation, in Bernstein’s sense of the term (Bernstein, 2000), as knowledge is reapplied to new situations and evolves. This lack thus constrains the development of new knowledge in the field. I will return to the concepts of Bernstein in the next chapter in more detail.

This comparison leaves HR in a similar predicament to the new administrative roles emerging in universities. These roles need to be valued by the employer and others in the organisation, including other occupational groups; they need a

knowledge base in order to evolve and move – assuming this is appropriate – towards professional status. They also need an external means of normalising behaviour across the occupational group. It is these elements which would allow for the balance against organisational forces which might over-turn their influence.

The main issue is around the knowledge base and how this could be identified, bearing in mind the emphasis on what seems to be more generic knowledge that appears to saturate the personal criteria for higher education professional roles. However, there may be hints of ways of underpinning this practical knowledge with theory. For example, Jensen and Lahn (2005), in their study of identity formation among student nurses in Norway, look at how links to the professional nursing community, weakened by “processes of individualisation and de-traditionalisation” such as the move to mass higher education for nurses (ibid. p.306), are strengthened through engagement with a base of foundation knowledge via both historic and current literature in the field. Their assumption is that the range of theoretical knowledge in the field inspires the students, creating a relationship with this knowledge, reinforcing their work practice and pride through a professional ideology and effectively distinguishing their work from other fields, contributing to the students’ self-perception as a valid profession alongside the more established medical profession (ibid. pp.314-16). This study shows how access to extensive disciplinary knowledge in a university course as a foundation for identity can strengthen the position of an occupational group. Following Bernstein, this basis in theory before practice allows for the possibility of recontextualisation, as theoretical knowledge is applied to new contexts, enabling the development of practice and the production of new knowledge. However, beyond the study, such access may not resolve issues around the wider hierarchical positioning of nursing in relation to physicians and surgeons, as well as the external perceptions of the discipline in terms of broad societal recognition. In other words, while the occupational group feels that they have achieved a sense of professional identity from within their ranks and consolidated a base of knowledge within higher education, this may not be the wider perception and there must be a degree of demand for the expertise being produced. This is a balance with external perceptions that needs to be considered in relation to the

group to be examined in this study - those potential emerging professions in higher education. Hence, while Jensen and Lahn suggest a means of constructing a professional identity which could be translated into training or qualifications for higher education administrators, the connection with the requirements of the external field – the institution – and the relationship with other occupational groups working there needs to be configured. Another issue to be negotiated is the organisational structure of the institution, which is the basis for the community in which these roles operate.

2.12 Summary of chapter

As stated in my introduction, my intended outcome for this chapter were to show that:

- Academic work has transformed into a non-individual activity which is effectively process-based;
- The knowledge needed to carry out academic activities has changed;
- There is an organisational issue: academic staff now need to work with different groups of staff who may bring another type of expertise to the table;
- These other groups – and here the emphasis is on administrative groups – have been neglected in terms of their knowledge-base and development;
- The research undertaken to date with respect to these administrative groups falls short of addressing their status as an emerging profession.

In this chapter, I have shown that academic work, in terms of teaching and researching, has shifted from a relatively autonomous and possibly more personal activity, to one that is predicated on a process-basis involving more actors, including those who would have previously been termed ‘non-academic staff’. For academic staff, this has resulted in a perceived loss of – at least ideological – control, particularly over the choice of how they teach and research. This is due to responsiveness towards external factors and beholds a loss of the primacy of the academic disciplinary group as the key professional group within universities. Instead, the locus of power has shifted to the institution and to the demands of the state.

Academic leadership has become more explicitly a means of bureaucratic control, rather than based on purely academic merit. A prevalence of university administration has occurred but is not the only means of management control of academic work; academic leadership is also part of this control and has become more overt in its directiveness than has been previously expected. The categories of academic and other administrative roles have become less clearly defined¹¹, with aspects of teaching and research becoming more explicit and often allocated to either category. As a result, the work has become more tightly bound up with the institution and academic units have become less discrete and independent as they have had to respond to internal markets for resources, interact with other agencies within and outside the institution and develop activities in response to external demands. This is similar to the situation in which other professions have found themselves, although this tension may be healthy for the advance of an occupational group if managed effectively.

This position has come about through several interlinked factors: the intervention of the state in higher education via funding and requirements for institutions to report on their activities to HEFCE/OfS and adhere to the frameworks of such agencies as the QAA. These requirements have contributed to the development of new roles working alongside academic staff and these roles contribute to the process of providing teaching and securing and carrying out research (and, increasingly, consultancy and knowledge transfer). They have taken on aspects of academic work as well as the new requirements of external agencies. Hence, the knowledge now needed to execute academic work now involves an extended base of knowledge within institutions.

The evolution of the knowledge economy, of which many of the changes are logically the consequence and the demand for a highly-skilled workforce, has resulted – for some disciplines anyway – in transdisciplinary work across disciplinary groups and the development of new regions within universities. These new ways of working encompass other actors, including new roles which

¹¹ This may also apply to other roles e.g. technical roles, but these are not the focus of this study.

sit in the administration sphere but who work in collaboration with academic staff, contributing to teaching and research as part of the process.

These new administrative roles are in a problematic position due to the perception of impact on academic identity. They have reached an impasse in their development as potential new profession(s) in that the dynamic between them and academics is often conveyed in the literature as a zero-sum arrangement, with power shifted from academic staff to the administration via the new managerialist ideology. The research undertaken in the sector has not dealt in any real depth with the issue of knowledge and there is a lack of clarity about the contribution the new roles make in this sense. Connectedly, universities are no longer just a community of academics but consist of different occupations. This has had an impact on the development of academic and administrative identities. The latter cannot be explored without reference to this collaborative community.

In the next chapter, I will use the principles developed by Bernstein and Adler et al as lenses to explore the issues of knowledge and community and how these might be capitalised on by the newer administrative occupational groups. Bernstein provides a means of examining how knowledge forms a disciplinary identity and how this can be extrapolated to understand the position of the newer administrative roles as a developing profession(s). Adler et al provide an analysis of how professions work together in modern organisations and how this collaborative framework can help identify a focus for where the knowledge – and contribution – of the newer administrative occupations may lie.

Chapter 3: Knowledge, Professional Identity and Community: Bernstein and Adler et al

3.1 Introduction to chapter

As surmised in the previous chapter, academic work is now an institutional matter with different role holders and post-holders making various contributions to both teaching and research activities. This is a result of state intervention in higher education via funding and accountability requirements, which has transformed institutional structures and ways of working. New administrative posts have developed which involve working more directly on academic activities in partnership with academic staff and these roles are imbued with a certain expertise which has not been investigated in any depth by previous research. As a result, it is unclear as to whether these emergent roles are a profession in terms of their identity. Consequently, this study intends to look at the knowledge required and utilised by these roles in order to understand whether they constitute a profession. However, as these roles work closely with academic staff (as well as others, such as technical staff) they cannot be examined without reference to being part of an organisational community, e.g. an academic department.

The aim of this chapter is to set out a basis for examining the knowledge needed by university administrators for supporting the processes for research and teaching in universities; this will be coupled with a further means of understanding the way that staff work together.

I have chosen two perspectives in order to formulate a theoretical framework which will enable me to research the issues of both knowledge and community using a cohesive approach. I intend to explain the principles developed by Bernstein (2000) in relation to knowledge and Adler et al (2006; 2008) in relation to the collaborative communities that university staff work in. I will also set out the significance of these principles for researching the new administrative occupations under discussion.

I will translate Bernstein's concepts from their focus on the school curriculum (Bernstein, 2000) and, echoing Beck and Young (2005), will use these theories to explore the issues around knowledge and what this means for existing groups which have been recognised as professions. I will also explore what this means for newer occupations which may be emerging professions, based on the knowledge they contribute to a particular context. Subsequently, these concepts can be used to examine the position of the newer administrative occupations in universities discussed in Chapter 2.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the current context of working in universities involves academic and administrative (and other) staff working in partnership. In terms of professional identity, no longer developed purely in a community of similar practitioners but instead is situated in a context of collaboration, I will use Adler et al's principle of the collaborative community (Heckscher and Adler, 2006; Adler, Kwon and Heckscher, 2008) to explore the issues around community for the newer administrative occupations working with academic staff in universities. The aim is to gauge how working in such a community affects these workers and their position as potentially emerging professions.

I will go on to establish how these two very different perspectives relate to each other and how they can be used to provide a theoretical framework for my study.

3.2 *A framework for understanding changes to the disciplinary group and professional identity: Bernstein*

Disciplines are, as noted in the previous chapter, the basis for academic identity and anchor expertise within specific subject areas (Becher, 1989; Henkel, 2000). Curiously, there has been little reflection on the different forms of knowledge within higher education institutions since Gibbons et al's argument about Mode 2 knowledge (Gibbons et al, 1994), despite occasional acknowledgement of the transformation of academic work in terms of the diffusion of labour involving different actors as previously discussed (Musselin, 2007). It is therefore hardly surprising that the actuality of the present relationship between disciplinary groups and identity versus the administration is under-addressed in the literature

and their relationship to the current base of knowledge in use is completely neglected.

In order to understand this further, I will examine the delineation between disciplines and how individuals are socialised or inducted into these areas. I will use the concepts developed by Basil Bernstein (2000) to do this. This late work of Bernstein's implies a focus on school subjects and the school curriculum, reflecting the interests permeating his other works. However, as discussed in the next section, Beck and Young (2005) translate his principles concerning knowledge structures to apply to their discussion of professions. This translation is echoed later on by Young and Muller (2016) in their volume on curriculum and knowledge. As will be seen, although Bernstein does not talk explicitly about university structures per se, his principles can be used to set up a clear framework for how this induction occurs within institutions, although his concepts are directed from a particular angle which does not include the current context where subject expertise has now been joined by other forms of knowledge in the production of teaching and learning. Despite this viewpoint, his theory provides a means of understanding the genesis of academic identity. This genesis of identity in the university also opens a window to understanding professional commitment for occupations outside academia in terms of socialising students into the norms and expectations of a disciplinary area, so that the subject becomes the focus of their endeavours for its own sake.

To start with, the strength of the disciplinary group in terms of 'framing' and 'classification' can impact on the resultant identity of practitioners (Bernstein, 2000). Bernstein (ibid. 2000) uses these concepts to illustrate how the curriculum within a subject area is ordered and protected from other areas and how individuals are socialised into the subject community. In Bernstein's terminology, classification relates to boundary-setting: stronger boundaries provide more protection from other subjects through discourse and promote a strong basis for expert identity, with clear rules through which the individual recognises the subject context. Framing relates to control over the curriculum, phasing and pedagogy: stronger framing leads to the locus of power lying with the teachers'/experts' production of knowledge rather than with those acquiring the

knowledge (ibid. 2000). Thus logically, if the transmission of disciplinary knowledge and normative behaviour expectations form the basis for the identity of developing practitioners in that subject area, then influences outside these factors pose a threat which may weaken this identity by diluting the strength of framing and classification boundaries.

The commitment to disciplines *for their own sake* can be understood using Bernstein's paradigm of the singular knowledge structure. This category consists of strongly-bounded subjects, whose:

...creators have appropriated a space to give themselves a unique name, a specialised discrete discourse with its own intellectual field of texts, practices, rules of entry...

(Bernstein, 2000, p.52).

This commanding of a subject space enables control over the conduct of experts in the field and access to membership. Pure singulars, such as (pure) mathematics, look inwards to themselves and are practiced for their own sake as a result of socialisation into subject loyalty (ibid. 2000). They are clearly delineated from other subjects in terms of framing and classification in that their curriculum is established and tightly controlled and is phased progressively. There are strong boundaries between mathematics and other subjects, compounded by the prevalence of a specific language that is not easily accessible to outsiders. In effect, there is no point of reference to academic identity other than within their 'calling' to the subject (ibid. p.54); any interaction with external influences is less a response to the needs of a market or organisational environment than a means of self-protection for the subject. Of course, this is not to say that singular subjects are not able to function in terms of practical application to an external context, as could be shown by such subjects as physics and chemistry.

As Bernstein uses the singular as the means of identifying the origins of professional commitment, so the regionalisation of knowledge structures consists of "recontextualising singulars into larger units", which function in both the

intellectual fields and in the areas of external practice (Bernstein, 2000, p.52). It is these regions – classic examples include architecture, medicine, media - which invoke the danger to (academic or professional) identity, as the new subject areas may become too responsive to their associated areas of practice which in turn becomes the determinant of the subject (ibid. p.189). Hence, the tension between the subject and where it is practiced needs to be carefully negotiated in order to preserve the commitment of the expert to the subject for its own sake and ensure that new knowledge is produced which is not unduly influenced by the external context. Of course, external factors may well stimulate innovation and research, but it is necessary to ensure that the outcome is not determined solely by the demands of the market or the institution.

3.3 Professional identity

To elaborate more clearly on this, Beck and Young (2005) explore how Bernstein's principles of knowledge structures relate to the formation of both academic *and* professional identities, with the assumption that disciplinary study in higher education is pivotal to the development of professional identity (Guile, 2012, p.90, citing Beck and Young, 2005). They analyse how Bernstein uses the Durkheimian principles of the primacy of 'the word', or inward-looking, sacred self – which is the means by which the external context is understood – in sequence over 'the world' (ibid. pp.186-7). It is this pedagogic ordering which provides an understanding of the notion of professional commitment: the dedication to the subject comes *before* engagement with other, more practical factors. The regionalisation of singular knowledge into even less stable units, via the process Bernstein describes as genericism, illustrates how knowledge may become entirely disengaged from any subject base and become an issue of 'trainability' (Bernstein, 2000, p.59) or rather what may be recognised by the term 'transferable skills'. Logically, the consequence of this evolution is that dedication to 'the word' before 'the world' is lost; professional commitment has no place as there is in effect no word. The danger in this premise is that those working in the related occupations are restricted in terms of development. Beck and Young use the example of teaching where professional training, consisting of generic standards and competencies rather than any disciplinary basis in philosophy or sociology, has been imposed by the state and risks "silencing – by denying

'trainees' access to the forms of knowledge that permit alternative possibilities to be thought" (Beck and Young, 2005, p.193). The assumption of control over the professional curriculum by the state risks overwhelming the occupational group with external forces; the occupational group, by the same measure, has no method of rebound through discourse. Beck and Young use the Enron scandal as an illustration of the dangers of compromising or silencing professional judgement (ibid. p.195) and this acts as a healthy reminder as to the importance of objective professional judgement. However, as Guile (citing Bauman, 1987) points out, the a priori assumption that professional knowledge has some authority has more recently been challenged (Guile, 2012, p.92); there is also an implicit assumption that such expertise is not dynamic but rooted in the annals of academe, rather than evolving as it becomes part of professional learning and practice (Guile, 2012, p.95, citing Guile, 2010).

However, this explanation of professional identity formation needs to be contextualised in terms of the move towards inter/transdisciplinary areas for research and teaching as a result of the evolution of the knowledge economy in an environment where resources are restricted and universities are accountable for their management and expenditure. The drive to respond to new markets for degree subjects and to opportunities for external research funding has the potential to compromise disciplinary identity as set out by Bernstein. For example, concern in industry over lack of skills in the area of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) can result in public investment in funding for research and teaching in these areas and a state directive for institutions to redirect resources into these areas (HEFCE, 2012). As another illustration, the need for institutions to be financially viable can result in the development of programmes for which there is perceived to be a market, hence the development of undergraduate degrees in areas as diverse as complementary medicine, hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism & transport (UCAS, 2013). Following Bernstein's point, these may well be much more subject to external demands and less based on a robust curricula and pedagogic basis.

Some established regions have become comparable to singulars in terms of their insulation from external forces and examples include medicine and architecture.

In the former, the theoretical basis – the ‘word’ – is delivered to students before they engage in the more practical aspects of applying theory to patients. The ethical aspect of practice is also dealt with at an early stage (e.g. see UCL’s MBBS programme or Manchester University’s MBChB programme, 2019). It is clear from looking through the curriculum for medical training that Bernstein’s principles can be applied and one can understand how professional identity can be inducted; the experts’ control of the medical profession via university-based training as well as by the General Medical Council and Royal Colleges provides a solid framework to insulate the profession against any excessive influences from other agencies (although, conversely, it is worth noting that such a strong basis may provide a frontier to preserve the privileged position of medicine too effectively and direct the power base too far towards the experts - see Freidson, 1988). This protection is less clear for newer regions of study, particularly where these areas are driven by the needs of the market.

3.4 Bernstein’s principles applied to the new administrative occupations

My contention is that a parallel can be drawn in new occupational areas, where there may be potential to professionalise roles which have developed a clear basis of expertise which is needed by a particular market or client group, but where there is no current means of recognising or accrediting this knowledge nor mandating what this knowledge is. More specifically, consideration must be given to the new occupations which have arisen to facilitate or support academic work and how these affect academic identity. As I have touched on earlier, the reality within institutions is that the landscape of disciplinary knowledge has changed to encompass new areas, with new forms of knowledge appearing alongside what may be termed academic knowledge. These forms may well offer a type of expertise which complements that offered by academic colleagues, but many of these roles may not have academic recognition for this contribution in terms of their comparative novelty within the sector. This dissonance is complicated by the directives which may come from this group as part of the management structure within a university regarding teaching and research, which may affect the ideological control of subject specialists whilst encouraging them to direct

their efforts in a particular area, potentially involving cross-disciplinary collaboration.

In Bernstein's terms, the effect is potentially twofold: new cross-disciplinary areas risk losing the original foundation of socialisation and commitment to their expertise as well as the normalising influence of the peer group, becoming too responsive to the institution and the market. The newer occupations working alongside academic groups, facilitating research and teaching, are products solely of the organisation and – by this argument – have no basis for commitment to an area of expertise despite having a developing base of knowledge to execute their roles. As will be seen in the following chapter; there is no evidence of 'the word' prior to 'the world' and their genesis has been from 'the world'.

The plausibility of Bernstein's theories as a means of practical understanding of professional education is problematised; however, applied to universities they still have currency as a means of understanding the concept of professional commitment and of socialisation into a discipline at university level. In this sense, they also offer a means of examining the professional identity of academics. Bernstein's concepts provide a twofold framework here. Firstly, there is tension between the calling to the subject and demands of the context which is external to the subject group – the management demands of the wider institution, the market, funders – which poses a challenge to academic identity as well as the integrity of their work if over-balanced in favour of the latter. Secondly, there is also the power of the singular subject and its potential for creating professional identity which needs to be mobilised for the development of both newer regions and emerging professions in higher education. The position of the latter group, however, is complicated by its organisational location and the ambiguity of its knowledge base. I will address this issue in the next section in this chapter.

For academic staff in universities, the primacy of the word before the world varies between different disciplinary groups¹². Following the logic of the above discussion, established areas such as medicine or law may have stronger

¹² For examples, consider variances between subjects such as pure philosophy, engineering or leisure and tourism studies.

professional or academic identities than newer regions which are the products of recent markets. How these different groups respond to the management demands of their institution and external requirements may also differ, as might how they respond to working with the new occupational groups under discussion.

In the next section of the chapter, I look at the way that subject specialists – academic staff – and administrative staff work together within institutions and introduce the need for another perspective to reflect this modern way of working consisting of different occupational groups being positioned to collaborate, bringing in a different perspective to Bernstein's principles which are problematised for university administrators as a group as mentioned above. I introduce the concept of the collaborative community (Adler et al, 2006; 2008) and go on to discuss how this principle will be used within this study.

3.5 Communities within universities: organisational structures

I set out in Chapter 2 that academic work within universities has in effect shifted from an autonomous activity to a process-basis involving academic staff with subject expertise and administrative staff who utilise another type of knowledge. The administrative roles under discussion in this study involve a level of expertise which has developed out of sector changes over recent decades. They also work in partnership with academic colleagues and are part of a community within their institution, i.e. an academic department or faculty depending on their institution.

Administrative and management roles in the higher education sector are determined by organisational structure; hence professional autonomy is subject to the requirements of this structure which sets out levels of responsibility, authority and so forth. This problematises professional practice due to the potential constraints on professional judgement and it also problematises the way these roles are perceived within higher education institutions. As exemplified in the work of Rowland (2002), Henkel (2000) and Allen Collinson (2007) plus many examples from the pages of the Times Higher Educational Supplement, administrative roles are placed in a deficit position compared with academic roles, even though the differentials between them have weakened as has been

discussed. The perceived issues between these polarities constrain the former's professional practice even further; role holders may find that they do not have credible authority with academic colleagues despite their position in the institutional structure. The key element of trust between the professional and the market (academic colleagues) is missing. However, as has been seen from the work of academics and research administrators, the key actors in academic work at the more complex level are participants in a process rather than owners of the whole. As a result, a more productive approach would be to look at the different types of expertise now required by each type of actor – academic, administrator – and analyse how these affect the professional identity of each, particularly given the lack of classification and framing (in Bernstein's terms) for the latter.

This approach is complicated, however, by the constraints of the organisation in which both are situated, and the control exerted by this structure on each party. As has been seen in the preceding chapter, the ideological autonomy of academic work has been reduced in the light of sector reform and the consequent increase in explicit management structures within institutions. The effects of such structures on a professional group are integral to its identity but can adversely compromise its standing as a profession. Hence, the expertise of emerging professions needs to be looked at in this context and in the face of the market, the source of demand for this expertise which is the institutional setting.

One of the central claims of my study is that there is an alternative to the academic-administrative dichotomy, as indicated in the previous section, which enables the change in academic work to be embraced rather than critiqued. As has been suggested, the principle underpinning the way academic work is carried out in universities has changed from functional differentiation to process-based organisation in order to reflect new accountabilities and the demands of the market and external agencies. This suggests a new way of working where there is cross-over and collaboration between different roles as academic work is distributed between different participants who need to work together to deliver teaching and research. In this light, I turn to the work of Adler et al, whose work on the changing nature of working within modern organisations examines how different occupational groups work together. They focus on the changes to

communities, with a basis in loyalty and shared values, in the face of the growing influences of the market and organisational hierarchy within firms and how these three facets might not be counteractive to each other. Adler et al argue that these changes have resulted in professional groups being positioned to collaborate with other occupational groups, both other professions but also those roles which previously lack equivalent status. To exemplify this, Adler et al discuss the changed relationships between physicians and other occupational groups such as nurses, who have previously worked together in a hierarchical manner (Adler et al, 2008); this dynamic has evolved as a result of external market pressures so that these roles now work as a partnership. This collaborative relationship echoes the position for academic and administrative staff working in universities as argued in Chapter 2. This offers an alternative to Whitchurch's third space (2013) which still relates to the academic-administrative delineation, as I will discuss in the next section.

Heckscher and Adler's volume (2006) on collaborative communities is concentrated on professions and their relationship to one another within organisations. They exemplify this in private (US) firms such as in the health and IT sectors, but the principles that they identify in their analyses can easily be transferred or adapted conceptually to other (knowledge-intensive) organisations whether in the private or public sectors, including universities. There are fundamental elements on which their work is based which resonate with the issues that have been clearly identified in academic work, such as academics' loyalty to their subject areas and the more recent administrative roles which have emerged to deliver elements of academic work as well as non-academic. These latter roles exhibit fluidity and may work across institutions (or parts of institutions) as well as transcend the binary divide of academic-administrative work and reflect the move to a process-basis for working where there are increasing interdependent (in Heckscher and Adler's terminology) contributions from different types of staff.

3.6 Collaborative communities and professional knowledge: Adler et al

Adler et al (2006; 2008) set out the organisation of modern professional work as predicated on the matrix of community, hierarchy (which I equate with organisation or bureaucracy) and market. They cite the importance of each principle: hierarchy's strength is control and dissemination of codified knowledge but its disadvantage is lack of motivation for new knowledge-creation and the dissemination of tacit knowledge; the market's strength is in the (inducement for) production of new knowledge but its weakness is the "socially optimal dissemination of knowledge"; and community's strength is trust and knowledge-growth but its disadvantage is closure and insularity (Adler et al, 2008, p,360; see also Heckscher and Adler, 2006). They reject the received notion of the ascendance of the latter two factors as necessarily detrimental to the first, or that the factors are mutually exclusive of each other. Adler et al term this new type the 'collaborative community'.

The key essence of the professions is a clear knowledge base, or expertise, which is in demand. In order to ensure that this knowledge remains relevant to the market in which the profession operates there is a clear need for dynamic interaction between the practice of the profession and the market. The market must inform the evolution of practice and hence the evolution of relevant expertise; without the market or client influence driving it, there would be a lack of incentive for knowledge-growth.

However, Adler et al are also clear that the concept of community is undergoing a transformation in real terms. The collegial community of the professions, previously relied on to provide self-governance and a unifying power against external influences as well as a normalising authority, is now subject to increasing pressure in terms of accountability and performance as well as cost-effectiveness (Adler et al, 2008, pp.361-2; p.370). This is analogous to the position of academic staff as discussed in Chapter 2: as stated, academic work has transformed into a process-based activity which involves different types of staff and is subject to external accountability. In this respect, Adler et al's analysis of

community provides an alternative approach to Bernstein's as set out earlier in this chapter.

In recent times, more professions are coming to be based in organisations alongside other occupations. Adler et al provide the example of US-based physicians whose employment circumstances are changing in response to the evolution of hospital management; as a result, the autonomy of such professions is being challenged by the demands of the organisation and market (Adler et al, 2008). However, rather than compromising the integrity of these professions, their communities are developing new ways of working in response to these challenges. It is fascinating to note that these new ways may encompass a departure from the old collegial forms of professional community with collaboration taking place across occupational groups rather than simply within. This empirical view of community does not undermine the notion of professional collegiality as implied by the literature around new managerialism as discussed in Chapter 2, but instead recasts it across different occupational groups. This reflects the reality of how higher education institutions now operate as well as other organisations. It should be noted here that the one aspect of this inter-professional collaboration that Adler et al neglect is the relative hierarchies between established professions and other occupational groups and how these may impede practice. This is an area pertinent to the issues surrounding new professional groups working in higher education and will be returned to later in this thesis. As a potential emerging profession (or set of professions), the developing new roles in universities under discussion may be constrained by their lack of clarity or recognition.

Adler et al note concern about the loss of the site for socialising entrants into the norms and ethics of practice for a particular profession (ibid. p.362) but implies that this site has become bound up with the forces of hierarchy and market. To expand, Bernstein's interpretation of the insular professional community is that it is necessary for knowledge-workers in order that they learn the 'craft' element of their profession and become socialised into the behaviour of their peers. They need also, however, to advance their expertise and practice through generating new knowledge but this must be done in the context of market need. To capitalise

on the benefits of hierarchy – organisation, dissemination of codified knowledge – without the restrictions of alienation (i.e. the management is seen as a means of control, with a negative impact on professional practice) there needs to be a different means of engagement between the community and hierarchy. This is where Adler et al's collaborative community comes to the fore. I will discuss these two approaches in further detail in Chapter 6.

As well as cross-working, Adler et al cite the blurring of boundaries between bureaucracy and professional autonomy: this is exemplified by studies in medicine, where physicians have moved into more management-orientated roles in both the UK and US (Adler et al, 2008, p.362). This points towards the focus of Adler et al's argument, the development of collaborative communities which extends and embraces the concepts of hierarchy and market and transforms them into a more organic structure.

This is the crux of my rejection of Whitchurch's 'third space': Adler et al's new type of community provides a means of progressing beyond the academic-administrative binary divide and instead embracing the benefits of hierarchy (i.e. the organisation) and market. Without this division, it is possible to develop a new paradigm as mooted in Chapter 2 which reflects the new process-based ways of working across different groups of staff within modern higher education institutions.

The hierarchical aspect described by Adler et al opens up possibilities of democratic management structures which engage practitioners, rather than a detached bureaucracy which may stifle innovation. Instead, hierarchy is shown to work in collaboration with other staff. Heckscher and Adler (2006) use the example of the scientific community, with value placed on contribution to a shared objective; hierarchy is established via defining the socialisation into the community where values and norms are internalised and comprehended by those working in the community. Where a more complex project arises, the hierarchy may become more explicit in order to meet outcomes but without undermining the principles of the community (Heckscher and Adler, 2006, p.60). Adler et al also cite examples from the health sector, across occupational boundaries

groups working together to improve quality and cost-effectiveness and where management roles open up for practitioners (Adler et al, 2008, pp.368-9). The effect is to shift the emphasis from individual achievement as the marker of professional success to organisational or team achievement.

The concept of the collaborative community suggests a means of responding to the pressures of accountability, cost and quality assurance which augments the relationship between the professions, organisation/hierarchy and market. However, this is based on the principle of (professional) work as a continuous process with different actors crossing over between these axes, merging to form a whole. This process of knot-working (Engeström, 2008) exemplifies the fluidity of many of the new higher education administrative roles. Managers may work with different groups of staff, reconfiguring into new teams for a specific objective, e.g. working with a group to develop a new programme or consulting to develop a new institutional strategy. However, the implication of Engeström's concept is that there is no over-arching authority, which is not necessarily the case in universities. A particular group may have a focus, but the managerial or administrative members may represent the institution and its interests on a consistent basis.

This is where Adler et al's principle of collaborative communities does fall short of addressing one key risk. Despite the cross-occupational collaboration, without clear management/administrative control there is nothing to suggest that such collective control would not simply regenerate the closure characteristic of traditional professional groups and the self-interest or self-protection that such collaboration seeks to avoid. It could be said that a separate bureaucracy is needed to provide an objective administrative function, focusing on the well-being of the overall organisation and hence balancing out the interests of the experts. It is here that Gouldner's 'true bureaucrat' comes to the fore and provides an alternative interpretation of the function of the administration within an organisation (Gouldner, 1958). This type positions the administration or management as outward-looking, protecting the interests of the organisation – in this case the university - over those working in it, who may have their own agenda as a group of experts. In Chapter 2, I described how the discourse around new

managerialism did not allow for this conception of university bureaucracy, situating the administration as an imposed structure rather than one that has evolved due to external influences and increased accountability. Gouldner's 'true bureaucrat' restores the administration to a more positive connotation in a higher education institution, protecting its interests as part of the collaborative community of the university.

These localised bureaucrats favour the needs of the wider institution and hence balance out the influence of the disciplinary group with its (Bernsteinian) commitment to its own interest, potential self-protection as a group housed within the institution and desire for monetary and other resources within the institution's own internal market. Hence, these locals need to retain their own objective judgement in the face of pressure from academic staff who may have their own agenda; however, their lack of expertise in the relevant academic subject area does not preclude them from working in partnership with these subject experts. Gouldner uses the example of a plant manager who possesses management authority over colleagues with expertise in chemistry or mechanical engineering and states that there are two "fundamentally different" criteria for the legitimation of authority in such cases: one is based on knowledge and experience; the other on incumbency in office (1959, p. 413). In other words, such specialists need to hand control of certain areas to others who have the skills and knowledge they lack. In the case of a university, generalists may lack knowledge of certain disciplinary groups they are working with but may have other expertise – whether in quality assurance, planning, technology - which enables them to contribute to academic work from another direction. What is suggested is that these other groups, with their focus on lateral issues such as the welfare of the organisation, may have facets of Bernstein's commitment within their own practice. They may also however have a different type of expertise but this is not unlocked at the present time. Nevertheless, it is now clear where this expertise may be located in the case of a university: on the axis of the organisation as opposed to the axis of the subject experts.

3.7 Collaborative communities in higher education

In the field of higher education, Adler et al's concept of the collaborative community is one that may provide a means of understanding the interaction between the factors of professional community, market and organisation/hierarchy. Harking back to the evidence of 'blurred boundaries' proffered by Whitchurch (2008; 2013) and Allen-Collinson (2009), there is a move towards a more organic structure with less delineation between the academic community and those supporting academic activities *bureaucratically*. However, in the cases utilised by Adler et al, what is clear is the continued centrality of professional knowledge to the occupational groups under discussion, whether they are part of a disciplinary group or the bureaucracy. This centrality is an issue within the higher education context, as will be shown. Within this context, it could be said that the focus of knowledge has been shifted: instead of locating the crux of knowledge purely in academic subject areas, the disciplinary knowledge needed to execute academic activities – teaching, research, increasingly consultancy and knowledge-transfer – has been added to by a 'know-how' knowledge which I will define later in this thesis. This is needed to help make these activities happen and some aspects previously performed by academic staff has shifted to other role holders. Coupled with the change of stress on Mode 2 research and the impetus to work across disciplines, this suggests that the emphasis is on the type of academic activity being carried out rather than on the discipline itself as the basis.

In the current UK context, reflecting Adler et al's example of US physicians who have shifted towards collaborative community working as a response to the influences of the market (in terms of increased accountability) and bureaucracy (Adler et al, 2008), this new knowledge sits not simply with academic staff as *professionals*, but with non-academic staff – managers, senior administrators. One way to describe this knowledge is to situate it on a spectrum: from the expertise held by academic staff to that held by the administration. Using Whitchurch's 'blended professional' descriptor there may be overlap between the groups, however, there is also the risk, for academic staff, that the monopoly they have on requisite knowledge in the field of higher education is displaced to a certain extent. For example, the perceived freedom to choose what to research

is already restricted by the priorities set by funders operating in an environment where resources are already scarce. By the same measure, consultancy and knowledge-transfer is largely determined by the demand from external bodies who are funding these activities, whether private or state-sponsored.

The holistic collaborative community can be threatened: the reliance on the demands of the market needs to be balanced against the regulative driver of the professional group. However, the professional group, in terms of the where essential knowledge used in higher education is based, has possibly become a fusion of the academic and administrative in response to market changes. This has profound implications for subject specialists as well as for new role holders. The concept of the collaborative community offers a means of recasting Whitchurch's third space: the binary divide is replaced by a new space.

3.8 *Relationship between Bernstein and Adler et al*

The principles espoused by Bernstein and Adler et al provide a different, but complementary, lens for examining the occupational group at the heart of this study. The inwardness and protective character of singular knowledge structures and the outward-facing nature of the collaborative community may appear in opposition but they can be used to draw attention to different, but related, aspects of the new set of roles.

To explain, as described earlier in this chapter, Bernstein's theories provide a route for a disciplinary group to claim a space for themselves and insulate their position against external influences. This principle may not just apply to an academic subject group, but could be extended to other occupational groups such as university administrators, working alongside disciplinary specialists on academic activities. Bernstein's principles also articulate the differences that may exist between different subject areas, in terms of their framing and classification and thus ability to insulate themselves against other forces. As discussed above, the collaborative community as articulated within a university includes not only disciplinary experts, but other parties representing the hierarchy, or organisation, as administrative experts facilitating academic activities. In this context, each party as a potential profession may need to maintain a balance against the undue

influences of the other, and both against the external context, e.g. the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS), government legislation. While the disciplinary group must preserve its position in relation to institutional management and the external market, the administrative group must protect the interests of the organisation in relation to these other forces. It is here, as part of the hierarchy or organisation within the collaborative community of the university, that this group can find the origins for its own 'word', despite its location in alignment with the organisation or 'world', to borrow Bernstein's terminology. Bernstein's principles also allow for how different disciplinary groups might relate to the influences of the organisation and the market, or external context. This allows me to explore how this impacts on university administrators working with different subject groups in terms of knowledge and ways of working.

This is where the two sets of principles converge or co-exist, despite their differences in approach which appear to be in opposition with each other: Bernstein's concept of the power of singular knowledge structures provides the 'word' and Adler et al's model of the collaborative community provides the 'world', which has space for organisational expertise; perversely, the principles come together. To expand on this claim, both the academic and administrative staff working together on academic activities might be able to build on the basis of singular and regional knowledge structures, finding a means of establishing their place – their professional identity - based on their expertise within the institution and sector and seeking to insulate themselves from undue influence by exercising control over their position. However, in this context both groups of staff are part of the collaborative community within the university context, albeit each providing a different contribution to teaching or research: the academic staff are positioned to provide the subject knowledge while the administrators in question provide the organisational expertise to facilitate this work. Thus, teaching or research are the product of these areas of expertise, with one axis of a metaphorical graph representing subject knowledge and the other representing organisational expertise. The university matrix articulates the facets of knowledge and community, or 'word' and 'world'. It provides a holistic framework in which to research university administrators which I will develop in the next

chapter in order to investigate the relationship between knowledge and community.

3.9 Summary of chapter

The intention of this chapter has been to explain the principles developed by Bernstein, in relation to knowledge, and Adler et al, in relation to the collaborative community, in order to show that these can be extrapolated and applied to staff in universities in terms of how they work.

Through the framework of Bernstein's knowledge structures, it is possible to understand how academic commitment (as professional commitment or socialisation) develops via the precedence of the 'word' before the 'world' forming the basis for identity. In the context of this framework, the boundaries around these academic groups may weaken if their activities are too responsive to external demands, posing a threat to academic identity. However, this needs to be juxtaposed with the benefits of transparency and standard-setting, albeit with these measures used in a meaningful way which does not alienate those delivering teaching or research. This entails working in partnership with other types of staff (as well as other academics) involved in implementing these measures. However, this is not to say that the issue of knowledge is denigrated: rather, the issue is that the knowledge required to carry out teaching and research may have changed and is thus now configured both differently and across different occupational groups. I have shown that the administrative groups – if conceptualised as a potential new profession – could use Bernstein's principle of singular knowledge structures to start to establish themselves with reference to a specific body of knowledge. This resonates with the position of the nurses studied by Jensen and Lahn (2005), discussed in the previous chapter.

More explicitly, I have argued that teaching or researching now involves a collaborative community (Adler et al, 2006; 2008) of subject experts and others, such as research managers and teaching specialists in quality assurance, with alternative but complementary types of expertise. The principle of the collaborative community, although not without its pitfalls, clarifies where we may expect to find the focus of the knowledge base for these new groups: on the axis

of the organisation rather than in a subject group. However, the holistic nature of the collaborative community, with its obscuring of boundaries between occupational groups, also offers the potential of a new space in which to research how academic work is undertaken, what knowledge is utilised and how this is configured between different groups of staff.

These principles will enable me to approach research into the newer administrative occupations in universities in a new and novel way, moving away from the impact on academic identity as the basis for exploration and also from the alignment of the emergence of these roles as simply new managerialism. Both Bernstein and Adler et al retain the notion of knowledge as the bedrock of the professions, but each reflects a different angle on how these roles may be viewed and developed. In the case of Bernstein, this is twofold:

- the way of understanding how different disciplinary groups within an institution may respond to the influences of the organisation and external requirements and
- how the new roles under discussion may exercise their development as a profession via clarifying their knowledge base.

In the case of Adler et al:

- the location of any potential expertise for the newer occupations is clarified as aligned with the working of the organisation and
- the breaking down of boundaries between staff (i.e. academic and administrative staff working together) and the recognition of the process-basis for working in universities.

The alignment of university administration with the organisation itself clarifies its position compared with academic expertise: each party provides input to teaching and research but from a different direction and with a different emphasis, academic staff with commitment to their subject area, administrative staff with commitment to their organisation. As a result, I remove the latter group from its

identification only in terms of academic staff and in light of the literature around new managerialism, giving it a fresh perspective.

Together, the approaches provided by Bernstein and Adler et al offer the means of investigating the newer occupational groups in terms of (potentially professional) identity and community. With these tools in mind, in the next chapter I will recap my arguments to this point and focus on the themes and issues that have arisen with respect to the university administration roles that have developed over recent decades. I will then describe how I approach the empirical research and my methodology.

Chapter 4: Researching the Emerging Professions in Universities: the Issue of Knowledge and Community

4.1 Introduction to chapter

In the following chapter, I will start by drawing out the themes and issues which have emerged to this point in the study and contextualise these in light of the framework provided by Bernstein and Adler et al as discussed in Chapter 3. I will draw out how the principles espoused by these researchers relate researching the knowledge developed and utilised by teaching and research to the community in which they are carried out. I will describe how I use their concepts together to explore the administrative roles within universities as a profession and develop the research questions which will be used in the following empirical research.

I will carry on to discuss my approach to the empirical research carried out for my study. The 'what' and 'how' nature of the research questions that emerge show that I need a means of accessing the details of how staff work, what they do and know and why and how they have come to acquire the knowledge they utilise in their posts. As I want to understand how this knowledge is obtained within the collaborative community of the university, I will demonstrate that I need to access real-life examples, echoing Yin (2014). I will explore the level of detail required to address my research questions, which is not inherent in previous research in this area, and discuss that I therefore need to select a method of research which allows for the nuancing required to address this shortfall, fulfilling the remit of my study. I will then go on to set out my methodological approach to the study. This will bring together the theoretical framework I developed in Chapter 3 and the practical aspects of exploring my research questions. I will then focus on case study research due to the real-life nature of my study and break down the components into documentary research, interviews, access, insider research and related matters and ethical issues. I will indicate that I used a comparative case study method but within one institutional context.

As set out in Chapter 2, I am researching administrative roles working in partnership with academic staff on teaching and research. The very nature of the case study method enables exploration of these roles within the framework set up by Bernstein and Adler et al.

4.2 Themes and Issues

I have shown in the previous chapters that new roles have emerged within higher education over the past few decades which sit alongside and work together with the traditional academic roles. The activities of delivering degree programmes and research have shifted to a process-basis where different types of staff provide input to these undertakings, rather than simply subject specialist experts. I am researching these roles at the site of the university as the traditional location of training for the professions in the context of looking at knowledge currently deployed within these institutions and how this is affecting the development of university administration as a potential new profession with its own knowledge base.

To expand on this premise, in Chapter 2 I have situated changes to higher education as the result of state intervention and more explicit external requirements which have required universities to introduce new systems and processes. This has resulted in a change to the way in which staff work and in particular how academic work is carried out in terms of developing and delivering teaching and research. The area of academic administration has undergone a transformation from basic clerical support as its main function; academic work—how teaching and research is carried out—has shifted to encompass new processes and other actors. New administrative roles have emerged beyond that of low-level clerical support which work alongside staff who are classed as academics and which deliver input to teaching and research activities in partnership with their academic colleagues. These sector developments (the changed relationship of the state and universities, the more explicit governance and management structures within these institutions in response to external requirements for reporting and auditing and the emergence of new roles or posts outside the academic sphere which are directly involved in academic work) have transformed the labour of academic work from a private, individual activity or one

based in small groups of academics, to a more institutional-level process involving different actors including administrators. For example, provision of a degree programme will involve not only the academic tutors delivering it but other staff who are involved in practices such as marketing, recruitment, quality assurance and review; these other staff will normally be administrative rather than academic. There will be external benchmarks against which the university will measure itself in a competitive sector, e.g. student surveys such as NSS, and hence the programme team will need to show how they are ensuring the quality of the student experience. The result of these developments for these new roles is that knowledge, or expertise, is as important for administrative staff working in universities as for academic staff.

The literature and current research around higher education has been fixated on issues with these new roles: they are set up in a dichotomy with academic roles/staff and are shown to be problematic in terms of their direction and professional positioning. They are often depicted as eradicating the autonomy of academic staff and growing in power at the expense of academic freedom (e.g. Rowland, 2002). The existing research in this area (such as that of Whitchurch, 2013) focuses on both the differences between academics and professional staff and when those differences come together (i.e. in what Whitchurch terms the 'third space'). As such, this research is not positioned to uncover the nuances which exist in the ways that academic and professional staff work together in universities at the current time. Previous research has not accounted for differences between teaching and research activities or any variation between different types of subject. My research seeks to address this absence: my intention in this study is to research these perspectives and move the very nature of higher education research forward instead of focusing on the regressive, zero sum position which has formed the basis of most existing research.

In Chapter 3, I have used the concepts developed by Bernstein and Adler et al to unpack the issues which underpin how professions such as academics (leaving aside contentions about whether this group is in itself a profession or set of professions (William, 2008)) increasingly work within organisations in collaboration with other occupational groups and what this means for professional

knowledge, particularly for occupational groups which may in fact be emerging professions themselves. Using these principles as a lens to ask questions about these groups will allow me to set aside the dichotomous expectations that seem to permeate much research into higher education in terms of it focusing on the binary opposition of academic and administrative staff or extrapolating this into a grey area between the two, as Whitchurch has done (e.g. 2008; 2013). As I have discussed previously, this is not a productive way forward in researching these new roles and current research appears to leave more questions unanswered than resolved in terms of the nature of their required expertise (Gornall, 1999; Allen-Collinson, 2006; Hockey and Allen-Collinson, 2009).

In order to address this gap in research and clarify why knowledge is so important in the context of administrative roles in universities, I will next recap the main issues arising from the work of Bernstein and Adler et al and then show how these concepts will be used moving forward in this study.

4.3 *Issues about knowledge and identity*

My argument is that Bernstein's ideas about the relationship between knowledge and identity and Adler et al's argument about community, identity and expertise can be used in two ways.

In Bernstein's case, I used his principles of knowledge bases and curriculum theory (Bernstein, 2000) in previous chapters to illustrate how practitioners are socialised into academic subject groups and how their identity is formed. In this chapter, I will use them, in conjunction with Adler et al's ideas about collaborative community, to establish a conceptual framework to research the work and knowledge undertaken by professional staff in universities.

In Adler et al's case, I use their principle of the collaborative community which reflects the way that academic work is now undertaken in universities, with academic and administrative staff working together on teaching and research activities on a process-basis. As discussed in Chapter 3, this articulation opens up a means of identifying where the knowledge utilised in the administrative roles is located: on the axis of the organisation as well as with the subject experts.

At this point, I should again note that there are differences between these approaches. As discussed in Chapter 3, the basis of Bernstein's principles is inwardness whereas Adler et al espouse the benefits of external influence, embodied by the market and hierarchy/organisation. These contradictions (Table 4.1 below) form the theoretical framework for my research which will be explored in the following sections; this is an original approach that departs from previous research in the field.

4.3.1 Knowledge

Bernstein's principles help us understand the formation of academic identity and – by extension – professional commitment (Beck and Young, 2005) through the basis of a theoretical grounding which allows for recontextualisation in practice in different situations (Bernstein, 2000). However, they also indicate the risks for newer or more vulnerable (to external influences) fields of study and, by analogy, emerging professions; thus it is this aspect which is crucial to the study of newer roles in universities and their development as areas of new expertise. The relationship that Bernstein reveals between the primacy and insularity of singular subjects and others which are regionalised, which may be more subject to external societal influences, extends to the suggestion that newer occupational groups with new expertise may have difficulty asserting themselves as potential professions in the face of a demanding market or other forces. For example, newer roles may find themselves not recognised by the established academic groups they work with due to their lack of identity. Similarly, academic subjects which are too responsive to external demands may suffer similarly.

In this sense, in the face of the ways of working which have resulted from the changes to the higher education sector, I want to look at how academic and professional role holders work together across different subjects as well as different activities – teaching and research. I will do this via the lens provided by Bernstein's framework. This is a perspective that I have drawn out of the work of Bernstein and which has not been used previously; it is an original means of progressing research into the position of new occupational groups working in universities.

In Chapter 3 I have shown how Bernstein's concepts offer insight into the significance of theoretical knowledge as the source of identity for an occupational group which may be an emerging profession; this essentially is the crux of his importance to my empirical study. To expand, via his concepts of the framing and classification of knowledge structures, Bernstein offers a way of understanding how knowledge is produced and controlled in society, particularly by universities by implication. Inherently, he also offers a means of understanding the nature of commitment to the 'word' before the 'world' or to the principles of disciplinary knowledge for its own sake via a process of socialisation, before its application to the external world. Although he did not explicitly relate these to the professions or to the reality of modern higher education, his theories offer a means of understanding the closedness (or not) of particular subject groups/experts and the issues around the emergence of newer bodies of knowledge, e.g. those relating to the new occupational groups in higher education. In particular, he provides a clear analogy for how academic identity is developed:

Their (singulars') sense of the sacred,....does not arise so much out of an ethic of 'knowledge for its own sake', (it) is more a function of socialisation into subject loyalty: for it is the subject which becomes the lynchpin of identity. Any attempt to weaken boundaries between subjects or change classification strength.... may be felt as a threat to one's identity and may be experienced as a pollution endangering the sacred.

(Young, 2008, p. 153, quoting Bernstein, 2000)

His notions lead to an understanding of the genesis of professional identity which could be utilised by emergent professions as they try to establish themselves; however, they also illustrate the issues which such a group may encounter. The basis for professional status is a distinct body of knowledge which is in demand by a particular group or 'market'. However, the term also embodies objectivity and autonomy, with development regulated by a peer community of practitioners who provide a normalising influence (Evetts, 2003; 2005). This independence is pitted against the influences of the market – those who require the expertise

under offer – and the organisation/bureaucracy within which the professional is based. As I discussed in Chapter 3, a failure to achieve a balance has implications for the identity of a profession. It is via the group's commitment to their profession, via socialisation into the community of practitioners, and expertise that this balance is achieved in terms of this knowledge and identity providing a means of rebound when the group risks being overwhelmed by external social influences. In the case of potential emerging professional occupations in universities, a lack of a clear knowledge base coupled with a weak community of peers places these groups in a vulnerable position in terms of their status as emerging professionals.

To illustrate this claim, Jensen and Lahn (2005) explore the impact of theoretical knowledge in their study of the professional identities of nurses in training. It is via access to historical and other sources of theoretical knowledge that a newer profession may find itself able to establish itself as both a community of practitioners and be enabled to reapply knowledge to new contexts, thus recharging the profession and keeping it modern (ibid. 2005). The implication is that this reinforces the occupational group against the external pressures which may compromise its practice; this is done through a means of strengthening the subject's classification (i.e. the strength of its boundaries with other subjects) and framing (i.e. its control over the curriculum, phasing, pedagogy) (Bernstein, 1971). Control of disciplinary groups is located within the academic community (Moore & Maton, 2001) as the legitimated 'knower' via the verification provided by peer review and more systemic processes such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF). These means of verification result in a hierarchy of subjects depending on the weakness of a group's classification and framing. This in turn may influence how these groups interact with others outside the group, e.g. their home institution or university administrators working on teaching or research.

In terms of the modern higher education environment, my research will explore how these notions of boundary and control are articulated between different types of subjects in terms of the relationship between academic staff and the

administrative colleagues they work with on teaching and research¹³. As already stated, in terms of the expertise exerted by these newer colleagues, I will explore what this consists of and how this is used within different subject contexts. Extrapolating Bernstein's theories, it may be the case the in subjects where there are weaker boundaries and framing (Bernstein, 2000) pedagogic decisions, for example, are in effect removed from the hands of academic staff and are controlled by others within the institution. Consequently, the research questions set out later in this chapter will need to be applied to different types of subject groups as well as different types of academic activity.

I should reiterate that my focus is the other, newer, administrative roles which are now involved with academics working in subject areas. These groups work in partnership with academic staff (researchers, lecturers) and the work in which they are involved (research projects, delivering degree programmes) on what could be described as a process-basis or as a holistic activity with different actors who contribute something towards the whole.

4.3.2 *Community: changes in the way academic and administrative staff work*

As I discussed in Chapter 3, Adler et al's concept of the collaborative community (2006; 2008) is a means of rethinking the resultant division of labour now evident within universities; it offers a radical way of re-thinking the 'third space' coined by Whitchurch (e.g. 2013). However, as also discussed in Chapter 3, Adler et al's space is a more holistic entity - a successor to the third space - where the delineations of community, market and hierarchy/organisation become less boundaried, allowing for the administration to be researched outside the binary opposition of the academic-administrative divide. For example, academic staff may also be managers in the explicit meaning of the term (Henkel, 2000, p.252) and administrative staff (traditionally the bureaucracy in Adler et al's terminology) may work directly on academic matters.

¹³ See Chapter 6

I have shown that the nature of academic work has shifted from an almost private, autonomous activity to a more public, institutional matter based on process, involving various contributors, academic and administrative. This shift has reflected the trend of organisational achievement taking precedence over individual achievement, illustrated by university mission statements, strategic plans, the focus on student progression and employment rates and positioning in league tables¹⁴. This cross-working shares similarities with the occupational groups examined by Adler et al (2006; 2008) who have developed new ways of working collaboratively across occupational groups. There are, of course, other issues which have been flushed out in the review of the literature around the professions and higher education which are pertinent to the concepts of both Alder et al and Bernstein. As previously mentioned, Adler et al do not account for any hierarchy between different occupational groups or professions, nor for any lack of perceived equity or animosity between different occupations. This is an aspect that is evident in a lot of the existing literature around higher education (e.g. Allen and Newcomb, 1999; Warner, 1999; Gornall, 1999; Rowland, 2002; Deem and Brehony, 2005) and may prove to be an issue for the professional development of new occupations; however, this will be borne in mind during discussion of the empirical research.

I have commented in Chapter 2 that the role of universities is changing with respect to their remit becoming more aligned with that of the professions in terms of positioning against the forces of market and bureaucracy. I have also shown that these newer administrative roles are configured within an institutional organisational (or bureaucratic) structure and I will need to research how the new occupational groups fit into this alignment. Following Adler et al, their position is to be identified with the organisation/bureaucracy, rather than a particular subject group, with their knowledge base potentially anchored in supporting the processes of teaching and research activities, as I identified in Chapter 3. However, their position as part of the bureaucracy does not preclude the possibility of professionalisation: what is common to the principles of both Adler et al and Bernstein is the emphasis on knowledge bases as the crux of

¹⁴ This has been consolidated by the arrival of the TEF (*Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework*) from 2017.

professional identity and the basis for the peer community which in turn ensures a normalising influence on those who practice.

The concept of the collaborative community (Adler et al, 2006; 2008) embraces the benefits to be sought from market and bureaucracy as well as peer community and in doing so implies where the expertise for new groups working in universities could lie: on the axis of the organisation, providing 'management' knowledge rather than subject-specific knowledge. It is this aspect of Adler et al's concept that illuminates how such new occupations may find a professional identity. Hence, the new occupations are identified as a region but their expertise is not located – as may be expected – within the academic groups within a university, but in the bureaucracy. This may be complicated by cross-occupational collaboration involved in Adler et al's concept of collaborative communities: specific roles may cross boundaries as exemplified by the physicians who move into management roles (Adler et al, 2008, p.362), thus creating a more holistic community. This is the above-mentioned new iteration of the third space, where the delineations of community, market and bureaucracy become less clear and more interchangeable.

In order to address the issue of newer administrative occupations as budding professions in light of this new third space, I will look at the configuration of subject and other knowledge involved in the production of academic activities. This will involve examining how the non-subject specific knowledge utilised by the new/emerging administrative occupations is configured with the subject (and potentially other) knowledge provided by academic staff. This is particularly important in terms of the possible boundary-crossing between different roles. Assuming that the knowledge utilised by new occupational groups points towards a basis for professionalisation, then a further important issue is how these groups are socialised into their roles and learn the 'craft' aspect of their work. This is particularly important if this aspect has become less delineated from the forces of bureaucracy and market (Adler et al, 2008, p.362) but their position still potentially reflects the interests of the organisation over (the self-interests of) the subject group. In this sense, I will explore how these new groups are socialised

into the norms and expectations of their roles and where their source of commitment (in Bernstein's terms) comes from.

As previously explained, alongside exploring the differences between teaching and research-related activities, my empirical study will need to take into consideration different subjects in terms of those with different degrees of insulation and/or interaction with the external social world. In light of the knowledge economy, if universities have been undermined as the sole producers of knowledge (Delanty, 2001) as indicated in Chapter 2, then I will need to consider in this study what this means for different academic subjects, such as high and low status disciplines (e.g. law and education), how they differ in their responses to external social forces and how this affects the new roles working alongside academic staff. Bernstein's (2000) knowledge structures enable us to formulate how different disciplines may be subject to these factors.

An issue with the concepts of Adler et al is that the proliferation of the collaborative community erodes the boundaries around previously autonomous disciplinary groups. This implies that the framing around disciplinary groups is weakened as others help influence the curriculum, pedagogy and so forth. More powerful subjects with stronger defined boundaries may react differently to this influence; I will discuss this in more detail in the next section.

4.3.3 Identity vs community: using the concepts of regions and collaborative community to explore new administrative roles

From the concepts developed by Bernstein, there are clear tensions between singular subjects which have clear boundaries and whose experts have strong academic identities, and regionalised subjects which function in both the intellectual fields and in the areas of external application (Bernstein, 2000, p.52). The former have more power to resist external societal (and organisational) influence. The position of some (newer) regions is analogous to the position of the newer administrative roles working alongside academic groups which have arisen in higher education, in terms of their vulnerability to these influences.

These new roles have arisen from the field of application – academic teaching and research – due to changes in the way institutions operate and the effect this has had on academic work as done by academic teachers and researchers: in effect, the ‘world’ has preceded the ‘word’. However, in Bernstein’s terminology, the use of knowledge within these roles as suggested by previous research (e.g. Allen-Collinson, 2006; 2007; 2009) locates them as regional, rather than generic, knowledge structures consisting merely of transferable skills (ibid, 2000, p.53). However, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, my premise is that this knowledge is located on the organisational axis of the institution rather than in the academic groups. This suggests that the nature of this knowledge is not entirely aligned with the codified knowledge articulated by Bernstein but neither is it ‘everyday’ knowledge which is born of common sense or general tasks; it does not sit within the academic knowledge held within departments. I will use this study to investigate this nature in more depth.

The failure by previous research to recognise or explore the nature of this knowledge has prevented these new roles from identifying or developing as potential professions and has resulted in a stalemate. If staff are tied to ‘everyday’ knowledge in their engagement with the world, then this prevents them from exploring other possibilities – “thinking the unthinkable” (Bernstein, 2000) - and extending their development which can reinvigorate their practice. This limits them as professionals, if indeed they are such.

I have argued that the external pressures exerted on universities by the state and by market forces, and consequently by the institutions themselves – as organisations, as bureaucracy - on the academic groups working within have resulted in these new ways of working. Administrative roles have transformed and academic staff now work in different ways with these role holders; the nature of academic work has accordingly changed and now involves other occupational groups. There is therefore a tension between the identity developed by academic staff (as a result of socialisation into their respective academic disciplines) and the reality of how they work now. The community of the academic department now has to interact with other staff in that the university has become a collaborative community (Adler et al, 2006; 2008) encompassing academic

groups and new (administrative) staff groups who work in partnership on activities. This combination is complicated by potential unclear boundaries between academics and administrative staff, e.g. in terms of academics who become managers or even administrators who teach.

It is at this juncture that the concepts of Bernstein and Adler et al come into play together. I want to explore how this new community of different occupational groups working in partnership affects the development of each group. However, I also want to explore the particular knowledge utilised by university administrators and how they might mobilise Bernstein's concepts to create space for this knowledge and subsequently exercise some degree of control over their development. Bearing in mind Bernstein's differentiation between subjects with stronger framing and classification, I will examine the relationship of these new roles with academic groups and how they differ between different types of academic subjects, i.e. singulars such as history and regions such as engineering.

It is important to note that there is dissonance between the theories of Bernstein and Adler et al as discussed in Chapter 3. In Bernstein's terms, singular subjects and some regions are strong due to their insulation from external factors; strength in community is derived from insularity and inwardness. For Adler et al, the strength of the singular discipline and the need to socialise entrants into the norms and ethos of a particular profession (or subject) is acknowledged but the implication is that the factors of hierarchy and market are healthy influences. The former facilitates innovation and the latter facilitates organisation and knowledge dissemination. By extension, for Adler et al the professional community becomes stronger as it embraces collaboration between different occupational groups. These contentions can be summed up by Table 4.1:

	Identity	Community
Bernstein	Strong – singulars	Strong – insular; inward-looking
	Weak - regions	Weak – Outward-looking

Adler et al	Strong - regions	Strong - collaboration
	Weak - singulars	Weak – insular; exclusive

Table 4.1: Contentions between Bernstein vs Adler et al

I note that, despite this discord, using the principles set out by Bernstein and Adler et al offers a basis for effectively exploring notions of knowledge and community in relation to university administrators. The tensions produced through the opposition inherent in these principles are not an issue as each set of principles provides a lens through which this group can be explored. I will explore how there can be cohesion between these sets of principles in the following section.

4.4 *Researching the knowledge and community of higher education administrators*

In order to understand what the new administrative groups actually do and the knowledge members of the community have, my research will involve consulting with these individuals, both academic and administrative. If the boundaries between subject-specialist academics and administrative staff are blurred, then, in Bernstein’s terminology, this may weaken the identity of the academic groups although this may depend on the status of the academic group. It needs to be acknowledged that some control has shifted towards the organisation and the new occupational groups have attained some degree of control of academic work.

Regions such as engineering are not just complicated by their interaction with the field of practice¹⁵ but also, in practical terms, by their interaction with the organisation in which they are based. In this sense, regions look not only to the field of practice but also to their institution which could be said to be represented by the new administrative roles which protect the interests of this organisation; this is the locus where Bernstein and Adler et al’s principles converge. However, this also applies to some singulars such as physics or chemistry which have a practical application to the external world. The issue is whether singular subjects

¹⁵ This includes the professional bodies which accredit degree programmes and in effect regulate the profession.

are more insulated from such organisational influences than (at least some) regionalised subjects, even in the context of blurred boundaries between groups.

If there are new occupational groups which are emerging professions and these groups are the product of the 'world', i.e. institutional requirements or external accountability, then the 'word' needs identifying as this is the means by which these professions can be kept current and reinvigorated. The relationship between the word and the world for regions is normally iterative as a result of their interaction with the field of practice; likewise, these new professions need to respond to the needs of their market. I am, however, interested in how the expertise of these new roles is acquired in a collaborative community where the socialisation process is potentially diffused by different occupational groups. I want to explore the impact that this has on identity for these (potentially) new professions.

In order to explore this new type of regionalisation within the context of the collaborative community, I need to research an example of such a community within a university setting. To elaborate, I need to purposively sample a unit which produces academic teaching and research but involves different types of staff who work in partnership on these activities. Both academic and administrative staff being researched need to be working above a certain level, i.e. administrative staff would not simply be carrying out lower-level clerical tasks but would have a significant part in the process of delivering degree programmes and a sufficient degree of autonomy and control over their work. Through the research, I want to be able:

...to understand a real-world case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to [my] case.
(Yin, 2014, p.16)

As is suggested by the collaborative community described by Adler et al (2006; 2008), the context is a holistic unit where the boundaries between its members may not be clear. Hence concentrating on individuals rather than the community

as a whole would not suit the direction of this study, as I want to investigate how the concepts of Bernstein and Adler et al play out.

The core of Adler et al's concepts are predicated on the relationship between different occupational groups and I will explore this relational perspective. I will also consider the relationship between academic and administrative staff as a collaborative community where knowledge needed to produce teaching and research is distributed between these groups; I will need to understand what exactly this knowledge consists of and how it is configured.

I will also drill down into the specifics of how this new knowledge is acquired. With the principles of Bernstein in mind, I want to understand the locus of the 'word' and how it derives from the imperative of the 'world'. This implies an in-depth exploration of a group of people, not only surveying what they do and how they do it, but the history of how they came about the knowledge that they utilise. However, Bernstein's knowledge concepts deepen this exploration of the knowledge base of a collaborative community within a university unit or department by contextualising the unit within a 'hierarchy' of singular and regional academic subjects of varying vulnerability to external societal and organisational influence. To ensure that this context is explored sufficiently, I will look at more than one unit within an institution to explore how a collaborative community of academic and administrative staff may vary between different types of subjects, e.g. a singular such as mathematics and a region such as engineering. This approach implies a comparative dimension to a case study method, as more than one unit is researched within a single institution.

In terms of the framing and classification implications I have identified via Bernstein's work and what these mean in terms of insulation from external societal influences for academic subjects, no research has looked at teaching and learning as separate processes from research but there is also a lacuna of research comparing different subject areas. As the focus of the research is clarified, the next section will draw out the research questions which arise from the theoretical framework I have set up around knowledge and community.

4.5 Research questions

To re-state the situation, the aim of this study is to research the knowledge utilised by university administrators, in terms of what it consists of and how it is configured across these administrative post-holders within universities. Relatedly, it aims to explore these newer administrative posts/roles in universities in light of their position as emerging areas of relatively new expertise and potential professions, working alongside existing and (often) established academic groups. I will examine the nature of the expertise held by these newer occupations and how it may differ between academic activities – teaching and research – as well as between subjects. Naturally, this leads to the main question that will be asked within the study:

1. What does the knowledge utilised by university administrators consist of?

I will examine this perspective within my empirical research, looking at the nature of this knowledge and how it sits with the subject expertise traditionally provided by teaching and research colleagues. This implies the first of several sub-questions within the study:

- 1.1 How is the knowledge utilised by these administrators configured with the subject (and potentially other) knowledge utilised by academic staff?

The importance of theoretical knowledge implied by Bernstein (2000), the precedence of the ‘word’ before the ‘world’, is confounded by the reality of the new roles in higher education being researched. These have been driven by the need to respond to the ‘world’ in the first instance, i.e. the changes which external influences have exerted on institutions, transforming the way that their staff work. In this sense, the relationship between the word and the world has become an iterative association as staff have started to move towards professionalisation (Gornall, 1999; Conway, 2000; Laurwerys, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2006; 2007; 2009; Langley, 2012). This relationship and the study carried out by Jensen and Lahn (2005) and discussed in Chapter 2 imply two further sub-questions:

- 1.2 What is the theoretical knowledge utilised by these administrative roles and how is it acquired?
- 1.3 How does the process of professional socialisation into these administrative roles take place?

It is the sub-questions, which emerge out of the framework based on the principles of Bernstein and Adler et al, that will address the issue of whether the new roles are potential new professions. I am aware that there are certain aspects of the development of a professional that I have so far neglected, in particular non-formal or tacit learning (echoing Eraut, 2000) as part of the professional socialisation process. I anticipate that these aspects will become apparent during the research and will discuss such issues as they arise.

The next issue to be considered is how to carry out the empirical study to address the questions that have been identified. As I have already set out, this study will disregard – as far as is practicable – the binary divide of academic and administrative work, instead focusing on what those working in a university on teaching and research activities actually do. The research will involve studying groups of staff who work together in the areas of degree programmes and research. I will identify the processes by which teaching and research come into fruition and who the actors are in these processes. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this is a new way of looking at these actors as previous studies have been predicated on the traditional binary divide as the status quo, with no research undertaken into the way that these groups of staff work in different academic subject groups or on different types of academic activity.

These research questions thus suggest that the methods used to capture data must be naturalistic and interpretive. In carrying out this study (as the researcher) I do not want to control or intervene in what happens; I want to capture the real-lived experiences of those involved. It is clear from the very nature of these questions that a positivist stance is not appropriate here. Instead of being anchored in one method, the means of carrying out the research must be generated by the framework used and the resultant research questions themselves. The next section details how this will unfold.

4.6 Methodological approach: principles and methods

I will now look at the implications of the individual research questions and how they can be answered in practical terms. This section sets out the issues involved in designing this research and the approach that I have decided on, showing my reflections as I develop the methodology.

4.6.1 Theoretical approach to the research design

Following Adler et al's principles, if the current context for these new/emerging groups is the collaborative community, then the above questions will need to be researched within this context. This involves considering cross-boundary working, echoing that depicted by Adler et al's physicians (Adler et al, 2008, p.362). In order to fulfil this effectively as a researcher, I will need to gain knowledge of roles and who does what with regard to the process of academic work within a particular setting. To investigate this with depth, I will need to compare what is formally expected, i.e. what is written down in job or role descriptions, policies and procedures, with what actually happens in the real-lived experiences of those carrying out the work. Hence, I will need to access a certain level of local documentation and information such as job descriptions, organisational structures and process descriptions which set the scene for what is expected of different role holders working together and also indicate which staff members I should include in the fieldwork. These sources will need to be compared with the reality of how these roles pan out in practice.

Adler et al's collaborative community suggests that boundaries between groups of staff are now more permeable than once was the case: thus, the interdependence of their roles needs to be probed alongside the interplay of the community, hierarchy/organisation and market. This is important in terms of professional practice. As discussed previously, it is also clear that the concept of community is undergoing a transformation in real terms (Adler et al, 2006; 2008): the collegial community of the professions, previously relied on to provide self-governance and a collegial power against undue external influences as well as a normalising authority, is now subject to increasing pressure in terms of

accountability and performance as well as cost-effectiveness (Adler et al, 2008, pp.361-2; p.370). This is a trend that is apparent in the UK's higher education system as has been seen in previous chapters. It is also a trend which may play out differently between staff in different subject areas as implied by Bernstein's principles (2000)¹⁶. It is this interplay which needs to be unpicked in researching these questions in terms of whether what exists is a more holistic community – potentially a new 'third space' - where the delineations of community, market and hierarchy/organisation become less clear and more interchangeable. This application to the university context is exemplified by Henkel who identifies that academic staff also hold management roles alongside the administration (Henkel, 2000, p.252). As a researcher I will need to position myself as a result so that I can access this level of detail without unduly influencing the dynamic. I will address this in more detail later in this chapter.

As professional knowledge involves theory and recontextualisation (Bernstein, 2000), there is a 'know-how' which facilitates the explicit knowledge needed to perform an occupation satisfactorily. This may be referred to as the 'craft' aspect of the job and involves tacit learning and cultural references/norms (Lave and Wenger, 1991); this facet will be investigated later on in the study. With this in mind, I will look at what formal knowledge is used but also explore the less formal aspects, such as the unspoken elements that inform how people use this knowledge and what actually happens. Therefore the way of capturing this data needs to be as naturalistic as possible. I will look at academic and professional staff working on academic activities and how this work is configured between them. This approach needs an appropriate method of data collection that enables the capture of a deep level of detail and nuance, hence qualitative methods such as observations and interviews appear a natural means of doing so.

While the main research question 1 and sub-question 1.1 are concerned with contemporary events, 1.2 and 1.3 are concerned with aspects of the subjects'

¹⁶ This may also be true to an extent between different types of higher education providers. For example, some more established providers may not feel vulnerable to external measures such as TEF rating or position in league tables. Some lower-perceived institutions (post-92s) have better league table ratings than older providers but may rate these successes more highly than their more established competitors. However, that is a topic for another thesis.

experiences and personal histories which are more subjective and personal. In terms of how individual subjects have come to be socialised into their role, informal or tacit learning is important and in this context is contingent on an individual's history/saga alongside any formal training. I need to consider how this process can be recalled or described retrospectively by individuals and explore the normative influences of the academic and administrative staff involved, how these affect how they function within a group and between groups of staff and give consideration to how the professional status of these groups is affected. Within the subsequent analysis, social and cultural relations will need to be considered and, with a mind to the Bernsteinian framework, hierarchical issues will need to be considered, i.e. low (vulnerable) vs high (insulated) subjects.

To research these questions, there are layers of complexity within the university sector that need to be unpicked. At the higher education sector (meso) level, there are profound differences between institutional structures, e.g. multi-faculty universities with clearly delineated faculty arrangements which include different academic departments relating to what may be termed singular (insulated from external social influences; controlled by academic experts) and regionalised (functioning in both the academic world and field of external practice; more responsive to external social influence than singular) subjects (Bernstein, 2000). There are also smaller, specialist institutions which may consist of academic units based around a field such as education or the arts. These are supported by administrative structures which may be configured across different layers of the organisation (when comparing different universities) such as across a faculty instead of a department or unit; I will acknowledge this in my empirical study. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are any number of administrative roles which vary between institutions in terms of title, grade and remit and this would indicate that it may be difficult to draw any sector-wide conclusions without researching a large, representative sample which would involve a huge project beyond the scope of this thesis. At this stage, the way academic work is configured across groups may be difficult to analyse between institutions or the sector due to the number of variables. In this study, looking at one institution will enable me to

draw some particular conclusions which can then form a hypothesis which could in the future be applied to research in other institutions.

At the institutional level, by choosing a particular institution with a consistent internal structure across its components, it will be possible to explore the topics discussed above in some depth between two subject areas (such as a low and a high status subject) and draw some conclusions that could go beyond the particular institution studied. A comparison could be made between types of subjects but the sample selected would need to have comparable management structures and involve staff at a similar level working together directly on teaching or research.

To illustrate this approach and drawing on Becher and Trowler's (2001) classifications as discussed in the previous chapter, the investigation within one institution could be broken down as follows in Table 4.2:

	Examples
Hard-pure subject	Physics, chemistry
Soft-pure subject	History, English
Hard-applied subject	Engineering, medicine
Soft-applied subject	Education, law

Table 4.2: Examples of subject types

In terms of practicality, four subjects may require too much commitment – from myself as researcher and from the institution – so two is more realistic.

At micro-level, of those academic and administrative staff members selected for research, the detail of individual knowledge, ways of working and experiences needs to be explored. The process of delivering either teaching or research needs to be broken down in order to unpack the detail of what is done by each party and where responsibility lies.

Due to familiarity and locality I will utilise a multi-faculty university in close proximity to my place of work and study, accessed using my personal and

professional contacts. I will discuss access issues later on in this chapter but the familiarity involved with certain individuals raises potential issues related to carrying out 'insider research'. I will look later in this chapter at the significance of my own personal perspective in relation to how I carry out the research. I will now look at the research method used, which was suggested by the factors set out above.

4.6.2 *Researching new university occupations and their knowledge base: methods for a case study investigation*

As I have argued to this point, it is clear from the literature in the field that the changes to the way staff work on teaching or research are endemic; change has taken place across the university sector. In response to this, I wish to research some very specific issues around knowledge and the potential development of new professional roles within institutions utilising the framework provided by the work of Bernstein and Adler et al. In order to do so, I need to talk to those working within academic and administrative roles to realise their understanding of the professional roles needed in universities.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the depth and nature of information required to answer the research questions – by capturing the contemporary and biographical real-life experiences of those involved in the processes of teaching and research, working in different type of subject areas – suggests that a case study would be the most effective way to undertake the research. As mentioned in the previous section, data would be best gathered using documentary research for the institution being considered – exploring job or role descriptions, organisational structures and terms of reference – and via interviews with those working on teaching and/or research. To increase the validity of the consequent analysis, it would be ideal to carry out observations of these subjects working together in order to triangulate the analysis; however, as discussed in Chapter 3, due to limited time and opportunity this may not be possible and alternative follow-up was used in the form of email or discussion.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are elements of ethnographic research implied by my approach, i.e. the holistic nature of the approach and the need to understand the culture of the departments being studied. I anticipate that there will be a wide spectrum of perspectives from those working in the departments being researched and that a method such as interviewing would enable these perspectives to be unpacked. What I want to understand from this research is the meaning of the subjects' actions, the very specific context in which they occur, identify unanticipated phenomena, understanding the process by which actions take place (although not at the expense of outcomes) and develop causal explanations for what was taking place (Maxwell, 2005, pp.22-3). I therefore select a research method which would enable me to access this level of nuance via data collection. However, I also need to be proportionate to my own context: this is the first empirical study I have undertaken and as a part-time student with a career I needed to be realistic about the time I would be able to commit to data gathering. Ethnography implies an immersion in the environment being researched and researcher participation. While this may be feasible if undertaking the research at my place of employment, I would be concerned about insider research issues clouding the objectivity of my eventual data analysis. This is based on the presumption that I would have a close professional affinity with individuals and matters being researched. In this light, I prefer to select an institution with which I have limited connection. In relation to method and my position as a new part-time researcher, I select an alternative technique.

Case studies are the preferred research method when asking questions related to 'how' and 'why' events are taking place in an environment where the researcher has little control over events and where contemporary, real-life phenomena are being researched (Yin, 2009, p.6-7). The congruence with my own research questions here is clear; although I am also looking at 'what' is taking place in order to check the legitimacy of my theoretical framework and lead into the 'how' questions, the aspect which will reveal the core of my research topic. As mentioned in the previous section, I note that there is a biographical element to research questions 1.2 and 1.3 which informs the contemporary. Despite Yin's claim this aspect is not restricted by using the case study method as such detail

can be built into the specifics of how the interviews are carried out, the interviewees can be encouraged to talk about their histories.

My questions at this stage relate to different groups of staff working together on academic activities. In order to look at all the factors involved and examine each unit as a discrete entity the logical choice is to study each unit as an integrated system for case study (Stake, 1995). This is the method I choose due to the need to look at the complexities of a real-life situation – that of different categories of staff working together on academic activities – without me exerting any control over the situation as the researcher (Yin, 2009). I will use more than one single method of data gathering within the case study framework which allows me some flexibility in how I explore and triangulate the research, e.g. by note taking and by following up on individual interviews with questions via email or meetings. The specific questions at this stage and the prevalence of ‘issues’ implied by the research questions are not problematic as these could be easily explored within a case study technique using semi-structured interviews (using the issues given as a framework for each interview) and other methods such as observation or use of artefacts (e.g. institutional documents):

Issues draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concern.... Issue questions or issue statements provide a powerful conceptual structure for organizing the study of a case.

(Stake, 1995, p.17)

The next issue is how to select the case to be researched in order to avoid the scenario where the case does not turn out to be viable for the research objectives (Yin, 2006, p.115). The context chosen needs to conceptualise the issues which I have raised around knowledge and community for university administrators and which inform the research questions. It needs to consist of academic and administrative staff working together – above a certain level - on academic activities implying it could be purposefully investigated using the theories set out by Bernstein and Adler et al in the previous two chapters (Saljo 2009, p.206). In order to facilitate the exploration of several different subject departments, I will

choose a multi-faculty institution which includes a wide range of academic departments and includes administrative roles delivered at this local level which interact with academic staff. I will focus on two different academic/subject units which each consist of different types of staff who work together on academic work; these two units each form a comparative case for researching. I will unpick how these parties work together, what their roles are both formally (in terms of the organisational structure and job description) and informally (in terms of collaborative relationships, tacit learning and knowledge) and how the roles are articulated in terms of expertise and autonomy of judgment.

I will need to make an informed choice concerning which institution and departments I study, because they would be required to have a good chance of providing examples of the types of working I have been focusing on. To expand, I will need to access two departments, as discussed earlier in this chapter, which exemplify different types of subjects e.g. a hard-pure subject and a soft-applied subject (Becher and Trowler, 2001). I also will need to assure myself that the departments involve both administrative and academic staff working together on teaching and research in partnership as contributors to the process of academic work. My focus is to address the research questions in the context of two different disciplinary groups; for this reason, there is a comparative dimension to the case study within one institution. Alternatively, this could be seen as a comparative case study.

I note that there are potential disadvantages of only studying one institution and two departments. I risk coming to conclusions which are specific only to the institution being researched; this means that it would be unlikely that conclusions could be readily extrapolated to other universities but the outcomes could allow the theoretical framework to be generalised (Yin, 2009, p.10) and provide a hypothesis to inform further research. In practical terms, as a part-time research student employed full-time, I need to be realistic about what is achievable within this study while ensuring that my study is robust enough to address the aim of my research.

I will now break down the components of how the comparative case studies will be researched in order to unpack further issues. The first component, the documentary research, will be used to inform how to structure and direct the main body of the case studies, the interviews with those working in a university.

4.6.2.1 *Documentary research*

The aim of this aspect of my research study is to inform who I would interview and/or observe later on. Within my desk-based documentary research, I will use the internet to select a multi-faculty (and therefore multi-subject) institution which includes staff working in collaborative communities within different types of subject areas, e.g. hard-pure, soft-applied. This will be done using the university's website, drilling down into different academic departments and analysing staff titles and roles. I will use this research as a means of identifying which members of staff should be approached for interviews and information. It will also be used as a tool to suggest where the most effective data gathering may take place and to inform interviews and observations accordingly. I will try to access organisational information which is publicly available via the chosen institution's webpages, e.g. role descriptions on staff webpages, governance or committee structures and staff lists. Aside from the institution's website, access to documents is also available via academic departments and central support, e.g. the university's Human Resources department. I will have to consider issues which this may raise, as requesting access to certain sources, e.g. job descriptions, might make staff feel threatened. I will manage this by requesting generic job descriptions rather than personalised ones and checking whether these may be applicable to all similar post-holders.

I have to bear in mind that what is published may be out of date or invalid, so cross-reference this information with checks to my contacts within the institution. It is important to understand how the documents being considered have been produced and how the content may be received and implemented but this would be borne out in the interviews and communication carried out later. In addition, such initial research may prove revealing as such documents provide evidence of continuity and change which show how an organisation – in this instance – has developed (McCulloch, 2004, p.5). However, the ephemeral nature of e-

documents means that it may be difficult to track changes or histories of change for a structure (McCulloch, 2004, p.37), so the cross-referencing of the content of documents with my initial contacts at the institution will be invaluable, enabling an accurate assessment of the organisation's structure, how staff roles are configured and so forth.

I also need to be aware that external-facing documents, such as those available online, may present a more favourable scenario than the reality; as a result, such evidence needs to be read critically rather than simply accepted (McCulloch, 2004, pp.33-5). Validity could be assured by using documents which represent different viewpoints to manage down bias and increase reliability of the data (McCulloch, 2004, p.37). Consequently, using different levels of documentation and tracking whether there is consistency between the documents and their function could help me to build a clearer picture of how staff work together within the institution. However, if dissonance is to be found between the different types of documentary evidence available, this may be an aspect that could be explored within the interviews later on.

4.6.2.2 Interviews

Informed by the outcomes of my research on the structure of the organisation, the academic departments and staff profiles, I will choose academic and administrative staff working together on teaching and research to be interviewed. These staff will be employed at a level where they utilise academic and other specialist/expert knowledge in the execution of their work. As the questions set out earlier in this chapter imply the need to look at the history of the individuals being spoken with (how they acquired the knowledge they use for their work, how they were socialised into their current positions, how they feel about what they do) the interviews I undertake need to include an opportunity to draw out the biographical aspects required to research the personal historical and socialisation aspects of the research questions, e.g. 'what do you do?' or 'how did you get to be doing this?'. In (other) practical terms, access to subjects may be quite limited and I expect to have to use their availability as efficiently as possible. To enable the interviewees to impart as much detail as possible in relation to the research

questions, I will carry out very loosely-structured interviews with academic and administrative staff to access personal narratives.

To explain in further detail how the interviews will be structured in relation to my research questions, I will ask interviewees to describe their roles in terms of what tasks they undertake, how knowledge is used in their execution, how their roles fit in with the production of teaching activities and what they understand is done by other actors in this production process (research questions 1 and 1.1). Whilst letting the interviewee speak freely, I need to probe them to unpack the detail relevant to my study. In order to understand the theoretical background to the knowledge they hold and how they attained their current role in terms of socialisation (research questions 1.2 and 1.3), I may need to prompt them to discuss their work history and background. As I want to explore some issues which may be quite personal for those being interviewed, I would need to be sensitive to how I build trust in the interviews I undertake and to consider how I would encourage participation. I will work with my research questions as the framework for each interview and let the interviewees' responses guide me as to how often I prompt them for more detail, remaining mindful of how much I may unwittingly direct them in my own questioning. However, I will retain a list of questions (Appendix 1) to maintain consistency between the interviews and as an aide memoire, ticking off topics as they are covered.

To a degree, I need to be accepted by the members of the community of the department in order to gain access to the field and collect data which is as naturalistic and authentic as possible. I will need to consider how I present my questions or use any particular structure within each interview situation or whether I leave subjects to talk freely around some loose topics and steer them or probe where needed. Wegener's account of the awkwardness of the researcher (Wegener, 2014, p.155) raises issues of how to mediate my own discomfort if faced with a difficult social situation during an interview. I note that my position may be mediated by my status as a manager at a university with certain interviewees and this may encourage them to trust me as a peer, although conversely they may feel that I might judge them and this may prevent a rapport being established. I need to be sensitive to these potential dynamics and their

fluidity, which may be dependent on many factors outside my control but may have also impact on the efficacy of my data collection during interviews.

As the researcher, I need to be reconstructing the narrative within my account and analysis of what happens and I need to be conscious of how I do this to avoid compromising the data. To minimise any compromise, I will use recordings and detailed notes which would support robust later analysis. I need to ensure that the interviewees feel sufficiently comfortable to respond so I need to be clear about the implications for the data, how it would be used, and the degree of anonymity I could provide.

The basis for an interview is a conversation between the interviewer and interviewee and the context in which it is carried out:

The interview takes place in an interpersonal context, and the meanings of interview statements relate to their context. Interviews are sensitive to the qualitative differences and nuances of meaning, which may not be quantifiable and commensurable across different contexts and modalities. (Kvale, 2009, p.55)

As the person carrying out the interviews, the meaning generated for the study will be the product of myself and the interviewees. I am exploring how people work and how they see themselves in light of the concepts of Bernstein and Adler et al. Knowledge would be generated by the interaction between the interviewer and subject. There will be no attempt to identify a positivist outcome as the objective is to obtain the subject's personal views of how they work. This will be aided by a shared vocabulary, which needs to be checked before and throughout the interview process to ensure that both I as interviewer and the subject are sharing a common language. I will seek to avoid any bias via a shared ethical understanding of the subject being interviewed as an individual and my own personal bias, which may affect interpretation. I anticipate that a recognition of these biases and sensitivity to them would help minimise their effect on the knowledge generated (Kvale, 2009, p.242). This could be done by reviewing my own notes and reflecting on how I felt during the interviews, whether I had

inadvertently imposed my own views on the interviewees due my own preferences and so forth.

To enhance validity, I will use practical checks such as reflecting back what had been said previously and re-presenting answers (Sandberg, 2005). It will be also crucial to ensure that there is a shared understanding about the concepts being investigated, e.g. what was meant by 'the process of socialisation' or 'theoretical knowledge' (ibid. p.50), so I will have to ensure that I translate such terms into more accessible questions. I will also seek to interview several sets of academic and professional staff who work together on teaching and research to ensure some degree of consistency but I would likewise need to ensure that they were not simply providing corporate answers. In order to validate my findings, I plan to access observations, e.g. of meetings involving relevant staff where they are discussing teaching or research, to see what actually happens, with the view that I would need to configure my presence to minimise any effect on how natural the meetings are. However, due to timings and my own availability as the researcher, I note that the observations may be limited to email exchanges and conversations in follow-up to the interviews¹⁷.

I am also aware that there may well be a tension between the public-facing and private aspects of how knowledge is used between the groups and how this might be reconciled to what happens between academic and professional staff working on teaching or research. I have to consider whether posing actual questions to subjects or structuring interviews too overtly could influence how they responded or steer them to particular answers. In this sense, it may be better if the interviews can be paralleled by observation of the 'community in action' as the role holders work together which could be done through my attendance at team meetings or discussions between staff. My belief is that this observation would also allow me a better understanding of the tacit/'craft' element of the knowledge being used by the different staff. This would be a means of validating my eventual research findings; other means of achieving validity would be to compare interview data with data from observations to try and identify inconsistencies and areas for

¹⁷ This reflects the eventual reality of undertaking the interviews as a part-time researcher while navigating a separate full-time job.

follow-up via further, more structured, interviews where possible (Sandberg, 2005).

I will need to consider what I capture/record, in terms of discussion but also the non-verbal. I do assume that the only source of data is verbal and need to consider what goes on beyond this level. This may mean examining body language, gaze, rapport, positioning, which all contribute to the depth of meaning when observing the subjects working together, as well as considering the shared culture and values of these subjects and power relations between them [this is particularly pertinent to questions 1.2 and 1.3]. For example, with regard to 1.1 in particular, how different role holders behave in a meeting may have multi-layered implications in terms of what is said, who speaks, who is listened to and what actions each party is tasked with. As the researcher, I need to consider how best to position myself in relation to the subjects in order to be able to maximise my observations but also minimise my presence. I could consider filming the proceedings but again the camera would need to be positioned to record data adequately and I am conscious that the camera's presence may distract the subjects so I decide to use audio recording only. I will also take detailed field notes of the interviews as well as observations of meetings, basically 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) or detailed notes of interactions to ensure vigorous analysis is able to be carried out later on. Recording the interviews will also enable me to play back scenarios during follow-up interviews (within the agreed use of the recordings by those featured).

A further issue which is critical to consider is the number of interviews that should be undertaken in the course of collecting data in relation to the object of inquiry in a research project or a PhD. Clearly, there is a need to reach saturation point in terms of any further data collection no longer adding any value (or only adding diminishing value) to addressing the research questions. This fine line may be hard to identify and can therefore be considered arbitrary (Mason, 2010). However, discussions about the number of interviews or the 'key informant' (Gilchrist, 1992) status of the interviewees which might be sufficient to support a qualitative study tends to refer to the aim of the study as the driver and determiner of sample size (Mason, 2010, citing Charmaz, 2006). I note the lack of consensus

and that the suggested number of interviews from the authors cited by Mason range from as low as five or six to sixty (somewhat depending on the research methodology used), although Mason points out that there is little empirical evidence to support this guidance and the sample sizes of doctoral studies involving qualitative methods varies enormously (Mason, 2010). Furthermore, Guest et al (2006) found that data saturation can occur from a very early point in the number of interviews undertaken, which suggests a prescribed number of interviews is not necessary. The more similar the experiences in the samples, the earlier saturation may be reached (ibid. p. 76).

Based on the above considerations, I determine that the critical issue will be to ensure that I identify key informants who might provide high quality data and ensure that the interviews are of as good a quality as can be obtained, rather than to massify the interview process and run the risk of acquiring a greater volume of data with variable quality or repetition of viewpoint. This can be mitigated by transcribing interviews early on and undertaking initial analysis to evaluate the efficacy of early data collection. In terms of numbers of interviews, I will need to acquire enough data to inform my conclusions and fulfil the aims of my study, but the depth and quality of data will be more important than quantity. Furthermore, I recognise that the reality of being a part-time doctoral researcher, who is also in full-time employment in a demanding role, will likely have a bearing on how many interviews are possible (and the demands on busy interviewees may also be a factor). For these reasons, I feel that the number and key informant status of my interviewees will constitute a sufficient basis to justify my findings. I nevertheless acknowledge that I will set the ceiling for my saturation point more with key informant status than volume of interviews in mind and that this could be considered as a potential limitation of the research.

In the next section of this chapter I will look at issues of access around the study.

4.6.2.3 Access

Access to the relevant units will be arranged via personal contacts with professional and academic staff at a pre-92 institution in the South East of England. The area is chosen for ease of access due to my own work and to allow

for follow-up and flexibility in interviewing participants and attending meetings. The variety of higher educational institutions in the area (both pre- and post-92, specialist and multi-faculty) mean that a more anonymised approach is possible as anonymity may be more assured and therefore participants may feel more confident in opening up to a researcher.

The gatekeepers to the departments which are to be approached are part of my professional network. One is an ex-colleague who works as the administrative lead within an academic department in a faculty with which I have no other established connection and comprises a subject area that I term a new region, consisting of bringing together academic staff with different backgrounds in various social sciences. My contact will raise the prospect of my research with their head of department (using an email explanation of my research which I will provide) and will seek approval to grant me access to staff in the department and discuss departmental business with me. In the case of the other department, I know some staff from a previous role but do not know the administrative lead or the current head of department. I will contact one of the academic staff that I know via email, reintroduce myself and explain my research premise, asking if he could facilitate access so that I could set up interviews. In the case of both departments, I will draft an explanation of my research for circulation via email to staff to invite interest.

I will approach these gatekeepers via email as soon as I am relatively clear on the methodology to be used and the type of academic departments to be investigated. I note that I need to bear in mind any issues within the units I would like to investigate which might exclude them from the research, e.g. issues with personnel or lack of consent from potential participants.

4.6.2.4 *Insider researcher and related issues*

I am aware that I would need to manage my own relationship with the context as a manager working in the sector – as someone caught up in the politics and organisational issues raised in the literature – and that I would need to manage how I would negotiate these matters in order to produce a robust piece of research. As, to an extent, an insider researcher (i.e. as a manager working in a

university local to where I would be carrying out the research), I realise that I might be affected by personally and externally held beliefs about the field of study so I would therefore need to consider this when I recording data and subsequently analysing it.

As the researcher is the instrument of the research (Eisner, 1991), I note that my interpretation may be tempered the outcomes of the study and that I could run the risk of becoming too entrenched in the context. The basis of the suggested approach, with its overtones of ethnography, is to understand subject's point of view and experiences; I need to consider how it this would be mediated by the researcher from 'within'.

While I will not be carrying out my research at my own place of employment, I will be gathering data at a local institution where ex-colleagues and friends, as well as other members of my own professional network, are employed. In this sense, as we share (geographically at least) a setting and there was the potential of a personal connection to the staff I am researching (Floyd and Arthur. 2012, p.173, citing others), I class this as quasi-insider research, despite the context being a separate organisation from where I work. Regardless, as a researcher working in another institution and possibly sharing a professional background with subjects, I am aware that I may empathise with or oppose their views. I therefore need to be aware of the potential to unduly influence subjects' responses by – however inadvertently – colluding with those I interview by not managing my own interaction with them during interviews or imposing my own opinions or responses. Of course, I need to consider my relationship with subjects who have a similar background to myself as I carry out the study. Drawing on Blumer's "sensitising concept" (Blumer 1954), I aim to navigate the cultural, institutional and personal aspects of the context and manage the impact of these when analysing my data. For example, my relationship with the context and subjects may change as I access the organisation and get to know people. This relationship needs to be constantly renegotiated in order to manage any issues which arise and might potentially affect how I capture (e.g. in field notes) and interpret the data.

Of course, it may be the case that my position as a university manager researching a context with which I have some affinity is not an issue. Shared experience is not always the case even within the same organisation; indeed, different departments within a single university might have very different cultures (Floyd & Arthur 2012, p.173). However, I need to retain an awareness of myself as someone with a vested interest in what is being researched.

In terms of my immersion or acceptance in the community, I come from a professional background where I could tailor my presence to fit the situation and possibly enhance the quality of the data I collect. For example, if interviewing/observing academic staff, I will consider that I might want to emphasise the more academic aspects of my own history if they seem reluctant to respond. Conversely, if working with administrative staff, I may want to position myself distinctly as a non-academic staff member. It is being able to build such synergies that can facilitate the gathering of extensive data to address the research questions (Floyd and Arthur. 2012, pp.174-5). However, I do not want to inadvertently manipulate any situation where I am gathering data, although at the same time I need to acknowledge that I will be the agent through which the meaning of the research is to be conveyed.

These considerations lead to a wider reflection of the ethical issues implicit in the study, which will be dealt with in the next section.

4.6.2.5 *Ethical issues*

While considering my relationship as the researcher to the subjects being interviewed as part of the case study, I also need to consider the practical ethical aspects of the study. In assuring that ethical issues are identified and responded to, I will adhere to the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/ethics>).

To safeguard the interests of participants, as mentioned in the previous section, I need to consider my own position as a researcher with a professional role in a local university. I will disclose this position to participants in order to secure their informed consent so that they are fully aware of my background, my professional

links with their institution, potential conflicts of interest and so forth. For example, I have to consider whether any aspect of my research outcomes might affect their own situation in terms of compromising their employment position and ensure that they are still content to proceed. Both the participants and I need to be realistic: even in a multi-faculty institution, local colleagues may be able to identify participants within the study at a later point and I need to try and avoid this, while also acknowledging this to participants. I will disclose to participants how the interview data would be collected and managed in terms of security and data protection legislation; data collected will be maintained on a secure location on the servers provided by my own university. I will also disclose how I will ensure anonymity as well as confidentiality as far as possible and the participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point up to the execution of the interviews or observations.

Once the interviews (and follow-ups) are been carried out, the data will be used for the study. I will agree with the participants how recordings and transcripts can be used and who these sources can be shown to for follow-up, i.e. only myself and my supervisors. I will ensure that names are removed within my thesis and, where possible, specific job titles will be made less apparent and names of departments will be made as generic as possible to avoid identification. My intention in using a large, multi-faculty institution is to help provide some protection from identification for individual staff and departments (unless they expressly wish to be identified). I hope that such measures would enhance participants' trust in me as the researcher and thus help ensure the richness of the data collected.

However, I also have to consider the need to produce data and have a degree of control over its use moving forwards (albeit within an ethical framework). To this end, I will offer to allow interviewees to check the transcripts of their own interviews for accuracy but also be clear that I will not allow them to be involved in the interpretation of the interviews. This will be explicitly stated in the consent form that I will develop for use in this study. Any further involvement may impact on the robustness of the analysis. These consent forms will be provided to all

interviewees and explained prior to each interview. I will offer participants copies of the final study if they wished.

4.7 *Summary of chapter*

In this chapter, I have articulated how the concepts developed by Bernstein and Adler et al in Chapter 3 provide a theoretical framework with which to develop a piece of empirical research that addresses the basis of this thesis: the nature of the knowledge held by university administrators, the context in which it is utilised and whether this group is a profession.

I have produced a methodology and set of research questions which will address this overall aim of the study. In the next chapter, I will describe the design of the investigation in more detail, including the analysis of the interviews and coding, then move on to the outcome of the research and my findings.

Chapter 5: University Departments: Identifying Academic and Professional Knowledge

5.1 Introduction to chapter

In Chapter 2 of this study, I argued that academic work had become a process involving both academic and administrative staff working together collaboratively. This shift was based on the more overt intervention of the state in higher education and the increased accountability of teaching and research activities to external agencies and frameworks.

In Chapter 3, I set out the theoretical frameworks provided by the works of Bernstein and Adler et al: Bernstein's concepts of knowledge structures enable me to research how a particular group with a body of knowledge may establish itself and develop an identity; Adler et al's collaborative community provides a means of moving away from the prevalence of academic identity as the means of investigating administrative roles and also repositions them away from the negative connotations of 'new managerialism' prevalent in much of the research literature to date. The aim of this chapter is to set out how I undertook the research for the study in light of the theoretical framework established using the work of Bernstein and Adler et al in Chapter 3 and the methodology set out in Chapter 4. I also document the outcomes of this research and how these build towards addressing the aim of my research as set out in this thesis: to explore the newer administrative posts/roles in universities in light of their position as emerging areas of new expertise and potential professions, working alongside existing, and often well-established, academic groups.

In this chapter I will start by contextualising the university and the two departments in which I carried out the research and set the scene for the way in which the academic and administrative staff are configured within that institution. I will then discuss access issues in carrying out the research and go on to discuss the design of the investigation. I will then identify emerging themes and issues and go on to contextualise those themes and issues in relation to knowledge and collaborative communities. I will move on to select the key themes and issues in

relation to each department in relation to the theoretical framework predicated on the notions of knowledge and collaborative community as discussed in the previous chapters. I will then summarise the findings of the research and set the scene for the way forward in terms of developing university administration and my contribution to this in the final chapter of this study.

5.2 Contextualising the university, departments and roles

As stated in Chapter 4, I had chosen to access two academic departments which consisted of different types of subjects e.g. a hard-pure subject and a soft-applied subject (Becher and Trowler, 2001). This was in order to be able to address my research questions in light of the theoretical framework provided by Bernstein and Adler et al. I also had to be confident that the departments involved both administrative and academic staff working together on teaching and research in partnership as contributors to the process of academic work.

The university used for the research was a large, pre-1992 multi-faculty university in the London area. It was long-established and had faculties that covered a wide range of subjects. There was a faculty structure for each overarching disciplinary area which was headed by an academic Dean and a senior (non-academic) administrator along with a faculty-level administration team. Within each faculty, there were several academic departments which were each headed by an academic head who was supported by a departmental administrative lead, basically a departmental manager who managed the administrative staff (and sometimes technical staff) within the department. This structure is exemplified as follows in Figure 5.1 and the management structure in Figure 5.2. The departmental administrative lead was line managed by the aforementioned senior administrator for the faculty, although s/he worked day-to-day with the academic head of department as well as other staff (both academic and administrative) in the department.

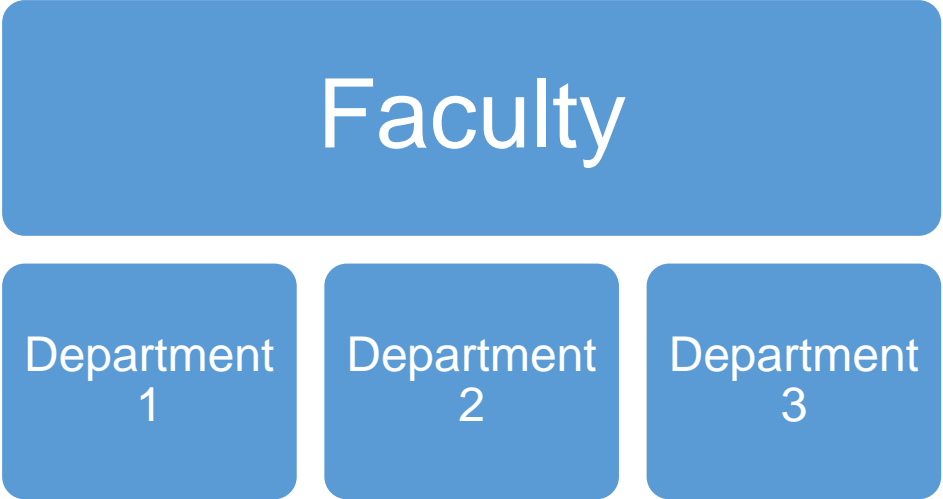


Figure 5.1: Example of faculty structure

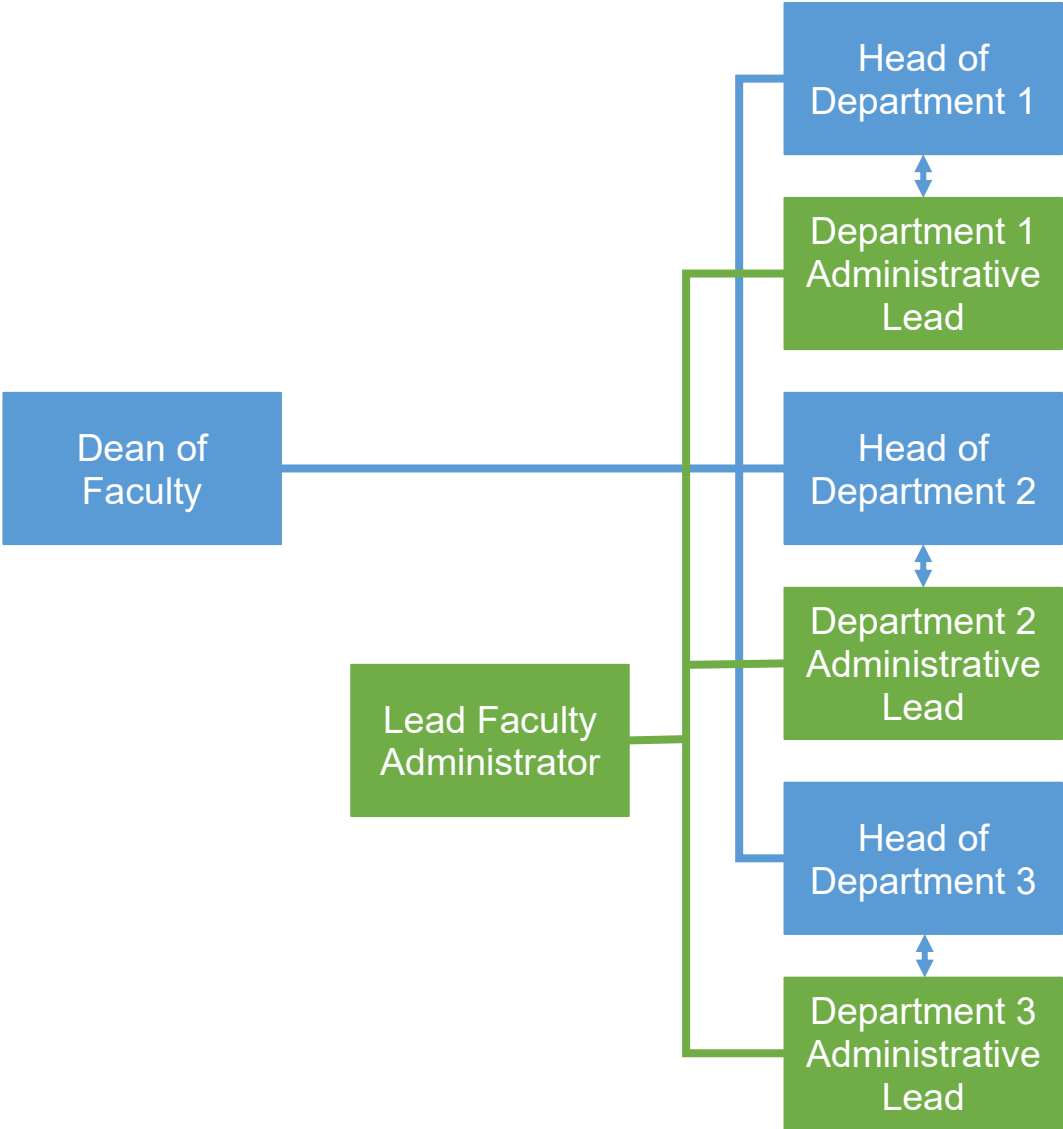


Figure 5.2: Example of faculty management structure:

The academic work in the departments was supported by departmental administrators at various levels and with specific remits. Despite the faculty structures ostensibly appearing similar, upon further examination it was very clear that there were differences in how roles were configured and resourced between different departments, although the reasons for this are unclear¹⁸. Incidentally, central departments within the university provided support for the usual 'registry' functions within the wider university, such as admissions, registration, examination arrangements, records and data management, co-ordination of quality assurance, finance and HR.

As proposed in Chapter 4, I selected two different types of academic departments within the institution in which to carry out the research. One department was a relatively young social science department, recently-formed, which – as discussed in Chapter 4 - I classify as a soft-applied subject in that the subject is functional and – to a large extent - qualitative (Becher and Trowler, p.36, 2001).

5.2.1 Description of social science department

In this particular case, the department consisted ostensibly of two sub-groups of different disciplines, with academic staff aligning themselves as one or the other¹⁹ while working together across the two areas. In terms of Bernstein's knowledge concepts, I categorise this as the development of a new region (Bernstein, 2000)²⁰.

I noted that both of the disciplines as they were configured within the department were mainly externally-focused with research in the department predicated on policy-making or case study work. However, within the department there was research on theory as well as empirical research into policy and quantitative research and approaches towards the political, economic, legal and philosophical

¹⁸ For example, the science department has a general co-ordinator role which oversees the operational side of the department including HR, purchasing and ordering, estates, but also deals with marketing and programme approval and amendments so has a part-quality assurance focused role; the social science department has an administrator who deals with the general administration, and a specific manager post for education.

¹⁹ This was explained by the departmental manager during the data collection process and was confirmed by the description of the department on the university website.

²⁰ This region was not one commonly found at other institutions at the present time, although variations were identifiable in other universities.

aspects of the social science. Looking at the different approaches and backgrounds of the academic staff, I infer that the boundaries between the department's overall disciplinary focus and other departments are blurred and are hence weak in terms of framing and classification (Bernstein, 2000).

This 'young' department, established within the last decade, amalgamated the two subject areas into what I would term a new combined region in the Bernsteinian context set out in Chapter 3. To explain, two subjects had been situated together in one departmental unit, forming one larger department which was predicated on the interdisciplinarity between the two and how they informed each other particularly in relation to the external world²¹. In this context, the department consisted of different disciplinary groups such as economists or historians²² who would have experienced different socialisations into their subject areas and hence have different backgrounds. This arrangement was described by the departmental manager during data collection and during my interview with one of the academic staff²³. The physical estate allocated to the department (and recently moved into within the last three years at the time of the interviews) appeared to support the socialisation and development of the department as a community, with all staff and research students based on one floor and a large common kitchen/social area which appeared to be well-used²⁴.

At the time the research was carried out, the department ran four major undergraduate degrees with several hundred students in each year group as well as three masters' programmes. Two of the undergraduate degrees were co-taught with other departments in the university. Research was an obvious focus in the department, although a relatively small part compared with the teaching side²⁵. There were 30 academic staff, approximately 26 research students and seven administrative staff covering general departmental administration,

²¹ This is based on the website description of the department in autumn 2016 and discussion with staff.

²² This is based on the research profiles and background information provided on the departmental webpages, autumn 2016.

²³ Interview with R, academic, social science department

²⁴ My observation during visits to the department; also referenced in interview with K, education manager.

²⁵ Interview with C, departmental manager, social science department; also interview with R, academic, social science department.

teaching/education support and communications. Research support was provided by a faculty administrator rather than at departmental level due to resourcing availability rather than as a result of a deliberate management decision. In this department, there was a manager role which had a specific management remit for learning and teaching operations. This post reported to the departmental administrative lead who had oversight for the strategic and operational management of the department²⁶. This specialist post had line management responsibility for the administrators who worked directly on the department's degree programmes. The administrators worked in a team structure and had clear reporting lines to the departmental manager, albeit on a day-to-day basis they worked directly with the academic staff involved in research and programme delivery and with students. Figure 5.3 illustrates the matrix relationship of the departmental administration team with academic staff and students:

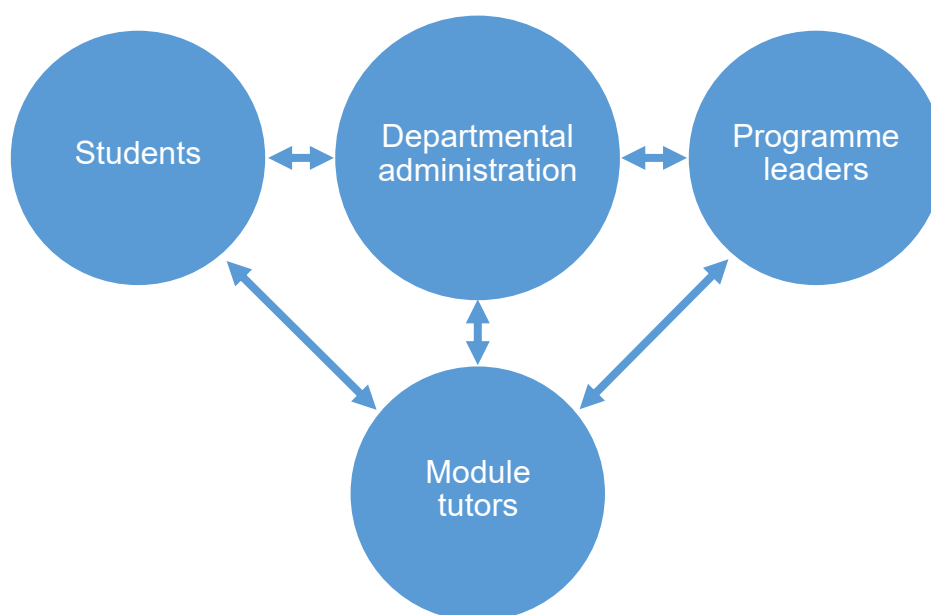


Figure 5.3: Relationships between staff and students in social science department

Comparing this structure with that of other departments in the same faculty, it was clear that while there were similarities, there were also differences which may have been due to the needs of each department.

²⁶ Interview with C, departmental manager, social science department; also interview with R, academic, social science department. Also evident from job description.

5.2.2 Description of science department

The other department selected was a long-established singular discipline (Bernstein, 2000) which I describe as a hard-pure science subject (Becher and Trowler, 2001) with many notable alumni and staff, including Nobel Prize winners. This department was situated in a separate faculty within the institution to the social science department. As a hard-pure subject, with a clear curricula basis, the boundaries between this subject and other departments were relatively clear compared with the social science department.

The science department was one with great historical significance in terms of key scientific developments and notable alumni²⁷. At the time of the research, it ran a selection of integrated masters (MSci) and bachelor (BSc) degrees in the singular subject (or combined with other singulars such as philosophy or mathematics) with about 300 students as well as one MSc programme. The department had grown considerably over the last decade, with the number of academic staff doubling to 32 and the research student numbers trebling to about 90²⁸. As with the social science department, academic staff were focused on research but due to the volume in this area there was dedicated support at departmental level for researchers and research students. The administrative support had grown with the department from a team of two to five. As with the social science department, comparing this structure to that of other departments in the same faculty, it was clear that while there were similarities, there were also differences which were again presumably due to the needs of each department.

In the science department, the roles within the administrative team were generalist. The departmental lead administrator worked closely with the academic head of department and oversaw the range of administrative functions to support learning and research including developing strategies, overseeing finance, HR and regulatory compliance as well as the operation of the department and its interactions with central parts of the university. The administrative team below this lead post were configured with a co-ordinator who worked across all

²⁷ Examples are withheld to ensure the anonymity of the department.

²⁸ Interview with Q, departmental manager, science department.

activities and administrators who either focused on learning and teaching or research and research students²⁹. As with the social science department, there was a clear organisational structure for the administration team and they worked closely and on a day-to-day basis with academic staff and students. This implied a clear sense of a community of academic and administrative staff who worked within ostensibly separate structures within the department but who also worked closely on research and teaching, thus forming a matrix represented in Figure 5.4 which is similar to Figure 5.3:

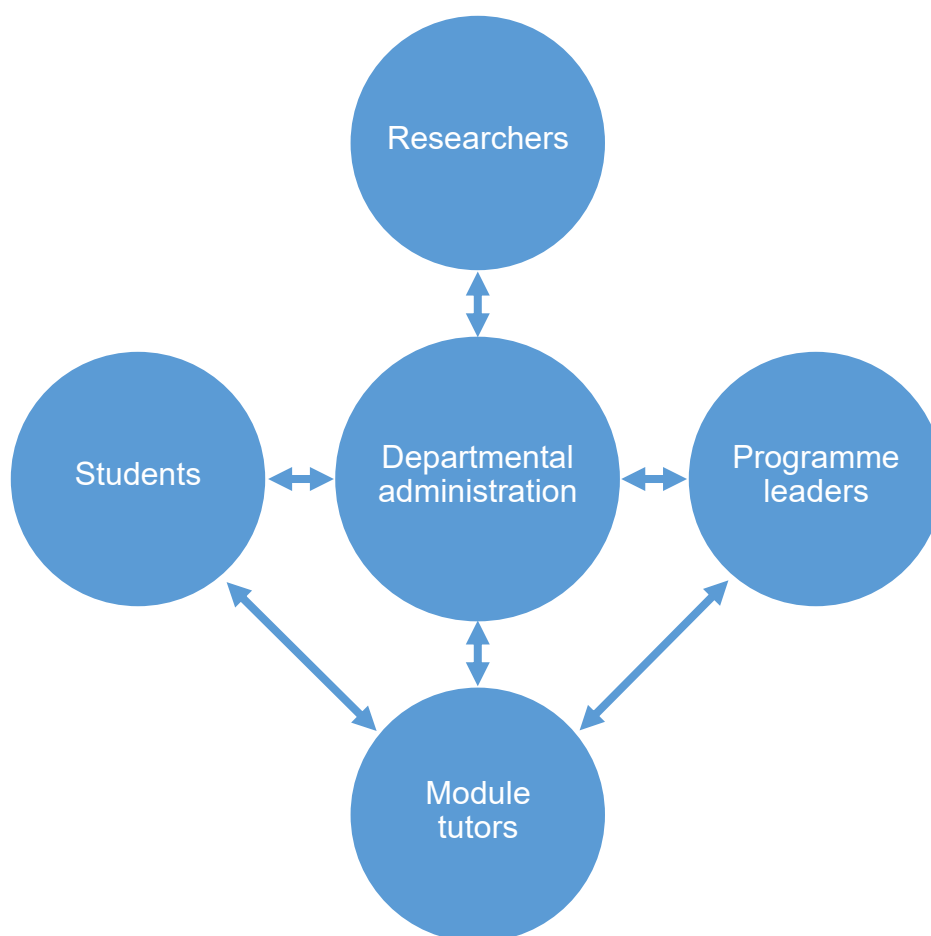


Figure 5.4: - Relationships between different staff and students in science department

5.2.3 Roles within both departments

To understand the scope of the administrative posts within each of the departments in question, I was able to obtain from the social science department

²⁹ Interview with Q, departmental manager, science department.

a number of generic and specific job descriptions. This enabled me to consider the different administrative roles within the department as well as the senior administrative posts which led the administration for both departments. What was clear from the job descriptions was that, while education to degree level or equivalent experience was required in the person specifications, there was a level of expectation for the management-level roles that was inconsistent with the level of knowledge that was implied by the responsibilities for the posts. For example, the Education Manager post in the social science department required the holder to be the department's "lead and specialist on regulatory guidance". This was assured within the person specification in the "Experience" section rather than "Education/Qualifications and Training" section, which required "Experience of working to regulations relating to quality assurance". This implied that it was the experience of using such regulations that was important, but at the same time it denied the necessity to have this knowledge. Similarly, the post was also required "To assist the Deputy Head of Department (Education) and Departmental staff in the development of programmes and modules". There was no clear indication from the person specification how this would be evaluated apart from the requirements to have an "Understanding of and empathy with the teaching needs of a Higher Education Institution" and "Experience of working with similar responsibilities in the Higher Education sector". There was little indication as to how the former criterion would be measurable.

This supported the assumption in my previous chapters that there is a body of knowledge that relates to university administration but that it is problematic in terms of how it is identified and articulated. This knowledge sits between the horizontal, formalised knowledge that makes up the social science subject and the vertical knowledge that the science subject consists of. As a result, I describe this knowledge as a new category which is codified but does not align with Bernstein's horizontal and vertical knowledge structures. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, I situate this knowledge on the organisational axis, providing knowledge which differs from subject-specialist knowledge but which is necessary in the current sector context for a university to function.

The ways of working that were evident in the departments and the substance of the job descriptions pointed towards an interesting opportunity to explore the issues identified in my previous chapters.

5.3 Access issues in carrying out the research

I discussed access issues in Chapter 4 but will now expand on these in more detail. To facilitate my research, the university that I chose was one with which I had historic links and where I had formed professional connections throughout my career. I therefore had contacts in several departments which would suit the purpose of my study.

It is important to say at this point that access was less of an issue that it might have been had I been researching another sector. To explain, there is a community of university administrators who know each other through networks developed through working at different institutions, mutual contacts and events. This provides a level of trust and recognition between individuals and – by extension – their institutions, which may not be as readily available to an outsider.

I anticipated that using a large, multi-faculty university would allow for a suitable degree of anonymity for both the departments involved and individuals. Anonymity was important for the study (as discussed in Chapter 4) because I wanted to ensure that interviewees felt sufficiently comfortable in order to promote open, honest responses. As staff often move between institutions within the Greater London/South East area, I understood that anonymity may well be a factor in deciding whether they would participate in the study or not and the degree of candour they might offer during interviews or other interactions such as follow-up emails. With this in mind I tried to protect identification as far as possible, as I suggested in Chapter 4, so I ensured that initials were used and that job titles were made less specific than they actually were in order to reassure interviewees. I explained this when I presented the interviewees with consent forms during the initial meeting where I also explained the study and their part in it as well as how their data would be treated. I noted that most of the administrative staff who participated were female, so to further reduce the

possibility of identification I changed the gender of all administrative staff to female when referring to them in this study.

In terms of familiarity, the social science department included an ex-colleague working as the departmental manager, whom I had met over a decade ago and who had become a friend. I had worked in the science department well over a decade previously and it still included a few people that I had links with but although I did not have a current personal relationship with any staff members, several of them recalled me from my previous post in the institution.

With regard to the former department, I had to ensure that my ex-colleague was prepared to participate and to negotiate access with her head of department; alongside this, I had to bear in mind any issues that might arise from a type of 'insider researcher' position. To explain, I was aware that my data collection and analysis may be affected by what I knew about the department and my relationship with my ex-colleague and therefore whether I could manage to maintain sufficient objectivity to produce a robust piece of research. As discussed in Chapter 4, where I termed it 'quasi-insider research', my connection with a key member of the department could colour both my influence on the conduct of interviews with departmental staff (including my ex-colleague) and the subsequent analysis of data. To navigate through these issues, I recorded my interactions and impressions in field notes in order to provide a source on which to reflect after the event. These notes included detail about who I saw and where, how I felt, who I avoided, which point in the day I undertook the interview and even the weather. I noted the impact these factors had on me as a researcher which enabled me to consider more effectively whether I had unduly influenced the conversation and thus I could try and moderate any bias of my own which might affect the analysis. In order to prevent any inadvertent influencing of interviewees' responses through identifying my connection with the departmental manager, I did not expand on this when arranging interviews but simply followed up on the emails she had sent the department to introduce me as a doctoral researcher. Conversely, I reflect now that my familiarity with the departmental manager probably helped ease my way to arrange interviews in terms of assuring her colleagues of a level of trust in me. In addition, my ongoing contact with her

allowed me to revisit some topics in more detail as I analysed the transcripts. In order to maintain some separation, I created some boundaries: I kept discussions with her about the department, and in particular my research, on a professional level regardless of whether these discussions were via email or confined to visits to the department. This helped me maintain a more detached approach to the study.

As mentioned, I had worked in the science department over a decade previously. As a result of this connection, the then-head of department recalled me and was happy to grant access readily. He was very supportive and facilitated an email exchange with the administrative lead for the department in order to set up the interviews. The role holder changed while the interviews were being arranged but the successor was happy to continue with the agreed access. I again presume that this was due to my connection, which granted me a degree of trust. Reviewing the staff pages online, I was confident that there were very few staff remaining who I had worked with or had any personal connection with and thus I was able to avoid any significant 'insider research' issues. I felt this would enable me to approach the department in a position of trust as an ex-staff member, but with little connection to individuals.

I initially arranged the interviews for the social science department through the departmental manager who acted as conduit. Once she had agreed to me accessing her department, she mentioned me at a departmental meeting and encouraged staff to engage. She asked me to provide a brief summary of my research and details of what I wanted from the department. I also provided an example of the types of question that would be used and assurance about ethical approval and consent. She then circulated this to all staff via email, encouraging them to make themselves available. I followed up via email and arranged interviews over the coming months with staff as they responded to either that email or to subsequent further contact. Most of the interviews were undertaken in staff offices in the department with one exception due to the staff member having recently left post to work at another university, resulting in that interview being undertaken off-site at a café. My first visit to the social science department,

which I had not been to previously, was to meet the departmental manager and have a tour of the department before interviewing her.

For the science department, I originally set up access through emailing the then-head of department who as mentioned remembered me from a previous post at the institution. Again, I provided a brief summary of my research, the nature of the questions that would be asked in the interviews and ethical approval form. He was happy to approve me undertaking research in the department and asked me to contact the departmental manager to arrange to visit the department and interview staff. As with the social science department, my first visit was to meet the departmental manager, be given a tour of the department and then to undertake several interviews over the course of the afternoon.

At the start of each interview, the interviewee was asked to read a summary of the research project and a consent form, being given sufficient time to read both and sign the form. The form covered consent to the interview, offered access to a transcript on request for checking (but no editorial control over the interview or analysis), data protection, the opportunity to ask any further questions before progressing and consent to any follow-up afterwards. As it happened, all interviewees bar one signed the form with no hesitation. The one exception insisted that she trusted me and did not see the need to sign the form. While this was not ideal, I judged that she had sufficient information to consent and made the decision to proceed with the interview. The transcript bears out that her consent was forthcoming, despite no formal documentation. I infer that this readiness to consent to participate in the research indicated that there were no concerns from the interviewees, with me or my position, in terms of any possible 'insider research' issues or potential conflict of interest. I also reflect that this willingness is born of a degree of trust between university administrators. I note that my links with each department (although historical in the case of the science department) and the initial contacts' inclination to grant me access suggest the power of the university network and the possible credibility that working within the sector brings; this is possibly a recognition of a common goal.

After the first interview undertaken, I mentioned to each of the individuals that the discussions might tend to the personal. This was born out of my experience of the first interview and I then started to inform participants about this in order to pre-empt any surprise or awkwardness which might shorten the interview or prevent an open answer. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I assured informed consent by setting out whom I was and what my role was and where I worked. I also assured confidentiality in terms of describing how I would anonymise the institution and departments as far as I could.

Although I started arranging access to the departments during the summer period in 2015, the phasing of interviews took place over approximately six months from January 2016. This delay was due my appointment to a new job at another institution in autumn 2015, starting in post at the end of the year. When I arranged the interviews in early 2016, after initial visits to the departments, tours, introductions, initial interviews and so forth, I scheduled the rest of the meetings during the middle or end of days in order to fit around my new post and consequent travel. I found that when interviews were undertaken in the middle of a working day, these were far from ideal conditions under which to reflect; I found it better to carry out interviews at the end of the day if possible to arrange, which also enabled me to write up field notes and any reflections on my visit immediately afterwards.

I completed the interviews in June 2016. The social science department was reconfigured shortly after this point and some staff were undergoing redeployment which made follow up very difficult to pursue. It was also difficult to interview further academic staff during this time of change and uncertainty and I only managed to obtain one interview with an academic staff member in this department which I anticipated would restrict my analysis in due course.

On completion of the fieldwork and data analysis, I was concerned that I had not undertaken sufficient interviews or other data gathering to support my eventual conclusions. However, I obtained sufficient data to support a robust thematic analysis and conclusions which provide a basis for further research (see 5.4 below and Chapter 6).

5.4 *Design of the investigation*

In this section I will look at how I designed the investigation and how it developed as the research progressed. I will start by revisiting the themes and issues being addressed, as developed in the previous chapters, and how they were reflected into the questions used in the interviews. I will then discuss the number of interviews undertaken, the timing and how the data collection and interviews developed over the period of the research. I will describe the data I assembled at the end of the period and how I used field notes to complement my interview data.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the themes of this research were the knowledge used by the administrative and academic staff in departments working on teaching programmes and research, how they worked together to deliver these in the context of the principles concerning knowledge structures (and, by extension, professional identity) developed by Bernstein and the concept of the collaborative community developed by Adler et al. My particular focus is on the new administrative roles which have developed over recent decades and how these may be described as emerging professions.

In Chapter 4, I developed an overarching research question and several sub-questions which were intended to enable these themes to be investigated. The rationale behind these questions was to understand the community context in which the interviewees worked, who they worked with and what knowledge they contributed to the processes of producing degree programmes and/or research, in-keeping with the principles developed by Bernstein and Adler et al.

Following on from Chapter 4, I developed the overarching research question and sub-questions into an initial set of questions which were more conversational and personal with the aim that they would reveal relevant details in a more naturalistic manner while retaining the focus on the themes of knowledge and collaborative community. I used as an exemplar questions from another researcher to inform how I might develop my own. To expand on this, my research questions as set out in Chapter 4 were:

1. What does the knowledge utilised by university administrators consist of?
 - 1.1 How is the knowledge utilised by these administrators configured with the subject (and potentially other) knowledge utilised by academic staff?
 - 1.2 What is the theoretical knowledge utilised by these administrative roles and how is it acquired?
 - 1.3 How does the process of professional socialisation into these administrative roles take place?

In order to make these questions more accessible for the interviewees, I considered what might encourage them to discuss what they did in their occupations and how they had learnt what they needed to know. After consideration of the exemplar and the theoretical framework utilising Bernstein and Adler as set out in Chapter 3, I developed a more conversational set of potential questions predicated on the aspects of knowledge and collaborative community.

Taking the first sub-question 1.1, in order to evince more detail during the interviews this was developed into the following indicative questions:

- Can you tell me about your job and what you do?
- Can you tell me how you became interested in your current job/position?
- Has your interest in your specialism/role/job changed in any way over the years you have been working?
- How do you work with (other) academics? With (other) administrators?

With the second sub-question, 1.2, I needed to gain an understanding of the interviewees' backgrounds and biographical work history to inform how they had acquired the knowledge they utilised in their roles for teaching and/or research activities, hence the indicative questions were:

- How did you start in your specialism/role?
- What made you interested in what you do?
- How do you know what to do? How did you learn this?

- What qualifications/training or development have you undertaken?

It was clear that these questions related to the interviewee's career histories or trajectories and that this detail would be pertinent to the research. The intent behind these questions was to reveal how the interviewees had obtained the knowledge needed for their roles, and their commitment to them. From my own experience, I was aware that interviewees might find their responses quite difficult to articulate, as the individuals may have acquired this knowledge informally via peers rather than through formal training or may have had to research information themselves; this became evident as the interviews progressed.

The third sub-question, 1.3, furthered this in terms of Bernstein's principles of socialisation and was personalised as follows:

- How do you approach the teaching/admin side of teaching/research?
- Do you feel that you decide what you teach/research/do on a daily basis or do others decide?
- If you get stuck with some aspect of your work, say an issue with a student, how do you solve this?
- How do you approach e.g. developing a new programme/running a new programme? Who do you speak to? How do you do it?
- Do you find anything about your role frustrating and why?
- What happens if your administrator/prog leader gets stuck? Does s/he ever get frustrated?
- What do you do if a student raises a concern? A staff member?
- How do you keep up to date with things in your subject? With the university?
- What or who motivates you?

Many of these interview questions imply relationships with other staff, questioning how the interviewee works with others, how they learned their role or who they speak to. From these, I anticipated that working relationships and networks would be important in answering the research question and sub-questions set out above.

The initial list of questions is provided in Appendix 1. To test out the efficacy of this approach, I piloted the interview technique with colleagues (one academic, one non-academic) to see how the interviews might pan out. They gave me feedback which helped me when I approached the first interview proper, including the need to tweak the questions depending on whether I was interviewing an academic or administrator.

Following the principles set out in the preceding chapters, I researched the departments I had arranged to study through online research and discussion with one of my contacts before I started the series of interviews³⁰. I identified the key roles that I wanted to concentrate on and used the descriptions available on the departmental webpages to try and understand the remit of each role. Once interviews were underway and I had established contact with the departmental managers, I asked for copies of job descriptions and further information on departmental structures and culture. Such documents were forthcoming from the social science department but not from the science department.

Before I commenced the interviews, I did not have a definite plan as to how many interviews may be necessary but wanted to ensure that I was able to talk to both academics and administrators who worked together in order to enable cross-referencing and substantiate responses and subsequent analyses of the interviews. I did not plan how long the interviews might last, as to begin with I was unsure about how long it would take to obtain data which proved useful. In light of the pilot interviews, as mentioned above, I gauged that an indicative length would be one hour, although in actuality each interview lasted anything up to 90 minutes. In some cases, conversation post-interview continued incidentally and I kept notes where it was not convenient to re-start recording. Table 5.1 shows the breakdown of who was interviewed from each department and their role:

Interviewee	Department
C, departmental manager	Social science

³⁰ I had already identified that the departments chosen would suit my subject area, having links with staff and having researched the structures of each department and its related faculty.

E, education manager	Social science
K, education manager	Social science
R, academic	Social science
Q, departmental manager	Science
J, research administrator	Science
P, head of department	Science
D, academic	Science
S, academic	Science

Table 5.1: Interviewees by role and department

The first interview at the chosen university was carried out with the contact in the social science department with whom I was closest. I was therefore concerned that the interview may become too personal or that I may make assumptions instead of checking details, however on the positive side I felt more confident than I would have done with a complete stranger and was able on completion to ask her how she felt the interview had gone. As mentioned in the previous section, this enabled me to prepare other interviewees more effectively, warning them that the conversation may end up being more personal than they might expect, when I briefed them on the ethics form and obtained consent.

It was also interesting that the interviews, from the outset, became more conversational than semi-structured and by the time I carried out the later interviews I was using my questions as a checklist rather than to steer the discussion. From the earliest interviews and transcripts, I was also aware that allowing the interviewees to talk freely yielded a huge wealth of detail and unguarded comments. From a review of the early interview content, it seemed that this would reveal the most subtle detail, so I was keen to ensure this happened. During these conversations, it was however difficult to keep moderating what was being said in order to try and pinpoint any inconsistencies. In the main, this was done through speaking to different people working in the same department on similar activities and so resolved itself. In some instances, I was able to go back and contact a particular interviewee after carrying out other interviews in order to get some further specific detail on certain issues, e.g.

whether there were divisions between different types of academic staff within the social science department.

Prior to and throughout the interview process, I was conscious of my own position as both a university administrator and a research student and how I would manage this when meeting interviewees. To explain, as mentioned in Chapter 4, I had planned to emphasise the academic aspects of my background (if needed) to build a rapport with academic staff in the departments being researched. However, I found that this was not necessary with any of the staff who agreed to be interviewed. Conversely, my position as a university administrator who was undertaking a research degree seemed sufficient to encourage participation, with one interviewee – post-interview - taking the opportunity to ask which software I might use during analysis and making recommendations. In terms of power relations, my position as a non-academic, as well as a visitor or outsider to the departments did not seem to affect the willingness of the participants to talk. As a senior manager at a university, I am used to addressing senior academics and having robust discussions, the experience of which I felt contributed positively to the dynamic during the interviews with academics. As a head of a large department in my current post, I am also used to building a rapport with colleagues with different remits and responsibilities and this helped me approach new individuals positively.

As mentioned in the previous section, I kept field notes on the interviews, which I added to the beginning of the transcripts in order to help reflection on each interview. This was particularly important as the process of collecting the data felt fragmented and disjointed because I went on a few visits by email arrangement, often just arriving at staff offices and introducing myself (and in one instance meeting up with someone in central London at a café). This lack of formality reflected the 'open access' nature of the university campus, where the public can come and go as they please without challenge, even in the departments. As I had friends and contacts working in the university, I visited outside of the arranged fieldwork on a number of occasions and was able to observe the departments more surreptitiously in how they worked together, who was in the office and how students interacted with the department. I made

handwritten notes which I later included at the start of the full transcripts for each interview.

After I had conducted a small number of interviews, I began the transcription in order to familiarise myself with the process and also to enable me to absorb the interviews. I listened to and transcribed the interviews and, to start with, tried to capture the individual voices of the subjects, including in the transcriptions any hesitations and pauses to reflect the detail of the conversations. However, after transcribing the first couple of interviews and realised the frequency of hesitations as the interviewees reflected on what they wanted to say, I resorted to only using this when I thought that it added possible significance to the transcript, e.g. in terms of illustrating the difficulty an interviewee had with answering a question, which might have a bearing on the subsequent analysis. Because I sometimes commented in the background as the discussions progressed (or vice versa), I used square brackets in the transcripts to indicate when the other person interjected something, e.g. an agreement, into the speaker's response.

To try and increase the depth of my understanding of what the interviewees said during conversations, I listened again to the interviews to try and pick up on any other emphases that I may have missed during transcription, in terms of intonations of voice or changes of tone which might reveal some other detail.

I began the data analysis before I had completed the interviews in order to guide me in later interviews and provide me with an initial review of themes that were starting to arise. The actual analysis was iterative; there was a reciprocal relationship between collections and review as interviews were being undertaken across a period of 6 months. I carried out an initial evaluation of hard-copy transcripts using manual highlighting once a few interviews had been undertaken to understand what was coming through, with a view to determining how to progress future interviews in light of the theoretical framework I was using. I will extrapolate this shortly.

In Chapter 4 I anticipated that I risked becoming too entrenched in the context which could compromise the efficacy of the study. To try and ameliorate this, at

the start of the transcripts I added in notes about the setting, impressions on meeting the interviewees, and how I had felt about the interview before, during and after it took place³¹, to try and remind me of the situation in more detail. My context was the knowledge that the interviewees had accumulated and utilised within their work and how they worked with others. As previously mentioned, I also made field notes of meetings, impressions of the visit to the department, thoughts and reflections to provide a more holistic context and enhance the data collection process by providing more detail for analysis beyond the interviews themselves. This detail also allowed me to reflect on whether I may have inadvertently colluded or influenced the outcome of the interview, as discussed in Chapter 4. Indeed, I noted that one of the early interviews involved me discussing the science department as it had been when I had worked there and another connection between myself and the interviewee (Q). Looking back on the transcript post-interview, I considered whether I was over-influencing her responses; however, listening to the intonation of the recording, I concluded that I was trying to build a rapport. This realisation made me wary with further interviews and I was conscious of trying to manage-down this level of interaction with other interviewees.

As mentioned above, once I had finished transcribing the first three interviews and could identify some common traits through reviewing the transcripts and noting recurring issues, I started an initial thematic analysis in relation to my theoretical framework as set out in Chapter 3. I chose this approach on the basis that these aspects need not be quantifiable in the data, but rather I was searching for themes relevant to my research questions and theoretical framework, looking at commonality across data sets (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.86). Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis has been widely accepted and appeared a more suitable mode of analysis for the data rather than quantitative content analysis:

An alternative use of thematic analysis is to provide a more detailed and nuanced account of one particular theme, or group of themes, within the

³¹ E.g. was I nervous about meeting the interviewee? Was I prepared?

data. This might relate to a specific question or area of interest within the data... or to a particular 'latent' theme... across the whole or majority of the data set.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.83)

Braun and Clarke recommend a six-step approach which I roughly adhered to, including data familiarisation via reading and re-reading of the transcripts, initial coding and theme identification. My further analysis set out below echoes the review of themes that is stipulated in their research.

Throughout this analysis, I tried to link the data back to the original issues identified in the previous chapter – that the origin of the study was group of professional staff who have developed but do not have a clear place as a profession or within universities. My focus being the knowledge that is now utilised in delivering teaching and research and the way that staff work together on these activities, within the framework provided by the work of Bernstein and Adler et al, I developed a very basic initial code using these concepts. I carefully read the transcripts, searching for key words or key issues relating to knowledge and community in order that I could begin to get an angle on these themes. For example, where an interviewee discussed their qualifications or how they had undergone training for a particular role, this part of the interview³² was colour-coded as pertinent to the theme of knowledge; where an interviewee discussed who they worked with, this was colour-coded as pertinent to the theme of community. Where part of a transcript was relevant to both themes, another colour was used to illustrate this.

The identification of whether parts of the interviews correlated with the themes of knowledge and community was predicated on key words or phrases and their contextual use. In Table 5.2 I provide an example of the words or phrases used in the interviews which I identified as connected to knowledge (or 'know-how) or community:

³² For example, part of a sentence or paragraph.

Knowledge or 'Know-how'	Key words/phrases included: training, ask questions, guidance, experience, how things work, MBA, PhD, degree, background, find out, information sources, learnt, way of thinking, skills, work history, transfer.
Community	Key words/phrases included: working with, liaising, department, faculty, networks, contact, bringing people in, shared, discussion, team, delegate, interface, 'all in the same boat', peer support, loyalty, commitment, love.

Table 5.2: Example of key words or phrases used for initial coding exercise

I classified these words as related to knowledge or community through careful reading and re-reading of the transcripts. This is the process through which I translated the key words to the themes throughout the data set:

[It] was a small specialist institution... there was quite a lot of support, there was a reasonable amount of training, so I think first of all there was quite a bit of training for finance, for how to complete a planning round, there was a lot of help available on the quality assurance side, I guess cos it was small institution you knew who to ring, who to go and ask questions at.

(C, Departmental Manager, Social Science Department)

In the above example, I identified key words and phrases 'training', 'how to', 'help available', 'ask questions'. While these may have proved innocuous in another context, within these interviews they indicated reference to how the individuals concerned gained knowledge as to how to undertake their posts. In this case, the themes of career trajectory and knowledge involved arise from the interviewee's narrative, reflecting on a previous post.

...I've learnt it on the job, I think....I mean, I've obviously brought an attitude and a state of mind to the job, but the actual skills I've learnt as I've gone along,. I think when I came here – I started here at the end of 2007 – I was probably really very raw indeed.

(Q, Departmental Manager, Science Department)

In this example, I identified the key word 'learnt' in relation to the interviewee's knowledge development, which as I will show was an emerging theme in the data.

It is through this identification of key words and phrases in context that patterns became apparent; this reflected Braun and Clarke's approach, reflecting aspects of the data which were relevant to the research questions (2006, p.82) across the data set. However, I should add that I did not intend to rigidly adhere to Braun and Clarke's phases of thematic analysis (Ibid, p.87) as I was focused on addressing the research questions effectively. Rather, their structure provided a useful touchstone in retrospect.

It became clear from reviewing the transcripts that the key words relating to knowledge were not specific to knowledge in the strict sense but also encompassed what I alluded to in Chapters 3 and 4 as 'know-how'. This knowledge moves away from Bernstein's knowledge concepts but is not generic; rather, it is the tacit aspect of how to utilise (often codified) knowledge and reapply it, or recontextualise it, to new situations. In effect it is the 'craft' learning and I will return to this concept later on in this chapter in more detail.

Using these highlighted transcripts, I then developed a grid system for each group, academic staff and administrators, to see what might be aligned within these groups; again, this search for themes reflected the suggested approach recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). In Table 5.3 I provide the simple breakdown which formed the basis for this grid.

Knowledge	Community	Other/comments

Table 5.3: Outline of grid used for initial coding exercise

Once I had completed the grid for each group of staff, I noted that some observations in the 'knowledge' column informed separate observations in the 'community' column for each subject, helping me start to formulate links between separate parts of each interview. For example, via the clarity brought about by the colour-coding, it became clear that external networks at previous workplaces

were important in developing the knowledge used by administrators in their current posts.

I then went through the transcripts again using software for qualitative data analysis, Nvivo. I used variations on the nodes/themes related to my theoretical framework. I did this as a check for my initial thematic analysis and to see what else might be revealed through a more systematic check; I also aimed to try and balance out the possible subjectivity of my own analysis. I also used Nvivo for further analysis of themes and to approach these in slightly different ways in line with my theoretical framework, concentrating on what was coming out of my focused analysis.

I used the Nvivo outputs and initial grids to look at the intermeshing of themes (new regions, community and references to what may indicate evidence as to the nature of the knowledge utilised by the administrative post holders, in line with my theoretical framework set out in Chapter 3). I used job descriptions where available to compare these with what was said in the interviews, noting that it was not always possible to obtain these for each post. I was also aware that what post holders actually did may differ in detail and level from what was expected or formally documented. Any queries were followed up with the relevant department, normally with the departmental manager.

5.5 *Emerging themes and issues*

This section looks at the outcomes of the initial analysis of the transcripts using a grid system for each type of staff – academic and administrative - and how they revealed various themes and issues relating to the frameworks of Bernstein and Adler et al. The sub-headings refer to the broader themes implied by the outcomes of the research and arise from the research questions and the interview questions derived from them as set out earlier in this chapter.

I concentrate on four themes which were common between many of the transcripts. I start with career trajectories because of the importance of how one is socialised into a particular type of occupation and how one may have accumulated the knowledge or skills for the role. As discussed in Chapter 2,

researchers have identified issues concerning the identity of university administrators as a new occupational group and potential profession. Whitchurch (2009) described this group as 'blended professionals' but did not unearth the detail of how they started in this type of role, which is crucial to understanding how they accumulated their knowledge and became part of the university community. There has been little focus on the pathways that university administrators follow and how this enables them to progress and develop both their skills and knowledge. To some degree, this is understandable because to date as this group was still comparatively new, as also argued in Chapter 2. However, this does not excuse the current oversight. In my research questions and interview questions, I explicitly draw out this aspect due to its importance in the formation of the interviewees' identities and current positions.

I move on to the theme of knowledge involved in the administrative roles. This was informed by the work histories of those interviewed, as from the interviews it was evident that much was learnt on-the-job, particularly in the first instance. I then discuss the use of internal and external networks, which are used as a means of extending knowledge, and working with colleagues as part of a community of workers with mixed remits, which is another key issue for knowledge gain.

5.5.1 Career trajectories

As mentioned above, the theme of career trajectories was important due to the lack of research around how university administrators ended up in their occupations and how they had accrued the knowledge needed. The detail revealed in the interviews allowed me to show the background to this development, compared with the more delineated paths that academic colleagues had taken³³.

In terms of Bernstein's principles, used as the lens for this research study, knowledge development and the building of identity through socialisation was crucial. In terms of the principles of Adler et al's collaborative community,

³³ For example, interview with P, head of the science department.

however, it was important to understand how the university administrators interviewed had become part of their current community, whether this was construed as the department in which they were based or the sector as a whole.

Between the academic staff interviewed, I was interested to note their academic backgrounds and the way their careers had developed to the current point. For the science department, the academic staff interviewed had all followed a common path of undergraduate degree, doctoral studies, post-doctoral research and subsequent academic posts, moving up through the rank in universities. There were some slight deviations from this: one interviewee, in the science department, had spent over a decade working for a professional body associated with his discipline before returning to a university career³⁴; another had switched to a (related) subject area for a period of time before joining the current department due to a restructuring exercise:

I started off with a degree in [...], then a PhD in [...], at which point I couldn't find any jobs in [...] so I switched to [science] and I spent 15 or so years in [similar] departments and I had no intention of moving into [the science] department but the university closed down [the other, related academic department]...

(S, academic, science department)

The academic interviewed from the social science department had worked in a variety of different jobs, including local government, before undertaking further higher study and moving into an academic career:

So my track into this is a little bit different from a lot of people, I guess, in the department. We tend to kind of, in my experience, we tend to fall into two camps, right? So the kind of people who've gone straight from school into university, to postgraduate study, to PhD, to work. There are the people who've kind of had, sort of proper jobs. I had a proper job for a while.

³⁴ Interview with P, head of science department.

(R, academic, social science department)

Interestingly, R felt that his first degree (although in one of his department's subject areas) had little bearing on his subsequent specialisation:

...I mean, the gap between my first degree and postgraduate study – it really wouldn't matter too much what my first degree was in. But I think it was broadly helpful that it was social sciences, but it didn't matter too much. It's more, I guess, the advantage I had going into master and postgraduate stuff was that I had been working in the public sector, I had experience of kind of managerial stuff there, that's the thing I think that gave me... um, interest, but also an advantage in moving into studying again.

(R, academic, social science department)

For all of the administrative staff interviewed, their backgrounds, i.e. how they had scaffolded their way to their current posts, were more varied. For example, one (J in the science department) did not have a degree herself, but had started at the university as a temporary secretary and had learnt how the university worked, changing roles as the department evolved. J had started at the university over a decade previously and her role may require a degree in the current climate³⁵:

Yeah, cos I definitely didn't come from a university background. I just came from an office administration type of background so I had that experience but not with students or education.

(J, research administrator, science department)

A recurring theme was that none appeared to have started their career in higher education with any clear plan and career progression, where it was wanted, was less clear than for academic staff. For example, E (education manager, social science department) had started working in a university part-time as a

³⁵ Survey of similar grade posts on www.jobs.ac.uk in May 2017 indicated a requirement for a minimum of Level 3 qualifications for most posts and several requiring a first degree.

programme administrator after finishing another job and had stayed working in the same type of role, progressing eventually to a manager post before specialising in quality assurance at another institution:

It sort of happened accidentally. I came to London to teach German for a year... I then I didn't want to go [home] so I needed a job ... I ended up getting a programme admin part-time job.... That way I got into programme admin and eventually that job became full-time and I did that for a few years, I think two years part-time, two years full-time, so I was kind of student-facing. Then I applied for a similar job [in the social science department], did programme admin there for a year in the same department, then [the departmental manager] created this new role of education and research support manager within the department, so I applied and got the job, so kind of moved up a little bit from the student-facing programme admin kind of day-to-day stuff to more planning, supporting.

(E, education manager, social science department)

Another interviewee, Q (science department), had started working in university assessment administration while finishing a humanities PhD and gained promotion before moving to her current position without any planned trajectory:

[Her previous post] was really stressful. Yeah, I think I was the only person who wasn't carried out, actually. Yeah, it was peaks and troughs of activity. The peak was really, really high. The rest of the year was really easy but that period between March and June was incredibly trying. You can't do it for that many years otherwise it will kill you, so, I wanted to work in departments so I came here.

...

I applied for a few jobs and this was the one that I was offered. As it turns out, I really love this department, actually, and I realised... I didn't know [scientists] before that, but I realised that [scientists] are really – at least in this department – really lovely people. And I really enjoy working here.

(Q, departmental manager, science department)

Q was clearly very settled in post and felt a strong allegiance to the department, showing no signs of any desire to apply for posts outside the department for the benefit of career progression:

I don't know... there's a feeling about this department... It's a woolly, wishy-washy thing. There's just a beautiful feeling to this department, perhaps because it started so small and it had a kind, like an almost family atmosphere to it, where everybody knew each other, and we've maintained that even as we've grown, to an extent anyway.

(Q, departmental manager, science department)

K (social science department) had worked in a related area for another institution before moving to work for a charity but had taken her current post because she missed working in education:

I worked at an exam board, so I've got a pretty good idea of what you can and can't do, because those are national exams. ... I worked at [another institution] as well, so have seen what we do around exams there as well. It all kind of pulls together.

Then in response to my question concerning whether she had always worked in education or a related area throughout her career:

No, I worked in exams for a while, then took a break from exams and worked in a charity sector, then decided I missed education so I came in then more as... doing programmes. But as part of those programmes, there's assessment taking place as well.

(K, education manager, social science department)

For K, she saw her possible trajectory clearly from her own experience:

I think my next step, I might be looking to maybe do a sideways move. Purely because I just think doing my job in terms of universities has been

very much confined to education and teaching and in universities, to go higher up you need to have project management and my project management experience is quite some time back. And also experience of research and research projects, and research funding.

Also:

I've done other things. I've been involved in the Athena Swan project. I've been involved in putting together figures for research projects and, you know, when I was at the charity I was doing a lot of finance stuff. But somehow or other that doesn't translate to when you want to apply for a job higher up. As you go higher up in a university, they seem to want you to... teaching doesn't seem to be considered to be that important. And sometimes it seems that the view is that anyone can step in and do a teaching role, but if it's about your research funding, you really want someone to be experienced so they don't treat the two exactly the same and I think they should do.

(K, education manager, social science department)

C (social science department) had started working in higher education because she had taken redundancy from a private sector job and was offered university work through a recruitment agency:

What led me to higher education management in the first place, which was about 13-14 years ago, was redundancy in the private sector. It was as simple as that. It was a job and my first HE job was at [another university] where I went for an interview via the same agency for two different posts in the same week and got offered both of them, and the post for a sort of assistant type role, one to IT which was a central department, and one to a fairly newly created faculty and I took the faculty role because it seemed a lot broader and a lot more interesting. And I also thought, if I'm going to do any time at all in HE I'd like to understand a bit more about it and it seemed to me it was more sensible to take the faculty role because that would tell me more about HE than an IT role would. ... So I took that and

discovered fairly quickly that it was a fascinating world, nobody ever stops you volunteering for something [laughs] and it is incredibly broad.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

Rather than through a more explicit career plan, in effect the administrators interviewed had ended up working in higher education through being attracted to a specific post or by accident. However, they had remained largely within the sector and most sought to move forwards in their careers like K.

As seen, several of these administrative interviewees illustrated the lack of clear pathways to career progression for those working in these roles, with the propensity to apply for posts that seemed interesting (e.g. Q “applied for a few jobs and this was the one that I was offered”) but others had an indication as to what might be required for progression. For example, as seen above K (social science department) had the clear perception that project management experience was needed as was experience of research projects and funding; E (social science department) saw her move to a more central post focusing on quality management at another institution as the way forward, providing access to the institution and the locus of decision-making:

I think I was very much department-based when I was at [the university being researched] as that was the nature of the day to day business, it was relating to departmental matters and departmental planning. I mean, definitely as a programme administrator you’re very much kind of within your unit and I remember, [the education manager] role I had, it was starting to edge a little bit out towards central services more, and you get invited onto working groups about certain things where you’re getting a bit more oversight, so that is another why the QA job at [current employer] felt like a bit of progression for me, because that then takes you further into central services and kind of out of the departmental or faculty ghetto and more into the institution.

(E, education manager, social science department)

C (social science department) had previously moved from a central management post in university information services at another institution to return to working in a faculty or academic department with the aim of “a broad senior role that looked interesting”. C’s own career path had taken her to explore such a centralised role in a university but this was not part of her long-term interest:

I wanted at some point in time to work in a more central role, it didn’t have to be at that point in time. I think it was a useful thing to do, to see the other side, as they say. So, that was in my game plan to do that. Moving back into the academic administration side was a kind of choice.... I like to be in a role that’s broad enough that I get to see what’s going on in the bigger picture, but is close enough to the action and purpose of what a university is here for.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

For C, the central role was “useful” for her career but not a long-term proposition. The net effect of these choices for the interviewees was that they were drawn to successive posts out of interest rather than a clear trajectory, whilst at the same time being keen to progress their careers. This suggested a rather instinctive or incidental approach to career development over an established pathway.

In the details revealed in the interviews and any follow up, these personal histories showed that entrance to the higher education sector as an administrator was not by any means exclusive or dependent on qualifications, e.g. a relevant first degree. Rather, it was more about broader work experience gained after initial entrance, which as shown above was often incidental rather than by design.

These trajectories indicate how the interviewees became part of their respective higher education communities. In some cases, such as P’s, the community was very localised and the source of attachment to the job; with other interviewees such as C, K and E, the community was more fluid, centring on their department as per their current posts but potentially changing as they moved either role or institution. Bearing in mind the incidental nature of these career paths and the means of entry, I inferred from these personal histories that the knowledge which

enabled these staff to do their jobs must have been imparted by means of the community in which they practice. The next section looks in more detail at how this knowledge was acquired.

5.5.2 Knowledge involved in roles

One outcome of the interviews identified that there was a tangible set of knowledge that had been accumulated and was utilised by the administrators working in the departments. Aspects of this knowledge were codified or explicit, such as the requirements set by external agencies for the sector; some was warranted by the institution due to its structure. The method of amassing this knowledge was mixed, however. This ranged from learning-on-the-job, using both informal advice from colleagues and formal training (e.g. MBAs, local training courses), to using sources such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Higher Education Academy (HEA) and other universities as sources to inform the advice offered and moderate how they undertook tasks.

In the case of the administrators interviewed, all of their training was on-the-job for each post. For example, J (research administrator, science department) had started working in the department on a temporary basis over a decade previously in another role, acquiring knowledge from first principles as this was the first time she had worked in a university. Basic knowledge had to be accumulated as she had no experience of the UK education system:

I just came from an office administration type of background so I had that experience but not with students or education. I remember coming here and feeling a bit like a fish out of water... I was like, you'd say 'what A level eligibility?' and I'd be like 'I don't know what an A level is?'... I guess you just pick up things along the way.

(J, research administrator, science department)

J had attained her current level of knowledge needed for her job via a multitude of means. Mainly she associated this to experience, asking people in the organisation for information or advice, finding information from webpages, having

meetings with people and accumulating 'how to' knowledge through the different roles she had been appointed to within the department over time. Conversely, she appreciated the need to pass on this knowledge to new staff:

....I've got that knowledge... I spent quite a bit of time showing [new colleagues what to do], because they need to be able to do their job, I need to help them, make it easier for them...

(J, research administrator, science department)

J's experience and understanding of the importance of passing on this knowledge echoed the importance of internal networks in the personal development of the administrators interviewed. The centrality of community was also alluded to: colleagues who had experience of certain kinds of work, e.g. research administration, were the main source of training and induction into such a role.

This was born out in the account given by C (departmental manager, social science department). C's first management role started at a time when her new employer was improving planning and financial processes as well as automating previously manual processes such as financial reporting. This change included training on-the-job from the university's finance department and peer support from the other managers who also had to adapt to the new processes. C interpreted this as being employed in the "right place, right time" in order to benefit from the peer support and closeness to detail which proved valuable to her understanding of how the processes worked, commenting that "I haven't actually worked anywhere since that has provided as much training or as much guidance ...". This direct training was, for C, very much an incidental product of the point in time at which she started in that post. However, for her, this was complemented by her subsequent experience in different roles at other universities:

In some ways, part of what my knowledge is now is partly having had that point in time, but also having had the experience across a number of sometimes quite different universities. So, with different financial systems or different ways of looking at things, just generically being in different

financial positions themselves... so I worked in some cash-strapped universities and some cash-rich universities – make your own mind up which is which... !

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

The different roles that C had worked in prior to her current post had shown her that the knowledge that she had built up was not obsolete as she moved between institutions. The main principles endured and were recontextualised between different roles:

It's a little bit like... my first job was in tax, so the tax rules may change from year to year, but the concept doesn't really. It's only really... what is the tax rate, what is the personal allowance...once you have the concept, the 'what is' part is actually quite a small change, that's just a factual change rather than a conceptual change. I think it's kind of similar in some ways in HE, that the facts – the small-scale facts may change but the larger scale concept doesn't change that much.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

However, it is important to note that C was the only interviewee who had undertaken a higher degree (MBA in Higher Education Management) that was directly relevant to the sector. She explained that she had found it had provided her with a bigger-scale overview of how higher education worked. The programme had introduced her to sources of information that may have been withheld without doing the qualification; these sources were not necessarily available through experience only:

Actually, just the practice of putting something together, writing up an assignment, researching for myself, doing the whole 'find out for oneself' thing, just actually spending some time leafing through things that had been written sort of because I had to, as opposed to... Would I have done that instead of eating a sandwich, watching TV, whatever? There's something about having to do it, and it was interesting to do, and there are some information sources that I probably still look at. So I think before I

did the MBA I don't think I ever looked at the HEFCE website, now I still look at the HEFCE website from time to time to see what's what. There's all sort of things on there, to different degrees of detail... but I'm not sure why I would have ever looked there in the first place if I'd never done the MBA.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

This sort of commentary indicated that the qualification, for C at least, offered her opportunities to think about higher education in a way that may not have otherwise been available. For her, the overview provided by the MBA was particularly important, offering her insight into university governance:

...that whole kind of question about the locus of control, about where the control is in a university, where the accountability is, where the decision-making is and how things work.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

This gave her space to consider the nuanced differences between institutions and appreciate the impact of diverse structures on both staff and student experiences. Her experience working in different roles in a variety of institutions also helped her understand the impact of small differences. Her first management role, as mentioned above, included a position on the university's senior management team which gave her insight into the way the university worked at close-range, the "bigger picture" in her words. This viewpoint aided C in her eventual progression to a completely different type of role, working in a senior position in a central team in another university rather than in a faculty or department; incidentally, this post also involved working with non-academic central services staff rather than academics. As a significant example, she recontextualised the knowledge and experience she had attained to change manage different groups of staff through a restructuring exercise in her new post, drawing on her management experience at her previous institution such as the interaction with trade unions and HR. While she noted that there were a few

differences in process, there were many similarities and she was able to use her learning from previous experience to inform her performance in her new role³⁶.

The other departmental manager I interviewed, in the science department, had a very different history and outlook to C. She had a doctoral degree in a humanities subject and had found that the skills involved in her research studies had transferred to her current post. However, she had learnt the detail of her current role on-the-job and was very department-focused:

I don't like [the University], right? So ... I've no loyalty to [the University] at all but I do feel a deep loyalty to this department.

(Q, departmental manager, science department)

As a result, Q's perspective was very local and she did not appear to network beyond her department and only to a limited extent with the faculty. The knowledge utilised in her role was confined principally to her department.

E (education manager, social science department), like C, had worked in different institutions before arriving in the social science department and had developed her career from programme administration³⁷ to education management³⁸, again mostly learning on-the-job and realising where her interests lay:

I think as people realised they could give me stuff to do that wasn't just photocopying or emailing students, and then you take on a little bit more, and then you learn more, and I kind of found that I kind of enjoy [working] with regulations and policies and kind of reading stuff and figuring out what it means, what you can do and what you can't get away with.

(E, education manager, social science department)

This knowledge, across several roles and institutions, had helped her to realise that there was a common external regulatory framework that all universities

³⁶ Interview with C, department manager, social science department

³⁷ Providing direct administrative support to degree programmes.

³⁸ In basic terms, managing the programme administrators and the processes relating to the delivery of degree programmes with a defined level of responsibility.

needed to comply with and was thus able to take the principles learned to new institutions and adapt them to suit the context. This echoed what C had described and suggested the ability to recontextualise in a similar way. Where advice was needed, particularly in her recent move to a job in a more central role away from the department, E used colleagues and her wider network for input, having built a network of people to interact with and share knowledge. She also used online resources, e.g. the Higher Education Academy (HEA) or the QAA website and documents as well as looking at what other universities were doing via their websites. She used these resources to recontextualise in terms of what policies meant for her faculty and department, providing a less insular perspective than a purely departmental focus.

You can transfer so much. When I moved from [previous institution] to [institution being researched] there's just so much that you're immediately familiar with because undergrad degrees work the same way, postgraduate degrees work the same way. So even though the student body at [previous institution] and [institution being researched] are very different things, basically how the programmes work is more or less the same, there's slight variations.

(E, education manager, social science department)

This was echoed by K (education manager, social science department) who saw the similarities between different institutions, e.g. the need to adhere to UKVI requirements and external frameworks, but also noted that there is some flexibility in how these are articulated within different universities.

In terms of what skills were needed, E mentioned skills such as communication as very important as well as the ability to develop an overview:

I think you need to not be afraid of getting to grips with regulations and policy, and try not to feel freaked out by that sort of documentation. Be willing to sit down and drill down and think 'ok, but what does this really mean in practice?'... Being able to communicate with people – and different people across the institution... talk to students, talk to academic

staff both junior and senior, you talk to other professional services staff across the university, so... just being interested in what they do and trying to understand their pinch pressures and their deadlines and timelines. I think that helps a lot to see how the whole picture comes together. So you need to be able to, or to be willing to look at details, but also the bigger picture, and find out where the connections are.

(E, education manager, social science department)

K commented that the university often employed administrative staff who did not have degrees themselves, which was out of line with expectations at her previous institution. She considered that it was useful for staff to have undertaken a first degree:

I would say it's really helpful if you've been through the whole university experience because you know what it feels like.

(K, education manager, social science department)

This comment echoed that dependence on experience that seemed to drive the careers of those interviewed. It was experience that provided these staff with the knowledge to carry out their roles and expand their skills. Apart from in C's case at a previous institution, most training available to these interviewees to develop their knowledge and skills was very general, e.g. management training:

I haven't been [to] anything particularly focused on my specific roles, I've done kind of the general stuff around – let's say – equality and diversity, and ...like chairing meetings, mental health support for students, so things that touch upon what I do some way or another.

(E, education manager, social science department)

I think that a large amount of my training has tended to be maybe management training. You know, I did... the other training that I did was maybe things like presentation skills.

(K, education manager, social science department)

In summary, it was clear from the administrators interviewed that the majority of learning for their roles was obtained via on-the-job training and previous experience and that networks and colleagues were important in helping professional development. I inferred that, once the principles were acquired for a particular area, e.g. quality assurance, these were easily transferred to another post and another institution; this being due to the common external framework that universities are subject to. Any formal training tended to be in generic skills which could apply to any category of staff, e.g. presentation skills. The specific training in finance and planning that C reported appeared to be a product of a particular time in the life of that institution rather than a sustained approach to the development of staff as a matter of course.

As is evident from the quotations provided above, tacit learning played a large role in scaffolding the progression of those interviewed and facilitating recontextualisation. C viewed her ability to build relationships with different groups of staff as instrumental in her progression to her next post but her knowledge of HR and her experience of restructuring was also salient:

I had the right skill set and I was neither library nor IT, and therefore fairly perfect for [the department she was based in] on that basis. When I joined [the department] was just about the start a large change management process... and I was responsible for part of that process. Specifically, about the process and how we were going to do something, the timeline, etc, being part of the negotiations with the unions, it was fairly complex. Again part of the reason why I got that role was because I had been through a fairly significant change management process at [her previous university], so I think one thing built on the other.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

C felt that her knowledge of HR processes coupled with her ability to facilitate a change management project, having been through a similar experience, contributed to her progression. J also exemplified the role of tacit learning in her development of her role:

I just think it just comes with time, just kind of having meetings with people, or learning or... I have sat with people in various different roles before, and kind of got an overview of what should be done, or how to do it.

(J, research administrator, science department)

I note that C's comments about the MBA's helpfulness suggested that such a qualification may provide an overview which helps understanding and progression but with a sample of one it is difficult to judge the impact. However, evidently in C's case the qualification provided access to other resources for enhancing her understanding and knowledge as well as a perspective (e.g. on governance) that may not have been readily available otherwise experientially, therefore expanding her knowledge beyond her career experience. This resonates with the theme Beck and Young (2005) raise which I discussed in Chapter 3: limiting access to knowledge that allows "alternative possibilities" and hence encourages professional development. In the case of the university administrators being examined, access to knowledge beyond experience is therefore important otherwise career progression is incidental and fatalistic, predicated, as has been shown in this section, on localised training and networks of colleagues who can provide a route to obtaining the knowledge needed to do a job.

It is important to recognise that the knowledge that was described by the interviewees was not only codified, in the sense of the regulations and policies that they had to learn, but there was also a strong element of what I call 'know-how', learned tacitly, which was predicated on the codified knowledge and experience of how a university works and the recontextualising of these aspects to new situations.

The key emphasis from the interviews was that knowledge acquisition involved internal and external networks of staff; these networks are explored more extensively in the following section.

5.5.3 Internal and external networks

In discussing the interview questions used earlier in this chapter, I anticipated that working with others and networks would be significant. The administrators interviewed placed much emphasis on the use of their own networks in order to get issues resolved or to extend their own expertise and knowledge. In Bernstein's terms, this fluidity and lack of structure to knowledge acquisition is problematic in that it is unregulated and vulnerable to external factors. As is evident from the discussion on knowledge in the previous section, there is also a lack of underlying principles being communicated in a systematic way which leaves little scope for recontextualisation and risks limiting the administrators' practice. In Adler et al's terms, the prevalence of the local community as a means of education for this group encourages a local identity with the department but conversely might constrain its development as learning is limited to close colleagues (Adler et al, 2006; 2008). This insularity might be counter-balanced, however, if there is access to internal networks across the university or elsewhere in the sector, offering alternative viewpoints or information and in effect providing some degree of a normalising influence.

It was apparent from the interviews that knowledge accrual was a gradual process, with individual administrators developing an awareness of who to ask about certain areas of work as they got to know their institutions, sometimes subverting processes in order to achieve a positive outcome for their department. An example was in the case of the departmental manager for the social science department who used her contacts within the university to resolve an issue relating to ensuring applications would be opened for a new degree which had just been approved:

...I'd already made some contacts in Admissions, so I actually went via Admissions which was probably the end point in effect... so there seemed to be a gap between the QA [unit dealing with programme approval] and the Admissions... So I kind of pushed from both ends and somehow the middle moved.

[C, departmental manager, social science]

Both internal and external networks were shown to be valuable in terms of sharing practice and ensuring consistency. K (education manager, social science department) was part of a group of ex-colleagues who met up regularly and discussed work issues:

...and it's not just necessarily that we talk about education. Sometimes it might be line management issues, it might be kind of like anything, but you get a different perspective.

(K, education manager, social science department)

J (research administrator, science department) had accumulated contacts within her institution who could help her when she needed to find out how to do something:

I think it comes with time, and know[ing] who to use and ask, because I think I got better at learning to ask people in the college and using the webpage to look for various different centralised departments. ... I have sat with people in various different roles before, and kind of got an overview of what should be done, or how to do it.

(J, research administrator, science department)

J's perspective suggested a necessary reliance on seeking out support from other staff, with the confidence to do so arising from familiarity. She also recognised the importance of passing on what she knew to new staff, thus cascading her knowledge to others:

Even like with new staff starting, you know, I've got that knowledge and people, you know, [...] is new and there's another woman who shares this office cos they're both part time, you know, I spent quite a bit of time showing them, because they need to be able to do their job, I need to help them, make it easier for them...

(J, research administrator, science department)

Bearing in mind the emphasis in the previous section on on-the-job training, it could be said that such an attitude is crucial in enabling new staff to do their jobs.

Within the interviews, there was a considerable emphasis on problem-solving and using networks of contacts to resolve issues:

You start building a little network of people who you know deal with similar things and you kind of check with them, 'is this something you're familiar with, do you know where to go as it were, as far as you're concerned?'

(E, education manager, social science department)

E's account suggested that moving beyond the locality of the department was helpful in terms of influencing how the university operated and seeing the wider context. In relation to whether E liaised with external people or agencies to help her do her job:

...[At the University being researched] probably not so much as I was quite contained in the department and within the various team structures... in the job now I have been reading a lot of stuff, the HEA website for example, all the Quality Assurance Agency stuff, cos we're kind of... obviously we're constrained by that, we're trying to figure out what that means for our specific school regulations and what that means filtering down to the faculties and to departments. And so that's been a bit more [...], looking at what else is out there in the sector, looking at what other universities are doing, so, at the moment we are looking at curriculum and credit frameworks and possibly undergraduate classification schemes, so you kind of look at what other universities are doing, who you think are your main competitors, so you kind of trawl through their websites and think 'aha, this is what I need'.

(E, education manager, social science department)

I noted that there was a difference in the way that some respondents worked with colleagues outside their department. In the case of Q, who worked in the science department, she was very focused on the department and described a tension

between it and the higher levels of the institution. This was crystallised by the management structure for Q, who was line managed by the administrative head of the faculty as per the common management structure at the university, despite being based in the department:

I don't know, maybe I'm just in that old-fashioned academic mode, but I prefer to have an academic boss, and I deal better with academics. But the day to day running of the department is between me and the Head of Department so it doesn't really make that much sense to me to have that sort of parallel line of management which in practice means that I book my holiday with one person but I work on a day-to-day basis with another.

(Q, departmental manager, science department)

Q was the one respondent who did not indicate much of an engagement beyond the department. She identified her knowledge source as 'on-the-job' and from talking to colleagues such as the head of department, with whom she worked closely, as well as the transferable skills she had acquired during her doctoral studies. She liaised with some of her peers within the same faculty but appeared to have set herself apart from them due to her affinity with her department and her academic background:

I've always assumed that I think the way I think because I have that academic background. I mean, you have a foot in both camps as well, right? So you must... it's different, right? It's a different way of thinking.

(Q, departmental manager, science department)

K, on the other hand, saw the benefits in setting up networks and had started to regularly lunch with others in the faculty who had similar roles to her own; she also recognised the importance in expanding this type of relationship-building to her own team:

... we had an issue with exams. I made an appointment and took some of my team members across and we sat down and had a discussion with [the] Exams [team], just to find out what we could be doing better, what

they wanted us to do more of and really how we could help each other. Doing things like that.

...

Yeah, cos you've then got a better idea of how things work, and also, it's also making those personal connections, because it's so dead easy just to email people all the time and you never ever meet that person or speak to them. So I think that really helps.... I found was a great way of getting information rather than getting it piecemeal, as it were.

(K, education manager, social science department)

I noted that these networks were not just limited to staff but also – in two cases – encompassed students. In the case of Q, the departmental manager for the science department, her additional (academic) work as a project supervisor built up trust with the students. This gave her access to informal feedback which she was able to feed into decision-making within her normal remit, saying “the students sort of come to me and tell me things that you don't get when you do the ordinary feedback things”. In J's case, the involvement with research students was more social and involved lunches and celebrations.

The networks discussed all consisted of administrative staff and, as well as providing learning opportunities for the administrators, indicated clearly the positioning of this group on the hierarchical axis of the organisation. To explain in Adler et al's terms, the departmental structures fitted the concept of collaborative communities with academic and administrative staff working together on degree programmes or research and inducing a sense of identity for their members. However, as the community risks insularity external stimulation is needed to ensure knowledge is current and meets the needs of higher education's external stakeholders. This is where the significance of internal (i.e. across the institution) and external (i.e. other institutions) networks becomes clear: these networks are a means of ensuring currency of knowledge and practice, of regulating practice to some extent and of providing access to alternative views and advice. However, these networks are also in themselves restrictive as they only offer the experience and knowledge provided by their members, which in turn may be limited. Their shortcoming is that – without a

structured approach – these networks may not offer up access to new knowledge beyond the current experiences of their members. In terms of professional development this is a major issue, particularly when coupled with the insularity of the departmental community.

The use of networks segues into the theme of working with colleagues as part of a university community, both academic as well as administrative. The dominant community for both groups was identified as their department, which was geographically important in terms of serving as their physical base and offering direct contact with academic and administrative colleagues. However, this co-location also served to limit their development as mentioned above, particularly if there was no or little means of contact with staff elsewhere in, or external to, the institution.

Bearing in mind the difference between the departments' subject areas, as one singular, hard-pure science discipline and one soft-applied, regionalised discipline, I wanted to examine if this affected the knowledge and development of those administrative staff interviewed. The next section considers this angle.

5.5.4 *Working with colleagues*

This section considers the way in which academic and administrative staff in each department work together and how this affects the development of the latter. In Chapter 2, I discussed how academic work had evolved to a process-basis involving different types of staff working in partnership with each other. I also argued that research to date had depicted a breakdown in trust between academic staff and administration, setting up these groups as diametrically opposed. However, the interviews undertaken represented a different perspective. It was clear from the initial analysis grids that the academic and administrative staff within the departments worked closely together on teaching and research. In fact, the work for which academic staff were needed – teaching, research - was facilitated by the knowledge held by the administrators as will be shown shortly. In this sense, it was clear that the relationship between these groups was more than simply a means of support; rather, the groups were

working as a collaborative community with work taking place across different occupational clusters (Adler et al, 2006; 2008).

In terms of the academic staff interviewed each was clear on the role of the administrative staff, although not necessarily on the detail of what they did³⁹. They understood the level of the administrative roles within their department as well as the faculty and indicated a distinct appreciation for what these post-holders actually contributed to teaching or research:

OK, so [the education manager] has a more overarching view of teaching, so she's really helpful in terms of timings for making amendments to modules, because of course there is a bureaucracy in the college we need to negotiate through. Things like appointing graduate teaching assistants, student numbers, that kind of thing. The slightly kind of arms-length stuff, that the [programme administrators] won't have a view on necessarily because they're kind of doing a slightly different role, so there's that kind of role as well in the admin office. And then the tier above that is [the departmental manager], who is much more strategic in terms of, you know, what are the programmes going to look like, what kind of things are we going to do with them in terms of number of students who take them, that kind of thing.

(R, academic, social science department)

They are the absolute heart of the place; they're the glue that binds it all together. Whether it's the technicians or the secretariat, whatever they're doing, and if they are bad, then the whole place falls apart. I've seen it happen and it's very painful, and I think their contribution is essential. And ... I do believe it so strongly that if you get the admin staff on board and caring in the same way that I talked about management generally, and they're respected, then the place will run much more smoothly.

(P, head of science department)

³⁹ E.g. interview with D, academic, science department.

This was contrary to the assumptions set out in Chapter 2 about such administrative roles and reflected in the work of previous research discussed in that chapter.

The administrative staff were also clear on their roles and how they worked with academic staff, positively supporting teaching activities and research. They saw working with academic staff and students as integral to their roles and appeared to understand where their roles were situated within the processes of teaching or research. For example, the departmental manager in the social science department saw her role at the:

...interface between the strategy and operation of department...it's at the interface between the department and the Faculty and the rest of [the university] and it's also in many respects perhaps also at the interface also between the administration and the academic work...
[C, departmental manager, social science department]

This was in line with the equivalent manager in the science department:

So on a daily basis I'll have 100+ emails, and a few dozen people through my door every day. Most of that will be asking for a quick decision on something or other or there's a problem – how do we fix it. So, but I oversee the running of the Department, so the finances of the Department, HR, who we're hiring, even down to hiring post-docs. Stuff like that. There's the students, at all levels, so we have administrators who deal with them but I have oversight of that all.

...And then I work with the Head of Department closely on the bigger stuff, sort of more strategic things, so that might be assigning jobs to academics, who should be chair of the exam board, that sort of stuff. You know, how we teach stuff, programmes, how it all slots together, why we're changing things. So it's really varied.
[Q, departmental manager, science department]

Both departmental managers described themselves as working closely with their head of department and overseeing the operation of their departments in collaboration with these post-holders, rather than imposing the type of control suggested by commentators focusing on new managerialism in higher education as discussed in Chapter 2. To illustrate this, the departmental manager in the science department positioned herself as follows:

I feel really strongly that the only reason we're here is – any university is here – is to do research and teaching. Everything else is subordinate to that and if you're an administrator you support that, and you make it easy for the academics to do what only the academics can do.

[Q, departmental manager, science department]

In that chapter, I discussed a notable change in academic work as the balance shifted from academic staff to administrative staff. I commented that academic work had shifted from being an autonomous, small-group or private activity, and this was still evident within the interviews with academic staff. However, R (academic, social science department) commented that he had a great deal of autonomy in terms of what he researched and how he worked:

It's brilliant. I mean, there are few jobs like this where you get to choose exactly what you do, which is go off and write and research about whatever you want, you know, that's very, very rare. So absolutely, almost all of my working time is determined by me.

[R, academic, social science department]

This again appeared to contradict assumptions about managerialism imposing on academic autonomy, as suggested in relation to Deem (1998) in Chapter 2, rather, the input of the administration was seen to help with ensuring the efficient running of academic activities. Hence, this privacy was countered by the interactions with other types of staff in the delivery of teaching activity, but with no detriment to his autonomy. Instead, he seemed to be well supported by the department's education manager who helped him navigate through the university's (and sector's) requirements and parameters:

...so it's no good me deciding now that I want to change what I'm doing in terms of assessment, say, in September? I needed to have had that conversation probably in November time to hit the cycle, so what (the education manager] would do is send out an email to all staff, right. 'If anyone wants to amend their modules, you need to let me know by this date, get the paperwork in by this date', yeah, that kind of thing, which is the sort of thing that academics generally are sort of rubbish at, so...
[R, academic, social science department]

Hence the operational aspects of delivering degree programmes were facilitated by the education manager's knowledge and role.

The relationships within both departments between academic and administrative staff were described in supportive terms by each group of staff. This extended to a crossing of boundaries in one case, with the departmental manager in the science department contributing to project teaching of undergraduate students. This had been at the suggestion of a previous head of department who had recognised her academic background and seen fit to use it to resolve staffing shortfalls in the department.

Not all of the relationships discussed in the interviews were positive. There seemed to be certain tensions between the departments investigated and their respective faculty structure, rather than within departments, which appeared complicated. In both departments, the departmental manager was line managed by the most senior administrator in the faculty; in the social science department there was also a dual reporting line to the academic head of department. In the case of the departmental manager in the science department, she felt the arrangement was inappropriate as her daily work was undertaken with the head of department, who she felt would be a more appropriate line manager:

So my actual boss is not the Head of Department, it's the Director of Administration, I think she's called, in the Faculty. So that's an administrator, that's my official line manager, but... so when I joined the

Department my actual line manager was the Head of Department, and in practical, pragmatic terms that continues to be the case but technically it's not.

...

I don't know, maybe I'm just in that old-fashioned academics mode, but um, I prefer to have an academic boss, and I deal better with academics. But the day to day running of the Department is between me and the Head of Department so it doesn't really make that much sense to me to have that sort of parallel line of management which in practice means that I book my holiday with one person but I work on a day-to-day basis with another.

[Q, departmental manager, science department]

The reason for this structure and differences between faculties was confirmed⁴⁰ but not explained by either department investigated, however it could have been an attempt to provide some input to the departmental managers' practice from outside of the department.

Within the science department there was a perception that the faculty administration team was better resourced than the department and there was more of a willingness to use their help, with the departmental administration team being described as "burdened"⁴¹. This perception sometimes resulted in academic staff undertaking tasks that they might have reasonably passed on to the departmental administration⁴². Conversely, some academic staff were also described as transferring work to the administration team that was unreasonable, such as suggesting and allocating projects or running schools placements schemes⁴³; these tasks being within academic workload allocations. This suggested a further blurring of boundaries in the science department between the remits of academics and administrators despite any clarity in their role or job descriptions. However, there was also a reluctance to hand over some of the

⁴⁰ Confirmed in text and email correspondence with departmental manager, social science.

⁴¹ Interview with D, academic, science department and interview with S, academic, science department.

⁴² Interview with S, academic, science department.

⁴³ Interview with P, head of science department.

more administrative work to the administrative staff. One of the interviewees, a professor now in an academic leadership role for the faculty, reported that he ended up undertaking tasks himself which may have normally been allocated to an administrator, e.g. writing research impact case studies. He expressed a concern that administrative staff may not understand academic matters or the requirements of academia but went on to explain that he had later found a faculty administrative colleague who did understand his intentions, therefore confounding this claim⁴⁴.

Within the social science department, there was a slightly different relationship with the faculty. The department had additional support for research from a faculty administrator as they did not have a dedicated post within the department. The contribution made by this faculty post-holder was particularly acknowledged in terms of how she helped steer academics through the university processes as well as the advice offered on the proposal itself:

...and she was really helpful in term of just bouncing ideas about how to pitch [the grant proposal], the application, and talk through the whole process and even down to now, like 'where's it going to be coded, what's the cost code?', stuff like that. They're really excellent at helping with that.
[R, academic, social science department]

Interestingly, there was a clear emphasis on the individual in post with her effectiveness attributed to the "force of her personality":

I mean, she knows this stuff. She wants people to apply for grants. She'll come to departmental meetings and say, you know, 'you haven't applied for anything this year as a department. Why not?'
[R, academic, social science department]

⁴⁴ Interview with D, academic, science department: he gave example of the HR department not understanding the mechanics of a particular academic appointment.

This intervention is seen as positive by R, although he acknowledged that there was a resistance to the university's 'bureaucracy' from other members of the department:

We had to do some forms at the end of each module, just record, you know, the spread of grades, and your own comments, what you thought... how you thought it went and [how you could] improve next time, and that's useful because of the external examiners, with the exam board and stuff. There was real resistance to doing that, 'I'm not doing another form! This is ridiculous!' Our department meetings are brilliant, you should definitely sit in on [one], do some participant observation stuff, it's awesome. [laughs]
[R, academic, social science department]

However, this did not seem to overawe the positive complementary relationship R described between the academic and administrative staff.

The approach to relationships between each department and the respective faculty did appear to vary. An academic in the same department described the faculty-level administration as well-resourced while the department's administrative resources were seen as stretched to the point where he was reluctant to add to their load; he commented that he was happy for the faculty team to take on some tasks which he would be reluctant for the (stretched) departmental team do undertake. This pressure on the departmental administrative team was confirmed by the head of the same department⁴⁵. In the social science department, the faculty level of administration was portrayed as more supportive by an academic, as in the example of the faculty administrator who was dealing with research administration. In terms of the administrative staff in the science department, the manager described a tension between the levels of the department and faculty, but also accepted that this was usual:

⁴⁵ Interview with P, head of science department.

There's always a tension between faculty and department, and that I suppose is natural. There are sort of personality clashes as well, you know, so faculty just happens to be quite – sounds a bit strong but sort of micromanaging all of its departments, whereas the feeling in departments of course is that they want a little bit more autonomy and freedom. I think those are probably natural tensions that, you know, sort of rub along.
[Q, departmental manager, science department]

Despite the perceived tensions, there seemed to be a common goal between both academic and administrative staff within both the departments which focused on supporting both the academic work and the students. For example, S (academic, science department) found satisfaction in the positive impact on students that he experienced from his departmental leadership role⁴⁶. K (education manager, social science department) “really like[d] the fact I can make a difference to [the students’] experience of university, because I can remember what it was like” and voiced her pride at the achievements of academic colleagues. E (education manager, social science department) saw her role as:

Kind of, trying to make the academics understand what the regulations are, but also trying to work out within the regulations how much scope do we have to do what we want, and will that make the students happy?
(E, education manager, social science department)

D (academic, science department) understood the balance needed between facilitating the work of academic staff and the administration:

...but a lot of the challenge is trying to do things so on the one hand academic staff don't see just an endless barrage of data requests... and also see relief for things which it's crazy for academic staff to be doing because it's not a good use of their time, because we need them to be getting research grants and doing the research and writing papers and so

⁴⁶ Interview with S, academic, science department.

on. But on the other hand not overloading the administrative staff because they've only got so many hours in the week as well.

(D, academic, science department)

Indeed, P (head of science department) underlined the value he placed on an effective administration team, describing them as “the absolute heart of the place”. This was reflected in the commitment that some of the administrators interviewed had towards their roles and their feelings about the social side of their jobs, exemplified in K's appreciation of the physical configuration of her department on one floor of a building and the shared spaces which aided communication:

... we're really lucky, we're all on the same floor, and... everyone is in this departmental area. We have academic members who come into our main office, they all have their own offices so quite often I will go and just knock on their door and talk to them if there's an issue. We bump into each other in the corridors and we've also got a shared kitchen, which is really great as it may well be that there's a discussion just about something like cricket, or it may well be something where we'll have a discussion about work. So, yep, this is one of the nicest departments I've ever worked in.

(K, education manager, social science department)

It was interesting to note the sense of commonality and community that ran through both departments. This translated loosely into a commitment to the respective departments which was, for the science departmental manager, crystallised as love: “[a]s it turns out, I really love this department, actually...”.

This detail reveals that the administrative roles within the departments have moved past the new managerialist ideology discussed in Chapter 2, where they were portrayed as detrimental to academic autonomy and implied a breakdown of trust; rather than a binary opposition, there is a relationship of partnership.

Rather than a detrimental effect on academic autonomy, the way that academic staff and administrators work together exemplifies the clear function of the latter

roles, linking teaching and research activity with external requirements (e.g. in terms of the national quality framework) and institutional requirements (e.g. cycles for amending modules or advising on grant proposals) to ensure that the departmental community endures. It is clear from the data that the (senior) administrative posts are not simply support mechanisms in the clerical sense; they are evolved roles which include codified knowledge. The main issue, as shown in previous chapters, is that this knowledge suffers from a lack of clarity or recognition. In this sense, there was little difference in the way that the collaborative communities of academic and administrative staff worked between each department. However, there was a difference between the inward-ness and outward-ness of each department (in Bernstein's terms) and their relationship with the wider university/faculty and external contacts.

In the science department, the emphasis of the departmental manager was focused on the department, its need and its staff. Her obvious attachment to the department was coupled with her antipathy to the faculty and her line management arrangement, as described above. While Q had a self-proclaimed "deep loyalty" to the department, she did not show any inclination to build relationships beyond the department, although she did collaborate on some level with other managers in the faculty, albeit "[n]ot closely"⁴⁷. J, who worked in the same department, extended to liaison with other departments in the university, but did not indicate any links beyond to any external contacts. As previously indicated, this risked limiting their development to the experiential learning available within the department and gave no room to extend knowledge. As part of the bureaucracy, in structural terms, this closeness exemplifies the insularity of community mentioned by Adler et al (2008, p,360; see also Heckscher and Adler, 2006) but also – interestingly – is central to Bernstein's singular knowledge structures (Bernstein, 2000). As per the concept of the collaborative community, the close working within the science department illustrates the organic working between the bureaucracy and 'professionals'/academics as mentioned in Chapter 3. However, as also contended in that chapter, this closeness may detract from the function of the administration in their role as

⁴⁷ Interview with Q, departmental manager, science department.

hierarchy/bureaucracy due to the close interest and emotional investment that the administrators have with their department. This insularity may conflict with their position ensuring that academic activities follow the relevant regulatory framework, adhere to external requirements and so forth.

Conversely, while they worked closely with academic staff within their department, the administrators interviewed in the social science department showed a different approach, as set out in the section on networks (5.5.3). This enabled a more cosmopolitan view, integrating best practice with their work and seeking alternative perspectives on issues such as line management⁴⁸ or quality assurance requirements⁴⁹.

5.5.5 Summary of themes and issues

From these four emerging themes of career trajectories, knowledge, networks and working with colleagues, it is clear that the issue of knowledge accumulation and the normalising or regulation of the behaviour of administrative staff in departments is complicated by their localisation. By this I imply their relationship with their academic department risks overshadowing their objectivity. This was particularly apparent in the case of the science department where there was little evidence of the administrative staff maintaining (or wishing to maintain) substantial links outside of the department. The social science department was more outward-facing and the administrators showed signs of external engagement, coupled with experience from previous institutions. It was interesting to note that they appeared to have a clearer perspective on possible career progression as well.

Having identified these themes, in the next section I will now concentrate in more detail on the interpretation of data and how this reveals the position of these administrative roles in relation to the status of a profession, focusing more explicitly on the work of Bernstein and Adler et al as the tools to undertaken this analysis.

⁴⁸ Interview with K, education manager, social science department.

⁴⁹ Interview with E, education manager, social science department

5.6 Interpretation of data

In this section I look in more detail at the themes identified in the previous section. While the data produced some key themes as set out above, I now want to focus on the knowledge and community aspects that arose, in the context of the theories of Bernstein and Adler et al, as discussed in previous chapters. As the research progressed, it became clear that these theories provided a helpful lens to explore the issues at the heart of this study rather than identify a solution.

In order to demonstrate that these administrative roles are an emerging profession in line with my conceptual argument, I carefully probed the extent to which there was a body of knowledge utilised by these occupations. This has already been implied by the emergence of an associated theme in the previous sections of this chapter. In the spirit of research enquiry, it is important to consider what might have led me to conclude that university administrators did not constitute an (emerging) profession. Such an implication would have resulted from lack of commonalities in the data between data sets and hence the arising themes in this chapter would not have been identified. Reflecting on the antithesis of the constant comparative approach (Creswell, 2003), and the naturalistic use of this method (as articulated by Fram, 2013), there would have been a lack of connection between the interviews as well as with the theoretical framework I had developed. In essence, there would have been a disjunction between what the administrators did and what academic staff did; the community concept may well have been fragmented. The other resonances between the data sets, e.g. the career trajectories, the way staff accumulated knowledge, may have been vastly different.

In order to undertake this analysis systematically, I developed another grid (Figure 5.5) to identify the links between knowledge and community identified in the analysis shown in the previous section.

Knowledge considered in Bernstein's context

- Sequential knowledge – based on training and experience; not hierarchical
- Weak grammar
- Diffuse – lack of control over knowledge acquisition which is accidental or incidental, and often dependent on one person rather than systematic
- Lack of focus/sources of transmission
- Need for overview, otherwise administrator has to 'self-start' and join things up, i.e. realising that key principles transfer between contexts.
- Progression requires access to areas outside of administrators' experience, e.g. research or project management. Qualification might resolve this.
- Training available in universities often very generic, i.e. line management skills.
- Volatility of knowledge – can change with external agencies, e.g. OfS, UKVI

Collaborative Community considered in Adler et al's context

- Reliance on administrators to interpret regulations and external requirements
- Battle between aspirations of academics (e.g. changing modules) and management of what can be done (e.g. QA, student experience) – AKA doing the right thing vs doing things right!
- Career progression unplanned and based on interest over designated career paths.
- Commitment to sector and development
- Networks are a source of development and progression as well as resolving issues.
- Community teaches new joiner how to do their jobs; department or wider institutional framework moderates their behaviour.
- New type of professional community > academics and admins as part of same community
- Interaction and power relations between academics and admins - blurring of boundaries.
- Some administrators committed to local community (e.g. Q in Science), others more to sector and ethos. Over-focus on local community might stifle development.
- Basis of trust – administrators gain trust of colleagues.
- Members of the community understand what each other do as well as barriers, e.g. resourcing.
- Networks are a source of sharing good practice.
- Understanding of roles on each side and parameters – boundaries may shift.

Figure 5.5: Links between knowledge and community

This grid helped me to consolidate the connection between the issues arising from the interviews in the context of knowledge and community as set up by my theoretical framework. This visualisation enabled me to clarify a way forward interpreting the data, the outcome of which now follows.

5.6.1 Knowledge in the collaborative community

From the data collected, it was clear that the notion of knowledge was vastly underplayed by those interviewed and it was mostly obtained via on-the-job training and via networks. The substance of the knowledge, however, was predicated on potentially transient detailed information such as frameworks set out by the QAA or research funders but with underlying principles such as governance, quality assurance or finance which, once known, were transferable between contexts⁵⁰. There was an acknowledgement of required skills, such as management and communication⁵¹, in executing these administrative roles. Bearing in mind the research perspectives of Deem, Henkel and others, this understatement is not surprising as there has not been any focus on the bones of knowledge that this occupational group require in order to discharge their roles.

In terms of Bernstein's principles, the issue is that the skills needed appear to align with his definition of genericism; some are difficult to quantify beyond transferable skills such as management skills or project management. However, looking at the way that the collaborative community of the department – academic and administrative staff – works together, as well as the detail of the regulatory knowledge used by the administrative staff, it is clear that some of this knowledge is not disciplinary but is formalised or codified. Manoeuvring the power of Bernstein's singular knowledge structures, it may be possible to 'create space' and propagate this formalised knowledge via networks and community in a very loose way, with both academic and administrative staff united by a common purpose: commitment to their department and sharing of practice. The issue is that this knowledge is vastly unstructured and is – by definition – entirely responsive to its context of application; its accumulation is unsystematic and

⁵⁰ Interviews with C (departmental manager, social science department) and K and E (education managers, social science department).

⁵¹ Interview with C (departmental manager, social science department) and K (education manager, social science department).

unregulated. This precludes any space for both accessing knowledge beyond one's own experience or new knowledge production without access to an organised curriculum such as through a degree programme.

In the science department, I also note that the departmental community is the primary site through which the administrators interviewed received their training (with further training provided by other departments or contacts within the institution as needed⁵²) and I extrapolate from this (noting their commitment and loyalty to the department) that the department primarily moderates their practice too. In the social science department, the experiences of the administrators interviewed indicated that their training had been obtained from other (previous) contexts, as well as the current department and so was less reliant on the department as the source of their practice or its moderation. This also came from external networks or other sources such as experience or websites such as HEFCE or QAA⁵³. The knowledge needed is horizontal, consisting of areas as far-ranging as regulations, grant application drafting or change management and is propagated without a systematic structure. This constrains how it may be interpreted or practiced and risks severely limiting the capability of staff. This unstructured approach to knowledge acquisition lacks control and is dependent on incidental factors, such as the knowledge and experience of existing staff members or the accessibility of other staff elsewhere in the institution. There is no explicit access to an overview of the higher education context as there might be with an organised curriculum and the current training available is predicated on generic issues such as line management. The net result is to disadvantage not just the individual administrators who are in this position, but also the collaborative community of which they are part. This lack of organisation risks impacting on their contribution to the success and effectiveness of academic work in the department. Commitment to a local unit needs to be balanced against the wider administrative community in the university but also refreshed by external networks in order to increase knowledge and encourage objectivity in practice.

⁵² Interview with J, research administrator.

⁵³ Interviews with C (departmental manager, social science department) and K and E (education managers, social science department).

Coupled with this nebulousness, however, there is a sense of commitment to the department or sector (this varied for each interviewee) that could be more aligned with a professional occupation. Interestingly, this is a case of the 'world', in Bernstein's sense, coming before the 'word', which consists of a set of codified, non-disciplinary knowledge and generic skills instead of a curriculum; the generic skills include the application of discretion in interpreting regulatory and policy frameworks in order to facilitate academic activities. As mentioned above, I have described this knowledge as 'know-how' which is accumulated tacitly.

In terms of professional practice, the tension between the subject, or knowledge, and the context (the department) needs to be negotiated by the administrators interviewed. The issue is that the knowledge needed for university administration roles is so entwined in the context it is difficult to separate out. The data gathered points to networks outside of the department as the means of ensuring that this tension is maintained: the 'word' has to come from external resources or networks, at least from outside the department. However, as seen in the data, this is not currently formalised within a curriculum in any systematic way⁵⁴.

The roles examined in the interviews have necessarily to be responsive to their context of practice, i.e. the department, but they also need to be insulated (to some extent) in order to avoid becoming too responsive. This is problematic as these roles are bound up in the structure of the department and faculty, particularly in the case of the departmental manager posts which deal with the strategic direction of the department. The content of the knowledge base for the departmental manager roles is based on the organisational infrastructure aspects of the department (the interface between academic and administrative work; the interface between strategy and operation) and is thus more generic. The knowledge needed for the education managers in the social science department consists of 'know-how' knowledge, facilitating the academic work in the department, e.g. by knowing how changes to modules will impact on students more widely, on university systems or the parameters that the department need

⁵⁴ There is a professional association for university administrators, AUA, but membership and participation in CPD is not expected for practitioners as part of their roles, although it is often encouraged; none of the interviewees mentioned the AUA in conversation.

to adhere to in order to meet external requirements such as the QAA's Quality Code, with these requirements being reflected in university-wide processes and regulations. This topic of 'know-how' knowledge is echoed in R's description of the expertise provided by one of the faculty administrators who provided close support for research to the social science department⁵⁵. Due to the nature of this knowledge, which appears to be aligned with the organisational side of the department, it was vastly underplayed by the administrators interviewed and was difficult to qualify beyond its identification as codified, non-disciplinary knowledge and generic skills, which together I term 'know-how'.

5.6.2 Departmental differences

From the interviews within both departments, it is clear that academic and administrative staff work closely together in a joined-up manner where there are aspects of each role that might be transferable between these groups of staff⁵⁶; collaboration is apparent between these groups of staff as per Adler et al. However, as set out in Chapter 2, the issue with community that Adler et al identify is its insularity; due to the lack of a structured curriculum and dependence on networks, there is little chance of knowledge expansion or production.

This resonates with the case of the departmental manager in the science department, whose experience and commitment was particularly localised to the department; this was echoed to an extent by the research administrator in the same department, J, although J was more proactive in seeking out information from other departments when she needed help or advice, such as on financial systems. This perspective was inward looking and there was no evidence of outward-ness, or any connection with external networks, which meant that the administrative staff risk being limited in terms of progression. It was interesting to note that the two administrative staff interviewed had been in post for many years and showed little inclination to progress their careers outside the department. This localisation risks the department being in a silo, with the perspective offered by the administration becoming merged with that of the

⁵⁵ Interview with R, academic, social science department.

⁵⁶ Interview with R, academic, social science department; also example provided by S, academic, science department who described the department's career liaison role which could be undertaken by an academic or administrator.

academic group. This may in turn compromise how the department is then managed in terms of working against/with the needs of the wider institution and external factors. For example, it was unclear in the science department how the administrative staff kept up with developments in their areas of work.

Conversely, within the social science department there was a much more outward-looking perspective; the administrators interviewed were engaged with external networks and factors and there was evidence of wider work experience in other universities⁵⁷. This engagement entailed a more robust level of support for their department as they were able to provide alternative perspectives rather than becoming too embroiled with their department.

This comparison resonates with Bernstein's principles of singular and regional knowledge structures: the singular science department exemplified insularity in terms of the administrative staff whereas the administrators in the newer, regional social science department were more responsive to external factors and networks. Of course, this was a small study of two departments and so is naturally narrow, but provides the basis for further analysis outside of this study.

5.6.3 *Boundaries between roles*

In Chapter 4, I set out that Adler et al's concept of the collaborative community suggested that boundaries between academic and administrative staff were now more permeable and therefore the interdependence of their roles needs to be probed alongside the interplay of the community, hierarchy/management and market. In terms of the differentiation between the academic and administrative staff, it was clear from the interviews that there was a blurring of boundaries between the administrators and academic staff in some cases, but this was mostly down the possibility of transfer of work between the two categories. For example, in the science department the careers liaison was enacted by an academic staff member, whereas in another department in the faculty this was

⁵⁷ E.g. C, K and E had all started their careers at other institutions and maintained external networks.

undertaken by an administrator⁵⁸. However, in general there was clarity between the roles, such as in the case of a student having problems:

If they've got a personal problem, then they should come to me and then we'll talk it through and then I'll put them in touch with the right processes as per the university, right. Now, students being students, don't understand that and they will often switch and go to the wrong person, and that's when kind of working together comes into play. So you have to be able to respond to them, have to be able to say, 'look, here's how it works', and be as nice and friendly and open as you can.

(R, academic, social science department)

The emphasis was rather on working together to support students instead of pursuing parameters. This reflected the notion of the cross-boundary professional (Whitchurch, 2008c) but particularly resonated with the concept of the collaborative community, with close working between different groups with varying remits who worked together to reach a common aim. This echoed my previous comment in Chapter 4, as this structure reflected facets of a holistic community where the subject specialists and management/hierarchy in Adler et al's terms (i.e. the academic staff and administrators) were less clearly delineated. This was echoed by the perspective of the head of the science department, who was very focused on the management aspect of his role and what this meant for leading the staff under his remit, including how this might impact on student surveys or how changes to the estate might affect the way the department worked. For example, in relation to a potential new office location the University was exploring:

And two of the departments did a pilot over there in a new structure which is basically open, I mean not an open plan office in the typical sense, where you just have the big room with lots of people and desks, I don't think you could do that, but partitioned off with no roof, so no soundproofing, visibility, no privacy, and they hated it, by and large....

⁵⁸ Interview with S, science department.

There were some nice things, the social space was very nice, but actually, no-one was using it cos you know what happened? They were all working from home.

(P, head of science department)

This was an example of the more generic management skills that have been identified as contributing to the 'know-how' knowledge utilised by the administrators and exemplifies the transfer between the two group in terms of their remits. This specific example reflects the genericism evident in this type of knowledge where the judgement is down to experience rather than any regulatory or external framework. This concept will be explored further in the next section.

While there was cross-over, there was also some clarity between the roles of academic and administrative staff⁵⁹. In the case of issues with examinations for example:

Outside of my line management responsibilities, then I ensure that our regulations and everything are up-to-scratch, if there are any high-level queries they would normally come to me. So, if it's something like there's a mistake on an exam paper that the students have noticed, then I'm the one who will then report to the head of department and the head of education... [and] find out what actually went wrong and report it to them, those kinds of things.

(K, education manager, social science department)

K added that she investigated such instances, including considering the validity of the error, whether process need to be amended to prevent a recurrence:

Or alternatively we go to the academic because [on] some of the exam papers, I haven't got a clue what they are talking about! [laughs]

(K, education manager, social science department)

⁵⁹ NB: the administrators interviewed had specific job descriptions, whereas the academic staff did not.

Hence the input of a subject specialist was required to complement the regulatory knowledge held by K.

From the research, it is clear that there were two types of 'know-how' knowledge in play: one was predicated on codified, defined regulations or frameworks; the other was the product of experience accumulated through working in different posts, managing people etc and was common across academic and administrative staff in both departments.

I categorise this second type as akin to generic knowledge (Bernstein, 2000), but while I acknowledge that this type of tacit knowledge does not relate to any substantial content, it is still important for maintaining the organisation of the academic department and, in effect, helping things run properly. There was an indication from the interviews that this knowledge, though not based on content, was a by-product of the experiences of both academics and administrators:

I've had some training but I think by and large from experience. And I've got reasonably strong views on management. I think management – this is trite – is about people. ... The best managers, like the best teachers in my view, engage the staff they work with and make them feel the work matters and that they're part of a team, and that they care about their work. So if you're talking to students, to engage them in their own learning.
(P, head of science department)

P's management knowledge was related clearly to his teaching experience. Similarly, C's tacit knowledge was clearly connected to her management roles in other universities and her 'know-how', particularly around Human Resources legislation and principles, was recognised when she sought promotion at other institutions:

When I joined [a central services department in another institution] it was just about the start a large change management process, particularly across library services, and I was responsible for part of that process. Specifically, about the process and how we were going to do something,

the timeline, etc, being part of the negotiations with the unions, it was fairly complex. Again part of the reason why I got that role was because I had been through a fairly significant change management process at [her previous institution], so I think one thing built on the other.

(C, departmental manager, social science department)

To explain, while this tacit knowledge is generic, it is generated by the practice of staff, which is in turn predicated on a more codified type of knowledge (whether subject-specific or regulatory). In terms of boundaries, this knowledge serves any staff regardless of remit but who have to operate on the organisational axis of the collaborative community, e.g. as an administrator or a line manager for academic staff.

This generic knowledge does not belittle the codified knowledge held by the administrators; rather, it clarifies where the permeability lies between academic and administrative staff remits. The remaining issue is how to move beyond the collaborative community in order to provide a structure for professional development for the administrative staff. The next section looks towards how this may be remedied.

5.6.4 *Using Bernstein and Adler et al's theoretical frameworks*

The use of Bernstein's knowledge structures have proved a useful means of exploring the expertise used within the administrative roles under examination as a potential profession. As previously stated, the focus on knowledge has been long neglected in research on this occupational group and this study has provided a means of accessing this knowledge. Using the concepts of singular, regional and generic knowledge structures, I have shown how this group might use their recognised knowledge to develop a professional identity and identifying space within which to develop this knowledge indicates how this group may progress and formalise their identity.

The knowledge identified is complicated by the positioning of the administration, in this study, in two ways. Firstly, as seen in the previous section the

administrators are located within a community of both administrative and academic staff⁶⁰ where, although remits are clear, there is a degree of cross-over between roles and both parties work together on teaching or research activities. Secondly, the codified knowledge is clearly predicated on the organisational side of operating the activities of the respective department, providing what I call 'know-how' expertise to ensure that the activities accord with the institution's requirements in terms of regulations and processes as well as the external regulatory framework. There is a clear movement of control to the administration in terms of setting boundaries for how academic work operates, as suggested in Chapter 4. Using the lens of Adler et al's collaborative community, this shows the advantages and shortcomings of this positioning: the community aspect was, in the case of the science department, immersive and the administrative staff were inward-looking towards the department; in the case of the social science department, while there was evidently cohesion and commitment to the department, there were also clear links with external networks as well as others within the institution which ensured a more balanced perspective. To my mind, this also provided space to develop one's knowledge and refresh practice, as well as to compare one's viewpoint with those of other administrators.

In this sense, it was clear that the concept of the collaborative community within the university needed the external incentive of these networks in order for their administrative staff to optimise their practice and access the normalising influence of their peers. However, this influence was unregulated in itself and lacked structure. Conversely to the principles set out by Bernstein, the notion of inwardness and insularity undermines the administrators' development as a potential profession. This echoes the perspective of Adler et al's collaborative community as per the comparison set out in Chapter 4, with the input of the market and hierarchy seen as positive stimulus. The dissonance between Bernstein and Adler et al's concepts of identity and community is illustrated in Table 5.4:

⁶⁰ In the case of the science department, there were also technicians.

	Identity	Community
Bernstein	Strong – singulars	Strong – insular; inward-looking
	Weak - regions	Weak – Outward-looking
Adler et al	Strong - regions	Strong - collaboration
	Weak - singulars	Weak – insular; exclusive

Table 5.4: Comparison of framing of concepts of identity and community

This confuses the notion of Bernstein’s framing and classification as discussed in Chapter 2. In terms of framing, strong control of a curriculum for university administrators (as is implied by Bernstein’s perspective) is not possible as this knowledge is clearly determined by external factors such as state agencies or frameworks; this knowledge content will be explored in detail in Chapter 6. In terms of classification, my research suggests that this differs between the two different departments investigated: in the science department it appears that the strong insularity and commitment that would be expected of a singular subject had been embraced by their administrative staff; conversely, the weaker region represented by the social science department was reflected in the outward perspective of their administrators. In effect, the weaker classification was more beneficial to this group of staff and aided their progression and development.

5.7 Summary of chapter

In this study, I have shown that the occupational group of university administrators show signs of moving towards being a profession, in terms of an increasingly identifiable knowledge base alongside a more generic set of skills/expertise which is born of experience and tacit learning, but this professionalisation is limited by the lack of organisation of the group.

If these roles are deemed emerging professions, it is important to recognise that not all of the roles require same knowledge. From the interview data, the implication is the more general departmental roles may require more of an overview and knowledge of the principles of how higher education works with

detail as needed. More specific roles, e.g. education manager, require more specific codified knowledge, i.e. from frameworks set out by the QAA, OfS and institutional knowledge which needs to be kept updated through engagement with external sources or agencies.

While I have shown that the works of Bernstein and Adler et al have provided a lens through which to focus on the knowledge and ways of working of university administrators, they do not provide a neat solution as to how to progress the development of this group as a profession. However, their concepts together do suggest a way forward. As set out in the previous sections, training is mostly on-the-job and accumulated through experience, which develops tacit knowledge. As the administrators are based in a collaborative community, the issue is how to refresh this knowledge through alternative sources of expertise, e.g. networks. This knowledge is dependent on changing frameworks (e.g. QAA, TEF) so staff need to understand more deeply what is behind these frameworks. I have shown that there is already evidence of commitment to the sector or department which resonates with professional commitment, although is focused on the context of practice, and this can be drawn on to develop further training.

From a Bernsteinian perspective, I have shown that there is a need to enable access to knowledge beyond the individual's experience and this needs to be articulated in a more structured way than is currently possible. There is a need to balance out the influence of the local community, i.e. the department in the case of the administrators featured in this study, with other normalising influences and the implication of this study is that networks may provide this mechanism. From the study, I have shown that – in the case of the two departments featured – there may be a risk of insularity and so external stimulation may need to be more formalised to ensure that staff develop, contrary to the insularity that Bernstein purports to develop identity. I have shown that the remits of the administrators will occasionally cross over into delivering academic work, e.g. the departmental manager's project supervision work in science department, but in general are actually quite bounded and clear. The main issue is with how to categorise this knowledge, how to propagate it and how to regulate it as knowledge that is based on the axis of the organisation rather than in an

academic subject. This is coupled with the issue of how to facilitate the necessary tacit learning which enables good practice.

I have also shown that the normalising of behaviour of the administrative roles examined is very informal; most was predicated on the sharing of practice and the relationship with the department (more so with the science department) and colleagues. However, the need of the 'home' department needs to be aligned with the needs of the wider faculty/institution or external requirements in order to fulfil external or institutional requirements.

This summary indicates a need to formalise the development of the administrators in question, utilising some bases already in place – on-the-job training and networks within and across institutions. The next chapter will focus on potential solutions to this.

Chapter 6: Professionalising University Administrators – A Way Forward

6.1 *Introduction to chapter*

This final chapter sets out the output of my research and the implications for those working in administrative roles in universities as well as the way forward for future research.

I start by summarising my findings and setting out my contribution to higher education studies: the identification of a new knowledge base for higher education administrators and how this is constituted as a new type of region which is located entirely in the field of practice and is constantly-shifting. I show that this region involves the translation of external sector changes to institutional policy and practice and incorporates the increasing emphasis on student outcomes due to their emergence not only as consumers of education but also more recently as part of the collaborative community of the faculty or department. I discuss the tacit side of this new region and its importance. I go on to explain how I established my findings and then conclude this chapter (and indeed the study) by setting out the implications of my research in terms of the main outcomes for knowledge, the organisation/community and the professional development of university administrators as a group.

6.2 *Summary of findings and my contribution*

My research was undertaken in a pre-1992, multi-faculty university and I focused on two different types of academic department, one a relatively new social science and the other a long-established science department as described in Chapter 5. These departments were housed in separate faculties, although the faculty structures were similar and the administration within both departments was configured in a broadly comparable manner. My research was based in two departments which met the definition of Bernstein's singular and regionalised disciplines, as I explained in Chapter 5. As also described in the previous chapter, the singular science department appeared to foster – for the administrative staff at least – an inward-facing perspective; the regionalised and

relatively new social science department was more outward-facing. My findings clearly established that there is indeed a knowledge base that university administrators working in faculties or departments hold. However, the administrative staff in both departments acquired their knowledge in similar ways in terms of on-the-job training, networks of colleagues, online resources and so forth. This administrative group exhibited the characteristics of an emergent profession.

My research is a novel contribution to the field of higher education studies and is the first study to examine university administrators as a potential profession in the context of the community of academic and administrative staff in two different departmental settings. Firstly, I articulate the position of the administrators' knowledge in relation to subject specialist knowledge as located on different axes of the university as an organisation. Secondly, I identify this group's knowledge base as a new type of region which is generated entirely from the field of practice – the institution.

The difference in perspective indicates the importance of consideration of local departmental culture in the development of these staff and how this might be managed while not compromising their commitment to their work and their locality, but ensuring their impartiality in how they utilise their knowledge in practice.

6.3 Research outcomes

6.3.1 New knowledge base

My research has established a new knowledge base and identified where it is situated in terms of the organisation of a university. As I asserted in Chapters 3 and 5, this knowledge base sits on the **axis of the organisation** and forms part of the production of academic activities, i.e. degree provision or research.

My study clearly shows that, from the sample of staff interviewed, university administrators are an emerging profession: they exhibit some of the salient characteristics of a profession in terms of a body of knowledge. Following Adler

et al (2006; 2008), there is what could be termed a market need or demand for this knowledge in terms of their contribution to delivering academic activities; their input is needed in order to provide the framework/organisational infrastructure for delivering these activities. However, due to the hitherto lack of clarity around this knowledge base and the previous perception of university administration as denigrating the position of academic staff, this position has been under-valued. My study sought to demythologise this view and identify their contribution to academic activities and their position as an emergent profession.

In my research, I have used Bernstein's (2000) concepts as a means of understanding how bodies of knowledge create their own space and how this leads towards the genesis of disciplines and professions closely associated with disciplines such as law and medicine, and their perpetuation. I have discussed how the principles of Adler et al reflect the current process-basis of the way in which academic activities are carried out in universities in Chapter 2, involving both academic and administrative post-holders. Adler et al's concepts enable a focus on where the knowledge held by the administrators is positioned: on the axis of the organisation with academic subject specialist knowledge on the other axis. This has helped me to establish that programme delivery and research are the product of academic knowledge and organisational knowledge. Figure 6.1 illustrates this conclusion in terms of degree provision, using the knowledge areas derived from the interview data discussed in the preceding chapters, such as relating to external quality framework requirements. Figure 6.1a builds on these concepts, building in further aspects that have arisen out of sector changes from my own experience (highlighted in red) and which I set out more explicitly in Table 6.1 later in this chapter.

As implied in Chapter 3, Bernstein's inward-looking principles do not allow for the way that professions or occupational groups currently often work in organisations: for this reason, I called on the concepts developed by Adler et al to help me articulate the concept of different post-holders working in a community alongside other professions on the same activities. The identification of the knowledge areas in figures 6.1 and 6.1a established a rapprochement between the theories of Bernstein and Adler et al. Furthermore, Adler enables me to situate this

knowledge in relation to academic expertise, while Bernstein's principles provide a means for this knowledge base to be established and for university administrators to appropriate a space to lead to their identification as a profession, as discussed in Chapter 3. Reflecting the research outcomes in Chapter 5, the more nuanced implications of this manoeuvre in terms of working in different subject communities are discussed later in this chapter, in light of Bernstein's definitions of singular and regional departmental communities with different degrees of insulation from the influences of the organisation/institution.

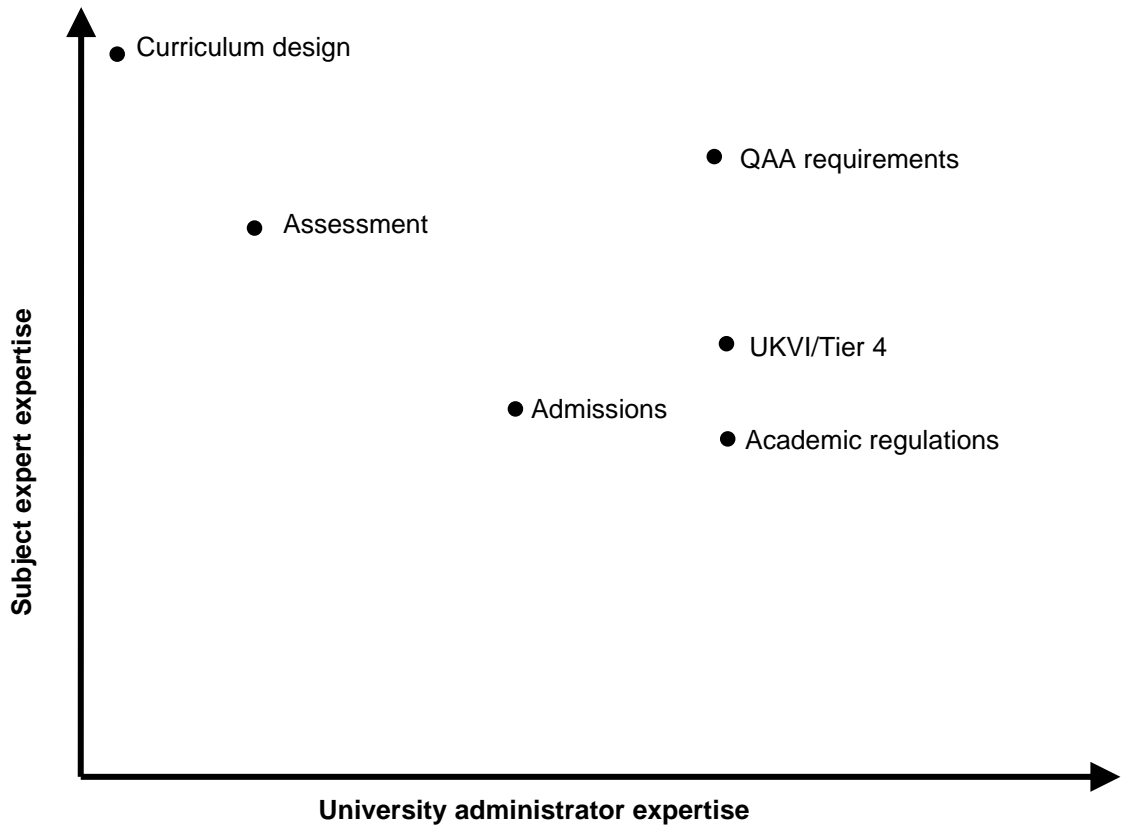


Figure 6.1: Degree provision as the product of subject specialists and administrative expertise

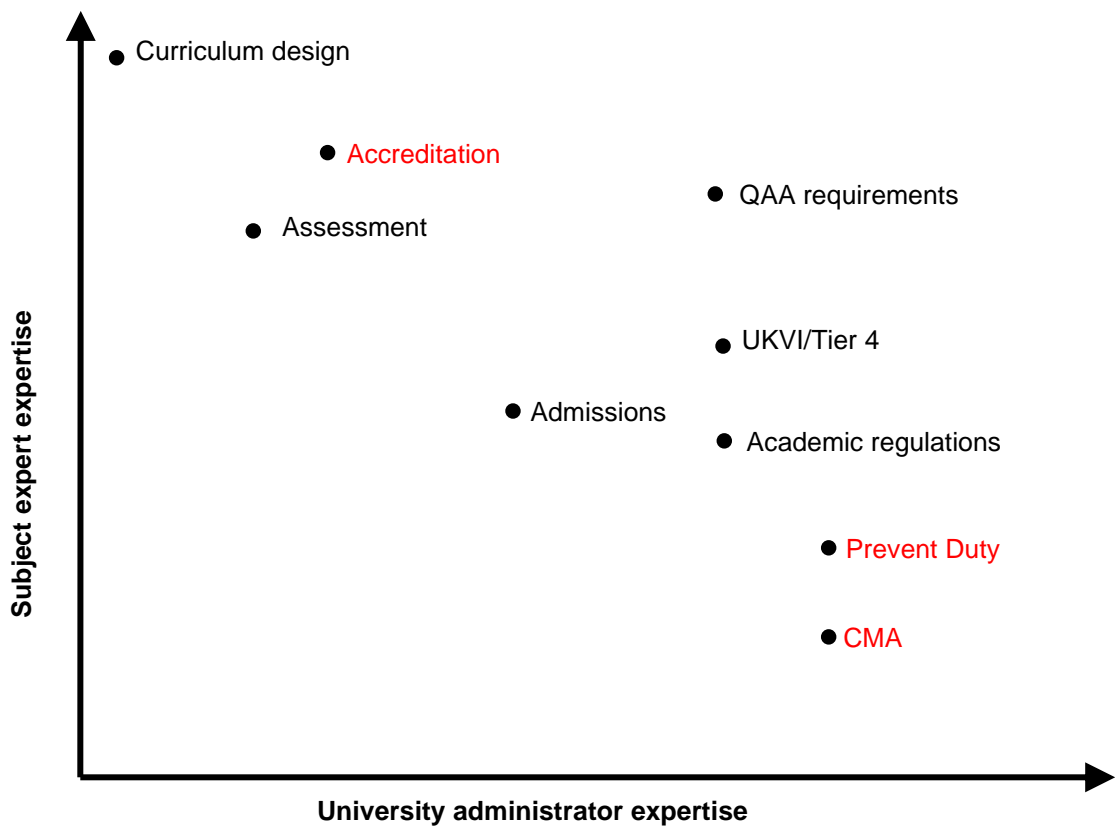


Figure 6.1a: Degree provision with additional examples of administrative expertise highlighted

To expand on this as exemplified in Figure 6.1, the x axis (the expertise provided by the administration) provides the organisational infrastructure for teaching in terms of articulating external sector requirements (e.g. compliance with legislation), academic regulations, the quality assurance processes through which a degree is developed and the management of admissions and assessment to name but a few areas. In terms of research, the x axis provides management of budgets and finance processes such as costing proposals or advising on complex grant issues. The y axis depicts the subject-specialist expertise that provides the academic research. These factors work together to produce the overall teaching output, sometimes with permeability between their respective areas. For instance, an administrator may have curriculum knowledge that enables him/her to teach on a programme⁶¹, whereas an academic may have innovative ways to manage admissions.

The data from the interviews clearly pointed to knowledge held by the university administrators which focused on QAA requirements⁶², academic regulations⁶³, admissions⁶⁴ and assessment⁶⁵ and implied how this was related to that held by academic staff (i.e. subject expertise). Figure 6.1 is an articulation of how this expertise relates and where the locus might lie. I have expanded on the categories of knowledge based on my experience over two decades of working in higher education and reflecting on changes which have resulted in further areas of work in the provision of academic activities, e.g. legislation around consumer protection (CMA) and terrorism prevention activities (Prevent) as suggested in figure 6.1a. As mentioned above, I expand on the knowledge base later in this chapter.

As I stated above, university administration has not been able to identify itself as a profession both due to its perception as being at odds with academic staff and

⁶¹ In addition to the projects taught by the Departmental Manager in the science department, I know several other university administrators who have taught sessions on programmes, including myself.

⁶² Interview with E, education manager, social science department.

⁶³ Interviews with E and K, education managers, social science department.

⁶⁴ Interview with C, departmental manager, social science department.

⁶⁵ Interview with K, education manager, social science department.

the lack of research to date on the nature of its knowledge base. However, my study has evidenced how this knowledge is both formulated and needed within higher education institutions. This perspective also negates the perceptions of the administration as at odds with academic work and shows the limitations of new managerialism in undervaluing the role of university administration, a perspective which has pervaded higher education discourse. In situating university administrators on the axis of the organisation, I have illustrated their commitment is towards protecting the interests of the university, whether this is the academic department or the wider institution. This clarifies another aspect of their position as an emergent profession.

My articulation of the knowledge and its relationship to subject expertise positions university administration in a new light. It locates university administrators within an organisation, with a degree of permeability between knowledge bases held by different types of staff, and this differs from Whitchurch's 'third space'. This knowledge consists of a new type of conceptual base, akin but not entirely aligned with a region in Bernstein's terms, but heralding a new type of region. However, instead of arising from two disciplines coming together and operating in an external field of practice, this knowledge is not discipline-related in terms of being identified with any existing subject areas and is entirely generated from the context of practice with little control over the content, as it is generated at state level. To compare, a more established region such as engineering is the product of singular knowledge structures, including mathematics and physics, explicitly applied to external contexts in the real world. In this area, there is a tension between the academic discipline and the external contexts but there is a significant degree of control from the academic side through the degree curriculum. This is not the case with all regions, as some less-established cases such as tourism or business studies tend to have more eclectic knowledge bases which are more susceptible to external influences and thus these academic disciplines have less control over knowledge, as discussed in Chapter 2. It is important to note that these examples are regions which are derived entirely from the external context, as is the case with university administration.

There is currently no academic discipline to balance out the externally-driven influences of state agencies and legislation in terms of the knowledge utilised by university administrators. However, as I have discussed, this knowledge is a new type of region where its substance is entirely externally-driven and developed, rather than merely a set of genericisms, i.e. transferable skills. My argument is that this anchor in the context of practice should not denigrate the position of university administrators as an emerging profession. Other, more established, modern professions such as accountancy are based on practical training and do not require a first degree in a connected subject as a prerequisite for admission to training although a first degree is normally a condition of entry; instead, training is normally based within an organisation. For training as a chartered accountant, the normal route is through employment with a company which is authorised to offer the ACA qualification and involves completion of examined modules as well as other professional development activities⁶⁶.

Even an established profession such as law has always offered a route for non-law graduates via its Common Professional Examination or Graduate Diploma in Law route, which consists of an intensive course to provide the law knowledge normally covered in an undergraduate degree. It is interesting to note that this route is also available to students who have acquired vocational experience which is deemed to be equivalent to a first degree⁶⁷. Accountancy is a prime example of a modern profession which has grown from the 'world' but claimed a space for itself, in Bernstein's terms. In the case of law, the CPE is an example of how an established profession is closely associated with an academic discipline but also offers a route for those who have not obtained a degree in this field.

In both cases, it is the employing company that provides the practical context which is congruent with the position of the university administrators interviewed. In a similar manner, the administrators interviewed started working in universities at department level and were involved in activities in partnership with academic

⁶⁶ Details as per the professional association website <http://careers.icaew.com/how-to-become-a-chartered-accountant> - October 2017.

⁶⁷ ⁶⁷ Details as per the Law Society website <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/law-careers/becoming-a-solicitor/> - October 2017.

staff, such as programme administration or assessment, which provided a basis for developing their careers in the sector. This suggests that establishing this group as an emerging or new profession may not be problematic as there is a basis for training but the means of instituting consistent training needs to be clarified. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Bernstein's principles of knowledge structures provide a resource for developing a space for this group as a budding profession.

The content of this new type of region is also regularly shifting with external factors, such as new legislation, directly impacting on these roles particularly around degree provision. For example, the introduction of the UK's Points Based System in 2008 created an impetus to develop and implement new policy and processes within universities in order to meet external compliance requirements for international students with Tier 4 visas. To explain, this tiered system is (at the time of writing) a means of regulating immigration to the UK for non-EU migrants, based on certain criteria such as qualifications and skills⁶⁸. Non-EU students wishing to study at a university in the UK need to show they meet certain requirements including that they have an offer of a place from an institution, have at least a minimum standard of English skills and funds to support themselves in order to be issued with a student visa (known as a Tier 4 visa). The university at which they wish to study must also hold a Tier 4 license to sponsor such students. In practical terms, this means that the university is responsible for ensuring that students met these criteria in line with legislation. Adherence by the university is assured via external audits and the possibility of license withdrawal⁶⁹ (and hence loss of students and income to the institution). This has created a new set of roles both in terms of ensuring institutional compliance but also advising and supporting students who hold Tier 4 visas. Universities admitting Tier 4 students have to ensure they retain their licences for sponsorship through monitoring these students' engagement with their studies (i.e. attendance) and provide records confirming these checks when audited as well as other information around applications and identity checks.

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/apply-to-come-to-the-uk> accessed April 2019

⁶⁹ A real-life example of this happening was London Metropolitan University who lost their license in 2012: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/aug/30/london-metropolitan-university-visa-revoked> accessed April 2019.

This is knowledge that had to be developed and articulated by university administrators but was also needed by academic staff in their dealings with students. To exemplify the latter point, certain types of programme delivery (e.g. where modules are delivered in an intensive 'block') might not be feasible for admission of students holding Tier 4 visas, so the impact of such changes needs to be understood by academic teams via engagement with administrators who have acquired the necessary knowledge in relation to the Points Based System and can identify solutions for implementing it and resolving any issues arising.

Similarly, the now-named Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) has had a direct impact on this knowledge base which has had to respond with changes in university processes and priorities. The TEF is a government-driven means of measuring the quality of higher education provision through meeting metrics in the following three categories: Teaching Quality, Learning Environment and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain. The statistics used to measure quality are derived from the National Student Survey, student continuation (progression) data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and employment outcomes for graduates obtained via the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.

For some institutions, the increased importance of student progression, satisfaction and employability in light of the TEF has resulted in more explicit policy and processes such as those focusing on student engagement (to help reduce attrition rates), resourcing to support student survey activity and emphasis on embedding employment skills in the curriculum. We can already see some evolving/newer roles of late which are entirely focused on the student experience and the institutional processes which impact on this^{70,71}.

⁷⁰ Examples of advertised posts in early 2018 include a Faculty Education Manager role at a Russell Group institution with clear remit including regulatory management and student survey outcomes, progression enhancement, all of which are clearly linked with TEF and the evolving external environment.

⁷¹ Looking at the faculty and departmental administration for the institution where I carried out my research and a similar institution in the locality, there are increasingly roles which have an explicit student experience focus incorporating satisfaction and employability.

Further agencies or legislation such as Prevent Duty, which requires institutions to implement processes to prevent students becoming involved in terrorism, and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) which has made the requirement of accurate, transparent and timely information to applicants and students much more explicit, have also impacted on the profile of other administrative roles in terms of increasing their knowledge base. If not explicitly creating new roles, fulfilment of these requirements has necessitated university administrators to interpret legislation in order to facilitate changes within their organisations, e.g. in terms of information provision to students, processes around changes to degree programmes and pastoral support and advice.

In order to illustrate examples of external drivers for these changes, Table 6.1 sets out the timeline for recent years, the impact on universities and the development of new knowledge areas. The aim of this table is to show the emergence of new roles as a result of these changes and knowledge areas more explicitly and exemplify how university administration has evolved and become more complex over recent decades as a result:

Date	External agency or measure	Impact on institutions	New knowledge generated	Examples of new administrative roles developed
1997	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)	Development of processes and roles to ensure fulfilment within institutions of criteria set out by quality assurance framework and for external audit.	<p>Quality assurance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of external framework (the chapters of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education; Subject Benchmark Statements) for own institution in terms of policy and regulation; • understanding acceptable practice within own institution and across sector, e.g. in terms of information provision to students, design, development of programmes and modules, assessment practices, external examining, degree provision in partnership with other organisations, student appeals and complaints; • understanding how these can vary between institutions and why; • understanding and articulating how these practices may vary between types of disciplines; • understanding the role of professional accreditation; • preparation and requirements for external audit/review. 	Quality Assurance Manager or Officer
2008	UK Visas and Immigration (formerly UK Border Agency)	Institutions hold licenses to sponsor international students who require Tier 4 visas. These institutions are required to ensure that students engage with their studies and must provide evidence for external inspection by UKVI.	<p>UKVI compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of legislation and translation to new processes within university, e.g. student attendance monitoring, attendance thresholds; interaction and reporting to external agencies (UKVI); • practical knowledge of degree programmes (including pedagogy) to enable monitoring and adherence; • awareness of student support resources; • university policies and regulations; • knowledge of different cultures; • data analysis. 	Visa compliance officer; visa advice officer.

2015	Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)	Assurance that information available to applicants and students is accurate and sufficiently extensive that informed decisions can be made with regard to programmes of study.	CMA compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of consumer rights legislation to development of degree programmes and admissions; • legal implications of the terms and conditions of student registration; • practice across sector. 	Compliance Manager ⁷²
2015	Prevent Duty (Home Office)	Implementation of duty within institutions via development of policy and reporting structures as well as support systems to prevent students becoming involved with or supporting terrorism; cross-agency working e.g. with police.	Prevent compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of legislation and translation to processes within university, e.g. approval of external speakers; • interaction and reporting to external agencies; • practice across sector with regard to supporting students who may be vulnerable to radicalisation; • knowledge of different cultures; • IT systems. 	
2015	Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (formerly Teaching Excellence Framework) (Office for Students)	More interventions to improve outcomes of National Student Survey and reduce attrition rates; increased focus on student employability and inclusion of these skills in curriculum.	Student engagement and development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum and pedagogic knowledge of degree programmes in order to provide interventions where students raise issues or are at risk of non-continuation; • data analysis; • student support interventions for students at risk of failure, e.g. personal tutor support, buddy or peer support systems and their efficacy for different needs. 	Student Experience Manager/Officer

Table 6.1: Timeline for the development of new knowledge

⁷² This knowledge and responsibility is often integrated with existing substantive posts.

My study has chronologically established that the knowledge base for this new region of university administration is accumulated through a combination of resources, including localised training from colleagues and other networks as well as information available within institutions (regulations, policy) and external websites (QAA, funding councils – which often dictate the institutional regulations and policy). Because of the contextual nature of this knowledge base and its regular evolution (e.g. the introduction of the Office for Students), the region is continually changing and how the knowledge is used by university administrators consequently shifts.

Since I began work on this thesis in 2012, the relationship between students and universities has evolved to the extent that the former are positioned explicitly as consumers of higher education. This has recently been solidified by the establishment of the Office for Students (OfS) as the government authority for higher education in early 2018, superseding HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access. The OfS will oversee the TEF moving forward, thus ensuring that students are not only consumers but also the main evaluators of higher education institutions and qualifications. This assessment is provided directly through their participation in the National Student Survey, as well as indirectly through their success in progressing through the stages of their undergraduate degree ('continuation') and subsequent employability.

In terms of the theoretical framework for my research, this reflects an extension of the collaborative community of the academic department within a university with students now part of that community as well as consumers. Over recent years they have been increasingly represented at all levels within the governance of institutions, whether within departmental meetings regarding programmes or at highest management committee level. Their input has also increasingly been a requirement for the development of new programmes as well as changes to current programmes and the advent of the CMA guidance has increased importance via consumer legislation of providing timely and accurate information to students. In this sense, the market for a department's degree programmes has become assimilated into the organisation and its governance.

As a consequence of latter-day developments in new public sector management/new managerialism, i.e. increased accountability, there is more emphasis within universities on the outcomes of student surveys and the resultant implementation of this feedback, potentially influencing changes to programmes of study, learning resources and the estate. Pre-TEF, there was already a developing focus on feedback as the QAA Quality Code set out expectations for student engagement and representation and the instigation of the National Student Survey in 2005 provided a direct link between the student voice and HEFCE. In the last ten years, university league tables have provided a very public measure of an institution's attractiveness for potential undergraduates in terms of experience and outcomes. The link between TEF and tuition fees over the last few years has formalised the relationship between the student as consumer as well as member of the university community.

This will also have spawned underlying activity within an academic department or faculty. There is now more impetus to ensure that all students are scaffolded towards completing the survey (so there may be extra processes around analysing the data set to ensure the correct students are contacted), have the impact of the survey explained to them, all with the aim of ensuring their experience during their degree is a positive one. This may, in turn, unwittingly influence how pedagogic issues are dealt with, e.g. negative feedback on assessment processes might influence choices with regard to scheduling and type of examinations. These are all elements that would need to be on the radar of staff involved in these activities so that they can consider the implications when involved in programme development or delivery activities. However, a lack of oversight as to how these local activities correlate with the external changes would limit not just their practice, but potentially cause a risk to the success of a degree programme.

The ever-changing nature of the knowledge base for university administrators is the product of state intervention in higher education through legislation and creation of new external agencies. This resonates with my hypothesis in Chapter 2 (in the section on New Managerialism): in previous research on higher education the TEF, Tier 4 visa monitoring processes, and Prevent Duty would

have been construed as symptoms of new managerialism in universities, whereas my research clearly locates these measures as a result of government action rather than university management acting in isolation.

In the following Figure 6.2, I map out the outline of this knowledge in terms of the main external frameworks which influence academic activities, as well as the variables which tend to be more specific to each individual institution and may be the product of organisational structure, culture and departmental differences. This diagram depicts the external factors that affect the development and delivery of a degree programme, which in turn drive internal institutional strategy, policy and regulation. To expand, the external quality framework (currently provided by the QAA and OfS) will set the parameters for the way in which an institution's regulatory framework is articulated. Likewise, external UKVI legislation and the requirements for monitoring students with Tier 4 visas may influence the structuring of a degree programme that is aiming to attract international students. The development of a new programme is thus subject to the university's internal interpretation of the external environment and its pressures and demands.

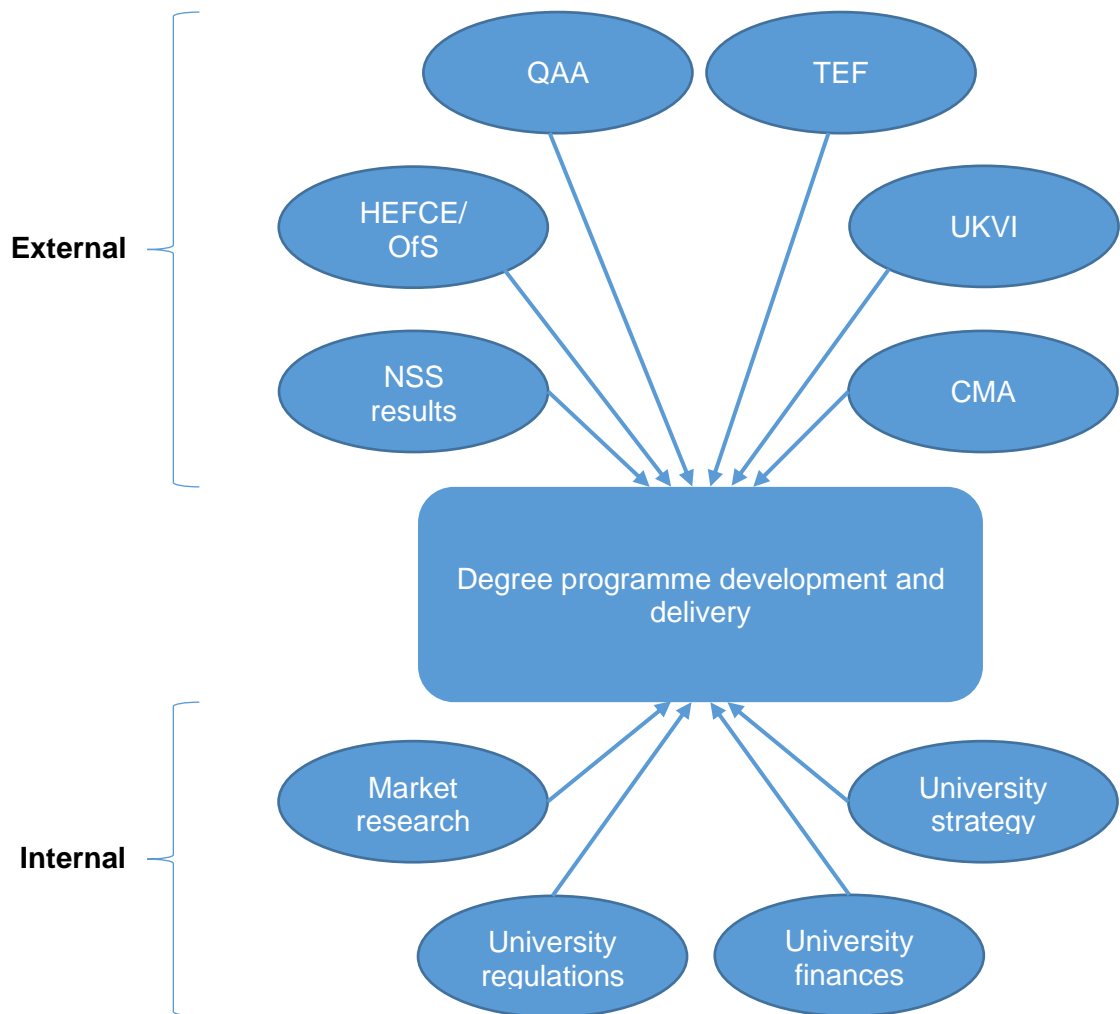


Figure 6.2: External and internal factors affecting the development and delivery of a degree programme

The diagram relates to provision of a new degree programme as an example. Detailed information relating to the external factors is accessible via websites, external agency briefings and conferences and may be cascaded through to staff within a university via institutional leads for certain areas of work, e.g. heads of quality assurance teams. This indicates that staff who have no engagement with these sources of learning will suffer from knowledge atrophy and are at risk of limiting their ability to perform their roles or their development. This is clearly indicated in the interviews undertaken in this study, particularly those in the science department. Knowledge of the internal (variable) factors is accessible via university information on websites, internal procedural documents, local training and an awareness of departmental expertise within the organisation, e.g. who in the marketing department would be tasked with analysing competitors and evaluating student demand; who in the finance department can provide guidance

on costs and funding. Other knowledge on these influences would be accumulated through practice and tacit learning, for instance an awareness of the flexibility of the estate to enable certain types of programme delivery (i.e. whether facilities would be available to deliver a certain method of teaching to a large group) or an understanding of how a particular subject is taught and the resources which are needed (e.g. IT equipment for simulations or a specific server for programming). As confirmed in the interviews, this level of knowledge develops with experience and application and becomes transferable to new contexts and nuances. While this level of detail will vary between institutions in terms of differing regulations, financial positions, strategic direction and estates and facilities, the general principles will be consistent because each institution will be subject to the same external influences, albeit to a varying level. Due to the practical basis for the region, there is a formal/codified and tacit element to this knowledge. This region is emergent and the knowledge is provided through online information, briefings and from colleagues as depicted through my research. The region is very much a 'know-how' body of knowledge. The tacit side of the region is an integral part of the knowledge base rather than a personal element; in basic terms, knowing comes from doing.

6.3.2 *How I established these findings*

I researched two sites to compare how two different types of department worked and whether there were differences between them that might reflect their different subject knowledge bases – one a singular, one a new region. This enabled me to consider the consistencies and differences between two collaborative communities of academic and administrative staff: one an established science department with a clear basis at the university; the other a newly-formed regional department bringing together several different subject areas in a new group. These two perspectives enabled me to consider whether there was variation in how the administrators worked, how they developed their careers and their relationship with academic staff in light of two different contexts. As described in Chapter 5, considering Bernstein's concepts, the science department was inward-looking, with long-serving academic and administrative staff. Although relatively newly-established, the social science department was outward looking,

with staff who had worked elsewhere in higher education and who indicated that they were on a career trajectory which might take them beyond the department.

There were consistent patterns which were common between the two. These included how the administrators acquired their knowledge through local training via colleagues and utilising their networks. It was also interesting to note the incidental nature of the administrators' entry to their university careers. There was a loyalty to the departments and a sense of belonging which were also notable. There was a certain degree of permeability between the academic and administrative roles, e.g. pastoral care, project supervision, assessment issue resolution.

There were also variances between the two departments. Principally, as stated above, the singular department administrators (i.e. the hard science department) were mainly inward-looking to the department and remained (although sometimes with a changed role) for a long period. The wider institution was used to resolve issues around information or processes but the emphasis was on the local unit rather than networks for personal development.

The regional department administrators were more outward-looking and situated their trajectories beyond the current department or role. Their professional development was more externally-focused, e.g. by use of action learning sets with ex-colleagues or through academic qualifications. Contrary to the culture of the science department, administrators in the social science department had clear links with outside networks and used these to continue to extend their knowledge. It is interesting to note that of the three administrators interviewed in the social science department, one had recently moved to a new post focusing on quality assurance (at the time of the interview) and another subsequently moved to a higher-level post in another faculty within the same institution. To my knowledge, this was not the case for the staff in the science department while this thesis was underway.

These differences in approach are particularly interesting in light of the organisational structure of the faculties in which the departments were based at

the time of the research. As set out in Chapter 5, both were located in faculties with similar structures. Support for degree programmes, research and related activities was articulated within the department (NB: research support was provided by a faculty administrator rather than at departmental level in the social science department due to resourcing availability rather than a deliberate decision). There was a variation between the resourcing for teaching in the social science department, with a dedicated education manager who oversaw the degree programmes, and for research in the science department with a dedicated officer. There was also a slight variation in the line management arrangements for the department managers in that the social science manager was jointly line managed by the head of department and the faculty administrative lead⁷³; for the science department, the manager was line managed by the faculty administrative lead but worked day-to-day with the head of department.

While it was clear that there were small differences between the administrative structures in each of the two departments studied, both were located within the same institution and wider governance structure, including common recruitment approaches, wider training availability and so forth. However, they each clearly displayed a different approach to their wider institutional and external linkages as discussed in Chapter 5. I deduct from this that the differences must, to some degree, be the result of varying departmental cultures rather than individual approach. While the science department included staff who had been in post for a long time in many cases⁷⁴, the social science department included staff who were relatively new and – as far as the administrators interviewed indicated - who showed an inclination to move on in time, although this could be attributed to the recent genesis of the department itself.

It was of note that the academic staff within each department reflected the position of the administrative staff, with those in the science department coming from a traditional trajectory of postgraduate study, post-doctoral work and

⁷³ Interestingly, this was only clarified as a formal arrangement in follow-up with the social science manager much later.

⁷⁴ The department manager and research administrator interviewed had been in post for many years; as had the academic staff interviewed—with one exception. NB the research officer's role had evolved since initial appointment in a departmental secretarial post with tasks assigned to the support of undergraduate students.

academic posts and those from the social science department having a more variable trajectory⁷⁵.

The most salient outcome of the research in the departments indicated that the knowledge – and by extension contribution – provided by university administrators is based on the axis of the organisation in terms of enabling research and teaching activity and so any excessive inwardness towards their departmental culture needs to be moderated by another influence in order for them to be effective as professionals and remain impartial.

My study looks at a particular multi-faculty, pre-92 university and my findings may be extrapolated to expect similar findings at similar institutions. However, this is a small, focused study on one university at a particular point in time and the similarities and differences found between pure science departments and regionalised social science departments may not be consistent across all such institutions. I would anticipate such differences to be due to the governance and management structure of the institution, its position in league tables and financial security, as such factors tend to influence the autonomy of academic units. In terms of governance and management structure, other institutions may articulate their administration differently. For example, administration may be articulated and managed at faculty level without local department support and this may affect the way academic work is processed between academic and administrative staff. The culture and recruitment processes may also affect these differences: if the institutional practice is to recruit staff with a lower level of experience than some of those depicted in this study, then I assume that the level of expertise they could provide to academic activities may vary⁷⁶. If this variance is not resolved through training and the influence of more experienced colleagues, then their ability to

⁷⁵ Albeit only one member of academic staff in the social science department was interviewed; other details came from the administrative staff.

⁷⁶ As an example, I examined the job descriptions for similar programme administrator posts between two institutions during 2016 and found them to be different in terms of the level of support to be provided to degree programmes and the degree of autonomy implied, although the standard of experience and skills required for the posts were similar. Discussion subsequently showed that the levels of performance between the posts reflected this discrepancy.

fulfil their roles would be impeded. However, one would need to undertake a more extensive study to explore how this hypothesis is evidenced elsewhere.

6.4 *Implications of my findings*

My study is a novel contribution to the field of higher education studies. My research has identified that there is a clear knowledge base for university administrators working on teaching or research and situated this group as an emergent profession. However, it has also explored their position as members of collaborative communities within academic departments and the variances between types of departments.

This approach is novel as no research into university administration had used such a perspective or theoretical framework before. While there had been important research to further examination of this occupational group, particularly that carried out by Whitchurch, this did not address the topic of knowledge which is the heart of my study. No other study has focused on the location of this type of work in the context of a university, where subject experts and administrative experts work in partnership together on teaching and research activities.

In terms of 'process expertise' which encompasses expertise in relation to the processes of managing information or communication, Treem and Barley (2016) set out a noteworthy account of the importance of this type of knowledge in the context of domain (subject) expertise and this comes close to my analysis of the position and knowledge of university administrators. Treem and Barley describe this expertise as facilitating the work of domain experts, and "... can be viewed as adjacent to or overlapping with contributory expertise" (Ibid. p. 215) but it has been largely invisible and so undervalued in organisations. They acknowledge the significance of experience and tacit learning and delve somewhat into the specific nature of process knowledge. However, their notion of process expertise is bound up with technology and communication skills whereas my argument is that there is more tangible knowledge underpinning university administration, which makes this occupational group distinct.

There are key implications from my findings for how this group develops their professional identity which I will now describe.

6.4.1 Knowledge

In this chapter, I have defined the knowledge base for university administrators in more detail and identified its origins in external sources which influence how higher education is articulated. However, it is more complex than a set of concepts; it involves formal and tacit elements and the development of an oversight of how activities in an institution work. These elements together form a new type of region, to use Bernstein's terminology.

While these concepts may be acquired as horizontal knowledge structures, there needs to be a linkage between them to ensure oversight. For example, knowledge about degree programme development needs to be connected with knowledge that includes admissions processes and practices, assessment frameworks and processes and marketing. In addition there must be a connection with external parameters such as the external quality framework, TEF and UKVI regulations in order for an administrator to develop professionally. Likewise, any knowledge about research grant application processes needs to be linked to funding council requirements, procurement regulations, HR practices and financial regulations among other factors. To prevent staff from gaining this knowledge is to potentially force them into silos. This reinforces the need for an overview of how the processes supporting academic activities piece together. The horizontal nature of the knowledge accumulated by university administrators is a risk and needs to be approached in a more joined-up manner; in effect, the segmentation of the horizontal knowledge needs to be overcome and actively linked up. As I have explained in this chapter, this is complicated by the shifting nature of this region as it is derived from, and responds to changes in, the external environment.

This acknowledgement and clarification of the knowledge needed by university administrators can directly benefit this group. It provides a basis for a new approach to this group's professional development which to this point has been predicated on generic skills such as the diploma and courses available from the

AUA whilst the training for research managers via the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) is more structured but uptake is not seen as mandatory⁷⁷. Rather, there is a necessity for further research to consider how to capture this knowledge generation and enable learning across the sector, hence moderating practice and behaviours. In effect, the ‘word’ is based on the ‘world’, but it is unclear how this knowledge is best cascaded or engaged with by university administrators. Currently, university administrators acquire knowledge in an unmoderated and incidental way and due to this approach their development depends more on accident than design. As a result, there is no formal means of professional development that can capitalise on the commitment of staff to their roles whilst extending their knowledge in a systematic way.

Research in higher education up to this point has neglected the issue of a knowledge base for university administrators. My research points the way to further study which recognises my outcomes and acknowledges the expertise held by this group. Further research needs to concentrate on differentiating between the teaching and learning and research-related areas these role holders often focus on. My study has in effect conflated the two, albeit with a focus on degree-related roles, but further detailed research could refine the knowledge pertaining to each area and whether there is a need for oversight of both at some point in the development of staff.

6.4.2 *Axis of the organisation/community*

In this chapter, I have used the analogy of the axes of a graph, with the x axis representing the expertise provided by the university administration and the y axis representing the expertise provided by subject specialists. Using this, I clearly expressed the position of university administrators in relation to academic staff, showing activities such as a degree provision and research as the product of the endeavours of both. I have also discussed the degree of permeability between

⁷⁷ ARMA offer structured certificates for administrators and managers (<https://arma.ac.uk/arma-qualifications/>) but while the curricula appears focused, e.g. funding environment, costing, there was no reference to this organisation from interviewees. The 2017 membership survey indicates that 84% of members have not participated in ARMA qualifications <https://arma.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MEMBERSHIP-PROFILE-1.pdf>

the responsibilities of both types of staff, although each retains a clear basis of expertise.

This community relationship is a characteristic that has been in development over the past few decades as the state has intervened more explicitly in higher education, requiring institutions to adhere to external frameworks and reporting as a means of, in effect, judging their worth (e.g. via the REF and TEF). Higher education research has focused on the deficit relationship between academic and administrative staff and there has been little which has examined the latter as a professional group working in partnership with the former. My study clearly sets out this relationship in constructive terms, acknowledging the knowledge imparted by each group and showing the administrative group as an emerging profession, albeit one that needs a degree of regulation moving forward.

Situating this group within a collaborative community has implications for the approach to researching higher education. Rather than a nebulous 'third space' with little reference to knowledge, this relationship illustrates the collaborative community that currently operates within academic departments/faculties. It also articulates the knowledge bases of each group and situates each group as having particular expertise.

This recognition of the significance of the community and the relationship between these groups provides a means of establishing university administrators as a profession, with a body of knowledge as the basis. In terms of further research, I am proposing that there is exploration beyond the third space which is more in line with the recognition of the collaborative community that exists in the university department.

6.4.3 Professional development

I have defined the knowledge base held by university administrators and situated them in a community of professionals – the academic department. In effect, I have confirmed this group as an emerging profession and as a consequence their professional development is crucial.

My study has identified how the knowledge and career development of a small group of administrators has been germinated and this has hitherto been dependent on on-the job training and accumulated through experience and tacit learning, leading to recontextualising and updating previous practice between posts. This has been augmented by sharing of practice between colleagues and utilising networks both within institutions and externally. This has been the process of normalising behaviours to this point and, as previously noted, is dependent on incidence rather than design and needs further consideration in terms of how to benefit the development of administrative staff in universities.

From what I have established in my examination of two different types of department, it may be the case that different subjects – and by extension different institutions – will be insulated from certain external factors such as changes to research funding frameworks or the impact of poor NSS results on their position with regards to TEF. This may have implications for the development of staff working in different academic departments: if they are more insulated from sector changes, their development may be curtailed. This needs to be compensated in some way if they wish to progress their careers and re-charge their knowledge.

There is a need for the propagation of knowledge to be expansive and extend beyond the locality of the department or faculty. To explain, a change that is purely developed and implemented by colleagues involved in quality assurance, who are without knowledge of the wider university processes that a change will impinge upon or the impact elsewhere in the organisation, is a risk. A lack of organisational or process knowledge means that a university administrator is unable to envisage the dependencies involved in such changes. As an example from the interviews discussed in Chapter 4, the development of a new programme has implications not just for the department and those involved in teaching and administering it locally, but also the central registry function – the admissions and registration teams, student records, student systems, examinations, graduation ceremonies - as well as marketing, timetabling/facilities, library and potentially others. In the case mentioned in the interviews, where this joining-up falls down, someone with an overview of how programmes run and the dependencies (in this case, C, the departmental manager for the social science department) was able

to track down the breakdown in process, intervening to enable admissions to be made to the new programme.

This suggests that any experience localised within a department or faculty should be augmented through access to knowledge outside of the immediate context. For example, an administrator who works on degree administration could be developed through exposure to programme development and approval processes which includes the external⁷⁸ and internal⁷⁹ frameworks that the department or faculty would need to adhere to. Additional development would be obtained from informal and formal (committee) discussions and understanding of the part that other university departments, e.g. registry admissions, Quality Assurance and IT, would play in the development and eventual delivery of the degree. By the same measure, a research project administrator working within a department could have their knowledge extended through involvement in the research grant development process, which would build an awareness of the requirements of different funders as well as finance processes and the university's strategic approach to and governance of research.

Through my study, I have defined the regionalised knowledge base for university administrators and situated them in a collaborative community which forms the professional context for this occupational group. The issue remains as to how to systematically develop this group in order to overcome the insularity of some academic departments and ensure that their training and practice is, in effect, regulated.

I have shown how the knowledge used by this group is driven by external factors that derive from state agencies such as the Office for Students and are articulated within institutions as changes to regulatory structures, policy and so forth. This knowledge is in an almost constant state of flux which the administration within institutions has no direct control over. As I have discussed, this knowledge is

⁷⁸ The QAA and its Quality Code, Subject Benchmark Statements.

⁷⁹ These internal frameworks are normally an articulation of the external frameworks including the QAA's requirements, but also reflect the university's financial requirements, institutional strategy, the subject expertise available to deliver the degree programme, estates and IT resources and marketing analysis.

based entirely in the context of practice and the region incorporates a tacit element of learning as a result.

There needs to be a professional agency which synthesises this knowledge and practice via working directly with institutions, sharing the resultant region across institutions and facilitating professional development. This organisation could capitalise on the on-the-job training and networking which already forms the development of university administrators (as seen in my research) but have a hand in regulating practice and preventing the insularity which might occur within certain departmental cultures. Such a normalising influence would aid the professional development of this group in a more overt way than the Association of University Administrators currently does.

As I have said above, university administrators need to understand the wider context in order to expand their knowledge. Their knowledge develops out of their practice as new frameworks such as TEF come into being and have to be articulated within an institution. This means the knowledge base has a dynamic foundation that is different from the knowledge held by academics and professionals such as physicians. To expand on this, the introduction of TEF has already resulted in new practices to articulate this external change within institutions in terms of changes to policy or regulation, student or research management and even curriculum or assessment changes. As my study has indicated, this is all undertaken in partnership between academic and administrative staff. The professional knowledge for this group arises from this connectivity as staff learn together how to develop and action these changes; this is where the tacit aspect of learning comes in. A professional organisation needs to take this reality into account and approach the administrative groups as part of a wider community with academic staff. Consequently, such an organisation should involve academic staff as well as administrative practitioners.

I return to my comments in Chapter 2 on the university as the basis for training of the professions and the site of origination for the administration which is an emerging profession. Of course, there is an irony that this site also houses the potential location for furthering this profession and research on its knowledge

within the area of higher education studies. This subject area already encompasses some university administrators who have moved into academic posts (notably Whitchurch) but needs to retain its freshness through the involvement of practitioners who remain in the realms of the administration in order to progress. This forms an interesting alignment of an academic group with the axis of the organisation and again resonates with Adler et al's permeable collaborative community as administrators move into (potentially temporary) academic roles in order to recharge their academic side whilst retaining their organisational perspectives. In Chapter 4 I commented that control of disciplinary groups is normally located in the academic community and verification is provided through peer review such as the REF. In light of my study, it would be interesting to explore the development of higher education studies as a source of professional training and its inclusion of university administrators on its framing and classification (to revert to Bernstein's terms).

In terms of research, the prospect for professional development of university staff could offer up potential longitudinal studies on how different types of academic departments respond to the advent of a more interventional external body. Further research might also focus on organisational structures: if there is the risk of administrative staff becoming insular and jeopardizing their development by being situated within certain types of academic department, then positioning them in another location (either physically or in terms of organisational structure) may provide a balance. However, it is important to note from the interviews that there was considerable value placed on being part of the collaborative community of the academic departments and interactions with academic colleagues.

My study has offered a different perspective on university administrators as an emerging profession with a clear path forward in its development. This could build on the existing current organisations which have tried to professionalise this occupational group – the AUA, ARMA – but re-think the approach in the context of a clear knowledge base and the collaborative community in which this group works.

6.5 *Limitations of this study and suggestions for further work*

My research has provided an insight into an emerging profession that has been hitherto neglected. However, there are limitations to my research as it stands:

- This study started out with the intention of focusing on those working in both teaching and learning and research-related roles but due to the interests of those interviewed the emphasis in my study fell towards the former. This was doubtlessly influenced by the focus on education and quality over research activities in my own career path, however, it was also subject to the outcomes of the interviews undertaken in the research. As noted in Chapter 1 there has already been some focus on research-related roles so I see my study as an opportunity to address the balance to some extent.
- It is important to note that not every institution has the same structure and power, in terms of the control over academic units' direction and/or finances and this may be articulated differently between faculty/department/unit levels in other universities.

In light of these constraints, my study provides a clear basis on which to develop more focused research on research-related roles in universities with a view to further analysis of the intricacies of the knowledge required for these roles.

Similarly, my theoretical framework could be extended to a larger-scale study to either examine administrative roles and their knowledge and position within other types of departments or units of a university or to examine similar types of departments or units laterally across different institutions. This would test also the findings of my research in terms of the insularity and outwardness of university administrators working in different types of departments or faculties and the bearing this has on their development. This might have consequences for the articulation of organisational structures as some may develop staff more than others. This is an approach that is novel and opens up the development of an emerging professional group.

References

Adler, P. S. and Heckscher, C. (2006) 'Towards Collaborative Community', in Heckscher, C.C. & Adler, P.S. (eds). *The firm as a collaborative community: reconstructing trust in the knowledge economy*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Adler, P. S., Kwon, S.-W. and Heckscher, C. (2008) 'Professional Work: The Emergence of Collaborative Community', *Organization Science*, 19(2), pp. 359–376.

Allen, D. and Newcomb, E. (1999) 'University management and administration: A profession for the 21st century', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 3(2), pp. 38–42.

Allen-Collinson, J. (2006) 'Just “non-academics”? Research administrators and contested occupational identity', *Work, Employment & Society*, 20(2), pp. 267–288.

Allen-Collinson, J. (2007) "“Get yourself some nice, neat, matching box files!” Research administrators and occupational identity work', *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(3), pp. 295–309.

Bacon, E. (2009) 'Do professional managers have a profession?', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 13(1), pp. 11–16.

Barnett, R. (2000) 'University knowledge in an age of supercomplexity'. *Higher Education* 40 (4), 409-422.

Bassnett, S. (2005) 'The importance of professional university administration: a perspective from a senior university manager', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 9(4), pp. 98–102.

Becher, T. (1989) *Academic tribes and territories: intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines*. Milton Keynes: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Becher, T. & Trowler, P.R. (2001) *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines* (2nd edition). Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Oxford University Press.

Beck, J. and Young, M. F. D. (2005) 'The assault on the professions and the restructuring of academic and professional identities: a Bernsteinian analysis', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(2), pp. 183–197.

Bernstein, B. (1971) 'On the classification and framing of educational knowledge', in Young, M.F.D. (ed.) *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education*. London: Macmillan.

Bernstein, B. (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Bernstein, B. (1999) 'Vertical and Horizontal Discourse: An essay', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20(2), pp. 157–173.

Blumer, H. (1954) 'What is Wrong with Social Theory?'. *American Sociological Review*, 19(1), pp.3–10.

Brickson, S.L., (2005) 'Organizational Identity Orientation: Forging a Link between Organizational Identity and Organizations' Relations with Stakeholders', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(4), pp.576–609.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), pp.77–101.

Carroll Graham (2012) 'Transforming spaces and identities: the contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(4), pp. 437–452.

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Churchman, D. and King, S. (2009) 'Academic practice in transition: hidden stories of academic identities', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(5), pp. 507–516.

Conway, M. (2000) 'Defining administrators and new professionals', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 4(1), pp. 14–15.

Courtney, K. (2013) 'Adapting Higher Education through Changes in Academic Work', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67(1), pp. 40–55.

Creswell, J. W. (2003) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (2nd edition). London: Sage.

Dearing, R. (1997) 'The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education'. Available at <https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/Partners/NCIHE/> (accessed July 2010).

Delanty, G. (2001) *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society*. Buckingham: OUP

Deem, R. (1998) "'New managerialism" and higher education: The management of performances and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8:1, pp. 47-70.

Deem, R. and Brehony, K. J. (2005) 'Management as ideology: the case of "new managerialism" in higher education', *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(2), pp. 217–235.

Deem, R. (2010) 'Herding the academic cats', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 14(2), pp. 37–43.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds), (2008) *The landscape of qualitative research*. 3rd ed., Los Angeles; London: SAGE.

Engeström, Y. (2008) *From teams to knots: activity-theoretical studies of collaboration and learning at work*. New York: Cambridge

Engeström, Y. et al. (2012) 'Knotworking in Academic Libraries: Two Case Studies from the University of Helsinki'. *Liber Quarterly: The Journal of European Research Libraries*, 21(3-4), pp.387–405.

Eraut, M. (2000) 'Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work'. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol.70(1), pp.113-136

Etzkowitz, H. and Leydesdorff, L. (2000) 'The dynamics of innovation: from National Systems and "Mode 2" to a Triple Helix of university–industry–government relations', *Research Policy*, 29(2), pp. 109–123.

Evetts, J. (2003) 'The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World'. *International Sociology*, 18(2), pp. 395–415.

Evetts, J. (2004) 'From profession to professionalism: a discourse of occupational change'. The first CSP conference in the studies of professions. Oslo, Norway, 17-19 June 2004.

Evetts, J. (2005) 'The Management of Professionalism: a contemporary paradox', (October), pp. 1–18. Changing Teacher Roles, Identities and Professionalism (lecture). Kings College, London, 19 October 2005.

Flango, V.E. & Brumbaugh, R.B. (1974) 'The Dimensionality of the Cosmopolitan-Local Construct'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 19(2), pp.198–210.

Floyd, A. and Arthur, L. (2012) 'Researching from within: external and internal ethical engagement'. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*. 35 (2), 171-80

Foreman, P. & Whetten, D.A. (2002) 'Members' Identification with Multiple-Identity Organizations'. *Organization Science*, 13(6), pp.618–635.

Fram, S. M. (2013) 'The Constant Comparative Analysis Method Outside of Grounded Theory', *The Qualitative Report*, 18(1), pp.1-25. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol18/iss1/1>

Freidson, E. (1988) *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge*. London: University of Chicago

Freidson, E. (2001) *Professionalism: The Third Logic*. Cambridge: Polity.

- Gander, M. (2017) 'A descriptive study of professional staff, and their careers, in Australian and UK universities'. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 22(1), pp. 19–25.
- Gilchrist, V. J. (1992) 'Key informant interviews', in B. F. Crabtree & W. L. Miller (eds.), *Doing qualitative research: Research methods for primary care* (pp. 70–89). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gornall, L. (1999) "'New professionals": Change and occupational roles in higher education'. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 3(2), pp. 44–49.
- Gornall, L. and Salisbury, J. (2012) 'Compulsive Working, "Hyperprofessionalism" and the Unseen Pleasures of Academic Work', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 66(2), pp. 135–154.
- Gouldner, A. (1959) 'Organizational Analysis'. In Merton, R.K. Broom, L. and Cottrell, L.S.Jr. (eds). *Sociology Today*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gourlay, L. (2011) "'I'd landed on the moon": a new lecturer leaves the academy'. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(5), pp. 591–601.
- Graham, C. (2012) 'Transforming spaces and identities: the contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(4), pp. 437–452.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A. & Johnson, L. (2006) 'How Many Interviews Are Enough? : An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability', *Field methods*, 18(1), pp.59–82.
- Guile, D. & Young, M. (1998) 'Apprenticeship as a conceptual basis for a social theory of learning'. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. 50(2), pp. 173-193.
- Guile, D. (2012) 'Inter-professional working and learning: 'recontextualising' lessons from 'project work' for programmes of initial professional formation'. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25 (1), 79-99.

Halsey, A. H. (1992) *Decline of donnish dominion: the British academic professions in the twentieth century*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press.

Hamilton, S. (2012) *An investigation into the relationship between professional knowledge and the transformation of Human Resources into a profession*. (MA dissertation, obtained via Michael Young/IOE library)

Harley, S., Muller-Camen, M. and Collin, A. (2004) 'From academic communities to managed organisations: The implications for academic careers in UK and German universities'. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64(2), pp. 329–345.

Heckscher, CC. and Adler, P. (2006) *The firm as a collaborative community: Reconstructing trust in the knowledge economy*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Henkel, M. (2000) *Academic identities and policy change in higher education*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Henkel, M. (2007) 'Shifting Boundaries and the academic profession', in U. Teichler & M. Kogan (eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession* (pp. 175-190). Paris and Kassel: UNESCO Forum on Higher Education. Available at http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/v_pub/wb/wb65.pdf (accessed December 2012).

Henkel, M. (2005) 'Academic Identity and Autonomy in a Changing Policy Environment'. *Higher Education*, 49(1), pp. 155–176.

Hockey, J. and Allen-Collinson, J. (2009) 'Occupational Knowledge and Practice amongst UK University Research Administrators'. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 63(2), pp. 141–159.

Hogan, J. (2014) 'Administrators in UK Higher Education: Who, Where, What and How Much?'. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 18(3), pp.76–83.

Jensen, K. & Lahn, L. (2005) 'The binding role of knowledge: an analysis of nursing students' knowledge ties', *Journal of Education and Work*, 18(3), pp.305–320.

Kleiman, P. (2012) 'Scene changes and key changes: disciplines and identities in HE dance, drama and music', in Bamber, V., Saunders, M. & Trowler, P. (Eds) *Tribes and territories in the 21st century: rethinking the significance of disciplines in higher education*. London: Routledge, pp.130-141.

Knorr Cetina, K. (1997) 'Sociality with Objects', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 14(4), pp. 1–30.

Kogan, M. (2007). 'The Academic Profession and its Interface with Management', in U. Teichler & M. Kogan (eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession* (pp. 161-173). Paris and Kassel: UNESCO Forum on Higher Education. Available at http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/v_pub/wb/wb65.pdf (accessed December 2012).

Kok, S.K., Douglas, A., McClelland, B. & Bryde, D. (2010) 'The move towards managerialism: perceptions of staff in "traditional" and "new" UK universities'. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 16 (2), pp.99-113.

Kolsaker, A. (2008) 'Academic professionalism in the managerialist era: a study of English universities', *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(5), pp. 513–525.

Kolsaker, A. (2014) 'Relocating professionalism in an English university', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 36(2), pp. 129–142.

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009) *InterViews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles; London: SAGE.

Langley, D. (2012) 'Research management and administration: A reflection of where we are and where we need to go as a profession', *Perspectives: Policy and practice in higher education*, 16 (3), pp.71-76.

Lauwerys, J. (2002) 'The future of the profession of university administration and management', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 6(4), pp. 93–97.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leicht, K.T. & Fennell, M.L. (1997) 'The changing organizational context of professional work', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23(1), pp.215–231.

Lewis, K. (2014) 'Constructions of professional identity in a dynamic higher education sector', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 18(2), pp.43–50.

McCulloch, G. (2004) *Documentary research in education, history and the social sciences*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Macfarlane, B. (2011) 'The morphing of academic practice: unbundling and the rise of the para-academic', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 65(1), pp. 59–73.

Macfarlane, B. (2014) 'Dualisms in higher education: a critique of their influence and effect', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 69(1), pp. 101–118.

Martin, E. (1999). *Changing Academic Work*. Buckingham: SHRE and OUP

Mason, M. (2010) 'Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews', *Forum, qualitative social research*, 11(3), Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428>.

Middlehurst, R. (2004) 'Changing Internal Governance: A Discussion of Leadership Roles and Management Structures in UK Universities', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 58(4), pp. 258–279.

Middlehurst, R. (2013) 'Changing internal governance: Are leadership roles and management structures in United Kingdom universities fit for the future?', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67(3), pp. 275–294.

Miller, H. (1995) 'States, Economies and the changing Labour Process of Academics: Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom', in Smyth, J. (ed) *Academic work: the changing labour process in higher education*. Buckingham: SHRE and OUP, pp. 40-59.

Moore, R. & Maton, K. (2001) 'Founding the sociology of knowledge: Basil Bernstein, intellectual fields and the epistemic device', in Morais, A., Neves, I.,

Davies, B. & Daniels, H. (eds.) *Towards a Sociology of Pedagogy*. New York, Peter Lang, 153-182.

Muller, J. (2009) 'Forms of knowledge and curriculum coherence', *Journal of Education and Work*, 22(3), pp. 205–226.

Musselin, C. (2007) 'Transformation of academic work: Facts and analysis', in U. Teichler & M. Kogan (eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession* (pp. 175-190). Paris and Kassel: UNESCO Forum on Higher Education. Available at http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/v_pub/wb/wb65.pdf (accessed December 2012).

Naidoo R. (2011) 'Rethinking development: higher education and the new imperialism', in King, R., Marginson, S. and Naidoo, R. (eds.) *Handbook on Globalization and Higher Education*. Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, pp. 40-58.

Oakland, G. B. (1953) 'Determining Sample Size', *The Canadian Entomologist*, 85(3), pp. 108–113.

Olssen M. and Peters, M.A. (2005) 'Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: from the free market to knowledge capitalism', *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(3), pp.313-345.

Parker, M. and Jary, D. (1995) 'The McUniversity: organization, management and academic subjectivity', *Organization*, 2(2), pp. 319–338.

Paul, C. and Delamont, A. (2010) '*Accessing, waiting, plunging in, wondering, and writing: retrospective sense-making of fieldwork*', in Atkinson P. and Delamont, S. (eds) *SAGE Qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, pp. 209-234

Peters, M.A. (2009) *Education and the Knowledge Economy, in Creativity and the global knowledge economy*. New York: Peter Lang

Pratt, J (1997) *The Polytechnic Experiment: 1965-1992*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Oxford University Press

Price, S. & Jewitt, C. (2013) Interview approaches to researching embodiment'. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on human factors in computing systems*, pp.2907–2910.

Ramsden, P. (1998) 'Managing the Effective University', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 17(3), pp. 347–370.

Regan, J.A. and Graham, C. (2018) 'A career in professional services: accident, serendipity or something more?', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. Routledge, 40(1), pp. 3–17.

Rowland, S. (2002) 'Overcoming fragmentation in professional life: the challenge for academic development'. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 56 (1), pp.52–64.

Sabzalieva, E. (2012) 'Understanding universities' responsibilities to their wider communities, *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 16(4), pp.123–128.

Säljö, R. (2009) 'Learning, theories of learning, and units of analysis in research', *Educational Psychologist*, 44(3), pp. 202–208.

Sandberg, J. (2005) 'How do we justify knowledge produced within interpretive approaches?', *Organizational Research Methods*, 8(1), pp. 41–68.

Schofield, M. (2014) 'Handcuffing institutional research and quality assurance to the student experience: 50 Shades of grey?', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 18(4), pp.119–123.

Scott, P. (1997) 'The changing role of the university in the production of new knowledge', *Tertiary Education and Management*, 3(1), pp.5–14.

Seyd, R. (2000) 'Breaking down barriers: The administrator and the academic', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 4(2), pp. 35–37.

Shattock, M. (1994) *The UGC and the management of british universities*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Oxford University Press

Shattock, M. (2008) 'The change from private to public governance of British higher education: its consequences for higher education policy making 1980-2006', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62(3), pp. 181–203.

Sheldon, M. E. (1971) 'Investments and involvements as mechanisms producing commitment to the organization', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 16(2), pp. 143–150.

Shelley, L. (2010) 'Research managers uncovered: changing roles and shifting arenas in the academy', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 64(1), pp. 41–64.

Shelley, S. (2005) *Working in universities: the realities from porter to professor*. Glasgow: Humming Earth.

Shields, R. & Watermeyer, R., (2018) 'Competing institutional logics in universities in the United Kingdom: schism in the church of reason', *Studies in Higher Education*, pp.1–15.

Shine, J. et al. (2010) *Professional careers in higher education: institutional perspectives*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Skinner, M. (2001) 'The AUA code of professional standards', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 5(3), pp. 63–67.

Slaughter, S. and Leslie, L.L. (1997) *Academic Capitalism: politics, policies, and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press,

Smith, J. (2010) 'Academic identities for the twenty-first century', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15(6), pp. 721–727.

Solomon, N..and Usher, R. 'Changing Spaces of Knowledge, (Dis)placing the Learner', *SCUTREA, 29th Annual Conference*, University of Warwick, 5-7 July

1999. Leeds: Leeds University. Available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000001019.htm>

(Accessed May 2017)

Stake, R.E. (1995) *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, California; London: Sage

Stavrou, S. (2009) 'Negotiating curriculum change in the French university: the case of "regionalising" social scientific knowledge', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 19(1), pp. 19–36.

Stehr, N. (1994) *Knowledge societies*. London: Sage.

Taylor, P.G. (1999) *Making Sense of Academic Life: Academics, Universities and Change*. Buckingham: SHRE and OUP

Treem, J.W. & Barley, W.C. (2016) 'Explaining the (de)valuation of process experts in contemporary organizations', in *Expertise, communication, and organizing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford Scholarship online.

Trowler P. (2010) 'UK higher education: captured by new managerialist ideology?', in: Meek V., Goedegebuure L., Santiago R., Carvalho T. (eds) *The changing dynamics of higher education middle management. Higher Education Dynamics, vol 33*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 197-211.

Ulrich, D. (1998) 'A new mandate for human resources.', *Harvard business review*, 76(1), pp. 124–134.

Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10176915> (accessed April 2013).

Ulrich, D. (1997) 'Measuring human resources: An overview of practice and a prescription for results', *Human Resource Management*, 36(3), pp.303–320.

Vidal, S., Laureano, R. and Trindade, M. (2015) 'Assessing the impact of grant managers on the success of grant applications', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 19(3), pp.84–91.

Warner, D. (1999) 'An academic and/or an administrative career?', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 3(1), pp. 16–18.

Watson, D. (2006) 'Who killed what in the quality wars?', QAA. Available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-matters-Who-killed-what-in-the-quality-wars.aspx> (Accessed 20 February 2013).

Watson, D. (2009) *The question of morale: managing happiness and unhappiness in university life*, Maidenhead: Open University Press (cited in the report - http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Events/Documents/The%20Changing%20Academic%20Profession%20in%20the%20UK%20and%20Beyond%2022%20June%202010%20_Final_.pdf (accessed November 2012).

Weiler, Hans N. (2005) 'Ambivalence and the politics of knowledge: the struggle for change in German higher education', *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 49(1-2), pp.177–195.

Wegener, C, (2014) "'Would you like a cup of coffee?" Using the researcher's insider and outsider position as a sensitising concept'. *Ethnography and Education*, 9 (2), pp.153-166.

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whitchurch, C. (2004) 'Administrative Managers – A Critical Link', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 58, pp. 280-298.

Whitchurch, C. (2007) 'The changing roles and identities of professional managers in UK higher education', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 11(2), pp. 53–60.

Whitchurch, C. (2008a). 'Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: the emergence of *third space* professionals in UK higher education', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62(4), pp.377-396.

Whitchurch, C. (2008b). 'Beyond administration and management: changing professional identities in UK higher education', in Barnett, R. & Di Napoli, R. (eds.) *Changing Identities in Higher Education: Voicing Perspectives*. Oxford: Routledge.

Whitchurch, C. (2008c) 'Beyond administration and management: reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 30(4), pp. 375–386.

Whitchurch, C. (2009) 'The rise of the blended professional in higher education: a comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States', *Higher Education*, 58(3), pp. 407–418.

Whitchurch, C. (2010) 'The use of management trainee schemes in higher education institutions', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 14(3), pp. 76–79.

Whitchurch, C. (2013) *Reconstructing identities in higher education: the rise of 'third space' professionals*. London: Routledge.

Whitchurch, C. and Gordon, G. (2013) 'Reconciling flexible staffing models with inclusive governance and management', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67(3).

Wild, A. and Wooldridge, E. (2009) *The development of professional careers in UK higher education*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Williams, K. (2008) 'Troubling the concept of the "academic profession" in 21st Century higher education', *Higher Education*, 56(5), pp. 533–544.

Wilson, M. R. and Corr, P. J. (2018) 'Managing "academic value": the 360-degree perspective', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 22(1), pp. 4–10.

Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case study research: design and methods*. California: Sage.

Yin, R.K. (2014) *Case study research: design and methods* (5th edn). California: Sage.

Young, M.F.D. (2008) *Bringing knowledge back in: from social constructivism to social realism in the sociology of education*. London: Routledge.

Young, M. and Muller, J. (2016) *Curriculum and the specialization of knowledge studies in the sociology of education*. London; New York: Routledge.

Zucker, Donna M., "How to Do Case Study Research" (2009). *School of Nursing Faculty Publication Series*. Paper 2. Available at http://scholarworks.umass.edu/nursing_faculty_pubs/2 (accessed August 2013).

Websites accessed:

https://jobs.harper-adams.ac.uk/Upload/vacancies/files/110/Academic-Registrar_v03.pdf accessed Apr 2012

<http://www.odgersberndtson.co.uk/gb/executive-opportunities/opportunity-details/38865/> accessed Apr 12

<http://www.westminsterexcellence.co.uk>

accessed April 2012

<http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/hr-and-training/2/> accessed Apr 12

http://www.theworkfoundation.com/assets/docs/publications/65_defining%20knowledge%20economy.pdf accessed Sept 12

http://wwwm.coventry.ac.uk/course/undergraduate/ug2012/Pages/Building_Services_Engineering_BEng_Hons_degree.aspx

accessed Sept 2012

http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Events/Documents/The%20Changing%20Academic%20Profession%20in%20the%20UK%20and%20Beyond%2022%20June%202010%20_Final_.pdf

accessed Nov 12

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/HigherEducationReview.aspx>

accessed February 2013

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2012/name,75745,en.html> accessed Jan 2013.

http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2470&Itemid=278 accessed February 2013

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/crosscutting/sivs/stem/> accessed May 2013

http://www.ucas.ac.uk/about_us/stat_services/stats_online/data_tables/subject/ accessed May 2013

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/medicalschool/undergraduate/mbbs-programme/docs/Year1-Study-Guide.pdf>

accessed May 2013

<http://www.mms.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/mbchb5year/coursedetails/index.aspx?year=2013&code=01428&pg=2> accessed August 2013

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=412051> (Rebecca Attwood article on student complaints as per OIA report) accessed 2016

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=417895> (David Matthews article on student complaints regarding misleading marketing) accessed 2016

<http://careers.icaew.com/how-to-become-a-chartered-accountant>

accessed October 2017

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/law-careers/becoming-a-solicitor/>

accessed October 2017

<https://arma.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MEMBERSHIP-PROFILE-1.pdf>

accessed May 2018

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/employment>

accessed June 2018

Appendix 1 – Interview questions

The following are indicative questions to be used for interviews. As I want to enable the interviewees to talk as freely as possible, the interviews will be semi-structured and some of the following questions are to be used as prompts if an interviewee needs encouragement or focus, and as an aide memoir for myself when conducting the research.

1. What do you do?
2. Who do you do it with, i.e. who do you work with? (Prompt – are they academic or other types of staff?)
3. What do you work with them on (teaching, research)?
4. Describe the detail of what you do.
5. How do you know what to do?
6. How was it when you started your job/role?
7. Who manages the activity?
8. Who do you report/answer to, particularly when something goes wrong or someone is unhappy?
9. Do you like your job?
10. What do you like about it?
11. What don't you like about it?
12. What do you think others you work with think about you/your job?
13. How much control do you have over what you do?
14. How much is procedural/day-to-day tasks?
15. How much discretion do you have in your work/ability to make judgements on research/teaching activity? Describe in detail.
16. What are your qualifications?
17. Did your qualifications help you get your current job/role?
18. How did you come to be doing what you're doing?