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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) subject review (SR), notions of continuing professional development and transformational change in academic staff. In a previous study (Blythman 2001) I explored the *immediate* experience of SR as perceived by academic staff. The current study examines the longer-term impact on academic staff and their professional world, a complex mix of professional life, knowledge, attitudes, practice, skills and values. I examine through qualitative interviews with 23 academics from 11 different institutions whether they perceive SR to have contributed to longer-term changes in their professional world.

I explore higher education as a site of conflict based on macro issues of wider social division and micropolitical issues of power and power relations. I offer a detailed reading of particular contexts including the role of agency and a Foucauldian model of the operation of technologies both repressively and creatively. These technologies include academic identity and professionalism, and the operation of power through resources including time. I consider that people experience the world in different ways, contingent on contextualised power relations. The social world is understood through diverse perspectives and this is best captured through the voice of social actors. My main data, therefore, were collected through semi-structured interviews.

My study shows that SR had positive aspects for some including increased reflection and deeper pedagogic thinking. Generally, however, the way in which SR was constructed damaged its own stated objectives. This happened through a conflation of information with knowledge, encouraging the hegemony of one model of teaching, diverting resource to second-order activities and encouraging institutional conformity and bureaucratisation. This resulted in institutional and individual behaviour which foregrounded compliance and fabrication. I finish by critically exploring alternatives suggested in current literature and tentatively suggest a future approach.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction: subject review and transformational change

This research project explores the relationship between subject review (SR), notions of continuing professional development (CPD) and transformational change in academic staff. Taking SR as one form of the audit culture, I aim to illuminate the relationship between this and transformational change in academic staff through several sites for CPD. In Blythman (2001) I explored the immediate experience of SR as perceived by academic staff experiencing the process. We are now approaching a time when it becomes possible to assess longer-term impact. This study sets out to explore one particular aspect: its influence on the professional world of academic staff by which I mean a complex mix of professional life, knowledge, attitudes, practice, skills and values. These various dimensions appear in a shifting pattern often isolated from each other only conceptually. I examine, first, through an illuminative approach, whether subject review, as perceived by those academic staff, can be understood as contributing to longer-term changes in their professional world at an individual or team level. Second, I examine the extent to which these changes can be interpreted as transformatory empowerment through sites of CPD.

What was subject review?

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, subsequently QAAHE) subject review of teaching and learning in higher education was a relatively short-lived but powerful form of Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA). Its immediate impact on the professional and personal lives of academic staff was significant. (Blythman 2001; Morley 2001a; Morley 2002), as was its impact at institutional level (HEFCE 2000). This parallels the impact of OFSTED school inspection on individuals and institutions (Cullingford 1999). SR's origins were in earlier forms of internal and external quality assurance (Brown 1998). There is a growing literature identifying issues including the impact on academic identity and working lives (Hannan and Silver 2000; Henkel 2000; Morley 2001a;

Morley 2002; Newton 1999; Newton 2000); compliance, performativity and fabrication (Ball 2000; Strathern 1997; Strathern 2000a; Strathern 2000b) and Foucauldian ideas of regimes of power and the disciplinary gaze (Hodson and Thomas 1999; Johnson 2002; Morley 2000c; Shore and Roberts 1995). Other literature indicates that these are not uniquely UK issues (Barrow 1999; Fitzsimmons 1995; Harvey 1998; Stensaker 1999.)

Subject review (previously TQA) ran from 1993 to 2001 for higher education institutions in England and for a briefer time in Scotland where it continued to be called TQA. This study does not address Welsh or Northern Irish systems. At the time of writing, review of specific subject areas continues in the form of academic review for higher education delivered in further education colleges and some higher education institutions deemed as requiring a detailed quality check. Discipline audit trail is emerging as an amended form of review for subject areas in higher education institutions which are deemed to merit a 'lighter touch' (QAAHE 2002). The origins of SR lie in the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) which requires the Higher Education Funding Councils to:

> secure that provision is made for assessing the quality of education
> provided in institutions for whose activities (it) provide(s), or (is) considering
> providing, financial support. (Section 70 p.52-3)

TQA was originally run directly by the UK HE funding bodies however, in 1997, HEFCE contracted the newly formed QAA to carry out SR. Similar arrangements were made with the other funding bodies. There have been minor changes in the methodology across time and different parts of the UK but the only large change came in 1995 with the introduction of universal visits, organisation into aspects to ensure a common structure and the introduction of graded profiles (although in Scotland this was only a tentative pilot involving 17 reviews). During the period of QAA management of SR, from 1997-2001, there were more than 1200 reviews in England alone. The system was across 42 subject areas although not all areas were reviewed under the post-1995 system. In Scotland there were 47 reviews in 1997-9, 30 under the old methodology without graded profile and 17 as a pilot with

graded profiles. No reviews took place in Scotland after that date until 2000-1 where the new method of academic review was piloted.

The end of subject review?

Subject review has officially ended (QAA 2001a). Arguably SR, some aspects of QAA, and its then chief executive could not withstand the criticism from powerful parts of the higher education sector. I explored in Blythman (2000b) the battle between QAA and the Russell Group of elite universities over the role of external examiners and the reporting formats of SRs. I concluded that, in the case of external examiners, the power and interests of the state, through the funding councils and QAA, lost out to the wishes of the elite universities. With reporting formats, success for the Russell Group was more limited. Undoubtedly, the university sector, and in particular the Russell Group, has been resistant to SR and appears to have achieved its demise. There are various possible readings of their resistance. It can be read as a mistrust of the methodology, protection of academic freedom from state and bureaucratic interference or alternatively a form of elitism where the university does not expect to be accountable for the use of public money and sees itself as beyond challenge. A related reading would be protection of producer capture and resistance to recognition of the rights of other stakeholders. It seems likely that at different places and times all these motivations were operating. At the same time, policy makers recognised that universities become good at 'playing the game' thus requiring a change of ground rules (HEFCE 2000).

There followed an apparent decline in QAA's power, achievement by the sector of 'a lighter touch' and a recognition that QAA codes of practice are technically voluntary. However, at the time of writing, HEFCE has emerged as a stronger force suggesting that the notion of 'the lighter touch', involving less time consuming and demanding external scrutiny, is rather more contested than was previously realised. Institutional audit still has a subject dimension on the insistence of HEFCE (QAA 2001b). Those deemed worthy of the 'lighter touch' have 'discipline audit trails' at discipline level while others

are still subject to 'academic review' which, arguably, is as intense as SR. Additionally, the review of Foundation degrees, the new two year vocationally focused qualification, announced in the autumn of 2002, used a model as intense as academic review, with a series of aspects and a six week involvement with the institution. There is no grading, only a threshold benchmark, and the results are not published at institution level. However, the bureaucratic burden remains as heavy as subject review.

Any bureaucratic reduction in the post-subject review era is questionable. The Director of Review at QAA has suggested that it will be a big challenge for universities to compile an evidence base for institutional audit that will satisfy HEFCE's demand for 'clearly accessible and consistent data on many areas' (THES 4/10/02 p.4). Equally HEFCE seems not to have abandoned the issue of accreditation of external examiners. It seems to have the lost the battle, at the time of writing, for a compulsory national accreditation scheme (THES 20/9/02) but history would suggest that they will regroup and this retreat may be temporary since the most recent white paper (DFES 2003) introduces a national training system for external examiners . When I started this research study I regarded subject review as gone and the importance of the study was to learn lessons for CPD should any similar forms of external quality assessment emerge in the future. I now regard such forms as already emerging with a closer than anticipated resemblance to SR. I therefore regard the relationship of SR to CPD as a live issue.

The concept of continuing professional development

My interest is to explore the impact of SR on academic staff. I found earlier (Blythman 2001) that the actual experience of the event had a profound impact on those going through the process. This included formal and informal and positive and negative learning experiences. Of course, formal and informal learning boundaries are porous. The question is the extent to which learning takes place which could be labelled as continuous professional development (CPD). In the next sections I examine CPD conceptually as professional learning which takes place in various sites. I use the term CPD

as applied solely to academic staff in higher education institutions and the developments described are restricted to those of direct relevance to their employment as teachers. It excludes developments in their disciplinary knowledge, including research, while recognising no rigid dividing line between a discipline and its pedagogy. Additionally, this study is restricted to academic staff who are already in post. I examine CPD from four perspectives; first, as a process, second, as a series of outcomes with a particular focus on notions of transformation, third, from the perspective of power and control, i.e. whose objectives are being met and fourth, what inhibits CPD.

CPD as process

Guskey (2000) focuses on process, defining professional development as:

> these processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students (p.16).

Zuber-Skerritt (1992) defines professional development as:

> the development, self development and institutional management of faculty (or academic) staff at all levels with reference to their activities and responsibilities as teachers and managers in higher education (p.145).

Professional development is, however, a much more complex and contestable series of processes than is often recognised. Various writers outline alternative theories and approaches. (Boud and McDonald 1981; Hargreaves 1994; Perry 1970; Schon 1987). Webb (1996) sums up the various positions as:

> positive knowledge for technical expertise, human understanding and collaboration for practical and social improvement (p.3).

Walker (2001) extends this to include critical professionalism which is reflexive and socially and politically positioned. CPD is multi-faceted,

encompassing developments in knowledge, practice, skills, attitudes, thinking and possibly other dimensions. These are only analytically separate and any development is likely be multi-dimensional. There is not space here to explicate the possible interpretations of these terms. They are all complex concepts. For example Eraut (1994) suggests that professional knowledge includes the contrasts between theory and practice, public knowledge and personal knowledge, propositional knowledge and process knowledge and analytic and intuitive thinking (p.19). Eraut argues that:

> theory and practice are shown to have a symbiotic relationship which varies with both the mode and the context of knowledge use (p.20).

In this study I have used the term 'professional practice' to label what happens within academics' professional worlds with a broad meaning including knowledge, understanding, attitude, values and skills, dimensions which I see as overlapping and difficult to untangle. This is intercut with analysis of the extent to which development is perceived as affirmative or transformative (Fraser 1997). These dimensions can also be categorised as essentially either mental processes or action. Knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and thinking locate in the former, skills and practice in the latter. Eraut (1994) indicates, however, that knowledge and action work on each other so that knowledge acted upon is no longer the same knowledge and that action in one situation is not necessarily transferable knowledge. I regard all typologies around the impact of CPD as analytical rather than ontological and boundaries between dimensions are blurred.

CPD as transformation

My focus is on professional development examined primarily as sites for perceived outcomes rather than on the process. It examines academic staff perceptions of whether or not development/ learning has taken place. However, outcomes and processes cannot be rigidly separated. Discussions of CPD often assume that some sense of transformation is sought or achieved. (Fullan 2001; Huberman 1995; Walker 2001; Webb 1996). But the

concept of transformation requires examination. Harvey (1998) regards transformation as a 'meta-quality concept' and defines it as 'a fundamental change from one state to another' (p.244). He also suggests that it implies a change not only in what people know but in how they think and in what they can do. It adds value to the person or group concerned. Transformation tends to have positive connotations, implying that the transformed state is superior to what went before, often based on increased understanding (Barnett 1990). However, the tendency of CPD priorities to identify the desired end result indicates that it is value-laden rather than 'neutral' technology. Additionally, transformation may be temporary or intermittent. Implications of increased understanding would suggest some kind of permanence but the fluid and dialectical nature of the social world questions any such assumption. I explore this further in chapter 9 in an examination of inhibitors to sustainability.

Reflection is widely identified as a transformative process (Schon 1987) which genuinely exposes learners to reframing their own governing ideas and values (Zuber-Skerritt 1992). Much professional training is based on this paradigm (Clegg 1999). However, the concept of reflection is critiqued as overstating the transformative power of reflection-in-action (Eraut 1995) and giving limited recognition to the distinction between theory-in-use and espoused theory which does not translate into action (Fleming and Rutherford 1984). Others argue for the importance of contextual factors including time pressures, willingness to reflect and routinisation of professional work, for some recognition of the limited role of reflection in surfacing tacit knowledge and intuition (Eraut 1995; Harvey 1998) and the need to take more account of complex temporal relationships between reflection and action (Clegg et al. 2002). Reflection's role in professional training can also be problematised, particularly for largely female workforces, with a focus on self-surveillance and normalising practices and for the possibility of 'counterfeit reflection,' reflection to achieve externally imposed ends or values (Clegg 1999; Morley 2001a). Barnett (1990) argues for going beyond reflection to dialogue and critique, building towards what he calls 'the ability to conduct a critical dialogue with oneself' (p.171). Thus reflection becomes reflexivity. This exploration of

transformation through reflection and reflexivity informs this study through an attempt to analyse the self-reported changes in participants' working worlds. However, the analysis stays alert to issues of permanence and performativity.

Transformation is a complex and contested concept operating at various levels of the social world, from ideas of transforming societies e.g. South Africa (Cooper and Subotsky 2001), or even society as a whole, to transforming individuals. Fraser (1997) outlines the difference between transformation and 'affirmative remedies', in essence the difference between tackling problems at the level of perceived symptom or underlying social or economic structural causes. She argues that the former can only produce temporary and shifting solutions which in turn create further problems. Fraser's analysis is at a societal rather than individual level but could equally apply to individual actions. The concept of transformation within higher education operates variously between individual and social levels. The role of higher education seems, to some, to be transformation of the individual to encourage critical thought and action to help transform society (Barnett 1997a) although there are competing human capital models based on skills and competences. However, Barnett (2000) calls transformation 'a weasel term' and points out that we need to ask, 'What kinds of transformation? In whose interests?' He suggests that, for students, it can become 'an education for fabrication that supplants an education for understanding' (p.174). There is a danger of transformation becoming entirely instrumental in the effect higher education has on students and the effect such students then have on their environment (p.181). Barnett identifies the danger of transformation becoming 'an operational project' which is about 'extracting surplus value' rather than 'injecting value'. We are moving from 'transformation-as-emancipation to transformation-as-sheer-performance' (p.32). Thus we find transformation sliding into performativity. For Barnett, it is the role of the university to sustain the former as well as the latter.

The ability and willingness of the participants to have some ontological sense of the difference between the two forms needs examination in any discussion of transformation, and the pattern may vary over time. Change may exist at

behavioural level but not be embedded in the individual's subjectivities, therefore suggesting compliance rather than commitment. My focus is individual members of academic staff rather than students or the university as an institution (either in the individual or general sense). The debate between Mezirow (1994) and Tennant (1994) and Newman (1994) explores the complexities of transformation. Mezirow argues that 'the theory's assumptions are constructivist, an orientation which holds that the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience, is central to making meaning and hence learning' (p.222). This involves both 'meaning perspectives' which are predispositions and 'meaning scheme' which are specific examples of meaning perspectives. For Mezirow, this happens through reflection as a response to a major problem or an accumulation of minor issues. In this study I examine how respondents make meaning and learn through interpreting their experience. However, given the limitations to the concept of reflection outlined above, a more reflexive approach is taken.

CPD – power and control

Clegg (1999) conceptualises reflexivity as:

> a double loop, or ontological loop whereby the knower's social being in terms of gender, race, sexuality and class form part of the basis of knowing (p175).

This model of reflexivity recognises power relationships and enables the individual to understand their situated power position. My view is that power is diffuse and mobile (Foucault 1998) but individuals can read or feel power relationships in particular contexts. I argued earlier that professional development is a complex and contested concept raising such questions as development for whose gain, at whose expense, for what objectives. It also raises issues of 'for whom'. Roe (1988) identifies a range of staff attitudes to professional development activities which varies from outright rejection, through toleration of these activities for others, support in theory but not in practice, to active engagement. Power and control over CPD are affected by structural and cultural factors at national and local level.

Research questions

My research aim is to explore the relationship between SR, notions of CPD and transformational change for the respondents. I set out to illuminate then interpret respondents' perceptions of SR and related changes. I therefore developed a set of research questions which start with the policy context then move to key aspects of academic life which are potential sites of CPD. To meet this aim I first explore the context of SR through its stated role in national policy with particular reference to enhancement claims which I view as an expression of CPD claims. The first research question is:

1. What enhancement claims were made for SR through stated national policy?

I then explore respondents' positions in relation to SR per se since their views might relate to their responses to particular aspects of SR in their professional world. My second research question is:

2. How did respondents perceive the process of subject review?

I then set out to investigate particular sites where SR may influence the continuing professional development of respondents. These are, first, in the area of professional views with specific reference to conceptualisation of students and staff-student relations, and pedagogy. The relevant research questions are:

3. What influence can SR be considered to have had on staff-student relations?

4. What influence can SR be considered to have had on pedagogy?

Second, there are sites where SR may influence respondents' professional world. These include individual working practices, including conceptions of time, and institutional responses to SR. The relevant research questions are:

5. In what particular ways can SR be considered as contributing to changes in respondents' professional practices and professional context?

6. How did respondents perceive the university's response to SR and how did this response influence respondents' professional context and practices?

I then set out to explore the affective domain through connections between respondents' perceptions and aspects of their own expressed personal and professional identities (Henkel 2000; Morley 2003). These factors may influence respondents' views and perceptions of changes. The research questions are:

7. In what ways did respondents' perceptions of SR and the post-SR university relate to issues of age and gender?

8. In what ways did respondents' perceptions of SR and the post-SR university relate to issues of institutional status, academic discipline and academic identity?

Finally, since my concern is with the longer-term influence of SR in relation to CPD leading to transformational empowerment, I set out to explore respondents' perception of changes they wished to sustain and whether or not sustainability in these areas was perceived as possible. The research question is:

9. What changes, desired by respondents, were perceived as sustained or not sustained and what factors can be considered as enabling or constraining these changes?

Responses to these questions are then interpreted through a lens of empowerment/disempowerment and the relationship to transformatory change through specific sites of CPD. I recognise that empowerment is a contested concept. I use it here in the sense of capacity or self-efficacy. I return to a more detailed consideration of this concept in the final chapter.

The following chapters start with the design of the study and underpinning theoretical perspectives. I then set the national policy context and the claims made for SR in chapter 3. In chapter 4 I start the analysis of my data, relating my respondents' views of SR. I then turn to the implications of SR's impact for students, examining the way it influences conceptualisation of students and, in chapter 5, the model of pedagogy it encourages. In chapter 6 I investigate the influence on two strands of working practice, reflection and reflexivity and the use of time, the former being offered sometimes as a positive gain from SR while the latter emerges as a concern. In chapter 7 the focus moves to the influence on academic staff of institutional response to SR and in chapter 8 I explore the implications in the affective domain. The longer-term sustainability of impact is examined in chapter 9, I return to the research questions in chapter 10 and the final chapter draws together some theoretical conclusions, identifies contribution to knowledge and examines ways forward for professional development theory and practice.

Chapter 2

Research design

In this chapter I outline my ontological and epistemological position and give a detailed account of my methodology and research methods.

Methodology of the study

The methodology of this study reflects my political, ontological and epistemological position. Higher education continues to privilege advantaged sections of society (CVCP 1998; Kennedy 1997). This operates through external factors including student financial support and internally through institutional structures and cultures. Central to this is cultural capital, forms of capital which are dispositions reproduced mainly through the family (Bourdieu 1997). Such privileging of particular social groups operates against principles of equity and social justice. Second, ontologically, the world operates dialectically with any activity or movement having within it its own contradiction or, alternatively in Foucauldian terms, that the operation of power is creative as well as negative. Third, the world of higher education, like any social world, has to be implemented through social actors who, while constrained by structural factors, have some autonomy.

My previous work outlines my ontological, epistemological and methodological position (Blythman 2000a; 2001). I regard higher education as a location for various types of conflict based on macro issues of wider social division and micropolitical issues of power. These connect in multiple ways, contingent on local factors with space for agency operating dialectically with structural factors (Giddens 1979). I have become increasingly interested in exploring the relationship of power to a detailed understanding of particular contexts and what technologies operate both repressively and creatively (Foucault 1995; 1998). These technologies include academic identity and professionalism, and the operation of power through resources including time.

My epistemological position is that people experience the world in different ways, largely affected by their power position in particular contexts. The social world is understood through a variety of perspectives coming from multiple realities and this is best captured through social actors being able to 'name the world' (Freire 1996 p.69). Validity comes from a sense of recognition by those inside the world being described (Nias 1993). The methodology enabled my respondents to give voice to their world through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of national policy, however, is restricted to published aims because of the difficulty in trying to go 'behind the stage' in this arena. It is recognised that public policy might well be a key site for the distinction between 'theory-in-use' and 'espoused' theory (Fleming and Rutherford 1984). The epistemological claim for this section of the study will be thus limited.

Micropolitical perspectives

I have an interest in micropolitical approaches to the social world. In this study I focus on individual and small group work relationships through a lens of power and explore how these relationships operate dialectically within the culture(s) of higher education. I define micropolitics as the interplay, within an organisation, of the status and power of various groups based on their material interests and values to achieve their preferred outcomes (Ball 1991; Ball and Goodson 1985; Blase 1991; Gronn 1986; Hargreaves 1994). Morley (1999 p.2) describes a micropolitical perspective as recognising 'control and conflict as essential and contradictory bases of organizational life'. For Ball (1994a) it happens at all levels:

> teachers' careers, institutional micropolitics and state power and policies are all intertwined in a complex process of changes in patterns of control, relationships and values (p.64).

Hoyle (1982) argues for the importance of recognising plurality of interests. Any classification of interests should include consideration of the personal, professional and political. Ball (1987) identifies key micropolitical concepts as including power, goal diversity, ideological disputation, conflict, interests,

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political activity and control. He also foregrounds the extent to which micropolitical activity is conscious or intuitive, strategic or short-term, advancing group or individual interests, led by material interests or values and contingent on context. Both Ball (1987) and Blase (1991) emphasise that this meso level works in a dialectical way with the macro level of national structural and cultural factors. This relates to structuration theory (Giddens 1979) which argues for a dialectical relationship between structure and agency.

Micropolitical perspectives, originally developed conceptually in research on the school sector, are beginning to appear in higher educational settings (Blythman and Orr 2002a, 2002b; Morley 1999, 2001a, 2002; Trowler 1998a). They offer readings of how and why staff change, or fail to change, in their professional behaviour and allow for an analysis of enablers and constraints at structural and cultural levels. They help identify the difference between transformation and compliance. However, in relation to the third possibility, that of internalisation of organisation norms and values, developing work on the impact of performativity on higher education suggests that technologies of the self are affecting micropolitical space. Individuals now may construct themselves as professional subjects internalising the institutional norms (Ball 2000; 2001). This may lead to less activity in what Goffman (1971) calls 'back stage' (p.114).

Research design and methods

I set out to explore the perceptions of groups of academic staff at least a year after they experienced SR, to establish how they felt that they and their colleagues had been changed professionally by this experience.

The project design has three parts:

a. An analysis of data collected in my earlier study where respondents who had gone through SR one or three years earlier talked about SR's longer-term effects. These data were not reported on at that stage since it was not central

to the focus of the earlier report. There are ten interviews in this section which is reported on in chapter 9.

b. Interviews with 23 respondents from 11 higher education institutions reviewed between 1997 and 2001 (see appendix 1 for terminology). Those reviewed before 1997 were excluded since the timescale for reflection would be too long and there were significant methodological changes with the introduction of the QAA model. I aimed to cover a range of respondents in a variety of institutions which differed on a number of dimensions including type of institution; geographical area; disciplinary area; subject review score; respondent position in the hierarchy. This is the major part of the study. Details of the sample are in appendix 2.

c. A policy analysis of the stated aims of SR located within the main QAA publication over this period. This is reported in the next chapter.

Data Collection

The primary data collection method was interviews to enable the actors to give an account of the world of subject review as they see it. The earlier study used semi-structured interviews to give both focus and space for development. In evaluating this I decided that my questions were too focused and repetitious. They produced the information but were awkward to operate. For example, I broke down into separate questions the positive, negative and neutral aspects of a number of topics. In fact most respondents dealt with all three aspects holistically. With my main sample I asked fewer questions but had detailed prompt lists to ensure full coverage. The interview schedule is in appendix 3.

I recognised that the area of perceptions of some personal transformation, is a difficult one to capture. Respondents might not be conscious of transformations or be able to articulate their view of the reasons. Ball (1994b) argues that actors' voices can be interpreted in three different ways, as 'real stories' (p.109) i.e. accounts of what happened, discourse focusing on why

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things happened and as interest representation concentrating on underpinning reasons. Epistemologically, data through 'voice' can have these three interpretative frameworks. My study concentrates on the first two and I accept their world as being what it is for them. Accounts may be 'guileless descriptions of events' or 'sophisticated interpretations' (Ball 1994b p.112) or a combination of both. In the discourse interpretation we can also see 'the assumptive landscape' and 'ideological touchstones' (Ball 1994b p.114) and we need to recognise problems of memory and accuracy. However, I am committed to a perspective of allowing my respondents to 'name the world' (Freire 1996 p.69) as they see it and I wish to avoid any suggestion of false consciousness. My sample comprises higher educational professionals who should have powers of reflection and articulation that could not be assumed in some other research sites. To facilitate the process I told the respondents, in advance, the areas of reflection.

I was also entering the affective domain with the possibility of surfacing feelings not previously expressed or evaluated. I needed to be conscious of boundaries between research and counselling. In fact I found few open references suggesting that this was sensitive ground although two respondents indicated it was their first opportunity to talk about SR and another said that the interview brought back to him the anger he had felt at the time. This raised two issues: that of treating respondents with respect and sensitivity and the need to position myself in their eyes in a way that was conducive to open conversation. Clegg (1999) outlines the similarities between reflective practice and consciousness raising in the women's movement of the 1970s, in particular the pleasure and empowerment that can be gained through the foregrounding and sharing of experience that was previously private and tacit. However, she points out that, through the limitations of external structural factors, reflective opportunities, like continuous improvement, may be restricted to ground defined and prioritised by national policy or institutional management. This can turn reflection into self-surveillance.

It was a challenge in the design of this study to encourage respondents to be reflective and share experience rather than operating self-surveillance. Ball (2000) alerts us to the possibility of performative response. I wanted participants to operate within their own ontology rather than a perceived 'on-message' response. This challenge affected my choice of sample and method of approach.

The sample

I chose to avoid senior managers, defined as dean or above, because, in my earlier study, senior staff tended not to move beyond an official stance, partly because the risk of being identified as 'off message' becomes greater as one climbs the hierarchy. I needed a method of approach that avoided coming across as someone 'checking out' QAA style progress. But, equally, I felt an approach that was openly distanced from QAA would affect responses. I therefore chose to make approaches in each institution through an informal contact, either personal friends, former colleagues or people with whom I had worked in a professional capacity. I asked them to find me two people willing to be interviewed and I then approached potential respondents, by email, referring to my contact. The aim was to associate me, in the eyes of my respondents, with the informal contact rather than as an 'official approach'. I acknowledge that responses may still have been affected by the need of respondents to codify, make explicit and effect closure on issues that are ontologically complex, messy and contested. My challenge was to encourage them to move from a performance code to a critically reflexive code. My belief is that while participants were mainly able to access this 'bilingualism' (Gewirtz et al.1995), this was a significant challenge and I recognise that I achieved only partial success. It also became clear that the slippage between the two codes is frequent and may be unconscious. However, given my theoretical position of allowing respondents to 'name the world' there was no easy methodological resolution. The reported reflection in this study remains untested against action. The strategies outlined above were an attempt to recognise if not solve these problems. The knowledge claim that can be made for the research findings lies in the domain of respondents'

articulated perceptions of how they have changed and I made no attempt to triangulate it with observations to relate this to verifiable behaviour.

The sample was chosen to give as wide a picture as possible of the impact of SR and therefore comprised a range of institutions in terms of status, subject discipline and geographical location. I chose to include two Scottish universities (see appendix 4 for reasons). While making no claims to systematic sampling I have tried to reflect the current diversity of the sector by including respondents from pre- and post-1992 universities and an HEI, high and low status institutions, universities located differently on the research/teaching spectrum and both vocational and academic disciplines. These distinctions are not clear-cut. To illustrate, it is difficult to decide whether a Department of Social Policy in a pre-1992 university is vocational or academic. The discipline suggests vocational but it is heavily research oriented and prestigious yet the research has policy outcomes as well as academic. I have a mix of gender and age although only three of my sample were under 40 which may reflect my method of choice or the ageing profile of UK academic staff.

My sample was limited to institutions where I had personal contacts. A further limitation was that not all disciplines had been through SR between 1997 and 2001. Another factor emerged as the study progressed. To some extent I had a self-selecting sample. Some at least had *chosen* to be heavily involved in subject review and this mainly indicated some degree of acceptance of the system. This seemed particularly, though not exclusively, true of pre-1992 universities where my respondents often had colleagues who chose to have no involvement with SR. A number of my respondents had taken on a departmental quality assurance (QA) or teaching and learning role. This may make my sample a less critical group with standpoints which accept and are attracted to this kind of process. I explored the ethical issues of this kind of research in earlier writings (Blythman 2000a). In summary, I offered my interviewees confidentiality but made clear to them that, given the small sample, and its structured nature, there are limits to the degree of anonymity.

To preserve as much confidentiality as possible, institutions are not identified anywhere in this study.

The final part of my data collection was an analysis of the enhancement role of SR in QAA policy documents. My intention was to examine documents produced by the DfEE, QAA and HEFCE post-Dearing but the volume of material made this ambition unrealistic. I then decided to focus on QAA documents and to check all published QAA documents from 1997 for references to links between quality enhancement and SR. This proved impossible since, when I attempted it in the spring of 2002, QAA had removed all its archived circulars from its web-site. My second attempt was through the Academic Affairs department of my own institution, the London Institute. I discovered that they did not systematically keep QAA circulars. In the end I limited my analysis to all the editions for this period of *Higher Quality*, the twice-yearly newsletter which sums up current developments. These data are reported on in Chapter 3 and Appendix 5.

Data analysis

My main data analysis tool for interviews draws on the analytic procedure of grounded theory which recognises the relevance of building on existing theory while not restricting analysis to this (Strauss and Corbin 1998). However, I recognise Morley's (1999) critique that grounded theory often fails to recognise that all researchers start with theories. I make no claim to neutrality and recognise that my analysis is constructed by my standpoints, outlined earlier. I used the same method for analysis of policy texts. Ozga (2000b) argues that, for research on policy, what matters is data collection and analysis that is 'coherent and consistent' (p.82) and which connects to the research in an explicit way which is open to scrutiny and challenge. I therefore treated the texts as I treated interview transcripts; one key theme, the relationship of SR to quality enhancement, was identified and coded. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and form my main data set. I read these to identify emergent themes. From this, using the computer assisted data analysis programme Nudist, a coding frame was set up and interviews

analysed and coded. Additional themes emerged as the analysis proceeded and some themes merged or split. I moved back and forth between the data and themes which Gerson and Horowitz (2002) describe as:

> an interactive and iterative process (which) helps define an emerging set of categories or 'ideal types' that become the project's explanatory foci (p.217).

I needed to be aware that I am an insider in the world I was analysing. The main sample, unlike my earlier study (Blythman 2001), did not include my own institution but higher education is my professional world. Insider research is sometimes conflated with action research (Hammersley 1993) but they differ. While action research implies intervention, insider research presents issues of role strain, prior knowledge and tacit understandings. I had experienced what I was asking my respondents to describe. I have my own emotional and intellectual response to SR. Platt (1981) discusses the issue of being known to respondents. In the main data set I had met five of the respondents previously and knew them professionally. Platt (1981) highlights the tacit, social, technical and ethical assumptions that such a context can create, leading to more elliptical responses. Thus analysis faces the danger of the researcher assuming rather than deducing the meaning from the data. Burgess (1980), McCutcheon (1981), Newton (2000) and Trowler (1998a) all argue in various ways that deeper understanding can emerge from fuller knowledge of the context. Hammersley (1993) critiques this position, partly because it ignores the possibility of self-deception but Trowler (1998a) argues that such problems are not intrinsic. My position is that this debate highlights the importance of bringing reflexivity to the way I am positioned inside the research and the complex relationship between representation and reality (Schostak 2002). However Skeggs (2002) argues that a model of reflexivity based on:

> the knowing, inner self was a specific historical production that was produced through particular methodologies: forced telling for welfare for the working class and authorial exhibitionism for the middle class (p.349).

Mason (2002a) describes a theoretical position which argues for 'decentering the subject' especially the 'rational unitary self-governing subject who can account for their practices and reveal the logic of these practices' arguing instead for 'multiple subject positions' and 'the centrality of text, language and practice' (p.235). Lincoln and Denzin (1998) regard this as a 'crisis in legitimation' (p.413). While recognising this criticism of reflexivity, I also see a danger in closing down research pathways leaving the researcher nowhere to go methodologically. Rejection of reflexivity also seems to suggest that a more 'objective' position is theoretically possible. In my view a better way forward is to re-emphasise the importance of research dialogue thus encouraging the emergence of multiple interpretations. I do, however, recognise that multiple interpretations are still researcher-constructed and position myself as a constructor rather than an excavator, recognising interviewing as a site where knowledge is constructed (Mason 2002).

Data presentation

It has been difficult to decide how to 'name' my respondents. Many factors about them are, at times, relevant to their response. These factors include gender, age, discipline, place in the university hierarchy, status and location of the university, level of involvement with SR and the SR score their department received. To devise a comprehensive code such as Henkel (2000) uses seemed to involve too many dimensions. I also find such codes a distraction which can interrupt the flow of the argument. I also considered an appendix which matches all the factors listed above to the number allocated for each respondent but finally decided that this amount of information attached to an individual risked breaching confidentiality. I therefore identify my respondents by a simple number and refer to other factors when they seem add to understanding. Appendix 2, giving details of my sample, does not match these to individual numbers.

Chapter 3

The policy context of subject review

In this chapter I locate SR in its national policy context exploring its relationship with concepts of accountability and the management of risk. I also explore institutional responses through new forms of management. The diversity of institutions that currently comprise UK higher education is explored. Finally I introduce my respondents, illustrating the diverse staff profile in UK higher education at the start of the 21st century.

UK higher education is under pressure. The sources, forms and impact are summarised well in Becher and Trowler (2001); Knight and Trowler (2000); Kogan (2002); and Salter and Tapper (1994). Pressures include expanding student numbers, increased student diversity, resource reduction, decline in professional trust, increased internal and external quality assurance procedures, marketisation and deterioration of working conditions leading to intensification, alienation and stress. For du Gay (1996) the rise of the enterprise culture, as a response to globalisation, leads to uncertainty and the resultant foregrounding of flexibility. Becher and Trowler (2001) and Barnett (2000) explore the implications of this for the nature of knowledge. Trowler (1997) describes the Robbins' trap where staff want both expansion and teaching models based on elite model principles of small student numbers. All this forms the back-drop to SR.

This study explores the impact of SR on CPD. SR sits in an ambiguous position in relation to professional development. The main purpose of SR was to monitor rather than develop (QAA 2001a). However, the need to justify the financial and human cost means that partial and weak claims to enhancement were made. In a study which relates to the quality enhancement role of subject review, it is only fair to examine the extent of any such claim by the QAA. In appendix 5 I report on a detailed reading of all editions 1997-2001 of Higher Quality (HQ) to establish the extent of the claim and whether it shifted. I found, first, there is an ambivalence over what claim is made, if any, for a

quality enhancement role for SR with a conflation of particular forms of information with improvement. This relates to concepts of transparency which are explored in chapter 4 where we see this conflation refracted through the system. Second, there is a more general conflation of accountability with continuous improvement with the former automatically leading to the latter. Third, assurance is conflated with enhancement, as in external examiners acting as both commentators, and verifiers/ 'calibrators'. They are presented as simultaneously measuring and maintaining. Fourth, there is also a disjunction, particularly in the later HQs, between a discourse of institutional autonomy and an underlying message of central control predicated on lack of trust (Newman 2000). QAA therefore makes a relatively modest claim for the enhancement role of SR rather surprisingly given the wide and diverse range of staff development activities it stimulated.

The political context of accountability as a response to risk

I argued in Blythman (2001) that the last twenty years has been a period of increased accountability in higher education. The background is recounted from various perspectives in Williams (1992), Trow (1994) and Brown (1998). I explored various meanings, perspectives and origins of the concept (Eraut 1993; Eraut 1995; Giddens 1984; Power 1994; Ranson et al. 1987; Readings 1996; Winkley 1999). Key points include that accountability in the form of audit constructs as well as describes (Power 1994; Ranson et al. 1987), that it leads to an internal logic of accounting rather than social accountability (Readings 1996), that there is a tension between professional accountability, which includes moral accountability, and a consumerist model (Eraut 1995; Ranson et al. 1987) and that it is a response to risk and can lead to a culture of compliance (Power 1994). Another perspective is that the audit explosion was an off-shoot of technological advances enabling new levels of data collection, storage and analysis (Middlehurst 1995).

O'Neill (2002) argues that accountability arises from a 'crisis in trust' (Reith Lecture 1) and trying to prevent abuse of trust. But accountability, rather than rebuilding trust, leads to back-covering, and 'compromise and evasions'

(Lecture 3), particularly when faced with conflicting aims. Accountability also advocates faith in transparency but, for O'Neill, transparency makes trust retreat and production of too much information can lead to deception (Lecture 4). For Shore and Selwyn (1998), a concentration on performance indicators moves higher education to a contractual relationship based on legal rights and obligations. Audit is also perceived as a response to consciousness of the production of risk in post-industrial society (Beck 1992; Power 1994).

Higher Quality 4 portrays the higher education system as becoming more complex and that 'complexity adds risk, and risk must be managed'. SR can be read as a response to risk arising from a decline in trust. Possible forms of risk include the reputation of UK higher education in the international market (Blythman 2000c; DfES 2003) and the need to meet government human capital requirements (DfES 2003).

Institutional response of managerialism

A response to this loss of trust and increased sense of risk is the perceived need for new forms of institutional management. For Exworthy and Halford (1999) these include increased financial accountability and effectiveness, marketisation, the impact of these on discourse and principles, the rise of 'calculative technologies' (p.5), increased legitimacy and power for management and the rise of a form of management which emphasises innovation, creativity and empowerment therefore decentralised in a culture of shared values. The rise of 'the enterprising self' makes personal attributes more important than rules and procedures. Exworthy and Halford (1999) summarise a variety of explanatory theories including the rise of the New Right, the end of consensus about the welfare state and the move from needs-led professionalism to market-led managerialism. They also argue, however, that this change is not total and that different forms of management/professional relationship continue to exist side by side.

Shore and Wright (2000) argue that there are three strands to managerialism: changes in discourse, new kinds of practice and changes in both working conditions and the way individuals construct themselves as professional

subjects. This has led to a new sense of governance and an increased governmentality through imposition of external controls and internalisation of new norms of continuous self-improvement. The effects are institutions that are more auditable with audit constructing the meaning of quality as systems rather than first-order activity. The impact on individuals under such increased surveillance, combined with shifting performance indicators, is one of fear and anxiety, an issue I explore in chapter 8.

Du Gay (1996) argues that we are seeing a move from bureaucratic to entrepreneurial governance, which emphasises change, 'empowerment', the customer and taking responsibility at an individual level. The bureaucratic model focused on adherence to rules and procedures with a concomitant denial of 'personal moral enthusiasm' (p.153). Du Gay problematises this move since in the public sector there is, or should be, a responsibility to the rule of law and issues of equity, integrity and probity but adds that changes in institutional culture are not totalising and I show from my data, in chapter 7, competing cultures and discourses existing side by side. The picture is not static. Newman (2000) argues that, under New Labour, managerialism has taken on a new form based on a discourse of modernisation. This includes development of the neo-liberal concept of consumer into one of the active citizen, a focus on partnership rather than competition and a concern with effectiveness rather than simply efficiency. There is a concern to deliver social policy priorities rather than simply reduce public expenditure. However, Newman argues, this leaves a tension between the requirements of accountability and a desire by government for considerable control, albeit 'steering at a distance' (Neave 1998), a tension I recounted in my analysis of *Higher Quality* (see above and appendix 5).

Various accounts of the rise of accountability and managerialism attribute its origins to the neo-liberal political project of the 1980s, sometimes suggesting that life was easier before. However Kogan (2002) points out that this does not imply a golden age. For Harman (1990), notions of cohesion and collegiality are 'romantic' (p.32) and fail to recognise the role of structural conflict or elitism and exclusion. Smith and Sachs (1995) state that:

Academic life is, and always has been, inseparable from matters of resources and their distribution in the search for reputational work (p.232).

Giri (2000) points out how little self-examination there has been by the academy. Du Gay (1996) indicates the limitations of the previous bureaucratic model.

The policy context of CPD

The idea of professional development has powerful, if contested, status in higher education. Arguably it locates within continuous improvement, an idea that is only occasionally challenged. Morley and Rassool (1999) problematise continuous improvement through exploration of who defines the aim, method, needs and priorities. Shore and Selwyn (1998) see it as primarily to serve neo-liberal political aims.

New teaching staff are now expected to aim for membership of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (NCIHE 1997), now known as The Academy. Wareham (2002) explains the background to teaching courses for HE academics and links accreditation and training of teachers to new managerialism. Equally, the idea of continuing development monitored by appraisal has an almost universal hold across the academy. This foregrounding of quality enhancement and monitoring of the individual originates from the expansion of higher education to a much wider section of the ability range requiring a greater focus on pedagogy. It can no longer be assumed that higher education is for a small, able elite who arrive with considerable cultural capital. This combines with a national policy concern about levels of human capital in the globalised economy (DTI 1998). This, moreover, is located in a political climate of declining resource for public sector work and a resultant intensification of working patterns for academic staff (Currie et al. 2000; Fisher 1994; Wilmott 1995). CPD also fits well into the new managerialism project reaching its nadir in performance-related pay (Waine 2000). It becomes a way of enhancing performance in the name of

quality. Teachers become responsible for their own development, what Ozga (2000a) calls 'entrepreneurs of the self' (p.230), pointing out the tight, externally set framework for such development.

This policy context is supported by the powerful ideology of the 'learning society' and 'lifelong learning' as the route to greater social inclusion and a human capital solution to the perceived challenges of globalisation. Coffield (1997) argues that the terms have been appropriated by the Right as a way of making individuals more responsible for their own learning and employment to serve the needs of a market economy. The terms then become a panacea for all ills with no recognition of structural factors. Clarke et al. (2000) call this ' the shift from responsibility for welfare from 'the public sphere' to 'the private sphere' (p.3). Much of this ideology has parallels in other areas of public services (Poole 2000). Macrae et al. (1997) show that structural and cultural factors continue to exclude some from 'the learning society' and argue for the recognition of the role of cultural and material capital in access to learning.

The current higher education sector

The current higher education sector is diverse. Part of this comes from increasingly diverse students (Trowler 1998a). Another form of diversity arises from the status of institutions based on their 1992 position, with categorisation into pre-1992 university, post-1992 university or a Higher Education Institution (HEI). At the time of the Dearing report there were 176 HEIs of which 115 were titled universities (NCIHE 1997 para.3.84). The curriculum of these diverse institutions varies particularly along the vocational/academic continuum and their focus on 'hard' or 'soft' disciplines. Becher and Trowler (2001) discuss the issues involved in categorising disciplines. Perhaps the most important variation is that of status and resource (Booth 1999), reflected in the poor financial health of many lower status post-1992 universities (Ainley et al. 2002). Trowler (1998a) identifies a certain instability in status rankings. However, movement is relatively marginal. For students, to the extent that choice is based on rational factors (Macrae et al.1997), high entry qualifications signify status. For academic staff the departmental research assessment exercise (RAE) score is likely to

be of highest significance, partly because it signifies a serious research culture and funding. In both these leagues movement is marginal. As Trowler (1998a) states:

> This is quite different from the previous 'integrated' system in which qualitative differences between institutions are relatively limited, effectively comprising what Trow (1987:273) has called the 'separate campuses of the University of the United Kingdom' (p.17).

Diversity of mission is now receiving government policy recognition (DfES 2003). Many earlier studies of academics focused on elite staff in elite institutions (Becher 1989; Evans 1993; Halsey 1992). Trowler (1998a) suggests this gives a partial picture of the much more complex world of UK higher education. The more recent study by Henkel (2000) included four post-1992 universities in a sample of eleven but all seven disciplines were academic rather than vocational and, of the four post-1992 universities, two had 'strongly research-focused institutional strategies' (p.23).

In my study I have attempted to personify the diversity of the sector. A number of my respondents, particularly those in vocational disciplines, had spent much of their working lives outside education. Most were also in institutions where they were expected to carry significant teaching loads. They seemed very different from Halsey's dons (Halsey 1992) with their Oxbridge or quasi-Oxbridge life styles. The following chapters show how these various contextual drivers impacted on their professional lives through SR.

Chapter 4

Responses to SR and the student-teacher relationship

In this chapter I relate my respondents' diverse views on SR in the context of current theoretical thinking on SR. I then focus on the implications of SR for students and the student-teacher relationship, including an examination of commodification in higher education and its relationship with SR.

Subject review was not always popular with those on the receiving end. Even the policy makers concede its limitations in terms of costs and 'behavioural responses' (HEFCE 2000 p.6). At institutional level it has been heavily criticised by the Russell Group of elite universities epitomised by London School of Economics' academic board vote to 'reform, transform or terminate QAA' (quoted in Morley 2003 p.122). At departmental level, the Economics department at Warwick produced a highly critical article for The Guardian (Guardian 30/1/01) arguably more powerful because they had achieved a top score of 24. Research on subject review and its precursor, TQA, has also produced considerable critique. Some criticism is, like the Warwick letter, a cost-benefit analysis. Newton (1999) and Henkel (2000) argue that TQA is a bureaucratic burden. Morley (2001a) identifies various estimates of the cost of SR and argues that the financial and opportunity costs are 'greedy'. She also questions the costs of 'foyerization and impression management' (2001a p.474) in relation to the limited meaning of the SR results.

A second concern is that the methodology encourages educational orthodoxy (Henkel 2000). Morley (2001a) argues that the language of SR implies 'discursive orthodoxy, normalisation techniques and common goals' (p.475). Johnson (2002) argues that it constructs discursively a model of education which naturalises values particularly inappropriate to fine art, since concepts of 'good practice' can be antithetical in a discipline which values the 'transgressive or subversive' (p.220). A third criticism is of the supposed peer nature of SR. Morley (2001a) outlines LSE's criticism of the quality of the reviewers but points out that this is open to multiple readings of either

rejection of an inappropriate system or refusal by an elite institution to be scrutinised by those who lack peer esteem. Morley (2001a) questions the feasibility of a peer review system in a heavily competitive marketised environment. A fourth criticism suggests that, when quality is an external system, staff become good at 'compliance and concealment' (Newton 1999 p.220; 2000) although attitudes to TQA depend on the respondents' position in the institutional hierarchy with those lower down being more critical. Strathern (2000a) critiques SR for failure to recognise the contested nature of transparency. Morley (2001a) also criticises the SR system as positivist, assuming one measurable truth based on modernist rationality and points out that it is not open to any genuine challenge suggesting a one-way gaze.

Henkel's (2000) respondents accepted accountability but criticised the methods which, she suggests, implies greater ambivalence than stated to the principle of accountability. In my earlier study (Blythman 2001) I found this embrace of accountability combined with methodological criticism for lack of developmental dialogue, the 'blitz' of the one-week visit, dangers of encouraging a prescriptive 'tick box' teaching methodology and criticism of the actual reviewers. The diverse group of respondents in this study had varied responses to the SR system per se. As in other studies (Blythman 2001; Henkel 2000), almost all expressed a belief in the concept of accountability. However, they criticised the methodology, variously, as an inappropriate form of accountability, using flawed concepts of measurement (Power 1994), as too positivist and encouraging simplistic models of teaching with a low profile for disciplinary knowledge (Meadmore 1998; Shore and Selwyn 1998). This supports Readings' (1996) argument that:

> excellence is not a fixed standard of judgement but a qualifier whose meaning is fixed in relation to something else (p.24).

My respondents regarded the structure of SR as over-complex with inappropriate opportunity, financial and personal stress costs; flawed subject classification systems; inconsistency across subject areas, size and status of departments, and points on the review cycle, and variability of reviewers.

Respondents' responses included fabrication (Ball 2000) and prioritisation of second-order documentation over core teaching activities. SR was seen as an event to be managed and a low score indicated failure in stage management. For some the experience was bitter. Respondent 3, a senior male academic from a pre-1992 university, stated:

We feel that we were raped in the TQA.

This is a metaphor of violation and invasion, yet coming from the most prestigious person in my sample, the only professor, male and from a pre-1992 university. This could be read as the outrage of the powerful at being challenged or an indication of the extent of the sense of violation. (Morley 2001a). Generally, the critics were more cynical than bitter. For some it was an attack on professionalism (see chapter 8). Critical views were not universal. Some saw benefits and others regarded cost and some wasted effort as a necessary price for justified accountability. Most respondents favoured some system, if not in its present form. Within an acceptance of accountability and some perceived benefits, respondents portray SR as a system which was excessive, inappropriate, game-playing and unfair. This suggests that QAA was failing by its own standards and that it failed to establish credibility with my respondents as a source of impartial stakeholder information. However all my respondents accepted the need to operate with this flawed system and I now examine the impact on their working worlds.

SR happened within a national policy framework. There is some consensus in the literature that relations between staff and students in higher education are under pressure, largely due to greatly increased student numbers in a climate of declining resource (Taylor 1999; Martin 1999), leading to 'a loss of 'intimacy' in staff-student relations' (Jary and Parker 1998 p.7). Some suggest that this, combined with a market philosophy has led to higher education becoming commodified (Becher and Trowler 2001; Noble 2002). However, as discussed in chapter 3, there is a danger of assuming a previous golden age.

SR is criticised as contributing to the commodification of higher education which encourages universities to see students as economic units. Morley (2001b) argues that SR directly contributes through a model based on customer care and consumer entitlements. Certainly stakeholder discourse is there. A teaching and learning co-ordinator from a post-1992 university explained:

> I still need …… to listen to what students are saying, because they, of course, are our main stakeholders and our recipients (10).

But the extent of commodification of higher education needs clarification to avoid overstatement. One strand of thought identifies a process of commodification in higher education and suggests reasons. For Delanty (2001) this is partly the move towards education as a private rather than public benefit as we shift away from the role of higher education in building the nation state. Some relate it to the redefinition of professionalism as accountability in support of New Public Management, attributed to the neo-liberal project of the 1980s and 1990s (Barton et al.1994; McWilliam et al.1999; Shore and Selwyn 1998; Shore and Wright 2000).

However the origins may be earlier. Becher et al. (1981), writing at the beginning of this neo-liberal period, identify earlier increasing pressure to make education more publicly accountable although the actual word was foregrounded as a result of Callaghan's Ruskin speech in 1976. The authors argue that this pressure was both internal and external with teachers themselves challenging their role as experts. The 1960s are also identified by Becher et al.(1981) with consumer rights, concern about the use of public money and a loss of trust in institutions often reflected in the growth of pressure groups. Shore and Selwyn (1998) criticise the introduction of contractual relationships between teachers and students and see it as part of the new managerialist culture. Becher et al. (1981) regard public mistrust of professionals as an unintended consequence of greater public involvement and post-war social changes leading to a decline in automatic respect for authority. Giri (2000) points out that there has been little self examination of

whether all was well in the academy before the arrival of the audit culture and argues that previous accountability mechanisms had 'an element of incestuous self gratification' (p.184). This links with criticisms of the external examiner system (Blythman 2000b).

Cotterill and Waterhouse (1998) point out that critique of current neo- liberal moves should not assume a previous golden age. This could be used as a criticism of Shore and Selwyn's (1998) argument that 'the origins and strength of academia reside in the domains of contemplation, curiosity and intellectual freedom' (p.164) without raising the issue of what knowledge and for whom. Thus we see democratic as well as neo-liberal roots in the accountability culture. However I would argue that its current forms meet the needs of a neo-liberal project rather than a democratic one.

The object of commodification seems to have two strands. First, it is argued that knowledge itself is becoming a commodity (Lyotard 1984; Barnett 1997b; Delanty 2001). The suggestion is that all knowledge is socially constructed and therefore no longer holds its privileged position as under the Enlightenment and the sovereign nation state. Knowledge becomes a market commodity and universities lose their role as the main producer. The second strand is that the relationship of students to the university is becoming one of consumerism with a university education or degree as an individual purchase for the individual's economic benefit. The latter has implications for both staff and students, and to some extent the institutions themselves. While the implications for staff of a more commodified HE are explored in other chapters, the focus here is on the way consumerism appears to operate on students and how academic staff respond to this.

Some respondents in my study, while recognising some element of market choice, felt that so far SR scores have no impact on student recruitment. Respondent 2 pointed out that it is not a piece of information that prospective students ask for. An economist in a pre-1992 university explained the operation of the higher education market:

> The thing that actually attracts students is word of mouth, experience of others, recommendations of people who've been through the system .... And that is why teaching has to be taken seriously, because students know when they're getting a bad deal. Students know whether the quality of the teaching is good, bad or indifferent, and they, you know, they aren't stupid, and they will talk to other students who are prospective students or what have you, and that will ultimately determine our success in terms of the market (6).

This respondent argued for respecting this market because a fall in reputation led to the recruitment of less able students which made life harder for academic staff. Segal Quince Wicksteed (HEFCE 1999) point out, however, that many potential students have a more restricted choice through reasons of financial position and family commitments. Brooks (2002) argues that the element of decision making by the student is affected in a complex way by factors such as ethnicity, gender and class. Ball et al. (2002), using a model derived from Bourdieu, show the impact of these factors on students' knowledge of status patterns within higher education with resultant patterns of self-exclusion that reinforce existing status hierarchies. The quotation above leads us to question who has access to this word-of-mouth information.

Another aspect of a consumerist approach from my study was wariness of the angry consumer. A senior lecturer in a post-1992 university argued:

> I think we are probably more frightened of students than we were in the past. Not wanting to get into some legal battle because lots - we've got one at the moment where a student's got a very top lawyer that he's using that looks at every single word in our documents and our handbooks to find gaps so that the student can get a better grade but the University will say 'OK, your appeal can go ahead' rather than 'Hang on a minute, this is ridiculous'. So I think there's a fear mentality (23).

For several respondents this related to a loss of professional trust. For the respondent quoted above some assessment regulations evidenced this:

> Again if you think about double marking, the only reason for double marking, I presume, is that it challenges the integrity of the staff member that they are not honest .... or they are biased (23).

There was a desire by some respondents to directly satisfy the employment market. This is perhaps not surprising since many were in disciplines that

would define themselves as vocational. A principal lecturer from health-related studies argued that:

> (TQA) is an important phase because every now and again I think you've got to sit down and you've got to look at your course in the cold light of day and you've got to say is this course reflective of what we want to produce, i.e. a graduate that is competent to practise, and particularly in medicine I feel that that is very important, that the course is up-to-date and it is achieving the demands of what a graduate has to face when they become a clinician, and I think that for me is the most important thing (17).

However, another post-1992 sector respondent (18) illustrated tension in the system where the university wanted to please employers demanding numeracy skills. But students were performing so poorly in numeracy that it was affecting retention and achievement so the university solution was to downgrade these skills in the curriculum. These respondents identified with employers' needs. Morley (2001b), however, problematises the concept of 'employability' for its failure to recognise structural barriers, the diversity of students and the state of the market thus leaving the responsibility with the student rather than employment practices.

Student voices and SR

All respondents reported some form of university system which enabled students to evaluate their experiences. This was not surprising since it was a subject review expectation that a system would be in place (QAA 2000). QAA has a stakeholder model which at least some of my respondents affirm, although a post-1992 sector teaching and learning co-ordinator relates the need for direct contact with students rather than simply relying on evaluation systems:

> I don't want to totally give up the teaching role because I think if I am to make any influence on learning and teaching in the school I still need to have, if not both feet, certainly one foot in the grass roots, and to listen to what students are saying, because they, of course, are our main stakeholders and our recipients (10).

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Evaluation systems took various forms but, commonly, a required minimum was laid down by the institution centrally while some universities had very developed systems (10). In one university the teaching assistants had the role of systematically identifying issues arising on the course and reporting back to course managers (6). Some respondents indicated that they used this evaluation to inform their own practice (1). Respondent 4 argued that systematic student evaluation data enabled staff to move from the 'purely anecdotal'.

However, Morley (2001a) argues that students are 'being incorporated into the managerialist project' (p.472) by constantly having to meet the needs of quality audit and some respondents expressed similar reservations about evaluation systems. Delucchi (2000) argues that student evaluations can be too like customer satisfaction surveys so fail through an over-superficial approach which focuses solely on the service elements. A reader from a pre-1992 university concurred:

> At the end of every single course we do a course evaluation with students which is in a set form so you can compare across courses. You know, we're not particularly deep. I don't think they really get at the heart of the material, you know. 'Were the course aims clear? Signal your agreement on a five point scale'...........
>
> Well, O.K. it tells you something but what it tells you I'm not entirely sure. 'Was this course nice overall? Would you recommend it to others?' You know, tick on the Likert scale. So we can make a claim that the course was popular with students and cover our backs but I'm not sure how much it really tells us. (11)

Respondent 17 argued that, although evaluations were useful information, in the end what really mattered was not whether students enjoyed the module but whether they passed it. A third respondent (19) pointed out that good evaluations could lead to course team complacency implying a handing-over to students of professional responsibility for critical evaluation of the course. Respondents also reported feedback systems as often based on the six categories used in SR and so the areas for the student voice are predefined

(10). The use made of student voice information again reveals nuances of both consumerist and democratic rights models.

Student rights

Students are usually portrayed as both winners and losers in SR (Blythman 2001; Morley 2001a). My data show short-term loss through diversion of resources to 'feed the beast' (Newton 2000). It is sometimes argued that SR gave some power directly to students since they were consulted over the quality of their experience and that this could be used consciously to make gains. Certainly there is plenty evidence of short-term practical gains (Blythman 2001) and my respondents came up with several examples but often, as in other studies, suggesting that these were not sustained. A reader from a pre-1992 university stated:

> We used the fact of the game to secure advantages for ourselves. For example we have, had a Student Study room where undergraduates could come and work quietly and the room was a bit of a 'guddle'. And it was constantly under threat because the University was desperate to recover space ....- we successfully made the case not only that we had to keep this room but it had to look gorgeous. So it was entirely redecorated and it ended up looking like - in fact the table and chairs you're sitting on have been appropriated from that room because about two years after the TQA exercise was over the University did appropriate the room (11).

Morley (2001a) suggests an alternative reading of colonisation of students with apparent gains being superficial and related to their economic value to the university. Some respondents recognised the consultation with students as a game. One respondent from a pre-1992 university pointed out how little unmanaged contact assessors had with students:

> Surprisingly we were reassured that the inspectors would not just be talking to students on an ad hoc basis, that the meetings with students would be in formally structured settings, focus group-type settings. And I found that slightly surprising because clearly then it gave the institution the opportunity to kind of hand pick you could say. I myself did this, we were asked to nominate students who could be on a focus group, so of course I nominated two particularly good, you know positive, you know keen, enthusiastic people, and you know that's probably not very... kosher. (5)

There were also suggestions of collusion between staff and students to help achieve a good score (2) and of students being encouraged into the game through involving them in the processes.

My respondents often expressed a desire to respond to what students wanted. In one case students had indicated their wish for changes in the way they were allocated to small groups (8). Scott (1999) explores the extent to which universities have become more customer focused and argues that customer focus does not mean always seeing the customer as right, arguing for bringing into alignment student and institutional expectations. For Scott education is a product, like law or medicine, that is difficult for the consumer to judge. Customers can judge the quality of the service but not the end product, a position which at least some of the 1960s student radicals would see as reactionary and patronising (Stedman Jones 1969). From my respondents there was a general sense of wanting students to be happy. Respondent 6, who in other areas took a more traditional position, was keen that the students were satisfied with course changes. Occasionally this was expressed in the discourse of consumerism:

> There was a recognition that, at the end of the day, the major stakeholder is the student (10).

However, this respondent, a teaching and learning co-ordinator, goes on to say:

> But also, of course, there was a growing recognition over that time of the power and the - power's perhaps the wrong word, but the duty owed to students to make sure they knew exactly what their role was, and that could only be fulfilled if the staff knew exactly how to operate within the system too (10).

Students were also perceived to gain by increased follow-up of issues raised by students through course committees (5) and this 'closing the loop' was recognised as altering the balance of power and giving increased voice to those other than the course director, including students and other course

team members. However, my respondents did not see the student voice as paramount and sometimes recognised issues raised by students as outside one's control and inappropriate.

In summary I suggest that commodification of education may be more complex and contested than is sometimes suggested. My data offer some evidence of impact of ideas of commodification on the perceptions of my respondents and SR seemed to increase mechanisms to capture 'the student voice'. Respondents, however, recognised the limitations of such mechanisms. These responses do not suggest a major power shift to students as a result of SR's foregrounding of the student voice, rather that academic staff still consider themselves in a powerful position in relation to students although this might be expressed in different ways. Respondents' views were, of course, affected by their pedagogical philosophy, the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 5

The influence of SR on pedagogy

This chapter examines the various views of pedagogy held by my respondents and examines the extent to which they were influenced by SR. I return to a theoretical exploration of pedagogic models in my final chapter, taking an abductive approach arising from my data. In this chapter I report on key findings. Several models emerged from my data. One model was predominant and its origins are examined to clarify its links with national teaching and learning policy.

Model A (dominant) - Student learning rather than teaching content
This model asserts a sense of responsibility for ensuring that students learn. This does not preclude some recognition of student responsibility or involvement. It builds on what students already know rather than a transmission model. A late arrival into teaching from industry explained:

> .... let's start out with what you know, let's empower you to tell me
> something about what you know. There is a sense that there's your
> building blocks, they're in the wrong sequence or they're out of alignment -
> let's align them together and you can see how we've done this. They all
> understand what the process is much better. That's what I do - that comes
> from the TQA (1).

There is, then, recognition of the need to teach students skills that are expected of them, in particular study skills, so that students understand process as well as content.

Importance of student learning was recognised even by those who felt that they lacked expertise as expressed by the following respondent from a pre-1992 university:

> I think we could invest a great deal more in planning our teaching and
> thinking about student learning or about how students learn. I haven't a
> clue about how students learn to be honest. I mean we're supposed to

know lots about it but I don't even think the students know how they learn (11).

A teaching and learning co-ordinator clearly indicated the influence of SR on this model:

> (SR) did heighten the importance of teaching delivery, you know that it wasn't sufficient to know your subject, but delivering the subject was important too (10).

A consequence of this was also enthusiasm for formative as well as summative assessment (1). This model endorses student potential and holistic development, sometimes presented as a developmental journey with rejection of notions of 'fixed capacity'. A post-1992 respondent stated:

> There are some cynics who say a student comes in with 60, sort of B's at A Level and they're going to leave with a 2.2 degree. I don't actually think that's necessarily true, I think that you can develop people, you can increase a person's ability (1).

An art and design respondent (8) pointed out the usefulness of making learning explicit to students, showing them the critical journey they had made. She contrasted this holistic model to competence checklists, arguing for the need for dialogue and discussion with students. Both these respondents expressed willingness to push students but saw this as working collaboratively with students to encourage self-reflection. The desire for students to understand their own experience led to the role of transparency, which is a recurrent theme throughout this study. Transparency needs to be problematised as a concept and I do this later in this chapter. However, when examining the dominant pedagogic model, for my respondents it was 'a good thing', the obverse of an inequitable hidden curriculum.

This model also assumed the efficacy of innovation in teaching. SR was seen to have contributed through diversification of assessment and careful identification and meeting of individual student needs. However, as we will see below, SR could also have a strong negative effect on innovation. The changing nature of the student body was recognised as requiring different

teaching and learning strategies (18;19). There was resistance to university attempts to treat all students as the same (19). This concern with differentiation also required strategies to avoid large classes including use of graduate teaching assistants (6) and offering additional support to 'weaker' students (23). Not all respondents signed up to this dominant model of pedagogy although the vast majority did in most aspects. There were two other discernable models.

Model B – the 'standards' model

The second model, held by two respondents from the same department of a pre-1992 university, might be categorised as a residual traditional model. The characteristics included preference for an element of instinct in assessment rather than codification and a belief in 'standards':

> You know sort of pressure to try and express things in, what shall we say, positive language rather than negative language, you know we were asked how do we grade - well the first is really, is something quite special, and we really got most of this here, and the 2:1 nearly got it, there might be a few things, but 2:2s are really getting a bit shaky, ... (For the current climate) you can't do it negatively, you've got to do it positively. And this notion that somehow we had to set up a degree programme so that 99% of all students came out with a sort of positive outcome, and then it just got better and better and better, just seems to be sort of distorting (3).

A third characteristic is a preference for exams and rejection of 'political correctness' in assessment which recognises individual differences in students. Thus we have some hostility to the student potential model in the same way as the student potential model rejects the model of fixed ability. The second respondent (6) in this group also expressed a fourth characteristic, a belief in a recognised, non-negotiable subject content.

Model C- art and design

The third model sits outside the polarity of Models A and B and was found mainly within art and design disciplines. Respondent 15 argued that in his department people were passionate about their subject rather than wanting to be teachers. This may suggest a model of traditional academics who simply teach as a way of funding their research interests; however, it combines with

a belief in intensive and time-consuming individual teaching and assessment. I found extensive evidence of this model in earlier work on art and design teachers Blythman (1999; 2001). In this model, one-to-one communication and individual negotiation of the curriculum are highly valued. Respondents were critical of when, and how, this was challenged by assessors looking for a more codified and evidenced approach:

> I know teaching and learning policy outcomes, whatever they care to call it. They are beginning to kind of put it into packages and the problem I can see is that in terms of fine art it just doesn't fall in necessarily to those given criteria (8).

Another respondent in this group recognised the tensions with the QAA framework:

> I think the notion of evidence - we were accused to having too much of a... we got 22 - we had too much of an oral culture, we talked to each other too much apparently whereas we should have written things down slightly more (4).

This model foregrounded the quality of individual student work, something that at least one respondent (4) felt was a lack in the SR framework. Johnson (2002) argues that the SR framework is particularly unsuitable for fine art. Arguably this model is, essentially, the traditional atelier model of art education that bears greatest resemblance to an apprenticeship to a great master combined with a focus on challenging orthodoxy. This model, however, is difficult to sustain with increasing student numbers, has no tradition of codification or documentation and indeed challenges notions of codification.

These three models are visible in my data and most respondents fit one model or another quite well although, of course, there is not a total fit with individual respondents showing some elements of other models within their own dominant pedagogy. The second and third models conflicted more with the SR model than the first. Respondent 22 suggested that preferred models of teaching might be generational. Arguably, a more complex mix of factors is

at play including type of institution, subject discipline and exposure to teacher training. Personal factors such as age and gender are returned to in chapter 9. I now turn to the influence of teacher training on pedagogy.

The role of teacher training

None of the five respondents represented by models B and C had a formal teaching qualification. Of the remainder, 13 had a formal teaching qualification and a further respondent had ILT membership. Not all qualifications were specifically for higher education; one respondent in social policy had a PGCE in maths. The four respondents from health-related disciplines had NHS teaching qualifications. Those least likely to have a formal qualification were older staff in pre-1992 universities and those from art and design. Three respondents without formal teaching qualifications were in post-1992 universities having come to teaching relatively late in life and felt some university pressure to complete such a qualification. Even where the respondents did not have formal training, they were often operating in an environment where this was being encouraged for TAs (teaching assistants) (20). The most common model of teacher training was one which shared origins with both SR and Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILT) membership, and relates closely to model A outlined above.

There is a dominant theory of pedagogy operating in UK higher education at policy level, evidenced through the expectations of the ILT, HEFCE Learning and Teaching Strategy and the underpinning values and principles of many teacher training courses for higher education academic staff. The immediate origins of this model are the values propagated by SEDA (Staff and Education Development Association). These values emphasise students' individual approaches to learning and the importance of supportive contexts (SEDA website). The ILT is concerned with the development of learners' understanding and how teachers evaluate their teaching and build on that evaluation (ILT website). HEFCE requires HEIs to have a learning and teaching strategy. This claims simply to identify process and allow the individual institution to identify their own priorities:

So far as possible, we will leave it to institutions to determine the content and structure of their revised strategies (HEFCE 2002a).

They are required, however, to meet, in a measurable way, national priorities including widening access and improving retention and employability. Arguably, the nature of these national priorities also encourages a particular pedagogic model although, as in many other policy documents, 'good and innovative practice in support of high quality learning and teaching' (HEFCE 2002a) is not deconstructed. The SR model is best articulated through the Aide Memoire in the QAA Subject Review Handbook (QAA 1999). The following features are evident: flexibility and students' choice, progression to employment, a focus on skills, clarity of objectives, ensuring student understanding, academic guidance and support and curriculum design 'informed by recent developments in teaching and learning' (p.2). There is no explanation of 'recent developments' although statements elsewhere imply that it is seen exclusively as ICT.

Many universities have in-house teaching qualifications for academic staff based on the SEDA values and supported by a literature on teaching and learning in higher education which encourages the same model (Biggs 1999; Gibbs 1992; Prosser and Trigwell 1999; Ramsden 1992) and a focus on the scholarship of teaching (Trigwell et al. 2000). The intellectual origins of this model are in the work of Marton and Saljo (1976) and Entwistle (1987) with phenomenographic studies of students' approaches to learning. A second conceptual source is that of the reflective practitioner (Schon 1987). Its proponents identify this as a move from Mode I to Mode 2 knowledge, moving from teaching to learning, more student centred, demand driven and focusing on problem solving and performance (Ramsden 2001) but reveal an interesting lack of intertextuality with earlier feminist approaches to pedagogy. The dominant pedagogic model expressed by my respondents seems to relate more closely to Mode 2 knowledge but I have no triangulating evidence from their practice. Murray and MacDonald (1997) point out that lecturers'

expressed conceptions of teaching do not always translate into actual teaching methodologies.

Some respondents were enthused by this model, expressing intellectual fascination for scholarship of teaching. Respondent 1 reported changes in his own model of teaching and his understanding of good assessment and course design since they are the 'ancillary handmaidens' to student learning, an exposition of a key tenet of the dominant model. A younger pre-1992 sector respondent (7) was aware of policy connections. He saw his teaching as 'quite subject review friendly' since he had previously worked and had his teacher training at Oxford Brookes (which, with the Open University, was the crucible for this model developed by the team working with Graham Gibbs).

Institutional attitudes to pedagogy seemed to sit easily within this model. Universities varied in the importance they attributed to teaching and learning as opposed to research but all respondents felt that their institution gave it significant recognition with respondent 10 suggesting that this had been increased by SR. Respondent 6 felt that the university's attitude to pedagogy depended on the balance in its sources of income. Several respondents reported that their university felt obliged to respond to the SR agenda through action both before and after the review and that this included developing teacher training programmes. The institutional perspective is developed in chapter 7.

Limitations of the dominant model

The following themes come through the various versions of the model outlined above. First, in this discourse there is considerable emphasis on the student (or 'learner' in the case of ILT) and 'learning' often comes discursively before 'teaching'. This subtly alters the power relationships within the academy through implying that the 'learner' comes before the teacher. Second, reflection is a key idea based on the work of Schon (1987) but with little recognition of the limiting role of structural factors or externally imposed limitations on areas for reflection (Clegg 1999). Third, the model encourages

responsibilisation of academic staff since it presents student approaches to learning as relational and malleable by lecturers through assessment strategies (Gibbs and Habershaw 1996). Du Gay (1996) states that this responsibilisation supposedly increases individual human capital value and personally empowers but he indicates how it problematises equity and probity, although I would wish to avoid any sense of golden ageism.

I would not wish to argue against this dominant model as a cognitive model of learning but its limitations are in its gaps. These are explored in chapter 11. It is a personal development model in the tradition of the reflective practitioner working through continuous improvement and is open to Morley and Rassool's (1999) criticism since it assumes a common identity and purpose and stops being 'organic and self defined' (p.84).

The role of peer observation

Another potential influence on pedagogy coming from SR was the role of peer observation systems. Many respondents referred to these systems, not surprisingly, since their existence was a QAA expectation (*Higher Quality 2*). Some respondents reported them as useful and making a contribution to the quality of teaching by allowing staff to identify and remedy issues. It gave them a framework for dealing with individual weaknesses (6). This raises the question of in whose interest peer observation operates, whether it benefits the individual or the institution. Institutions were enthusiastic about peer observation and often supported it developmentally. However there was a sense that such systems had been introduced simply for SR and even enthusiastic staff found them difficult to sustain in full across a department. An art and design respondent described the desirability of such a system but indicated pressures that meant it was simply fabricated:

> We put it in place very rapidly and pretty haphazardly to be honest, across the faculty. And there was some bad feeling actually with regard, you know, with panic up on high, telling us that we should have already been doing it and we'd been doing it for years but no-one had actually thought

about finding the time to make sure it could happen or how you know it takes place.

And I don't get to spend enough time or any time, you know, even with the painting staff or in the print making studio to see how they're doing and, you know, cross reference illustration cross over...... I would give my right arm just to sit down in one or two lectures mainly to kind of feed myself as much as see how other people are delivering things. I think there's a kind of mismatch there, but you know you're aware of staff from all sorts of other courses and you know you even could describe yourself as friends of many staff but, you know, one's experience of their teaching is pretty limited (15).

For others it was entirely about fabrication. A post-1992 university senior lecturer explained:

Admittedly we actually created some (observations) and went and did some a few months before so that we actually had paperwork saying we did it (23).

This suggests a contribution to pedagogic thought that seldom gets beyond individual one-off experiences of any value. In parallel to formal observation systems SR seemed to have stimulated discussion of pedagogic issues, the sharing of practice and materials and researching national good practice. Respondent 19 felt the usefulness of such discussions for the less confident members of a team. It was seen as a way of stealthily providing informal teacher training. However, like peer observation, this discussion was difficult to sustain once the pressure of SR had moved on. This theme is developed in chapters 6 and 9.

Perceived influence of SR on pedagogy

SR was regarded by most respondents as having a direct effect on pedagogy. These effects were perceived as both good and bad and fit a Foucauldian model of being simultaneously repressive and creative. Sometimes the emphasis was on the deleterious. One respondent pointed out that the formalisation of delivery systems with the aim of achieving improvements has also had the effect of losing the informal collegial relationship with students. However the same respondent argued that tightening university regulations

can be made more positive by relating them to study skills. Codifications that had to be produced for TQA became part of the teaching process.

We saw above that, at least in the dominant pedagogic model, innovation in teaching and learning methods was seen as a positive. My data has examples of how SR both encouraged and killed off this enthusiasm for innovation. Several respondents (19;20) argued that SR gave the course team confidence and impetus to experiment more with different methods and content and introduce more diagnostic work earlier. Respondent 10 thought that it encouraged academic staff into teaching and learning projects on autonomous learning. Innovation was also introduced through respondents' observations elsewhere as assessors (21). Sometimes the effect of SR was personal and respondent 13 reported that SR was part of what made him reflect on his teaching and change his style of lecturing.

However, another pre-1992 university respondent (3) felt that SR had a strongly negative effect on innovation:

> I hope we're not completely risk averse, but I again think the penalties of anything at all being seen not to be exactly right are very high. And it's not necessarily that they would take a mark off you, although they might, it's more that, bless them, they would want to know which eighteen-step plan you have got for improving this next year, and life's short.

SR and discourse

SR seemed to influence dominant models of pedagogy through the way it framed and constructed language. Morley (2001a) suggests that, although respondents often value the discursive space for reflection that subject review opens up, this defines and limits the parameters for discussion. Taylor (1999) argues that often academic staff lack explicit educational values and thus a language to talk about pedagogy. My data evidence the way the six aspects of subject review framed and constructed, through language, a particular model of pedagogy. Universities frequently used these as a framework for course evaluation and sometimes it dictated both committee structure and

professional development priorities (10). A pre-1992 university lecturer in politics recounted his use of it to solve a problem:

> ....here's an example from today. OK. There was some ambiguity about some issue and I think I thought it through in Subject Review terms and came up with a solution which I then checked with somebody else was the right one and I made my deduction through a kind of Subject Review mental process, you know. 'What are the quality assurance implications of this? O.k., they're this, so therefore you've got to do that', you know?(7)

He then went on to outline how this almost unconsciously begins to structure thought.

> So I think that's something which you don't know has happened but actually has happened ..... Before, you know, in the run up to Subject Review.....we thought, 'Oh we've got to think about this because the Subject Review will pick up on it' but it's not until you actually get into the process and you start kind of thinking about, thinking in a way that Subject Review makes you think, that you actually start just engaging with issues in - automatically in that kind of way and I think that's probably a most profound thing (7).

This was not perceived as negative. A number of respondents regarded the framework as useful. Respondent 19 argued that, even as an education specialist, it is sometimes difficult to find the right language in pedagogy. Respondent 1 suggested that it enabled him to see the different strands to teaching and learning and how they interlink rather than 'a solid road'.

Another (20) thought that TQA moved people beyond simply teaching the way that they themselves were taught. The actual discourse of SR is perceived as influential. Respondent 13 argued that it gave them a language which enabled quality enhancement discussion to take place. The politics lecturer quoted above related:

> I think the vocabulary can be a bit crude ..... it can feel a little bit sort of, a little bit too new Labour control freak and everything but ...... I think it's important that we make transparent to students what it is that you are going to do and what it is that you want them to achieve. I think that, for example, writing a set of aims and objectives for a module for a programme - it's a reflective exercise which actually helps you to think what the heck's going

on and helps you to bring some of those issues or you know, what's the phrase? A hidden curriculum, you know the idea that students have one agenda and you have another and never the twain shall meet. Well, you know, if you just simply kind of plough on assuming that what you're - that your agenda is their agenda then you're not going to get very far but if you make transparent what your agenda is, clarify your expectations then that's got to be a good thing (7).

For two respondents (14;21) the language gave academic respectability to pedagogic ideas. The language also had its critics. Respondent 3 disliked the pressure to use positive language in assessment. Another pre-1992 university respondent argued that the language lacked meaning:

So there's not really any consistency because we really don't know what it means because that's part of the language problem. We don't know what a learning outcome - what is a learning outcome? Being able to switch on a computer or being aware of welfare to work reforms and their history over the last thirty years? I mean what is it? (11)

This respondent however had, with her team, adapted to it in some ways out of compliance and respondent 20, from the same department, pointed out that they modelled their course handbooks to meet the expectation of SR. We, therefore, see the influence of the QAA framework and discourse even for those expressing reservations. However, arguably, this is a framing influence rather than a hegemony and the fact that there is an agenda in these areas at all could create space to squeeze in other issues. Respondent 18 related how he had used the retention agenda to achieve a long-term aim of increasing support for a curriculum area that students found difficult. In general, however, the power of the QAA discourse should not be underestimated. My data suggest that through discourse and policy formation SR has had a significant influence on how students are taught in higher education, an influence that can be seen as both creative and oppressive. Crucial to this model is the concept of transparency.

Transparency

I pointed out above that transparency is a crucial and complex concept in this study. This section is about transparency in relation to students and

pedagogy. In chapter 7 I discuss institutional moves to transparency as a response to the SR agenda, both before and after SR. Strathern (2000b) argues that 'transparency of operation is everywhere endorsed as the outward sign of integrity' (p.2). Henkel (2000) relates that, in the period running up to SR, 'an increasingly heavy premium came to be placed on transparency and fairness in the assessment process' (p.79). Transparency is also seen as the antithesis of the hidden curriculum, an idea associated with reproduction of structural inequalities aided by the absence of formal institutional structures (Margolis and Romero 1998). As a pre-1992 sector respondents states (although she subsequently goes on to problematise the process):

> Having to be more conscious and explicit about rules, well how could you
> say it's a bad thing? (11)

Transparency was overwhelmingly identified as a good thing. A pre-1992 sector respondent (7) argued its importance as a way to make teams clarify in their own mind what they were doing so that staff reflected and really communicated with students, avoiding the hidden curriculum and confusion of expectations between staff and students. For him it was about 'fairness' to students. Even respondents who were very critical of the whole experience and process of SR supported the idea of transparency. One such respondent (3) indicated the advantages of clarifying and writing down objectives although he also suggested that it led to compliance both individually and institutionally. An art and design respondent (8) argued that it was SR that got academic staff to understand the meaning of transparency.

Transparency was most sought after in course information (handbooks etc.) and assessment practices, in particular rules and regulations and feedback to students. A number of respondents (22, 20, 19) referred to what they saw as improvements in course handbooks in terms of content and clarity. Production values also improved. This was seen as important by a principal Lecturer in business studies:

> You know, these little things which give the impression of a professional
> outfit (13)

Assessment, including feedback to students, was the second site for transparency. A number of respondents emphasised its importance, the need for clarity and the influence of subject review through its explicit concerns with feedback (8;20;22). Respondent 20, from a pre-1992 university, also reported that assessment had been an area of criticism in their subject review and as a result they had implemented, for the better, the TQA recommendations for improved assessment practices including feedback to students which had long been a bone of contention among students. A related area of transparency was that of assessment criteria. There was a general feeling that students were entitled to know the rules of judgement. This was seen mainly as an issue of clarity. Respondent 13 talked about the gain from SR of ensuring that exam papers are scrutinised properly before being given to students.

Transparency also had its usefulness to academic staff and management. It made the curriculum transportable between staff. If a module was described in detail then someone other than the author could deliver it. Becher and Trowler (2001) make the point that when higher education becomes:

> a 'thing' capable of being bought and delivered in module sized chunks, with learning outcomes being the unit of currency...(then) academic staff may be viewed as exchangeable deliverers of learning outcomes rather than as subject specialists with unique contributions to make (p.10).

They then point out how attractive this model is from a managerialist perspective. Several respondents with managerial responsibilities identified this benefit (13;14;19). Another benefit of transparency for academic staff was that it also made transparent institutional expectations of students. This was seen to contribute positively to the power relationship between staff and students offering protection for the institution when faced with appeals by students challenging academic judgements.

While most respondents saw transparency as an unmitigated good (13; 17) some expressed reservations. Respondent 19 pointed out that students were

swamped with information. Respondent 11 argued that the level of information was surface and that there were opportunity costs from the resource implications of creating transparency. These respondents identified that sheer volume of apparently transparent information can become a fog, questioning the whole notion of information as transparency (O'Neill 2002). Transparency seemed predicated on a positivist view of communication with no recognition of the way meaning is mediated. The assumption was that if something was stated 'clearly', a favourite QAA word, then students would understand it in the meaning intended by the author. Chanock (2000) shows this cannot be assumed, that there was no common understanding between students and staff of phrases like 'too descriptive, not enough analysis' (p.97) throwing doubt on the meaningfulness to students of 'clear' learning outcomes. I would not want to argue against attempts to make things clearer to students but rather that we need to avoid an over-simplistic model (Meadmore 1998).

The search for transparency relates back to the apparent search for the student voice discussed above. The student evaluation questionnaire is supposed to make the views of students transparent to staff but, as we have seen above, these are limited both conceptually through being bounded by a predetermined structure and in translation into action due to resource and other structural limitations. Strathern (2000a) argues that transparency privileges information as a source of knowledge, while failing to recognise the time lapse from communication to absorbing and understanding:

> Reception is crucially contingent on the initial willingness of the recipients to be put into the position of taking (Strathern 2000a p.311).

Noble (2002) quotes from one of his respondents: 'the syllabus and lecture notes are not an education, an education is what you do with these materials' (p.10). Transparency can be a process of objectification which turns performance into objects, a point illustrated from my data in the role of course handbooks, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and feedback to students. I return to the issue of transparency later. Meanwhile my study shows the

influence of SR both on the pedagogy of individuals and on the dominant framing concepts of current pedagogy. This influence appears to reinforce a student learning model and increased codification within externally set parameters. This created difficulties for respondents operating within different pedagogic paradigms although, for some respondents, it could also create agenda space. Transparency was a key technology in this process.

Chapter 6

Some implications for academic working practices

So far I have outlined my respondents' perception of the impact SR had on their relationships with students and their pedagogic practices. I now analyse the impact on other areas of working practices through two themes. The first is the perceived influence of SR on their reflection and reflexivity both individually and as teams, often regarded as one of the benefits of SR. This explores the extent to which subject review is both a repressive technology and also leaves space for some creative empowerment. The second theme is the impact of SR on time pressures in working practices, often seen as negative. This includes a discussion of how respondents manage these pressures and their attempts to 'recapture' time.

Reflection and reflexivity

We saw earlier the relationship of reflection to CPD including its possible contribution to transformation (Eraut 1995), the dangers of it becoming an instrument of self-surveillance (Clegg 1999), the importance of contextual factors (Clegg et al 2002; Harvey 1998) and the role of tacit knowledge (Clegg et al 2002; Eraut1995). One positive impact of SR for many respondents was an increased focus on individual and team reflection, by creating a space for reflection (9) and an imperative to examine one's practice (4), thus increasing self-awareness (13). A pre-1992 university respondent expressed it as follows:

> You know we've perhaps been a bit too satisfied, content with students saying 'oh yes it works very well', or tutors praising what we offer, but I do think, yes, I think it has perhaps been helpful in that way, that it prompted that greater reflection on everything we do (19).

Several aspects contributed to this increased reflection, including, as seen earlier, peer observation. It is, however, worth reinforcing its perceived contribution to reflection. A post-1992 late entrant to teaching regarded it as:

very useful both in terms of seeing how other people structure lectures, seminars, whatever, and also getting feedback on what they thought of your own performance, and in both senses you learn a lot (2).

However, on occasions the reflection of others seemed to be the objective rather than self-reflection and at times apparent collaboration came close to management 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves 1994 p.186) to deal with staff performance (6).

Encouragement of team communication

Most respondents reported increased team internal communication as a result of SR preparation but its sustainability varied as other factors intervened. The team was often a source of psychological support, what respondent 2 called 'a response to an external threat', what Morley (2001a) calls 'the war effort'. However, several respondents argued that there were longer-term improvements in communication (8;9) with other teams in the institution, a valuable conduit of knowledge and source of ideas for practice. Some respondents who had professional liaison responsibilities with outside agencies felt that there was improved dialogue since both organisations needed an agreed narrative for SR (9). For some there was more individual reflection through activities like writing aims and objectives (7). Becher and Trowler (2001) argue that, despite the negatives, SR has also had positive effects and for my respondents increased opportunity for reflection and reflexivity was perceived as a gain.

Outcomes of reflection

Clegg et al. (2002) problematise the relationship between reflection and action arguing for an approach that recognises temporal factors. I explore this in chapter 9 with an analysis of inhibitors to action. While recognising this point I found evidence of action on reflection among my respondents. It often impacted on pedagogy as discussed in the last chapter. For respondent 10 it stimulated new ideas for development projects. However sometimes it led to

developments of the reflective process itself; respondent 10 felt that SR had made course review forward-looking rather than retrospective. Respondent 5, as we saw earlier, became more conscious of closing the loop with course issues raised by colleagues and students. For some this reflection was in itself a boost to morale since, as respondent 2 argued, there is some pleasure in making explicit one's strengths, leading to gains in morale and self-esteem.

My respondents mainly saw this additional reflection and reflexivity positively. SR was perceived to contribute to increased reflection and discussion, both within and across teams, exactly what Barnett (2000) argues for in the age of supercomplexity. Taylor (1999) also points out that conversation is a powerful tool to remove stereotypes the various 'academic tribes' have of each other. However both Barnett and Taylor emphasise the importance of dialogue based on respect, discussion and sharing and it is questionable whether the communication of SR preparation meets this criterion or is more performative. Clegg (1999) also argues that, where professional autonomy is under attack, reflective practice may be a form of self-surveillance and constrained within pre-set models of acceptable practice. I argued earlier that hegemonic discourses define and restrict what is possible. I would not, however, want to argue complete loss of agency and so see the reflection and reflexivity coming from SR as limited but real for my participants.

The role of time

While my respondents saw SR as contributing positively to reflection, they saw it and its consequences as having a negative impact through its consumption of time. Henkel (2000) states that SR dominated the term or semester in which it occurred and for far longer for those with related organisational responsibilities. Two specific aspects of the temporal nature of social practice i.e. the nature and impact of short-termness and the impact of issues of time on the sustainability of any changes resulting from SR, are discussed in Chapter 9. Chapter 11 explores theoretical considerations more fully.

Not having enough time is a major inhibitor to action according to academic staff. However, any understanding of time as an objective, fixed resource limits our understanding of its operation. Hargreaves (1994) outlines four possible conceptions of time: technical-rational, micropolitical, phenomenological and socio-political. Cambone (1995) argues that time for teachers is a complex and multi-faceted construct. He builds on Hargreaves' analysis and emphasises the difference between monochronic time and polychronic timeframes, the extent to which different types of time are being experienced simultaneously by the same person. He also outlines the phenomenological implications of public and private time and identifies the importance of cyclical time, the socio-temporal cycles that operate both structurally and culturally within the institution. Relating time to how teachers learn, he differentiates between 'allocated time, engaged time, time-on-task, aptitude, perseverance and pace' (p.518) and argues that considerable time is required to cover and align these various categories, pointing out the distinction between time spent on input into professional development, such as formal training sessions, and the time taken to digest, reflect and implement.

Cambone (1995), like Hargreaves (1994), identifies the political nature of time allocation and use and so, in this study, conceptualisations are examined through a lens of power relationships in relation to time, who is felt to control time. Campbell (1985) identifies lack of time as one of the great barriers to collegiality identifying problems of amount of time available and inflexibility through timetable constraints, use of own time which depends on a moral rather than contractual obligation and 'snatched time' for rushed conversations which he argues militate against both quality and professional behaviour. My earlier study (Blythman 2001) found that academic staff expressed time for subject review as time taken from activities they regarded as more valuable such as time with students, time for reflection and personal private time, suggesting that respondents felt that time was being taken from them thus indicating a passive response rather than an active choice.

Time pressures

Almost all my respondents referred to time pressures as significant to their working practices and saw QA processes as a major contributing factor. I argue in the next chapter that, additionally, institutions respond to SR by significantly increasing their QA processes which have a considerable individual time cost. The Foucauldian nature of the diffuse and invisible surveillance of quality assurance is expressed by a pre-1992 sector professor:

> I'm afraid that I'm rather losing track of who it is who is telling me to do these things (3).

Respondent 6 referred to the long run-up to SR as a contributing factor while a post-1992 senior lecturer commented on the expanding nature and demands of the quality assurance agenda:

> Every year we're doing something major and sometimes you just don't implement what you want to implement and things get lost. I mean we had the added dimension of having to have Professional Institutional Accreditation and Validation and that is an absolute nightmare because they're always changing the goalposts. So we're always trying to get our courses to do one thing or the other, depending on who the master is at the time (23).

The immediate demands of QA was not the only factor consuming time. Respondent 1, from publishing, indicated the fast pace of change in his subject; several commented on increasing student numbers. Some respondents saw diversification of the student body as increasing time spent on students perceived as needy (3;5). Channel (1990) reports academic perceptions of international students as often very needy. Another (1) commented on the time cost in restructuring courses through the university's decision to move to semesterisation. Some increased demands were more directly attributed to SR such as changes in assessment practices. In chapter 5 I outlined the changing forms of assessment 'encouraged' by SR as part of the dominant higher education pedagogic model. A number of respondents indicated that time spent on assessment had increased considerably (1;3), including through the introduction of more formative assessment and the need

to make all assessment procedures explicit, in response to QAA requirements (3). When combined with sharply increasing student numbers (1;19) it became a key consumer of time. A post-1992 sector respondent stated:

> Well the University has its Quality Assurance or Quality Management abyss or whatever you want to call it and edicts will come from them saying this is now something that we feel we need to do. I mean for example at Quality Assurance they were saying 'Do you double mark or is there anonymity?' We said we only double marked certain things and now we're finding a few years down the line everything has now got to be double marked, it has to be blind marking and of course the practicalities of that is that you're doubling your workload (23).

This extension of work surrounding teaching was seen to go beyond assessment by this post-1992 sector respondent:

> you find that a lot more time is taken up with ..teaching administration and teaching management than in the past (6).

In chapter 5, I outlined the dominant pedagogic model operating in UK higher education and it needs to be stated that, whatever its merits, it assumes a greater devotion of time to pedagogy than previous models.

Respondents in vocational areas reported additional time pressures from tighter liaison and documentation of relationships with other bodies (usually other public sector work placement providers in education or health) because QA demands on partner organisations leaked back as additional demands on higher education. Respondent 11 pointed out that all QA work has an opportunity cost. Several gave examples of what had lost out. This included time to know what other colleagues on a course were doing (15). The way institutional response to SR consumes yet more time is examined in chapter 7. Some respondents related the time pressure put on people as individuals and the impact on their research profile. This is explored in chapter 8.

Strategies to take back time

This time pressure, however, does not deny agency. A number of respondents related strategies to win back time. This included increasing staffing resource but, as it was usually difficult to increase staffing (19), other strategies were developed. However, time was not necessarily being taken back for the self but to meet higher status demands such as the RAE. There were a number of ways in which respondents had worked to 'take back time' including finding others to do part of the work. Respondent 6, from a pre-1992 university, reported much heavier use of graduate students as TAs while others (11;23) talked of 'streamlining' teaching. Assessment practices in particular were a focus for streamlining with respondent 23 outlining their reduction and respondent 3 explaining how they deliberately avoided course structures requiring complex assessment. For others, time saving was achieved by organisational features such as timetabling to ensure staff had some uninterrupted research time (17). Respondent 13, using as an analogy the dangers of plate spinning, set up structures that would be self-managing. Only one respondent (17) specifically mentioned the role of e-learning as a way of taking back time and even she felt its potential was limited because development was time-consuming and costly.

Unintended consequences

Time pressures also meant that respondents did things that neither they nor anyone else would see as desirable. A number of respondents referred to things being done superficially. A pre-1992 sector reader indicated:

> we have to review individual courses when we do our courses reviews but I think a lot of it is done as a formality rather than any kind of deep reflection on teaching because to really seriously re-design courses you need time to do the re-design, train people to do other things, prepare teaching materials and that's not made available to us (11).

A post-1992 sector respondent pointed out how things got prioritised:

I think what stops (peer observation) is that there seems constantly to be too much to deal with and it's one of those issues that isn't, hasn't been turned into a big enough buzz word for it to get to the top of the list you know. Health and safety's been a big buzz word so we've had to make sure, we've had to find the time for it, ……. you push it to the top of the list (15).

For some (17), however, SR had made a contribution to saving time by encouraging streamlined systems. This aligns with views expressed by respondents in my earlier study (Blythman 2001) so TQA, arguably, contributes both to the problem and the solution since, for some, it brings a welcome element of efficiency into the system. Additionally, although respondents felt under time pressure, they seemed, within this pressure, to have considerable control over their own time. Notably, although being interviewed for this study was of no direct benefit to my respondents nor could be seen as a priority, no-one cancelled or changed the interview time and all met me at, and for, the time agreed.

SR's impact on practice can be complex and no one impact is entirely positive or negative. My respondents saw increased reflection as positive but it can be questioned as limited by the normalising effect of the SR agenda. Clegg et al. (2002) talk of the loss of time for reflection and this aligns with my data so SR both encourages reflection and takes away time that would make it possible. My respondents saw the use of time by SR as negative and yet there is evidence of considerable individual and group agency in finding ways to 'take time back'. This suggests a Foucauldian operation of power as both creative and repressive.

Chapter 7

Subject review mediated through the institution

This chapter focuses on how institutions are perceived by respondents to have reacted to subject review, relating back to theories of managerialism and the management of risk outlined in chapter 2. I explore how this response impacts on the everyday working lives of academic staff and, in particular, the relationship between time, increased institutional activity and regulation (including uniformity and consistency), and disempowerment.

The UK higher education environment

We saw in chapter 3 the complex, changing environment of UK universities. This provides a context for institutional response to SR. Barnett (2000) comments on the recent rise of the university as an organisation rather than an association. Kogan (2002) argues that there is evidence of greater institutional management at the expense of professional power and that legislative and policy changes since the mid-seventies have moved universities from being 'holding companies' (p.57) to becoming fundamental units with values. A key driver was the Jarrett Report (CVCP 1985) which aimed to bring concepts of business efficiency into higher education. For Kogan and Bauer (2000) this significantly contributed to the development of managerialism, the dominance of systems over values and a general shift in public services to being more corporate and managed. External factors such as expansion, resource cuts, the RAE and QA all strengthened the role of central management leading to centralisation and institutional framing of academic work, and the rise of activities such as income generation and collaboration with industry. This, together with requirements to produce for external agencies extensive planning and statistical data, led to the rise of administrators who cut across traditional discipline-based structures with the introduction of departments including marketing, quality, research productivity, human, financial and physical resources and a consequent shift of power to managers and non-academic administrators. The power flow to management

leads to technology transfer as academics move into systems management, through increased managerialisation and the need to seek resources, while administrators impact on academic decision making (Kogan 2002). Delanty (2001) argues that:

> legitimated by a discourse of accountability, the university loses its sense of moral purpose (p.130).

Although I accept Delanty's critique of Readings (1996) as overstating loss of institutional power, in my view, accountability indicates some movement from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation although both have always been present in some proportion. The role of institutional management becomes to keep the university aligned with external demands and constraints (Henkel 2000).

The extent to which universities are strategic or merely reactive is debatable because of the implementation gap (Bowe et al 1992; Cerych and Sabatier 1986) between those at the top of the policy chain who may have a clear strategic position and the 'street level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980). Gaps may also exist between national policy intention and its interpretation by institutions leading to significant unintended consequences. One of my respondents (3) pointed out that increased regulation of assessment in his (pre-1992) university operated for him as a constraint on entrepreneurial curriculum development (see chapter 6). Similarly, there may be a coherent national strategy but existing on two levels of the long-term aim and the need to meet more immediately the needs/demands of the electorate (Barber 2002). Again, there may be a tension between the political intentions of national policy and the values and priorities of senior civil servants (Fitz and Halpin 1994), or quasi-civil service organisations such as QAA and HEFCE (Randall 2002). Henkel (2000) argues that:

> The (post-1992 quality) structure reflected boundaries and distinctions that owed more to struggles for power, interests and values than to planned or rational division of labour (p.73).

The implications for institutional structures, procedures, rules and relationships between academic and administrative staff, with particular reference to SR, are explored in this chapter. I examine:

> how actors themselves perceive the particular arenas in which they are engaged (Becher and Trowler 2001 p.34).

I discuss universities as if they were entities with opinions and agency; this reflects my respondents' discourse. In practice the institution, in this context, is what my respondents would see as 'management' at both university and faculty level and includes central QA teams. Notably for some of my respondents, this was seen as a rather shadowy group and several commented that they had lost track of who it was that was telling them to do things. Unlike Henkel (2000) I did not interview senior staff (Dean or above) for reasons explained in Chapter 3. There was no-one in my sample who saw themselves as 'management' in this sense.

Institutional preparation for SR

For Henkel (2000), TQA was quickly recognised as having:

> tangible significance for institutional and departmental reputations (p.79).

My respondents reported that their institutions took SR seriously. The degree and manifestation of the seriousness varied. The following respondent from the post-1992 sector felt that this operated negatively:

> The bit that was destructive and negative was the excessive bureaucracy, the top-down panic and confusion that tended to destroy team spirit, ... if you want to take the analogy, instead of just letting the plant grow and develop they kept lifting it up, seeing the roots were all right, sticking it in again and that was counter-productive and negative, and it left a bit of residual ill will internally against certain aspects of internal management rather than any external process (2).

Another post-1992 sector respondent (15) described the panic from on high when the management realised that there was no peer observation system in

place despite it being a QAA expectation. Respondent 9 described the 'hype and pressure' around SR because the college was bidding for university college status and therefore the management at all levels were really 'jumpy'. Some respondents quoted the pressure from the university to achieve a particular grade (2;9;22). This was sometimes because the university felt that it had something to prove but pre-1992 universities also seemed to fear loss of position.

Universities varied in the amount of central involvement in managing SR. The pre-1992 universities were usually less centrally directed (7) but the post-1992 institutions varied in the amount of 'centralised decentralisation' (Henkel 1997 p.57). Sometimes this was seen as helpful by my respondents. A health-related studies respondent described:

> .... they did organise lots of things to actually kind of help us to get up to speed with things, so it wasn't just, you know, a lot of pressure and ..... you go away and get on with it. It's like you know this is the pressure but .... you know we can have this meeting and ..... invite these people to talk to us so that we know what we're doing and that sort of thing, so it was pressure but there was support there as well. (9)

Sometimes institutions offered financial help with preparations including introducing peer observation systems (10) and achieving accurate student statistical information (18). In contrast, respondent 1 referred to his university using SR as 'a stick to beat you with' while respondent 8 related how her university quoted the grades achieved by 'competitors' as a benchmark that must be met.

Responding to SR – the score

The actual score appeared to play an important institutional role before and after the event. My respondents' more personal response to the score is dealt with in the next chapter. Institutional reaction to the score was related to the importance attached to it beforehand. In some cases the SR score was seen as more important than the RAE (4); in others the reverse was true. Even where a good TQA score led to direct financial rewards, as in the Scottish

system, the greater importance of the RAE in the eyes of university management still seemed to apply. A respondent from a pre-1992 university stated:

> ... more resource comes from a good TQA rating than from a good RAE rating but the University behaves as if it's the other way around....... this institution fancies itself as a research driven institution and it thinks that its future lies in generating high
> quality financially rewarding research (11).

A second respondent from the same university (20) pointed out that more senior staff time went into the RAE than TQA. Respondent 22, from another pre-1992 university, reported a certain management ambivalence about the importance of teaching, reflected in the operation of internal promotion systems.

However, universally, universities seemed to be concerned about the impact of the score (Henkel 2000). Even in the research-oriented university quoted above there was a consciousness that the reports were made available to prospective students and, although recruitment was not an issue, achieving high grades mattered (20). Segal Quince Wicksteed's report (HEFCE 1999) indicates that there is, as yet, little use of SR scores by potential students. So perhaps this is a more diffuse concern with longer-term brand image and is as much about attracting high RAE scoring staff as it is about attracting students. Where an institution felt that it had received a low score (which could be as high as 22 in a prestigious institution) senior management seemed to react with concern and worry. A pre-1992 sector respondent related:

> I will always remember the day that the result was announced, and this extremely sombre atmosphere as people filed out of that room, ... I've never seen so many long faces in one place. I mean a couple of points were all that was really being talked about here .... a fascinating part of the whole experience was to see so many senior management figures so clearly dispirited and worried by the outcome (5).

Those who had significantly contributed to high scores felt that the university was grateful and their contribution recognised. Several respondents (5;22;23)

described the personal thanks they had received and the benefits to their institutional profile. As respondent 22 put it, 'our value within the university's increased significantly'. However several respondents questioned whether this led to material gains like sabbaticals or increments (5;22). Course teams and departments could also be recipients of university gratitude and this was seen as particularly important where this grouping was less successful in other performance indicators such as application rate (11) or research performance (5). This mirrors my finding from my earlier study (Blythman 2001) where one department thought their existence had been saved by a high score. Increased departmental status was particularly important to respondents in the predominantly female departments such as para-medical subjects (14) where the gendered nature of status within the university was most sharply felt. I return to the issue of gender in the next chapter. Several respondents, however, questioned the extent to which these gains would last and I discuss this in chapter 9.

Institutional response to SR – standardisation

Institutional concern translated into action. Many respondents referred to specific changes introduced in response to their SR report. Universities set out to achieve more standardisation of documentation and systems. Henkel (2000) argues that standardisation is part of a more general move by universities to increased structure and order. This may come from the need to manage risk (Beck 1992) and find ways of asserting control (Foucault 1995) in a fast-moving shifting world of globalisation. Standardisation makes the organisation more auditable (Power 1994). Becher and Trowler (2001) outline a model which combines devolution of responsibility with tight parameters and strict monitoring of staff and expenditure, a model which resonates with technology of the self (Foucault 1988) and responsibilisation of the workforce (Shore and Wright 2000). In my study, standardisation of documentation and removing variability was a key institutional response to SR. We saw in chapter 5 institutional attempts to bring more standardisation to assessment. However, universities often leave a degree of autonomy within prescriptive frameworks. The following pre-1992 sector example illustrates:

The form that module documents take, there's a lot of leeway for you to kind of insert your idiosyncrasies but there are definite things that have to go in module documents such as a statement of aims and objectives, a statement of your availability, office hours, various statements and regulations, arranging your reading list in certain kinds of ways so that everything that you recommend, core reading for a week's session, is available on student reserve collection short loan in the library (7).

Henkel (2000) and Trowler (1998a) both report the tension between attempts to impose generic standards and specialist disciplinary understandings of what construes quality. This was exemplified by one art and design respondent as a cultural clash between the university house-style for documentation for students and the principles of design underpinning her course:

The University says (module guides) must be typed in Times Roman and I refuse to use it. Absolutely - how can we be a fine art school and use that typeface? ...... and at the moment I will persevere because by the time they realise I'm doing it I will have probably left so... I refuse, I will not give students a piece of type that I think is absolutely unreadable, flowery, busy, when I'm actually trying to talk to them about editing out, making something clear (8).

Some respondents, however, favoured standardisation as a form of branding (14) and felt that their professionalism was enhanced by standard corporate formats. Various respondents (3;15;23) related that they were often not sure from what level in the hierarchy the impetus originated, giving an image of each level trying to second guess what the level above wanted.

The picture was generally one of 'managerialisation' with its focus on:

the process of subjecting the control of public services to the principles, powers and practices of managerial co-ordination' (Clarke et al 2000 p.5)

with its concomitant low-trust environment. This is a form of risk management. The institution needs to both avoid risk and be seen to avoid risk. The latter is, in itself, a risk avoidance technique since it allows

managers to evidence action if not yet solutions. Action mainly meant an increased role for quality assurance.

QA as a response to SR

The second main institutional response was perceived as increased QA procedures to tackle QAA identified problems. This often related to student satisfaction as consumers and issues of transparency, and also as a protection against consumer complaint as discussed earlier. Two areas of concern were course descriptions and assessment regulatory frameworks, the latter often having been the focus of QAA criticism. Respondent 20 described a university teaching audit system after TQA. Respondent 23 referred to increased regulation on mitigating circumstances and blind marking. Henkel (2000) reports both increased numbers and profile of cross-institutional units with quality assurance/enhancement remits. A number of institutions in my study had created additional QA posts, often labelled as teaching and learning, but tasked with fulfilling QAA requirements (1). These were 'new categories of experts' (Shore and Wright 2000 p.62). Additionally, projects were initiated which could be interpreted as yet more quality checks or an attempt at quality enhancement, or simply a cynical response to be seen to have actioned the report. These included more systematic peer observation systems (1;15) and formalised training for TAs (20). Different universities had different issues. For respondent 18 progression rates became the major institutional priority and everything else was subordinated to improving these, again evidence of SR dictating the future agenda.

A pre-1992 senior academic summed up the impact of SR on the institution in the following way:

> Now TQA has passed it's left this very large sort of footprint in (the university's central administration) so that we have various committees, we have a rather bureaucratic system that requires us to document very carefully new courses and so on..... And all of that process is requiring aims and objectives.... Each course has got to say which of those it adopts

and how it examines, you know, at what stages do we assess each of these. So it's sort of the university bureaucracy has taken off (3).

QA becomes about 'feeding the beast' (Newton 2000 p.153). A post-1992 sector respondent described the elision of good practice with regulation:

> I think it was an eye opener .. it made you aware of the many layers that we have to abide by in terms of regulations or good practice and I think it's even more so now. It's come out of the woodwork that things identified perhaps within the Quality Assurance as good practice are now becoming things that you have to do. So there's been a big jump (23).

Strategy or reaction – a knee jerk response?

Many respondents described the unquestioning way in which the university had reacted to criticisms in SR reports. For respondent 1 this had the irony of an immediate post-SR significant investment in the library, a focus of criticism, despite ignoring previous departmental pleadings. One department (6) had formally challenged their report. Although they felt their university was sympathetic, they still had to produce an action plan to satisfy QAA. Comments by QAA became a 'truth' that had to be recognised and dealt with. My respondents recognised that universities were determined to be ready for the next round and that part of readiness was to be seen to have responded quickly to criticisms from this round. Some respondents saw this as an appropriate conscientious response (23). Others expressed more cynicism arguing that their university was ensuring that 'the stage management is in place' (2) for the next time and that much university response was purely cosmetic (14). One review was perceived as spawning work for the next (5) and, although, again, this was not perceived as wholly negative, respondent 23 referred to the pressure from the university trying to second guess what QAA would want next.

Some respondents suggested that parts of the organisation relished this role. Kogan (2002) argues that some vice chancellors used such systems as instruments of change. Henkel (2000) quotes senior respondents who pushed for additional QA/QE policies, activities and posts even after a satisfactory

report. Several middle manager respondents illustrated how SR had enabled them to introduce otherwise contentious change (7;13). Other respondents, including this pre-1992 sector professor, saw it as fitting a pre-conceived agenda:

> I also think that sometimes you know individuals really just get over-enthusiastic. It may suit them, it may be even what they want to do, but it's not what will actually help the rest of us to do the jobs that we have to do. (3)

This enthusiasm for QAA-induced action was seen particularly problematic when combined with a lack of prioritisation:

> These are ideas that fall on enthusiastic ears when they're propagated in the sense that there's always someone who thinks 'oh yes, you know, I shall make this run' and so on, and universities are not terribly good at prioritising. So you know in a sense always another, ... priority, another issue to get their hands on, and you know some sort of slip off the desk but .... very rarely do they, thinking it's a waste of time, stop doing it. (3)

Several respondents reported both a lack of prioritisation and indecisiveness in university policies so that 'the goal posts keep changing' (6) and these constant major changes 'are a nightmare' (23). Shore and Wright (2000 p.74) describe 'coercive accountability'; my data suggest chaotic accountability. Respondent 14 reported that subject quality groups in her university, known as 'squeegees', might be abolished through restructuring although they had only recently been formed as a result of TQA. Respondent 23 argued that the strategies from university level were beginning to conflict with each other. There was a contradiction in management response which consisted of both telling people to focus and yet always increasing the agenda. Institutions appeared to need to be seen to respond in an almost knee-jerk reaction with little regard to long-term strategy, what Taylor (1999) calls 'little evidence of organisational learning' (p.56). An unintended consequence is the refocusing of university priorities from first order activities to second order QA activities (Shore and Wright 2000).

This reflects the current HE environment. My respondents recognised that their institutions faced multiple problems; several (1;19) referred to financial difficulties causing problems in accessing any university resource to finance the new requirements. Additionally, my respondents reported universities feeling under pressure to be good at everything and even those who positioned themselves as mainly teaching institutions felt research pressure for financial and/or status reasons. Taylor (1999) points out that universities:

> want to be all things to all people...And they expect their academic staff to commit to the achievement of all these things without missing a beat.'
> (p.39)

I return to the implications of this for the individual in the next chapter but I now turn to how institutions operationalise this need.

Volume of activity

The impact of the above institutional response impacted on my respondents in several ways. It undoubtedly affected feelings of empowerment and disempowerment which I discuss below. Another impact relates back to my findings in chapter 6 where time implications were seen as a major negative effect. Institutional response is a major contributor to loss of individual time through increased institutional activity. This relates to the need to 'close the loop,' and evidence that this is supported structurally. Henkel (2000) found:

> concern to ensure that quality assurance arrangements were systematically developed and linked from the top to the bottom. (p.94)

This requires consultation and communication to move both up and down the university structure so that I found the same issues discussed at various levels through 'mirror committees'. Several respondents sat on the department, faculty and university versions of the same committee (2;10). These committees created their own work and consumed much academic time. Additionally, an increasingly wide range of academic staff were

involved. Some committees were purely QA with no substantive area of work. A post-1992 sector teaching and learning co-ordinator related:

> the quality group reviews all our structural procedures at intervals, and ensures that any activities which impinge on this are done through that grouping. All of these groups report back through the school executive, which is the Dean, three Heads of department, technical manager, and administrative manager......(10)

Many respondents also held roles outside their main teaching or research function. Being a good 'campus citizen' requires this level of activity. To illustrate the volume that exists in the contemporary university, appendix 7 lists the various committee and other roles of my respondents. A post-1992 sector respondent commented:

> We had a recent away day where we were put in little groups to discuss certain aspects. I was given meetings..... and I just did a quick analysis of how many meetings we've had each week at university level, faculty and school level and it was - I mean you didn't have anytime to do anything else (23).

The proliferation of committees also links back to the 'knee-jerk' response by the institution to external demands and initiatives:

> I think we set up meetings because of some new edict come through from the Government or wherever. You don't realise that's been dealt with elsewhere. So I know within our School there's been a requirement to set up a Quality Assurance Committee within the School yet there's one in the Faculty.......So there's always a tendency to set up things for the sake of it, rather than identifying 'Do we actually need to do that?' (23)

Ironically, some universities had identified the proliferation of meetings as a problem and were having meetings to decide how to resolve this. They faced a tension which a post-1992 teaching and learning co-ordinator with staff development responsibilities summed up as follows:

> I think probably people might say there are too many meetings, but I think that's a common problem. There is the dichotomy there you know, if there are too few, people say, 'well you know nobody's asked us', if there are too many, people are so busy - it's the juggling act of trying

to do what has to be done but not spend too much time doing it (10).

This respondent, a middle manager, presented meetings as being about voice for academic staff. However the same respondent was trying to make meetings more action orientated and less of a 'talking shop' since they were 'time-consuming and costly'.

This volume of committees and roles also illustrates confusion over what a university is meant to be nowadays (Cowen 1996; Barnett 2000; Delanty 2001) and so academic staff take on multiple time-consuming roles in marketing, developing online learning, school liaison, industrial consultancy and many others again evidencing universities trying to be all things to all people (Taylor 1999). Often involvement in these activities was a 'reward' for a good personal performance in subject review (5). The time of academic staff is therefore consumed by increased roles and university activity as well as the demands of increased documentation and the current model of pedagogy as outlined earlier.

This picture of institutional operation illustrates current thinking on university management. I explored earlier the development of managerialism in universities but this is not totalising. The professional, bureaucratic and entrepreneurial (du Gay 1996; 2000) all operate contemporaneously in a complex mix of emergent, residual and dominant models (Williams 1989). Becher and Trowler (2001) found that management styles were likely to be a conscious or unconscious mixture. Arguably, universities take entrepreneurial responses, such as decentralisation and a focus on outcomes rather than regulations, (Exworthy and Halford 1999) and bureaucratise them. Cowen (1996) argues that 'universities and university systems have their own trajectories and altering those trajectories is difficult although clearly not impossible' (p.246). Universities need to be 'attacked and criticised publicly' to make this happen. Arguably, however, this criticism and attack has happened and a result has been ' social construction of performativity' (Cowen 1996 p.254). For Cowen, performativity is about achieving performance efficiency so it becomes about behaviour, measurable outputs

rather than knowledge or truth. Performativity also requires technology and it could be argued that ease of measuring performance indicators through ICT has led, as it did with housework (Friedan 1965), to ever increasing expectations of what can be achieved. Inside the university, social construction of performativity clashes with previous cultures but the detailed measurement of performance moves the university to a managerial culture where there is focus on 'immediate products' (Cowen 1996 p.254).

Yet, many universities have not yet abandoned listening to academic voices. Kogan (2002) points out that, despite power shifts, most vice chancellors still come from senior academic ranks. This may indicate a struggle between managerial practices (from necessity) and collegial values which attempt to find ways of recognising academic autonomy and encouraging intrinsic motivation. This could be an alternative reading of the proliferation of consultation with, and involvement of, committees at all levels. Or it could be limited in democratic intention and simply be the embodiment of management-speak 'ownership'. There is no longer a clear distinction between managers and those who are managed (Exworthy and Halford 1999). I discuss this in the next chapter. This suggests, as did much of my data, that even if there is still a management/professional dichotomy, many academic staff position themselves ambiguously.

Empowering the Individual?

The above suggests that even quite confident universities were running scared and felt obliged to be seen to respond to all criticism. To what extent did my respondents feel empowered or disempowered by this?

Increased managerialism through standardisation and regulation was perceived by some as a loss of power but others welcomed the opportunity to work within frameworks and still found enough creative space within prescription. No respondents, even those most critical, suggested open public resistance to TQA. A pre-1992 sector professor stated:

And again you know my attitude to these things is .... it may be silly but you know this is what they want, I guess we'd never not...... try and deliver it. I mean I sat on the research assessment panel twice in the earlier rounds and I was amazed at a couple of universities who spent their sort of mission telling you what a stupid exercise it was, and I thought this is not the way that you're going to........ win friends and influence people (3).

Game-playing may be happening but Henkel (2000) found that, for her senior respondents, accountability was embedded in their 'assumptive worlds' (p.84).

At individual or departmental level smaller-scale resistance existed usually where the demands of SR and its aftermath cut across disciplinary values as outlined above. However there was frustration from lack of power. A pre-1992 sector respondent (3) expressed fury at the university's decision to go early in the SR round. He saw this as a tactical error but had no power to resist. Respondent 4, from the post-1992 sector, felt powerless to resist the work coming from QA procedures since, even if issues were sent up the hierarchy, the university always gave the work back because it required a level of detail that could not be handled centrally. However respondent 18, from the post-1992 sector, perceived himself as an outsider looking in and it was the management who needed to 'deliver the goods'.

My data show a tension still existing between du Gay's (1996) three stages of professionalism, bureaucracy and entrepreneurialism. The rise of performativity to enhance entrepreneurialism has been operated by the universities in a way that could be seen as bureaucratic with endless committees, standardisation and documentation, an example perhaps of the failure of what Barnett (2000) calls 'the notion of unlearning' (p.127). Or this endless activity could be seen as an attempt to continue an academic community model with involvement in decision making coming either from principles of professionalism or through a managerialist attempt at consensus and therefore compliance. For several of my respondents this additional involvement was perceived as individually empowering but, in general, the associated time pressures were disempowering. This relates to ideas of responsibilisation which are discussed in the next chapter. Arguably, it is difficult to achieve any kind of empowerment when under externally imposed

time pressure. Barnett (2000) argues that there was little resistance to the rise of a more 'managed' university partly because academics were happy to leave to others the administrative load of management. However, my data suggest that, rather than avoiding, my respondents were drawn increasingly into management activity. Given the other sources of time pressure, outlined earlier, from increased and diverse student numbers, the dominant pedagogic model and rapidly changing disciplines, additional time demands from extra QA activities are likely to be a form of disempowerment. The way this translates into stress is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 8

Subject review and subjectivities

This chapter starts with a brief look at the concept of identity, the nature of academic identity and the tension between identity and multiple subjectivities. It explores the contradictions in the way many respondents felt about SR as a stressful, damaging experience which yet, for some, offered possibilities of empowerment. There is some discussion of factors affecting individual response. These include the individual's structural and cultural location within the institution and the SR score.

For my respondents, aspects of SR influenced, and were influenced by, personal identity factors. Identity is a complex concept and I do not attempt an analysis of current theoretical thinking in this field. I focus on those aspects that seem particularly relevant for this study. Bendle (2002) points out that identity is theoretically and socially difficult because it is both essential to individual well-being and yet is socially constructed and comprises multiple and fluid subjectivities. For Henkel (2000), as the world becomes less certain and more fluid, this is mirrored in identity. However, Taylor (1999) points out the importance of a sense of 'coherence and continuity' (p.41) in a fragmented world. In my view, identity is strongly influenced by structural factors, such as gender, ethnicity and class, which provide a historically situated context for individual actions. Additionally, there are personal identity factors set early in life which may alter but are unlikely to disappear. I also believe that identity comprises multiple facets that may not act in unity. However I do not see identity as essentially fragmented and disintegrating to the extent that some post-modernists argue. I agree with Henkel's use of 'undermine' (2000 p.13) rather than destroy, that identity may undergo changes but these are limited and that multiple subjectivities are parts of a whole rather than completely disjointed. There is also a degree of agency although I accept that structural factors limit choice and opportunity. These factors are understood and experienced in different ways by different people. Identity is affected, but not totally determined, for the individual by contingent, contextual factors.

Turning to work identity I recognise that there can be tensions between an individual's identity and their situation within the academy (Trowler and Knight 1999) which I see as an arena of competing cultures in which 'the micro-social context both shapes and is shaped by the subjectivities of the participants involved' (Becher and Trowler 2001 p.133). Contextual changes (see chapter 3) impact on identity. Halford and Leonard (1999) explore the relationship between work and identity and argue that there is a complex mix of 'external imposition...internal processes...and structural location' (p.103). Foucault (1977) argues that discourse helps constitute identity. But I recognise a degree of consciousness, understanding that people are able to code switch. Gewitz et al. (1995) explore the idea of the 'bilingual' headteacher who can adopt management discourse. They argue that there is some values drift but it is not a simple process. Halford and Leonard (1999) argue that, although people are influenced by discourse, in the context of public sector managerialism, 'discourses compete and jostle with each other' (p.120) and that individuals position themselves discursively in a variety of ways. The impact of discourses is mediated by existing structural and cultural influences in the individual identity.

Academic identities

There have been several detailed studies of academic identities which go beyond the scope of this study. Henkel (2000) examines their formation and development, including research identities. I examine only my respondents' identity as they enter SR and subsequently. In addition, their research identity is only relevant where SR impacts, usually in the form of problematising it through competing demands. Taylor (1999) argues for three levels of academic identity, that of relationship with employer and work, identification with academic discipline, and cosmopolitan identity as an academic reflected as series of values. Aspects of academic identity outside the institution, Taylor argues, mean that there is constant dialectical interplay between institutional cultures and academic identities.

The above studies and Becher (1989) have little consideration of major structural issues of identity such as gender and class. In the second edition of *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*, however, Becher and Trowler (2001) identify ways in which inequities of gender and ethnicity operate and argue for recognition of a complex interrelationship of academic identity factors including these aspects. Trowler (1998a) argues that there is a complex, shifting pattern of structural factors, culture and agency and that these include issues of gender, class and ethnicity as well as material interests and personal identity factors. There is considerable literature on gender relationships within the academy (Bagilhole 1994, 2002; Currie et al. 2000; De Groot 1997; Morley 1998; Morley 1999; Morley 2001a). Space limitations prohibit exploration of this aspect but the literature clearly indicates the problematic gendered nature of the academy.

Institutional identity

One aspect of academic identity is the relationship with the employer and work (Taylor 1999). Arguably, with increased managerialism, most full time academic staff are now managers in some form. Certainly most of my respondents carried some level of management responsibility for a course, section or department. Possibly this simply reflects the fact that my sample was chosen from those involved in subject review. However the description of roles in appendix 7 and the increased involvement in institutional activity explored in chapter 7 supports the argument that increasingly academic staff are managers in some form. In pre-1992 universities this may be temporary and more of an imposition than promotion but still exists on a significant scale. Taylor (1999) explores the rise of universities' expectations of 'the competent manager' (p.46). Exworthy and Halford (1999) suggest that, in the public sector, a clear dichotomy between professionals and managers has disappeared. Old forms of relationships have not totally vanished therefore, they argue, we need to explore the relationship triangle of bureaucracy, new managerialism and professionalism. The relationship between managers and professionals may be conflictual but is more likely to be incorporative of professionals into management. This process then redefines both

professionalism and management. My data show evidence of redefinition of professionalism to include thorough documentation of activity and being a good 'campus citizen'. This, according to Exworthy and Halford (1999), is a more likely explanation than deprofessionalisation (loss of public trust) or proletarianisation (loss of autonomy), ideas to which I return later. They see instead an internally fragmented professional world with loss of joint interests and some professionals being redefined as managers.

The influence of such changing expectations are reflected in my respondents but seldom through adopting institutional management values. My respondents positioned themselves in different ways. A number clearly identified with their course or department rather than the whole institution. For others, especially those who had come in from industry, academic life was still Other. Some felt alienated from academic culture, particularly long, 'unfocused' meetings (2). The institutional strategy of having a large volume of committees and meetings as a response to SR thus sits uneasily with those with an industry-based perspective. Some respondents, who were long-term academics, still positioned themselves psychologically as outsiders when it came to SR and found considerable interest in watching the process and performance from the sidelines (5).

My respondents therefore varied in their level of institutional identity. I return to the implications of this for professionalism later in this chapter. I looked in chapter 5 at my respondents' teaching identity through their model of pedagogy and I now turn to the importance of research identity.

Research and collegial responsibilities

The literature on academic identities argues for the importance of research as a dominating force (Henkel 2000; Becher 1989) although the second edition of *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines* (Becher and Trowler 2001) recognises the changing landscape of UK higher education and increasing diversity of institutions and missions. The original Becher study (Becher 1989) was of academics in pre-1992

universities and most of Henkel's sample come from prestigious disciplines in pre-1992 universities. Earlier studies (Clark 1987; Evans 1993; Fulton 1996; Halsey 1992) also focus on disciplinary factors as dominant in the formation of academic culture. Trowler (1998a) argues that these earlier studies were based on an elite, both individual and institutional, and therefore give a partial picture which overstates the importance of the discipline, merging reality with an ideal type. The world my study examines, although diverse, foregrounds research considerably less. For some post-1992 respondents consultancy replaced academic research. However, it would be wrong to deny research's importance, particularly for respondents from pre-1992 universities. Respondent 3 argued that while TQA altered negatively his attitude to teaching, he had a different attitude to research where he still had 'personal pride and personal responsibility'. Respondent 5, from this sector, identified the difficulties and pressure he faced not being an active researcher in a research university. Those in pre-1992 universities realise that research is the direction they have to take:

> It's a shame that teaching occupies so little time but the rewards for teaching are constantly eroded and we're pushed more and more in the direction of doing research. I say it's a shame because actually I think my abilities turn more in the direction of teaching than research but that's not, you know, a choice we're really allowed to make (11).

However, for most respondents their research was intrinsically very important to them and they resented the encroachment of other demands.
As we saw, SR exacerbated the encroachment of expanding teaching-related work but more specifically in the time demands of preparation for the event. Several respondents felt that they had lost years of research time because of SR. For some, particularly those in pre-1992 universities, the real pressure came from the need to be good at everything. Henkel (2000) points out the pressure from being expected to do excellently in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and TQA while simultaneously coping with more students and bringing in external income. A younger pre-1992 sector respondent expressed the tension:

Yes, and I've got, perhaps part of it is me, I do care for my students and the quality of teaching that I do, so perhaps that makes things slightly different, so perhaps I shouldn't care so much and not put in so much and then I'd have ten per cent more time to do research, but I don't know, that's not me really (22).

Respondent 18 developed a statistics research interest out of QAA but he was the only respondent where TQA made any positive impact on research. For the others the time-consuming nature of SR and its consequences were entirely damaging to their research profile and this was resented.

Another aspect of identity was the need that some respondents expressed to be good 'campus citizens' This included taking departmental responsibilities and helping colleagues. For respondent 1 it meant being co-operative even with developments about which he had serious reservations, an example perhaps of Exworthy and Halford's (1999) influence of managerialism on the concept of professionalism. SR and its consequences contributed to the workload of the campus citizen. Respondent 7 described the tension between wanting to be a 'good campus citizen, which meant an active part in SR beyond the call of duty', and prioritising his research time.

Intensification and stress

My respondents viewed the impact of SR as one of intensification and stress, now widely recognised as features of academic life (Currie et al.2000; Fisher 1994; Lafferty and Fleming 2000; Marginson 2000). Key sources are time pressures and dissatisfaction that time-consuming areas, such as administration, are those offering the least satisfaction. Currie et al. (2000) argue that the situation is gendered through a masculinist work ethic. The examination of the role of time in chapter 6 showed that feelings of time pressure played a significant role for my respondents. Other intensification came from documenting everything and a determination not to be caught out next time. One of the younger respondents (15) argued that he could not face continuing at this pace for another 20 years. Many respondents related the long hours they worked, particularly exacerbated by SR before, during and

after. Some were critical of the immediate pressure of late night working in the preparation period and the feelings of stress and anxiety (22) induced by the thought of SR. Several referred to the combined pressures of TQA and the RAE and the impact this had on their personal lives and health (4), findings that echo my earlier findings (Blythman 2001) and Morley (2001a). Respondent 19 was told by her manager that the solution was to focus on fewer things but this was difficult in a culture where academics were expected to be good at everything. Indeed the constantly increasing agenda came partly from the perceived need at individual and institutional level to be good at everything (Henkel 2000; Trowler and Knight 1999). Respondent 13 pointed out that there is a limit to what anyone can cope with at any one time.

Being visible through public performance in a subject review, can, for some, be a source of stress. In my earlier study I found some evidence of this mainly in relation to performance on aspect groups (Blythman 2001). Some respondents in this study referred to 'nervousness' in general about their work being under scrutiny but a number made the point that they welcomed teaching observation and found it developmental (1;7). No one referred to stress of being watched. Again this may suggest again changes in the assumptive world so that surveillance, as part of the system, is the norm (Foucault 1995).

Compliance and fabrication

I have illustrated, in previous chapters, compliance and fabrication (Ball 2000) in the form of game-playing. This operated at both individual and institutional level. Institutions ensured they had 'coaches' who built on the gains and losses of previous 'matches' to maximise 'the score'. Part of this performance was explicit fabrication of the views of those participating; students were specially chosen for their likelihood of giving a good account and academic staff were drilled to 'sing from the same hymn sheet', a common metaphor in accounts of SR. Reviewers were also seen as part of the game, complicit in a 'gentleman's agreement'. This echoes Ball's (2000) findings, in a school context, that lack of authenticity was understood and accepted by inspectors.

This game-playing did not end as the assessors left the building. We saw examples in chapter 7 of institutional game-playing to give the illusion of criticisms being actioned. Several respondents stated that apparent improved communication such as team briefings were really 'cosmetic' (another frequently used metaphor).

Fabrication and compliance also entered, or deepened its hold on, individual behaviour. Several respondents (1;23) argued that ticking boxes becomes more important than the original substantive activity. Individuals and departments become concerned to meet the letter of new regulations rather than take on board their intent, semesterisation being a frequent site (1). Respondent 3 reported feeling that a criterion of acceptability of a piece of work was now likely to be 'could I get that past QAA?' rather than its intrinsic worth. The cult of transparency also encouraged compliance since activities such as giving course outlines could give the illusion of fuller more transparent information while failing, intentionally or unintentionally, to increase students' knowledge and understanding. Watching one's back became a reason for fabrication and compliance since everyone assumed that accountability and evidence were here to stay. For O'Neill (2002):

> those who know that everything they say or write is to be made public may massage the truth'(lecture 4).

A business studies principal lecturer explained how colleagues now did not raise things in meetings because they were then minuted and thus known and auditable:

> If it becomes an action in the minutes we will never be able to bury it again (13).

Many respondents were quite conscious of their level of fabrication and on several occasions, in response to questions, I was asked if I would like 'the official line or the honest line' (15). Respondents felt that they and their colleagues had learned to play the game and this had become a bigger part of

everyone's repertoire presenting a fundamental problem for a system that claimed to be searching for truth.

The implications of this for those individuals involved can be interpreted variously. Some respondents clearly relished the game. We also saw earlier the possibility of being 'bilingual' (Gewirtz et al. 1995) but Trowler (1998b) argues the importance of values of academics in the social processes of policy implementation. Nias (1996), in a school sector study, argues that teachers find it stressful when asked to compromise their values. In the later section on resistance I argue that there are lines which some respondents were not prepared to cross even if this involved an element of personal risk. Morley (2002) argues that impression management and performance within an alien discourse is emotionally taxing leading to alienation.

Individual factors

I now look at the impact of SR on academic staff with particular reference to gender, age and stage in career and the status location of both the individual and their institution. Morley (2001a) critiques SR from a gender perspective and argues that apparent gains for women (Luke 1997), through increased visibility, could also make them more governable and knowable. Promotion may be into a managerialist responsibilised arena. Morley (1998; 2001a) also points out that a lot of women's invisible 'emotional labour' goes into SR. Morley is essentially arguing that much of the opening up of power such as apparent increased collegiality, enhanced visibility for women, more power for the student voice, or space for reflection could be read as illusionary or comes with additional personal costs. I found considerable responsibility for SR being carried by women at significant personal cost.

Yet SR seemed to have a powerful confidence-raising effect for some respondents. People wanted to do well. This was an issue for a number of my female respondents, one (9) pointing out how nice it was to be involved in a high quality achievement. Bernstein (1971) points out that:

the structure of society's classifications and frames reveals both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. .....This raises immediately the question of the relative status of a given content and its significance in a given educational career (p.48).

My four respondents in health-related subjects in the post-1992 sector felt deeply the gendered nature of mainly female departments within the academy. Even the official nomenclature of their discipline reveals marginal status. These departments were in the lower status post-1992 sector, they were lower status than doctors (whose training is in the pre-1992 sector), they were recent entrants to the academy from specialist NHS training facilities and they were overwhelmingly women.

All four respondents felt that their department had done well in SR and considered this as a significant source of increased collective status. This group were also more likely to mention the importance of outward recognition:

> It was really nice to be able to say, 'well actually we may be only health faculty but we can do it right. In fact we can do it better than most of you'.......That's probably quite negative because it's one-upmanship but you know it is nice (9).

Ball (2000) argues that intra-institutional rivalry, in settings of performativity, can induce a variety of emotions including pride as well as more negative feelings. A Scottish respondent, where respondents tended to know the assessors at least professionally, felt particularly pleased because they had done well in the eyes of respected fellow professionals. Individual, departmental and disciplinary confidence had been boosted. The other respondent from this department additionally felt that it increased the confidence of post-1992 universities in having such disciplines in their portfolio. This argument was also made by a male surveyor in a department that got 24.

Contrastingly, some respondents felt that SR exacerbated gendered exploitation within the academy particularly in the production of documentation late at night. Several male respondents (6;13) talked

glowingly of women who had carried the burden of the preparatory work citing their subsequent promotion. However, Morley (2001a) problematises the way men have been able to harness female labour and the consequent career track for female academics.

Generational differences

My respondents varied in age from their thirties to their sixties with most in the upper age range. My data partly suggest two generations with differences of attitude though, not surprisingly, there were exceptions. Four respondents in the upper age range were relatively new to the academy, having come from industry as experienced professionals. Both generations talked, unprompted, about age-related factors and perceived generational difference. Two of the youngest respondents (7;22) came from a department which they saw as ideologically divided along age grounds with themselves as modernisers and the 'old guard' resistant to change. Other younger respondents (15;17) talked about older staff in a similar vein. Some older respondents acknowledged the impact of age. Respondent 20, in his sixties, felt that his department would benefit from 'fresh new blood who would bring enthusiasm to QA ideas'. Both younger and older respondents associated increased cynicism with age, one younger respondent (15) stating how older staff were less willing 'to jump through the hoops' with something like SR because they had seen it all before. Another of the oldest respondents (3) talked about coming towards the end of his career and a resultant pragmatism and cynicism. Yet another (19) felt that her generation, who had lived through a different academic culture, were more critical of all the paperwork and felt that there were more valuable uses of an academic's time such as reading or preparing lectures.

For one of my youngest respondents (22) the age profile of a department was seen as having significant impact on ethos and the possibility of change. However, Karpiak (2000) points out that some older long-term academic staff can also find 'a second call' (p.125). This included feelings both of renewed enthusiasm and a more relaxed, flexible and less dogmatic approach to teaching. In my study some modernisers were older; one, in his sixties, (10)

felt that the opportunity to change direction to teaching and learning, as a result of QA, gave him a new enthusiasm. For others feelings were mixed. One of the younger respondents felt nostalgia for the past, when there had been time to talk to colleagues and go out for lunch (15). Another respondent, in her forties (17) who mainly saw herself as a moderniser, still regarded herself as 'one of the old school' since her key quality value for a course was whether or not students succeeded. The picture is complex and any suggestion of clear generational difference is an over-simplification. Huberman (1995) suggests that the use of age as a determinant of career practice ignores agency and that much development is 'lacking in continuity and order, and sometimes down-right random' (p.195).

The impact of the score

There is a sense of contradictory consciousness in my data. Respondents were critical of the SR system yet achieving good scores was important to them. It was a signifier that oddly brings status even though the system is critiqued. The score was a form of 'naming' which Morley (2000) points out is a 'significant aspect of the constitution of identity' (p.69). Ball (2000) argues that:

> in a culture of performativity, judgement, comparisons and displays (are used) as a means of control, attrition and change (p.1).

Respondents varied over the emotional involvement they felt with the score achieved. Some felt like outside observers (5;18). A bad score, unsurprisingly, affected more deeply those who carried some level of departmental responsibility for SR. Many respondents identified primarily with their department or section. The effect of a bad score was mediated when it was possible to blame those outside the department. Respondent 21, where two points had been lost because of the library, pointed out that this issue was 'completely outside our control' and presumably therefore their sense of personal responsibility.

However, for others a low score was devastating. I illustrated in chapter 7 the impact of a low score on the management of the institution and several respondents gave examples of how they and others had felt personally damaged by a low score. In one department it was described with considerable bitterness using the metaphor of rape (see chapter 4). Morley (2001a) discusses the effect on confidence, identity and self- esteem, arguing that this labelling reaches interior spaces. Respondent 1 felt that the lack of remediation made a low score a declaration of failure rather than a developmental process. For him it was a confidence issue and those who were good and knew it could weather the storm but for those in a more fragile situation it could be damaging to morale. However, even a confident senior academic in a prestigious department (3) expressed a feeling that his attitude to teaching had been permanently damaged by SR through what he perceived as an unfair low score.

For some respondents, particularly those early in their careers and in pre-1992 universities, it was very important to be in a high scoring department:

> I know of another department, that shall remain nameless, where I have good friends and colleagues who were sitting on a 21 in subject review and a 3A in the RAE and so they only scored 24A .... I mean internally in the University as well I think that there is definitely the politics of reputation in a place like this.... So I think those are kind of motivating things. I just don't want to be part of an enterprise that seems to be sort of under-achieving I suppose. (7)

As indicated earlier, a high score was particularly important for those who felt most keenly the gendered nature of the academy.

Influence of the institution

Respondents' response to SR was affected by the status of their institution. Ball (2000) argues that the effects of performativity vary in form across institutions. As we saw earlier, research pressures were likely to be greater in pre-1992 universities with the concomitant need to be good at everything. Also those in pre-1992 universities felt that their position could be defined as elitist and challenged by SR. Respondents 3 and 19, in different pre-1992 universities, referred to general feelings in their institution that SR was the revenge of the post-1992 sector 'with roots in local authority management and boxfuls of paper' (3). Pre-1992 universities were also more likely to have SR run by a small tight team, with many of the department 'protected' from it, so team spirit was enhanced.

Post-1992 respondents perceived themselves and their sector as being more developed in some of the demands of SR, particularly in systems and documentation. This perhaps suggests, as pre-1992 sector respondents feared, that SR was a way of foregrounding aspects in which post-1992 universities did better. However, post-1992 universities seemed to lack the confidence of older institutions and feared criticism. This, according to respondent 17, had led to a level of codification and a concern with consistency that left the individual academic frightened to move.

Disciplinary influences

I explored earlier the role of commitment to one's discipline. Kekale (2002) suggests disciplinary differences in conceptions of quality. In my data I found some evidence of disciplinary influence although I wish to acknowledge this diversity without suggesting an essentialist model (Fraser 1997). These disciplinary differences impacted on respondents' view of SR. Sometimes SR suited their working practices. One business studies respondent (13), echoing an earlier finding (Blythman 2001), emphasised how much he liked defined projects with a fixed timescale and a clear outcome. Respondents with a strong vocational connection (mainly health-related and design

courses) sometimes felt the pull of the 'industry' (15;17). They were there to meet the needs and values of those industries and, whatever the power of SR, industry reputation took precedence.

Disciplinary values also arose where respondents resented SR's failure to recognise unique features of their particular discipline. For Respondent 4 SR did not appreciate the extent to which art and design had an oral culture. Some also thought that the university failed to understand their disciplinary values as we saw particularly in the case of fine art where both standardisation of documentation and the more rigid structure of modularisation were felt to threaten these values (8). This sense of mismatch between SR and disciplinary values is particularly strong in art and design (Johnson 2002). However, two economists (3;6) felt a clash between SR and their belief in propositional knowledge and the consequent need for traditional forms of assessment. As I argue later, these disciplinary values were a key source of any individual resistance to SR.

Effect on professionalism

The impact of SR on academic identities indicates ways in which concepts of professionalism may be changing. Change here should be seen as general and diffuse trends rather than comparison between fixed historical points. I regard the idea of a golden age as partial and elite. Key arguments about the changing nature of professionalism include the extent to which academic work is becoming proletarianised, which suggests alienation, and/or responsibilised. Responsibilisation suggests academics are incorporated into institutional management through the redefinition and alignment of management and professional roles as discussed earlier. In chapter 4 I argued that the rise of consumerist discourse relates to a growing mistrust of professionals and a rejection of professional ethics as a basis for accountability. As outlined earlier there is considerable evidence both in the literature and my data of intensification and stress in academic staff. This relates to, but is not synonymous with, proletarianisation. There is significant literature on the changing nature of professionalism (Barnett 1997b; Downie

1990; Eraut 1994; Watts 2000). Additionally, the literature on teaching as a labour process (Rosenholtz 1991; Smyth 1995) suggests a series of fundamental changes in work patterns in the form of intensification. Becher and Trowler (2001) sum up the debate stating that there is significant evidence of intensification and proletarianisation of academic work but argue that this constructs contradictions which can also open up micropolitical space. Ball (2001) has suggested, however, that this intensification leads to a loss of micropolitical stimulations since less time is spent on informal relations.

TQA is recognised as putting pressure on concepts of professionalism. Jeffrey and Woods (1998) argue that school teachers experience inspection as deprofessionalising. It is predicated on a lack of trust but also requires upskilling in technicist ways such as writing learning outcomes, with more concern for form than underpinning meaning or value. Prattle and Rury (1988) argue that this technicist upskilling is to support pre-determined ends over which teachers have little control. Watts (2000) sees TQA as affecting working lives of academics through questioning what exactly is now meant by 'professional'. However, for Becher and Trowler (2001) SR has also had positive effects, particularly through enhanced understanding of students' educational experience and equal opportunities for both students and staff. For Eraut (1994) professionalism needs core concepts of knowledge base, autonomy and service but this raises the debate of the relative power of the professional and the client including contested issues of who the client actually is in education and the relationship of consumerism to a more general 'rights' movement (Downie 1990), as outlined in chapter 4.

Professional trust was raised by several respondents. An older pre-1992 sector senior academic (3) saw SR as an attack indicating that trust in professionals has disappeared through external quality checks and attempts to downgrade the external examiner system which he saw as based on trust and personal integrity. Taylor (1999) sees personal integrity at work as a key value of cosmopolitan academic identity. Arguably, therefore, the closeness of trust to recognition of personal integrity makes its removal an attack on

one's identity. Troman (2000) argues that trust relationships have changed in high modernity and builds on Giddens' theories (1990) arguing that relationships of trust change with major social changes and, currently, trust cannot be assumed. Plurality of views and values has led to distrust of experts and increased surveillance and audit. Trust has to be negotiated yet is essential for existential well-being. O'Neill (2002) argues that constant monitoring through performance indicators damages trust. The evidence for proletarianisation, however, sits uneasily with responsibilisation. The link is through accountability. Many argue that the redefinition of professionalism on the lines of accountability is in keeping with the needs of New Public Management and can be attributed to the neo-liberal project of the 1980s and 1990s (Barton et al. 1994; McWilliam et al.1999; Shore and Selwyn 1998; Shore and Wright 2000). However, I have argued in chapter 4 that the origins may be more diverse and have democratic as well as proletarianising roots. Whatever the origins, it appears that, rather than becoming alienated, academic staff have become responsibilised.

Shore and Wright (2000) argue that the culture of audit has led to changes in professional identity towards the self-managing individual who has internalised institution goals and higher education policy and thus is both individualising and totalising. Responsibilisation takes the individual inside the system. For McWilliam et al. (1999), there is a new curriculum for academics which aims to reshape cultures and individuals to be enterprising. This curriculum redefines what knowledge is valued and again privileges responsibilisation and a move from the cognitive to affective domain. This appears in my data with a concern by my respondents to be able to manage themselves in a difficult and changing world.

Respondents and their reports of institutional behaviour imply a search for coherence and connections and the desire for a rational and organised world. They present a feeling of post-modernist disintegration but with individuals and institutions working even harder to reassert modernist rational systems and stability. Respondent 23 talked of the need for the 'glue' and 'cement' that held the organisation together. This also related to the need to be

prepared for the next form of SR and some respondents engaged me in discussion after the interview on what form I thought SR's successor would take. There seemed to be a need to make the world knowable, rational and manageable, evidence of Taylor's (1999) importance of a sense of 'coherence and continuity' (p.41) in a fragmented world. Some respondents favoured the imposing of order on their work that many did in preparation for SR. Respondent 21 felt that it generally made life easier to be well organised and that SR's impetus was beneficial, a view also expressed by some of the respondents in my earlier study (Blythman 2001), echoing ideas of 'technologies of the self' (Foucault 1988). One health-related subjects respondent argued that a benefit of TQA was that it made one 'very diligent about whether or not circles are closed':

> You know that it's done and it's filed and you can find it and it saves all the worry or energy. You know something's going to come up, you know you're going to be able to find it and it's easier to do it at the time rather than put it off. So it allows you to have that done and dusted so that your energies can be where they should be (14).

This is a good example of the self-disciplining individual who sees twin benefits of saving own worry and energy but this then frees her up to put her energies 'where they should be' with no implication that this should be personal rather than the employers' interests.

Du Gay (1996) contrasts the enterprising self with previous bureaucratic models and indicates unintended consequences. These include loss of probity with the decline in recognition of the concept of public service leading to changes in professional identity which involve trade-offs. Internalisation of norms and values, however, are not new and part of only an 'entrepreneurial ' model. While the bureaucratic model privileged impersonality, strict adherence to procedures and acceptance of hierarchy (du Gay 1996), internalisation of norms and values is central to traditional models of professionalism with clear ethical standards that are expected to be internalised and shape professional identity. These, however, relate to the interest of the client, not the organisation, and there is conflict between

traditional professionalism with client loyalty and the entrepreneurial model with organisational loyalty. Thus the issue is not so much one of responsibilisation but of responsible to whom for what goals.

Resistance

Any ontology that recognises agency must tackle the issue of resistance. If academic staff do not like the implications of recent higher education changes such as SR, to what extent and how do they resist. Foucault (1998) argues that power is never total and completely controlled by one group. Giroux (1981) argues for analysis of 'counter-hegemonic' elements and sees resistance as:

> a social process that both embodies and reproduces lived antagonistic social relationships (p.13).

However he warns against romanticised notions of resistance. For Margolis et al. (2001), education sites are 'an arena of conflict, compromise and struggle'(p.15). However, they also distinguish between oppositional acts and resistance pointing out that such acts can be just as contradictory, with unintended consequences, as the activities of the dominant ideology. Giroux argues that we need clearer notions of the nature of resistance and how it operates in lived experience. Henkel (2000) argues that an elite minority can afford to ignore policy changes. Becker (1995) suggests the possibility of horizontal career moves into more comfortable positions in occupations with limited or problematic vertical movement. Smith and Sachs (1995) argue that administration has always been avoided by those keen to develop 'reputational work' (p.232). Certainly, several respondents talked of colleagues who had completely side-stepped SR, 'who just sort of disappeared' (7), what Taylor (1999) calls 'lone rangers' (p.55). Another response, according to Henkel, could be collective outright rejection of the policy innovation. This is arguably true of my two respondents from the low scoring (in their view) pre-1992 university whose response I related in the sections on institutional and personal responses to the score. However, as I

noted earlier, neither argued for a lack of accountability in principle, simply the operation of this particular system. It was one of these respondents who argued that it would be foolish for any institution to take a path of open resistance to SR (see chapter 7). Henkel (2000) argues that much more common is subversion or compliance. The section above on compliance and fabrication revealed that this was widespread among my respondents, both personally and in terms of reported actions of colleagues and institutions. Another form of accommodation, according to Henkel, is by redefining the responsibility for QA work to administrative staff. Respondent 13 reported how, as a result of SR, he had been able to increase his administrative staff from 'one secretary' to a team of six or seven administrators. Arguably this exemplifies Becker's (1995) second form of horizontal career move, that of making one's current situation easier.

However, as we have seen, most of my respondents were heavily pulled into additional work. I indicated earlier that SR administrative work was to some extent defined as 'women's work', suggesting some evidence for Henkel's argument. Another form of accommodation is working harder, and respondents' accounts of intensification evidence this. Additional work tended, however, not to be in the core areas of teaching and research (Henkel 2000); rather it was diversion into time-consuming QA activities. For Henkel, accommodation also allows space for 'translation ' by academics and she quotes the way that the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative was harnessed by many staff for other purposes but points out that new discourse and practice may change academics' assumptive worlds, echoing the difficulties discussed above of being 'bilingual'.

There was limited evidence of open resistance coming from my respondents. Respondents were more likely to talk of the resistance of colleagues rather than their own. Sometimes resistance was reported as a nuisance, as we saw in the section above on age; at other times there was more sympathy. Where resistance existed, it seemed to come partly from pre-existing loyalty to disciplines as in the examples we have already seen of art and design resistance to modularisation of the curriculum and rigid corporate formats,

economists' resistance to changes in traditional forms of assessment and business studies resistance to the downgrading of numeracy skills. My respondents also related resistance to changes which clashed with other core educational values (Taylor 1999). Respondent 19 had rejected institutional changes in tutorial arrangements since she thought this was not in the interest of her students. In this case and that of the clash over format and font, the respondents did not resist publicly, they just quietly went on with their previous practice. One form of resistance which is quite feasible in HE is just to ignore (Cowen 1996). Resistance was also related to feelings of intensification. Respondent 10 had difficulty establishing a transparent system for staff development because it required more form filling even though those involved claimed to want this transparency. However, this could also be interpreted as an excuse since no one can be against transparency publicly but it could reveal things that some do not want revealed. This may indicate that resistance to increased bureaucracy actually covers resistance to more fundamental changes.

This raises questions of why there was so little resistance. Respondent 3 argued, as we saw above, that it was politically futile to resist at individual institutional level. For some, resistance did not fit their self-image, one describing himself as an enthusiast not someone 'who sits on the sidelines and pours scorn.' However, one could argue that the fabrication and cynical compliance, seen above, was a form of resistance (Ball 2000) since it actually reduces the effectiveness of the SR model. According to Margolis (2001p.16) agendas can be negotiated, accommodated, rejected or diverted by students. Arguably this is equally true of academic staff. Ball (2000) argues, however, that:

> fabricating the organisation requires submission to the rigours of performativity and the disciplines of competition- resistance and capitulation (p.9).

The complexity of the operation of SR on individuals therefore has an undoubted impact on subjectivities but again there is a creative/repressive tension which can open many effects to multiple readings.

In summary, my data suggest increasing permeation of academic life with management responsibilities impacting negatively on both research identity and personal well-being. The result can be the self-disciplining individual or subtle forms of resistance including compliance and fabrication. These are mediated by a number of factors including institutional and individual status. This all suggests an impact on conceptions of professionalism.

Chapter 9

Subject review and sustainability of professional change in universities

I regard higher education as a location for various types of conflict emanating from macro issues of social division and micropolitical issues of power (see chapter 2). These connect in multiple ways, contingent on local factors with space for agency operating dialectically with structural factors (Giddens 1979). Previous chapters have indicated this tension through disciplinary and wider educational values operating oppositionally within and to a structure of government policy in teaching and learning and the role of the student. Other tensions described earlier include those between the perceived material interests of respondents and the operation of university structures, often themselves influenced by wider national resourcing and accountability policies. Times of change make such tensions more explicit, as Paechter (2000) demonstrates in her study of curriculum change in schools.

This chapter explores the relationship between structure and agency and how actors make meaning from it. It focuses on one aspect of change, changes coming from SR that my respondents wished to sustain. I examine the role of structural factors in sustainability of desired change in this setting, through an exploration of reported enablers and constraints within which processes described earlier happen. This chapter does not set out to give an account of what structural factors 'really are', rather they are described as related by my respondents. Following Giddens (1979), I argue that all social practices are contingent on context and that action is located within these structural contexts. I therefore am critical of some aspects of poststructuralist theories. We need an understanding of origins and effects of power, as well as forms and operation.

What is epistemologically important is social actors' perceptions. Understanding the social world of contemporary higher education means understanding respondents' constructions of this world. Yet, although social actors are influenced by being inside the context, this is not totalising. A more

determinist position would argue that choice for respondents (the things respondents wanted to do) was socially constrained and that their apparent desire, for example for pedagogic changes, simply meant that they had been captured by the discourse. I reject this because my epistemology is that the world for respondents is as they experience it. If they experience something as agency, then, for them, it is agency. Following Giddens, I also recognise that, while actors are socially and spatially located, there is a level of individual awareness:

> All social actors, no matter how lowly, have some degree of penetration of the social forms which oppress them (Giddens 1979 p.72).

Structure never has total control therefore we have change through disruptions to hegemony. My view of the interrelationship of structure and agency comes from Giddens who sees structure as what binds:

> visible pattern which is patterned in time as well as space, through continuities of social reproduction (ibid p.64).

This includes rules and resources, has reproductive capacity and can be both enabling and constraining.

Giddens defines action as:

> a stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the on-going process of events in-the-world (ibid p.55).

with the possibility of acting differently as a necessary feature. Motivation for action, for Giddens, is both conscious and unconscious. The relationship between structure and agency is dialectical. Structural issues affect both conditions and consequences for social actors. However this operates as constraint, not determinism. Rules and practices are mutually constituted through 'duality of structure' (ibid p.69). This requires investigation of:

the forms of institutional articulation whereby contexts of interaction are co-ordinated within more embracing social systems (Giddens 1984 p. 334).

The relative importance of structure and action varies with context. This dialectical relationship plays out in my findings. Structures and agency interplay and intersect at various levels. Government policy, including resource allocation, influences both university structures and the operation of power relations in the institution both at meso (management) and micro levels. Equally, the micro operation flows back and changes institutional structures which in turn influence changes in government policy. An example is the relationship between national policy of accountability through SR and the consequent structuring of university activity leading to compliance and fabrication by academics and managers which, in turn, has required some re-thinking of national policy, for example the decision to cease grading in SR's successors.

I examined this interplay between structure and agency through respondents' desire to keep some changes coming from SR and what they reported as enablers or constraints.

What respondents wanted to sustain from SR

This study examines the extent of a link or disjunction between professional development and SR. A crucial question is, therefore, the extent to which respondents felt that desired changes in work practices were sustainable. Some with staff development responsibilities (10) related efforts to ensure that 'good practice' was embedded but indicated difficulties caused by competing pressures. Sometimes respondents thought things had continued but with 'less focus and intensity' (13) or inconsistently (11). The concept of sustainability cannot be accepted in an unquestioning way. The environmental sustainability debate suggests that 'the idea of sustainability is conceptually flawed' (Wals and Jickling 2002 p.122) through failure to recognise tensions between what different normative systems might regard as sustainability or what is worthy of sustaining. Post-modern thought has some

difficulty with sustainability partly because of its connotations of progress. However, my view is that the world of higher education is being redefined rather than disintegrating and that the picture of disintegration of higher education is over-stated (Delanty 2001). Sustainability becomes a site of conflict, not an impossibility. Most respondents expressed a desire to exercise some control over their complex circumstances. For one post-1992 respondent peer observation had 'run into the sand' but this was a cause for concern and therefore rejuvenation was planned. This respondent also argued that:

> I suppose the good thing about the review being over is you can dump things which are a bit of a waste of time........ but, the good stuff, you want to maintain (13).

Much literature on introducing organisational change tends to assume a management perspective. However, Harris and Bennett (2001) identify the contested nature of change. This chapter examines sustainability of professional change, not from a management perspective but from respondents' views of what they would like to have sustained from SR. This included increased professional contact with other academic staff, in particular peer observation and increased team reflection including curriculum discussion. Respondents had also valued the opportunity to introduce desired teaching and learning initiatives and more streamlined systems. Additionally, those who felt that their individual or group reputation had been enhanced by SR wished to sustain this.

I originally investigated sustainability briefly as part of my earlier study (Blythman 2001) but it was not the focus of that report. The respondents in that study reported some positive aspects. These included increased confidence through feeling that their individual and departmental future was secured through a high score, and long-term benefits through the continuation of meetings and relationships created by subject review. Several referred to their increased knowledge of the college (IFS 1). Another perceived benefit was that SR established systems which then only needed light maintenance (IFS 5). However, for many the longer-term influence was limited. Increased

communication with managers (IFS 2) and a higher personal profile were not sustained. Hoped-for recognition did not materialise leading to morale and motivational decline (IFS 4). One respondent felt that being on a crest then dropped was deeply damaging (IFS 4), an issue we saw in the last chapter. Valued staff development sessions were not continued and staff could not understand why (IFS 4). Another constraint was lack of strategy to evaluate the experience collectively and so (IFS 3) knowledge was buried within individuals. The desire to build on the lessons learned did not happen (IFS 6) with a consequent general feeling of loss of earlier gains.

Specific examples included the loss of senior staff to other institutions and a loss of team cohesiveness. Particular desired changes such as new assessment procedures did not happen (IFS 7). Documentation and systems were not maintained and people seemed to 'revert to type' (IFS 6):

> There was just so much relief that we got that result that it's just been allowed to slide........and what I don't see now is a level of commitment from School management at School level (IFS 6).

In all schools key staff left for promoted posts within a year of SR. One school lost almost all its senior staff. This was seen by a remaining senior member of the school as people 'cashing in their chips' (IFS 4). As a manager, he was left with youthful enthusiasm but loss of tacit knowledge and experience. He felt that things were 'ungluing very fast'.

The schools in this earlier study had all received what were perceived as good scores but there was a feeling that:

> a good score encourages you to wipe your brow and forget it. The lack of feedback or built-in internal check-ups exacerbates this tendency. (IFS 1)

This respondent felt the school not could not sustain the energy level. However, another explanation offered was that a high score leads to complacency (IFS 2). Respondents reported tension between those who thought 'well now that's finished' and those who wanted change embedded

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(IFS 4). Thus respondents report short-termism, overriding time pressures, competing normative positions and other external pressures reflecting the issues of embedding and sustainability raised by Harvey (1998), Fullan (2001) and Bascia and Hargreaves (2000). My earlier study did not explore contributing factors so in this study I looked at constraints on sustainability. Respondents offered explanations for this lack of sustainability that highlighted both structural and micropolitical factors.

The interplay of micropolitical and structural factors

The interplay of structural and micropolitical factors in achieving educational change is well covered in the school improvement literature. I have written elsewhere (Blythman and Orr 2002b) that Morrison (1998) gives an in-depth account including the impact of Japanese quality models, also critiqued in Morley and Rassool (2000), organisation theory, theories of leadership and the impact of post-modern conceptions of the world. The contested nature of school improvement is outlined by Harris and Bennett (2001), in an examination of both structure and agency. Relevant issues for this study include the need to see 'improvement' as an area for contestation recognising that there is no universal, unitary interest, the role of the external environment including policy pressures and the micropolitical operation of institutional culture(s) (Harris and Bennett 2001). Elliot (1996) alerts us to the danger of a narrow range of performance indicators. Bowe et al. (1992) identify as constraints to reform a neglect of institutional history and thus micropolitical factors. They argue that the limitations of a single change focus also constrains joined-up thinking and that change is not politically neutral. For Fullan (2001) successful change implementation is dependent on multiple factors including clarity, need, practicality and complexity of change objectives, the local situation and its constraints and opportunities, the role of external pressures and policies, the involvement of key actors at both behavioural and normative levels and the need for the correct balance of pressure and support.

Part of my argument is the close relationship of sustainable, desirable change and transformative notions of CPD. Eraut (1994) identifies a similar range of potential constraints to CPD. Again context is important at both individual and group level. He foregrounds particular issues for mid-career professionals, a group comprising the majority of my sample, arguing that this group need, and currently lack, opportunities to:

(1) reflect on their experience, make it more explicit through having to share it, interpret it and recognise it as a basis for future learning: and (2) escape from their experience in the sense of challenging traditional assumptions and acquiring new perspectives (p.21).

As we saw in chapter 6, these opportunities were welcomed by my respondents who sometimes identified SR as a catalyst for transformation. Similarly, and interconnectedly, institutional structural and cultural factors are likely to impact. Nias et al. (1992) outline a series of structural and cultural factors which they regarded as necessary for whole primary school development. These include appropriate institutional values, organisational structures which enabled professional interaction and space for informal back-up structures, enough human and material resource and appropriate leadership. The extent to which institutional culture encourages open discussion or the group self-esteem of the section being reviewed could have significant influence.

Fullan and Miles (1992) suggest that constraints include incompatibility of the way the various actors want to achieve change; failure to realise the importance of commitment rather than compliance; lack of long-term staying power; misunderstanding resistance; failure to recognise that change requires considerable resources in time, energy and money; failure to see the joined-upness of problems and therefore solutions; failure to tackle culture as well as structure and a failure to implement at local level. These could be all seen as factors which affect the possibility of having a culture that supports transformative reflection. Thus the literature suggests a combination of structure and agency including the role of the external environment,

micropolitical material and normative interests, resources and leadership and management, with the balance and relationship contingent on context.

Respondents regarded both structural and cultural factors as constraints when trying to sustain desired change with structural factors operating at several levels. These factors included the constraining influence of government policy in relation to resource allocation based on student numbers, and regulatory pressures through accountability systems. These pressures played out at institutional level through internal resourcing models, university rules and regulations and ways in which time and space were organised structurally.

Implications of short-termism in policy

Government policy was a key structural constraint and, within, the role played by short-termism, particularly through policy initiatives and resource allocation. Harvey (1998) evidences the short-termism of much quality management activity. Within this structure it also operates as a process enacted by individuals and groups, sometimes with unintended consequences. Short-termism can be a strategy to reduce costs through, for example, short-term contracts (Hey 2001). In subject review it meant that additional resource for enhanced staff development and support was unsustained. It is also a method of control since constantly changing performance indicators encourage insecurity (Ball 2000). Quality performance indicators become a shifting signifier operating as a disciplinary technology (Shore and Wright 2000). Short-termism allows experimentation without commitment. In SR the focus constantly shifted from group to group leaving behind unfinished business and feelings of anti-climax.

There are unexpected consequences that are problematic for policy makers (Kennedy 1997). Short-termism privileges immediate monitorable results. The transparent course handbook became more important than the course itself. SR targets encouraged surface performativity and compliance. We retreat to what will achieve the required measurable performance within the

timescale. This leads to problems of definition, problems caused by structural factors outside the control of the organisation or individual, and issues of manipulation of performance indicators (Waine 2000). Harvey (1998) attributes short-termism in relation to quality assurance to a focus on accountability rather than notions of transformation, with a consequent dominance of procedures, illustrating the way structures can act as a constraint on action. QA tends to be judgemental rather than developmental, another example of a short-term approach. This results in defensiveness and a compliance culture operating oppositionally to the original stated aims.

Work load, time and autonomy

Practices involving pedagogic ideas and attitudes were sometimes seen as sustainable, several respondents (1;20) reporting a positive influence of interest in QA on their teaching. Some innovative teaching ideas had caught on and transferred to other courses, particularly if innovations could be managed individually with limited extra work. Reynolds (2001) suggests that:

> change is only successful when it has become part of the natural behaviour
> .....implementation by itself is not enough (p.34).

Equally, individual professional pride could help embed changes. Respondent 5 reported feeling rather embarrassed on realising that, before SR, there was some failure to close the loop in his course committees. Those who had gained in status through close association with teaching and learning initiatives (5;10) felt that this was likely to be permanent although, arguably, this simply reflects the institution's current increased concern with teaching and learning which subsequent policy re-focusing might alter. A female respondent (14), from the health-related sector, felt that improvement in reputation had its own impetus and that, having gained in reputation, her group did not want to lose it again. However, respondent 23 talked with resentment about how their higher status in the university, because of their score, was not sustained. Respondent 3, who had felt that SR had damaged his approach to teaching, regarded this damage as permanent and

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respondent 13 argued that status altered over time because of factors including the university's financial position, staff attitudes and competing demands of research. Thus we see the operation of micropolitical factors operating both positively and negatively for respondents and also the influence of structural factors of resource and government policy.

For several, the key to sustainability was ensuring that innovations were not time-consuming, indicating again the importance of conceptions of time to which I return in the next chapter. One middle manager (17) argued that she made some TQA processes sustainable by making them more slim-line. IT could contribute too; formats and templates were preserved and these influenced content (7). But for a business studies principal lecturer these things required maintenance:

> I wouldn't be surprised if I went round every module now I would discover three or four work books which don't conform to the house style because someone else has taken over, didn't realise it was mandatory, couldn't find a template, had something they'd used before in a different style (13).

Several respondents pointed out that time-consuming activities, such as meeting with part-time tutors and peer observation, began to erode (3;8;15;23). Time was a contributing factor in stopping reflection moving to action. Particularly difficult was the combination of time factors and shifting priorities which militated against reflection and consequent action, an issue identified by Clegg et al. (2002) in relation to reflective practice. Respondent 23 described staff resentment of time-consuming student assessment documentation which seemed to duplicate work, an indication of improvement as a contested concept with no universal unitary interest (Bowe et al.1992; Harris 2001). Respondents recognised the importance of engaging staff at normative levels (Fullan 2001). Respondent 22 pointed out that those who had no commitment in the first place slip back and what was important was the extent of intellectual acceptability of the changes. Another (17) argued for recognition of the relationship of changes to the material interests of the individuals involved (Hoyle 1982).

The perception of practices as core or marginal also affected sustainability. Contacts did not survive unless built into structures (2;8). Respondents seemed to differentiate between core and marginal communication as well as core and marginal activities. Things viewed as optional extras, such as meetings that were collaborative across sections (2), fell away as did activities that were one-off events. According to respondents, this explains why peer observation declined even for those who valued it. Respondent 19 regretted the demise, for time reasons, of discussion across teams. This respondent, who ran a language support service, reported the desire of her team to sustain two initiatives on teaching materials and feedback to tutors on student progress. However, these initiatives were time-intensive indicating that time-consuming projects that were seen as desirable rather than essential were likely not to be sustained. Fullan (2001) identifies need and practicality as key drivers for sustainability and my data show how definition of an activity as non-core can lead to its demise. Campbell (1985) argues for the importance of both willingness and opportunity to allow collaboration and we see through time pressures, although the willingness is expressed, the opportunity dissipates.

This all shows a combination of micropolitical and structural factors operating. Changes were easier to sustain when structures had space for teacher autonomy, for example in one's own teaching, or when resources were not needed or where micropolitical relationships did not have to be negotiated. Some factors could operate in contradictory directions. Professional pride could act as a positive influence of SR yet be negatively affected by structural situations. Equally, we saw how the perceived core and marginal nature of activities intersected with time pressures and other structural demands.

The role of management will in sustaining desired change

The will of managers, individually and collectively as a corporate power, played a contributing role that could be constraining. Respondent 14 pointed out that changes were dependent on the lead person staying. She argued

that professional pride motivated sustainability but this was dependent on leadership (Nias 1992; Fullan 2001). Ironically, I found in my earlier study (Blythman 2001) that, particularly in one department that had scored highly, almost all senior staff left within a year. Respondent 15 argued that having structures in place should make improvements sustainable even if staff change. As we saw in chapter 5, this was one of the motivations for transparency but it depended on the agreement of the new leader. Also, as argued above, a transparency solution fails to acknowledge the role of tacit knowledge.

Conversely, several respondents (2, 14) quoted examples where lack of departmental management support, reflecting a culture clash over the importance of industry links and placements, led to developments being stultified. Lack of sustainability was also perceived across different QA procedures. Respondent 20 pointed out that what the university did for RAE did not necessarily sustain into QAA because he perceived it as less important to senior managers. Fullan (2001) argues the importance of engaging all levels of actors at normative as well as behavioural levels. My data suggest some ambivalence at management levels, especially in prioritisation between demands of QAA and those of the RAE. Structural solutions were undermined by such issues.

Resource as a structural constraint

Government resourcing models emerge as a structural constraint. My findings shows this working its way downwards through university structures and indicates the importance of agenda setting, identified by Paechter (1995) as a key factor in influencing change, and its link to resource within a context of management of risk. Activities were often sustained when longer-term resource had been acquired. Respondent 6 was able to delegate much first year teaching to TAs because of devolved budgeting. Respondent 10 used externally funded projects to sustain developments then used their success to gain longer-term university funding. However, some material gains were short-term. Gains like improved accommodation for students could be

cosmetic and temporary partly through resource pressures (see chapter 4). For a post-1992 sector respondent (13), significant gains in administrative support were contingent on increasing international student income. Yet such examples also reveal respondents using micropolitical space within structural constraints to achieve desired changes.

Staffing difficulties also constrained sustainability. For respondent 6 there had been 'staffing melt-down'. Respondent 13 suggested that staff turnover led to loss of tacit knowledge. I identified above the additional staffing difficulty of having large numbers of part-time staff (8) and the consequent team communication difficulties (17). Turnover of staff could also cause loss of SR gains (13) indicating the local implications of structural issues. This all echoes Fullan and Miles (1992) and Nias (1992) on the need for sufficient human and material resource to achieve sustainability.

Respondent 18 felt that issues, like retention, were put on the agenda by SR and so action around them would be sustained, again indicating the importance of agenda setting (Paechter 1995). Respondent 21 argued that the nature of future external QA systems would affect attitudes to, and priorities for, sustainability. A key motivator was not to be caught out next time, to be prepared, a clear response to risk (Beck 1992). Several respondents (22) described how they now kept all documentation and how their universities were making concerted efforts to 'clean up' student statistical data (20, 18). There was a belief that, whatever system replaced SR, monitoring of evidence would not go away. One pre-1992 respondent argued:

> people will come in and check up on you and you may as well get used to that (7).

This was not universally seen as negative and respondent 13 argued for the usefulness of external 'forces' coming in to keep things sustained.

I argued above that structures operate at local as well as government level. For respondents, institutional structures could both enable and constrain

desired changes. Procedures were likely to be sustained if the institution built them into formal institutional structures. Contrastingly, university operation also acted as a constraining factor. Several respondents pointed out how difficult it was to make things happen in a university (Harman 1990). There seemed to be an ironic parallel to the point made in the last chapter about resistance. I argued there that a form of resistance for academic staff was simply to ignore and not do what was required by university management. For some respondents the university simply failed, rather than refused, to act to support changes. This failure was attributed by respondent 11 to her university having a culture which favoured research over teaching. For others the constraints to sustainability were structural pressures within the institution from pressure of student numbers and increased SSR (10), or the staffing profile. Communication was also constrained by staff being split across sites or in other ways physically distant from each other (8; 14). Another constraint was increased university regulation working against curriculum development. My respondents, therefore, faced both structural and micropolitical institutional factors in their attempts to implement change.

However the key constraint identified by respondents was scarcity of time. I argued in chapter 6 that time cannot be seen solely as a fixed resource (Hargreaves 1994) and should be understood as socially constructed and politically allocated (Cambone 1995). For my respondents, perceived lack of time was seen as a barrier to collaborative work and collegial relationships. Lack of time is usually given as a key reason for the failure to implement a desired change (Collinson and Cook 2001; Fullan and Miles 1992) and so teachers' conceptualisation of time is central to any understanding of continuing professional development. The literature and my findings, outlined in the last chapter, show feelings of scarcity of time exacerbated by shifting priorities and lack of engagement with institutional priorities. Micropolitical factors, through values and material interests, intersect with structural constraints. In the final chapter I return to conceptualisations of time in the academy.

To sum up, the findings show an awareness by respondents of ways in which they felt empowered or disempowered by the enabling or constraining of desired changes. This suggests greater awareness, by respondents, of external pressures than earlier literature suggests (Becher 1989). Fullan and Miles (1992) and Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) argue for the important role of external pressures and my findings suggests that this is now more widely recognised by academics. This study suggests, therefore, that sustainability continued to be fragile even where desired by respondents. The damaging influence of government policy, time and other resource pressures, the translation of these into institutional structures, competing normative values and micropolitical factors work to advance short-termism. Wider structural factors led to dialectical opposition through a variety of practices. These in turn led to institutional structures which constrained empowerment and transformational change. The opportunities for such change were, therefore, partial and local, mainly limited to that within individual control.

Chapter 10

Answering the research questions

In this chapter I return to my research questions and show how they have been answered. As indicated earlier, I took an illuminative approach to explore whether subject review, as perceived by respondents, could be understood as contributing to longer-term changes in their professional world at an individual or team level. Second, I examined the extent to which these changes can be interpreted as continuing professional development leading to transformatory empowerment. I am therefore taking both an emic and etic approach (Pike 1954 quoted in Harris 1990); emic because I attempt to illuminate the academic world as respondents see it; etic because I am also bringing extrinsic theorisation to interpret this illumination. Thus there are two voices: that of respondents (itself, of course, multiple) and my own where I apply a theoretical lens of empowerment/disempowerment, using it as before in the sense of capacity or self-efficacy. The following account of the answers to the research questions follows this pattern.

My research questions were:

1. What enhancement claims were made for SR through stated national policy?

Exploration of this question was limited to analysis of all editions during this period of *Higher Quality*. This reveals ambivalence over what claim is made for a quality enhancement role for SR through conflation of a) particular forms of information with improvement, b) accountability with continuous improvement (assuming the former automatically leading to the latter), c) assurance with enhancement, as in external examiners simultaneously measuring and maintaining. Additionally there is a disjunction between a discourse of institutional autonomy and an underlying message of central control.

This reveals a policy context that both disempowers through increasing central control and information demands yet simultaneously has an ambivalence which can leave creative space for individuals to affect consequent local agendas.

2. How did respondents perceive the process of subject review?

Respondents had varied perceptions of the SR process per se. Accountability was accepted as a principle but not in its SR form which was criticised as methodologically inappropriate and conceptually flawed. However, some respondents accepted that any accountability system had a cost. There was also an emotional response to SR. Some perceived it bitterly but cynicism was more common. It was sometimes perceived as an attack on professionalism. All accepted the need to operate within the system, however flawed.

This suggests that respondents were not completely captured by the discourse of quality assurance, suggesting that social actors can, to some extent, 'penetrate' social forms (Giddens 1979). Power is greater when disguised (Foucault 1998) therefore this awareness is empowering or at least combats disempowerment. Yet the accepted need to operate within SR indicates that any empowerment was limited to thought rather than action.

3. What influence can SR be considered to have had on staff-student relations?

Influences included short-term loss through diversion of resources from teaching and learning to SR activities. There were also short-term practical gains but these were not necessarily sustained. There was some longer-term gain by 'closing the loop' on issues thus offering some limited increased student voice. Respondents also expressed a variety of attitudes to the idea of students as consumers. This cannot be attributed to SR alone although SR's focus on the student experience is a contributing factor. There was some stakeholder discourse and a desire to respond to what students wanted and

for students to be happy. This sometimes was expressed in consumerist discourse, sometimes not. Respondents were critical of evaluation systems as resembling customer satisfaction surveys and preferred direct contact with students. They felt that good evaluations could lead to course team complacency and the abrogation to students of professional responsibility for critical evaluation of courses. Additionally, students' academic success was more important to some respondents than students' enjoyment. Respondents also reported ways in which they thought the university had been influenced by consumerist notions of students. These included wariness of the angry consumer and increased assessment regulation indicating loss of professional trust.

Turning to the lens of empowerment/disempowerment, much current writing suggests the disempowerment of academic staff through a perceived rise in consumerism giving students market power. I outlined in chapter 4 my critique of these views. My findings suggest some evidence of the influence of ideas of commodification and the marketisation of education on respondents' perceptions. Additionally, SR has increased mechanisms to capture 'the student voice'. Respondents, however, recognised limitations of such mechanisms and seemed relatively uninfluenced by notions of students as consumers. This does not suggest a major power shift to students. Academic staff still consider themselves in a powerful position in relation to students although this is expressed in various ways. While there is no substantive suggestion that SR had an empowering influence on academic staff in relation to students, I suggest that current discourse of disempowerment through student consumerism is overstated.

4. What influence can SR be considered to have had on pedagogy?

Respondents held different models of pedagogy. I discerned from my data three general models. Of these one predominated which focused on learning rather than teaching; responsibility for ensuring that students learn; holistic development, including skills, rather than transmission; rejection of notions of 'fixed capacity'; assumed efficacy of pedagogic innovation; more

complex and regulated assessment including formative assessment; transparency as 'a good thing', the obverse of an inequitable hidden curriculum; making learning explicit to students. This model sat relatively comfortably with teaching and learning as defined by SR. However there were two other discernable models more problematised by SR.

Policy connections were recognised. Respondents saw the dominant model as influenced by national teaching and learning policy, including SR, and those holding this model were more likely to be teacher trained, another influence of this model. They saw SR as influencing through diversification of assessment and foregrounding of individual student needs. Respondents suggested that discourse of SR affected pedagogy and the six aspects framed discursive space and thus structured university pedagogic evaluation and planning. This was not always perceived as negative since it gave an academically respectable language for teaching and learning. However, for others, pressure to use positive language in assessment led to loss of meaning. Art and design teachers were critical of the codified, documented, evidenced approach of QAA. Peer observations were regarded as useful but time pressures led to fabrication. Even those most critical of SR felt pedagogically influenced by it. Policy changes and factors, other than SR, also affected pedagogic models. These factors included increasing student diversity recognised as requiring different teaching and learning strategies, and resistance to university attempts to treat all students as the same and to large classes.

Respondents reported that particular aspects of SR had been helpful. These included peer observation and enhanced pedagogic discussion with consequent sharing of practices although sometimes these had been difficult to sustain. Respondents also reported increased confidence and impetus to experiment pedagogically and some felt that SR-influenced agenda-setting created space for teaching and learning issues. For some it encouraged intellectual fascination for scholarship of teaching. However the focus on second-order activities led to formalisation of relations with students.

Additionally SR could conflict with disciplinary values and negatively influence innovation.

A key driver of the dominant pedagogic model and SR was a focus on explicitness and transparency. Respondents mainly accepted transparency, in principle, as avoiding the hidden curriculum (fairness) and confusion of expectations, particularly in relation to course information and assessment practices. There was a feeling that SR stimulated understanding of the meaning of transparency. However, there was also recognition that the level of information was surface, too much information can obfuscate and there were opportunity costs. Transparency could operate as compliance both individually and institutionally and have a management role in the commodification of knowledge.

Through the lens of empowerment/disempowerment, this indicates that, through discourse and policy formation, SR has had a significant influence on how students are taught. SR influenced both the pedagogy of individuals and the dominant framing concepts of current pedagogy through a model which foregrounds student learning and increased codification within externally set parameters. Transparency was a key technology in this process. This created difficulties for respondents operating within different pedagogic paradigms although it could also create agenda space. SR, therefore, could operate either as empowering or disempowering depending on respondents' positioning in relation to the dominant model.

5. In what particular ways can SR be considered as contributing to changes in respondents' professional practices and professional context?

In respondents' accounts of how SR contributed to changes, context affected practices and evolving practices in turn affected context.

At the level of practices respondents reported SR as contributing to changes through individual and institutional conscious compliance and fabrication, the

prioritisation of second-order documentation over core teaching activities, and event management and game playing. However, SR was also considered to have increased reflection and, through this, positively influenced professional practices. There was increased team, college and external communication. For some it created space for reflection on practice leading to increased self-awareness, it made systems like course review more reflective and was felt to act positively through the pleasure felt from foregrounding one's own strengths. The QAA requirement for peer observation contributed. However, for some, reflection could be contrived and improvements were not necessarily sustained.

SR was also perceived as contributing to changes in professional context and a key change was an increased consumption of time, through immediate preparatory pressures and longer-term influences. These included changes in assessment practices making procedures explicit with increased university regulation and extension of work surrounding teaching. Additionally, there tended to be tighter liaison and documentation of relationships with other bodies both for and after SR. This had opportunity costs particularly in relation to research profiles. However, for some, SR brought welcome efficiency into the system. Non-SR factors also contributed to increased consumption of time. These included fast pace of disciplinary change, increasing student numbers, increasing student diversity and modularisation.

However, at the level of practice, some respondents developed strategies to take back time. These included moving work to others (sometimes gendered), streamlining systems, timetabling in particular ways, doing some things superficially and neglecting others. Notably, there was little reference to e-learning as a time-saving strategy, despite the present policy context.

Through a lens of empowerment/disempowerment and the relationship to transformatory CPD, these findings suggest a mixed picture. SR's influence on practice was not entirely positive or negative. Reflection and reflexivity, perceived as coming from SR, were limited but real for respondents. There seemed to be some creative empowerment through an opening up of

discursive spaces which can be used creatively. Peer observation appeared to have contributed. However, some of this reflection might resemble 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves 1994) and can be questioned as limited by the normalising effect of the SR agenda thus making it performative.

Additionally, SR simultaneously encouraged reflection and took away time that made it possible. The consumption of time by SR was a strong negative force and disempowering. Yet there was individual and group agency in finding ways to 'take time back'. This suggests a Foucauldian operation of power as both creative and repressive and so SR operated as both empowering and disempowering.

6. How did respondents perceive the university's response to SR and how did this response influence respondents' professional context and practices?

Respondents perceived their university's response to SR as both positive and negative. For respondents, university response came through the action of management who were seen as a rather shadowy group. Some respondents felt that they did not know at what level or where regulations were coming from.

Respondents reported that universities took SR seriously but the degree of central involvement depended on TQA/RAE positioning. University response could be perceived as helpful or destructive institutional panic. Institutional responses were read variously as cynical or attempts at enhancement. There was more standardisation of documentation and systems with some limited autonomy within prescriptive frameworks. In particular, there were increased QA procedures, especially for course information and assessment, additional QA posts and the elision of good practice with regulation. QA systems were often based on SR aspects, so were pre-defined. Universities seemed determined to be ready for the next round. This was sometimes reported as enabling management to introduce otherwise contentious change, or fitting a prior agenda. Universities seemed to feel pressured to be good at everything.

The actual score was important. Universities responded to SR reports as a 'truth'. This could result in lack of prioritisation and indecisiveness leading to conflicting strategies.

This influenced respondents' professional context and practices. There was loss of individual time through increased institutional and management activity, particularly documentation and meetings, and the consequences of the dominant pedagogic model. The documentation requirements could constrain curriculum development. Some reported pressure from universities trying to second-guess what QAA would want. Some welcomed and some resisted standardisation, often for disciplinary values. However, some reported a more positive side where these systems informed one's own practice and enabled staff to move from the 'purely anecdotal'. Some felt that they benefited from increased personal status and university gratitude although these benefits were not necessarily sustained.

Through the empowerment/disempowerment lens, we see a tension between professionalism, bureaucracy and entrepreneurialism. The rise of performativity to enhance entrepreneurialism (du Gay 1996) could be seen as bureaucratic with endless committees, standardisation and documentation. Or this activity could be seen as an attempt to continue an academic community model with academic voice in decision-making coming either from principles of professionalism or through managerialist attempts at consensus and therefore compliance. For several, this additional involvement was perceived as individually empowering but, in general, the associated time pressures were disempowering. Increased managerialism in the form of standardisation and regulation was perceived by some as a loss of power but others welcomed the opportunity to work within frameworks and often found enough creative space within prescription. No respondents suggested open public resistance. There was general recognition that the university had to play the game. It is difficult to achieve any kind of empowerment when under externally imposed time pressure. Respondents were drawn increasingly into management activity. Given other time pressures, additional time demands from extra QA activities are likely to be a form of disempowerment.

Professionalism seemed to be redefined as being a good 'campus citizen' which required this level of activity and thus respondents felt powerless to resist the work coming from QA procedures.

7. In what ways did respondents' perceptions of SR and the post-SR university relate to issues of age and gender?

Respondents perceived an association of age with increased cynicism and different educational values. However any suggestion of clear generational difference is an over-simplification; some 'modernisers' were older. Gender issues came through in two ways. SR was sometimes perceived as exacerbating gendered exploitation, with considerable responsibility for SR being carried by women at significant personal cost. Yet doing well in SR could have a confidence-raising effect for some female respondents.

Through a lens of empowerment/disempowerment, the connection between age and greater cynicism about SR, although partial, suggests some empowerment since cynicism indicates awareness of the operation of power relations and consequently is a form of resistance. Equally, the awareness of gender issues meant that some female respondents recognised a playing out of gender issues of role allocation and yet the lived increased status for women in marginal female departments suggests the possibility of an empowering space to combat such marginalisation.

8. In what ways did respondents' perceptions of SR and the post-SR university relate to issues of institutional status, academic discipline and academic identity?

Respondents' perceptions seemed affected by the status of their institution. In pre-1992 universities research pressures were greater with the concomitant need to be good at everything, requiring extensive multi-skilling. These universities also felt that their position could be challenged as elitist by SR. Additionally, SR was often managed by a small, tight team with others 'protected' from it. Post-1992 respondents perceived themselves and their

sector as being more developed in the systems demands of SR. However, post-1992 universities lacked confidence so more regulation/codification emerged influenced by SR. The score also played a role. Although respondents were critical of SR, achieving good scores was mainly important to them although respondents varied in their degree of emotional involvement.

Disciplinary differences emerged in perceptions although this is based on very limited numbers in each discipline. In business studies, SR suited working practices. Respondents with a strong vocational connection (mainly para-medical and design courses) sometimes prioritised 'industry' values. Art and design respondents resented SR's failure to recognise unique features of their discipline. There was a clash for economists between SR and belief in propositional knowledge, and consequently traditional forms of assessment. Notably, disciplinary values were a key source of individual resistance to SR.

The degree of identification with the institution varied. Some identified more with their course or department; some felt alienated from academic culture; some positioned themselves as outsiders in relation to responsibility for SR. However, most respondents carried some level of management responsibility and models of professionalism included thorough documentation of activity and being a good 'campus citizen'. Research was less foregrounded than in some other studies but still intrinsically important.

Respondents reported SR pressures on academic identity. It exacerbated the encroachment of expanding teaching-related work and expanded the definition of good 'campus citizen'. It was damaging to research profiles. This was perceived as intensification and stress from volume, competing demands, work under scrutiny, professional trust under attack and the need to be self-disciplining. Some relished the game. For others there were normative clashes with non-negotiable principles and a desire for a rational, predictable and organised world. In short, there were tensions between SR and aspects of academic identity, academic discipline and institutional status. This led to some limited forms of resistance. Open resistance was seen as foolhardy or countering their model of professionalism. However, the findings suggest

some resistance by disappearing, doing nothing, compliance/fabrication or work shifting and often stimulated by disciplinary or general educational values. The pressures of SR can result in the self-disciplining individual or subtle forms of resistance.

Again SR seemed to simultaneously empower and disempower. Both pre- and post-1992 universities were in some ways disempowered by SR; for both a low score was perceived as damaging to esteem while a high score could feel empowering. SR suited some disciplinary communities of practice more than others. SR seemed to disempower respondents in relation to research, exacerbated by an SR influenced reconstruction of professionalism to include more managerial and administrative responsibilities. Respondents were often aware and resentful of this reconstruction. There was some attempt by respondents to take back power through subtle forms of resistance. Again power acts creatively as well as negatively by stimulating resistance.

9. What changes, desired by respondents, were perceived as sustained or not sustained and what factors can be considered as enabling or constraining these changes?

There were a number of changes, perceived as results of SR, that respondents wished to sustain. These included increased professional contact with other academic staff, in particular peer observation and increased team reflection and curriculum discussion; opportunities to reflect and interpret their work; increased cross-institutional knowledge; desired teaching and learning initiatives; more streamlined systems and enhanced individual or group confidence and reputation. Respondents reported that some aspects had been sustainable. These included individual changes in pedagogic ideas and attitudes, some transfer of innovation to other courses and organisational systems. However, a number of desired changes were often reported as not sustained. These included increased communication with managers, higher personal profile and status, cross-team activities, team cohesiveness, desired new assessment procedures, and, in general, time-consuming activities.

Reasons were offered why some desired aspects had not been sustainable. These included lack of institutional strategy to evaluate the experience and loss of tacit knowledge and experience to other institutions through movement of senior staff. Energy levels could not be sustained and a high score could lead to complacency. Furthermore, tension between those who did and did not wish to continue with changes and the tendency for those with no commitment in the first place to slip back were also factors. Additionally, there were culture clashes over priorities and some reported a lack of institutional will. Gains in individual status could be adversely affected by the university's financial position, staff attitudes and competing demands of research. Respondents also reported perceived lack of time as a barrier to collaboration since time pressures and shifting priorities militated against reflection and consequent action. Activities or contacts perceived as marginal, time-consuming or not built into systems dissipated. Some respondents also reported structural factors around organisation of time, space and resourcing, particularly staffing shortage.

However, respondents also reported that changes were sustained under some circumstances. These included when the desired change could be managed individually with limited extra work. Also feelings of individual professional pride could help embed changes as could intellectual acceptability of the changes and implications for individual material interests. Making organisational systems slimline and building them into formal processes enhanced their durability. Acquisition of longer-term resource to support the change was important as was getting issues on institutional agendas as necessary for the next TQA.

Through the lens of empowerment/disempowerment, these findings suggest that structural factors, particularly resource issues, constrained individual agency and thus acted against empowerment. These factors also affected structures at team level and thus local working practices. Sustainability seemed fragile, even when desired by respondents, because of the damaging influence of time and other resource pressures, competing normative values and micropolitical factors working to advance short-termism. Yet the influence

was not total. For some, space was created, through the TQA agenda, for limited changes often emerging from the reflexive space enabled, albeit temporarily, by SR.

Conclusions

There are limits to generalisability with such a small sample. However my study is illuminative. Respondents seemed to feel both empowered and disempowered by the experience of SR in various sites of possible CPD including conceptions of students, pedagogy and working practices. Responses varied according to social identity and situational factors. Respondents had multiple roles and multiple subjectivities, only some of which embraced managerial values. Most factors suggest diverse interpretations and SR can be seen as not totally disempowering; there are contradictions and discontinuities. Part of this reflects on the degree of agency my respondents seemed to feel and the relationship of oppositional behaviour and resistance to underpinning power relationships.

However, SR seems mainly to have been disempowering. Respondents were operating within an SR system about which they had major reservations. It added to stress and pressure, forced a loss of autonomy and individuality and consumed academic staff time. It seemed to create a level of institutional panic which led to over-management and conformity, producing a problematic blend of managerialist ideology and bureaucracy which sapped respondents' time and energy. Time and resource were spent on second-order QA activities at the expense of the core business of educating students. It led to a redefinition of academic identity which put pressure on disciplinary expertise. It restricted possible approaches to teaching and framed as the only acceptable model of pedagogy one which gave little recognition to wider social factors and which increased workload. Equally, there was no guarantee of permanence of any gain. These pressures led to a degree of alienation, resistance and resentment although reaction tended to be passive resistance, through compliance, fabrication and simply doing nothing rather than open opposition.

I pointed out earlier that transformation through empowerment tends to have positive connotations, implies a change in thinking as well as action, is limited and situated by context, lacks neutrality, is permeated with contested notions of reflection, requires a degree of reflexivity so that actors make meaning through interpreting their experience including their situated power position. However, a sense of *dis*empowerment affected how respondents changed through the experience of SR. I found some relatively minor initial signs of transformation through sites of CPD, although even these are open to multiple interpretation and unintended consequences. When transformation is analysed through a model of reflexive transformation/ resistance/ compliance/ internalisation of external (to the individual) goals and norms, certainly for some respondents valued transformation did take place, particularly in the area of pedagogy and greater professional dialogue and reflexivity.

The nature of change was that they became strategic by identifying and focusing on necessary practices to achieve the desired SR score. Some engaged in deeper pedagogic thinking but often combined with a degree of compliance. There was evidence of change at behavioural level, not embedded in the individual's subjectivities, a cocktail of compliance and commitment. Transformation can be instrumental rather than emancipatory and certainly some of the reported transformation could be interpreted in this way. Any feeling of empowerment could be read as illusionary, concealing manipulation and power relations or coming with additional personal costs. But respondents often showed ability and willingness to have some ontological sense of the difference between commitment and situational adjustment. Empowering change and compliance operated simultaneously and conflictingly. Respondents' reports suggest some coherence of individual values and a connection between degrees of transformation and its appropriateness for their value systems, a key prerequisite for CPD. Most respondents who felt their pedagogy was developed by SR come into this category. However, SR also required a degree of adjustment that most respondents fulfilled.

To sum up, SR operated in a number of ways. It was part of an overarching national policy structure which influenced and framed the way it operated as a process in universities. Universities also responded structurally to both the overarching structure and operation of SR, in turn developing processes which were framed by these structural constraints. However the tensions in this operation, partly through the operation of time as a disciplinary technology, and the ambiguity in the general policy context enabled individuals and groups to find micropolitical space, although limited.

Chapter 11

Conclusion: theoretical and professional considerations

Finally, I re-examine, in the light of my study, three concepts and suggest directions for theory development to address some theoretical tensions. I indicate how this study contributes to knowledge empirically and theoretically and explore the study's professional implications.

From the study three concepts emerged as dominant: power, including empowerment/disempowerment; time and pedagogy. These require some further theorisation at this final stage. My approach is abductive:

> the process of moving from lay descriptions of social life, to technical descriptions of that social life (Blaikie 1993 p.177).

This suggests emic and etic approaches and thus the two voices in the text as outlined previously. I now examine critically these three concepts and show how tensions played out dialectically in my study.

Theorising Power

Power and empowerment/disempowerment are central to my thesis. Empowerment has been much criticised conceptually and I return to this below. Initially I explore power. This must be a limited project given the size, complexity and contested nature of this concept. Recent theoretical thinking on power focuses on how power relations operate, often influenced by Foucauldian thinking (Popkewitz and Brennan 1998). Foucault defines power as:

> the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation; as a process which, through ceaseless struggle and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them (1998 p.92).

For Foucault, power is not an 'institution', a 'structure', or 'a certain strength':

It is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society (ibid p.93).

Power is not acquired/seized or shared, it is:

exercised from innumerable points in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relationships (ibid p.94).

Foucault has made an important contribution to analysis of power relations. He has foregrounded that power is mobile and fluid (Foucault 1998) and capillary, offering, therefore, a theoretical basis for micropolitical analysis. My data illustrate how power could flow or wane for individuals or departments through their SR score with Respondent 23 pointing out the insecure nature of any gain. Foucault has moved thinking beyond seeing power as held by a particular group (Wright Mills 1956) to an understanding of the importance of power relations rather than simply sources of power, thus revealing that power is not synonymous with the legal system as indicated in Enlightenment conceptualisation of a rationalist rule of law. Foucault has also highlighted that power operates most successfully when disguised and that it is not solely negative since it also creates knowledge, pleasure and resistance (Foucault 1994). Examples from my data include the pleasure expressed by female health-related studies respondents at their increased status in a gendered academy through achievement of a high score. Respondent 1 felt pleasure from increased knowledge of pedagogy. Equally, resistance is exemplified by respondent 13 pointing out that committee minutes were now controlled to hide issues and respondent 3 who refused to develop new curricula because of increasingly restrictive assessment regulations. These Foucauldian ideas have moved the focus of discussion to analysis of the *operation* of power and offers insights into technologies of power, particularly discourse regimes of power and the disciplinary gaze, including the examination (Foucault 1977; 1995). My data indicate the role of transparency as a discourse regime of power with respondent 11 pointing out the impossibility of being against transparency. Equally, respondent 7 argued that 'people will come in and

check up on you and you may as well get used to that'. The examination is normalised.

As indicated earlier, my findings reveal this operation of power through the effects of subject review on respondents. However I have several reservations. First, Foucault's focus on the operation of power can lead to a loss of focus on the origins of power thus moving our thinking too strongly away from major structural factors and the dialectical operation of micro and macro factors (Ball 1994a). Micropolitical analysis can be limited by its neglect of structural factors. I acknowledge that Foucault recognises that his focus is on the 'how' of power rather than the 'what' or 'why' (1994 p.336) and that he also recognises that micro level power must be within an 'envelope' of macro level power (1998 p.100). I recognise that Foucault is to some extent balancing what he perceived as an over-emphasis on structural factors.

> So long as the posing of the question of power was held subordinate to the economic instance and the system of interests this served, there was a tendency to regard (the mechanics of power) as of small importance (Foucault 1994 p.117).

However, his focus on the operation as the important heuristic for the study of power marginalises the question of where power emanates from. We need constantly to recognise that, while power flows, it is not an equal flow. Structural factors create concentrations of power at any particular historical juncture and this is played out in the way particular individuals or groups 'hold' particular amounts of power, or forms of power, in particular situations. My findings highlight institutional power which I regard as a particular time-contingent power position predicated on a particular group being able to operate to their advantage in key power relations. Institutional power is partly, though not exclusively, operationalised through the discourse and actions of individual or groups of managers. Examples from my data include respondent 8 who pointed out how constrained she was by the packaged nature of modularisation. This respondent and respondent 11 also indicated the limiting discursive power of 'learning outcomes'. I therefore argue for analysis that recognises both Foucauldian and structuralist perspectives as outlined in

chapter 9. My argument is that the origin of the power of SR is largely from its role as the legislative and executive arm of the state through accountability and performativity and managerialism for reasons outlined in chapter 3. This is exemplified by descriptions from respondents 15 and 5 of institutional panic at the fear or realisation of a low SR score.

I also recognise the *effects* of power (Popkewitz and Fendler 1999; Popkewitz and Brennan 1998 p.19) as an important area for exploration and that these often take an embodied form. For me this problematises Foucault's rejection of power as a 'thing' possessed by people. Foucault's theory was developed in the historical context of pre-Enlightenment positions of power as embodied in particular individuals, based on their social position, and the Enlightenment model of power as located in rational legal systems and embodied through their agents. I consider that it is possible to accept this analysis of historical change while still recognising that power can be 'held' (albeit contingent on temporary, contextual factors) by an individual or group. Power, in Foucauldian analysis, is recognised as 'exercised' rather than 'held'. Lukes (1974) expresses reservations on the use of 'exercise' on the grounds that it assumes an intention and individuality and its successfulness implies cause and effect. Lukes' identification of the issue of intentionality also problematises the issue of consciousness, not only in the exercise of power but also for all parties in any particular transaction in any power relationship. I also wish to question whether or not one can exercise something that one does not 'hold'. If we recognise that power relations are unequal, what is it embodied in the different actors that makes them unequal? I agree with Popkevitz and Fendler (1999) who argue that notions of sovereignty (domination by groups who exercise significant control of decision making based on their norms and interests) are not incompatible with a Foucauldian process model and that different ways of looking at power have different uses. I therefore argue that we need to examine the embodied effects of power and reconsider power as a 'state' or 'capacity' in an individual in addition to considerations of sources of power and power relations. I consider this 'state' as an effect of power and explore below in the discussion of 'empowerment'.

A further relevant aspect is the well-rehearsed distinction between 'power over' and 'power to' (Lukes 1974). 'Power to' is critiqued by Lukes and others as having pluralist assumptions of the possibility of 'absence of conflict'. However, I do not accept these meanings as exclusive. Power may exist both as a relation and as a capacity. Shewsbury (1987) argues for 'power as energy, capacity and potential rather than as domination' (p.8). I wish to suggest that it can be both. Respondents 1 and 10 in my data felt renewed energy through greater understanding and foregrounding of ideas about teaching and learning. Yet the art and design respondents felt constrained by the dominant form of the same ideas. We need to consider this within the context of 'power to resist' which, arguably, is more than 'power over' i.e. power over those one is resisting; it also signifies a 'power to', a capacity as well as an operation within power relations.

Empowerment- a contested concept

Empowerment, as a term, currently has become debased by much recent use. Troyna (1994) pointed out that, in the 1980s and 1990s, it was appropriated by the Right and others have indicated its appropriation by discourses of modernisation and managerialist projects of responsibilisation (Ball 1994a; Du Gay 1996; Morley 2003). I indicated in chapter 3 how empowerment can also slide into 'autonomy' with the dangers of responsibilisation of individual learners and denial of the state's responsibility for educating its citizens. In origin empowerment was discursively different from managerialist meanings of self-management (Ball 1994a). Its educational origins were in liberationist (Freire 1996) and feminist pedagogy (Lather 1992; Morley 1998). It represented increased understanding of power relations and individual/group location within these. This is explored below in the section on pedagogy. More recently, Clegg (1999) has referred us back to consciousness raising in the women's movement of the 1970s, and the recognition that empowerment that can be gained through the foregrounding and sharing of experience that was previously private and tacit.

I recognise empowerment as having two main meanings: the action of empowering and the state of being empowered. Much discussion and critique, especially feminist critique, of empowerment in educational literature focuses on the former (Gore 1992). I discuss this below. Here I concentrate on the state of being empowered. The particular focus of my findings is disempowerment. My findings suggest that empowerment (or disempowerment) can be perceived as a capacity or loss of capacity (neither fixed in amount nor decontextualised) that offers (or removes) something that strengthens the individual's position in power relations and that this is achieved by a gain (or loss) that could be a continuum of interests including material (material resources), emotional (personal support) or intellectual (understanding). This, therefore, enables or constrains CPD or professional learning and, through it, transformation. In my data respondent 10 felt empowered by the dominant discourse of student learning and had renewed his career through a move to this area. In contrast, respondent 3 felt disempowered by increased regulation and had little intellectual sympathy for the dominant discourse particularly in the area of assessment. Any continuation of this capacity in power relations is contingent on the continuation of the gain.

Shewsbury (1987) argues:

> To be empowered is to recognise our abilities to act to create a more humane social order. To be empowered is to be able to engage in significant learning. To be empowered is to be able to connect with others in mutually productive ways (p.8).

While wishing to problematise the assumed universal meaning of 'a more humane social order', I find useful the ideas of recognition, connecting with others and engaging in significant learning. If empowerment is an increased capacity to resist decisions and individual and social agenda setting (Lukes 1974), this explains why the exercise of power, particularly through agenda setting by SR, implemented through institutional decisions, or non-decisions (Lukes 1974 p.18), has some results that look like resistance.

Skeggs (2002) argues that reflexivity does not automatically lead to what I would consider empowerment. However she argues that:

> We will only know if we have some sense of the possibilities for action, access to resources and the fields, networks, or structural configurations in which the reflexivity takes place (p.367-8).

We need, however, to recognise a potential danger with empowerment conceptually. This is the suggestion that empowerment is when the empowered person recognises their 'real interests'. This is a key feminist criticism of much liberationist pedagogy (Lather 1992). Epistemologically I do not want to suggest 'real interests'. I see interests as 'an irreducibly evaluative notion' (Lukes 1974 p.34). Nevertheless, my political and social standpoint encourages situations where others explore their own values and understanding. I seek not that they recognise new interests that I have identified on their behalf but that they theorise their own lives (Maher 1999). The personal is political.

I wish to draw another theoretical connection to notions of empowerment, its relationship to the concept of cultural capital. The connection is not immediately obvious. Capital implies the accumulated labour of self and/or others, involves relations of production and exchange relations. These relate only tangentially to empowerment. However, I would argue that empowerment, in its embodied form, has many similarities to the embodied form of cultural capital defined as 'long lasting dispositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu 1997 p.47). Both are likely to enable the capacity to acquire resources to meet one's own ends or resist unwelcome demands. This may be individual or collective. Both have an embodied form, cannot be acquired second hand, require investment of time and effort, cannot be transmitted instantaneously or beyond the capacity of individuals to appropriate it and dies with them. Additionally, both operate as symbolic capital, that is unrecognised and thus perceived as legitimate competence. Further, transmission is difficult to observe and control. Foucault tells us that the way people come to understand the world is made from the apparatuses and technologies of power, more specifically biopower (Foucault 1998). This is

similar to the creation of 'habitus' and 'dispositions' (Bourdieu 1984). I, therefore, regard empowerment through an understanding that the personal is political to play a similar role to cultural capital.

Respondents were not totally captured by the discourse of QA. Decisions to co-operate were conscious and sometimes indicated considerable micropolitical understanding. There was compliance and fabrication (see chapter 8 for examples). The creation of space for reflection could enhance understanding of the politics of SR and their own institution, a form of professional development, through awareness of agenda setting as a technology of power. However, there is also evidence of the normalising effect of the SR agenda, in particular definitions of professionalism and a dominant model of pedagogy, although there was resentment of the former and a number of critical positions in relation to the latter. Additionally, structural pressures and conceptions of time could limit ability to move from understanding to action.

In short, I argue that power, while not a property, can be a capacity that is neither fixed in volume nor independent of its situated use. Power can exist as 'power to' as well as 'power over'. This does nor deny conflict since 'power to' can be the capacity to resist. Such empowerment is stimulated by experiences which raise awareness. We thus have, dialectically, an increased awareness through the experience of disempowerment. Empowerment has differences from cultural capital but in particular situations they are similar and further investigation of conceptual links would be useful.

Theorising time

Time emerged as a key technology of power in my study and I became aware of its under-recognised conceptual complexity, a point also made by Clegg (2003). I now examine time as it relates to everyday experience of academics. This discussion excludes longer-term passage of time i.e. a sense of history, and a sense of one's whole lifetime and career, although, of course, these

conceptions will influence everyday experience of time. Time is difficult to think and talk about:

> Everyone, it seems, holds a very exclusive personal meaning-cluster of time, a distinct but not fixed composition, one open to changes and linked to shifts in personal circumstances, emotional states, health, age and context (Adam 1995 p.5).

We need to re-examine assumptions that time can only be constructed as a fixed resource. Time perspectives need analysis that recognises that individuals and groups perceive, experience and talk about time in different ways and assign personal and group meanings to time, contingent on their life situation (Zerubavel 1981). Second, we need recognition that multiple time perspectives operate simultaneously for the same individual in supportive or conflicting ways (Ylijoki and Mantyla 2003), creating gaps and contradictions. For example we saw in respondent 7 the tension between the immediate and frequent time demands of being a good campus citizen and the different form of time required for productive research. Third, we need recognition of the political, social and cultural construction of time as well as the phenomenological. Fourth, we need to recognise the way agency and thus power intersects with different conceptualisations of time. Respondent 17 had developed strategies to re-organise institutional time in ways that gave back time to academics. Finally, we need to recognise the implications for both power and pedagogy of the time perspectives of academics.

Time is widely discussed in explorations of the lived experience of academics and identified as a constraint on CPD. However this is often limited to discussions of intensification of academic life, attributed to declining resources and increased managerialism and mediated through the role time plays in globalisation theory. The literature and data on intensification were covered in chapter 8. Explications of globalisation usually recognise the shortening of time horizons as a key feature (Mittleman 2000, Reich 1992), attributed to technological advances (Giddens 1990). Globalisation is a highly contested area (Hirst and Thompson 1999) and it is not my aim here to explore this

debate. I simply note the influence of these ideas on theorising intensification of academic life.

I wish to argue for a more developed examination of how academic staff conceptualise time. My aim is not to re-conceptualise time to fulfil a managerialist project to extract from individuals yet more academic labour. Equally I do not wish to deny the time pressures that most academic staff currently feel (see chapter 8). But we need to recognise the relativity potential of time and how this is played out in the world of higher education and so identify time as a site for greater reflexivity, connected with notions of empowerment. Adam (1995) argues for:

> the importance of getting to know the unreflected 'backcloth' of 'own 'time upon which 'other' times are constructed (p.7).

She argues that, once the operation of time is understood reflexively, 'the spell of clock time is broken' (p.5). To put it simply, I wish academic staff to have the capacity to examine reflexively the way they individually conceptualise time and the way others' conceptualisation of time refracts through their professional world. This reflexivity needs to encompass time in one's own life and time in the life of others thus covering our conception of our own time and others' time, and others' conception of our time and their time. To do so we need to examine academic staff conceptions of time and the way their time is conceptualised by others in the academy. We need to examine this with particular reference to disjunctions and gaps.

Time has conceptual tensions. Is it determined or open to agency? Is it universalist or phenomenological? Is it fixed or malleable? Can it be increased? There is a naturalism in the way time is discussed that needs reconsidering. Schonmann (1990), in a study of Israeli teachers, argues that time was 'an obsessive issue in the working world of the teachers' (p.98) and that they had a negative, pessimistic attitude to time seeing themselves as slaves to time which was beyond their control. This resonates with contemporary UK higher education. In my view we need to be more reflexive

about the nature of time and the roles it plays in higher education. If, epistemologically, we recognise that people experience the world in different ways largely contingent on their power position in particular situations then we need to see time through this lens.

Some literature on higher education hints at possibilities of seeing time in a more complex way. There is some limited recognition in the intensification literature of the political allocation of time. Much of this intensification literature, although from a variety of positions, (Court 1996; Dearlove 1997; McInnis 2000 a and b; Bryson and Barnes 2000) implies a fixed resource model. There is some recognition of the gendered politics of work allocation in the academy (Goode 2000; McInnis 2000a). Additionally, Bryson and Barnes (2000) suggest that long working hours, although mainly about workload, are also about peer norms and career advancement. Rutherford (2001), on a different employment area, suggests that the 'long hours syndrome' can be read variously as the result of increasing workloads, normalisation of long hours as a cultural norm, cultural expectations to achieve advancement, a form of competitiveness through high visibility, the individual's own intrinsic interest, motivation and satisfaction or a form of patriarchal closure on women since men often have more time to draw on. Yet this is still within a fixed resource model:

> the sorts of roles that staff enjoyed doing, and other positive aspects such as variety and control, were the very things that were squeezed by an excessive workload (Rutherford p.165).

Another insight comes from Enders (2000) who points out that intensification through longer hours is not consistent across Europe, even in similar circumstances of massification and increasing staff-student ratios. He suggests that, in some countries, there are 'counter forces' (p.27) which enable staff to reserve time for other purposes. He also argues that time allocation is tending 'to be flexibilised' (p.30), another recognition of malleability of time. Kyvik (2000) shows that, in Norway, allocation of time was affected by what staff chose to prioritise and additionally points out that his study captures 'the average conception of how working time was used, not

necessarily how this time was really spent' (p.45). Harman (2000) portrays intensification but identifies that, in Australia, the increase in academics' working time has been spent both on increased administration and research and writing in a situation where respondents indicated administration as the activity they least enjoyed and research and writing as the activity they most enjoyed.

This throws an interesting light on other intensification research, and my findings, where administration or bureaucracy is regarded as the main reason for increased workload. Indeed, in a contemporaneous survey also in Australia, McInnis (2000b) found that academics wanted to alter the allocation of their time towards increased research time. Ylijoki and Mantyla (2003) examine academics' experiences of lack of time and argue that academics have multiple time perspectives. Three are relevant here. The first is 'scheduled time', which is externally imposed, institutionalised and increasing. The second is 'timeless time' which is internally motivated and based on intellectual fascination, personal commitment, autonomy, freedom from interruption. This is now perceived as an ideal rather than actually occurring and is associated with hopes for the future or a lost golden age. The third is 'personal time' which is seen as being in short supply and at risk with consequent damage to family life and personal health, a concern expressed by respondent 22 who felt the tension between personal health and doing one's best for one's students.

Globalisation literature often sees time as malleable, speeded up and compressed, with transformation of space/time relations (Giddens1990). This is usually linked to external forces, mainly IT, operating in the interests of global capitalism. Respondent 21, a principal lecturer in publishing, indicated the rapid changes in his discipline through digitalisation. Giddens (1990) and King (1995) recognise time as a modernist construction which is under threat from constant shifting of signification (Game 1995). All this suggests that time in the lives and working practices of academics is much more complex conceptually than acknowledged in much of the literature. But we only get

glimpses; there is a theory gap in relation to the complex conceptual potential of time as a way of interrogating academics' lived experiences.

Relativism of time – physical and cultural

Theorisation from other areas than education develops such ideas through recognition of the relative nature of time. Hawking (1988) offers a position from theoretical physics:

> In the theory of relativity there is no unique absolute time, but instead each individual has his (sic) own personal measure of time that depends on where he is and how he is moving (p.38).

Additionally, from a social and cultural perspective, I wish to argue of time, as Giddens (1990) does of space (as opposed to place), that it is constructed by social forces that may not be immediately visible. Provonost (1989) argues for time as an object of study including diversity of temporal systems and perspectives, the organisation of time into cycles and structures, variance in time patterns for different social groups and the specificity and diversity of current significations of time. He highlights the relationship between periods of time and the content of activities in those periods. He conceptualises 'pivotal activities' (p.40) as highly significant activities, more resistant to external constraints and around which others are contingent. Some activities have multiple meanings and the various values around time articulate with each other, adapting to constraints and specific activities.

Phenomenological perspectives note the lived phenomenon that time can pass quickly or slowly, and its relationship to levels of activity (Flaherty 1999); that different meanings of times operate simultaneously within the same individual (Adam 1995; Gurvitch 1994); that different meanings of time overlap and merge so that they can no longer be distinguished (Albert 2002) and that time can be implicit or explicit (Rutz 1992). Social and cultural perspectives examine cultural constraints on the meaning of time (Sorokin and Merton 1937), different meanings of times within the same social formation (Bloch 1998) and the objectified structuring of time via calendar at societal level and

schedules at institutional level (Rutz 1992). Political perspectives examine tensions and conflicts between these different meanings of time both between and within individuals and groups (Rutz 1992) recognising that time can comprise pressure points at the intersection of competing value systems (Bergman 1992; Southerton 2003). Studies include how time is appropriated, institutionalised and legitimated (Rutz 1992) and time as a disciplinary technology (Adam 1995; Rutherford 2001; Rutz 1992).

The question of structure and agency in relation to time is always present (see chapter 9 for my position). We need further empirical exploration of the role time plays in the academy. My findings suggest ways in which structural factors affect agency around time and also resistance through agentic efforts to recover time. My view is that people experience time in relation to agency (Blythman et al. 2003; Case and Gunstone 2003). My findings in this study and my earlier study show examples of control and loss through such constructions as 'making time' or 'time taken from'. If people experience time differentially and therefore see different types of time and uses of time in different ways and make meanings using different constructions of time, I suggest that we have to move beyond time as a fixed resource and recognise the different ways we construct it.

Re-conceptualising time within the academy

In this section I show how these ideas relate to my findings. As I argued earlier, I recognise contemporary time pressures in academic life and the relationship of SR to a perceived negative consumption of time, a key inhibitor to CPD. However, respondents' time perspectives go beyond this. Many writers have suggested typologies of time (Ben-Peretz 1990; Bergman 1992; Ylijoki and Mantyla 2003; Zerubavel 1981). These build on a strong anthropological tradition from Durkheim, Mead and others of classification. I do not wish to suggest yet another typology because in my view classification brings a rigidity to something that 'isn't there' (Adam 1995). Rather I follow Rutz (1992) who argues for a move to the study of temporal phenomena.

My findings illuminate the conceptual complexity of time. First, there is evidence of agency. Some respondents manage these pressures and attempt to 'recapture' time through specific strategies (see chapter 6). Second, my findings suggest that time has different meanings in different contexts. The balance of time devoted by universities to SR varied as did level of central involvement depending on TQA/RAE positioning. Third, my findings suggest co-existence of individual multiple and simultaneous time perspectives. The need to be good at everything requires an academic to operate in different time frames simultaneously. Most respondents were required to be 'the teacher' where, although there is an element of autonomy and control, time is experienced as responsive to others, 'the good campus citizen' whose time is allocated by others, 'the researcher' who needs 'timeless time', 'the person with external liaison responsibilities' who has to recognise and respond to objectified time frames of other organisations and 'the individual concerned with own well-being' who needs personal or private time. Additionally, for some respondents from industry backgrounds, there was an alternative time perspective which experienced some uses of time in the academy as Other.

Fourth, my findings illustrate the politics of time. Gendered relations within the academy played out through the consumption of women's time in SR. Additional time demands from increasing QA activities are likely to be a form of disempowerment. Fifth, my findings suggest time as a disciplinary technology operating through institutional objectified time, in particular volume of activity including cycles of meetings. They also highlight SR-related time pressures before, during and after the event (see chapter 6). Sixth, my findings illustrate how these uses of academic time are legitimated. Greater involvement in management and participation in meetings is presented as increasing staff voice. Dominant models of pedagogy require greater use of academic time as does the cult of transparency. New definitions of professionalism increasingly drawing academic staff into institutional and managerial roles. Seventh, my findings show time as experienced by individuals as a series of tension points related to opportunity costs of QA activities in relation to valued research time, teaching and relationships with

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students. This was complicated by value given to being a good campus citizen although this also detracted from research time and teaching time. An additional tension was between the need to be good at everything and individual ability to cope. This led to concerns about managing oneself in a difficult, changing world, the need to be self-disciplining yet recognising that this may require unachievable levels of individual or institutional energy.

In short I suggest that some time phenomena are relatively easy for academics to accept. These include the political nature of time, the role of institutional time and time as a disciplinary technology but these are all predicated on continuing notions of time as a fixed resource in which we, academic staff, are the innocent victims. I do not wish to deny this but suggest that we need to think beyond this to more phenomenological approaches. Which time do we *choose* to prioritise, what power relations operate in *our* use of our own time and other people's time (including students), in what ways are we unreflexively colluding with our own role as victims?

I consider all of this to be a fruitful area for further empirical work and theoretical development. How people feel about time, and the degree of agency they perceive themselves as having in any situation, affect how they perceive activities occupying that time. How academic staff conceptualise time translates ontologically into social relations and social practice. However, it also has greater theoretical implications suggesting a need to recognise a closer conceptual relationship between agency and time. I suggest that time operates as a technology of power but in a more complex, multi-faceted way than is often recognised.

I have shown how the structuring of academic time creates pressures through policy and structural operation increasing workload. Yet micropolitical space is created through strategies to take back time. Nevertheless, this is limited by the extent to which academics have been 'captured' by the discourse of structural time frames, more so than in other aspects such as pedagogy and time. The pressure created by time structures dialectically creates the need to

be more reflexive about time but my findings suggest that currently such reflexivity is limited.

The influence of current policy on theories of pedagogy

Power and time both relate to how we can conceptualise pedagogy in higher education. Currently there is a dominant model of pedagogy which is discursively powerful. As outlined in chapter 5, this model also contributes to increasing time pressures. In this section I explore current models and some critiques. I then suggest an alternative approach. I focus on pedagogy rather than curriculum while acknowledging that there is no clear cut line, and that there is extensive critical debate on curriculum (Barnett et al 2001; Bernstein 1971; Moore and Young 2001). Pedagogy in HE in the UK until recently can be read as a 'banking model' (Freire 1996) based on transmission of propositional knowledge with the PhD as entry qualification for university teaching. I have discussed in chapter 3 reasons why, for policy makers, this became inadequate. There were two obvious possible pedagogic routes. The first, which dominates further education, is that of competence but this is poor preparation for the production of what Reich (1992) calls 'symbolic-analytic services' (p.174) and so the HE route became based loosely on Dewey principles of liberal education. There is a narrative yet to be uncovered of the exact micropolitical processes by which this happened. The result has been a dominant model, widely held by respondents and outlined in chapter 5. I indicated the academic origins of this model in the phenomenographic school of thought, focusing on students' approaches to learning (Biggs 1999; Entwistle 1987; Marton and Saljo 1976), and that of the reflective practitioner (Schon 1987). This model was politically supported by the growth of QA and the staff development function in universities and by national policy concern for evidence-based solutions. Education's division into different disciplines with diverse theoretical bases has meant that there is little intertextuality with other models (Malcolm and Zukas 2001).

This model can be critiqued for failure to recognise the role of structural inequalities and consequent student responses to learning including alienation

and lack of required cultural capital (Bourdieu 1997; Mann 2001; Margolis et al. 2001). It also fails to recognise the situated and difficult nature of the pedagogic experience. Lusted (1986 p.3) (quoted in Lather 1992) defines pedagogy as 'the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies – the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they produce together'. This model lacks any fundamental analysis of power (Webb 1996). It is a personal development model in the tradition of the reflective practitioner working through continuous improvement and is open to Morley and Rassool's (1999) criticism since it assumes a common identity and purpose and stops being 'organic and self defined' (p.84).

More detailed examination of the dominant model reveals assumptions of rationalist, consistent human behaviour (Malcolm and Zukas 2001) which fail to recognise 'the paradoxical power of address' and 'the space between.' (Ellsworth 1997). It also fails to recognise the multifactorial nature of pedagogic relationships including the tacit, implicit, invisible thus presenting analytical difficulties (Haggis 2002). This model is predicated on fashionable but false transparency. Additionally, it produces an 'in-student model' which fails to recognise the relational nature of learning including power relations (Webb 1996), and in doing so responsibilises the teacher. It assumes a 'what works' philosophy. Notably the annual conference of this school of thought is called 'Improving Student Learning' with no problematisation of such a title. More sophisticated versions do address context but in terms of student reaction which is usually problematised and pathologised (Case and Gunstone 2003; Ramsden 2001). It assumes one way of thinking/being that is good for all students in all situations and thus predefines 'understanding', pathologising students against a norm (Haggis 2003). The focus is on the learner, not the learning situation except in a technicist sense. It does not make people critical, ready for a conflicted world (Walker 2001). It fails to recognise the limitations of reflective practice through external definition of reflective boundaries or that thought is limited through dominant discourse. This all suggests that there is a need to move to new ways of looking at pedagogy in higher education. The above critique reveals the limitations of models that focus exclusively on students.

There are other approaches. First, there is analysis of the curriculum (Barnett et al. 2001; Bernstein 1971; Hyland and Johnson 1998; Moore and Young 2001) but I wish to move to a readerly rather than writerly approach. Curriculum reveals much about power relations in the construction of educational knowledge but less about the influence it has on individuals and groups and what happens in 'the space between'. Second, there is study of the role of pedagogy within the aims and objectives of higher education (e.g. Barnett 1997a) but this literature takes a wide lens and offers little detailed empirical study of current practices. Third, social factors and their inhibiting role in higher education learning are also quite widely covered in studies of the financial position of students (Callendar and Kemp 2000; Watts 2003) and of experiences of 'non-traditional' students within the academy (Macrae and Maguire 2002; Archer et al. 2003). However, again the focus tends to be on the student and there is little detailed analysis of social practices within the actual pedagogic relationship. One exception is Walker (2001) who describes a detailed attempt to implement a more critical approach through action research raising interesting issues of classroom power relationships and the meaning of being a teacher.

Earlier attempts to offer a different pedagogic model came, via adult education, in the form of critical and feminist pedagogy. Such models have mainly been developed for sectors of education other than HE. Critical and feminist pedagogy have obvious differences from each other, particularly in the way they read social structures, but also have useful commonalities. These include new ways for all participants, teachers and students to inter-relate in ways that care about everyone's learning and respect difference. Both build on personal experience and shared goals (Shewsbury 1987). However, the main focus of this work lay outside mainstream higher education and had difficulty in reconciling notions of equality with power relations in the classroom, exemplified by ethical and political issues involved in 'empowering' others (Lather 1992). 'Empowerment' can also become another 'regime of truth' (Mather 1999) and slide into 'autonomy' with the dangers indicated in the theoretical debate on lifelong learning. These include the

responsibilisation of the individual through the dominant discourse of learner autonomy which, as outlined in chapter 3, can become the privatisation of responsibility for learning (Coffield 1999), mechanised through IT.

Arguably, if we are to construct a socially meaningful and progressive pedagogy for higher education, we need to focus on academics and their interaction with students. While there has been considerable study of academics and their working lives from a variety of perspectives, there is a lack of intertextuality between theorising on academic intensification and theorising on good models of pedagogy. As a result, the intensification literature focuses on the teacher and may stereotype students as consumers; the pedagogic literature concentrates on the needs of the student and fails to recognise teacher needs and desires. Yet my study shows that the implications of the dominant pedagogic model include more work and responsibility for academic staff. Intensification makes empowerment models fail and intensification theory is in danger of using in-student models.

Towards an alternative approach to pedagogy

Where does this leave us? Gore (1992) argues that we need to continue on routes based on empowerment models but with increased reflexivity. My view is that to achieve this reflexivity we need to build a picture of current practice and its implications through a social practices model. These ideas are currently being developed through detailed empirical and theoretical work on academic literacies (Clark and Ivanic 1997; Harris and Thorp 1999; Ivanic 1998; Lea 1998; Lea and Stierer 2000; Lea and Street 1998; Lillis 2001; Lillis and Turner 2001; Scott 2002). Such studies explore the lived experiences, attitudes, values and perceptions of academics as well as students, recognising the contextual and time-specific nature of social practices. Analysis using this approach would recognise that all participants in the pedagogic relationship are socially constructed thus recognising not only class, gender and ethnicity but also previous educational experience and notions of cultural capital.

This recognises difference and rejects ideas of the universal student. Second, it would recognise the socially constructed nature of the pedagogic situation. This includes both the wider social context and the immediate institutional context (Clark and Ivanic 1997). Recognition of learning as situated would mean addressing questions of learning what, by whom, for what purpose. Third, it would cover all aspects of practice including discourse, values, attitudes, ways of working, ways of relating to people and objects, rules and regulations, tacit and explicit knowledge, forms of output and their conventions, and underpinning power relations. It would examine their origins in the dominant social and political culture. Fourth, it would problematise what counts as knowledge and be concerned with the tacit, implicit and invisible as well as observable behaviour, and relate this to assessment as well as pedagogic practices. This would include variations in conventions of appropriateness and acceptability in different disciplinary communities. Fifth, it would focus on gaps and communicative problems thus recognising that there are competing and contradictory discourses with differential power of being recognised. It would examine disjunctions between student and staff belief systems (Lillis and Turner 2001; Higgins et al 2002). It would recognise pedagogy as induction into communities of practice (Wenger 1998) and the tensions this may create with other subjectivities (Lillis 2001). Sixth, it would focus on the relational nature of the pedagogic relationship including individuals' links to past meanings and perceptions (Scott 2002).

This analysis requires a framework which recognises the role of structural and contextual pressures and responses to these pressures but also uses conceptual tools which permit exploration of whether 'the space between' is always a problem. For the dominant model, failure to close the gap is always a difficulty but Ellsworth (1997) argues that, while unmediated dialogue is impossible thus illustrating the futility of transparency, understanding of the nature of the mediation allows us creative space. This opens up dialectical understanding. My attempt to illuminate respondents' models of pedagogy and responses to constraints has been an initial exploration.

I have argued that structural constraints of dominant policy operate as a form of power but within it we have seen some micropolitical action in areas where respondents felt some level of control. There is a dominant pedagogy emanating from national policy yet there is resistance to it coming from educational and disciplinary values. Respondents are partly 'captured' by the discourse of transparency yet at other times can see its limitations. The workload of pedagogy seems to have increased significantly and it is possible that notions of the consumerist student have emerged as a reaction to this pressure, a way of fighting back the increasing workload demands. However, any response of blaming the students on the part of respondents is limited.

Outcomes of the study

This study has explored empirically and theoretically the relationship between SR and transformational change in academic staff through various sites of CPD. It has increased our understanding of how phenomena such as SR influence and shape the professional world of academic staff. The study has contributed to several areas of knowledge. Understanding of HE has been enhanced by increased knowledge through detailed empirical study of how external quality systems affect working lives of academics, both directly and through institutional response. Additionally, the study offers increased insights into contradictions between quality discourse of SR and effects it has in practice. It also identifies how time operates as a managerialist technology in UK universities.

Professional knowledge has been enhanced through increased understanding of how SR relates to different pedagogic models, identification of the relationship between the dominant pedagogic model and external QA, and by increased understanding of how academics conceptualise time and the implications of this for CPD. Additionally, this study has developed current understanding of how change happens in HE through the application of conceptualisation from the literature on school improvement.

The study has also contributed to knowledge in the area of policy. It contributes to the debate on appropriate models of pedagogy for HE, through analysis of current models in an innovatory way, focusing on their relationship to current quality assurance policy imperatives. It also offers increased understanding of policy issues through critical analysis of proposed alternatives to external QA models.

Finally, the study contributes to increased theoretical understanding, through conceptions of empowerment, of the relationship of audit/management to transformatory change in various sites of CPD through empowerment/disempowerment. It also identifies connections between concepts of empowerment and cultural capital and increases understanding of the role of time in HE as a social practice. It identifies the need for more sophisticated approaches to the role of time in the lives of social actors in higher education. I now turn to the implications of this for professional practice.

Theory and practice

I regard the role of theory as the exploration and development of concepts and the critical evaluation of ideas. However, as a practitioner, I have sympathy for the position of Taylor et al. (2002) who call for a move beyond the linguistic turn to a more 'practical' turn. The importance for me of theorising is in its illumination of how power permeates and is enacted in the professional lives and practices of academic staff. Thus, in conclusion, I wish to turn to the implications of this study for professional practice.

Professional implications

Morley (2001a) points out that in UK HE today 'there is a powerful rhetoric of inevitability, or a TINA effect ('there is no alternative')' (p.476), yet many working in this field try to suggest other ways forward. As a researching professional, I now critically explore possible alternatives. Strong, clear policy recommendations are difficult since the underpinning techno-rational

paradigm is fundamentally flawed. Current policy claims 'a lighter touch' and, were this to indicate a move from highly differentiated league tables to threshold accreditation, then some negative aspects might be ameliorated. The 'lighter touch', however, seems currently to exist only at the level of discourse.

Alternatives also have weaknesses. First, there is a return to traditional professionalism. This is attractive for academics since it recognises autonomy, trust and authority but the equilibrium of the society-professionals settlement has been broken partly through 1960s assertion of power by those who were the objects of professional attention as well as 1980s neo-liberal attacks. I question whether the fundamental trust relationship at the centre of this model could ever be reconstructed. Additionally we must consider who benefited from a system built on trust of professionals. There are too many critiques of 'the golden age' to argue for its return even were it possible (Du Gay 1996; Giri 2000; Smith and Sachs 1995).

Second, it is utopian to suggest a democratic idyll that fails to recognise issues of power and conflict and long-term economic policy focus on limiting public expenditure. Newman (2000) argues that:

> a modern public service, then, is likely to be one in which a series of conflicts must be managed, contradictory imperatives balanced, and new and old agendas reconciled (p.60).

She questions, however, whether or not current forms of managerialism could cope with these roles. O'Neill (2002) argues for 'intelligent accountability' which allows for less standardisation and detail but is based on 'substantive and knowledgeable independency of judgement of an institution's or professional's work' (lecture 3). However such a solution gives no recognition to power relationships and the contested nature of 'independency of judgement'. It seems predicated on a false assumption of communities of professionals with shared values (Morley 2001a) uncontaminated by 'exclusionary and discriminatory practices' (Morley 2000c p.66). Knight and Trowler (2001) develop Harvey and Knight's (1996) categorisation of

meanings of quality into a two-fold typology of Quality Type I and Quality Type II. They dismiss the former, essentially rationalist managerialism, as being inappropriate for the current age and take a more sympathetic approach to Type II. Type II has some attractive features since it recognises the world as complex and socially constructed and pays attention to creativity and personal fulfilment (p.111). However it still assumes the need for 'high trust cultures' and 'binding, well rehearsed goals' (p.111). I regard the former as irretrievable and the latter as a failure to recognise the impossibility of a higher education community with shared goals. Barnett (2000) offers us the metaconcept of 'supercomplexity' as a way of understanding the world as it is and argues that what graduates need is:

> capacity to embrace multiple and conflicting frameworks and to offer their own positive interventions in that milieu (2000 p.167).

This is undoubtedly challenging for many individuals. Supercomplexity is about contestability, uncertainty and unpredictability but my findings show that many individuals and institutions respond by trying to predict and get stability and planning into the picture. Yet it could be argued that this is futile since rules may exist but do not protect against the unpredictability of the moment (Barnett 2000 p.133). Barnett (2000) argues that the answer lies in knowledge of the world the university is operating in, the encouragement of interaction within the university and increased channels of communication where there is mutual understanding. For my respondents SR increased, to some extent, knowledge of how the system operates both nationally and at institutional level. It gave them insights into the 'backstage' and increased professional dialogue. To what extent is this transformatory? Barnett argues that these components present the energy for the future but, while recognising this potential, I return to my point about how SR simultaneously de-energised through loss of autonomy, encouragement to performativity and loss of time for the positive activities outlined by Barnett. There is more transformatory potential in the idea of supercomplexity if it is interpreted for the individual academic as the capacity to identify and use micropolitical space as it opens

up. This is a version of 'the personal is political'. Morley (1998) quotes Swindells (1995):

> The energy behind that maxim lay in the discovery that issues and experiences which felt uniquely personal...were indeed very common experiences, around which there were ideological investments in maintaining certain fictions and mythologies (p.21).

When people connect their lived experiences to the macro systems of power, this is empowering, offering alternative explanations not predicated on personal deficit. I would argue, however, the dangers of a corollary position which is that those who do *not* connect their lived experiences to the macro systems of power are somehow failing to recognise what is 'really' going on. If one labels the behaviour of others as capillary and technologies of the self there is a danger of ending up with false consciousness which is, first, not letting them name the world; second, it is a denial of their individual construction of identity and, third, it assumes that there is an objective 'true' interest that they are failing to recognise. Another approach is that of Giroux (1981) and Walker (2001) who argue for developing critical awareness in teachers and students, but we have to recognise such awareness may be used in unpredictable ways, some of which might feel to academic staff like consumer demands. Johnson (2002) argues, based on Foucault, that since discourse actively constructs what it represents:

> My preference is for a QAA that explicitly recognises the limitations of its own project – one that is neither absolute not neutral (p.223).

This is an attractive position but there is nothing in the current world of higher education policy that suggests any possibility of such public critical self-awareness being accepted by those developing policy on a modernist, rationalist model. Yet, in policy terms, this may be the closest we get, recognising that we cannot return to pre-accountability days although accountability is a 'wicked issue' where the best route is 'progressively to disengage from unsatisfactory practice' (Watson 2000 p.19). We need continuing policy dialogue, to make explicit what is going wrong, and discussion of alternatives. As higher education academics, we need to rely

on the self awareness of those on the ground that the personal is political. We saw earlier that transformation is an orientation which holds that:

> the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience, is central to making meaning and hence learning (Mezirow 1994 p.222).

This happens through reflection and dialogue as a response to a problem. For my respondents, SR created a situation where they were forced to make meaning. Power works best when disguised and we can challenge this disguise by scrutinising the dominant discourse, policies and their technologies, understanding their origins and revealing weaknesses (Shore and Wright 2000). So in terms of professional development theory and practice I argue for a position that creates and encourages situations which enable professionals to see, analyse and act on their readings of the world in which they operate. Additional research on perspectives of different social actors would enhance such readings. This could include the impact of changing pedagogies on *academic staff* as well as students and *students'* perception of the impact of QA on academic practices.

To sum up, I have made a contribution to the growing empirical analysis of how the audit culture operates in practice. In particular I have shown the way in which an audit tool like SR can impact on the CPD of academics, including through the operation of power relations. The contribution to professional practice is through the beginnings of an analytical framework for reading the power relations within an institution which can be shared by academics. This may help them operate more effectively in their own terms and thus offers empowerment.

Meanwhile I aim, in my own professional role, to create situations which enable and encourage dialogue. I also offer my interpretation of the world in this study showing the essential contradiction of a situation which seems to offer reflection, equity (through transparency), the importance of teaching and learning yet appears to damage what it offers.

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Appendix 1

A note on terminology

First, I have used both terms 'subject review' and, 'teaching quality assessment', to denote the phenomenon being studied. This is because, in Scotland, the term was TQA for the period of my study and, in England, some of my respondents, particularly in pre-1992 universities or who had been through earlier versions, continued to call it TQA. Second, one of my research sites was an HEI, higher education institution, rather than a university. However for clarity of style I mainly use the term 'university'.

Appendix 2

The sample

1 . There were 23 participants.

2 . The institutions from which my respondents came comprised:

2 1960s plate glass universities

1 constituent college of the University of London

1 College of Higher Education

1 ancient Scottish university

6 post-1992 universities, one of which was Scottish

There were two respondents from each institution with the exception of one post-1992 university where there were three. In some universities both respondents were from the same department; in others they came from different departments.

The geographical location was as follows:

London – 2

Southern England – 5

Midlands – 2

Scotland - 2

2 . The subject areas covered comprised:

Art and Design

Business Studies

Economics

Education

Government and Politics

Nursing Studies

Occupational Health

Publishing

Radiography

Social Policy

Surveying

Textiles

4 . There were 15 men and 8 women

5 . They comprised the following approximate age groups:

30s - 4 respondents

40s - 6 respondents

50s - 8 respondents

60s - 5 respondents

6 . There was one professor and one reader. The others were all senior lecturers or principal lecturers, some carrying head of department status.

Appendix 3

Interview Schedule

Part One

Demographic information + identity

1 . What is your present role in the college/university?

2 . How long have you been here /in what roles?

3 . How long have you been teaching? Where and for how long?

4 . Did you have any previous jobs before you came into teaching in HE?

5 . Do you have a teaching qualification and/or have you had any staff development to support you in teaching?

6 . What is the balance in your working life between teaching, research and administration?

7 . How do you feel about this balance?

Role in subject review

1 . Describe the roles you had in subject review:

2 . Check for details on

- Preparing documentation

- Participating in staff development sessions
- Being on an aspect group
- Leading an aspect group
- Being observed teaching
- Preparing the work sample

Extent to which they also have responsibility for getting other people to deliver.

Part Two

1 . *Can you describe the impact of subject review on your own professional life?*

Check for coverage of:

- Preparation
- The actual week
- The result

Check for coverage of:

- Knowledge (both process and pedagogic)
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Practice
- Work patterns

2 . *Can you tell me what things, if any, you do differently now as a result of subject review?*

Check for coverage of :

- Teaching and learning methods
- Assessment methods
- Administrative tasks
- Relating/communicating to students
- Liaison within teams
- Wider liaison e.g. other depts
- Relationships with colleagues
- Relationship with managers

3 . In what ways are these changes positive or negative?

Check for coverage of

- Self
- Students including student learning
- The institution
- Relationships at work

4 . In what ways are these changes your choice or externally imposed?

5 . *Which of these changes do you think you'll continue?*

- What factors affect whether or not you continue?

6 . *Are there any practices or activities that you started doing differently but did not continue with?*

- Why did you stop ?
- Check for focused response on reason and get as much detail as possible.

- What would have made you continue? Pursue time in detail.
- Was it 'a good thing ' that you stopped?

7 . What practices or activities would you have liked to start doing differently but were not possible?

- Why were these not possible?

Inhibitors

8 . What practices or activities do you now have as a result of subject review that you don't regard as useful or valuable?

9 . What about course teams you are in?

- Have there been any changes there?
- What were they?
- Why did they happen?

9 . What practices or activities would the course team have liked to change but couldn't?

- Why not?

10 . In general what do you think the impact of subject review has been on your working life ?

11 . How has subject review in general affected your thinking about your professional practice, skills and knowledge?

12 . Is there anything else you would like to add about the impact of subject review?

(Inhibitors - At the appropriate point:)

a . Time – when you say lack of time- time to do what?

- To what extent is this your own choice?
- To what extent do you feel you control your own time?

b . Are there ways in which structural or organisational factors get in the way?

- What are they?
- How do they inhibit?

c . What about access to resources?

d . Are there factors to do with the culture and values of the organisation or groups within it?

- What are they?
- How do they inhibit?

Appendix 4
Why include Scotland?

I chose to include two Scottish universities for several reasons. First, I am Scottish, have a personal interest in the way the Scottish education system differs from other parts of the UK and had personal contacts in Scottish universities. Second, the operation of SR, called TQA during the period of my study, differed in some ways, particularly the lack of numerical grades. Additionally, there was a much closer relationship between assessors and university departments, the latter having considerable say in the choice of the former. Cizas (1997), in a Lithuanian study, points out that small countries are likely to have far fewer institutions and individuals involved so that there is less competitiveness and those involved are likely to know each other professionally. This resonates with my understanding of Scotland. Third, there are systemic differences such as the lack of tuition fees at Scottish universities. Fourth, there is little recognition of Scotland in most literature on the impact of quality assurance on academic identity. Delamont (2001) identifies this as a general problem in British sociology of education. I identify specific Scottish points as they arise in my data but only to illuminate possible differences. I only have four respondents from Scotland and this study makes no claim to be comparative.

Appendix 5

Analysis of *Higher Quality* 1997-2001

HQ 1(1997a)
- Low key and tentative
- Before the Dearing report

HQ 2 (1997b)
- Includes the response of QAA to the Dearing Report
- Explicit identification of four key principles of operation as accountability, ownership by the sector, reducing the burden of scrutiny and enhancement
- Section on enhancement has no mention of SR.
- Enhancement to be delivered through practitioner networks, benchmarking and programme specifications
- Enhanced role for external examiners, (a position that turned out not to be sustainable (Blythman 2000b)
- Heavy focus on assurance rather than enhancement in its detail but:
- *'Our over-riding purpose must be to promote continuous improvement in quality of teaching, of student learning experience and of assessments of student progress and achievement. In pursuing this goal we will generate much valuable information and will be able to reassure the government, employers, students and the public in general that the money they invest in higher education is well spent....We must not allow a QA system to develop that exists for its own sake, a bureaucracy that is satisfied by filling in forms and ticking boxes' (annexe C)*

HQ 3 (1998a)
- Public assurance of quality is the main stated aim but quality will also be enhanced by a number of

activities including SR

- SR is, however, not a major part of the enhancement strategy. Enhancement will come from *'promulgation of good practice '* from the reviews rather than the process itself
- Yet the same section insists that the purpose of external QA processes is 'to assist institutions in enhancing the quality'
- Indicates that the funding councils 'wish to take opportunities to enhance quality' but again not specifically tied to SR. Codes of practice, programme specifications and benchmarks are seen as more major enhancement tools through dissemination of best practice
- Planned extended role of the external examiner with some conflation of assurance with enhancement, through the external examiner acting as both commentator, and verifier/ *'calibrator'*

HQ 4 (1998b)

- QAA's aims are outlined as safeguarding and enhancing standards of awards and the focus is on the qualifications framework, programme specification, subject benchmarks and codes of practice
- In Annex 3 subject benchmarks are presented as assuring standards in the face of public concern of erosion through expansion of the sector, thus they are presented as simultaneously measuring and maintaining

HQ 5 (1999a)

- Does not address enhancement

HQ 6 (1999b)

- No reference to enhancement for SR although

indicates an enhancement role for benchmarking, programme specifications and progress files

HQ 7 (2000a)

- The enhancement role is given to the now combined Code of Practice

HQ 8 (2000b)

- Overview reports *'make a contribution to the enhancement of the quality of subject provision within the HE sector'*

HQ 9 (2001a)

- *There is an exposition of the monitoring role which is 'first and foremost'*
- SR's role in enhancement is through offering *' opinions and information to institutions on how they might consider improving their approaches to bring them up to the best observed current practice'* (QAA 2001b p.2).
- Positive references to *'collegiality', 'autonomy', 'mature democracy'* We are told that the *'threat of external control'* recedes but:

- There are still exhortations to remember *'public responsibilities and duties'*. QAA is still seen as needed to *'reinforce'* institutions internal capacity
- *'So what is the role of external quality assurance when responsibility for quality and standards cannot but lie with those providing the programmes and awards? It is, first and foremost, to check that institutions are running their academic affairs in a way that can command public confidence. This is the accountability role, whose integrity cannot be jeopardised. External quality assurance also ensures that the information institutions provide for*

potential students and others about academic quality and standards is full, useful, reliable and up to date. This is the information verification role. And, further, it offers opinions and information to institutions about how they might consider improving their approaches to bring them up to the best of observed current practice. This is the enhancement role.' (QAA 2001)

- reports a sector wish for QAA to have more of an enhancement role
- Outlines the quality infrastructure focusing on the qualification framework, code of practice, subject benchmarks and programme specifications.

HQ 10 (2001b)

- Titled *'continuous Improvement'*
- Much discourse of institutional autonomy, the aim being *' a self regulating academically autonomous community'*
- States that QAA do not want a *'state-regulated system'*
- But in the next sentence we are told that autonomy must not be *'an excuse for sloppy or negligent practice'* so there is still a need for institutional audit and *'discipline level activities',* the latter having been insisted on by HEFCE.
- Claims that the new system is based on *'external audit of each institution's internal processes'* but gives no indication of why this needs *'engagement'* at disciplinary level

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Appendix 6

The Consumerist Student Debate

The phenomenon of the 'consumerist student' requires some clarification. Two not wholly consistent models predominate. The Dearing Report (NCIHE 1997) quotes universities' complaints about students as 'passive recipients' (para 5.2), Taylor (1999) talks of 'culture of dependency' (p.51) but others complain of students being over-demanding (Delucchi 2000; Rolfe 2002). There is a fine line between the active participant and the over-demanding consumer and Dearing (NCIHE 1997) points out that active participation can lead to conflicts of interest with staff. A brief examination of the literature of the 60s student revolt shows that, while there were significant issues of industrial influence on universities (Thompson 1970) and political concerns (Cohn-Bendit 1969; Stedman-Jones 1969), much of the action focused on staff-student relationships and expectations. There were challenges to the curriculum not only as 'bourgeois ideology' (Blackburn 1969 p.63) but also as not giving students enough opportunity to devise their own curriculum to suit their individual needs (Seale and McConville1968).

There was also considerable resistance to contemporary methods of assessment (Seale and McConville1968). The literature recognised 'an inevitable conflict of interest' between staff and students (Stedman-Jones 1969 p.48). Academic staff were seen, by some, as 'reactionaries ' (p.50) who saw students as an ephemeral group who were, by definition, ignorant and therefore should have no power. There was a recurring theme of whether or not the academic staff were the enemy. Senior academics were seen as holding power and essentially conservative within the institution even if progressive externally (Adelstein 1969).

Parallel to consumerist student theories is argument that 'standards of students are falling'. Delanty (2001), in the context of pressures on academic life, claims that 'falling academic standards among students has the effect of a fundamental failure in academic communication' (p.111). 'Falling academic standards' are not deconstructed nor problematised in any way. There is no

exploration of whether 'academic standards' refers to intelligence, previous knowledge, previous academic attainment, powers of analysis, motivation, commitment or staying power. Equally we are not told from what historical point the 'fall' commenced. The implication is that at some point in the past students sought university education for reasons of personal growth and now regard it only as a commodity. Dearing (NCIHE 5.5) argues, however, that students are looking for a combination of growth factors and economic advantage. (NCIHE 1997 para. 5.19). Arguably, this has been so for at least the last fifty years. Degrees have long been positional goods; the role of Greats at Oxford was at least partly to gain graduates entry to the senior civil service and, in a less elevated sphere, working-class Glasgow students were well able to make the connection between going to university and their ambition of becoming a teacher (McPherson 1991).

Another consumerism argument is that students regard higher education as a market and quite consciously 'shop' for the product they want. Indeed QAA claim one of the main aims of SR is to give students information to enable this (*Higher Quality 2*). The Segal Quince Wicksteed report (HEFCE 1999) on student choice suggests that, as individuals and families bear more of the cost of higher education, they will behave more like customers requiring clear consumer information to allow informed choice. Meadmore (1998) argues, however, that this is more of an illusion than a reality given the structural limitations to student choice.

It is not always clear in the commodification argument what the commodity is; educational experience and qualifications are at times conflated. Students are assumed to want to achieve the qualification effortlessly, implying a focus on the qualification, but a glance at the best example of commodified education in the UK, private schools, would suggest that what is being bought is a more sophisticated blend of experience leading to cultural capital, such as 'learning to lead', future networking possibilities and brand. A key reason why private education is a commodity is that it is privately purchased and not a right. The introduction of university tuition fees in 1998 brings a similar factor. Becher and Trowler (2001) argue that:

British students have moved from being 'consumers in waiting' to fully fledged consumers since the introduction of student fees in 1998 (p.7).

However, students only pay a proportion of the cost, many students pay nothing and in Scotland there are no fees yet there is no claim of radically different student behaviour. It is difficult to see this picture as Shore and Selwyn's 'unregulated market' (see above). In empirical studies of students' response to assessment feedback a less consumerist student emerges. Higgins et al. (2001) found that, while staff perceptions were that students had a purely instrumental attitude, students' perceptions were of emotional involvement in their work. Whereas staff perception was of lack of attention paid to feedback comments, student perception was of feedback as obscure and lacking dialogue. Chanock (2000) supports this with evidence that students' response to teacher comment on their work is one of lack of comprehension rather than lack of interest. Higgins et al. (2002) argue that what we now have is 'the conscientious consumer' (p.53) who exhibits some characteristics of consumerism in that they recognise they are paying, they see it as more of a service and feel that they have entitlements. However the 'conscientious consumer', in their view also has intrinsic motivation alongside consumer awareness.

Some argue that higher education should be democratic and inclusive (Brussels Student Declaration 2001). This is defined as equity of access and, discursively, relates to current government policy on widening participation (HEFCE 2001; DfES 2003). Equity as access contrasts with the 1960s students' rights model, outlined earlier. The latter model recognises and challenges the traditional power relationship between academic staff and students and directly argues for student voices (Walker 2001). Thus we have claims for student voices and student rights that contain elements of both a consumerist, or at least stakeholder model, and an earlier democratic community model. It is not always clear what the gains and losses are for students in this capturing of student voices, the extent to which authentic voices are allowed to be heard and to what extent it translates into any action of benefit to students.

Appendix 7

List of meetings and roles taken on by participants in addition to teaching and research.

Committee Meetings	Roles
University IT forum	Faculty IT co-ordinator
School learning resources group	Admissions tutor
Departmental IT committee	Assessment co-ordinator
Departmental and university learning and teaching committees	Learning and teaching co-ordinator
Assessment and regulations committee	Staff development co-ordinator
Tutorials network	Managing externally funded projects
University learning resources committee	Mentoring new staff
Faculty board	Director of undergraduate programmes
University audit committee	Chairing validations
Subject quality groups	Managing systems for exchange students
University, faculty and school research committees	International liaison
Course committees	School liaison
School staff/student consultative committees	Liaison with work placement providers on professional courses
Quality management and enhancement group	Work placement visits
Resources group	Head of specialist units within depts
Student support group	Putting materials on line
Curriculum development group	Interviewing potential students

Faculty and school management committees	Course director
University task groups for key skills	Consultancy
University task group for CPD	
School academic board	
University committee for foundation degrees	
Pedagogic research group	
Programme boards	
Faculty and school quality management committees	
Vice Chancellors commission	
External examiners university committee	
Learning management committee	
Promotions committee	
Faculty teaching quality and review	
Departmental graduate committee (validation)	
Curriculum committee	
Course teams, school meetings, academic group meetings	
E-learning committee	
Undergraduate modular programme committee	
Teaching quality assurance committee	

Appendix 8

Abbreviations used

CPD   Continuing professional development

DfEE   Department for Education and Employment

HEFCE   Higher Education Funding Council for England

HEI   Higher Education Institution

IFS   Institution Focused Study

ILT   Institute for Learning and Teaching

OFSTED   Office for Standards in Education

QA   Quality Assurance

QAA   Quality Assurance Agency

RAE   Research Assessment Exercise

SEDA   Staff and Educational Development Association

SR   Subject Review

SSR   Staff Student Ratio

TQA   Teaching Quality Assessment