REACHING THE TOP OF THE IVORY TOWER: EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEYS OF WOMEN IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory theory building research examines women's leadership journeys within Higher Education in the UK. It takes a critical management perspective and draws on Bourdieu's Social Action theory to provide a view through a new lens to answer the following question. Why, despite advances in equality legislation and policy, are there still so few women in powerful leadership positions in the UK HE sector? A positive deviance sampling approach was used to identify women who have reached very senior positions in HE in pre-1992 universities in the UK. Analysis of career narratives was conducted focusing on women's world views and drawing on their sensemaking to provide new insights into how gender and power shape the modern, complex world of work. Findings demonstrate that structural power inequalities persist resulting in discrimination and sexism throughout women's career journeys. Bourdieu's concepts of the field, capital, habitus and symbolic violence are used to shine a light on the key role of cultural hegemony and symbolic violence. The concept of the internalisation of structural constraints, resulting in psychological constraints to agency and action is introduced.

Research Question: What do the career narratives of women in senior leadership positions in elite UK universities illuminate about the reasons for the persistent dearth of women in positions of power?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1 Introduction

This thesis reports on my research into the reasons why there is a dearth of women in senior positions in Higher Education in the UK (CIPD). My interest is in the lack of women's presence in positions of power in organisations and hence the focus on women in senior leadership roles. The thesis is organised as follows: Chapter 1 presents the evidence for a dearth of women in positions of power in organisations and paints the landscape of women's presence in the field of education. Chapter 2 outlines the history of universities in Europe and the UK and critically examines women's experiences and positions in UK HE. The relevant literature is also reviewed in this chapter. Chapter 3 introduces the philosophical underpinnings of this work and provides a discussion on the concept of gender. Chapter 4 presents the rationale for my chosen methodology and describes the research process. Chapter 5 covers my research findings together with an ongoing narrative and discussion of those findings. In Chapter 6 I draw conclusions from my findings whilst also identifying research limitations, making suggestions for future research and talk about implications for organisational change based on my theorising.

Research Question

In order to gain a better understanding of the continued poor levels of representation of women in senior positions in UK HE I structured my research around the following question. What do the career narratives of women in senior leadership positions in elite UK universities illuminate about the reasons for the persistent dearth of women in positions of power? Through the in-depth interview process I worked to exploring the following:

1.   Experiences of career transitions and decisions

2.   Experiences and perceptions of recruitment, selection, promotion

3.   Experiences and perceptions of taking on a leadership role

Contribution

This research contributes to the existing body of research empirically and theoretically. It provides an example of how Bourdieu's (2001, 2005) social theory can be used to understand gender and power in the workplace. Empirically, it provides evidence of the everyday sexism and discrimination experienced by senior women in elite UK HE. Evidence which shows that women police themselves and others provides support for Bourdieu's (2001) concept of 'symbolic violence'. Theoretically, it builds on Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence and provides a view of how macro processes, particularly structural power, play out at the micro level and presents the idea that in addition

to structural constraints to their agency, women have added psychological constraints.

1.1 Where are the Women?

Over the last forty years there have been consistent efforts to increase equality of opportunity for women in the workplace. This includes significant changes to legislation for a wide range of employment practices including recruitment and selection, maternity/paternity leave and flexible working conditions. In addition, feminist ideology and action have both raised awareness of prejudice and discrimination and resulted in changes to women's expectations of equity in the workplace. Discrimination refers to 'behaviors directed toward people on the basis of their group membership' (Kenrick et al., 2005). Discrimination can be positive or negative and is characterised by differential treatment due to an individual's group or category membership rather than their performance, productivity or qualifications. The Equality Act of 2010 outlines four different forms of discrimination. Direct discrimination is the closest to the above definition, with the term 'protected category' used to indicate certain protected groups. Current protected categories are: age; sex; race; disability; marriage and civil partnership; religion or belief; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation and; gender reassignment Indirect discrimination refers to rules, policies and practices which apply to everyone but result in discrimination against any person of a protected category. Associative discrimination is the result of discrimination against a person due to their association with someone of a protected category.

Finally, perceptive discrimination refers to discrimination against a person who is thought to have a protected characteristic, even if they don't. Despite considerable changes, women are still under-represented at senior levels in organisations. For example, in the US women represent 19.2% of board members in US stock index companies and in the UK the percentage is slightly higher with women holding only 22.8% of seats on the board in European stock index companies (Catalyst, 2015). Hence, vertical segregation seems to still be present.

In addition, there is evidence that horizontal occupational segregation also acts to exclude women from certain professions, with many technical and science related professions dominated by men and occupations such as teaching, caring and cleaning still dominated by women (Smith, 2008, Buchmann et al., 2010).

1.2 Education a Female Profession?

In relation to women in positions of power and leadership in Higher Education, despite years of continued political pressure aimed at breaking the glass-ceiling, evidence suggests that strategic leadership positions in HE are still dominated by men. This lack of presence of women at very senior levels in HE is well documented (Osborn et al., 2000, Rees, 2002, Eveline, 2005, Sciences, 2007, EU, 2012). According to the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), in 2014 there are more female than male students in UK HE (males 45%, females 55%). This female majority continues when all staff members are considered (this includes academic and professional/administrative staff – males 46%, females 54%). This trend begins to reverse as you move up the hierarchy, all academics comprise males 55%, females 46%, professors, comprise males 78%, females 22%. Finally, the lowest representation of females can be found amongst Vice Chancellors where recent figures are difficult to find from HESA but according to a report from KPMG in 2013 only 17% were female (Jarboe, 2013). HESA figures do identify Vice-Chancellors (and Rectors) with the occupational code 'A0' but there are no available statistics for this category by gender. Thus, the statistics show a reverse trend for females across the hierarchy with women comprising the largest proportion at the lowest levels of HE and the smallest proportion at the highest levels. This is clear evidence of a leaky pipeline in HE. According to the literature, there is a number of factors which seem to play a part in the variation in women's representation at the top.

Some countries appear to be able to create conditions where women can and do reach senior positions in HE. For example, women do well in relation to men in Turkish universities with 32% representation for women at very senior levels i.e. Dean and above, exceeding figures for countries like UK, New Zealand and Australia (Neale, 2010). A further key factor is academic discipline. Lack of representation is not even across academic discipline with higher female representation in Humanities than in either Natural Sciences or Medical Sciences (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012). Thus an awareness of the variation in discipline activities needs to be considered when assessing the lack of women at senior levels. In the UK the age and status of the university also has an impact on whether women are present at senior levels, with older and higher status universities e.g. such as those in the Russell Group showing a low presence of women in senior roles (Priola, 2007).

For example, as highlighted above, in the UK very few women are heads of HE institutions. According to University UK (2015) there are 133 universities in the UK and 27 of these have a female Vice Chancellor. This picture is even worse in the most elite institutions with only 4 out of 24 of the Russell Group universities led by a woman Vice Chancellor.

Often women can be successful in achieving senior positions in HE but only in administrative or operational positions. When it comes to the academic or

professorial route, it seems that achieving a strategic position i.e. positions of power, is tougher for women than men (Bagilhole and White, 2008). Arguments in the literature suggest that there are two possible reasons for this, either organisational power holders are less likely to view women as a 'good fit' for these positions or that these positions are less attractive to women or there is a combination of these two propositions interacting to exclude women from making applications. These issues of structure and agency are themes which weave throughout the research.

These trends seen in UK universities are also true for other countries for example, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Ireland and South Africa (White et al., 2012, van den Brink and Benschop, 2012, Devine et al., 2011, Neale, 2010, White et al., 2011).

According to Healy et al. (2011), women have a higher presence in the public as opposed to the private sector. This greater presence is seen to be key to more participation at all levels. The moving cohort effect states that as more women enter into the market or a particular industry, there will be a subsequent natural increase in women across all levels of the industry (Martin, 1996). Employment figures for UK universities support the statement by Healy. There is indeed a higher representation of women than men however, this representation is unequally distributed across functions and levels (White et al., 2012). Evidence

demonstrates both vertical and horizontal gender segregation (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006). The trends which are evident in general career literature are also present in the university sector. Women are more likely than men to be part of the casualised labour force i.e. on short term or temporary contracts and unsurprisingly women are more likely to have had career interruptions than men (O'Neill et al., 2008). However, when it comes to academic work there appears to be less overt gender segregation (Crompton and Harris, 1998, Crompton, 1999). On the surface, women and men appear to do the same work however, issues specific to the HE sector include a discipline effect whereby, women are over represented in the Arts and Humanities and under-represented in Engineering or Physical Sciences and Medicine (Bagilhole and White, 2011). In addition, as will be discussed later, the effects of recent changes in the HE sector i.e. a move towards new managerialism seem to be having a greater negative impact on women than on men (Berg et al., 2012, Mauthner and Edwards, 2010, Deem, 2003).

Thus, although the greater presence of women than men in the field of Higher Education appears to support the idea that this field is a 'female profession', a deeper exploration of the data indicates that access to positions of power and formal leadership within HE is still problematic for women.

2　Literature Review

Given that my research examines the careers of senior women in HE in the UK and that holding a senior position in any organisation constitutes a leadership role, I present here an outline of both the literature on women's careers and excerpts from the leadership literature. The leadership literature is explored to demonstrate the gendered nature of conceptualisations of what constitutes a 'leader'. This is used to support the argument that within both research and practice, leaders are seen as normatively male. The research on women as leaders is also presented to illustrate how an essentialist view of gender tends to predominate in this field. The issue of gender bias in the evaluation of women in

leadership positions is also raised by the leadership literature. Within the literature there exists a range of explanations for the continued underrepresentation of women at senior levels in HE. The landscape moves from theorising driven by a largely agentic explanations through to explanations based on societal and organisational structures which discriminate against women. Yet other explanations place language and culture as a key explanatory factor.

The literature I have found to be most useful is that presented by social constructionist and post structural views. This is because rather than viewing gender as essentialist, it is considered to be a social construct which is largely

separate from one's biological sex. With this conceptualisation, gender norms are not fixed but subject to historical, political and cultural forces. The role of these forces is discussed in greater detail later and is considered throughout this thesis. Regarding gender as a socially situated practice corresponds with the notion that agency and structure should be considered as a duality (Giddens, 1984). Thus, the relationship between the individual and the social is a dialectic (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This conceptualisation is central to my thesis and, I suggest provides a useful understanding of how gender practices in the workplace develop and are maintained. It signals that any study which seeks to find answers about why gender inequality persists through the study of individual factors or social factors alone, is likely to illuminate only half the story, or even result in a distortion or misdirection. Further, feminist post-structuralists say that gender is understood better as a verb rather than a noun. The idea of gender as something which one 'does' introduces an opportunity for researchers to reframe gender practices in organisations with a consequent shift in the nature of research questions posed (West and Zimmerman, 1987). For example, instead of asking, 'Why don't women make it as leaders?' the post structuralist position shifts the focus towards social interactions, specifically the complex interplay between agency and structure. In this way, constraints on agency are illuminated by examining enactions and interpretations in context. Post structuralists emphasise the role of language, discourse and narrative As Metcalfe and Woodhams (2012) put it:

> *'Subject positions were identified as being shaped by discourse, limiting possibilities for how one may navigate*

discursive realms and exercise embodied agency and political resistance.' P. 126.

Thus, although there is a place for agency in social interactions, historical, political and cultural norms, conveyed through discourses act to set expectations and norms which may act to constrain any 'true' or 'free' expression of individual agency (Clegg, 2006, Lewis et al., 2010, Duberley et al., 2006). This conceptualisation of agency is also a central theme in this thesis.

With this ontological lens taken for granted assumptions are deconstructed and explored. This is important not only when talking about gender but also for examining the concepts of career and leadership. There is a shift away from a focus on the individual as the main explanatory factor which contributes to a lack of women in positions of power. Instead the conditions which facilitate and/or constrain the individual's expression of agency are scrutinised. This shift is highly important as it helps researchers engage in reflexivity and to question, 'givens' and 'norms' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). It also, moves research away from the gender deficit model which, in the early years, predominated research explanations for a lack of women in positions of power (Eagly and Carli, 2007a). The growth in recent years of social constructionist and post-structuralist research on women's careers have illuminated some key 'taken for granted assumptions' such as what constitutes career success and how women's

career choices are shaped by structural and cultural factors. The following

outlines the key issues and debates in the women's careers research.

2.1   Exploring Women's Careers

In the following I provide a map of the landscape of the current debates and

concerns in the body of women's careers research literature. I use the concepts

of structure and agency as an organising framework as this facilitates my

analysis of the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of research. In

addition, most of the debates within this field centre around these concepts. All

of the research examined is positioned in relation to these key concepts even

when this is not explicitly stated by the writer/s of the research. First it is

necessary to examine what is meant by the term 'career'. In much of the

research, the concept of 'career' or a definitive definition of 'career' like many

social constructs is still a matter for debate. Coupland (2004 p.515) states that:

> *' 'Career', as a term, has been described as difficult to define*
> *yet frequently used, in theory as well as in lay discourse, as if*
> *it were commonly understood what it means.'*

Definitions of that which is to be studied are essential as they help the researcher

to deconstruct the concept under examination and to create effective research

designs which result in a coherence between concepts, findings and analyses.

The way in which one defines or fails to define the 'career' concept indicates to the reader the writer's epistemological position. For example, many writers talk of 'old' and 'new' careers, referring to the 'old' as bounded by the organisation or profession, with the 'new' as boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001). Embedded within this is the notion that the 'career' concept is something which has a fixed and agreed definition and that this can move from one state to another i.e. 'old' and 'new'. In addition, this signals to the reader that the writers have a functionalist or positivist world view where dualism predominates. This tendency to oversimplify the social world of work can be seen throughout the literature. According to Arthur and Rousseau (ibid.) a definition of an 'old' career would be:

> *'A course of professional advancement; usage is restricted to occupational groups with formal hierarchical progression, such as managers and professionals.'*

And, a definition of a 'new' career would be:

> *'The unfolding sequence of any person's work experience over time.'*

Other definitions of 'career' point to the term as involving a strategic plan. Here one's work journey is viewed as a rational, strategic plan, usually to get to the 'top' of an organisation or profession as quickly as possible and/or to achieve a high income level and/or status and power. This approach is commonly used in modern textbooks for Human Resource Management (Mathis and Jackson,

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2011, Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Although a few individuals may approach their career in this way, qualitative accounts of individual career experiences indicate a much more messy and complex process. This is true for both men and women.

Viewing career from a constructivist perspective Mark Savickas (2001) drawing on the full range of career theories, including life stage and life cycle theories (Super, 1990) argues that careers do not 'unfold' but rather are constructed by the individual through sensemaking processes. Both personal construction processes and social construction processes contribute to the individual's career concept. In order to make sense of vocational choices and to create and manage a stable and appropriate self and social identity, the individual engages in the development of meaningful narratives. This view of a sense of self and self-identity contradicts the traditional, psychological model of self, as an internal and fairly stable construct and is better understood as a dynamic, socially interactive narrative process such as that described by Paul Ricoeur (1991b), George Herbert Mead (1934) and Erving Goffman (1959).

Young and Collin (2004), building on the work of Savickas (2001), identify four dominant discourses within the careers field. Firstly, the dispositions discourse views career as a matching process, between an individual's traits and occupational characteristics. Holland's Occupational Codes typology is an

example of this approach (Holland, 1996). The second discourse is the

contextualizing discourse, here the importance of context is introduced. The

individual's career related decisions and actions are located within their social,

economic, political, cultural and other contexts. The third discourse is the

subjectivity, narrative discourse which introduces the relationship between the

individual and her/his context. This discourse states that:

> 'Career represents a unique interaction of self and social
> experience. This discourse concerns that interaction *from the*
> *perspective o*f *th*e individual. It addresses how the individual
> constructs self over time, and in context, and includes *self-*
> *definition, self a*nd agency, purpose, and subjectivity: as well
> as partic*ular forms of construction such* as narrative,
> autobiography, life *story*, and the *subj*ective career. It is
> hence *particularly open to the influ*ences of constructivisms
> with th*eir focus* on the construction of meaning.' *(Young and*
> *Collin, 2004 p. 381)*

The fourth discourse is called the process discourse. Here the emphasis is on

the processes related to careers e.g. decision making, career counselling etc.

Unlike the other three discourses, this one examines how construction occurs

rather than what is constructed.

As stated earlier I use the Social Constructionist view of career and my thesis

draws on both the second and third discourses. Women's careers are

considered to be both a process of interaction between the self and social, and

this interaction is shaped by a range of contexts. Contexts are seen as both

facilitative and constraining to women's careers. In addition, the internalisation of

dominant discourses within contexts is achieved through the interaction between the self and contexts.

Led by social contsructionists, the 'career' concept is being revisited and deconstructed. Researchers such as Evetts (2000), Cohen, Duberley & Mallon (2004) and Cohen (2014) argue that the shape and meaning of one's work experiences or 'career' varies considerably across groups and individuals. In addition, these experiences are the result of the relationship between structure and agency. Alvesson & Wilmott (2002) and others point to identity and identity work as a useful viewpoint to study career as the identity concept can act as a bridge between structure and agency. Cohen and her colleagues (op cit.) also stress that by exploring career experiences we can gain valuable insights into the dominant discourses at play in society. The way in which people 'do their career' can tell us about how structures and cultures within societies have acted to constrain and/or facilitate this activity. This latter view is especially relevant for members of society who can be considered as 'other' e.g women, ethnic minorities etc. For example, a view of the history of women's work experiences shows how women have moved from the realm of the 'private' into the 'public' (Segal, 1993, Davidoff, 2003, Smith-Rosenberg, 1986).

It is this sense of 'otherness' and 'difference' which makes the study of women's work experiences interesting. By observing the 'other' we understand better how marginalisation and exclusion are developed and maintained.

2.1.1 Gender, Power and Hegemony

This thesis, provides an examination of HE in the UK from the vantage point of its historical roots and where women's careers fit within that landscape. Later I map out the field of HE and women's position within that field to show how power and power positions are central to women's access to top positions in elite universities. Here I am using Bourdieu's conception of 'field' where fields are:

> 'structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analyzed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)' (Bourdieu 1993 p. 72, in Emirbayer and Johnson 2008 p.6)

This is the process which Bourdieu (2001) referred to as, 'carving out one's object' is essential as it helps to identify both the structure of the field and the nature of the relations between objects in the field. What emerges is greater clarity concerning the power relations between objects and the power hierarchy within the field. For example, in the UK HE field, the historical account, outlined later, demonstrates the shifts of power from the church to the state. In addition, this process can act to expose less obvious power relationships such as the

power that research funding councils, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and external accreditation bodies have over what is researched and taught in universities.

What is apparent in the literature and the history of HE is that there is a common thread of women's subordination to men. For example, in the early days of HE women were excluded from the 'hallowed halls of power' and as time has progressed women have gained access to power but HE but it is still not viewed as 'her place' but 'his place' (Bagilhole and White, 2011, White et al., 2011). From Virginia Woolf's time where women were given partial access i.e. no access to libraries etc. to the current day where horizontal and vertical segregation by gender is still the norm, it is clear that HE is a gendered field. When it comes to women holding powerful leadership positions access is controlled through mainly hidden process from obscure selection procedures to the invidious impact of unconscious bias. The emerging story is that women are excluded from positions of power and that this stems from existing structural power inequalities (Benschop and Brouns, 2003, Van den Brink et al., 2010, Benschop, 2014). For this reason it is necessary to take a closer look at the concept of power.

According to many writers on the subject of power, it is still a highly contested concept which appears in different forms and is conceptualised in different ways

(Clegg, 1989, Haugaard, 1997). According to Clegg (1989) 'power' is thought of as a family of related concepts which can be split into three groupings, power as disposition, power as agency and power as facilitative. In addition, some theorists view power as a positive concept, Hobbes' view of the sovereignty of power focuses on power, as wielded by an elite community, as for the good of the community at large. Others see power as a set of dispositions or capacities held by an individual (Wrong, 1979). The final family views power as a relationship between structure and agency Giddens (1984), for example Karl Marx, Steven Lukes and Pierre Bourdieu (Clegg, 1989).

Bourdieu (2005), builds on the Marxist structural conception to outline the mechanisms which link aspects of structure and agency. He provides an understanding of the relationship between the macro and the micro (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008). This concept is a key focus in this thesis. Foucault's definition of power fails to sit neatly into any of these three families as he describes power as circulating around groups through the dual processes of discourse and practice (Foucault, 1983). For Foucault power is domination but he actively rejects the notion that power has its roots in material or structural relations. Foucault (Ibid.) is seen as the voice of post-structural power as for him as with Judith Butler (2006) gender, language and discourse are the source of power and control. The philosophical position one takes on power has an impact on how one conceptualises not just the nature of domination and control but also the nature of resistance.

As women have been consistently excluded or dominated in relation to access to power in UK HE, I have chosen to use the 'structure and agency' family of power and particularly Bourdieu's (2001) work to provide a new view of the dearth of women in senior leadership positions in HE. In addition, this view of power and how power relations persist despite changes to policy and practice fits very well with the experiences of women in academia. Finally, his concept of symbolic violence helps to understand why resistance to power inequalities is low. This is covered fully later when I outline my theoretical framework.

In addition to sociological explanations of power, the psychoanalytical approach provides some useful ideas. Elements of unconscious psychological processes and their relation to material structures by way of discourses help to provide an understanding of how the macro and micro interrelate. One theoretical proposal states that when women try to gain access to senior positions, they are seen as a 'threat'.

The idea of women as a 'threat' has a number of different explanations. Women can be seen as either a 'threat' to the organisation or a 'threat' to males in the organisation and both. Judi Marshall (1984) has said that women can represent a 'threat' to organisational stability due to a perceived lack of commitment to the workplace and the organisation . This way of thinking about women as,

'responsible for the home and the family', links into the 'Great Divide' discourse of an 'appropriate place' for women i.e. the private sphere not the public sphere (Segal, 1993, Davidoff, 2003). Here there are two interrelated discourses which result in the perception of women as a 'threat'. The public sphere is a space for men, characterised by stereotypical male behaviours such as action, visibility, leading and engaging in rational thinking. The stereotypical feminine behaviours such as, nurturing, relating and emotionality if introduced to this space is likely to result in disorder and chaos. Hence, spaces are gendered and the introduction of the feminine to the masculine space presents a 'threat'.

Heather Hopfl and Sumohon Matilal (2007) use a Lacanian lens to explore these ideas further. They suggest that there is a recurring theme of 'lack' within organisations and, that this shapes the nature of gender relations at work. The common organisational discourse about success, both for the organisation and its leadership is that of rational and planned movement towards the future (better organisation). This constitutes what is referred to as a 'lack' because the organisation is the focus of constant improvement i.e. more growth is required, greater efficiency, improved quality etc. This desire to address the 'lack' using a rational approach is said to come from the notion that men see themselves as less than whole (Höpfl and Matilal, 2007). This lack of 'wholeness' results from the recognition that women have the power to create new life, thus, men are not whole without women.

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The application of this concept results in men's rational activity in the public sphere as an attempt to 'feel whole'. In other words, the workplace project is essential to men for them to create a sense of purpose. Here men derive and express their self- identity solely within the public sphere of work. When women enter this 'rational' space (there is a recognition that organisations in reality are not rational) they bring their 'feminine' 'emotionality'. This is the antithesis of 'planned and rational' and begins to expose the façade of control and hence, is perceived as a threat. This process is symbolic and is conveyed through everyday interactions and conversations which position women as inherently more emotional than men. Applying Bourdieu's (2001, 2005) ideas to this it might be said that this notion of 'lack' is a discourse used to regulate and control, to obscure unequal power relations and discourage resistance. If, as a woman, I internalise this 'lack' discourse, then I'm likely to see myself as not fit or able rather than to question the structures which perpetuate these stereotypes. It is not suggested that all women behave in emotional ways in organisations, rather that the 'feminine' represents the uncontrolled and dangerous. With this view organisations are in 'safe hands' when men are in leadership positions whereas, the introduction of women represents the potential for disorder. Hopfl and Matilal (2007) go on to say that some women are 'allowed' into the membership of the leadership but that they are vetted to ensure that they are not a threat. This is achieved if the woman demonstrates sufficient 'male' characteristics. In this sense, she must 'control' her femininity.

As with the role congruity approach (Eagly and Karau, 2002, Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra, 2006), there is a clash between expectations related to leadership (in this case submission to the male norm) and femininity. In contrast to men, women have to subjugate their identity. The range of identities which they can develop and display is constrained. They have to engage in the fine balance of being 'male enough' to not be perceived as a threat, and female enough to not be perceived as strange. Hopfl and Matilal (ibid.) provide an interesting example of how women who are successful are considered to be male or praised in male terms. When a visitor to their university talked about his female Vice Chancellor he commented, "You have to hand it to her, she's got balls".

> *In other words, the ultimate compliment he could pay her was that she possessed metaphorically what she physically lacked. She had 'Balls'. The supreme achievement of her advancement to high office was apparently based on the fact that she had the appropriate male accoutrements, albeit merely figuratively, to do the job. (Hopfl and Matilal 2007 p198.)*

This view introduces some new ideas which may help to explain why the moving cohort theory and enhanced legislation has not resulted in leadership equity for women. Those who currently have the power to define the workplace, organisational success and career success derive their sense of purpose and identities from the public sphere as a rational space. Femininity (and thereby women) is a symbol of disorder and emotionality and hence a 'threat' to this

rational space and consequently men's sense of purpose and identities (Swope, 2012). Although this psychoanalytical approach may appear far-fetched, it provides some useful insights in relation to women's absence in leadership positions. This approach works to expose hidden assumptions and foregrounds women's 'real life' organisational experiences. Further, it places an emphasis on the need to recognise where the 'difference' between the genders occurs and hence what should be studied. With this view, difference is important but not in essentialist terms i.e.' how are men and women leaders different?', but rather in terms of differential experiences and perspectives. Also, in common with Bourdieu, this approach puts 'power relations' at the centre of the issue rather than 'sidelining' or 'disappearing' power and structure and hence, making these important areas of study. Finally, the critical role of symbolism and the symbolic is seen to be key to gender and leadership. In this work, gender identity takes on a symbolic power which shapes individuals' perceptions, attitudes, behaviour and language. This symbolic nature of gender links with the recent work which argues that gender itself can be thought of as a form of capital (Huppatz, 2009, Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010, Miller, 2014). This view criticises the notion of the 'neutral' organisation, and aligns strongly with Acker's concept of the 'Gendered Organization' (Acker, 1990).

What is suggested by critical researchers is that gender is ever present and is a defining force within society and this is not only expressed in organisations but actually shapes the workplace. This introduces an important question about why

organisations and workers are thought of as gender neutral when they are not. For example, the concept of the 'ideal worker' is an attempt at presenting workers as androcentric and yet the 'ideal worker' is normatively male (Ollilainen and Solomon, 2014). One explanation is that by making 'gender' a subtext, unequal power relations remain hidden or at least obfuscated and when power is exerted covertly, resistance is extremely difficult (Smith, 1988, Benschop and Doorewaard, 2012). Bourdieu's (2001, 2005) social theory would suggest that the notion of the 'ideal worker' as a neutral concept is yet another attempt at 'dehistoricization' and would likely, in line with Acker (1992) call for the dismantling of this concept.

The concept of hidden forces which surfaces in this work can be best understood as the process of 'Cultural Hegemony'. This is a form of invisible power and is defined by Antonio Gramsci (Bennett, 1981). The essence of this term is that the values, beliefs and norms of those who hold power are promulgated through cultural practices with the aim of creating an 'unquestioned truth'. This is evident in the presence of the dominant perception that equality has been achieved in the workplace (Savigny, 2014). The overt discourse in business is that, largely, the equality project has been achieved. Any lack of presence of women, people of colour, the disabled and others is seen to be due to their 'lack' of ability or suitable skills. Yet, research which looks at 'real' organisational experiences reports the persistence of inequalities (Due Billing, 2014, Höpfl and Matilal, 2007,

Sinclair, 2013). This gap between the rhetoric and the reality can be understood as a result of cultural hegemony.

What is suggested is that the masculinist leadership discourse as the dominant and hegemonic discourse is accepted by both men and women as a 'neutral truth'. What results is the reproduction of this biased view by both men and women. Gramsci (in Bennett 1981) states that a part of cultural hegemonic power is the seduction of acceptance of the dominant discourse, which leads to a 'false consciousness' . As applied to gender inequality, women often fail to recognise any gender discrimination due to this 'false consciousness' (Savigny, 2014). According to Bourdieu (2002), what has occurred is the internalisation of the dominant discourse. The idea of 'maleness' linked with legitimate power positions has been unconsciously accepted and internalised. What often results is a 'self-policing' by women of behaviour, their own and others, to ensure a fit with a male normed job or career role. This is achieved through identity struggles which manage femininities as non-threatening (Lewis, 2006). The internalisation of one's oppressor's world view is termed 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 2001).

This process of 'symbolic violence' is also presented in the psychoanalytic literature on women's experience in traditional male industries such as finance and technology. Shelley Reciniello (1999) posits that rather than considering

external barriers (structural and political) as separate from internal barriers (psychological), there is considerable overlap. She argues that, the disappointment and frustration of external barriers to advancement is internalised and results in not only anger but also self –doubt which in turn can result in lower self-esteem and self-efficacy. Ultimately, this can lead to, *'a deep sense that it was still somehow their fault.'* (Reciniello, 1999) p.308. It is important to highlight that I am suggesting that this is not just a gender issue but is equally relevant for other marginalised groups.

The concept 'Genderplus subtext' has been suggested to represent the wider impact and intersectionality of 'invisible power' or cultural hegemony (Benschop and Doorewaard, 2012). Another important point to raise is that cultural hegemony is a tool used in the maintenance of structural power divisions, it is not simply an issue of culture through discourse but rather culture and discourse are the mechanisms which ensure the continuance of these structures. As part of this, cultural hegemonic processes act to reduce questioning of the status quo. Any discomfort experienced as a result of an unconscious awareness of the disconnect between rhetoric and reality, is rendered impotent through psychological internalisation, i.e. 'I'm not good enough', 'I don't have the right skills' or 'I'm not ambitious enough'. This is Bourdieu's symbolic violence in action. Thus resistance is not even considered. Gramsci says that this 'false consciousness' is likely to be broken at points of crisis and transition (Bennett, 1981)

In women's careers research, these points of crisis and transition are, marriage, pregnancy, or promotion (Reciniello, 1999, Little, 2015).   If there is a lack of awareness of discrimination and oppression, resistance is difficult. One of the key elements of cultural hegemonic processes is that any resistance which occurs through dissenting voices and data is quelled by the incorporation of these ideas into the dominant discourse. This results in a distortion or reconfiguring of the new ideas to 'fit' with the dominant discourse.

A good example of this is the notion of 'new leadership', 'the female advantage' and 'post-heroic leadership'. The new rhetoric in leadership literature talks of a need for more 'feminine' and 'relational' leadership styles. This need is said to emerge from changes to the nature of work e.g. flatter organisations, increased globalisation and demands for more ethical and humanist centred workplaces (Due Billing, 2014). There are calls for leadership which engages in greater empathy, relational authenticity and empowerment. However, what is really occurring is the cooption of these to be used in the traditional capitalist project of increased profits and growth. These 'people centred' skills are used in instrumental ways to manage workers, productivity, loyalty and alignment with organisational goals (Fletcher, 2004, Binns, 2008).

I would argue that the continued lack of women in positions of power, despite considerable advances in legislation and policy, is likely to be explained better if issues of power are made central to the question. To state clearly, those who currently hold the power i.e. white, heterosexual, able-bodied males, work to their own interests (whether conscious or unconscious) to maintain that power.

Whether it is concern with displacement or fear of destabilisation, the presence of women in powerful positions is perceived as a threat. Although women have been 'allowed' into the public space, this has been attenuated or constrained. Women are either allowed into the 'hallowed halls' because they are perceived as 'safe' or they are given positions which represent no 'real' power or influence (Czarniawska and Hopfl, 2002, Fletcher, 2004, Sinclair, 2013).

Positioning leadership as gender neutral, when it is, in fact, normatively male, results in the development of more subtle and nuanced discrimination, which Smith (Smith, 1988) called the 'gender subtext' and Benschop and Doorewaard (2012) say is more accurately, 'Genderplus subtext'. This latter term draws together discrimination against women and other social disadvantaged groups. The process of a 'hidden power' or cultural hegemony means that either resistance is difficult or, even worse, that discrimination is not recognised. The dominant 'distorted' paradigm is internalised by those against whom

discrimination is practiced through this process resulting in symbolic violence and self-policing.

Thus, I would suggest that, in terms of achieving powerful leadership positions, women face a double disadvantage, in that, they face structural constraints and through the process of internalisation, these structural constraints often result in psychological constraints. This has a major impact on the ability for women to fully express their agency, this double constraint effect results in an agency constraint (Lewis et al., 2010). What needs to be asked are the following questions.   If it is hard to resist hidden power, how is resistance possible? Also, how can constraints on agency (structural and psychological), be removed or reduced? In agreement with a number of researchers (Bird, 2011, Benschop, 2014) I would suggest that the answer is to actively engage in gaining new perspectives and new lenses to illuminate these issues. One effective way to achieve a different perspective is to listen to the voices of what Sandra Harding (1991) calls, the 'outsider inside' . In other words, gather experiences from those who are on the 'inside' but are still considered to be 'outsiders'. In this study, that is exactly what I have done, as I have listened to the stories of women who have gained access to senior leadership positions.   Next, I examine further arguments for listening only to women's voices.

2.1.2 Why only women's career experiences?

Over the last forty years there have been consistent efforts to increase equality of opportunity for women in the workplace. This includes significant changes to legislation for a wide range of employment practices including recruitment and selection, maternity/paternity leave and flexible working conditions (Vinnicombe et al., 2013b, Fenton, 2003, Numhauser-Henning, 2006). In addition, feminist ideology and action have both raised awareness of prejudice and discrimination and resulted in changes to women's expectations of equity in the workplace. However, despite considerable changes women in the UK are still under-represented at senior levels in organisations, although, very recent efforts driven by the Government have resulted in an increase over the last four years. According to the Davies Report, in 2011 only 12.5% of FTSE 100 boards were female. By 2015 that figure has risen to 26.1% (Davies 2015). A (Van den Brink et al., 2010) considerable advance but still vertical segregation is present.

In addition, there is evidence that horizontal occupational segregation also acts to exclude women from certain professions, with many technical and science related professions dominated by men and occupations such as teaching, caring and cleaning still dominated by women (Blackburn 2006, Knights 2003, Frehill 2015). Thus, there is evidence that the experience of 'career' differs in relation to one's gender.

A number of studies examining the similarities and differences in men and women's careers have highlighted that often career aspirations, trajectories, choices and experiences differ greatly as a function of gender (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003, Duberley and Cohen, 2010, Duberley et al., 2014). According to Powell and Mainiero (1992), when researching women's careers, it is important to take into account, paid and un-paid work, subjective and objective measures of career success, the influence of societal as well as personal factors on career choices and, the non-linear nature of women's career trajectories. Thus, in thinking about careers, the difference between the career experiences of men and women become apparent. For women, a career can span the full range of work from full-time paid work in a large bureaucratic organisation through self-employment or part-time work and on to non-paid work in the home or more generally in the community (e.g. care of elderly relatives and voluntary work). This wider conceptualisation of 'career' for women illustrates why women's career experiences are often more complex and varied than those of men. It is this key difference which explains why it is useful to separate out career study by gender. There are still gender role expectations which shape how men's and women's careers are viewed, for example the view that family and the domestic sphere (the private world) is the main domain for women whilst the world of paid work (the public world) is the 'natural' domain for men (Smith-Rosenberg, 1986).

Not only are there gender based experiences of career, there is also criticism of much of the positivist research on careers, suggesting that many of the key concepts hold an implicit male bias. A good example is given in the literature by O'Neill et al (2008), which illustrates the importance of this point. They highlight how sampling methods can act to constrain and bias research findings. For example, by using an inclusion criteria of 'successful in career' as measured by 'level reached in the hierarchy of an organisation', the researcher has instantly framed the nature of 'career success' in a narrow and constraining way and, which constitutes a male measure of success (Bagilhole and White, 2011).

Cohen et al (2004) also point to the use of dualisms in much of the positivist driven careers research, such as the use of the concepts 'push' and 'pull' factors which drive decisions to make career changes. This type of simplistic and reductionist thinking can result in masking individuals' actual experiences, where decisions can be shaped by both 'push' and 'pull' factors. Researchers set the agenda for the dialogue in society and as such, the knowledge produced can often be treated as 'fact'. Indeed, most positivist research is presented as unproblematic and as the method which results in indisputable 'truths' (Giere, 2006). The danger is that society and organisations will then begin to treat simplistic findings as 'fact' or 'truth' resulting in a mismatch between people's career and workplace experiences. In turn, the dominant frameworks used to describe and discuss these experiences remain unquestioned. Thus, the call from social constructionists to 'unsettle' the 'settled' in the field of social science

is not a methodological nicety but a key principle for any social scientist wishing to create meaningful and useful knowledge.

As stated earlier, reasons posited for these differences vary across the literature, with some authors placing an emphasis on individual factors, some stressing structural factors and yet others, pointing to a relationship between structure and agency.

2.1.3 Key Themes in Women's Careers Research

In the following I will focus on those factors which are still considered to impact upon women's careers in highly developed countries such as, the UK, USA and Europe. According to a recent Thompson Reuters poll of women in the workplace, gender pay disparity and managing the competing demands of work and home life are the most critical issues for women in the G20 (2015). The argument I make in this thesis is that, despite significant, positive changes to equal opportunity legislation, human resource policies and the high presence of women in the workplace, there are still significant barriers to certain careers and to career advancement for women (Cohen, 2014, Vinnicombe et al., 2013b). I also argue that these barriers have their roots in the persistence of conceptualisations of gender and the workplace (Ely et al., 2014, Acker, 2006). This is supported by the tendency to consider the workplace and careers as

androcentric rather than gendered (Marshall, 1984, Marshall, 2011). Viewing a gendered space as androcentric acts to obscure structural and cultural factors which contribute towards differential experience, and instead, encourages a focus on issues of agency. Thus, the feminization of certain industries is framed as 'women's choice', women choose industries which allow for flexibility in hours to account for their responsibilities for family. The idea that family responsibilities are seen to be the 'natural' domain for women is one subtext of this idea that frequently goes unquestioned. In addition, the view that long hours and presenteeism is also a 'natural' element of the workplace also remains unexamined. The idea that women's choice of industry is an act of free agency predominates, whereas, these 'choices' are actually forced to some extent due to the gendered nature of the conditions in society (Okin, 2013). Family responsibilities, such as managing the home, caring for children, the sick and the elderly, still fall to women. According to Bianchi et al. (2012) despite shifts in the proportion of housework and childcare, women's domestic responsibilities still exceed those of men. Their research also shows that, despite the fact that employed mothers spend more time interacting with their children than their unemployed counterparts in 1975, women still feel that they don't spend enough time with their children. This gendered view of domestic, unpaid work also has an impact on the range of professional identities to which women have access and, in turn, results in differential treatment at work (Little, 2015). This is a good example of indirect discrimination.

In addition women experience direct discrimination, for example when a woman becomes pregnant, this is often viewed negatively by others in the organisation and usually there is a shift in the way her work is evaluated (Morgan et al., 2013, King and Botsford, 2009). Caroline Gatrell's (2010, 2013) work highlights how the male body is universalized as the 'ideal norm' within the workplace resulting in women being identified as 'other'. The more feminine a woman's body, the more she is placed at the periphery in organisations (Gatrell, 2010, Gatrell, 2013, Little, 2015). Pregnancy and motherhood are key transition points which push women into the paradoxical space of high visibility and invisibility at the same time. I return to this core concept later in this thesis. This predominant view in society not only impacts upon men and men's conscious and unconscious thinking but also on women. The result is that both men and women still view the private, domestic world as the domain of women and the public, workplace world as the domain of men. These views centre around the persistence of gender stereotypes and gender discrimination. It seems that negative perceptions about women's abilities and their career commitments are still prevalent. In addition, there are assumptions that women won't relocate for advancement (Vinnicombe et al., 2013a). Still there is a failure to hold managers accountable for their lack of development of women, for example, not providing women with a range of experiences necessary for advancement(Altman and Shortland, 2008). Issues of the gendered organisation also persist with an emphasis on long hours and presenteeism over results based performance. Finally, the lack of mentoring and

exclusion of women from informal networks is still an obstacle to access to senior roles.

Research on key influences on women's careers has helped to advance our understanding of how governments, professions, organisations and the family can act to constrain and/or facilitate women's career experiences. For example, Adelina Broadbridge (2010) after studying women's narratives of choice determined that they were not 'real choices'. She argues that choices are often made in response to structural norms of the male dominated work place. Rather than women choosing career or family - as Hakim (1995) posits with her preference choice theory, they usually try to maximise both, and engage in satisficing rather than optimization decision making strategies. Women try to integrate both family needs and work needs thus resulting in a satisfactory outcome for both whilst sacrificing any optimum outcome for one or the other. Further, women in the highest positions within organisations often put their children at the centre of their life rather than letting career displace family/children as Hakim (ibid) suggests. Thus, often career decisions and choices are made in the context of children and family as the central driver. Broadbridge's work demonstrates and supports Cohen et al's (2004) suggestion that dualisms can mask the real career experiences of women. Hakim presents a dualism of family or work whereas, Broadbridge's work suggests a more complex and nuanced process which requires the integration of both family and work to achieve a satisfactory outcome. In fact, Cohen et al's (2009) research on

the concept of 'work life balance' demonstrates that the boundary between women's work and home lives is flexible, dynamic and complex. The relationship between work and home is shaped by many factors including, emotions, autonomy and identity.

One of the most well-known descriptions of the impact of structural constraints on women's careers is the notion of a 'glass ceiling' (Cotter et al., 2001, Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000). Here despite a woman's motivation, knowledge, skills and persistence, she is blocked in moving up in an organisation by structural and cultural barriers. The concept of the 'glass ceiling' has been revisited by a number of writers with some amendments to the metaphor. For example, Ryan & Haslam 2005, identify a 'glass cliff' for women in senior or leadership positions. They provide interesting evidence for the preponderance of organisations to appoint women to leadership positions when the organisation is in difficulty. Thus, when measuring women's 'leadership success', it may be that men and women have different benchmarks. If women are mainly appointed to senior positions when the organisation is struggling, then the conditions in which they act as leaders are in the context of a failing organisation. According to Ryan and Haslam (ibid.) men are likely to leave leadership positions at the point where an organisation is failing. It seems that although some headway has been made to remove the glass ceiling there are still structural barriers at play. It should be noted that both the 'glass ceiling' and the 'glass cliff' comprise both structural and cultural elements. The separation of culture and structure as aspects which may

affect women's careers is not common in the literature but Evetts (2000 p.59)

sees these concepts as analytically distinct, stating that,

> *'Although many feminist researchers have linked the cultural
> and structural determinants of women's careers, this analysis
> will maintain that there are different kinds of determinants. It
> will be argued that the cultural aspects (beliefs and
> ideologies) are analytically distinct from the structural
> determinants (organizational promotional ladders and the
> divisions of labour in organizations and families).'*

Another modern metaphor used in women's career development is presented by

Eagly & Carli (2007). They use the metaphor of the 'labyrinth' to demonstrate the

nature of barriers as structural and complex. This metaphor recognises the role

of the individual in the structure/agency relationship. The paper goes on to

identify the key factors/issues which act as barriers for women in their careers,

focusing on the continued presence of gender based prejudice and stereotyping,

for example, the persistent discourse which casts women as communal and men

as agentic. Despite the recent popularity in intersectional approaches, this

tendency to treat women and men as homogenous is prevalent across most of

the careers and leadership literature. It is the researchers who take a social

constructionist approach who highlight the considerable heterogeneity present in

any gender category.

Other structural aspects highlighted, in Eagly & Carli's (ibid.) work, as constraining women in their careers such as relational demography, long work hours, career breaks and geographic mobility are also supported by many other writers as having a differential gender affect (Ozbilgin & Healy 2003, Maranto & Griffin 2010, Blackmore 2011, O'Neill et al 2008, Broadbridge 2008 and Wong 2005).

The use of the labyrinth metaphor is more helpful than the glass ceiling metaphor as it better reflects the complex nature of women's career experiences and allows for a relational model of structure and agency. However, the use of metaphor needs to be carefully thought through as it plays a key role in the construction of realities (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). As has been highlighted by Gareth Morgan (1997), metaphors can introduce new ways of thinking about organisational life but equally, they can obscure key aspects. In research there is agreement from scholars that the metaphor used directs the questions asked and the search for solutions, illuminating certain aspects whilst throwing others into the shadow (Alvesson and Spicer, 2010, Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010).

There are two other key aspects which are important in understanding woman's careers. These have both structural and cultural facets. These are the continued prevalence of occupational segregation, both vertical and horizontal and the role of the family. I say that these aspects comprise of both structural

and cultural elements because although, for example, science occupations are mainly male and are seen to be masculine activities(Osborn et al., 2000, Parker and Welch, 2013, Rees, 2002, Sciences, 2007), this is due to a combination of gendered attitudes and beliefs and the structured division of labour. In addition, occupational segregation appears to result from an interaction between structure and culture (Evetts, 2000). A good example is the teaching profession, which used to be mainly male but has now become primarily female. Explanations for a mainly female teaching profession which point to the 'nature' of women as carers and thus attracted to 'caring' for children, fall short as this does not explain the profession's transition from mainly male to mainly female. The process is better understood as a combination of structural, cultural and agentic factors. Working patterns in teaching fit well with family demands and often women choose teaching as this is seen to support a balance between these competing demands. Although this appears to be an issue of agency, or free choice, the fact that women are seen to be more responsible for the family than men demonstrates the role of structural power issues in this 'choice'. As more women began to move out of the private sphere (domestic) and into the public sphere (paid work), occupations which make a good fit for a balance between these spheres were bound to be more attractive. The consequent shift in the gender demography of teaching has resulted in teaching being labelled as a 'feminine' profession (Benedict, 2000, Burman*, 2005). This in turn may dissuade many men who may have identity difficulties with entering into a 'feminine' profession. Thus, work which fits better around the family tends to become 'female' work.

This is the case with part-time and shift work as well as with teaching. The unfortunate effect of female dominant work and professions then becoming devalued, will again act as a signal to men that status, prestige and power cannot be gained through this profession.

Not only are feminized professions subject to negative bias, there is good evidence that occupational segregation differs according to organisational level or grade. Smith (2008) shows that more women than men are in administrative roles in Higher Education (HE) and that this in part accounts for the gender pay gap. She also found that women in administrative roles are more satisfied with pay than men in similar roles despite experiencing the greatest pay gap. Conversely, academic women are less satisfied than their male counterparts despite experiencing a lower pay gap. women in Technical occupations do best in terms of pay gap but this may be a function of the fact that there are very few women in technology industries (ibid.). Similar findings relating to the interaction between level, grade satisfaction and occupational segregation are described in Buchman et al (2010), who look at the Swiss Employment Survey and Broadbridge (2010) who examines women's careers in retail. She specifically chose retail because as an industry sector it is highly female and hence, there would be an expectation of more representation of women in senior positions. However, even in retail women are still fairly absent when it comes to senior positions. As stated previously, Broadbridge (ibid) cites structural barriers as the predominant cause for this and highlights that women have to consider the

balance between family and work more than their male counterparts. In most of the literature, the role of the family is seen as a key barrier to women's career advancements (O'Neill et al., 2008, Ely et al., 2014)

Another area of investigation in this field has been a concern about the human capital which is held by women (O'Neill et al., 2008). The suggestion has been that the reason that women fail to advance to senior positions is due to a comparative lack of human capital, i.e. that men have the right training, education, experience and work assignments whilst women do not (Melamed, 1995). A survey of CEOs found that the dominant belief was that it is this lack of human capital which is the cause of fewer women in positions of power (Ragins et al., 1998). However, the research evidence does not support this perception. What is found is that human capital is important for women but not for men. Women are scrutinised for evidence of high levels of human capital, whereas, men aren't (Melamed, 1995). This double standard is present throughout all aspects of the workplace. For example, when men present a new idea, others increase their evaluation of their ability, whereas, for women, speaking up can result in a negative evaluation or no improvement in perceptions of her capability (The Economist, 2015, Pew Research Center, 2015). A study by Phyillis Tharenou (2001) found that women's advancement was predicted not by levels of human capital but rather by the interaction between gender and, career aspirations, masculinity and interpersonal support. In addition young women were blocked by male networks and help from those above is essential for

women's advancement (Nugent et al., 2013). It seems that, rather than human capital, social capital provides a better explanation of why there are so few women in positions of power.

Organisational processes which can be described as developing social capital are, mentoring, networking and sponsorship. Mentoring women has been seen as a potential panacea for the absence of women in positions of power. This is due to the findings from many research studies that indicated a lack of mentoring was central to the lack of advancement for women (Ragins and Cotton, 1993, Foust-Cummings et al., 2011, Bird et al., 1995, Cullen and Luna, 1993). Over the years, organisations have reported different levels of success with mentoring programs. Nugent et al. (2013) say that this is due to the implementation of formal mentoring programs. If the program is not a core part of organisational talent management and people development structures, there are lower levels of success. In addition, formal mentoring, even when it is effective, is not as effective as informal mentoring. Finally, access to influential mentors (who can act as sponsors) is very important. In fact, sponsorship is more important to women's career advancement than mentoring (Ibarra et al., 2010, Blake-Beard, 2001). A Catalyst reports state that mentoring is necessary but not sufficient for moving more women into positions of power (Catalyst, 2010). Before taking a closer look at the role of sponsorship, I will outline the key role of networking. Research suggests that individuals can build their social capital by developing many diverse networks (Baker, 2000, Singh et al., 2006). Further evidence

indicates that effective networking supports career advancement (Tharenou, 1997, Seibert et al., 2001). Networking can be defined as:

> '…individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships
> with others who have the potential to assist them in their work
> or career.' (Forret and Dougherty, 2004)p.420.

Networking is often viewed as a necessary competency or skill required by those who wish to advance to positions of leadership, however Forret and Dougherty (ibid.) argue that there are different types of networking, *maintaining contacts, socializing, engaging in professional activities, participating in community, and increasing internal visibility, (p. 420),* and that there are differences in both who engages in these and the career outcomes associated with them. They found that both men and women engage in most of these with women spending more time than men on the maintenance of networks. In addition, transitioning shallow contacts to deeper ones was a gap for both men and women with the latter often struggling to move deep contacts towards a more shallow relationship due to feelings of guilt and concerns about being perceived as acting in self-interest when the gender expectation is that women are more communal and caring. Finally, the key difference between men and women's networking was that men were more likely to engage in leveraging behaviour to gain career advancement. For example, asking a contact to make a recommendation to be considered for a high profile assignment or a place on an influential committee, activities which are linked to gaining contact with sponsorship by senior leaders (de Janasz and

Forret, 2007, Forret and Dougherty, 2004). According to recent research, this type of networking is tougher for women to achieve than men (Hewlett, 2013)

What is evident from the work on mentoring and networking is that these techniques have different outcomes for men and women. According to a number of recent research studies (Ibarra et al., 2010, Catalyst, 2010, Brink and Benschop, 2014) this is due to the differential access that men and women have to senior, powerful people (usually men) within their networks and as mentors. This introduces a difficulty as research demonstrates that psychosocial bonds are better with same gender mentoring relationships and yet formal mentoring programs which encourage women only as mentors for women, may actually act to lower opportunities for effective sponsorship (Blake-Beard, 2001).

It seems that although networking and mentoring are necessary parts of developing one's social capital, the key component is access to people of influence and, gaining their sponsorship. Thus, women's advancement is not necessarily improved with mentoring only, but must be include support from those in positions of influence and power. Nugent et. al. (2013) say that this is an often unrecognised factor and needs further research. They use Kram's (1985) definition of sponsorship stating that it is the active advocacy and support of a protégé by someone in a position of influence. Sponsors provide protégés with important introductions to key people and environments. They also will recommend a protégé for stretch assignments and will advocate for her/him

when openings or promotion opportunities arise. Sponsorship is often thought of as career support in terms of mentoring, and quite commonly has been thought of as a sub-set of mentoring (Foust-Cummings et al., 2011). However, Ibarra et. al. (2010) say that it sponsorship needs to be considered as distinct from mentoring. They say that although mentors can become sponsors, they usually don't have access to sources of power and influence in order to be effective sponsors. Good sponsorship can act as a powerful tool for career advancement for both women and men. However, it is not risk free. Sponsorship can result in increased visibility in an organisation which has the potential to be both beneficial and negative. As stated earlier in the discussion about pregnancy, visibility is a paradoxical issue for women in organisations. This is discussed in detail when I review the research on women in HE. Sponsorship can also be risky for the sponsor as it presents a potential for reputational damage (Nugent et al., 2013). Although there is evidence that sponsorship is a highly effective tool for advancement in organisations, there is little empirical research on how it works for women. The following is an example of how formal sponsorship programs can be successful.

According to a Catalyst (2011) report which explores effective organisational practices for moving women into senior roles, Deutsche Bank's (ATLAS), a formal sponsorship program aimed at the advancement of women, has been a success. The report highlights the key factors which contributed to that success. Firstly, it was important that the drive for diversity was seen as a business need,

secondly, organisational leaders were held accountable for the success of the program, thirdly, the framework was highly structured and fully transparent. In this program women who were identified as high performers were paired with someone from the General Executive Committee (GEC) and were given access to high profile assignments aimed at preparing them for a senior role. After the year-long program, 45% of women were in new or expanded roles. Although this case study provides some evidence for the positive impact of formal sponsorship for women, there is still a need to explore the issue of informal sponsorship. Many of the participants in my research talked about a sponsor or sponsors who had been central to their career advancement. It would be interesting to know the extent of this practice in women's career experiences and to understand the conditions in which good sponsorship occurs.

What has been highlighted in the discussion about social capital is the key role of power and access to organisational power in the advancement of women to senior positions. Whereas, the discussion in many women's leadership development programs focus on human capital, for example (Atkins, 2016, Forum, 2015), it is clear that social capital and power relations are more significant (Metz and Tharenou, 2001). One approach in careers research which focuses on social capital and power is that which uses Bourdieu's Social Action Theory. As this theory is central to my thesis, the literature which takes this approach is outlined below.

2.1.3.i Careers Research Using Bourdieu

One of the earliest works which used a Bourdieusian lens to examine careers was an attempt to create a grand theory of careers (Iellatchitch et al., 2003). Although this work does not deal solely with the careers of women, it is important because it provides an understanding of the value of using Bourdieu's theory to create a holistic view of career. It presents careers as a field, more precisely, a type of social field which comprises the core concepts of capital and habitus. Iellatitch et al. argue that Bourdieu's theory is useful because it avoids the separation of the objective and subjective i.e. action and structure can be examined simultaneously, as careers occur where context and individual experiences intersect. They introduce the concept of career capital, which is a form of capital which allows for the individual to move between fields, thereby, developing the capacity to be adaptable and flexible, a central discourse of the 'new career'. Finally, Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital and habitus foregrounds the role of power and struggle in careers

Bourdieu's theory has gained an increased interest in recent years in careers research and organisational research more generally. The value of using this approach is that it highlights the role of relationality and reflexivity (Swartz, 2008, Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011, Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008).

A number of recent studies have begun to use Bourdieu to examine women's careers and women's lived experiences as his theory and concepts are seen to be helpful in understanding the persistence of women's relatively poor positions in the workplace. Using the concept of 'field' to understand workplaces, and professions encourages an analysis of relative power positions and hence, forefronts the role of power and gender. In addition, viewing structure and agency as interrelated allows for the ability to research macro discourses as reflected in the lived experiences and narratives of women.

Susan Sayce (2006) examined the role of gender and gender change in industrial relations. She found that Bourdieu's theory can be used effectively to understand women's access to capital and how this can facilitate or constrain their progress within unions. Building on Bourdieu's theory of capital, Kate Huppatz (2009) and others (Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010, Duberley and Cohen, 2010) have introduced the idea of gendering career capital with Huppatz presenting 'feminine' and 'female' capital as potential new concepts to understand different power relations in feminized and traditionally feminine industries, such as the caring industries.   In more recent work it has been argued that the gendered nature of entrepreneurship and how masculinist discourses, (mis)recognition and symbolic violence in entrepreneurship education create spaces where the notion of entrepreneurship is normatively masculine goes unchallenged (Jones and Warhuus, 2014, Silke Tegtmeier and Jones, 2015)

Powell and Sang (2015) explored the everyday life experiences of women in the Construction and Engineering sector. Their focus was on the 'everyday sexism' that women might encounter due to working in a male dominated profession. They used Bourdieu's theory of social action, particularly the concepts of capital, habitus and symbolic violence to help understand women's lived experiences. Their study identified a number of processes related to persistent discrimination i.e. othering and (mis)recognition. 'Othering' occurred through exclusion from action, tasks and networks and the use of sexist humour. They argue that the exclusion practices are likely to result in women in this profession developing less human and social capital than their male counterparts, thus, creating barriers to career advancement. The use of humour, and women's responses to sexist humour, was perceived to be a mechanism for social boundary setting which acts to maintain the exclusion of women to the core group and supports men's homosociality (Watts, 2007). Moreover, women's reactions to sexist humour was to view it as inevitable and acceptable, with women creating justifications for this behaviour i.e. 'they are older men and they're not used to women' Powell and Sang (2015) point out that the emphasis was always on how the women would 'fit in' with the men's ways rather than the other way around. This theme of justifying differential treatment also appeared in women's (mis)recognition of gender discrimination. Differential treatment was viewed as 'natural' and due to essential and naturalized gender differences or was considered to be not about gender. For example, the young women in their

sample stated that there is no gender discrimination whilst at the same time describing instances of gender discrimination. Bourdieu calls this (mis)recognition which is a core feature of the process of symbolic violence. Here women and men have internalised gender discourses which present gender differences as 'natural' and innate. In fact, some women expanded on these supposed 'natural' differences and talked about how they used their femininity and difference to their advantage e.g. getting help from men to lift heavy objects. Kate Huppatz's concept of 'female capital' is used to explain women's behaviour. This is distinct from 'feminine capital' as it never dominates 'male capital'. Feminine capital refers to the privileged position of femininity in feminized industries. This is a type of cultural capital because it stems from socialisation processes (Huppatz, 2009).   Powell and Sang's (2015) final finding was the role of resisting gendered norms. They found very little resistance and, most of the young women were not involved in women's advancement activities, such as women's networking. What they did find was evidence of small everyday acts of defiance. They give the example of a young woman deliberately making a cup of tea badly, when asked by an older male colleague. Her intention was to ensure that she was never asked again. What is interesting about this level of resistance is that it fails to surface the power inequalities present in the situation. In fact, the lack of challenge indicates the lack of power that this young woman feels in her work. It also acts as a signal to the men that the 'natural order' of tasks in the workplace is that women do the domestic chores. Powell and Sang (ibid.) argue that there is a need for further work on the role of (mis)recognition

and symbolic violence in the persistence of everyday discrimination. They say that Bourdieu's theory of social action is a useful tool for understanding why women don't advance to senior positions.

What this body of work, using Bourdieu's theories, demonstrates is the importance of illuminating the hidden and subtle forms of (re)production of gender discrimination in the workplace. Taking a Bourdieusian approach provides an opportunity to view structure and agency as in relation with one another. In addition, it requires an emphasis on the examination of the whole i.e. the individual in context and time, not just the individual. It also requires a recognition that research must address issues of 'historicization' and 'essentialism'. Finally, it forces a discussion about power and relative power positions and how these are (re)produced and maintained through various forms of capital, including symbolic capital. A more detailed discussion of Bourdieu's theory of social action, including the concepts of field, habitus, capital and symbolic violence can be found in the chapter which covers the theoretical framework for this thesis.

2.1.4   The history of the European University – Where were the Women?

According to Bourdieu (2001) in order to resist the 'dehistoricization' which encourages a false naturalization of gender differences, it is important to always

start research by placing the issue of study into its historical framework .

'Dehistoricization' is seen to be a key process in obscuring unequal power

relations by presenting differences in gender, class, race etc. as 'naturally'

occurring. Exploration of the history and historical turns is the first step towards

illuminating power relations within the 'field' i.e. UK HE. Bourdieu's concept of

'field' will be described in detail later. Thus, prior to outlining the key issues

highlighted by the literature, it is necessary to set out the historical, political and

cultural context within which universities as organisations have developed. It is

hoped that this will act to demonstrate that HE is set in an historical context

where university is a place devised by men for men. In addition, it is a place for

men of privilege and power. I also discuss 'common sense' notions such as

status differences given to forms of knowledge (physics as more valued than art)

which act to set the agenda for the continued and persistent gender inequity in

the UK HE sector.

The first degree awarding universities appeared in Europe in the 11th Century.

These were developed by the church with a remit for training the privileged men

in society for classical professions (Thorstendahl, 1993). At this time knowledge

was conceptualised as coming from God and knowledge which was treasured

was theological and philosophical in content. It is essential to note two key points

about early universities. Firstly, they were constructed to support the status quo

and to train those who would uphold the state. Secondly, this historical and

cultural context of an elite, male driven engine of the state aids in an

understanding of the current state of the culture in our older and elite groups of universities in the UK. Management literature indicates that making changes to organisational culture is particularly difficult. This is made tougher when cultural practices are embedded and supported by organisational structures and legislative/policy practices.

By the 17th and 18th centuries with the advent of the age of enlightenment and the industrial revolution, new kinds of knowledge began to be considered as worthy of study in universities. There was now a switch to a preference for scientific knowledge and rational modes of thought. Universities at this time were independent self-governing institutions, generally communities of scholars funded by endowments or patrons. They were still patronised by the government at this time and were still organisations for the male elite in society (Boden and Epstein, 2011). The major split from the church came with the development of University College London by Jeremy Bentham, with this university achieving the label 'The Godless Institution of Gower Street'. Universities were clearly places for the rich and powerful.

The next phase of development led to Redbrick and Civic universities which aimed to develop new types of knowledge exploring the industrial, practical and the arts. The Civic university focused on the development of knowledge to enhance the economy of the city (Sanderson, 1972). At this time universities

began to be truly independent of the state, funded by endowments, philanthropy and fees. Still places for the rich and powerful and now with the power to shape economic activity in the city. It was at this point that women began to gain access to universities. Education was highly segregated with the development of women only colleges. An insight into women's experiences of university at this time comes from the writings of Virginia Woolf. She highlights how women had access but were also excluded access at the same time (this theme of present but not fully included emerges later in my findings). She was allowed to study at Cambridge University but was not given a room of her own in which to study (unlike the men) nor was she allowed access to the library (Woolf, 1977). Thus, although women appeared to have access, they were in fact still excluded from full participation.

This overt versus covert activity is still prevalent today. As stated previously, figures show that there is equity of access for women to UK universities both as students and academics. In fact, in most universities, female students enjoy a greater representation than their male counterparts (HESA, 2012). However, a more detailed inspection reveals a continued disadvantage for women in universities, especially female academics at the more senior levels. In their research on recruitment and selection in HE (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012, Benschop and Brouns, 2003) found that despite a greater presence for women in career pipelines, in all disciplines women's presence diminishes the higher up the hierarchy. This suggests that although there has been improved access for

women, there may still be barriers when it comes to accessing power based positions.

Greater participation by women continued as universities began to expand with the greatest expansion in the 1950s and 1960s. Universities were now state funded but not wholly governed by the state and research funding continued under the Haldane Principle which had been introduced post WW1. This resulted in the development of new research allocation structures, the University Grants Committee (UGC) and now the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which placed grant decisions in the hands of scientists and not politicians. With revolutionary social and cultural changes in the 1960s and 1970s universities became organisations where new social, cultural and political knowledge could be explored and promulgated. In 1962 the UGC created seven new universities to address the growing demand for university and an increasing interest in equal access to education across society. According to Filippakou and Tapper (2014) the concern was that existing universities were not responding quickly enough to the need for larger student numbers and that they were reluctant to update curricula . The university sector began to become increasingly diverse in terms of staff and students. Lifelong tenure and no external curriculum control meant that academics enjoyed the greatest levels of academic freedom at this time (Talib and Steele, 2000).

A major turnaround occurred during the 1980s with the implementation of the Jarratt Report in1985. This introduced the dismantling of the Haldane Principle and a closer coupling between university funding and the desires of the state. It may be that the influx of non-elite groups into universities in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a cause for concern by those in power. Now universities had become places where those without power could have a voice. Rather than upholding the status quo, knowledge from universities began to question the sovereignty of the current political structure. Control of universities and academics was partly achieved through the development of the new Research Councils and the introduction of an audit mentality to research activity i.e. the Research Assessment Exercise began a major change in the nature of UK universities (Talib and Steele, 2000, Thomas, 2001). This led to some universities engaging in market self-positioning and seeking alliances with similar institutions. The idea was to shape policy and strategy for the sector. For example, 1994 saw the development of two university alliance groups or mission groups. First, a number of large research intensive universities banded together to form the Russell Group. Secondly, in response to this development, the 1994 group was formed. These were smaller research intensive universities with the additional aim of creating innovation in teaching. The latter was disbanded in 2013 after key members moved to the Russell Group (Filippakou and Tapper, 2014). Thus began the application of neo-liberalist ideologies to the production of knowledge which has resulted in ongoing structural and cultural changes within the university sector. Research suggests that these changes have impacted more

negatively on female academics than their male counterparts (Barry et al., 2012, White et al., 2011, Deem, 2003).

> *Thus new public management reforms have been said to be carriers of masculine discourses, emphasizing competition and instrumental reason that has not been to the benefit of women…(Barry et al., 2012)p.54*

What is revealed through this brief examination of the history of universities is that both their historical and cultural roots and their relationship with society (via the state) result in a problematic context in which women can make a full contribution. The sector was created by and for elite men and evidence of this is still embedded in the structures and culture of pre-1992 universities i.e. through organisational hierarchies, decision making processes and recruitment and selection processes. In addition, with the advent of major changes to the funding of the university sector and the consequent rise of new managerialism, the modern university now has to align its activity more closely with that of the desires of the state. This new focus on objective performance measures could have resulted in greater transparency of organisational activities which may have benefited women by making their contributions more explicit. A stronger focus on quantification and measurement of work and output could have been a positive outcome for women. However, rather than academic freedom or intellectual curiosity driving university activity, funding options work to push activity within the bounds of the concept of the 'knowledge driven economy' (Boden and Epstein, 2011). Thus, the knowledge creation activities in universities must have 'value' for the UK economy. Knowledge generation is not

a 'free' activity but is constrained by those in power through funding mechanisms such as research councils, big Pharma or the military industrial complex. Equally it is constrained by research audit mechanisms i.e. the Research Exercise Framework (REF). The REF has been deeply criticised as an unfair bureaucratic exercise which favours older white males (Sayer, 2014). Even teaching practices are experiencing the tight hand of control. What can be taught to students is often controlled through the powers of external accreditation bodies. Market pressures result in the need for programmes to have these highly valued 'badges' of quality e.g. AACSB and AMBA. Recent literature seeks to explore the extent to which this sector shift has or will impact upon women in HE. This is discussed next.

2.1.5   Higher Education, a 'Home' for Women Academics?

As stated previously, despite women having greater representation in HE than men, their representation in leadership positions which wield the greatest organisational power is still very poor (Ely et al., 2011). This resistance to change in HE and in particular older and higher status institutions such as the pre-1992 universities needs further enquiry.

According to Allan (2011), women in higher education are beset with a range of issues which impact upon their career experiences, including; challenges to

work/family balance, the 'ideal worker' norm, conceptualisations of leadership (as male), occupational segregation and salary inequity. When these issues are viewed through an intersectional perspective, it can be argued that these barriers have an even greater negative impact for women of colour, lesbian women and those with a disability (Allan, 2011). This reflects the experiences of women in other industry sectors.

One of the key guiding theoretical frameworks which helps to explain these issues, is that of the gendered organisation (Acker, 2006). That is that HE institutions operate in a way to privilege men over women and that this occurs through, structural and cultural processes. Note that Acker repositions HE in its historical context thereby exposing structural and culture process which act to provide different experiences for men and women in the field of HE. By engaging in this re-historicizing, Acker exposes the myth of the organisation as neutral and meritocratic and instead brings to the fore the role of power structures. Acker's conceptualisation of bias against women is perceived as a largely unconscious or 'mindless' process of the uncritical acceptance, maintenance and promulgation of norms and stereotypes which are enacted in organisational structures, processes and culture. Given the historical roots of academia as outlined above, it is not surprising that UK universities remain gendered. This view does not position inequity processes as driven by misogynistic individuals, but rather that there is a more subtle and hidden process. This view is counter to the utopian view of

academia described by Henkel (1997), who believes that academia can be
characterised by:

> *'security of academic tenure, relatively generous allocations
> of time, relatively low levels of administration, a common
> salary structure, the interdependence of at least teaching and
> research, an emphasis on equality values in the allocation of
> work and the idea that academic specialisation is discipline
> rather than functionally based.'* Henkel (1997)p.138

This discourse which represents academia as neutral, well balanced and
focused on values of equity, is part of the reason why gender equity has been so
slow in HE. If the structures, policies and processes of academia are seen to be
either gender neutral or pro-equity, then the risk is that researchers will, turn the
lens away from structures of power and, invoke the deficit model which looks at
the 'lack' within women. A discourse which creates a view of academia as either
neutral to gender or welcoming to women is supported by a raft of changes to
legislation and the development of equality policies. However, what is evident
from recent research is that there is a gap between the 'seen' and 'unseen'.
Although policy and legislation changes appear to have achieved gender
transparency in practices, it seems that this has simply resulted in a greater
subtlety to gender discrimination with 'actual' practices remaining largely the
same as prior to these changes (Numhauser-Henning, 2006, Morley, 2006,
Pritchard, 2010, White et al., 2011, Fletcher et al., 2007, Van den Brink, 2011). A
stereotypical view of women's role and related appropriate work/status seems to
persist. For example, there is evidence that the role of leader is still largely
perceived to be masculine, i.e. the male leader is the norm and hence, female is

'other' (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012). This effect also tends to apply to issues of class, race and disability (Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012), hence, it appears that people hold what Lord and his colleagues would describe as an implicit, prototype of an effective leader and here in the UK that is still a white, middle class male (Lord et al., 2001). Leadership and the role of prototypes is discussed in detail later. In addition, any activities which relate to 'caring' tend to be seen as the domain of women e.g. welfare tutoring role (Ramsay and Letherby, 2006). Also, any organisational administration tasks associated with 'maintenance' or 'housekeeping' are often allocated more to women than men (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012, Bird et al., 2004). It is important to note that roles of these type do not contribute to the development of the social capital thought to be necessary to move into more senior positions (Singh et al., 2006, Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010).

In their work looking at recruitment and selection processes across three academic fields van den Brink and Benschop (2012) show how despite strict equality driven human resource policy, gender bias in recruitment strategies are still prevalent. What is more, these work to impede the significant changes that are required to address inequality in universities. The first point they make is that the notion of 'general academic practice' is a misnomer. Their research highlighted how different disciplines have developed very different ways of recruiting and selecting senior candidates. For example, in medicine the gap between potential candidates and actual applicants is markedly high (22% of

candidates drops to only 9% applicants). This is due to the way in which

applicants are identified, through a closed recruitment process, which involves

the use of scouts who rely on formal and informal networks to identify potentially

good candidates and ask them to apply. As these scouts are privileged males

who are embedded in the 'old boys' network of medicine, it is not surprising that

that few women are asked to apply. Van den Brink & Benschop (Ibid.) surmise

that two key inequality practices are taking place here, 1) that scouts adopt a

paternalistic stance toward women and 2) that the image of women does not

match the image of manager, as in the implicit prototyping process. In addition,

the overall concept of women as 'other' and men as 'the norm' also contributes

towards a bias in favour of male candidates (Czarniawska and Hopfl, 2002).

Van den Brink & Benshcop (op.cit.), in their analysis of talk between those on

recruitment panels illuminate how bias through paternalism can be so damaging

despite a seemingly 'caring' intention. Discussion around the extra stress placed

upon a female candidate who has children. The following quote provides an

example of a desire to protect.

> *'you shouldn't place such high demands on women*
> *candidates with family responsibilities' (male committee*
> *member) p.79.*

According to Martin (2006) this paternalistic masculinity results in maintaining

and promulgating the stereotype of woman as main carer of children and that the

family responsibility lies with the mother alone. This type of conversation is unlikely to occur if a male candidate has children.

An added element of gender bias was also evidenced through the talk of selection panels. This is the tendency to perceive leaders as male and women as 'other'. Often the leadership skills of women were questioned, with no supporting evidence. Phrases used to justify these questions were that a woman made;

> '…We thought that she was too diffident, not vigorous enough, not capable of managing the group, to be boss. I just thought she was too sweet.' (male committee member) P.80.

A final element which is highlighted as impacting upon selection for a senior medical academic role is that of physical appearance. Given that men are considered to be the 'norm' for the role of leader, then the expectation is that male physical attributes are coupled more closely with notions of 'effective leader'. Women who are particularly small and very traditionally feminine in appearance appear to be assessed poorly on ability to lead.

> 'Once heard a story of a very competent candidate, a woman, small in size, fragile, and a [male] member of the university board said: "Well should we take that **girl**?" So physical appearance is something crucial. (male committee member) p.80

So in medicine women are clearly at a disadvantage in comparison with men, having to overcome their 'otherness', physical appearance and likely lack of informal networks. These practices in medicine are in addition to those found in the other two disciplines studied by Van den Brink & Benschop (Ibid.). In the humanities, promotion occurs through the exclusionary practices of masculine information and support systems. In terms of support, this comes from current male professors seeking to 'grow' their future male successors. Future successors are recognised and mentored through male networks where they learn the right ways to 'move up' the organisation. Thus, despite policy attempts to make visible promotional procedures, information about promotion is kept invisible or hidden through the everyday cultural masculinist practices.

In the natural sciences, there was a smaller discrepancy between the potential pool of women candidates and those finally appointed. However, of the three disciplines examined this one has the lowest number of potential female candidates. The main gender bias practice witnessed in this discipline is the presence of the need for women to conform to the image of the 'ideal scientist' which is male in description. Skills associated with the 'ideal scientist' are technical ability, physical strength and focused goal orientation. These are also perceived to be skills that come more 'naturally' to men than women. It seems that when it comes to selection, women are measured against this standard which they often fail to meet due to skewed perceptions of their performance as women are seen to be less likely to 'intrinsically' hold these skills (Schiebinger,

66

1989). This effect could account for the fact that the natural sciences lose women much earlier in the career pipeline, with many deciding to switch from a science career in school. This results in even fewer role models further signaling that the natural sciences are not for women.

To summarise, it seems that within this one area of organisational activity, recruitment and selection, there appear to be some overarching and invidious inequality practices which occur across disciplines but that there are also discipline specific practices which work to continue to exclude women and/or encourage women to believe that they are not the 'right fit' for senior academic positions.

This exploration illuminates some of the reasons why, despite large strides in equality legislation and policy, women's presence at the top of HE is still largely unusual. Change needs to occur in the culture and practices within organisations. It also needs to occur in the mindsets of those who wield power, most particularly to change the polarised view of gender with the supposed presence of 'female' and 'male' attitudes, behaviours and 'natural' skill sets, with the typical male being privileged. This is despite evidence which contradicts a major difference in 'actual' day to day management and leadership. When actual sociolinguistic behaviour is recorded, as opposed to self-report or follower perceptions, there appears to be no difference in the styles of men and women

with both men and women opting for the 'normatively feminine' management style (Ladegaard, 2011a). In addition, differences in vocabulary range are small with men tending to draw on a wider verbal repertoire than women but using speech with is both normatively male and female. What is interesting is that when these same managers are assessed by their employees, whilst male managers' leadership is never questioned, female managers experience regular questions to their authority by male colleagues (Ladegaard, 2011a). This again speaks to the presence of gendered leadership with the 'norm' for leadership having a male image. Despite using the same speech behaviours, these women's leader positions were challenged by male colleagues, not because they 'performed' differently but because they are perceived as 'other' and a poor fit to the 'ideal' leader image.

This tendency to 'think manager, think male' is identified by (Schein, 2007) and (Mihail, 2006) as key to the lack of women in positions of power and that this is a global phenomenon. Jill Blackmore's work on globalisation and restructuring of HE (2002) suggests that there is a need to explore the male advantage as well as the female disadvantage, to illuminate the practices which confer advantage as well as those which create disadvantage whilst also changing the equity discourse from one of a 'women only' issue and more perniciously, a 'women's problem'. It places the issue of inequity at the heart of the organisation as it explicates that whilst there is a persistent disadvantage to some there is an equal persistent advantage to others. She also points out that the need to widen equity

activity to include class, ethnicity and disability is also pressing. The important

work on intersectionality will be discussed later.

Another key consideration that is raised in the literature is that of HE as a 'chilly

climate' for women (Acker and Feuerverger, 1996, Aisenberg and Harrington,

1988, Bagilhole, 1993, Barres, 2006, Collective, 1995). It is suggested that

ensuring that women have equal access to positions of power is not sufficient to

achieve equality of opportunity. This is because when appointed, the woman is

still positioned within a gendered organisation which tends to favour men. Thus,

it presents a 'chilly climate' for women (Maranto and E.C., 2010, Ryan and

Haslam, 2004). The negative perceptions as outlined previously concerning the

gendered nature of leadership and the image of the 'ideal scientist' continue to

operate even when women are given equal access to power. In addition, Ryan

and Haslam (2005) go further and present evidence to show that when women

do gain access to very senior positions it is in particular circumstances. Their

study followed the appointment of women to executive board positions to assess

whether there was a disadvantage to an organisation when women achieved

senior appointments. This had been the rhetoric promoted to justify the lack of

women executive board appointments. The study chose to look at the

relationship between new female appointments, stock market performance and

organisational performance. What they identified was a tendency for

organisations to appoint women to the board at times of organisational crisis. It

seems that at difficult times, there is a lack of appropriately experienced men and

at this time, women gain a seeming advantage. However, as Ryan & Haslam

(Ibid.) point out, this presents an unequal playing field for women as men get to

lead when times are good, hence, they have a chance to be perceived as

effective and successful leaders, whilst women tend to lead when times are

precarious and hence, have less of an opportunity to be perceived as effective

and successful. Indeed, there is a greater chance that they will be considered

the 'cause' of the organisation's decline or lack of performance. They coined the

term 'glass cliff' in contrast to the 'glass ceiling' to indicate the risky positions in

which women senior executives often occupy.

To recap the key issues for women in HE, despite considerable changes to

legislation and policy in the UK HE environment, women still suffer discrimination

through a number of organisational processes, including recruitment and

selection, masculinist notions of leadership, biased follower evaluations,

exclusion from information and support networks, a 'chilly climate' and differential

opportunities to lead, culminating in a 'glass cliff' effect.

In addition to this wide range of structural and cultural conditions which impede

women in their access to power, there is another complex effect for women to

navigate. This is what has been termed the paradox of visibility and invisibility

(Van den Brink, 2009, Tyler and Cohen, 2010). Due to the fact that women are

cast as 'other' in the gendered world of paid work coupled with the rarity of

women at very senior levels, any woman who takes on a leadership role in HE is immediately 'visible' (Kanter, 1977). Her difference from the 'norm' (male) places her in a position of vulnerable visibility. Unlike any newly appointed male counterpart, her action or inaction will be under greater scrutiny as she is being constantly held up to the 'standard' (male). Hence, she may feel that her first job is to demonstrate that she is 'up to standard'. She is also likely to experience a need to defend her decisions and actions. Thus, she is forced into carrying the burden of representing her category. In these terms, men enjoy gender invisibility being viewed as an individual rather than as male (Kanter, 1977). This unwanted visibility can lead to women either taking on a male persona or exhibiting 'male characteristics' (being like the boys) or deliberately emphasising a female persona (Bruni and Gherardi, 2002). What is interesting here is that for a woman in a leadership position, the dominant social discourse can begin to shape and change a woman's identity. Or as Foucault would put it, gender power relations, through discourse, create a context within which women are constrained to fully express their agency (Foucault, 1983). Paradoxically, at the same time as being 'vulnerably visible', women experience being 'invisible' as an individual. This leads to them finding that their experiences, views, attitudes and opinions are continually silenced. This silencing process can occur as a process of self-silencing as a woman's response to the highly masculine context.

There appears to be a number of structural, social historical and cultural effects which impact upon women in their work in UK HE institutions. Further, it is

postulated, in line with a Bourdieusian view that these act to shape expectations of women's place in HE and to constrain women's own expression of agency. It is suggested that due to the strong and persistent presence of the notion of leadership as male, these processes will be particularly strong as women move into senior, strategic leadership positions within UK HE. What follows is an exploration of the literature relating to gender and leadership, Selected research from the mainstream leadership literature is also examined. This will demonstrate that   although leadership is presented as androcentric and universal, it is actually a masculine and agentic view of leadership.

2.1.6 *Women in Senior Roles: Taking on a Leader Identity*

Those in senior management roles in HE are considered to be leaders of the organisation. Moving into a leadership position requires that the person in that role will be able to develop an effective leader identity (Sheridan 2013 in Vinnicome et al.) With the increase in managerialism in HE in the UK there has also been a greater focus on the need for senior management to engage in 'excellent leadership'.

Thus, what has developed is a discourse on leadership as an organisational panacea has been termed 'leaderism' (O'Reilly and Reed, 2010), and 'the leaderist turn' (Morley, 2013). This results in great hopes for leaders in the public

sector. This is places an extra expectation on senior management. It is not enough to be an effective manager, one must also engage in what Gardner & Avolio refer to as the dramaturgical process of leadership, to use impression management to create a convincing leader identity (Gardner and Avolio, 1998). These two key issues, the leaderist turn, and leadership as impression management create a difficulty for women in senior roles as leader identity is normatively masculine. The 'leaderist turn' encourages a perception of the leader as 'hero', which is a traditionally a male role (Western, 2013). In addition, research demonstrates that there is a preference for male leaders, and males in leadership positions are routinely evaluated better than their female counterparts (Scott and Brown, 2006). According to Lord et. al (2001) leader assessments are driven by a cognitive construct they call a leader prototype. They say that the leader prototype is activated in different ways in relation to gender stereotypes.

> *For example, though male and female leaders may have many similar characteristics, the interpretation of the same behavior (e.g., shows empathy and provides support may convey very different meanings for male leaders (e.g.,"nice guy") and female leaders (e.g., "not tough enough"), because there are many other constraints that vary with gender. (Lord et al., 2001 p. 318)*

Scott and Brown (2006) examined the relationship between leader prototype encoding and gender and found that when a woman enacts in ways that can be described as agentic, individuals had difficulty encoding these behaviours to the leadership prototype. Thus, when women act out of gender stereotype, they are not categorised as a leader. This contradicts the common sense notion that

women should behave more like the stereotypical man to succeed. It seems that due to gender identity expectations, a more communal approach to leadership is more expected of women. Given that the dominant view of 'effective leadership' is still male, heroic and agentic, this theoretical approach provides some explanation for why women are still not present in senior leadership positions. If there is an expectation that 'good leaders' will be agentic and leader prototypes are not activated when women are agentic, then what is occurring is an unconscious bias toward stereotypical men as leaders.

These social cognitive theories of leadership demonstrate that a perception bias mars the impression management efforts of females trying to develop an identity of 'effective leader'. This is important because the notion of organisational leaders as pivotal to an organisation's success is one which persists, despite a lack of research evidence to support this view (Davis and Useem, 2002).

Within the public sector, leadership is seen as essential for the efficient working of state funded organisations (Gill op. cit.). The growing complexity of the effective and efficient delivery of publicly funded services is seen to be resolved through the appointment of the 'right ' leaders and more recently by the practices of effective leadership throughout the organisation. The allocation of large budgets and high profile initiatives demonstrates the faith that UK governments have in 'good' leadership as the panacea for the problems faced by modern

public sector organisations (NHS, 2013). Indeed, Higher Education as a sector

has its own organisation dedicated to the development of leadership skills. The

Leadership Foundation for Higher Education identifies its mission as:

> *The Leadership Foundation is committed to developing and*
> *improving the management and leadership skills of existing*
> *and future leaders of higher education. Wherever the*
> *opportunity arises we shall work in partnership with a range of*
> *organisations within and outside of higher education for the*
> *benefit of the sector.*

Thus, in the current context of UK HE those in senior positions are viewed as not

just senior managers, but as leaders. This is crucial for women moving into

senior positons due to the gendered nature of the concept of leadership

(Ladegaard, 2011b, Binns, 2010). This makes it necessary to examine the

themes within the literature on women and leadership.

Although research on leadership and what makes an 'effective leader' covers

over a century, the issue of gender has only recently been seriously explored. In

fact, the leadership literature engages in what Bourdieu and Wacquant call 'false

naturalization' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). By ignoring the issue of gender,

the norm of leaders as male is developed. The mainstream leadership literature

presents stereotypically male characteristics and behaviours as 'effective

leadership'.

The body of work which has focused on women and leadership covers a range of theoretical positions. I draw on the work of Ely et al. (2003) and use their concept of four different frames on gender to help gain an understanding of how perspectives within gender and leadership research differ. The following provides an outline of this framework. Frame 1 refers to the view that there are sex differences which result in women being less able than men, in terms of leadership. This may be due to inherent biological differences or sex role socialisation. Whichever, both result in the need to 'fix the women'. Organisational responses include, helping women to develop the 'right skills' and the minimisation of sex and gender differences in organisations. This approach places male leadership as the norm, devalues women and restricts the ways in which leadership can be defined. Note that in most 'gender and leadership' literature, the focus is on women and leadership and not men and leadership.

Frame 2 moves the lens onto a celebration of differences and more accurately a privileging of the feminine. The notion of difference is not challenged but rather, women's ways, such as relationship building and nurturing are seen as better ways of leading. In addition, men are seen to be lacking in these skills.

Frame 3 rejects the notion of individual differences and instead places an emphasis on the role of the situation or context. The argument here is that women are underrepresented in leadership roles due to differences in

opportunities, reward and power all of which emanate from societal structures. Sexist attitudes towards women are viewed as the main culprit, and change will be achieved through new legislation, policy and practices. The aim is to change structures or at least mitigate against the damage caused by them.

Frame 4 builds on and rejects some of the ideas of the previous three frames. The idea of sex based differences is rejected and gender similarities are highlighted. However, the idea of leadership as male normed is accepted with the recognition that new norms need to be created. The notion of either an individual's sex or gender resulting in 'better' leadership is also rejected. In addition, frame 4 widens the net of underrepresentation and disadvantage saying that research should not just focus on women but also on other damage and disadvantages which result from the current white, male, middle/upper-class, heterosexual leadership norm. Here the view is that currently many people are excluded from making a contribution to leadership practices in organisations, and that it is not just those individuals who suffer, but also wider society. Robin Ely asks:

> *'Who else is missing from these roles?' What else is missing from the activity we call leadership? What new possibilities open up for people and organizations when the gendered aspects of leadership come to light?' (Ely et al. 2003 p.156)*

Thus, Frame 4 sees the study of gender inequalities in organisational life as a window through which new light can be shed upon the status quo of 'doing

business'. The gendered lens is used to illuminate the 'taken for granted' and 'hidden' aspects of societal norms which are played out in the everyday world of work. The purpose of this exposure is to achieve social change which moves to a more equitable society.

What follows is an outline of the key literature on gender and leadership. The four frames described above are used to critique and identify the position of research. In the field of business, interest in gender and leadership focused on women and leadership began in force, in the 1970s with the publication of a number of books both business practice and academic. At that time the focus was on why women were experiencing problems in accessing management and leadership positions (Loring and Wells, 1972, Larwood and Wood, 1977, Gordon and Strober, 1975, Kanter, 1977). Most of these writings expressed views which could be described as falling into Frame 1 and Frame 3 i.e. differences were discussed in either terms of sex differences where women are lacking (frame 1) or structural barriers (frame 3). Key ideas introduced in these early works were; the need for training for women, the need for legislation to address pay inequalities and the need to explore affirmative action or positive discrimination practices. Kanter's seminal work on the harmful effects of tokenism set the stage for greater exploration of the social, cultural and psychological impacts of often well intended organisational approaches to improving equality of opportunity (Kanter, 1977).

The main interest in the research field to emerge from this early work was on further exploration of the 'determinants' of sex and/or gender related leadership differences. In much of the early work, the terms sex and gender are used interchangeably with the individual's sex being determined by her/his presenting gender (Fulop et al., 2009, Ely and Padavic, 2007). In addition, the predominant masculine way of leading was taken as a neutral norm with men in leadership positions seen as 'gender neutral' and women in leadership positions viewed as 'other'(Fairhurst, 2007, Höpfl and Matilal, 2007). Hence, as in mainstream leadership research, the very notion of women and leadership was implicitly problematised.

The search for sex differences in leadership led to a number of studies but w conclusion. Some researchers report clear differences whilst others report little or no difference. Judy Rosener (1990) analysed results from a large survey study of business executives and reported some interesting similarities between men and women which are counter to extant literature. She found that both men and women experience family barriers to their careers and that women executives' households had twice the level of income as those of their male counterparts. In addition, she reports some considerable differences, concluding that men describe their leadership as more 'transactional' whilst women describe theirs as more 'transformational' (note that this is counter to Alvesson and Sveningsson's (2003) findings where men described their leadership as 'transformational'). After undertaking some follow up interviews with the women

who described their style as 'transformational', she concluded that women exhibit, what she termed, 'interactional leadership'. She goes on to posit that this form of leadership, which is more people focused and collaborative, is a better form of leadership than the traditional 'command and control'. She positions women and men as much more equal in organisations in the 1990s than previously, even saying that,

> 'Until the 1960s, men and women received different signals
> about what was expected of them.' (Rosener 1990 p124.)

This quote implies that differential gender expectations were only an issue prior to the 1960s and is now something which occurred in the past. This notion that gender discrimination is something of the past also emerges in my findings. A description given by one of her participants of her 'enthusiastic' leadership style provides evidence that gendered expectations and frames of reference for behaviour were still in place in the 1990s.

> 'Enthusiasm can sometimes be misunderstood. In
> conservative professions like investment banking, such an
> upbeat leadership style can be interpreted as cheerleading
> and undermine one's credibility. … One of the women
> acknowledged that her colleagues don't understand or like
> her leadership style and have called it 'cheerleading'. (Ibid..
> p124)

What Rosener (1990) does not discuss is whether the derogatory term 'cheerleading' would have been used to describe enthusiasm in a man in the same leadership positon. Clearly, behaviour was still perceived of and framed in

terms of gender, expectations resulting in different evaluations of the same

behaviour for men and women. In Rosener's (1990) work, there is clear

evidence of a Frame 2 perspective, gender differences are considered to be 'real'

and women's leadership style is considered to be better for the organisation than

men's. In addition, she perceives these differences as 'natural'. She reports that

women state that their leadership style comes 'naturally' to them. What she does

not explore is the possibility that men and women are reporting behavioural

styles that are consistent with their gender stereotype. It may be that many of

the men engage in behaviours which can be described as traditionally female but

fail to report this in a survey due to the social desirability effect i.e. they wish to

be seen as 'properly' male. Here 'properly' male refers to the desire to perform

hegemonic masculinity, which has been characterised as aggressive, athletic,

competitive non-emotional and agentic (Cheng, 1996, Connell and

Messerschmidt, 2005). The idea of hegemony and hegemonic discourses is

discussed in detail in the next chapter. The same may be true for the women in

the study i.e. women report their behaviour to align well with expected notions of

femininity or 'respectable femininity'(Fernando and Cohen, 2014). The

methodological problems associated with self-report survey tools include; a

concern about levels of honesty, a tendency towards socially desirable

responses (Grimm, 2010) and, the presence of demand characteristics (Orne,

1962).

Following on from Rosener (1990), Florence Denmark (1993) found that women were described as more democratic in their leadership practice than men, primarily that they engage in more participative approaches to decision making than men. She also found that when women behaved autocratically, they are rated negatively by both men and women. In addition, when women occupied leadership positions that were more traditionally male, they were more devalued by male subordinates. Finally, male subordinates rated women higher in leadership qualities than did female subordinates (Denmark, 1993).

This work indicates that, any differences between male and female styles, is more likely to be due to differences in expectations and perceptual bias than 'natural' biology. This explanation is supported by the work of Gary Powell (2011) who has charted subordinates' perceptions of men and women in leadership positions over a period of forty years. He reports a slight shift in perceptions over that time but a preference for a man in a leadership position still persists. In addition, Denmark (op.cit) concludes that although bias was still present at that time, change was not only possible, but desirable. She goes on to talk about the lack of representation of not only white women but also women and men of colour in leadership positions. Her final point is that change and empowerment is possible but a belief that this change will be driven by women, simply because they are women is flawed. She argues that change will occur due to the leadership of feminists, and I would add, those who believe in the fight for social justice. This group comprises both men and women.

Why change has not occurred at the expected rate and suggestions for speeding up that rate of change are made in the discussion of this thesis. A further complication highlighted by Denmark's (1993) work is that, in her study, women in leadership positions tend to maintain the status quo whilst men are more likely to create change. Note that the nature of the change is not specified, hence it is not safe to assume that any change advances social justice or equality. They also do not make a point of recognising that in a gendered organisation it may be more acceptable for men to create change and men are likely to encounter less resistance. Coupled with this is the fact that an individual needs to have high status to be considered able to empower subordinates. Thus, the concern is that those who wish to create change are not allowed access to the level of power which is likely to achieve this change. This position is supported by the later work of Höpfl and Matilal (2007) in which women are positioned as a 'viewed threat' to organisational stability, unless women display more 'masculine' behaviours. I will return to this notion later in this chapter. What can be seen in Denmark's (1990) work are elements of Frame 3 and Frame 4. She recognises that gender related differences in styles are shaped by expectations and perceptions, she also makes the link between gender bias and wider social justice concerns.

The most well-known research in the area of leadership styles and gender is the work of Alice Eagly and her colleagues. This body of work spans four decades and has seen a development in both her methodology and theorising. In her

early work (Eagly, 1987), she criticised the view that differences between male and female behaviour were largely due to social cognitive biases (at this point in research, most supposed sex differences in cognition and behaviour had been deemed non-existent or negligible). Her main concern was that although scientific research had demonstrated no major differences, there had been no shift in the behaviour of the general public. Her conclusion was that this disparity between science and 'common sense' was due to the nature of scientific methods i.e. that commonly used methods were failing to support the 'common sense' view. This led her to begin applying a meta-analysis methodology to the question.

In her work with Johnson in 1990 which looked at gender and leadership style, the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are used interchangeably. This lack of specificity was common in scientific research at the time. The meta-analysis included data from studies conducted in both the laboratory and organisations. They found that results differed depending upon the research setting. In organisation based studies (which are high in ecological validity but low on control of variables) men and women, in the main, don't differ with regards to people centered or task centered orientation. In laboratory studies (which are low in ecological validity but high on control of variables) the opposite is found.   The only difference reported in both organisational and laboratory studies was that women are viewed as more democratic/participative and men are viewed as more autocratic/directive (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). In another meta-analysis which

looked at how gender impacts on evaluations of leadership, Eagly and her colleagues reported a small overall tendency for subjects to evaluate females less favourably than males. This tendency was more pronounced when women used a stereotypically masculine style and when the leadership context was traditionally male. Note that the study looked at experiments only (Eagly et al., 1992).

What is interesting in this body of research is Eagly's refusal to accept social and cultural causal explanations. As with mainstream leadership research, the majority of studies in her meta-analyses used subjective measures to assess, leader behaviours and yet the notion that perceptual filters and social cognitive biases might be affecting the way in which leaders behaviours were assessed is resisted. Later research has demonstrated that the same behaviour exhibited by men and women is encoded differently i.e. gender actually impacts on the individual's interpretation and labelling of the behaviour (Scott and Brown, 2006). However, this shift was made in her later research with Steven Karau (Eagly and Karau, 2002), where role congruity theory was introduced to explain the differential experiences of leadership between men and women. In this paper, social roles and perceptual filters are presented as central to both the absence of women in many leadership roles and their perceived lack of effectiveness if access to a leadership role is achieved. Here the proposition was that women are evaluated as less effective than men because of a perceived incongruence between leadership as a male normed role and the femininity associated with the

female gender. The suggestion is that this unconscious perceived lack of 'fit' for a leadership role is what causes discrimination and bias against women. Further, they found that the more 'traditionally masculine' the leadership role, the greater the bias against women. Role congruity theory has been used since by many researchers to explain gender bias in relation to leadership in a range of settings (Ritter and Yoder, 2004, Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra, 2006, Diekman and Goodfriend, 2006, Diekman et al., 2010).

By 2003, Eagly, in what I believe to be a philosophical turnaround, had begun to look at the relationship between transformational leadership and gender (Eagly et al., 2003). At this point in time she moves away from a social understanding of women's leadership experiences and back towards an essentialist approach. Again using meta-analytical methodology, findings indicated a closer match between female leadership and the 'transformational' leadership style whilst male leadership was closer to the 'transactional' or 'laissez-faire' style. These differences were small and only one element of 'transactional' leadership, contingent reward, was displayed more by women than men. In their conclusions, the writers go on to make the link between the 'transformational' style and leader effectiveness and thus, surmising that women have a more effective leadership style, a Frame 2 position. The work they cite for this link is (Judge et al., 2004). What this work actually says is that the evidence for 'transformational' leadership being more effective than 'transactional' is unclear. Only some dimensions link directly to effectiveness and one of these is

'contingent reward', an element of the 'transactional' not the 'transformational' style. They go on to say that the success of this behaviour is more likely to be linked to an improved clarity in aims and goals.

To conclude, Eagly's proposition that women engage in the 'transformational style' and that this results in women being more effective at leadership than men is built on a number of tenuous links. In addition there is research which indicates that when women engage in the 'transformational' leadership style it actually results in the devaluation of women's leadership by male subordinates (Ayman et al., 2009). A further criticism of Eagly's work in 2003 is that it continues to consider women as a homogenous group, emphasising between group differences and minimising within group differences. Further, Eagly and Carli (2003) invoke the work of Sally Helgesen (2011) and state that women make better leaders than men, this is known as the 'Female Leadership Advantage' (FLA). This view links into the perception that there are gender differences in the way power is exercised by those in leadership positions. Women are perceived to exercise their power and influence in a less aggressive way than men, with more concern for the welfare of others and resulting in a liberation for the community. In contrast, men's power and influence is perceived to be controlling and dominating with an aim towards task achievement and the maintenance of status and social distance (Huxham, 1996).

These works rest on a Frame 2 approach i.e. exaggerating gender differences and seeing the feminine as better than the masculine. Further, the notion posited is that women are better than men with 'natural' tendencies for the care and concern of others. The difficulty with this view is that it encourages the persistence of gender stereotyping and thereby, acts to constrain how both men and women can express themselves. In order to ensure that leadership is an inclusive practice of gender and any other marginalised identities, there is a need to question the entitative focus in leadership research. Researchers need to stop looking for leadership in the individual but rather to consider leadership as a social and relational process (Sinclair and Lips-Wiersma, 2008).

Returning to Alice Eagly and her colleagues, in their latest work (Eagly and Carli, 2007a, Koenig et al., 2011) the focus is on role congruity theory and how cultural stereotyping can negatively impact women. In these papers there is a recognition of the role of socialisation and perceptual bias. In addition, further explanation is provided for how discrimination occurs. It is suggested that gender stereotyping results in a gender divide with regards to agentic and communal characteristics. Males are seen to be more agentic and females as more communal. Further, the dominant leadership paradigm defines leadership as more agentic than communal, thus women are seen as a less 'good fit'. This 'lack of fit' can result in extreme attempts at sensemaking when a woman is successful in a leadership role. Recently, a leading female academic, who has

demonstrated highly effective leadership in her very senior university position, reported an interesting encounter with a male colleague.

> *I am a professor and head of a department. A male professor comes into my office and closes the door. He states that he wants to ask me a question. He asks if I – like another colleague – am "transgenderist"? I look at him. Smile. I state lightly that I had not made the transgender movement from male to female, and moved to another topic. (Brabazon, 2014)p.67*

It is of great concern to me that an individual can only make sense of a woman's success in a leadership position by believing her to be biologically male!

In summary, the story of Alice Eagly's research on women and leadership is one of shifting from a Frame 1 perspective at the beginning, then moving through a Frame 2 approach and finally landing at a Frame 3 perspective. As stated earlier, Frame 3 focuses on cultural, historical and political factors to explain gender differences in leadership. In my opinion this constitutes a move in the research agenda focusing the lens of enquiry onto the social and relational and away from the entitative. As Sinclair (2013) says, this ontological shift is necessary to achieve true inclusiveness in the field of leadership . The great value in the move away from a Frame 1 or 2 perspective is that the process of what Bourdieu refers to as 'false naturalization' of gender differences is no longer the driving force behind a research agenda. The research lens now shifts onto the context and/or the interaction between the individual and context. Frames 1

and 2 separate the individual from her/his context whereas Frames 3 and 4 treat the individual as 'situated', historically, culturally and politically. As this conceptualisation of what it is to be human is central to my thesis, I return to this topic in great detail in the epistemology chapter. Also, the relationship between the individual, the cultural and the structural form the frame for my conclusions.

Frame 4 research on gender and leadership is presented mainly by writers who define themselves as either feminist, critical management and/or sociological researchers. Joyce Fletcher (1994) argued against the 'Female Advantage' saying that this theoretical approach is damaging to the advancement of equality and to women in organisations. Firstly, she points to the inappropriate emphasis between group differences whilst ignoring within group differences. As I highlighted earlier in this chapter, the differences between the way men and women enact leadership have been shown to be either very small or non-existent in the majority of the research literature (Due Billing, 2014). Fletcher (op. cit.) also says that this results in a continued emphasis on the differences between genders and acts to encourage the persistence of gender stereotypes which actually hampers the progression of equality.

I would suggest that this effect occurs in both men and women and can encourage the development of a rhetoric which does not match reality. This difference between rhetoric and reality was demonstrated in a study which asked

women in leadership positions to describe how they manage their role (Cliff et al., 2005). Overwhelmingly the women talked about their behaviour in terms of the stereotypically feminine leadership style i.e. focusing on relational and communal behaviours. However, later observation of the same women revealed a major mismatch between their rhetoric and their actions. They actually engaged in leadership behaviour which is stereotypically male i.e. task oriented and agentic.

There is no one way to understand this incongruence but I would argue that it is of great significance. What causes this behaviour? At the very beginning of this thesis I reported on a similar piece of research which examined the difference between the talk and behaviour of men in leadership positions (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). This also identified a disjuncture between what men said they were doing and what they actually did. The main difference was that the behaviour men self-reported was highly congruent with the descriptors of the 'transformational' leadership style. This could be accounted for by the sensemaking and identity struggle literature, which suggests that leadership discourse in organisations acts to regulate identities. What may be occurring is that both men and women, in order to make sense of their role and in an attempt to 'fit in' are working to develop identities which are congruent with the dominant discourses of their time and context (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Thus, as Fletcher (1994) says, rather than creating an advantage for women, the privileging of a 'feminine' leadership style actually acts to stop the questioning of patriarchal processes which create and maintain inequalities, and not just for women. It may be that patriarchal hegemonic discourses and structures act to

regulate and control women and men by regulating and constraining the range of possible leadership identities in which they can 'legitimately' engage. Bourdieu describes these processes as 'habitus', which are socialised norms which guide behavior and thinking, and 'doxa' which is '*an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident' (Bourdieu, 1984)p.471.* For Bourdieu these interactions between the individual, culture and structure are set within the context of power, control and domination. These ideas are explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

Recently the discourses around the concept of 'feminine' and 'masculine' styles has shifted towards a desirability for elements of the 'feminine' style and to a belief that certain 'feminine' skills are necessary for organisational success. Firstly, relational skills are seen as essential to the effectiveness of modern organisations. In the latest leadership research literature and business journals, leadership is now considered to be 'Post-heroic' and involves high levels of emotional intelligence and expert relational skills (McCallum and O'Connell, 2009, UhlBien and Ospina, 2012). However, these skills are not part of performance management protocols or linked to promotional success (Huff, 1990, Due Billing, 2014). In fact, these stereotypical 'feminine' skills are systematically devalued and their links to organisational success is often hidden (Kolb, 1992). The only time that relational skills are viewed as valuable is when men engage in them. When women engage in relational activity it is viewed as a

woman simply being a woman, whereas, when men engage in these skills it is seen as his ability to be flexible or as an indicator of high emotional intelligence. He is engaging in 'new leadership' (Fletcher, 2004). This confusing picture illustrates the need to explore dominant discourses as agenda setting mechanisms in both management research and organisations and to expose the paradox and ambiguity inherent in the 'false naturalization' of gender differences.

The common themes in the studies I've described illustrate two key points in the debate about women as leaders. Firstly, there are dangers in taking an essentialist or 'false naturalization' approach, whether the views of a 'feminine' style are negative or positive, most women and other disadvantaged social groups do not gain. As stressed by a number of researchers who take a Frame 4 perspective, the equality project can only be achieved by focusing on gender similarity or by recreating conceptualisations of gender (Calas and Smircich, 2006, Butler, 2006, Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). As Bourdieu (2001) would say, to resist 'false naturalization'. Secondly, there is a complex interplay between structure, culture, socialisation and psychological processes which results in complex and contradictory behaviour. This can be seen in the sensemaking processes and identity struggles in which both men and women engage in their daily organisational life (Weick et al., 2005). I agree with Bourdieu's view that what underpins these complex interplays and identity struggles is the persistence of unequal structural power relations, often resulting in symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001).

Further, these unequal power relations have their roots in material conditions which are maintained and reproduced through cultural, social and psychological processes. Regarding women in leadership positions, the topic of structural power relations is rarely discussed in the mainstream leadership literature. When the concept of power is discussed or researched, French and Raven's model is usually invoked (French et al., 1959). This focuses on power at the level of the organisation or individual rather than in terms of societal structures and fails to view organisations as in relation with larger society. Thus, in answer to calls for the use of a Bourdieusian approach in research on women's careers and to use symbolic violence to illuminate everyday sexism in women's career experiences, (Sayce, 2006, Wilkinson, 2010, Powell and Sang, 2015) the aim of this research was to illuminate the experiences and sensemaking of women in senior positions in UK HE with a view to providing new theory to explain the dearth of women in places of power.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Ontologicial and Epistemological Stance

This chapter presents an outline and explanation of the key ontological and epistemological themes which underpin my research. My research is positioned within a critical theory paradigm and draws on a social constructionist understanding of what it means to be human. The use of social constructionism to research careers is appropriate as the idea of a career is in itself a social construction. Cohen et al. (2004, p409) state that a career viewed through this perspective, *'is not conceptualised as a form or structure that an individual temporarily inhabits, constraining or enabling her in her journey. Rather it is constituted by the actor herself,in interaction with others, as she moves through time and space.'* They go on to highlight that this does not imply that the actor has total freedom in how she enacts her career. The social construction of the career is a dynamic and fluid interactive process which encompasses elements of the individual and her context.

The four key assumptions of social constructionism as described by Vivien Burr (1995)   underpin my research. The first is a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge. A rejection of the logical positivist view of 'reality as wholly objectvie' results in a constant questioning of terms and concepts which are usually considered to be common or taken-for-granted. This leads to a

questioning of what is often considered to be 'natural'. In this thesis, conceptualizations which are often treated as 'natural' in the world of work, such as gender, career and leadership are scrutinised with a range of lenses. In explore what participants say to gain insight into their taken-for-granted assumptions.   I also make the point that power inequalities are (re)created and maintained through the continued use of taken-for-granted assumptions as if they are 'natural'. Secondly, knowledge, including that derived from research practice, is conceptualised as embedded in historically and politically shaped social practices. This places knowledge practices within a power relations framework (Foucault, 1983). Thus, as Cohen & Duberley (2015)   say, one's context is not a benign backdrop to one's career but all that one does is embedded or nested within it. The third key assumption of social constructionism is that knowledge is sustained by social processes. This is central to the ways in which certain ideologies take on the position of 'truths'. What is 'true' is settled through social interaction and negotiations. Certain actors in society have more control over the discourses and, in turn, which ideologies dominate the discussion. Thus, one way of illuminating these power relations is to examine sensemaking through discourse and narrative (Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991). This sensemaking involves narrative as a dialectic process through which social and self-identities are constructed, regulated, constrained, and maintained (Cohen, 2014, Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This leads to the fourth and final assumption, that is that knowledge and social action go together. This refers to

the relationship between dominant ideologies and the process of certain actions or directions being taken whilst others remain unexplored or marginalised.

Thus, the use of a social constructionist approach results in the consideration of the role of context as integral to the human experience (Heidegger and Brock, 1949). As stated earlier, this then places the examination of human experience firmly within, and inseperable from, the political, historical and cultural context. It addresses Bourdieu's concern to resist 'dehistoricization' and 'naturalization' when working to understand social phenomena (Bourdieu, 2001).

At the start of this research process, I spent some time considering the way in which I would explore women's leadership experiences and conceptualisations. During this time, it became clear to me that my ontological view of the human condition differs considerably from that of the logical positivist. However, at the beginning I was not clear about how my views differed, and I had difficulty articulating what the exact differences were, despite the fact that I knew that these differences were central to my research. After much reading and thinking, I decided that the key differences rest upon the nature of being human, the conceptualisation of knowledge and the relationship between the two (Clegg, 1989, Haugaard, 1997). The social constructionist view is a good fit for this research as, in addition to the four key assumptions outlined, it can be characterised by duality rather than dualism.

The logical positivist view is characterised by dualism, in that, it positions humans as separate from the world. With this view, there is a 'real' objective world which can be measured and assessed accurately as long as the right tools are designed and developed and they are applied with full objectivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). For me, engaging in the practice of social science, exploring socially constructed concepts, this view of the world did not fit. As a psychologist by training, key questions which concerned me were; the relational nature of human sensemaking processes, the role of structural power and, the key role that language plays in this process. I refer to language as dialogues both external and internal and dialogues as both grand and personal. The logical positivist considers language as simplistic, resting on the 'correspondence of truth' theory (Ibid.). In this way objects, events and actions can be labelled in ways which are universal to all. This approach to language, has been questioned by philosophers and social scientists who highlight the fluidity of meanings and representations of symbols and words, Wittgenstein 1958, Ortony 1979 and Morgan 1980 in Johnson and Duberley (2000). These views helped me considerably in understanding where my thesis is positioned. For example, a logical positivist driven enquiry of gender differences is likely to lead to an essentialist view of gender.

Essentialist view rests on the notion that a phenomenon such as, gender or leadership, has an 'essence' which can be 'discovered' through the use of robust research techniques. I believe that gender is better understood as a social

process than as an essence.   To summarise so far, this research takes the position that humans' relationship with the world is not unproblematic and that this relationship with the world is mediated through the filters of perception and language. This is true for all humans even researchers who are engaged in scientific and/or systematic enquiry. As subjects rather than objects, they are by nature, subjective and can never be truly objective as all information is processed through the filter of perception (Morgan and Smircich, 1980, Giere, 2006) . Thus, I place my research within a social constructionist epistemology. Further, I have identified my position within the tradition of critical management theory (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003).

 Social Constructivism adopts a relativist ontology and a transactional or subjective epistemology. Relativism here refers to the belief that one's sense of reality is a constructed through sensemaking processes, through intersubjective experiences. When designing a research project, this foregrounds an individual's experience and interpretations over the desire to identify 'facts'. Transactional or subjective epistemology is the assumption that the individual cannot be separate from her or his knowledge base. In this way, a researcher cannot 'leave' her or his knowledge constructs outside the field of research. Rather, research interests, questions and chosen methods of enquiry are shaped and directed by the researcher's knowledge constructs (Lincoln et al., 2011). This approach is supported by those who argue for perspectivism in social science research, where the state of the art is enriched through a range of perspectives or lenses

which provide differing views of the same phenomenon, thereby developing a richer more meaningful understanding (Giere, 2006).   As stated earlier, Social Constructionism posits for duality and not dualism, which considers the experience of being human as in relationship with one's world. Here the individual is both, creator of her/his world and created/interpreted by her/his world. This concept is central to my thesis at two levels. Firstly, in terms of my role in the research process and how I create and make sense of knowledge, and secondly to set the context in which my participants engage with the world.

Social Constructionism positions the role of context as more than a benign backdrop to one's action. This view of context is explained well through Heidegger's (1949) concept of 'dasein' or 'being' which highlights the positioned nature of human experience.

Heidegger's 'Dasein' concept refers to 'being' as more specifically 'being there'. In this sense, 'there' is presented in terms of location or place and time. Thus, 'being' cannot be separated from context. This encapsulates an existential duality of humanity rather than a rationalist or essentialist, dualism ontology. An individual's 'being' is fully located in place and time, highlighting the importance of what Gadamer (in Risser,1997) calls 'historically effected consciousness' . With this concept of the individual, the individual is never separate from his/her context but rather can only be viewed as 'in relationship' with all the elements

which make up the context. This is their history, culture, current setting and other people. What Bourdieu would refer to as their field (Bourdieu, 2005). With this view, the study of the individual's thoughts, emotions, intentions and behaviours as if they were divorced from context results in false deductions, because the meanings in which the individual's behaviour are embedded or nested, is essential to understanding behaviour (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008).

Thus, when looking at how individuals engage with the world, with this view, gender and/or leadership identity is not something that an individual has, it is not entitative but rather is something that is constructed and co-constructed in a space which is wholly relational. By this I mean, in relation to others and in relation to time. This is crucial to recognising that, in terms of gender identities, current dominant conceptualisations of masculine and feminine characteristics are not unquestionable 'truths' but rather emerge from political, historical and cultural processes in a particular time. Thus, what has occurred is a 'naturalization' of gender, and through this gendered labour divisions, which according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) is a deliberative illusion aimed to support continued power inequalities. The same is true for leadership identities. As can evidenced by the leadership research literature where preferences for 'ways of leading' changing over time e.g. 'autocratic', 'transformational' and 'post-heroic'.

The role of time or temporality is of great importance as it is the consciousness of time which leads to 'concern', a key component of Dasein. Heidegger highlights that, if individuals or beings, were immortal, then there would be no 'concern'. It is temporality which directly leads to concern. Temporality provides the concept of a beginning, middle and end as can be seen in the narrative structure people use in their sensemaking processes (Weick et al., 2005). It gives a sense of directionality and of finality. He goes on to say that this forces a position of sensemaking or 'concern'.

In terms of an explanatory theory, I've used Bourdieu's (2001, 2005) theory of social action to understand how power plays out through social processes. Bourdieu's theory sits within the Social Constructionist view. The main starting point for Bourdieu is that knowledge and the objects of knowledge are socially constructed and, further, that this is achieved because of, and, through practical activity and oriented or directed action It is important to highlight that social processes are not neutral or agnostic but are set within a framework of unequal power relations Bourdieu's work (Ibid.), stresses this and makes an explicit link between macro and micro explanations thereby helping to understand how an individual's external and internal worlds interact.The relationship between social structures and psychological structures is central to my thesis. Bourdieu's theory of social action and his concept of symbolic violence are useful tools for understanding the narratives and themes in my data.

3.2 Bourdieu's Theory of Social Action

Bourdieu's theory of social action (2201, 2005), in common with Gidden's (1984) structuration theory, has the aim of moving away from a social theory which is either objectivist or subjectivist. In common with Heidegger (1949), Bourdieu sees social action as situated in time. Heidegger refers to the process of 'becoming' as the flowing together of the past and the future. For Bourdieu, practical action is the link between history and the future. Due to historicity, the past can be found in the individual's social knowledge. This special relationship between the past, present and future is key to understanding how structured power relations are at the centre of the reproduction of social inequalities and why rational practices, such as legislation, only achieve partial change.

As Bourdieu's theory is complex and deals with a number of new concepts and terms, before I explain how his theory creates a framework for my research, I will present a brief outline of his key ideas. In particular, his view of the relationship between the individual's internal world and the social world is easy to misunderstand. The tacit and unconscious, or automatic nature of social knowledge is often difficult for some to imagine, especially if one's training has been in the rationalist model of scientific research. Thus, what follows is an introduction to Bourdieu's social world including fields, habitus, capitals and doxa.

In Bourdieu's social world, the individual enters a society which consists of a number of spaces. Society is a multidimensional space consisting of a number of subspaces, or fields. A field can be thought of as a semi-autonomous and increasingly specialised field of action. Bourdieu's definition is more specific but more complex, *'A field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they will take with respect to the field. These positions takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations and forces that is constitutive of the field. (Bourdieu, 2005)* These fields can be any number of spaces such as institutions, social groups or workplaces. As the individual enters these fields, the individual will always have with him or her, their habitus. According to Bourdieu,*'Habitus is essentially the way in which the culture of a particular social group is embodied (internalised) in the individual, during the socialisation process beginning in early childhood. Habitus is, "society written inot the body, into the biological individual". (Bourdieu, 1990 p.63.)* Thus, one's habitus refers to the resources or the combination of the amount and type of capital that the individual holds or has built up to this point in time. This might be economic (physical assets), social capital (networks) or cultural capital. The latter is related to knowing the right cultural codes for a particular field, how to behave in order to achieve success in various fields or contexts. All these forms of capital are transformed into symbolic capital through an automatic or unconscious process when the individual enters into a field. Each field has its own rules or doxa, which is defined by Bourdieu as, *'an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as*

self-evident' (Bourdieu, 1984). It is according to these rules, that others in the field will evaluate the individual and ascribe him or her, their legitimate position in the field. Power relations, both within and between fields, structure human behaviour. Thus, in order to understand human behaviour it is important to understand the power relations in which social action occurs. One's position within a field acts to both enable and constrain one's potential direction of action. One's habitus interacts with the field and also shapes potential action.

According to Bourdieu, individuals engage in different strategies within fields, either of conserving or transforming these power relations. Those within the field who align with the doxa and accept the legitimate position which s/he is given by the group are playing the game of conservation. It is important to note that, there can be an unconscious or automatic acceptance of that the game in this field is worth playing and that the rules are just and fair. In this way, individuals who lack the right forms of capital for positions of power may not recognise the socially construed nature of their oppression. Instead, doxa acts to position any inequality as 'the natural order of things'. This is the most common strategy. Conversely, a few individuals will act to transform unequal power relations and try to change the doxa, or rules of the game, to their own benefit. The presence of these two different and opposing strategies causes tension and a struggle will ensue. The various, aforementioned, types of capital are used to jockey for power in this struggle.

What is clear in Bourdieu's theory is that structural power relations underpin social action. In addition, he provides a set of explanations which resists the dualist view of structure vs agency and presents these two as in relation with one another and mutually shaping one another. Finally, the concepts of habitus and doxa help to understand some of the counterintuitive behaviour observed in modern society, such as the lack of resistance to oppression and inequality. I will now link these key concepts to my research.

Bourdieu's social theory is underpinned by a recognition that, within a capitalist society, once humans engage in organising, hierarchical position taking occurs (Bourdieu, 2005). Further, relative positions are identified through capital distribution, not just economic but also social, cultural and symbolic capital. Thus, power is constituted through capital. As discussed earlier, capital, in Bourdieu's theory is relational and symbolic. He goes on to say that those with the most power will engage in conservation strategies to maintain their position and those with less power will engage in subversion strategies to undermine power. Haugaard (1997) supports this view of position based power using the metaphor of 'a game' where those in power set the agenda or set the rules of the game. Thus, in addition to resistance through subversion, there can be resistance through attempts to change the rules of the game.

Agenda setting also includes the power that elites have to identify what is 'valued' within a given field. For example, in most business schools knowledge related to finance and economics is privileged over sociological knowledge and commerce is privileged over other forms of organisation (not for profit) (Chia and Holt, 2008, Bennis and O'Toole, 2005). In this way individuals who possess this valued capital get to determine access to resources and the legitimacy of others. In the university field, 'masculinity' is a form of symbolic capital (Miller, 2014), thus, those who possess it have access to resources and can bestow or refuse the legitimacy of others. Bourdieu (2001, 2005) adds a final layer to this picture by saying that those in power will actively obfuscate these power plays through the processes of 'dehistoricization', 'naturalization' and 'universalism'. The aim is to present the rules of the game as 'the way things are' and 'the only way things can be'. The effect of this is to reduce any forms of resistance to the dominance of the elites. Further, the idea of agenda setting can be considered in terms of who creates the parameters for discourses. This refers to the creation of hegemonic discourses. Bourdieu (2005) says that by asking questions of who benefits from particular discourses and by exposing paradoxes between rhetoric and action, the processes which achieve conservation of elite power become exposed.

As stated earlier, Bourdieu's theory of social action also recognises the role of structuration in social processes. Bourdieu sees structure and agency as in relationship with one another. Thus, structures are created, maintained and

potentially transformed through the action of individuals and collectives. At the same time individuals' actions and experiences are shaped, constrained or enabled by structures. In this thesis I present gender identity and gender roles as a central site for the structure/agency struggle. I argue that gender identities act to facilitate and constrain individual agency. In this sense, a woman who lives in a context where gender appropriate behaviours are proscribed and highly policed constraints are placed on her ability to express her agency. She does not have access to full expression and experimentation of her self-identities thus, she is constrained not only in her physical engagement with the world but also her psychological experiences (to imagine herself as an engineer).

In addition to his theory of social action, Bourdieu's (2001) theory of symbolic violence is used to make sense of the contradictions observed in the narratives of my participants. Symbolic violence in Bourdieu's (2001) work has a very specific meaning, it does not just refer to the symbols of violence or violent acts which constitute anything that is not physical. It results from the internalisation of the ideas of the dominant or ruling group. This internalisation is an unconscious process where the oppressed or dominated take on the ideas of their oppressors as their own. The common 'Stockholm Syndrome' which refers to how those who are kidnapped empathise and take on the values of their kidnappers is a good example of 'symbolic violence'. Symbolic violence then is:

> 'the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his
> or her complicity'(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)p.167

(Mis)recognition is part of the process of symbolic violence. Dominant or hegemonic discourses which falsely naturalize men as 'ideal leaders' are internalised by both men and women. This in turn leads to (mis)recognition of the causes of a lack of women in senior positions. It is this that leads to the perception that women are 'other' when they take on a senior leadership role. The theory of symbolic violence helps to illustrate the contradictions between what they say and what they do. False naturalizations are internalised and unconsciously accepted. In turn, both men and women then act to (re)produce these discourses and act as if they are 'truth' or 'fact'. This can be seen not only in the mismatch between what women say and what they do, but also in their identity struggles. For example, working to maintain a sense of coherence between the incongruity of playing two conflicting roles i.e. respectable female and credible leader (as leader is normatively male). This complex and nuanced 'struggle' is necessary because the nature of being human is fully intertwined with and shaped by context and hence the influences of history, culture and power have to be considered.

Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) say that although Bourdieu's theory has been used in the field of management research, often it has been dismantled and fragmented. Bourdieu's theory is useful for this thesis as it brings together that which appears to be separate, by showing the relationship between structure and agency through the interrelations of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus'. His work provides a space where the structure versus agency debate is described as

structure interacting with agency. In addition, his theory resists the notion of

agency as purely 'free', which is a key issue in this thesis. Further, his concept of

'symbolic violence' is a particularly powerful mechanism for making sense of

paradox. As illustrated by the sensemaking of women I interviewed, paradox is

ever present as an incongruence between tales of experiences of discrimination

and the sensemaking which leads to the attribution of these experiences as

benign in nature.

Using Bourdieu (2001, 2005) to understand the absence of women in senior

positions in organisations the conclusion would be that, although there are

multiple factors which result in a majority male white leadership (in the developed

world) these emanate from unequal power relations which are created,

reproduced and maintained through interactive and dynamic processes between

structure, culture, social interactions and identity work. Further, the role of

discourse, specifically dominant and hegemonic discourses is central to, but not

sufficient to explain the persistence of these inequalities

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In summary, my research rests upon the Social Constructionist paradigm where

research knowledge is viewed as a creative interpretive process rather than a

discovery of essentials process. Thus, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005):

> 'The inquiry aims of this paradigm are oriented towards the
> production of reconstructed understandings, wherein the
> traditional positivist criteria of internal and external validity are

replaced by the terms trustworthiness and authenticity.'
(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) p.100

I conceive of the individual as inextricably entwined with her/his context and hence, it is not possible to examine an individual without taking context into account. In addition, I consider the construction and maintenance of identity and identities (including gender identities) as a narrative process which relies on the dialectics inherent in conversation. This contrasts with the traditional psychological view of one's identity as internal and largely stable but positions identities as dynamic and relational. My research explores the phenomenon of women's leadership experiences and conceptualisations and provides an interpretation of this phenomenon. In line with recognising the role of context, I privilege the accounts of women in this study as having a particular epistemological value in understanding leadership as experienced by women. I also explore these accounts by foregrounding an awareness of the role of power.

3.3　Conceptualising Gender

As this thesis rests on the notion that the concept of gender is central to human experiences, opportunities and identity construction within the workplace, it is necessary to clarify the particular position regarding the conceptualisation of gender. Many researchers in this field highlight the complexities associated with the definition of gender (Alvesson and Billing, 2009, Calas and Smircich, 2006, Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004) with some researchers failing to address the difference between sex and gender, assuming that they are fully overlapping concepts. Acker's (1992) definition provides clarity for me on this issue when she says that gender is:

> 'The patterned, socially produced, distinctions between female and male, feminine and masculine' *(Acker 1992 p. 250)*

This definition centralises the social production of gender. Biological sex is not the focus here, what is in need of discussion here is the extent to which gender related behaviour patterns are biologically determined and hence, inevitable and fixed. The 'naturalization' of gender is the central question. An examination of ontological positions on gender is helpful in providing an understanding of why and how research about gender and organisations and more particularly gender and leadership has developed.

The nature of potential change in gender relations is constrained by the

assumption that gender is closely related to biological sex and hence largely a

stable construct comprised of 'natural' or 'emergent' femininities or masculinities.

What underpins this position is a belief that there is a 'natural order' inherent in

gender relations. Thus, any persistent practices, stereotypes and inequalities

can remain resistant to change as they are perceived to emerge from this 'natural

order'. Or as Alvesson and Billing (2009) say, this robust category view of

gender:

> '…tends to 'freeze' gender and gives sex priority. Through
> assuming – even taking for granted – that men and women
> form easily accessible and unproblematic variables for
> comparison the entire approach reproduces and reinforces
> the categories. The distinction becomes normalized and
> naturalized.' p. 27

When exploring gender inequalities, this view of gender as set and unchanging

encourages particular lines of research enquiry in management which have a

tendency to implicitly position men as 'people' and women as something else.

According to Calás and Smircich (1996) this view is tightly coupled with the view

of the world as rational and functionalist.

> 'The majority of the women-in-management literature is still
> trying to demonstrate that women are people too. Consistent
> with the tenets of liberal political theory, it conceives of
> organizations as made up of rational, autonomous actors
> whose ultimate goal is to make organizations efficient,
> effective, and fair.' P.223

I would argue that it is this position which allows the fostering and continuance of sexist attitudes towards women in the workplace, especially for those in leadership positions. The tendency is to view male as the 'norm' and female as the 'other' (West and Zimmerman, 1987, Butler, 1986). Common notions of masculinity or masculine behaviours and performances are used as a reference point against which femininity and feminine behaviours and performances are measured. Research questions which ask, 'How can women develop strategies to become senior managers or leaders?' make sense when this view of gender is adopted. What the question results in asking, is, 'How can women develop strategies to become more like the men who currently manage and lead?' This in turn results in attempts within organisational policy and practice to 'improve' women by providing them with the 'appropriate skill sets' to lead. The implication is that of a deficit model of femaleness. Women are cast not only as 'other' but also as 'less than' or even 'deviant' (Eagly and Carli, 2004, Eagly and Carli, 2007b).

In terms of addressing inequalities and/or creating change in organisational practices, this definition of gender is unlikely to achieve improvements and may even serve to justify continued inequalities (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). If a woman is perceived to be less than a man, then she may experience greater burdens, stress and pressures when entering a leadership position. At best, this results in a 'protective' or paternalistic mindset from those in elite positions in organisations and, at worst, allowing space for systematic and targeted bias in

recruitment and promotions. As (Glick and Fiske, 2001) demonstrate, sexism, whether hostile or benevolent is damaging to the aim of equality. They identify that women who reject hostile sexism will often endorse benevolent sexism. In this way, benevolent sexism, by rewarding women who accept the patriarchal status quo, gender inequality is maintained and resistance is bypassed.

It is for this reason that selection of one's definition of gender is crucial. The early feminist conceptualisation of gender did not question the 'robust category' approach outlined above but rather focused on these categories as a fundamental organising principle within a patriarchal society. Thus, this is a structuralist view which leads to the examination of the structures within society which enable gender inequality. This approach has resulted in considerable changes to legislation and policy on gender relations in the workplace. It has also raised awareness and created public dialogues on the inferior position of women in society and in the workplace (Kanter, 1977). Research which focuses on inequalities which arise from societal structures continues to provide insight and expose systematic adverse effects on particular groups including women. Work on the role of intersectionalities further highlights how the role of class, ethinicity, disability and sexuality often combine with gender resulting in even deeper disadvantage (Essers et al., 2010, Zander et al., 2010, Crenshaw, 1997, Cho et al., 2013). Although these writers tend to focus on the structuralist approach an understanding of the role of the social is present in various degrees.

The social construction definition sees gender not as 'being' but as 'doing'. Here, gender is fluid and dynamic (Butler, 1990). Gender related behaviours and presentations can and do change in relation to context. For Judith Butler (Ibid.), this results in the conceptualisation of gender as practice or performance. She argues that it is a mistake to view women as a group with common characteristics, saying that this view actually reinforces gender stereotypes by reducing the space for other gender identities. She states that this results in an;

'unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations' p. 5

Her argument is that, feminism, rather than improving women's position, actually perpetuates continued gender divides. This occurs despite feminism's rejection of biological destiny. She argues that the feminist position, built upon the concept of patriarchy, replaces biological determinism with a cultural determinism, where masculine and feminine identities are inevitable. Although she may be correct in her analysis of the role of performativity in the development of gender identities and it seems clear that all women do not share the same characteristics, I would argue that what women do share is a set of common experiences in the form of gender stereotyping. Of greatest concern, for me, is Butler's (1990) insistence on gender as entirely separate from the body. She appears to treat the physical realities of sex difference as either invisible or somehow culturally determined. In her work she takes this as a given

and, according to Martha Nussbaum (1999) fails to interrogate this position or

convince the reader with any empirical or argumentative evidence.

> *'And yet it is much too simple to say that power is all that the body is... Culture can shape and reshape some aspects of our bodily existence, but it does not shape all the aspects of it. "In the man burdened by hunger and thirst," as Sextus Empiricus observed long ago, "it is impossible to produce by argument the conviction that he is not so burdened." This is an important fact also for feminism, since women's nutritional needs (and their special needs when pregnant or lactating) are an important feminist topic. Even where sex difference is concerned, it is surely too simple to write it all off as culture; nor should feminists be eager to make such a sweeping gesture. Women who run or play basketball, for example, were right to welcome the demolition of myths about women's athletic performance that were the product of male-dominated assumptions; but they were also right to demand the specialized research on women's bodies that has fostered a better understanding of women's training needs and women's injuries. In short: what feminism needs, and sometimes gets, is a subtle study of the interplay of bodily difference and cultural construction. And Butler's abstract pronouncements, floating high above all matter, give us none of what we need. p.6*

My interpretation of Butler's (op.cit.) treatment of the relationship between the

physical body and gender identities is that she is denying the body as a presence

or part of one's lived experience. In addition, her suggestions for the creation of

change in gender inequalities appear to be focused at the micro and meso levels.

Actions which create change are restricted to the local level, parodying traditional

gender identities and subversion of the expected norm through individual acts of

rebellious performance can be useful as tools for 'unsettling', but I believe that to

create serious movement and change in unequal societies, there is a need to

address both structure and culture.   It is as if Butler believes in cultural

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hegemonic power but fails to realise that its roots are in structural power

(Gramsci in Bennett 1981).

I've chosen to align my research with the position that gender is socially

constructed, and feel that Bourdieu's theory of social action, and in particular the

concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, Bourdieu 2001,

Bourdieu 2005). This approach ensures that issues of both structure and

agency are considered in the playing out of gender power relations.

4 Methodology

4.1 Epistemological Position

Using a social constructionist approach, here I clarify further the epistemological

position by asking a series of questions about the nature of the knowledge that

this research intends to create and how this will be achieved. I've used Carla

Willig's (2013) questions as an aid to move through this process.

The first question that Willig (Ibid.) asks is: 'What kind of knowledge does the

methodology aim to produce?' For my research I aim to 'give voice' to a

particular group of women and to provide a space for them to share their lived

experiences. According to Sandra Harding (2002), these accounts, through the

concept of epistemological advantage, will generate a new way of viewing their

careers experiences. This different lens will make explicit the implicit, exposing

subtle subjugations and discriminations of women which persist in the UK HE

context. In turn, this exposure should act to identify, or at least signal, areas for

further scrutiny and ways in which change can occur. The change should

address the project of achieving full equality of opportunity for all. Although this

research focuses on women and women's experiences, I identify women as the

category 'other' (De Beauvoir, 2012). Further, this category of 'other' also refers

to any individual who can be identified as not in the dominant category for their

particular cultural, historical context (West and Zimmerman, 1987). In the

Western hemisphere, at this present time, this is anyone who is not successfully presenting as white, male and heterosexual. I would argue that the processes and actions which act to implicitly maintain and support the subjugation of women are likely to create the same, similar, or worse for people in other disadvantaged social categories.

In addition, in taking a narrative approach to identity co-construction, talk about the relationship between female identities and leadership identities (male normed) and other accounts of identity struggles as proposed by Alvesson and Willmott (2002), are of great significance as here is a space where hidden power can be exposed. The impact of this hidden power often results in a 'feeling of incongruence' or sense of 'loneliness' rather than a clear awareness of oppression (Bourdieu, 2001). Another result of exposing the hidden is the identification of key narratives which may act to shape and constrain women's leadership experiences. As this research is driven by critical management theory, my analyses of the talk that participants produced are not presented as universal truths or facts, but as one informed and thoughtful way of viewing their talk.

The second question Willig (2013) asks is: 'What kinds of assumptions does the methodology make about the world?' I have outlined these in detail in the previous chapter, so here I will link these assumptions more clearly with my

chosen methodology. My ontological assumptions are realist not relativist and sit most closely with critical realism i.e. that there is a world out there with cause and effects relationships in which social actors use narratives to create meanings and make sense of their worlds but there are physical and structural forces which act to constrain/shape these meanings. Hence, I would say that my research takes a critical realist ontological stance. Although leadership is viewed as a social construct and a social process, this sits within a real physical world with power based structures. Thus, both the notions of leadership as constitutive and/or as a social identity sensemaking process, sit within this view as they both take into account the role of power, dominance and authority in the attribution, labelling and mandating of individuals as 'leaders' and the ascription of 'effective leadership'.

The third question Willig (Ibid.) poses is: 'How does the methodology conceptualise the role of the researcher in the research process?' She provides some interesting metaphors for different approaches to the research process. She asks researchers to think about their work in relation to these. Firstly, positivist empirical researchers are likely to view the researcher as a builder where data are thought of as bricks which are used to construct theory. This metaphor represents the key process of consilience which is central to the logical positivist approach. The lack of consilience is cited by some natural scientists as a criticism of the value of knowledge developed through post-positivist approaches (Wilson, 2001). This approach tends to engage in the search for

universals rather than valuing diverse views. Deduction, usually hypothetico-deduction is the driving research strategy for the researcher as builder.

Willig's (op.cit.) second metaphor is to view research as a treasure hunt. Here the researcher seeks out new treasures of knowledge from the data. Through regular, iterative and close scrutiny of the data, the researcher is a pattern seeker. Patterns or themes in the research are used to indicate new knowledge. This approach is initially inductive rather than deductive, in that analysis is data driven rather than hypothesis driven. As the research proceeds the researcher engages in abduction, drawing meaning from various signs, signals and patterns within the data, the research process and his/her existing knowledge. The interpretative process here is part data driven and part construction. The aim is still discovery but there is an acceptance of differing views of the same research 'treasure'.

The final metaphor sees the researcher as story teller, as the creator of new ways of seeing and thinking. With this approach, the researcher actively engages in providing a new lens through which to view a phenomenon. The aim is to unsettle existing constructions and traditional views, to expose the historical and cultural meanings which are often taken as 'facts' or 'truths'.

This final metaphor fits most closely with how I view my role in this research. I have planned to provide effective conditions whereby study participants can express, discuss and jointly explore how they experience leadership as women in the UK HE context. I believe that this provides an insider view which acts as useful texts for the generation of a new 'story'. By focusing on women's narratives and rationalisations I plan to bring new insights, which hopefully, provide an enriched understanding of the problem under focus, i.e. the lack of women in senior positons in HE. In addition, these new insights should act to indicate directions and actions which can be taken to create positive change towards greater equality for all.

4.2 Research Strategy

I chose to use a 'positive deviance' approach with which to explore my research question. I had the opportunity to see the value of this approach when working with healthcare researchers who were searching for more effective ways to improve the quality of healthcare and to reduce errors in healthcare provision (Bradley et al., 2009, Stuckey et al., 2011). The premise of this research strategy is that by examining individuals, organisational units or communities which exhibit behaviour or outcomes which deviate from the norm, but in a positive sense, new insights and learning can be achieved. Bradley et al. (2009) say that the two main benefits of the positive deviance approach are that, firstly, best practices can be illuminated, codified and shared with others in similar organisational settings and secondly, uptake of any proposed solutions is more likely due to the fact that they emerge from 'real' organisational experiences and processes.

> *'The central premise of a positive deviance approach is that solutions to problems that face a community often exist within that community, and that certain members possess wisdom that can be generalized to improve the performance of other members. Many of these strategies rely on resources that already exist in the community, which can increase their adoption and sustained use.' (Bradley et al. 2009 p.1)*

The full positive deviance cycle has four steps.

1. Identify positive deviants i.e. organisations, individuals or units which demonstrate excellence or positively deviate from the norm.

2. Engage in in-depth qualitative research to generate hypotheses.

3. Test hypotheses statistically with larger representative samples.

4. Work in partnership with key stakeholders and potential adopters to disseminate newly identified best practices.

For my research I have amended this process and focused on steps 1 & 2. I wanted to devote the space in this research to engage in a detailed analysis. I envisage that, if appropriate, larger statistical hypothesis testing would follow from my findings. The final stage of finding potential adopters to disseminate findings aligns with my desire to use any new knowledge to create change, however, I am interested in exploring ways other than hypothesis testing to achieve this. The hypothesis testing on large representative samples approach rests on the assumption that organisational change will simply occur if enough empirical evidence is provided. Research on organisational change indicates that, although this may be useful it is not sufficient (Grol and Wensing, 2004, Aarons and Sawitzky, 2006).

In this research, I identified women who can be considered positively deviant. In consideration of the fact that the norm in HE is that there are very few women senior positions, I consider any women who do achieve this as deviant i.e. outside the norm. I would say that they are positively deviant in that they are achieving the positive outcomes that are desired for a more equal society and

can potentially provide new understandings of how to move the needle in this direction.

This strategy shaped my chosen sampling method and choice of data collection techniques. The purposive sampling technique was used and qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted. I use the term qualitative here in the sense that it is 'Big Q' rather than 'Little q'. Qualitative research can be thought of in two distinct ways as either 'Big Q' or 'Little q' (Willig, 2013, Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2007). 'Big Q' refers to open ended, inductive research aimed at theory generation and understanding meanings, experiences and process. 'Little q' refers to open ended qualitative methods which sit within the hypothetico-deductive methodology. My research is the former as I've applied a form of Grounded Theory Methodology (Silke Tegtmeier and Jones) which is part inductive part abductive. Rather than begin with an explicit hypothesis, I ground my theorising in the data. Beginning with empirical data (in-depth interviews with senior women in HE), I then moved to a phase of systematic coding looking for themes and trends in the data. This process was repetitive and iterative with a sloughing and merging of codes until a useful and meaningful set of interpretations was reached. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), this approach brings together the scientific and creative. Unlike positivist empirical research which strives to demonstrate reliability and validity, rigor is demonstrated in qualitative empirical research through the systematic management of data and the transparency with which coding decisions and

interpretations are reported. The creative element is the sensemaking process which acts to present new interpretations, ideas and theory.

In order to meet the standards for rigor, I have tried to record and capture each step of my research so that the reader can see what was done to gather the data, what was then done to the data to create selected codes and my thinking in linking these codes to themes and theoretical insights. In addition, my reflections on the process are included throughout. Reflexivity is the usual technique used in this type of qualitative research to provide further transparency and hence demonstrate rigor.

4.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity in research refers to the process whereby the researcher engages in reflective or reflexive practice. These terms appear to be used interchangeably in the literature (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). The purpose of reflexivity is for the researcher to develop an awareness of his/her contribution to the construction of meanings which shape the whole research process. This practice recognises that the notion of remaining objective in research is impossible and instead proposes that researchers reflect on their action and choices throughout the research. In this way, the researcher's implicit theories are made explicit and his/her analytical choices are open rather than hidden.

According to Willig (2013) there are two main types of reflexivity, personal and epistemological. The personal focuses on how the researcher's values, experiences and biases may impact upon the research and equally how the research has impacted upon the researcher. The epistemological focuses on how the research process and tools have contributed towards the construction of meaning and how they may have constrained the constructions of other meanings. The key issue is that attention is drawn to the knowledge production/creation process and the key players in the research i.e. relationships between the researcher and the researched. Calas and Smircich (1992) talk of:

> *'a reflexivity that constantly assesses the relationship*
> *between "knowledge" and "the ways of doing knowledge".'*
> *p.240*

This quote emphasises the fact that all reflexive research should involve the researcher engaging in careful pondering and inward questioning concerning the knowledge s/he is creating and the process, including tools, which s/he is using to generate that knowledge. In addition, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) call for a sceptical approach to existing concepts that seem to determine a sense of 'reality'. In this way the 'taken for granted' and 'ordinary' are scrutinised and opened up to new interpretations.

> *'Empirical research in the reflective mode starts from a sceptical approach to what appear at a superficial glance as unproblematic replicas of the way reality functions, while at the same time maintaining the belief that the study of suitable (well-thought-out) excerpts from this reality can provide an important basis for a generation of knowledge that opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes 'truths'.' (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2009 p.5)*

In contrast to Willig's (2013) two elements of reflexivity, Alvesson and Skoldberg (op.cit.) outline four elements.

1. Systematics and techniques in the research procedure should be rigorous and clearly explained, they point to Grounded Theory Methodology (Silke Tegtmeier and Jones) as a good example of this element.

2. Clarification of the primacy of interpretation must be stressed and includes an awareness of interpretation assumptions and ideas which determine the researcher's interpretations.

3. Awareness of the political-ideological nature of research in that no research can be considered politically neutral. All research either supports the status quo or questions it.

4. Reflection in relation to the problem of representation and authority should be addressed. This refers to the status of the text i.e. to what extent is the researcher claiming that the text represents 'reality'.

I have tried to address all four points in my research. As I describe the development of my research I have outlined clearly at each stage what I did and my thinking which led to my choices. I've also stressed the interpretive nature of my work and clearly stated that my research is aimed at changing the existing conditions for women working in UK HE. Finally, in the chapter which describes the in-depth interview method, I have talked about what I consider to be the status of interviews as texts. In these ways I have ensured that I have engaged in reflexivity and have represented this process throughout my dissertation.

4.4 Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

4.4.1 The Biographical Method

In terms of potential methods which fit with this research framework, I felt that the

biographical method was a good fit as it is structured around the narrative

framework and it ensures a focus on the participant's world view, their particular

sensemaking of a leadership role in academia. According to Merrill and West

(2009), the hallmark of the biographical method is that it produces a document

which helps to expose the relationship between the individual's private and public

worlds . Thus, the individual's story about her career journey acts to signal to the

researcher knowledge which the individual highlights as the most salient in her

career and leadership experiences. Some of these are unique to the individual

whilst others, if they occur in talk with some regularity, are likely to represent

shared experiences of being a woman in a leadership position in HE. Unlike,

other research methods, such as, questionnaires and experiments,with the

biographical method, research data developed in this way remains situated and

contextualised, thus avoiding the error of 'dehistoricization'. As Laurie Cohen

(2014) says,

> *'Rather than being merely the backdrop against which*
> *individual's career-making takes place, this view sees context*
> *as an inextricable part of the action, impacting on individuals*
> *in a whole range of ways, both material and ideological.' p.14*

This method has also been described as one which can lead to empowerment in research participants (Bornat and Walmsley, 2004). The process of reflecting on the events in one's life can often act to bring a new interpretation of decisions resulting in epiphanies about one's subject position or simply personal progress in light of considerable barriers. In this research it is important to aim to provide some benefit to the participants for taking part in the research. Rather than simply considering that 'no harm' results from the research, I see it as an opportunity to provide a space for the participant to explore an issue of importance in their lives. A criticism of this type of research is that personal accounts do not closely represent the 'actual' events. Self-report methods are often supported by documentary evidence and/or observation in an attempt to identify the 'facts'. As stated earlier, this research views knowledge as socially constructed and recognises the fragility of the notion of a single 'truth' which can be 'discovered'. My research is not seeking a 'truth' but rather looking for new or different ways to understand various phenomena.

Usually, this method encourages the participant to look back over a whole lifetime, but as this research is focusing on women's careers, rather than a lifetime, the scope is limited to the career story. The start of this story was led by the participant resulting in differences between participants as some have had detailed career thoughts and plans from an early age, whilst others, started their story at later points in their life e.g. first academic job. In looking at how women use narrative to make sense of their experiences, it is essential that any chosen

method allows for an examination of participants' interpretations, on this, the biographical method is particularly strong. Faraday and Plummer (1979) say that the way in which narratives and biographies are constructed, i.e. what women choose to highlight or delete and the rationalisations used to make sense of the ambiguous, results in an external representation of their internal processes.

> *The inner experience of individual, how they interpret, understand and define the world around them' (Faraday and Plummer 1979, p.776)*

Another key strength of this method is that it encourages a story based structure to the interview process, allowing the participant to lead the process also restricts the chances of the researcher's world view being imposed on participants. In addition, this method aids in the elicitation and identification of any cultural, historical and social influences which shape women's career hence, allowing for the potential to see how societal views on gender identity and women in work may have impacted on women's leadership experiences. The surfacing of key life events which may have impacted upon participants' career decisions and leadership is also well facilitated by this method as the recreation of the 'career journey' brings back to mind trigger points which may well have been forgotten or played down. Often the process of thinking about past career decisions and events, in light of the individual's current position results in a recasting or reinterpretation of the role and importance of past events and people.

Initially, I intended to use three different methods to support participants in telling their stories. I planned a face to face interview which would be structured around

the drawing of a timeline and to get participants to keep a monthly log of their leadership experiences. This would then have allowed me to attempt some form of triangulation or synthesis of the three data sets. This technique is often used to demonstrate a sense of validity to the researcher's chosen themes (Silverman, 2000). However, practical issues led to a change in the methods used. The participants who had agreed to take part were located widely across the UK. In order to ensure that I could gather data from across the UK, I made the decision to try out a telephone interview to see the extent to which this different mode impacted upon the interview process. Using the telephone interview approach I had to make a decision about the drawing of a timeline. I decided that without some software which would allow us both to see the timeline being drawn, there was no opportunity to debate and reflect on what was drawn. This could result in a misrepresentation of the participant's intentions. I was also concerned that the attempt to keep the timeline would create a negative impact on the interview process and the quality of the conversation. For these reasons I dropped the timeline drawing. I also dropped the monthly log as the idea did not resonate well with the participants I interviewed early in the process. I had to assess the value of partial data from this source. My thoughts turned back to the original reason for the monthly log and as it was to be part of a triangulation process and the timeline had been removed, I could see little benefit in placing this extra time burden on participants, if in the final analysis the data were unlikely to be used in the way I had originally planned.

In the end, a semi-structured interview approach was used. Questions were drawn from key themes as identified in the extant literature on women's careers. All, but one, were conducted using Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). I did consider using an unstructured interview as in the ethnographic tradition but rejected this technique as I was concerned that a lack of structure would create greater difficulties for me in terms of analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). My worry was that in an unstructured interview, the participant may choose to focus on specific issues or challenges that are at the forefront of their present day experience. With a background in qualitative interviewing in market research, I was also very experienced at the structured and semi-structured interview.

4.4.2 In-depth Interviews

As I stated earlier, I chose to use semi-structured in-depth interviews due to the following: this method fits well with the interpretive paradigm; it provides the right conditions for participants to tell their stories; it balances the need for research control and space for participant expression and, it is logistically simple when compared with other qualitative methods. In addition, this method is well respected and widely used in careers research (Young and Borgen, 1990, Cohen et al., 2004).

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According to Willig (2013) the semi-structured interview is the most popular choice for qualitative research. She suggests that this is due to the fact that this method allows for a wide range of analytical methods, from thematic analysis to conversation analysis. She goes on to say that this method is easier to set up than methods such as participant observation or a full ethnographic study. A further benefit is that it requires less commitment, both psychological and in terms of time, than some other methods e.g. journals or auto-ethnography. Finally, the requirement of negotiation for access is less burdensome than with a longitudinal or observational study. As stated earlier the major disadvantage of this approach is the nature of self-report data. Some qualitative methodologists argue for the need to ensure that data collected this way are 'credible' and by this they mean, is the participant's account a 'true' account (Elliott et al., 1999). For some types of qualitative research this may be necessary i.e. patients' accounts of medical treatment. However, for my research the position on the interview text is that the participant's narratives and sensemakings are the focus of interest. Their interpretation is their 'truth' at that time, their representations of their experiences is exactly what I wish to explore. Thus, the issue of 'truth' testing, in this sense, is not relevant within this research.

In this thesis, the interview process is not approached as a researcher eliciting facts from her subject but rather as a conversation between the researcher and participant aimed to provide a space for the participant to express her understandings of her leadership journey and experiences. The way in which a

participant chooses to present her experiences is not 'checked for validity' but rather is accepted as an interpretation which fits with her current narrative of herself in terms of her career.

When the interview is positioned as a conversation, the process of 'validation' of interpretations is not an empirical process. Ricoeur (1991a) provides a good outline on the interpretive nature of validation in texts, highlighting that it is far from an objective and rational act but rather, shaped by power and more akin to a legal debate.

> *'The decision as to whether an interpretation is valid occurs through comparison with competing validations and pre-existing validations. Add to this that the validations of those in positions of power and commonly agreed validations carry more weight and it becomes clear that the process of interpretation of actions is not objective and rational but rather, fraught with issues of politics and power. Thus validation is 'an argumentative discipline more comparable to the judicial procedures of legal interpretation. It is a logic of uncertainty and qualitative probability' (Ricoeur, 1991a)p.159*

In judicial procedures, it is the weight of evidence which determines the most likely 'truth'. This is the approach I have taken to analysis with stories, themes and narratives providing the evidence to shape the most likely story.

The balance between researcher control and participant space for expression was very important to me. I felt that I needed to feel confident that I would collect

high quality, usable data. Although I could see the benefits of moving towards a more ethnographic unstructured interview approach, I was very concerned about generating a lot of data which was interesting but difficult to analyse. As this is my first time engaging in academic research, I wanted to ensure that I could present some meaningful, robust and useful findings. The semi-structured approach, through the use of a set of outlined themes, provides a framework for data collection which meets these needs. In addition, the semi-structured interview method allowed for a largely non-directive approach. Although I was mindful of key themes (drawn from the literature) which I wanted to explore, by asking open-ended questions about participant's current work role and current challenges in their life, I was able to allow sufficient space in which participants could express themselves and to define and re-define the topic under discussion. In this way I was able to access participants' conceptualisations and sensemaking of both their career journey and their current leadership role. Willig (2013) also suggests that any researcher planning to conduct interviews should ensure that they fully familiarise themselves with their participants cultural milieu.

As I have worked in HE in the UK for over ten years, I felt that I had a good understanding of the culture in which my participants were working. However, when it came to interviewing those who work in Ancient universities, it became clear to me that that particular setting is very different from all other types of universities. In these interviews, I had to ask more questions at the start of the interview to ensure that I fully understood their local contexts. There were key

differences in terms of job position titles, for example, sometimes the head of the university is the 'Rector', 'President' or 'Vice-Chancellor'. In addition, in Ancient universities colleges and faculty, in particular, fellows of the university, appear to have more power over organisational policy and procedures than in other types of university. However, in the main, I felt that I had a good understanding of the cultural milieu of my participants. This is important for two reasons, firstly, in any professional setting the use of language can be specific to that context. An understanding of the use professional jargon and/or the use of general linguistic terms in a context unique ways, helps to reduce the level of misunderstanding or misinterpretations.

Another benefit of understanding the world of research participants is that it is easier to build rapport during the interview. I was aware that this benefit could become a disadvantage if not handled carefully. As an in-group member, I can be perceived as a potential ally or a potential threat. I considered that part of my role was to signal to participants that I was the former. Through the use of carefully crafted communications, I aimed to demonstrate that I was trustworthy and that my research topic was of importance to them and their communities. As the community of HE in the UK is very insular and well networked, one of the justifiable concerns of my participants was that of exposure. With very few women in senior positions, it is possible for academic research which uses their direct quotes to cause a potential vulnerability to the wider community. Thus, it was of great importance to set conditions early on in the research process to

ensure the psychological safety of my participants. Alternatively, as an in-group

member I can also potentially be blind to the 'implicit assumptions' which I wish

to surface. This is a disadvantage of being fully immersed in one's participants'

milieu. Good PhD supervision, reflexivity and an awareness of this danger all

acted to mitigate against this potential damage.

Another key issue in interview research is the status of the interview. A number

of methodologists (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005,

Silverman, 2000, Willig, 2013) advise researchers to clearly identify the status of

their interviews. What does the interview represent in the research? The

language used to talk about those researched is important as it indicates the

research approach. For example, in experimental psychology the term 'subjects'

is used, in most positivist mixed methodologies (such as market research) the

term 'respondent' is used and in most post positivist research the term

'participant' is used. Each word used indicates the status of the researcher and

the researched. The 'subject' is subjected to an experimental procedure. The

'respondent' responds to the researcher's expert questions and the 'participant'

participates in the research with the researcher. In the latter, the interview is a

joint process undertaken by both parties. The major difference in status is the

recognition of the interview as a reciprocal interaction. The researcher, and

researched, are working together to generate understandings. There is not an

attempt to make the researcher 'invisible' in this process as with the positivist

approach.

An interview is a social interaction, it is a conversation which is laden with all the usual social, cultural and political burdens that shape a normal conversation. Here, in addition, there are the social signifiers to the two players of their respective roles, 'the researcher' and 'the researched' and these cannot be removed or ignored. For some researchers it is this role positioning which makes the interview problematic (Potter and Hepburn, 2005). In my research the interview status is that of an exploratory conversation. It is recognised that the meanings and conceptualisations presented by participants are, in part, affected by the social nature of the research interview and their engagement with the interviewer.

Further to this, as Willig (2013) states, the semi-structured interview is ambiguous. There are clear formal roles and structure but the tone is that of a discussion or conversation. She suggests that the interviewer/researcher needs to take care in managing this balance and to ensure that a strong rapport is developed which is both sensitive to ethical issues and allows space for a strong narrative. She warns against pushing participants to reveal beyond their comfort zone. The use of open ended questions encourages participants to say a lot more and to reveal more private information than when using closed ended or leading questions. Thus, the interviewer/researcher needs to be mindful of this potential for psychological harm or invasion of personal space. During the

interviews in this research I found my participants to be very open. This openness and rapport was achieved much more quickly than I'm used to in previous qualitative interviews. When I first realised that I would be unable to conduct my interviews face to face I was left with a sense of disquiet. Having conducted hundreds of interviews in the past I was well aware of the work it takes to build rapport and create a sense of engagement and trust with interviewees. I thought that in a telephone interview I would be unable to use my usual techniques and hence, rapport would take longer and trust may not be possible at all. What was surprising to me was that the opposite occurred. I found that participants moved into trusting and sharing much more quickly than in a face to face interview. This led to further theorising about why this occurred and what the conditions were that led to this? Firstly, it may have been the nature of the group being interviewed. It may be that part of the motivation for taking part was that they wanted to talk freely and openly about their experiences. In this case, I would have seen the same quick rapport build and self-disclosure if I had conducted them all face to face. Secondly, it may be that the social distance generated by the lack of visual cues and non-verbal language actually created a greater sense of psychological safety than if I'd been present in the room. Finally, the use of digital recording software meant that there was no obvious presence of recording equipment, as there is in a face to face interview, and hence, this visual reminder of being recorded was not present.

Much of the research on the differences between face to face and telephone as modes for interviews, come from the clinical field. The focus is on whether there are quality issues when using the telephone and whether differential findings result when different modes are employed. Most find that quality is not impeded and findings are similar despite the mode (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004, Fenig et al., 1993). Others have looked at levels of self-disclosure and found no difference between the modes (Janofsky, 1971, Bermack, 1989). What is interesting is that those who have examined mode of interview in relation to status levelling have found that large differences in status between the interviewer and the interviewee are reduced with telephone interviewing (Stephens, 2007, Vogl, 2013).

In research with women on the use of telephones for in-depth interviewing a number of benefits over face to face are highlighted. Amanda Holt (2010) reflects on her use of telephone interviewing with single mothers and highlights the following benefits. Firstly, the lack of non-verbal cues means that both parties have to engage in fuller articulation and explanations. This results in richer data which is more readily analysed. In addition, Holt (Ibid.) says that the lack of ethnographic information led to the text itself being the focus and not being subject to layering of one's own assumptions through cues from contextual data.

Finally, in terms of rapport building, the researcher can develop this by drawing attention to similarities and differences between the interviewer and interviewee . She also asked her participants about the experience of being interviewed over the telephone and received feedback that it was a positive experience, with one participant saying that it was like a counselling session. A potential negative of the telephone interview is that it can serve to silence some aspects of the individual, for example their ethnicity. This goes both ways, with the researcher's whiteness also being silenced. I feel that this can work in both ways as either negative or positive. For example, if I am a black female researcher, then my ethnicity is potentially hidden from my participants and hence, stops any potential discriminatory behavior. Overall, my experience in using telephone interviews has been similar to that of Stephens (2007) and Holt (2010) in that I was worried and wary at first about the potential negative impact on both the process and the quality of the data and yet I was pleasantly surprised by a much more engaging experience and good quality data. As Holt (Ibid..) suggests, there is a need to stop viewing the face to face interview as the gold standard.

In addition to the mode of the interview, of great importance is the design of the research agenda. For semi-structured interviews the researcher can either write out a few open ended questions or simply write out some key topics. Having previous experience of interviewing, I was very mindful of the structure of the interview and how the agenda can work to shape the process structure. For example, asking personal questions early on in the interview is likely to result in

poor answers and little discussion. It is also more likely to set the participant on their guard and result in the feeling that they are being scrutinised. I chose to use a combination of open ended questions and key topics (drawn from the women's career and leadership literature). My aim at the start of the interview was to communicate clearly to the participant the aim of the research, the process of the interview and to reassure concerning levels of confidentiality. All participants had received a copy of the interview agenda at least one week prior to the interview date. Once I had given an explanation I checked whether the participant had any questions. After answering any questions I then moved on to a question designed to get the participant comfortable talking about her current role at work. This put them at ease and helped me to begin to build an understanding of their particular context, an essential element to be able to engage in credible probing and laddering later in the interview. The use of references which are particular to the participant's context improves the questioning but also signals that the researcher is listening attentively.

4.5 Research Procedure

Method for Data Collection

Prior to data collection, I designed all research materials that I considered to ensure a smooth and ethical research process. First, I developed an interview agenda (See final agenda in Appendix 7.4 – 'Interview Agenda') which aimed to address the key issues outlined in the previous chapter. It was important to balance space for the interviewee to fully express themselves whilst also ensuring that I gathered sufficient information to respond to my research question. It was also extremely important to ensure that the question order was designed to support the process of rapport building and to signal psychological safety. Themes to be aware of, for prompting and probing were taken from the literature on women's careers in HE and women's careers more generally.

The interview agenda and the timeline process were tested using a single pilot interview with a senior female academic in a pre-1992 institution. As this woman is also a research and methodology specialist, the experience provided me with feedback from the actual task, and from an expert in the field of qualitative research.   In my initial introduction to the interview, I specifically mentioned the importance of 'identity' to my research. I removed this as the pilot participant suggested that this was not necessary to ensuring a smooth interview process and, in fact, could act to prime the interviewee to only talk about 'identity' issues.

The use of the timeline drawing, was also discussed and she reported to be very useful in helping to elicit memories and how particular events led to key career decisions. The use of a monthly diary was also discussed. Her feedback was that, although this would provide some very interesting and potentially valuable data, it presented an extra time burden to participants and could act as a 'step to far' in terms of data collection requests of very busy women. All other aspects of the interview agenda and process remained the same.

The interview agenda and all other materials such as the initial email, participant information sheet and consent form were sent to my supervisor for feedback. They were also subject to the University of Birmingham's Ethical Code of Practice for Research (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf).

The data collection process began with a plan to approach and gain engagement with women in senior positions in HE in the UK. In the early stages of planning I was considering interviewing women academics and women who work in professional or administrative roles (those who worked in universities but had not progressed through the academic route). However, as I began to examine the HESA statistics it became clear that there are many women in senior positions in professional roles, where the dearth lies in in academic roles. I did consider exploring both groups to see if I could understand why there was such a difference but ruled this out as a useful path for my research due to theoretical

and practical considerations. Firstly, I felt that to compare the two groups of women was a false comparison, although both are employed by universities the career role and route are entirely different. Secondly, a comparison study would have increased the risk of failure for my study as I would have needed twice as many participants and would need to develop a research design which would justify a fair comparison, such as a matched pairs design. For these reasons I decided to focus on female academics in senior positions.

The first decision I needed to make was whether to include all universities in my sample. Again the initial examination of HESA data indicated that the greatest lack of female representation at the top of universities lies in universities which are pre-1992. In 1992 the Further and Higher Education Act allowed many UK Polytechnics to become Universities. As these organisations have a very different historical foundation and there is not the same dearth of women at the top, I decided to exclude these institutions. In terms of my research strategy, I wanted to focus on the most elite institutions as I believed that the key factors which are contributing to continued exclusion would be more visible in settings where the journey for women was toughest.

The second major decision was to identify the meaning of the term 'senior position'. As there are so few women in very senior positions I decided to target those in positions which represented power (in terms of decision making) and

responsibility (in terms of management accountability for people and/or processes). This resulted in a decision to include all those in the position of 'Head of School' or equivalent and 'Directors' of research institutes or large specialist units. I also decided to include those on Senate as this position can wield considerable power over a university's strategic direction.

The first stage in the research was to identify women working in these positions in UK universities. I then gathered and recorded information which I felt was relevant to the research, both theoretical and practical. I developed a spreadsheet to record the following for each woman; full name, title, university name, university type, email address, telephone number, discipline, position title, university size, university rank (Times Higher Rankings) and whether the university was in the Russell group. I later added to this spreadsheet the category, traditional academic as some of the women I interviewed stressed this as important for them. I outline the details of categories below.

The next step was to develop and send a communication which would encourage women to participate in my research. I considered the different modes of communication, i.e. post, email, telephone and selected email as my first contact point. Through my market research experience I understood that contact by post results in a very low response rate and as I was already dealing with a very small group (I had identified 248 potential participants) I knew that I needed to choose

a mode of communication which would maximise interest and engagement. I

decided to send a standard email (see Appendix 7.1 – 'Introductory Email') to

potential participants (or their assistants) in the first instance and to follow up with

another personalised email, if I received no response. The initial standard email

resulted in 62 responses, some of which were a request for more information (8),

some of which were a clear 'no' (10), some of which were simple email bounce

backs, I assumed this meant that the email address was incorrect and thus

excluded these names from the study (5) and some were 'out of office'

notifications (6). The remaining responses were 'yes' (33). I was both surprised

and pleased at this success from the first round. I was also aware that there was

potential for dropout before the actual interview could take place. I re-sent the

standard email to the 'out of office' respondents, noting when they were due to

return. The final figure for participants who agreed to be interviewed was 31, two

booked an interview date and time but subsequently cancelled. Some who

originally said 'yes' dropped out and some who originally asked for more

information said 'yes'. The final number of actual interviews which took place

was 27.

Once a participant agreed to take part in the research, I communicated with them

to set a date and time for the interview and to provide them with further

information regarding the research process (See Appendix 7.2 – 'Participant

Information Sheet'). The issue of confidentiality was of great concern to many of

the participants. Some signed the consent form (See Appendix 7.3 – 'Consent

Form') prior to the interview, whilst others asked for a final stage of permission to be granted, once data analysis had been completed, so that they could see actual quotes in the context of the text. The consent form was sent one week prior to the interview together with a copy of the interview agenda (See Appendix 7.4 – 'Interview Agenda').

The interviews took place between June 19th, 2013 and August 1st, 2013. During the interviews I took notes but I put less importance on these than on managing the interview process and engaging in the conversation. As I was recording each interview, I felt that the notes acted as a further thinking tool rather than as a record of the discussion. The recording software tool, 'Goldwave' was used to record each interview. After a period of investigation and trial with a range of different recording software, Goldwave was chosen as it had the functionality required i.e. record live both speakers in the conversation and, recordings could be saved in a format which suited most transcription companies. In addition, Goldwave has one of the most intuitive usability interfaces. After each interview, I made notes on my thoughts about the interview and the linkages with theory and existing literature. I engaged in a sensemaking process of my own, to gain a better understanding of the participant's experiences. Throughout, I also kept detailed records (using Excel and Word) of each participant and the stage at which the data were in terms of process i.e. interview booked, interview complete, recording checked, file sent to transcriber, file received from transcriber, file uploaded to Dedoose etc. I engaged in an ongoing analysis

process, making notes regarding my thoughts about relevant theoretical positions which might make sense of my findings. I also conducted a further layer of analysis once all interviews had been transcribed and uploaded to Dedoose. The final number of interview transcriptions uploaded to Dedoose was 24. Three interviews could not be transcribed due to poor recording quality. Notes from these interviews were used as part of my analyses.

Once all interview transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose, I began to search for data which supported the themes I had already identified from the literature. I also explored the data for excerpts which would contradict or refute these themes. I did the same for the themes, theoretical ideas which I had generated during the ongoing analysis phase during data collection. At this point I was finding it difficult to navigate and make sense of the large amount of data generated from 24 in-depth interviews with a heterogeneous group of women. I decided to get guidance from various methodology books but did not find anything which might help in this instance. I knew that this must be a common experience for researchers who undertake inductive, interpretive research and so I turned to the literature on women's careers to see whether other researchers had talked about this issue and, hopefully, identified a technique which would help to shift me forward. In a paper by Fernando and Cohen (2014) on respectable femininity, they talked about writing short biographies for each participant, to help manage the data. I decided to stop exploring the data for themes and, instead, to spend time writing a short biography for each participant.

This process helped considerably as it forced me to immerse myself in the data in a different and more personal way. The construction of individual's stories further reinforced the differences between them as well as some similarities. I now realised that I would need to ensure that I represented this difference within the group when writing my findings. Although it is tempting to try to emphasise similarities to create neat and compelling findings, I felt that this level of artifice would act to obscure the fact that although these women have similar job roles, their career journeys and the way in which they engage in leadership and management are very different.

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In an effort to gather information from a wide range of pre-1992 universities whilst reducing the opportunity of any potential systematic bias, a number of categories were used to inform the targeting of potential interview participants. The following categories were used.

1.   University type

a.   Ancient University
b.   19th Century
c.   Civic Redbrick
d.   Civic 2nd Wave
e.   Plate Glass

The final pre-1992 category, 'Intermediate Universities' (n=3) were excluded as they are sufficiently different in nature from all other pre-1992 universities. For example, the Open University provides distance learning based programmes, the

University of Buckingham is a private university and the University of Ulster

provides a special educational remit to Northern Ireland providing highly

vocational courses to the whole Northern Ireland region.

2.   Academic Discipline

a.   Engineering and Physical Sciences

b.   Humanities

c.   Natural Science & Medicine

d.   Social Science

Although there is no full agreement on subject areas which constitute the above

academic disciplines, this categorisation is commonly used in a wide range of

research. For example, differences in the career trajectories and experiences of

women between the humanities and EPS are well documented (Boden and

Epstein, 2011). It was thought that these categories would help to provide some

understanding of any identified gender related differences in career experiences.

3.   Organisational Role

a.   Vice Chancellor

b.   Deputy Vice Chancellor

c.   Pro-Vice Chancellor

d.   Dean

e.   Associate Dean

f.   Head of School

g.   Senate or Council Member

As position titles vary across institutions, each of the above categories comprises role equivalents. For example, 'College Master' or 'Mistress' is considered equivalent to the title 'Dean'. A full description of role title equivalents used in this research can be found in appendix 7.5.

4.   Organisational Size (no. of students)

a.   Up to 10,000

b.   10,001 to 20,000

c.   20,001 to 41,000

These three categories were devised to separate organisations based upon the potential impact that organisational size has on key elements related to gender related career progression such as; structure, position power in the sector and potential or space for promotion and progression.

5.   Institutional Rank (Times Higher Education International Rank 2013)

a.   No rank

b.   Top 100

c.   101-200

d.   201+

Institutional rank was included in the analysis as it is a good measure of an organisation's position power or brand power in the sector. It helps to indicate the level of prestige associated with universities. A measure of prestige is

important as there is likely to be a relationship between power and prestige and women's career progression.

6.   Russell Group

a.   Yes

b.   No

Another good indication of a university's power and prestige is whether it is a part of the Russell Group. Russell Group universities are considered to be universities of excellence with a focus on international research. It is the elite group of UK universities.

7.   Traditional Academic

a.   Yes

b.   No

The final category used indicates the extent to which the participant can be described as having taken a 'traditional academic' career route. This was included to see if those entering into HE from 'non-traditional' routes e.g. business or industry professionals experienced improved career progression over women who took the traditional route.

Summary of Interviews by Sampling Categories

Table 1. Interviews by University Type

University Type	No. of Interviews	No. of Institutions in Sample to Population
Ancient	8	4 out of 6
19th Century	2	2 out of 15
Civic Redbrick	5	3 out of 6
Civic 2nd Wave	2	2 out of 7
Plate Glass	10	8 out of 23
Totals	**27**	**19**

Interviews were achieved across all university types with 19th Century universities having the lowest representation at one fifth (2 out of 15). The next lowest is the Plate Glass category showing just over one third (8 out of 23). However, interviews were achieved across the range of university types.

Table 2. Interviews by Academic Discipline

Academic Discipline	No. of Interviews
Engineering & Physical Sciences	4
Humanities	10
Natural Science & Medicine	6
Social Science	7
Total	**27**

In terms of academic discipline there was greater representation from those in 'Humanities'. This mirrors the greater representation of women employed in 'Humanities'. Equally, low numbers from both EPS and Natural Science & Medicine is consistent with low numbers of women employed in these disciplines.

Table 3. Interviews by Organisational Role

Organisational Role	No. of Interviews
Vice Chancellor (VC)	2
Deputy Vice Chancellor	4
Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC)	7
Dean	4
Associate Dean (AD)	5
Head of School	3
Council or Senate Member	2
Total	27

The role of PVC (or equivalent) has the highest representation in the sample with the lowest representation at both Council/Senate member and VC level. All other roles are fairly evenly represented. More the half the sample represents the level of Dean or above less than 1/5 of the sample below Associate Dean. Thus, the sample does represent women in leadership positions in Higher Education.

Table 4. Interviews by Organisational Size (No. of Students)

Organisational Size	No. of Institutions
Up to 10,000	3
10,001 to 20,000	14
20,001 to 30,000	6
30,001 to 41,000	4
Total	27

In terms of size, institutions of all sizes are represented in the sample with smaller organisations having a greater representation than larger ones.

Table 5. Interviews by World Ranking Position (Times Higher 2014)

Times Higher World Rank Table	Position in Table
Top 100	9
101-200	9
201+	3
No Rank	6
Total	27

Institutions from across the ranking positions are represented in the table with the majority falling above the 201 position. This mirrors the target population of pre 1992 universities in the UK.

A more detailed list of category descriptors for each participant can be found in

the Findings Chapter.

4.6 Data Analysis

As the aim of this research was exploratory, and the epistemological stance was social constructionist, it seemed most appropriate to use methods of data analysis which suited the need to analyse, re-analyse and reinterpret as the research unfolded. Of particular importance to me was to be able to make changes to my interpretations after engaging in the reflexive process. I began analysing data during the data collection process using a constant comparison of themes method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). At the end of each interview, I made notes of potential emerging themes. I also made notes of key issues which appeared to be of greater importance to the participant or which received greater emotional emphasis by the participant. In addition, I kept notes of my thoughts and concerns about the research process to introduce a reflexive element, as suggested by Willig (2013). Thus, data were analysed in a number of different ways, firstly through the constant comparison of themes method, secondly, once the data were imported into Dedoose, codes were developed. This latter process was not smooth and was punctuated with an additional activity. As stated earlier, in order to manage the data I created a short biography for each participant. Next, an exploration of themes, trends and anomalies was undertaken using the specific abilities of my chosen software. This resulted in the production of a first set of findings. At this point my findings were still lacking in a clear narrative and hence, I engaged in a final stage of analysis which separated themes into those supported by the extant literature and new issues. I now placed greater stress

on understanding the new issues in light of existing theory with a view to extending or developing theory. This outlines the overall data analysis process.

The following provides more detail of the use of my chosen web based data analysis tool. Table 6 below provides an overview of how the analysis process proceeded. The table shows how themes and codes developed into the final thematic narratives around which data are organised in the 'Findings and Discussion' chapter. In the first stage broad themes which were identified e.g. leadership. At the second stage a detailed code frame was developed which resulted in the development of sub codes which were sometimes repeated across codes e.g. 'masculine styles'. This element of repetition and cross weaving of themes led to the final development of the three narratives which, in turn, provide the bridge between data and theory e.g. 'aggressive leadership' links to 'identity struggle'.

Table 6. Example of Theme Development Through Analytical Stages

Stage 1 – Constant comparison thematic analysis	Stage 2 – Thematic and code analysis using Dedoose	Stage 3 – Identifying narratives from themes and codes
Career Decisions Change external/internal Progression & selection Family Identity Working conditions Views of discrimination Experiences of discrimination Leadership Role models/sponsors	Career decisions (17 sub codes including, ambition, **gender impact**, **asked to apply**, family) Progression & selection (14 sub codes including, **asked to apply**, **aggressiveness**, support from others, **gender discrimination**) Leadership & management (12 sub codes including, **managerialism**, **masculine styles**) Challenges (9 sub codes including, **HE external changes, structures cultures &practices**) Identity (7 sub codes including, **style**, conflict, personality, ethnicity, exclusion) Role models/sponsors/mentors (7 sub codes) Gender issues (5 sub codes) Family (3 sub codes)	**Gendered Organisation** (managerialism, power, family, working conditions, progression & selection, discrimination) **Identity Struggles** (respectable femininity, aggressive leadership, discrimination, ambition as masculine) **Symbolic Violence** (Asked to apply, women to blame, exclusion, discrimination)

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Data were then imported into Dedoose. Dedoose is a web based tool which allows for mixed data analysis. It provides the ability to be able to explore both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously. Thus, demographic data can be directly linked to quotes from interviews.

 In Dedoose the sampling categories I used are referred to in the software with the label 'descriptors'. Examples of how data can be explored using 'descriptors' against 'codes' can be seen below. An interrogation of the database which is described as 'descriptor by code' shows the spread of code allocation for any descriptor. In this case, I've highlighted the descriptor 'organisation type' by the code, 'managerialism', to show that participants in each organisation type are concerned about managerialism (Table 7). Conversely, in the following table (Table 8), I've highlighted the descriptor 'organisation type' again, but this time I've matched it with the code 'org support' (indicates a lack of career support from the organisation). This shows how participants from Civic Red Brick universities talk more about a lack of organisational support than those from organisations of the other types.

Table 7. Managerialism by Organisational Type
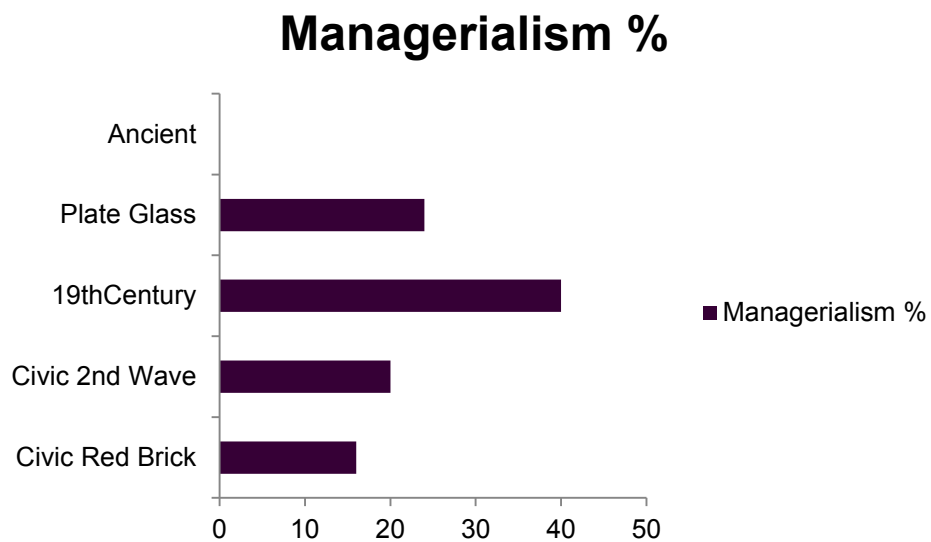
Managerialism %

The table above shows the number of times that the impact of managerialism was talked about by participants. This was in the context of their concerns about changes impacting on their work. What is evident is that the issue of managerialism is of concern to participants across all the organisations except for those in Ancient universities.

Table 8. Organisational Support by Organisation Type

Org support %
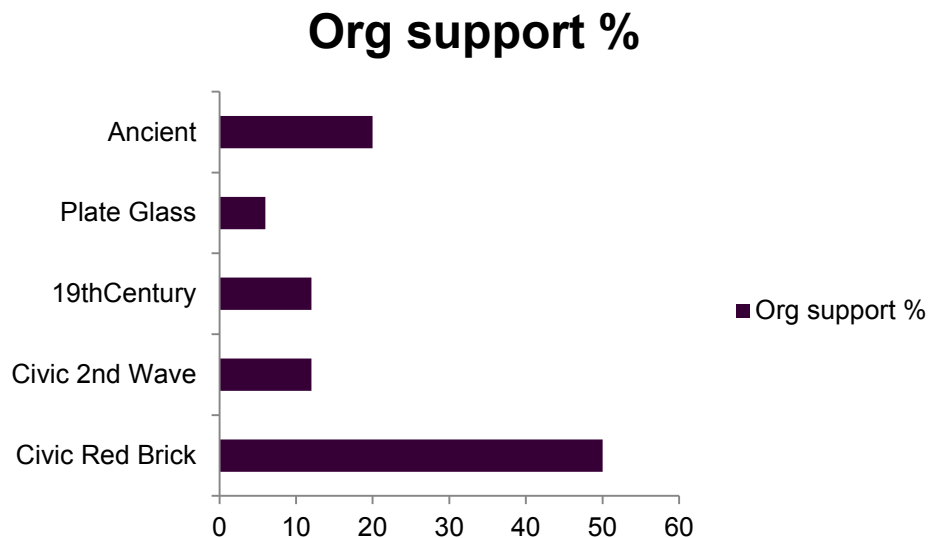
The table above shows relative percentages for the number of times that a lack of organisational support for women's careers was talked about by participants. In contrast to the previous table, here it is clear that this issue is of greatest concern to participants from Civic Red Brick universities.

In Dedoose, as with other qualitative software programs, analysis of texts (in this research, interview transcriptions), occurs through the manual allocation of codes by the researcher. Sections of text are associated with codes identified by the researcher and are then given the label 'excerpt'. To clarify further, an 'excerpt' in Dedoose is a section of text which has been highlighted by the researcher as an example of a particular code. The same 'excerpt' can be attached to a

number of different codes. Thus, a single 'excerpt' may act as an example of

more than one code. For example the 'excerpt' below has the following codes

attached; 'career decision', 'family', 'progression' and 'selection', 'gender impact',

and 'asked to apply'.

> *I was actually asked if I was interested in being Dean. That*
> *was quite a long time ago. My children were quite young and*
> *that was part of the reason why I said no, but I thought about*
> *it.(1)*

In this way the data structure supports the later questioning and exploration of

relationships between 'descriptors and codes' and 'descriptors and excerpts'.

Data can be examined for any systematic trends or relationships between

particular codes and specific descriptors. For example, as can be seen in the

table below (table 9), the code 'networking' can be examined by all descriptors to

see if there are any particular trends, such as, participants in Ancient universities

talk more about engaging in networking than do those from other types of

university.

Table 9. Networking by Organisation Type

Networking %

Organisation	Networking %
Ancient	~42
Plate Glass	~22
19thCentury	~15
Civic 2nd Wave	~15
Civic Red Brick	~6
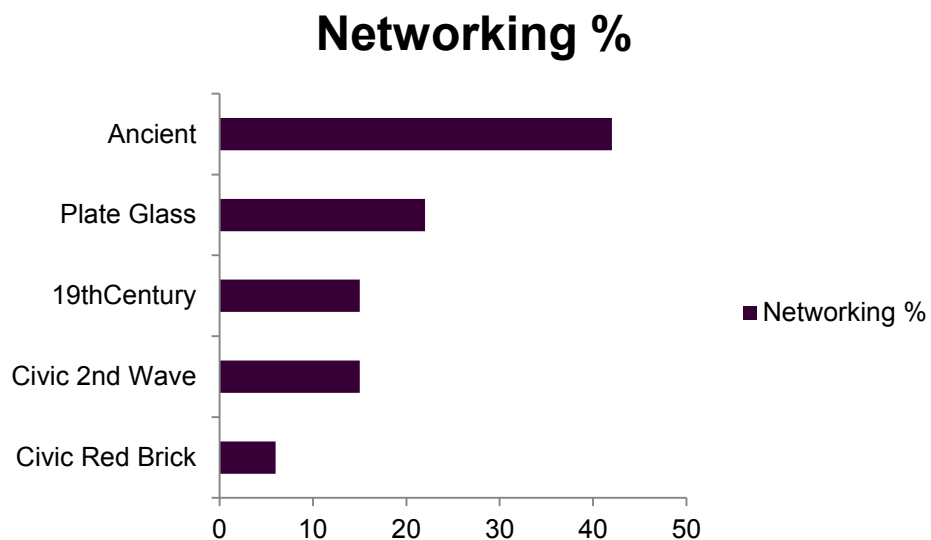
As analysis progress, sub-codes can also be developed if a coding category appears to be too broad. For example the code 'role models and mentors' has the sub-codes of 'none', 'male', 'female', 'peer', 'participant as role model, mentor'. For me the major benefit of the Dedoose data structure was that the data can be explored from a number of different angles and levels, with the opportunity to engage in fine grained analysis. Another benefit is that, it is possible to link back through these higher level analyses to the 'excerpts' which demonstrate the finding to check to see if an interesting finding is comprised of only a few comments from a number of different participants, or many comments from one particular participant. For example, in the table below (table 10), it looks as if the code 'family socialisation' was of great importance to only those in one academic discipline i.e. the social sciences. A deeper investigation shows that this result came from only one participant and no other participants talked

about 'family socialisation'. Thus, to assume that 'family socialisation' is only of importance to those in the social sciences would be erroneous as the result is based on the talk of only one person.

Table 10. Family socialisation by Academic Discipline

Family socialisation %
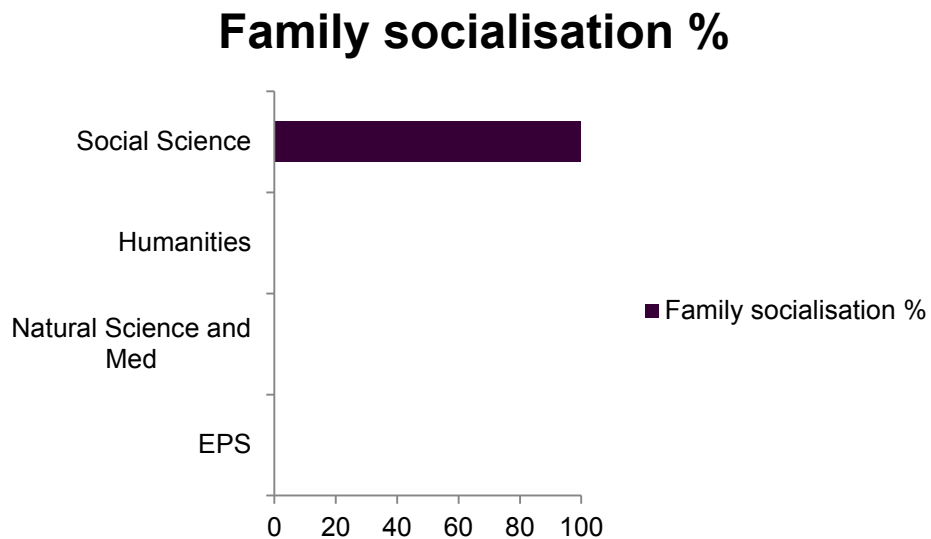
Using the above techniques, the data were explored for similarities and differences with a view to identifying salient trends. The use of actively searching for data which contradicts any identified trend helped to provide robustness of the final themes presented. The themes presented draw on all of the analytical processes discussed above.

4.7 Ethical Concerns

There are some key ethical issues to consider when undertaking any research. In this chapter I describe how I have worked to ensure that my research pursued a path which mitigated against any harm or loss for my research participants. I will discuss the following issues; confidentiality, right to withdraw, informed consent, deception and debriefing (Silverman, 2000). One of the major difficulties to arise early on in the research was the issue of confidentiality and anonymity. When undertaking qualitative depth interviews, an assurance of anonymity usually acts to provide complete confidentiality. Often, participants' names are replaced with pseudonyms and this is sufficient to ensure that no one participant can be identified (Berg et al., 2004). The participants in my research represent a very small group which means that even using this technique, there is an increased risk of personal identification. This meant that a participant's comments could potentially expose her to psychological harm including a reputational risk and potential negative impacts to their career progression. Thus, in this case, full protection could not be guaranteed using the usual methods. At this point a researcher can make two choices, either to make the interview an 'on record' interview or to identify other methods which will provide the protection of confidentiality (op. cit.). As the aim of my research was to make explicit the implicit, in terms of potential bias against senior women, I decided that an 'on record' interview would not provide the necessary data. In addition, I was concerned that this approach would have a negative impact on participation. What I chose to do was to provide participants

with a clear outline of the methods used at each stage of the research, which would

ensure confidentiality (Hossain, 2011). These included, details about who would

have access to the data and how it would be protected. Participants were given

the names and contact details of both my supervisors (who would have full access

to the data and would be able to link names to comments). They were also given

the choice to have a copy of the 'Proposal for Ethical Review' (available upon

request) which was approved by the University of Birmingham's Ethical Committee.

They were also offered the opportunity to view the 'University of Birmingham's

Code of Ethics'. All data collected were saved in password protected files and

participants were given the option to view the transcription of their own recording.

Transcriptions were conducted by a specialist service firm. Recordings were sent

to the firm with no names attached to the electronic file. In addition, an American

firm was used so that any potential of unintended identification was reduced. As a

further reassurance, participants were given the option to view any direct quotes

used in the research with a power of veto if they felt that it would result in any

potential adverse impact. In addition, participants were fully informed of the aims

of the research, no deception was used. They were also informed of their right to

withdraw at any point in the research. These extra efforts were important in

creating conditions where trust would be high and where openness was

encouraged. Moving beyond direct potential harm, it is useful to think about how

the findings of the research will be used. In common with critical management

research, I planned to use my findings to challenge disadvantage and bias to

women in HE (Willig, 2013). In this sense, I would argue that ultimately my work

should act to create benefits for my participants. I would also argue that a further

benefit to them was my attempt to make the interview process a space for them to

be able to reflect on their experiences and to engage in an adhoc, shared analysis

of their career journeys.

4.8 A Reflexive Account

Having run many in-depth interviews and focus groups in my previous work in market research, I started the process very much with this mindset. Hence, the early interviews have a different tone to the later interviews where I began to see the interview process itself as a joint exploration of the participant's narrative. My view of my role in the early interviews was to try to remain as 'neutral' and 'objective' as possible and to try to elicit key themes across the whole sample. During my reflexive times, it became clear to me that I was still enacting a logical positivist mindset. I was working to 'uncover' 'truths' from the narratives of my participants. As I began to analyse the data, each time I conducted another interview I became more aware of the sensemaking processes which were being used by participants. They were working to construct narratives which presented events and experiences as logical and rational. I also began to notice how conflicting events and incongruence between the 'normal' view of the world were managed through a range of rationalisations. There were also many interviews where women contradicted themselves. The most stark example was the presentation of a narrative which positioned gender discrimination as 'in the past' with later detailed descriptions of discrimination in the present. This particular finding put me into a state of confusion for some time.

Working through the mainstream leadership literature, I could not find a theory which provided an adequate explanation for this. It was at this point that I began

to explore the sociological and feminist literature, not just in the area of leadership and careers but also more generally on the relationship between the individual and her/his context. This, together with the discovery of work using the psychodynamic approach forced me into an entirely new mindset. I began to realise that I had begun my research with what Carla Willig (2013) calls a 'little Q' approach. I was still unconsciously using rationalist frames, this was despite a conscious recognition of social constructionist ontologies.

This recognition led to a wholly different engagement with my data. Now, I began to question any basic assumptions that I was bringing to my analysis. For example, I was still thinking in terms of hierarchal advancement as 'career success'. Also, in common with some of my participants, I was thinking of people skills through an instrumental lens i.e. relational excellence in an organisational setting, to me, was more about transactions rather than the true empowerment of others.   What became clear to me was that I needed to practice taking other ontological positions and working them through more thoroughly rather than dismissing different approaches at the first reading. Chris Argyris' (1995) talks about 'the espoused theory' and the 'enacted theory' in organisations. The idea is that often organisations espouse one theory through their mission statement whilst enacting an entirely different theory, which can be seen through their practices.   I feel that this describes what I was doing for part of the time during this research, espousing social constructionism whilst enacting logical positivism. What I have learned, is that the practice of one's intellectual position takes

conscious effort and work. It is not only participants who are subject to the

internalsation of dominant discourses but also the researcher. I've also learned

the value of respectful debate and discussion with colleagues. I feel that I've

moved from positioning my academic work as trying to dominate with evidence

towards a position of 'joint exploration' with colleagues from diverse epistemic

cultures.

5 Findings

In this chapter I have two distinct aims. Firstly, I aim to demonstrate the robustness in my sampling processes and transparency in the nature of participants in the sample. I also highlight areas for improvement in my data collection process or gaps which, in hindsight, I should have considered. Areas of potential bias are also discussed. Secondly, drawing on themes and discourses in the data, I aim to provide a new lens through which to explain the lack of women in senior positions in HE in the UK. This is achieved by focusing on participants' stories, sensemaking and attributions. What ensues is a picture which shows how women are engaged in identity struggles and rationalisations aimed at making some form of 'rational' sense from the irrational and dysfunctional. Although this very personal struggle seems to evoke an individualist explanation, I see these struggles as embedded in context and ultimately driven by macro structural power processes. I present a fairly dark vision of the continued but 'hidden' oppression of women, achieved through cultural hegemonic processes and 'symbolic violence'. This view of the problem of equity draws attention away from 'fix the women' explanations and instead shines the spotlight of interrogation on oppressive structures, cultures and discourses within society and how these play out in organisational life.

5.1 The Participants

Before I begin to present the data I would like to report on the overall nature of the data set within this research. What was striking was the lack of similarity or heterogeneity of this group of participants. Even in a small sample of 27 women who all work in the same industry sector, there was considerable variation in their life beginnings, experiences, attitudes and career journeys. Some come from academic families where both parents are successful academics whilst others are the first in their family to attend university. Some are happily married, others divorced and others single. Some have children whilst others don't. Some have proceeded along the traditional academic route whilst others have entered academia from business or other professions, such as medicine and health care or the arts. What is clear to me is that there are dangers in treating any gender identified group as homogenous.

In this research I am not considering 'women' as an homogeneous group within which individuals share inherent dispositions or characteristics. Rather, I am suggesting that the label of 'female' provides a signal to society, to organisations and to individuals that there are particular professional roles which are a good match to one's gender identity whilst others are a poor match. Different women will engage with that social dynamic in different ways but as long as one is identified as female, one will have to engage with that social dynamic. It is this, and only this, which creates a shared experience for all women.

As can be seen from the table below there is a good spread of the key categories represented across the sample. Below the table I provide more detail about how representative the sample appears to be of my target population. On reflection, there are some variables which could have a potential impact on participants' experiences and views which I did not measure. For example, I did not ask participants to identify their place on any socio-economic scale, nor did I ask directly for an assessment of their ethnicity, neither did I identify their age.   The table below shows each participant by the various categories used to look for particular themes or trends related to variables such as, 'type of university', 'world rank', and 'academic discipline'.

Table 11. Participants by Categories

Int #	Position	Discipline	Russell Group	Size	Trad Academic	Rank
1	Senate or Council	Humanities	no	<10000	yes	101-200
2	HoS	Social Science	no	10001-20000	yes	101-200
3	Deputy VC	Humanities	yes	20001-30000	yes	101-200
4	Dean	Humanities	no	<10000	no	No rank
5	VC	EPS	no	10001-20000	yes	No rank
6	PVC	Natural Science and Med	no	10001-20000	yes	>201
7	AD	Natural Science and Med	yes	30001-41000	yes	Top 100
8	Dean	Natural Science and Med	yes	10001-20000	yes	Top 100
9	AD	Social Science	yes	30001-41000	yes	Top 100
10	HoS	EPS	yes	20001-30000	yes	101-200
11	PVC	Humanities	yes	10001-20000	yes	Top 100
12	AD	Humanities	yes	30001-41000	yes	Top 100
13	PVC	Natural Science and Med	no	10001-20000	no	>201
14	AD	Humanities	yes	10001-20000	yes	Top 100
15	PVC	Natural Science and Med	no	10001-20000	yes	101-200
16	Deputy VC	Social Science	no	20001-30000	no	No rank
17	AD	Humanities	no	10001-20000	yes	>201
18	Dean	Social Science	yes	30001-41000	no	101-200
19	Deputy VC	Natural Science and Med	no	10001-20000	yes	101-200
20	PVC	Humanities	yes	20001-30000	yes	Top 100
21	PVC	Social Science	no	10001-20000	yes	101-200
22	HoS	Social Science	no	10001-20000	yes	101-200
23	Deputy VC	Humanities	no	10001-20000	no	No rank
24	Senate or Council	EPS	yes	20001-30000	yes	Top 100
25	PVC	Social Science	no	<10000	yes	No rank
26	Dean	Humanities	yes	10001-20000	no	Top 100
27	VC	EPS	no	20001-30000	yes	No rank

As can be seen from the table above, the greatest proportion of participants work within Plate Glass universities. This is followed by those working in Ancient universities. Given the larger number of Plate Glass universities in the target population (pre-1992 universities), it seems that in this sample, Ancient universities may be overrepresented.

It may be that those who responded to my call for interview are those who are more concerned with the issue of gender discrimination in UK HE. This may be a form of 'self-selection bias' (Heckman, 1979) or 'demand characteristics' as described by Orne (1962). Although these sample bias processes refer to the domain of psychological and economic experiments, I feel that these concepts may equally apply to my research. What I hope for is that there was a range of views and experiences within participants, prior to the research, given that not everyone reported gender discrimination and some reported positive gender discrimination it seems that there is a mix of views represented here. However, as I did not attempt to assess this prior to the research and I had to rely on those who would give me their time, I cannot rule out that this sample is more interested in gender discrimination than the target population.

Almost half of the sample comprises those in the role of PVC, Deputy VC and/or VC. A further third comprises those in the role of Dean or Assistant Dean. So the majority of participants are in either senior or very senior formal leadership

positions. Just over one third of the sample comprises those who work in either EPS or Natural Medicine and Science thus, the majority work in the Humanities or Social Science. This proportion mirrors the under-representation of women in Science Technology Engineering and Medicine (Gorman et al., 2010).

There are slightly more non-Russell group (15) than Russell group universities (12). This is to be expected given that the target sample for this research was pre-1992 universities. I was purposively trying to capture activity within the most elite universities in the UK.

In terms of size, the largest proportion, over half of the participants, work in universities with between 10001 and 20000 students (14). The smallest proportion is represented by those who work in the smallest universities i.e. with less than 10000 students (3). The next smallest is those who work in the very large universities i.e. with 30001 to 41000 students (4). Those who work in universities with between 20001 and 30000 students comprise almost one third of the sample (6). Thus, there is varying representation of universities by size but all are present.

Over two thirds of the participants define themselves as 'Traditional academics'.

Two thirds of the sample, works in universities which are ranked in the top 200 of universities in the world (according to the Times Higher Education 2014), with one third being ranked in the top 100. This demonstrates that this sample comprises mainly of elite UK universities.

In addition to looking at categories by participant, I also used the Dedoose function to explore categories by codes. Dedoose refers to these categories as 'descriptors', I will use the term category for the rest of this chapter. In this analysis, Dedoose highlights the number of excerpts within a code linked to a particular category. Where there are more excerpts associated with a particular category this has been highlighted of interest. In some cases, a subordinate code of a main code shows interesting trends, in Dedoose these are called 'Child Codes'. From now on I will refer to 'Child Codes' as sub-codes. In my presentation of the findings I have drawn finding using different analytical techniques into coherent and meaningful themes which are anchored to theory or theories drawn from the extant literature. For example, a number of excerpts recount instances of discrimination in relation to career progression and selection. Further analysis of these individual excerpts using the 'coding by category' analysis revealed that all instances of discrimination came from those in Russell Group universities. Hence, when in my analysis of discrimination, I have drawn together both thematic analyses and category by code analyses.

The following chapter is structured into the key themes which were identified in the data. Themes are drawn from the codes which were generated using Dedoose. The level of importance allocated to a code was dependent on the number of times the concept was referred to by participants. It is necessary to be aware that a theme may have been identified as important because one or two participants made regular reference to it rather than being referred to by more participants. Thus, similar themes were weighted according to how much they were talked about rather than by how many people talked about them. This process reports on the similarities across participants. I have also identified themes which represent differences across participants. These are themes which were talked about by only one or two participants but were stressed as important by the participant.

In order to protect the anonymity of the women who took part in this research I have anonymised all names of people and organisations in the quotes below. Each quote is labelled with a number which corresponds to the 'Interview Number' which can be found on the table above 'Table of Participants by Category'.

Next, I present the findings of my research.

5.2 Structural Power – HE a Gendered Field

Themes presented here resonate with the existing literature on women's careers which demonstrate that organisations are gendered (Cohen et al., 2004, Duberley et al., 2006, Cohen, 2014, Fletcher et al., 2007, Due Billing, 2014, White et al., 2012). The impact of managerialism is considerable and colours women's day to day challenges (White et al., 2011). Power is ever present with perceived personal level of power as mainly attenuated or ambiguous (Höpfl and Matilal, 2007). The issue of hidden power is also discussed. Family and caring are still considered to be women's responsibilities (Benschop et al., 2013). The mother identity is a point where identity struggles collide foregrounding the still complex relationship, for women, between the public and private spheres (Little, 2015, Cohen et al., 2009). This appears to be a trigger which results in a loss of visibility and status. Workloads are heavy with considerable horizontal expansion, gender differentiation and role ambiguity (Barrett and Barrett, 2011). Participants receive no or little support from their organisations whether this is considered to be resource, advice or mentoring. Where women do have mentors and sponsors these are mainly men. In terms of networking most women talk about the importance of a small group of friends rather than the more common notion of networking as instrumental and transactional. Russell Group universities appear to be the worst for discrimination and yet the most active in visible gender equality schemes. This is understood as a lack of congruence between organisational espoused theories vs theories in action (Argyris, 1995).

Finally, there appears to be a double standard in terms of the required skills for progression to leadership positions for some a strong research record is required whilst for those who have a strong research record, there is a need to develop their administrative or managerial skills.

5.2.1 It's Like Playing Poker in the Dark!

When asked about the main challenges they face in their current role, participants talked most about two different but inter-related issues. The external and internal environment, are the major causes of challenges in day to day management. Macro level changes related to funding, expectations and the function of HE in the UK have resulted in increased managerialism and a turn towards 'leaderism' as seen in other UK public sector institutions e.g. the NHS, National and local government (Morley, 2013).

For this theme, it is interesting to see that comments come mainly from those in 'Plate Glass' and 'Civic Red Brick' universities. Sector changes are viewed as having a negative impact on universities with strategic activity moving towards a need to create a competitive advantage with resultant managerialist activities.

> *Plus it's facing this massive change that it will totally change*
> *the culture of HE anyway but you know the loss of our*
> *HEFCE Funding we've always been very well HEFCE funded.*
> *…and no great need to generate huge out of country income,*
> *I mean traditionally this was the position. I mean the college*

until a few years ago we barely needed to recruit just let it be
known that the application process was open and they came.
It has completely changed … and that has cost a lot of pain.
(4)

In the following two quotes there is evidence of the discourse of commercial

business which is now shaping public sector activity (Mautner, 2005).

Leadership is now not solely focused scholarship leadership. Now, it is

perceived that for universities to survive in the new funding climate there is a

pressing need to imitate the world of competitive business, to treat students as

customers, and to ensure that faculty are well aligned with organisational

strategic intent.

In a way, the current challenges to me are the current
challenges facing the university sector and this university in
particular. So positioning, reputation, getting people to point
more or less in the same direction, say on Internationalisation,
winning over hearts and minds to what people might see as
the corporate strategy. (23)

The recent acceleration of change and the number of changes introduced

presents great difficulties for university structures and processes, which have

traditionally been highly bureaucratic and risk averse. Planning activity needs to

be more flexible and responsive to the external environment.

At the moment, with the external environment. For example,
when we reflect on our risk register, we sometimes get
concerned that the risks aren't getting any less. We're
working very hard to mitigate them. The playing poker in the
dark is that you are constantly having to cope with change,
and to change halfway through cycles. (23)

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Thus, traditional frustrations with the university internal environment have increased. In particular, the slowness in achieving desired improvements due to the distance between the 'university centre' and its schools or colleges or the complex layers of committees is seen as a major impediment to successful management. In addition, vague job descriptions and a lack of clear job role accountabilities, means that the identification of job task or job role responsibility is often problematic.

> *The biggest challenges, university organisations typically work on a matrix structure so there isn't an immediate one line of control. The biggest challenge is probably my patience on some things, [laughs] when you have to do an awful lot of consulting or finding out. I've got an example, I've got to send a letter to one of the research councils and, well, a letter needs to go from the university. I've sent about five emails to my seniors to find out who actually should be signing it off. It's those kind of, it's the brokering and keeping of everybody in line and knowing who you need to get to agree on things without getting just sucked into constantly not making decisions because it's someone else's to make. It's the organisational politics and consultation with more letters around the nooks and crannies to make the formal structures work. (9)*

Organisational structures also constrain effective cross disciplinary or inter-disciplinary working resulting in a difficulty to develop research networks.

> *It's quite difficult to make any connections outside that little cell and I know that's the same for other people across the institution that they are also stuck in their little cells. First of all, you don't see the broader picture and secondly, you don't have the networks to the other cells. I think what I have to try to do in the university is try to promote this kind of horizontal networks where different groups of academics can connect in various ways. (21)*

Power is expressed through 'fiefdoms' which results in a need to engage in the navigation of political sensitivities. For some, new managerialist techniques are seen as effective tools to address 'old' and unethical ways of working.

> *So I made an organisational diagram that showed who was in*
> *charge of who, and that was seen as very fascist and wicked.*
> *It was actually terribly necessary, as I'm sure you know*
> *Breaking down old confederacies, and cliques, and ghettos,*
> *and all of that stuff. (10)*

Many talked about the important role of organisational culture and cultural practices. When moving into their new leadership role, there was an expectation of 'business as usual', or 'that's the way we do things round here'. In the main, these difficulties are a result of the previously outlined changes in the UK HE economic environment manifesting as an increase in managerialism and a consequent expectation of a shift in the academic role and the place of universities in society. Concerns about how to manage this process surface as one of the main challenges to women in leadership positions. Differing views are expressed concerning the acceptance of and/or resistance to these changes. The quote below illustrates how for some there is an acceptance of managerialism as a necessity and a view that academics are resisting 'normal' management practices.

> *One of the biggest things that people feel is the loss of*
> *autonomy. This is partly because some of the things that are*
> *in place is sort of basic line management we never imposed.*
> *You know so really basic things like telling people when*
> *you're going on leave, you know telling people when you're*
> *coming in, that kind of stuff. Never ever imposed and now*
> *they are imposed they feel very restricted and some people*
> *can't I mean that's the small stuff the big stuff I suppose is*

> *driving from research inactive to research active so it raises*
> *… been raising the game. (4)*

This need to 'raise the game' of academics is further illustrated by the introduction of new 'performance management' discourse. There is a notion that there is a 'right way' to perform the academic role and, that currently many academics are simply not performing. Definitions of 'correct performance' are often unclear but are driven by the new pressing imperatives of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and reductions in Full Time Equivalence (FTE) funding. Thus, power structures within the UK are shifting the nature of the academic contract and creating new pressures on academics at all levels. These are translated using a Taylorist (1914) or anti-humanist approach, the focus is on economic efficiencies rather than effectiveness, on the short term not the long term and where people are considered to be organisational resources rather than human beings . Thus, in terms of research, more publications in the 'right' journals, represents good performance. The development of human knowledge and wisdom has been subjected to rational quantification.

> *The other thing is I sometimes feel that there are some very*
> *difficult personnel issues. That's because for years and years*
> *and years, and I don't think our organisation is different, we*
> *didn't have those difficult conversations that we're having*
> *now. We allowed people to go on for years and years and*
> *years, performing in a mediocre way. We went on for years …*
> *I really do think this is across the sector. (23)*

The majority voice was that managerialism is here to stay and is either a necessary or welcome change. In common with Powell and Sang (2015), there

was some evidence of resistance and a recognition of what will be lost without this resistance. In the quote below, concern is voiced over increased workloads and the change in university culture. The participant's choice to engage in active resistance is unusual in my research sample. As she is one of the older participants, it may be that, unlike many of the younger participants, she has past experience with the success of organised resistance.

> *The other thing is that actually as universities have become more and more managerialist and as, at least in some institutions, I think, including this one, university managers have very much a tendency to want more and more in that way. I just don't find the culture among the management attractive at all, and I'm happy enough to be on the council and try and challenge it, but I don't want to be one of them. Again, that's part of what took me to stand for the council. It's a feeling that actually I wanted to stand up and be in a position to … what's the phrase people use? Constructive challenge. I wanted to engage in constructive challenge to management. (1)*

In summary, managerialism is viewed in a number of different ways; as an appropriate response to macro changes, as a useful tool to create new and more equitable ways of working and, as a potentially dehumanising set of practices. The fact that the majority of rationalisations for increased managerialism were unquestioning indicates that hegemonic discourses are unconsciously accepted and internalised as 'natural' or 'inevitable'. This is the process of 'false naturalization' which results in political ideologies being viewed as the inevitable course of events (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Some of the challenges discussed above are likely to be the same as those

faced by men in leadership positions. However, I would argue that these impact

differently on women resulting in the need for a different response by women.

Due to the gendered nature of leadership, women, when raising issues of

concern, are often not taken seriously. The following quote demonstrates the

complex ways in which one woman felt she had to deal with the presentation of

an unworkable idea by two of her male colleagues. Their idea was ill-conceived

and if enacted could have resulted in resource strains, financial costs and

reputational harm to the organisation. Notice how she actively sacrifices any

visible recognition for her effective management by seniors, whilst celebrating

gains in credibility with her subordinates.

> *There was a bit of a classic there. Two male colleagues cooked this up between them, and then to stop it happening, I had to appeal to one and not to my Dean. I knew I had to appeal to this one as though I was saying, "We can't let Eugene go ahead with this because this is going to be really dreadful. Could you possibly speak to him? I know you're being quite reasonable about this." And so he did and said, "Oh, it's now sorted." And the Dean said, "Oh, thanks, Peter, for sorting that out." But it's the only way to manage the situation because if I'd gone and said to the Dean, "Peter and Eugene are cooking something up" he would have been like, "I'm sure it will be fine." That's the kind of thing where you just want to go, "Just excuse me while I open this door and scream." But I don't know. You just have to keep your humour about it don't you? And I think that's where other colleagues are... because one of the things, one of the really great supports I have here is I've got a really good relationship with the professional staff, because I've done direct undergraduate study. And so when this was all cooking up, they came to me and said, "This is what they're doing." And, again, that helped me with my credibility with them,that I can say, "I've managed to put a stop to that." (18)*

What is interesting here is the impact that one's gender has on others' attributions. The participant knew, likely from previous experiences, that her concerns would not be taken seriously unless voiced by a man. In addition, to do her job well, she feels that she has to make trade-offs. Her focus is not on her personal career success but the effective running of the department. She lets go of any potential recognition of skill from senior bosses as a trade-off for stopping the damaging project. In addition to this extra 'work' needed to stop the project, she is also mindful of the need to manage build her credibility with her staff. The latter results in what she sees as a positive outcome or return for her sacrifice. This clearly illustrates how when women and men are faced with the same organisational challenges, often, women have to devise different responses from those that men would take. What is clear is that, to achieve the same outcomes, women are much more likely to need to engage in extra intellectual and emotional labour than their male counterparts. In this example, the woman has to manage how she is perceived. Her gender shapes her boss's perception of her views and opinions. Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus provide a useful explanation for her behaviour. She recognises that this is the habitus of the field in which she is working. Thus, there is a hidden, taken for granted understanding that women's view hold less power or are less credible. In this way, the organisational culture comprises hegemonic discourses (women's voices are less credible) which are rarely questioned openly. The woman's choices for action are fewer than her male colleague's. The direct approach to

the Dean is not an option for her and this is entirely due to the signifying power of her gender.

What this story also illustrates is how both women and men usually engage with these hegemonic discourses at an unconscious level. It is this lack of consciousness which is key to the continued acceptance and reproduction of biased discourses. They take on the label 'common sense' (Bennett, 1981). The lack of consciousness is also central to understanding the lack of resistance and the difficulty with resistance to these biased discourses.

5.2.2 Power and Influence

Issues of personal power and influence were talked about in different ways by participants from different types of university. For those in Redbrick universities, participants said, that often it is difficult to exert power or have influence due to the constraining effect of bureaucratic structures and processes. One participant talked about how she gains leverage by invoking external sources of power such as accreditation bodies. Others talk about the need to bring in the power and influence of senior colleagues. Overall, in Redbrick universities, participants describe varying levels of power and influence with different audiences. For example, a participant may feel that she has sufficient influence at faculty level but not with schools or institutes.

> *At faculty-level, absolutely fine. I can influence what I need to*
> *influence there. That is not a problem. University-level, as*

*much as any of the other Associate Deans, I get my say, and
I feel I get to influence things at university level. The problem
is that the faculty is organised into schools and institutes, and
the schools and institutes sometimes can feel a little bit
autonomous. It is often much harder to get all of them signed
up to what we are trying to achieve because they want to do
their own thing, so that is the area that sometimes I sort of
feel it might be easier if I had a bit more power within the
schools and institutes to make them do things. In order to get
something done there, if they are being resistant, then, really,
my power is to go to the Dean and get the Dean to make
them do it, do it for me. (7)*

*I am very fortunate in that I have some leverage, for example
through external accreditation, so if all else fails, I can usually
say we have to this because we need to do it for
accreditation. (18)*

The sense of one's power as attenuated seems to result in the need to engage in

creative practices to leverage one's power. It also suggests that, as argued by

feminist and critical researchers, even if women do achieve legitimate positions

of authority, they will not have full power or their power will be 'castrated'

(Czarniawska and Hopfl, 2002, Fletcher, 2004, Sinclair, 2013).

In contrast, those in 19th Century universities report a sense of power and

influence at the most senior levels.

*I feel very much a part of the senior management and I have
a lot of, say an influence in shaping policies and procedures.
(25)*

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In Plate Glass universities, participants say that they have to rely mainly on expert power sources rather than their authority or position power i.e. intellectual power and persuasion. They also refer to how power and influence is often expressed through informal processes by strong individuals or group power bases.

> *…there is a lot of that that goes on in a way that is often very difficult to name. So, you know, to give you an example. I chair within the school, the school's research committee because that's what I'm Director of, and the first committee meeting … meeting of that committee that I chaired which is full of quite senior professors, all of them were more established professors than me because I was new to it and, you know, I was fairly used to chairing committees, but I wasn't used to probably chairing committees full of people with much bigger egos and much more … it was a very difficult meeting to chair because some things that I had predicted might be difficult actually weren't difficult, but some things I hadn't predicted … trod on toes of some people whose, you know … whose areas and whose power bases, they obviously came to protect …*
> *… and those … those are very difficult to name those things, you know? It's very difficult actually to say, "Look, this is what's going on and this is not necessarily a misuse of power, but it's," a lot goes on that is, you know, subliminal that is to do with personalities and at that level, I think that's where it's often very fickle to really … (22)*

> *It's intellectual power, it's not person… it's not a power you can wield like telling somebody to do something it's an intellectual. I have no power, I have no authority because it's a university. My own imparted authority is in reasoned arguments so I have to be persuasive. I can't threaten people, do this or you lose your job. I have to persuade people about things. (17)*

As with Redbrick universities it appears that the expression of legitimate power is often attenuated resulting in a need to develop other sources of power. The talk

about power issues which are 'difficult to name' links back to the concept of cultural hegemonic processes where power is exerted through hidden means. This concept of power as hidden or obscured is expressed in a different way by women in Ancient universities.

In Ancient universities the talk of power takes a different tone. Here participants emphasise how the college structure acts to shift the power from the top of the organisation to its constituents. The view is that of, power as responsibility, and that one's role is to provide stewardship or advocacy for the colleges and fellows. One participant states that her role is ambiguous in terms of her official power and authority.

> *I have very ill designed powers, nowhere set down so it's just a general expectation that I will provide leadership. (26)*

> *. I think it's probably something about the way in which this university is set up. We have the responsibility of running the university, but we always know that beyond this is what's called the congregation which is essentially a Parliament of the Dons which can get together and tell us what to do. It doesn't very often, because mostly just that's how the business runs, but the sense in which you always know that, if push comes to shove you would be answerable to the academic communities, the university as a whole, and I think that tends to work against the very sense of hierarchy and I think myself that's also good. (20)*

What is clear is that the relationship between legitimate positions of power and authority is not straightforward in UK universities. It is difficult to know whether the experiences of these women are very similar to that of their male counterparts or whether this is a gender issue. Research on power in universities is scant, making this an interesting potential area for more detailed inquiry.

5.2.3 A Dementing Mother, Five Grandchildren and a Divorce!

As has been identified in previous research on women's careers, family related factors play a very important role in these women's career experiences (O'Neill et al., 2008, Ely et al., 2014). For example, when making career related decisions, the needs of the family shapes the final decision. For some, their current leadership position resulted in a need to 'follow the husband's career'. For the participant whose quote appears below, this final move resulted in a positive outcome for but it came at the end of a lifetime of some negative consequences of being second in family career plans. What is interesting, is that when asked whether this lifetime of 'following' was fair, the respondent asserted that it was.

> …my husband had already been recruited by (this University)
> and our family home was (here), so I actually just needed a
> job (here). I wasn't particularly well equipped to take the sort
> of standard university jobs in the science and administration
> and academic administration but this Head of College job was
> advertised. It so happened that this college, I think, was quite
> consciously looking for an external person at that point in its
> evolution because they'd had a big sort of developmental
> forward but they felt a strong need to manage and consolidate

and change the ethos of the place. I just happened to fit the
bill and get … win the job through competition, really. (26)

In contrast to the above, one woman made the decision to move to another job to

put some distance between her and her husband as their marriage appeared to

be ending.

> *The reason I moved and two reasons and this is again, where*
> *I think women come into it, being a woman is … Mine was*
> *fairly rocky and it was if we're going to split up, would it be*
> *better if I moved away and did something else, moved away*
> *from the area so there was a thought of moving because my*
> *marriage wasn't in a good state. (13)*

For another participant, the need to ensure stability for her son in his education

and her husband's career at the same university were major factors in her

decision to not seek career progression at this time.

> *The next five years I don't want to do anything because my*
> *son is just starting high school. My husband's got a job here*
> *at the university. Why would I, I wouldn't gain much other*
> *than status by going and being a Dean somewhere else. If it*
> *happens in five years, I'll be fifty-five, that will be alright. (9)*

Pregnancy and rearing young children was also an issue to be considered in

relation to career progression.

> *I was there a few months and then the School role came up.*
> *When I was asked to do it I said, "Well, I am trying to get*
> *pregnant again but I'll take it on, but there's a risk I'm going to*
> *be pregnant and I will either have to step aside or you will*
> *have to make this job work for me." A lot of it was if I had a*
> *second child, I'm not sure I would have done this. (9)*

Women also talked about how family commitments and support from family have

impacted upon their career journeys. A small number say that it is the husband

who has taken on the role of carer in their family. However, there still remains

some residual guilt in handing over this responsibility, indicating that women still

perceive family and domestic duties as their domain.

> *I've had an extraordinary partner who has maintained a very*
> *high profile and very stressful career as well us significantly*
> *bring up two children. In a way he should be the one*
> *interviewed I've been the one who has been put in the more*
> *privileged position of the way our male colleagues have often*
> *been. Which is I have been left alone to go and be excellent*
> *at my job. I say the only downside of that is that it's just*
> *because it has meant that I have advanced in my career it*
> *doesn't mean I don't understand the loss it meant of just*
> *hours and minutes with my own children. I don't sit around*
> *and … There is nobody to blame for that I'm exceptionally*
> *lucky to have been healthy enough and met a partner who*
> *has helped me and been really instrumental in not only*
> *helping me but in raising two children. (11)*

> *I thought they'd (her children) be fine without me. I was there*
> *most of the time, but I didn't, there was only one time I*
> *remembered when the fox had taken two of our hens and I*
> *had an eight o'clock meeting and I got my bicycle out and I*
> *saw all these feathers in the garden and I knew I couldn't be*
> *there to comfort my children when they found out that they'd*
> *the chickens, but that's how I remember thinking of "Crap, I*
> *shouldn't be Associate Dean." but that's the only time I think.*
> *(12)*

For others, the responsibility of being the carer in the family simply adds to their

workload and increases their stress levels.

> *Also I've got a dementing mother too, which has been a huge*
> *strain. Just this last three months, she's gone into a home,*
> *and I can't tell you the relief there, so, I sort of had a*

> *dementing mother, five grandchildren, a divorce, it just … I*
> *must have hit every scale for … people come in my office and*
> *say they're stressed, and I have to … stressed? (16)*

For one participant, the expectation that, upon her mother's death, she would be the carer in the family, brought her significant emotional upheaval as she had just been accepted to Medical School, her lifelong dream.

> *In my mid-twenties, my mother was dead and my father*
> *thought I should give up everything to go home and look after*
> *him. That would have been one of the most difficult decisions,*
> *when I told him, "No." … that would have been the normal*
> *way that a single daughter would have behaved. …I tried,*
> *maybe three years, to make it possible to get into Med school,*
> *perhaps slightly longer than that. When there was the*
> *opportunity I just couldn't give it up. I thought, and actually*
> *was proved right, that my father would eventually find*
> *someone else and he wasn't good at living on his own. Many*
> *men aren't. He did find a very nice companion. So I would've*
> *given up and then I would've ... that wouldn't have been any*
> *good anyway. (8)*

Although there is variation in the way different participants' families impact upon their careers, what is clear is that the private sphere of 'family' and the work of unpaid care is still considered to be primarily the woman's role. Even where women talk about their husbands taking more responsibility, it is seen as a 'handing over' of responsibility, and there remains some regret and guilt about not being with the children at critical times or not spending enough time to get to know them well. In the main, with this set of very senior women, family responsibilities do act to constrain their career choices and progression. This means that, in terms of family, they experience similar barriers and difficulties as

other women in the workplace. The suggestion that women have to sacrifice

children and family to gain leadership positions is not borne out by the women I

interviewed. Although one participant clearly stated that she thought her career

was only possible because she does not have children. One of the outcomes of

this dual responsibility is the stress of an additional workload. There is the

unpaid workload related to family responsibilities and the very heavy workload

related to a senior position. I return to the issue of workload later.

Another outcome is when the two different spheres or fields collide, when the

public university has to interact with the private family. The following story

demonstrates that even when a woman is in a very senior position in the

university, once she is identified as 'mother', in some contexts, all her power and

influence is lost. This story also highlights the gendered nature of universities.

They are places designed for the stereotypical male and his life.

> *I'm the only person on the senior management team who has*
> *primary school age kids. The others either don't have children*
> *in fact neither Pro-Rector has children and the others either*
> *their kids have grown up or … actually a couple of cases*
> *they've got teenagers but older than mine and actually they're*
> *men. I'd say the gender issue is in the parenting issue it's a*
> *big deal for me because I'm very interested in how visible that*
> *culture is in the College and it's not very and I've been*
> *certainly quite open and you know been encouraging, I hope,*
> *about that and I have a few women on my staff with small*
> *children. We've had one or two maternity leaves in a couple*
> *of years, and I but I think that's an area where the College*
> *has had a blinker zone for quite a while.   … one of the*
> *surprises I suppose has been members of staff, members of*
> *academic staff who feel … when I became Dean who felt in*
> *the past that they had been discriminated against so either*
> *they'd lost visibility the moment they have their kids because*
> *they'd gone part time. Or they were concerned to not talk*

about parenting issues when they came in to work, because it just wasn't the 'done thing'. Also I should say there wasn't even a crèche when I came. …I also remember asking Finance about it and they said, "Love, there's just not been much called for one." It was, that was exactly the response there was nothing proactive about this at all. I felt yeah, I felt you know and I certainly on the odd occasion when I've come into the building with my kids which I do and the security guard says, "No kids are allowed on the premises," which isn't true actually but he's just misunderstood the rules and "I'm do you know who I am?" but at that point I'm just a mum with kids who you know. (4)

This story illuminates the hard to reach, every day, subtle discrimination which occurs in organisations. The lack of childcare facilities acts as a symbol of whose place this is. Elements of the private sphere i.e. the family, are not welcome in the public sphere. The fact that female faculty felt that they had lost their visibility and status once they had children is clear evidence of the hidden power of cultural hegemony. Further, their silence on the matter until a woman becomes their leader, indicates the presence of symbolic violence and self-policing. Finally, the encounter with the security guard starkly highlights the way in which identities can collide for women, resulting in frustration and a sense that, once identified as 'fully feminine' they are devalued. In this scenario, ensuring that one is seen as 'safely feminine' or 'masculine enough' is not an option. The presence of one's children immediately signals the identity of 'carer' and hence, 'fully feminine'. In addition, the 'forbidding' of children, or perceived 'forbidding' of children on the premises, when viewed through the psychodynamic theory which positions 'women as threat', can be interpreted as a need to control the 'chaos' which would ensue if children and by extension, their carers, women, were

allowed access. Whatever the underlying causes, this university is definitely a gendered organisation.

5.2.4 I Feel like a Hamster on a Wheel

A worrying trend which emerged was that of work overload. Women report being overloaded in terms of an enlarged role and/or pressure of delivery with a lack of resources. Role enlargement, through horizontal expansion, can occur when women, upon promotion, keep many of the tasks and responsibilities from their previous role. It can also occur due to role ambiguity, with women taking on tasks which they perceive as essential but not owned.

> *So my total teaching load in any week, normally during term, would be anything between with all the lectures and classes, anything between ten to sixteen hours.   Then I have meetings on top of that. So that's one reason I tot up all these hours. I'm trying to keep it under control, but it's quite hard. When colleagues go on leave and then you end up doing part of their jobs and that's what happened last year. I was filling in for someone running another course, standing in for somebody else… (14)*

> *Now the other, the most difficult thing I think for me is actually to I was going to say to manage my time. Just because I have got so many things in my plate now, partly, that's my own fault because without a job description, I think I could legitimately say it's not in my job description so, why am I even looking at that? (6)*

> *This job is 200%. On average I do eighty hours a week, week in, week out and it's exhausting, absolutely exhausting. (13)*

> *I feel like a hamster in a wheel and I can't run fast enough. (17)*

The rest of the job for me is stopping the ship from sinking. I'll
spend the rest of the time stopping the ship from sinking back.
I'm just going to think about where it's sailing to. I try to keep
my eye on the compass at the same time. (21)

This appears across all institutions and may be an expected part of playing a

senior role for both men and women. .

There appears to be an expectation that women will 'do more' than men, which is

demonstrated by the reports from women that, unlike their male counterparts,

they are expected to manage with little or no administrative support.

And I suppose the thing I find most depressing is I have to
spend a lot of time doing extremely low-level admin tasks. I
get on really well with my Head of School, and when I've
raised this with him, he's told me that he thinks, in essence
what he said to me, it's the only time he's ever said anything
to me like this, he said, "Mary, I think that might be a touch of
(University name)." And I said, I said, "What do you mean?"
And he said, "Well, I think you might be used to much higher
levels of support than are normal in a university." And I
thought, that is just below the belt, really. So ... Yeah. I think, I
think it's, I'm far too highly paid to be counting people's leave
dates, and things like that, really. (22)

This lack of resource together with a resistance from senior colleagues to provide

a remedy is another example of gender related differential treatment.   As

previously highlighted, the research indicates that female academics are more

likely than their male counterparts to be allocated work tasks which can be

described as 'housekeeping' (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012). Thus, it may

be that when women take on senior roles, there is an expectation that they will carry out any related administrative tasks.

Of major concern to a number of participants was the challenge to find time to keep up their research activity. There was a recognition that a strategy for ring-fencing time is necessary. This works for some but for others, often day to day management activities are allowed to impede.

> *I was research-active at the time, but since becoming Dean, I haven't kept up the research, because I've just found the job so all consuming. (16)*

> *I turn off the lights and don't answer the phone on Fridays. I give myself a day or week where I just… I don't even come into the university. I go to my own space and just do what I need to do in order to make that happen. I mean it took me a year to write the last paper. (17)*

Participants expressed worry about losing their research profile as this is perceived as presenting a risk to their career prospects should they fall out of management. Other concerns are about losing credibility and losing touch of movement in their field. The importance of building and maintaining one's research profile is considered to be critical to career progression to a senior role in some cases. Concepts related to research activity as normatively male, and hence, a symbol of legitimation to power access, is covered in more detail in a later chapter.

In terms of the impact that the dearth of women in senior positions has had on research participants, a range of experiences are reported. The majority of women say that they are the sole woman at their level in their organisation and this can result in a sense of isolation and for a small number of women, a sense of exclusion or hostility. This appears to be a function of academic discipline as women who report this work either in EPS or Medicine.

> ████████████████████████
> ██████████. *It's nice to be able to get these things out in the open. Just as I'm finishing, it's quite nice to talk about it. The environment is very hostile to women. (10)*

> *I came to this university into a very male dominated school, which was quite backward looking. I had to carve out space for my laboratories, I had to make sure that I was making good appointments and that those appointments had plenty of space and they were being supported. Those early days were the hardest here. (15)*

> *They're mostly men, and mostly, engineering scientists are not female. I think there are several ways in which you have to prove yourself. Well, I had to anyway I think in a broader context. (21)*

> *I feel I'm excluded quite a lot of the time. I'm quite often excluded from things but I suppose what I tended to do is say, "Okay, these are the things I'm going to do and I'm going to do those well." I suppose that's the way I tend to deal with it. I tend to say, "Okay, this isn't going very well. I feel excluded. There's a lot of things going on here where I'm marginalised, basically, but I'll make sure I do that well and that's something I can achieve." Then at the end of the year, I feel good about myself and also it gives me something to focus on, something where I know I can go somewhere, where I've got the policy directions are going. (21)*

The other thing is as you get further up confidentiality stuff gets more intense because you can't chat about it with many people. It's quite lonely and I think if you've learnt self-reflection, if you've learnt to spend time with yourself you don't find the loneliness quite so hard to take because it is difficult sometimes. (15)

The quotes above present a picture of the leadership space at the top of universities as one of difficulty and exclusion for women, and more importantly as a space for men. These women have felt the need to develop creative responses to work effectively in their roles. This runs from extra careful consideration in the recruitment and development of staff to the development of psychological strategies to deal with difficult emotions related to exclusion and loneliness.

5.2.5 There isn't a Culture Really of Mutual Support!

In this research I've split the concept of support into the following categories: Organisational support for the participant as an individual and organisational support for women as a group i.e. specific gender focused programmes and, Individual support from others such as family, friends and mentors.

Very few participants say that they feel well supported by their organisation. Where it is talked about it is usually in the context of support for major change programmes, including creating a cultural shift in their organisation.

From the senior management in the university who realised what was going on, I got huge amounts of support and a lot of backing. They kind of intervened basically and made sure that I had what I needed. From that moment on, I don't think I've had any … and I don't think the resistance that in the department I came into to create my new group was because I was female, it was simply I was bringing in a new discipline into their arena, yes. (15)

The more common experiences are that there is no support for the individual or that it is not well thought out.

…and they wanted me because of my background as an accountant, they wanted someone who had that professional status as well, because that was important for exceptions. But they also saw my potential as a researcher. But when I got here, there was absolutely no support in terms of... all of the advice I was given was actually really bad, so the guy who appointed me said, "don't register for your PhD yet because the clock starts ticking," which actually is the worst thing he could have said because I really needed that ticking clock to make me get on with it. (18)

Here there may be evidence that research activity is seen as normatively male and hence, expectations for this woman, in terms of research were low.

The practice of seeking support from others is presented by some as antithetical to the university. Rather than the expected collegiate culture where ideas and experiences are shared and discussed, what is seen is a culture which rewards performances of independence and individual decision making. The poor attempt to introduce a mentoring relationship for the woman below indicates a lack of knowledge and experience in developing relational organisational practices.

The colleges are very … fully independent and separate from each other and there isn't a culture really of mutual support. When I first came to (this university), the then Vice Chancellor who was a woman, allocated me the head of another College, a woman and she helped me to go and see her and I didn't really know why she'd asked me to go and see her. It turns out because she was supposed to be there to touch base with … and this was just occasionally … I've used her over the time but it wasn't a very real mentor relationship. I also went around and called on various other colleagues when I arrived but that caused some surprise in (this university) because it's not tradition here at all. (26)

In contrast, many participants talk about their organisation's support for 'women' as a group usually in reference to specific activities designed to address the leaky pipeline and unconscious bias. Given that the code by category analysis showed that the majority of talk about gender discrimination comes from Russell Group universities, it is interesting that talk about support for women come mainly from those from Russell Group, Ancient and Civic Redbrick universities. Here it seems that these are the only universities engaged in providing gender specific career support.

We're very conscious of the whole leaky pipe phenomenon and we're actively trying to do more to bring women on the middle to senior levels. When I was Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Personnel and Equality I started something which I continue to sponsor in my current portfolio, which is a mentoring scheme for senior women in the university called ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ and this is for both academics and administrative. They have to be at a level of potential seniority and then they get one to one mentoring from that as they're top men and women in the university. (20)

We have very good systems and grants to enable a young academic who is going to take a break for maternity leave and

> *does need some financial support to help as she's trying to get back into her academic career. And, for example, if you've got young children there's an evening seminar and you want to come, but you've not got a partner who that evening can look after your child, we'll pay for baby sitter. If it really is something that matters to you and to your career and your interaction. We're very conscious of women trying to do lots of things including bringing up a family. (8)*

Explanations for this apparent conflict include the fact that these universities may have recently recognised that discrimination is more evident in their organisations than others in the sector and hence, a focus on visible action. Another explanation is that these universities are enacting what Argyris (1995) refers to as an 'espoused organisational theory', engaging in visible, symbolic action, similar to tokenism, which acts to obscure the 'theory in action' the actual way the organisation practices . The quote below seems to support this view.

> *… who was the previous Vice Chancellor was very unpopular for a number of ways he did things. Very centralised. Very dictatorial. Was also hugely, hugely committed to getting more women into leadership; so set up various spring board activities of which I benefited. But also, there was a moment where he was pressing, I was involved with the Board of Governors, he wanted to get a woman as a Dean. This was one of his last symbolic acts that he wanted to do and he was pressing for the woman who was being interviewed, and she was not the best one for the job. It ended up with myself and another woman blocking it because she would have been a disaster. (9)*

5.2.6 What Would David Say here?

As has been identified by previous research literature the presence of mentors is an important factor in women's career journeys (Gorman et al., 2010, McDonald

and Westphal, 2012, McDonald and Westphal, 2013). In fact, only one

participant reported not having a mentor or any role models or mentors for her

career. She works within the EPS discipline and she cited a lack of women in

field who could act as role models.

> *No, I mean I would say I've had absolutely... It sounds a bit ungenerous doesn't it?   In my professional field, up till around now, I didn't have anybody really. As I was going up through the ranks, nobody, and I did always make a point of trying to get a mentor, and it just never somehow... There are not enough women in my field, somehow never really... really it never worked. No. (10)*

In this research more women had male mentors than female mentors. Again this

is likely to be a function of the lack of women at very senior levels to whom

women can turn for mentorship.

> *And another guy I worked with, another professor, David, who was ... Had incredibly high, he was a terrible, terrible administrator. But had terrific values. And I ... And a lot of those were about professional generosity, really. And I often use what I call the David test. You know, what would David say here. And sometimes it makes me do something that's really difficult for myself, you know. But feels right. So his values were very important. I actually think my father was very important. And I'm very aware as I'm saying this, there's no women in this list. (2)*

> *Yes. It wasn't an official mentoring role, if you like, but it certainly was, and he was certainly the person I would have gone to, to talk to about stuff when I wasn't sure about it. He was very experienced and really did help me a lot in those days, so definitely that would have been a mentoring role, yes. (7)*

> *I think, going back a long way, there was a professor called Charles who I did my Ph.D. – he was a co-advisor of my*

Ph.D., and all my life, really, I have sort of thought how would
Charles have done this because he was a really gentle,
excellent leader. Everybody would have done anything for
him, but I never heard him raise his voice or – he was just
really, really good. Certainly, he was an inspirational biologist
as well, which was very exciting for me. He is long retired,
but even now I sort of think, oh, what would Charles have
done in this sort of situation. (7)

What is interesting is how two of the participants talk about their male role

models as if they are a presence within their psyche, as if they've internalised

their voice and perspective which they then use as a benchmark for their own

behaviour. A small number of women are actively involved in mentoring or

coaching others, some as part of a movement within their organisation.

The Vice Chancellor is a mentor, I'm a mentor, many of our
heads of college are mentors. What this is designed to do is
really to provide the sort of mentoring which is not advisory
mentoring, but it's rather getting women to talk about their
kind of life choices as it were and to encourage them to talk
through, hear themselves talking and really focus on what the
next step may be for them whether it's an academic or
administrative or a combination of the two. (20)

Others play the role of mentor and role model for others outside of their own

organisation.

So the whole reason I'm really in education is in order to
provide a different kind of experience for people. I still haven't
managed to do maybe as much as I would have hoped. I
began by teaching on the (Course Name Removed).
I had a really nice experience, and it was mainly
teaching single black mothers in (Location Removed). And I had a
really nice experience at our meeting a few weeks ago where
we talked about some HIV program that was being set up,
and I said my experience. Then the woman next to me, who
was a black woman in charge of the construction council,
said, "Yeah, you taught me." (10)

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When it comes to support from other women, participants talk about women in their network, friends as providing peer mentoring and support. This links to research which indicates that men are more likely to engage with people in their network in a more transactional way than women. Women tend to develop stronger ties, or deeper relationships but have fewer of them (Parker and Welch, 2013).

> *They were a mix. I'm just trying to think were there more men or women. I would say it's about 50/50. Probably as I got older I have one or two or three, actually, three women friends who are actually very significant women, in their own right, who I can really talk to. Now, that's more peer support. It's a slightly different thing, but they're very mature, sensible, good women. I would say, at the moment, two men who I would use them that way. (8)*

> *I think the other thing I would mention is that I'm quite dependent on women peers, one or two women peers, female peers, who we can actually share and download issues. That's been more important, just having one or two people. Sometimes not more than one, but just someone who you can actually be yourself with rather than … and share issues. I think that's been more important for me. (23)*

5.2.7 A Witch or a Grandmother?

Throughout the interviews participants demonstrate an equivocal view of how gender impacts upon their experiences. The majority of participants report they have not experienced any direct discrimination. In fact the discourse that is presented is one of discrimination as a thing of the past.

So I went to see HR to see if I could ... I had some research leave owed to me and I was trying to get research leave and then maternity leave. And that was seen as a bit of a no-no. And could you believe this? The person in HR suggested to me that I just left the university because it would be easier. I know! That seems incredible now, doesn't it? So I don't think that was very good. And then my then-head of school was very old school. He talked about "Oh, you're wearing slacks today" and that sort of thing. This is quite a funny story. So I had one child and then two years later, I had another one, which is quite a reasonable length of time. …So I then told my Head of Department I was pregnant again and he came out with the classic line "Oh, that means that you're going to be off on exam marking". As if somehow in the middle of a night of passion, you'd consult the exam timetable. So he wasn't terribly sympathetic because no one had been on maternity leave before. (3)

Another discourse is that conditions are improving but that progress is slow.

Yeah, well, one explanation is it's taking a long time to work through and that there may be quite a lot of truth in that, because if you see the profile now I mean, in my faculty when I was appointed I was the second woman. There were fifty-three men and one woman who has just retired and me. I've not actually totted up the number of women but it must be at least a third out of fifty-three and I suspect it's getting close to half. It's worse than other colleges oddly enough, and still is quite poor in some. Some are very much better than others and again, my college was the first one to have a female head. Yes, she's female and she's a Fellow here. So it is changing slowly, and some women want it to change faster. I think it's worse in some of the sciences, but others are very much more female. Look at biology, that's becoming more and more feminised.(14)

The above quote presents a picture of positive movement in terms of gender equity, however, another participant presents a completely different picture. Both participants work in the same university. The quote below begins with the

participant's response to the question, "Are there times when you feel that you are unfairly treated?"

> *Oh, yes. Repeatedly, and if anything, I think (this university) is some many years behind the outside world … and we're at the start really … It's quite extraordinary, I find the … not just latent but quite naked sexism which is still rife. …Well, certain members of the Fellowship who if they were non-executive Directors in a commercial company would never dream of proceeding without having chatted with the Chairman of the Committee and testing their ideas and so on who don't … who have bypassed me … I think that in this day and age … a woman has a problem in being taken seriously but I can't quite decide whether a younger woman has more problems than an older woman … I think an older woman has the most difficulties … She's really seen as the … a witch or a grandmother or one of these clichés. (26)*

Yet another example reports on the gendered nature of the structure of the day in universities and whether these are family friendly. Note that one participant believes that early morning and evening meetings are a thing of the past whereas the other participant positions these early and late meetings as a positive feature. What appears to be most likely is that the conditions in which women work have not changed or improved. What has occurred is the development of a range of discourses which provide some element of justification or rationalisation. Note that the woman who gave this first quote says later in her interview that she gets up at five in the morning and works so late in the week that she stays in College rather than going home. She only goes home at weekends.

> *I did a report for the College on women in medicine. I took evidence from women who had made it and were doing, and I took evidence from two Medical Directors, women in their*

mid-50's. Both of them said, when we asked them questions, they couldn't' just consider applying to become a medical director much earlier because the meetings were at 8:00 in the morning and 5:00 in the evening. The design of the day didn't enable women who had children to look after. Why couldn't you have a meeting at lunch time? Gradually, that has improved.(8)

I'm lucky in that the other people who are involved at the top in the college the acting Master who has now become the Master, the Bursar and the Senior Tutor are all similarly disposed the same way I am. The Master is a very, very high flying engineer. We do our weekly meetings at 8:00 on Wednesday mornings and by 9:00 we're done, and then there are other meetings and most of the college meetings are organised either at the beginning of the day or the end of the day, so a lot of meetings are at 5:00 and then you're done by 7:00. (14)

This incongruence between what women say and what women experience can be explained by Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, the process of internalisation of social gender norms and expectations. Again there is evidence for the impact of cultural hegemony. Through the unconscious process of socialisation and internalisation of the masculinist discourse, women take on the norms for gender appropriate roles and behaviour. What results is a distortion in the perception and assessment of gender differential treatment. Thus, even highly educated and intelligent women may be 'blind' to discrimination when it takes place. Due to the internalisation of differential gender roles, there is an expectation of differential treatment, in fact, it is perceived as more normal than equal treatment.

5.2.8 All of my PVCs Have to Have a Research Profile!

When describing their career journeys, participants' stories point to a number of key issues which need to be addressed. Firstly, as has been previously highlighted in the literature, selection and progression processes are largely opaque, with gatekeepers making pre-selections of potentially good applicants and the pre-exclusion of those who are deemed to 'not fit'. Sometimes this works well for women who are well connected or who have powerful males who act as sponsors. However, this lack of transparency makes it difficult for people who are 'not well connected' to gain an understanding of how to access senior positions. In addition, it makes the process of ensuring equality opportunity for all extremely difficult.

> *And the other thing that I think is very interesting about it all is the lack of transparency in the processes. And that has always been an issue ... Was always an issue at (this university). It's an issue about promotion, too because it's not done out in the open and there aren't processes which you can scrutinise. I remember when I, once making an argument in a Head of School's meeting about that, and ... There was a sense in which that was seen as quite dangerous, I think. So I think the processes of selection and promotion are absolutely key. (2)*

This lack of transparency occurs despite the presence of sound recruitment and selection policies. What often occurs is an informal pre-selection process where people are vetted and/or given signals that they need not apply. In the following story a participant is subject to mixed messages, with her direct manager asking

her to apply for an open role and her most senior manager telling her that she

would be unsuccessful due to her lack of a significiant research record.

> *My Dean put my name forward so I was duly invited for an*
> *informal chat. It went like, "Oh, so you're interested?"*
> *"Yeah." "Tell me about your research." I would say, "Oh, it's*
> *predominantly leadership and learning and teaching." He*
> *said, " All of my PVCs have to have a research profile." I then*
> *said, "So, you're telling me that you would like me to withdraw*
> *my expression of interest?" He said, "I hink that would be*
> *best." I got up and left.   Really interesting, so when I came*
> *back, I said to my Dean, "I won't even by shortlisted." It's*
> *where some universities are with a really, shall we say, a*
> *privileging of research over, and this is probably where my*
> *frustration lies, not just learning and teaching but also on*
> *leadership management skill. Yes. They don't recognise*
> *it.(13)*

As highlighted in the literature review, often women in universities are given what

are known as 'housekeeping' roles such as Student Experience. These roles

come with a very heavy management and teaching load often leaving very little

time and space to develop and maintain a research profile. In fact, many of the

participants in this study expressed major concerns about having sufficient time

to keep up with their research when moving to a leadership role. It seems then

that it is the lack of a strong research record which is essential to gaining a

leadership role.

> *And I remember then, at that time, not getting a senior*
> *lectureship and I went for feedback and the then Dean said*
> *"Well, you know, I'm really surprised you haven't published*
> *more blah-di-blah". So, little consideration of people's*
> *contexts. I think that probably has really, really improved. (3)*

However, another participant was given the exact opposite message from her manager who encouraged her to build her management experience and skills as a way to ensure progression. You will note in this following quote that management used to be labelled 'administration' and now following the leaderist turn in HE, is labelled leadership.

> *I was appointed as lecturer here in '91, and the sort of line manager I had at the time, an academic, was keen to sort of – I did quite a bit of teaching at post-graduate level. I was doing some research, and he was quite keen to encourage me to have an administrative role because the university has the three categories of teaching, research and leadership, it's called now, but it was admin at the time. He said, "If you want to progress, you are going to need to do some admin as well," and he was involved. (7)*

What these contrasting quotes indicate to me is that sometimes women need a better publication record and at other times they need more management experience in order to achieve career progression. The 'lack' of skill seems to change depending upon the wealth of experience that the particular woman has. If she is a skilled teacher and manager, then she lacks research experience, if she is a skilled researcher and teacher, then she lacks management experience. Either way, the lack of progress is attributed to the woman's 'lack'. As I recounted in the literature review, this 'lack or deficit in women' argument has been popular for some time, with both researchers and practitioners. The focus has been to 'provide more training' and the target for training is ever shifting. There are calls for women to build their skills in, networking, negotiation, strategic thinking, analytical skills etc. (Babcock and Laschever, 2009). This discourse

results in a never ending list of skills which women lack but which men somehow

possess. I would argue that what is achieved is actually a very effective

distraction from the real root causes of lack of progression. These are the

structural and cultural processes which act to maintain existing power relations.

5.3 The Impact of Cultural Norms and Hegemonic Discourses

The following examples from the data provide evidence for hegemonic discourses which result in continued identity struggles for women. Recruitment and selection processes are opaque which benefits some women in this research but is recognised as a major block to achieving equity for all in the workplace as there appears to be a preference for white, middle class males (Van den Brink et al., 2010). The idea that women are lacking in the 'right' skills, attitude or style is prevalent throughout the data presented here. There is considerable evidence which shows that women have to manage their identities. Central to this is the conflict between their leadership identity and their feminine identity. This results in adjustments to identity to appear more male. Some women appear to manage this well whilst others engage in resistance. The concept that women are perceived as a 'threat' is discussed, presenting women who engage in reform rather than radicalism as potentially 'safe'. Other identities, such as nationality, are often used to rationalise discrimination based on gender.

5.3.1 He's Internal, he's White and he's Male

When asked about their progression to senior roles, participants tell a story not of 'drive' or 'ambition' and although there are stories of difficulties in moving up the hierarchy, by far the majority say that they have been asked to apply or have been head hunted for roles. Very often, participants say that they have had to be

asked repeatedly and encouraged to apply for open positions. Rationalisations

for being asked which vary from, 'nobody else wanted to do it' to 'they recognised

I had the skills or experience'.   What is clear is that women need to be

encouraged to apply or think of applying for senior roles. What is also evident, is

that there is often an informal process of pre-selection through 'behind the

scenes' discussions by gatekeepers.

> *That was it, so when this role came up, the Vice Chancellor*
> *asked to see me and I thought I'd done something wrong and*
> *sat down. She said, "You know, the job's coming up." I said,*
> *"Yes." She said, "We'd like you to apply for it." I was very*
> *shocked. I think probably the leadership worked and I think it*
> *also helped that they couldn't get many people interested.*
> *(13)*

The participant above recounts her thoughts when approached for a senior role,

most of which are negative and only one refers to her own ability. Firstly, she

assumes that the call to the VC's office is for a reprimand. Without knowing

more about this VC's style and the university's culture it is difficult to say whether

this initial response is due to a potentially toxic culture or whether it is due to a

negative self-view on behalf of the participant. Next, when she hears that she

has been identified as a potential candidate, she remarks that she is shocked.

She does not say why she is shocked but then provides some reasons, one is

that she has demonstrated good leadership and tightly coupled with this is the

comment that not many people were interested in the position. This 'modest' or

'self-effacing' discourse may reflect genuine self-doubt or it may be an attempt to

present a particular identity. She may feel that there is a need to present an

identity which plays down ambition and open claims to highly effective leadership

skills. Another participant recounts how she was identified as a potential

candidate for a Deanship. In this story, note how the grapevine is used to

convey the message to her that she is being considered. Also, her comments

about, 'signs of insanity', indicate an agreement that the position is not one which

is desired by many. Finally, there is no evidence of 'normal' selection processes

but rather, once she signals interest, again through informal means, she is simply

appointed.

> *So I was sitting in my office as someone who was just in the*
> *process of being promoted to a Chair when one of my close*
> *friends and colleagues comes in and says… I've heard this*
> *really funny thing, and at the time when they needed a Dean*
> *for Teaching and Learning, they called the old Deans and*
> *said have you got any ideas of people. The then Dean said*
> *do you think Veronica would like to be Dean of the*
> *Undergraduates and I said, "Well I haven't seen any other*
> *signs of insanity in her yet." and I said, "Well, I actually might*
> *you know. I'd like to give that some thought." "Oh really would*
> *you, well I'll go back and tell them" and I was appointed the*
> *Dean of Undergraduates… (12)*

It seems that many of the women in this study have benefitted from a 'hidden'

recruitment and selection process. By far the majority talk about being 'asked to

apply' for roles.

> *Now having said that, I haven't actually applied for any jobs*
> *for a long time. It's just been sort of falling into them by people*
> *asking me so can you do this and can you take on this, and*
> *climb the academic ladder that way. Then I would say oh,*
> *yeah, I could actually do these things whereas beforehand, I'd*
> *probably say no, I wouldn't be good enough yet. Maybe one*
> *day, I would be and it's only really when I've been tested if*
> *you like and I know I can do it. That's how I've sort of, yeah,*
> *climbed up. There's a bit on one hand thinking I can do*

whatever I want to do and on the other hand, not really doing
anything about it, might be a bit of a contradiction. (6)

One way of viewing participants' experiences is that these women are exceptionally good at their current roles and visible enough to be recognised by colleagues and superiors. For some this may be true, however, too often the open position is one which can be described as hard to recruit', with comments about, nobody else wanting the role or an urgency to recruit to the role. In addition, as stated earlier, for a significant number of participants, the woman's new senior role is actually merged with her existing role. In reality, this results in a double workload. In addition, the lack of transparency in promotion and selection processes is deeply worrying as it presents great difficulties in gaining access to the decision processes of gatekeepers. For some women, in this research, sponsorship by powerful mentors has worked to 'open doors' to leadership positions where they could demonstrate their considerable skills. However, it is this very process of 'behind the scenes' selection which is likely to continue to exclude many women.

Although the big story is that participants have by and large been headhunted or encouraged to apply, there are stories of difficulty and discrimination. Some have felt overlooked or ignored with other less capable people getting promotion before them.

Anyway, it all went well but then I started to realise I hadn't been put forward for a promotion and yet I was doing a lot of leadership. There were actually some quite difficult people around me who weren't really terribly performing. I was absolutely shocked to find when I put in for a promotion that one of these people who was actually quite a negative influence on everyone was promoted ahead of me and it was handled incredibly badly. (15)

Others report of progression opportunities denied but are unclear as to whether this was simply poor management or plans to keep her on an insecure contract.

I came here actually on a temporary contract to replace someone who was elected to parliament. So I was temporary for quite a long while and I, at that stage, went for a couple of new posts that came up in my subject and I didn't get them. And I've always felt like I was a bird in the hand and they could get a new person in and keep me in my ... So I don't really feel that was handled terribly well, although that's a long while ago. (3)

There is also evidence of broken promises.

They promised that they'd turn me into Professor when I arrived, and there was no move to that whatsoever. (10)

Differential and unprofessional treatment often leads to the point where participants have felt compelled to move institutions in order to achieve progression.

A group of Professors decided ... that because I wasn't a professor at that stage, they wanted it to be a Professor. There was lots of nastiness which is very unusual for the faculty it was at the time. And I didn't get it. And ... I decided I couldn't actually live with it, which was, because I've been here a long time. So obviously it's been a very nice

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place, yeah. So for me it was issues about ... It was very
importantly for me an issue of gender and status. I decided I
wasn't going to ... I didn't want to, I don't want to spend my
working days being resentful. So decided I would go
elsewhere. (2)

Again, this story demonstrates how discrimination can be 'hidden' and subtle. It

was difficult for this woman to know whether the need for a Professor was

genuine or whether this was a useful reason to exclude her. It is the case that

some roles require Professor status, however, it is also not uncommon for men to

receive a Professorship when he is identified as the ideal candidate for the role.

What is sad is that this woman's experience of discrimination meant that she felt

like an outsider even though she had been in that university for a long time.

What is good is that she doesn't attribute this experience to any 'lack' in her

ability or experience. She does not create any justifications or rationalisations for

this poor treatment. But, by not engaging in this process, she has to deal with

the incongruence and discomfort of feeling that she is not valued and the

outsider status in her own workplace.   She chooses to deal with this by moving

to another university. As I've said previously, this type of 'hidden' discrimination

is very effective because it is so difficult to build any resistance. There are

always other, very feasible explanations for this woman not gaining a promotion.

As can be seen from the quote below, these types of incidents are not isolated.

Given that they didn't support me in my promotion case, I felt
quite disaffected by that. I regarded myself as quite a
professional person and then I am a team person as well. I
think I had done a lot to support other people when I was
having quite a difficult time. I felt quite … I was extraordinarily

> *upset, I was disappointed in the extreme. I thought it was*
> *handled extremely badly at every managerial level. (15)*

For some, the lack of fairness in appointments is clearly seen as the exclusion of anyone who is perceived as 'other'. Russell Group universities are seen to be the greatest offenders.

> *The person they gave to, the internal, I'm not blowing my*
> *trumpet here, but I have to say, I know him very well. My*
> *breadth of experience is way broader, my experience is way*
> *broader than his, but he's internal, he's white, he's male. In*
> *the Russell Group there's absolutely been no tradition*
> *appointing women in higher positions. (25)*

It is interesting to note that the universities which appear to engage more in discrimination are those deemed to be the most prestigious i.e. Russell Group. According to one participant, this discrimination is largely unconscious in nature.

> *I think very occasionally, as part of being a Pro-Vice*
> *Chancellor you also chair electoral boards and very*
> *occasionally you see from a certain generation of males*
> *academic colleagues an attitude to the appointing of women*
> *that I think and I've said this from time to time, that I think it's*
> *concerning, because I think it articulates unconscious bias the*
> *way in which men in particular, if there hasn't been a women*
> *in a post before can't always envisage what a women in a*
> *post would look like. (20)*

These institutions are also more research focused and hence what might be occurring here is exclusion of females and femaleness as the activity of research is viewed as 'traditionally male' or a 'male domain'. Thus, whereas, the role of

'teacher' has taken on a female identity, the role of 'researcher' has a male identity. In Russell Group and research oriented universities there may be a double barrier for women as they have to contend with not only the implicit theory of leadership as normatively male, but also that the researcher is seen as male, resulting in a kind of double deviance.

For those who are currently at the PVC level or equivalent, there is a perception that progression any further is extremely difficult and that this is due to one's gender and where relevant one's ethnicity. Again, being identified as 'other' than male, white and middle class seems to provide an extra hurdle in selection for the head of a university, especially in pre 1992 institutions.

> *Up until now I never thought it's not possible, but I'm beginning to now feel the next step is proving difficult. If you look at the evidence and you look at the statistics and you look at all the figures in higher education, women Vice chancellors, that's my next step right? How does one explain that there are 150 universities and there are only 15 women vice chancellors …   If you still look at, and there's these 13 that's stuffed in post 92 sector. I don't want to touch that. If you look at the second tier vice chancellors there are any number of women in my position, how come women are just stopping there, they are not making the next step?   (25)*

> *Now I'm willing to move, there are other obstacles and these are genuine obstacles and that is, how much does the society actually want a woman at the top and how much do they value a woman at the top? (25)*

Although there's been a recent shift, the question this participant asks is still

relevant. The positions which represent the most power are still held

predominantly by males, mainly middle class and white males. Given that,

currently, there is only one non-white, male who holds the VC position in the UK,

it is safe to say that for non-white females the doors to senior positions are well

and truly closed.

5.3.2 Where's the Vision?

Many participants were highly self-aware in terms of their leadership or management style. Further, they were acutely aware of where and when their chosen style was not perceived as the ideal or appropriate style for a leadership position. When women talk about leadership practices and expectations of leadership, there is evidence of a preference for the traditional masculine style.

In most universities there is a perception that the 'ideal' or 'desired' leadership style is one which is highly directive and potentially authoritarian in nature. Although this is not verbalised, participants observe the behavior of those who are successful in progressing to leadership positions.

> *…the ones I see that are up there are the ones that are quite aggressive actually. (21)*

> *I think the traditional notion of leadership is very muscular in our way and they frequently articulated in sort of military metaphors. (20)*

Some reported a shift in organisational cultural expectations in leader/follower relations, away from fiefdoms. This was deemed to be due to the aforementioned changes in the external environment.

> *The culture was always the Head of Department who is the professor if you like, was kind of king or queen usually king but of that domain. The management here was relatively shallow and very informal so it was if you wanted something, if you wanted to develop something new, if you needed*

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> *further resourcing you fought your corner with the Rector and*
> *the Pro-Rector. (4)*

This shift was not talked about as a planned change but in managerialist terms i.e. as a need to gain greater outputs from faculty and staff as a response to reduced government funding.

Issues of the culture of senior management were also highlighted with considerable differences experienced across the sample. Not surprisingly, those reporting a more egalitarian and open culture amongst the senior management team also report feeling a sense of being on equal footing with male colleagues and a belief in the power to enact decisions and change. However, the majority report an expectation of more aggressive and directive behaviour at these very senior levels.

> *It might be the way I interact with the other senior managers*
> *but they tend to be quite aggressive and quite forceful and I'm*
> *actually not that sort of person. I suppose I'm not that … Well,*
> *I never thought of myself as being un-forceful but I'm not*
> *jumping in and trying to say something for everybody else*
> *kind of thing. It's not my style of doing things and I find that*
> *quite hard to deal with. Also, if people are being very critical*
> *and aggressive towards each other, I find that difficult to deal*
> *with as well. (21)*

The desire for these types of autocratic and aggressive behaviours for those in leadership positions also leaks into progression and selection decisions.

But then, when it came to the Associate Dean role, I did have to apply for that, and, in fact, I had quite a negative experience with that, with the then Dean, who I don't think was very interested in graduate education anyway. But he certainly didn't sort of see me as somebody he particularly – my interpretation, see me as somebody he particularly wanted on his senior leadership team. But I was interviewed, and I got the post. …what the Dean wanted to see from me, and the Associate Dean for Research, was that I would be able to stand up to Heads of Schools and Heads of Institutes, if I needed to. I knew that wasn't going to be a problem for me. My tactics in doing that would have been very different to any of theirs, but I knew I was perfectly capable, when I know I am in the right, of standing up and maintaining a stance. In the interview, in order to demonstrate that, I became somebody I wasn't and responded aggressively to the questioning that they were doing. That is what was wanted. (7)

In this woman's story it is evident that in some way, the Dean's preference for a more aggressive interpersonal style was conveyed. Here, the woman engages in sensemaking and interpretation which results in her recognition that with her current style, she is likely to be perceived as ineffective. She clearly does not agree with the Dean's assessment of her abilities but she also makes the choice to become 'more masculine' in the interview. Although this is her choice, it is necessary to point out that this was a constrained choice. The option to be 'herself' in the interview was likely to present the risk of not being appointed. In this case, she does not internalise the masculinist discourse but she does choose to enact it as if it were the norm. In this way, her own personal style of effective leadership remains hidden and due to her 'act' any effectiveness is likely to be attributed to the 'traditional masculine' style. This survival behaviour in which women engage results in a kind of personal success whilst at the same time ensuring that the dominant view of leadership remains unchallenged. Unlike

women who fully internalise and take on hegemonic discourses, here resistance is passive. She does not change her leadership practices, she just presents a different face for the interview. She will resist by continuing with her non-aggressive style but this resistance remains hidden and hence has less power to create change.

When women talk about their own style of leadership and management, they rarely use the term leadership. What they stress in the people element of the role.

> *I think one of the things I felt was really important was to spend time with people that I was leading, understanding them and helping them but also being very clear with them where I felt there were issues and I think I've still kept that transparency. I think if there's a problem … I pick it up very quickly if there's trouble between people. (15)*

The importance of acting as a facilitator for others was also seen as a key activity. Not only in terms of creating spaces for others' ideas but also working through people within the organisation to enable the development and enactment of those ideas.

> *…my role was to encourage people who had those ideas and to say, "Yes, let's take this forward. Let's run with it. Let's see how we can make it work," and sometimes having to push people a little bit. (1)*

> *I think we should in our roles, we should be enablers. I said before I was a facilitator, communicator, but actually enabling*

things to happen in the rest of the university because that's
why we are here, yeah. (6)

Although it may seem obvious that people management and development are central to any leadership role, it is the way in which participants conceptualise this which is important. Rather than talking about directing or organising people, the focus is on the relational aspects such as, building trust, understanding their needs and creating opportunities for development and impact. Thus, this talk tends to support the view of some researchers that females in leadership positions are more people focused than their male counterparts. However, other participants talk about their engagement with people in more transactional than relational ways.

> *I believe you should make the most of every opportunity and*
> *every connection. I only learned that ... women I don't think*
> *learn this very early in life, but I take great care now that if I*
> *meet people, I try very hard to really listen to them. Think*
> *about are they good people for me to connect with. Would it*
> *enlarge the stuff I'm doing? I suppose it's building up your*
> *connections and networks. I don't mean that in a cynical way.*
> *You sometimes meet someone, maybe it's a social event, and*
> *think, "Oh, gosh that person might be able to give me a good*
> *seminar at the college." Or you think, "That person might fit in*
> *there." It's being very aware of the people you meet. So I*
> *think it's something about making the most of every*
> *opportunity and giving those things your attention.(8)*

Although this woman uses a qualifier to 'soften' her meaning *'I don't mean that in a cynical way.'* it is clear that she views people as potential resources. Her engagement with others, even in social events, is shaped by their potential to engage in a useful transaction related to her work. In this way, relational skills

are used for transactional ends, this is not a consideration of people in the

humanist sense but rather they are viewed instrumentally. As outlined in the

literature review, this application of relational practices is identified by

researchers as a distortion of relations aimed at meeting the needs of the

dominant capitalist discourse which is rationalist and patriarchal (Binns, 2008,

Due Billing, 2014). Thus, not all 'people focused' talk represents the genuine

empowerment and development of others. Another interpretation is that women

have unconsciously internalised ideas of gendered leadership resulting in a

greater attention to their people oriented behaviour and less attention to any task

oriented behaviour. Without engaging in direct observation of day to day

interactions it is difficult to say with certainty whether their talk represents rhetoric

or action. One participant talks about how her style of collaborative leadership

was met with considerable resistance from her team.

For example, participants who describe themselves as using a collaborative

leadership style or a consultative leadership style reported experiencing

resistance from staff and faculty.

> *I felt, coming in as the Head of School, that the department*
> *was used to very charismatic, dominant leadership.   Telling*
> *people what to do. My whole project was to delegate*
> *leadership. This is for the Feminist Project. Delegate*
> *leadership and get people taking control and feel empowered*
> *in their own bit. They'd say, "Where's the vision?" And all that*
> *sort of stuff. But the vision was them having the vision. I*
> *think it has worked, but it's taken years, years for them to take*
> *the challenge look at themselves really. It's very odd. (10)*

To sum, in terms of leadership, women are aware that the stereotypical

masculine leadership style is still preferred in universities. They also engage in

identity management to present themselves as more masculine in their style.

When women talk about their leadership role, they rarely refer to leadership and

common dominant terms such as 'creating a vision' or 'creating strategic

alignment'. Instead, they describe their work in terms of people development,

idea facilitation and relationship building. Finally, there is evidence that the use

of a more collaborative approach to leadership is likely to be met with resistance.

5.3.3 She's an Alpha Male Type

The difference in the way men and women are positioned the university is shown

through a number of different stories. Gender is the dominant defining

characteristic in many situations. This shapes not only progression and selection

but also the ordinary day to day activities. What emerges from the following is

that there are gendered expectations of behaviour. Women in this study report

having to address these in a number of different settings. There is also evidence

of continued identity struggles and identity management. As the quote below

shows, women have to think about how they will present themselves and how

best to behave to counteract gender stereotypes.

> When I'm speaking to either men or women about the quality
> of women's leadership of which I have infinite regard I
> particularly tell young women you've got to confront and never
> play into any of the stereotypes that your male colleagues
> may well have of you.   Which is, that you will be manipulative

> *that you will not be a team player that you will be emotional*
> *when you should be logical. If you are prepared to be an*
> *honorable and good mate and if you approach it as you would*
> *being a member of a team, athletic team, member of a choral*
> *… Of a chamber, young women have infinite skills in this area*
> *but you need to be a mate not a sexual playmate not a*
> *liability, not a broken wing. You need to be … Its much more*
> *of a, almost a military analogy and you need to show you will*
> *cover your male colleagues' backs when they need it as well.*
> *(11)*

This advice to young women is intended to support and guide. The key messages are that your male colleagues will, due to your gender, begin with a negative view of you. They are likely to view you as a *'liability'*. The metaphors given as guidance are mainly traditionally masculine contexts i.e. athletic team and military. One's role is defined in relation to that of the male, *'you must be prepared to be an honorable and good mate'*. These words of guidance actually constitute Bourdieu's concept of self-policing. Here, a senior woman is giving instructions on how to be a 'safe female'. How to play the role in a way which is 'non-threatening' to male colleagues, how to remain 'respectably feminine'. Later, when I report on the reasons women give for a lack of female leaders, there is more evidence of self-policing activities.

Women have to manage their identities, not only to ensure that they are 'respectably feminine' but they also have to create ways to ensure credibility in their role. It is interesting to see that this is perceived as using traditionally male

strategies. Again the discourse of teaching as female and research as male is

presented.

> *Just like, you need to be a bit like a bloke sometimes. I think*
> *just to show that you're tough, sometimes you have to slip in*
> *some external leadership role in research so that you're just*
> *not a woman looking out for undergraduates. I think there is*
> *this, that when you need someone to look after the*
> *undergraduates you pick a woman but if you wanted*
> *someone for research you'll pick a man. I think there is*
> *something, I think that that does happen. (12)*

The idea of taking on the attributes of maleness is seen as central to career

success. In the quote below a woman recounts the advice she received from her

male mentor.

> *That's exactly what I'm trying to say, mine (her career) was*
> *planned by my supervisor, he planned it. He always told me,*
> *think like a man and I don't think you've seen me, this is from*
> *me,* �_▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒_ *. I used to say, "What do*
> *you mean can think like a man? I don't know how to think like*
> *a man." He used to say, "You've done two years of this now*
> *think about the next job, think about a bigger executive job, a*
> *bigger job; it will give you … " It's so important having a friend*
> *and a mentor like that. I wouldn't have gotten to where I am*
> *without his help. (25)*

The theme of managing one's femininity is woven throughout the interviews.

One woman talks about her boss and how she engages in complex and nuanced

identity management, she presents herself as a champion for women without

being too radical. I would suggest that this is a new form of tokenism. Although

'Gloria', in the quote below does seem to have made the issue of gender and

leadership more visible, her approach to change more reformist than radical.

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*Gloria's done it in different ways. She's gone on platforms
with me talking to, inviting student unions, talking about
women in academia. She's had lunches with women in senior
positions to talk about how to move things forward. But
ultimately, she's more comfortable on the liberal terrain.
She's more content about mentoring and all that, if the women
do the business they'll get there and how can we help. She's
very proactive.   When you get down to some of the more
tricky debates about power or shifting resources, or changing
the rules of the game she's open and she'll listen. She's not
quite comfortable on that and she'll flip out of that.
While we have a number of, we have Gloria, senior, the
Director of Human Resources, senior, the Director of Estates
is a woman. All three of them are childless women and I think
it makes a big difference to this cause. In lots of ways she
has, rocked the boat would be too strong, but the way that
she does things, the way that she's changed the culture of
engagement discussion, she's very non-hierarchal in how she
does things. She's taken minimal trappings of office. I
think she's a really impressive woman, but ultimately a liberal
feminist, not liberal feminist but in the liberal strain. She's a
woman who doesn't sleep much. Once I said, "How do you
manage all this"? She said, "I've never really needed much
sleep". She's an Alpha male woman type. (9)*

I would say that there are two main ways to read this. Firstly, 'Gloria' seems to

be working hard to create change to improve opportunities for women. Her

liberal approach together with her masculine style acts to signal to those in power

that she is a 'safe woman'. Changes will occur but they will be incremental and

manageable. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of an incremental change

approach in improving gender equity in organisations has been seriously

questioned (Benschop, 2014). She may have actively chosen a liberal rather

than a radical approach purposively believing that to be too radical would result

in exclusion, resistance and identity threat. The second reading, using a critical

management lens, would assess the changes described as 'surface changes'.

Her very visible engagement in the 'women's issue' can be seen as largely

performative. This type of organisational activity serves those with power by signaling to all that the organisation is a moving towards equity and fairness. It also, acts to distract from the root causes of inequity. In the main, the changes will be 'woman centered', usually providing mentoring schemes or yet more training. Here activities which are said to create change for women are actually coopted by those in power and used to further their interests through hegemonic discourses. In this case, the 'women are to blame' or 'women are lacking' discourse is still intact.

Another identity issue which women face involves the attempts by men to take ownership of women's ideas. Men often present themselves as the leader of a project or as initiator of a good project. In the story below, when men 'steal' her ideas, this woman feels that in addition to trying to claim back her intellectual work, she also has to manage perceptions of her and her behaviour very carefully.

> *The idea was mine, but someone else has taken it and run with it. And he is now saying, "It's going to be really tough to get this through the university." And I actually had to say, and I said it in front... in a meeting, "No, it's not. Because the university is really for this now." And it's just almost like he's got this, "I'm going to push this through, and it's going to be me that does it." And I'm going, "Well, actually you're knocking on an open door there." But it's really tricky because actually... I did it because I was just a bit annoyed. But it's a fine line because don't want to be trying to... you've got to be really careful you don't appear petty. Because that's what it can look like sometimes. But there have been a couple of things where you just want to, "I thought of that." A couple of times I have said, where there's been things where I've gone, "That was a good idea of mine, wasn't it?" And just try and grab it back a little bit. Because if you don't,other people... I mean, my team are brilliant, my team are all very,*

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really do see where I make the difference. But I think
sometimes higher up it gets blurred a little bit. (18)

Earlier, one woman talked about how visible recognition or credit for her work

was purposively sacrificed by a woman to her male colleague. Here what

appears to be happening is that universities provide spaces where men feel that

taking ownership of the intellectual work of women is acceptable or even normal.

Given that intellectual theft at the research level is the greatest 'sin' in academia,

it is interesting to see how this ethic is abandoned in the domain of management

and leadership and when the intellectual work is done by women.

> *You're not seen as being the prominent person but I have to*
> *make sure is to make sure that I keep hold of things. The*
> *things I'm working on, I have to make sure that they (men)*
> *don't steal them from me because what happens is if*
> *something starts to be successful, they jump right in and say,*
> *"Oh, look. We've done this and we've done that." In another*
> *words, it was me.   I've really got to make sure that I'm at the*
> *meetings where those things come up, where the things I'm*
> *working on come up and I make sure that I leave them and*
> *I'm signing a document or writing a document on those*
> *particular issues just not to lose control because the minute*
> *something starts to be successful, somebody else jumps in*
> *and takes it. (21)*

The quote above shows how much extra work is required to ensure that women

keep ownership of their ideas and projects.

5.3.4 I'm Never Quite Sure if it's my Femaleness

Another feature of discussions and reflections on gender and differential treatment is that other factors, such as ethnicity, nationality or personality, intersect or conflate with gender resulting in a lack of clarity about which feature has caused any discrimination. In this way, discrimination can be 'hidden' or 'deflected'. It may also be that this is a psychological rationalisation process aimed at managing feelings of incongruence and discord, which commonly arise during identity struggles (Alvesson et al., 2008). Participants talk about intersecting features such as, personality, management or leadership style, nationality and ethnicity.

> *I couldn't honestly say it was about gender. I think it was*
> *about my style because the person that was in the role before*
> *me, who had got tremendous support from the Dean, was a*
> *woman, and is known as a woman, but was known as sort of*
> *a Rottweiler-type. (7)*

In the quote above, gender as the cause of discrimination was minimised through the rationalisation that her style was different from that of her female predecessor. The description of her predecessor as 'a Rottweiler-type' indicates that the difference between them is the aggressiveness of their style. It seems that the predecessor engaged in a more masculine style. This raises the question, was this participant aware that this rationalisation does not deflect from 'gender' as the reason for discrimination but rather reinforces it. The contradictions highlighted above can also be seen in the quote below. Here she

begins with an assertion that she has experienced gender discrimination at all and then quickly proceeds to recount a specific time when gender does impact on her ability to share her views. She quickly follows this up with the rationalisation that 'personality' is the cause.

> *Yes, I can't think of a single time when I have felt I was being discriminated against because of being a woman, except occasionally, when you are in a committee meeting that is dominated by men. Then it can be very hard to get your point across, but that is a personality thing as much as anything. (7)*

The following story highlights how being a short female, which is an accentuation of femininity, requires extra work for the woman to assert her authority and claim her right to a leadership identity.

> *I think I did occasionally and I'm very small, I'm about five foot although I've a very loud voice and very occasionally I would find that I would be at dos and particularly as Proctor, in the Proctorial role and people always men and other women would express astonishment and surprise that I have the role. I tended to feel that it was connected with my size as well as my gender and that's actively offensive I think. People would express surprise generally after about two minutes in my company they would sort of apologise. When you're in this role you've got a lot of dinners and things and there is a kind of rather almost inevitable generational fascism from people, sometimes women as well as men, who are in a certain age bracket. That is not going to change. I've given up actually getting cross and trying to do something about it because there is no point, those people will just gradually die off and they're not being replaced by people with the same attitude so you just put up with that I think. It's much more that than kind of an active approach to gender. (20)*

In this final quote, the idea that one's national identity, if perceived as masculine, can mitigate against the negative effects of being female, resulting in a type of

androgyny. I would suggest that rather than being perceived as neutral, she may

be perceived as 'masculine enough' or as a 'safe female'.

> *I'm never quite sure whether it is my femaleness or my*
> *Americaness which is more present in the room. It plays in a*
> *very interesting mathematical equation which I was just*
> *pondering the other day which goes something like though I'm*
> *not a mathematician. Being female is minus one and being*
> *American is minus one but you put them together and actually*
> *being American as a plus one to your masculinity. Coming up*
> *from their stereotype of what you would be as female is being*
> *offset by your stereotype of what is being American. You end*
> *up as neutral. (11)*

Only one participant in this research comes from an ethnic minority group. Her

experiences indicate that the intersection of gender and ethnicity acts as to even

more deeply constrain progression to very senior positions.

> *I sincerely believe in being at the right place at the right time*
> *and the opportunity and the motivations and the resources,*
> *everything combined. But, it could be a combination of*
> *several factors and even now for example, in the women in*
> *leadership positions if you look at management positions.*
> *There are no minority women at all in my level, in British*
> *higher education. It's not good, because it's a negative*
> *energy and I don't want to be in that. I've always looked at life*
> *positively and I feel there are opportunities, you should seize*
> *them. I would not have talked much about discrimination a*
> *few years ago, but I'm now beginning to think, yes, there is*
> *probably something called bias gender. Because you have to*
> *think about a white organisation, why would they want a*
> *coloured woman? (25)*

This woman has recently been applying for the highest leadership positions in

HE and has begun to experience significant levels of discrimination.

5.3.5 I Haven't Ever Set Out With Ambition

There is a reticence to openly express any ambition in terms of a planned desire to move to the top. It is difficult to be clear about the extent to which participants are ambitious, but if talk about career planning and desires is taken at face value, then it would be easy to assume that most participants have had no desire or ambition to move up the career ladder. In fact, most talk from participants is about having no career plan or engaging very little in career planning. This 'modest talk' may be a device to manage the negative associations with the 'ambitious woman'.   As women in leadership positions, participants are already deviating from the norm, to deviate yet further by being openly ambitious and thereby stepping outside the boundaries of 'respectable femininity' may be considered too great a personal and professional risk.

> *I haven't ever set out with ambition at all, I just set out with a commitment to doing a good job, really, and doing a job that needs to be done, and, that's worked for me up now. It wouldn't work in this organisation now, but it did up to recently … that's how it worked for me. (16)*

> *No I think have never had an idea of what to do. I'm a lousy predictor of my own career. (12)*

> *There is that sort of deference that you wouldn't want to come out and say that is the role for me. (11)*

> *When I moved over into the Undergraduate Tutor role, it wasn't a decision so much about furthering my career, because I think at that time my in my life I wasn't particularly career driven, but I think from that I found a path. And also I*

think there was that thing, I think it was about finding something that you're good at as well, isn't it? I'm always... I'm not great with self-confidence still, but I'm a lot better than I used to be. And I think once I said, "Ah, I can do this. This is an area I'm good at," it kind of goes from there. So what you've done is you've chosen roles where it matches your skills really well, where you can excel well, and roles that maybe other people wouldn't want who were more focused on... (18)

I certainly … I never set out to be a Dean, so it won't be any disappointment to me when I'm no longer Dean. I think … I find it quite hard if I feel decisions are being made that are not good for the faculty, and not good for the staff, but I've just got to let go, and stand back, and I thought if I have a year's study leave, that ought to help me to let go, really… (16)

I felt as if, at one stage, my friend, this woman who is now a Dean in London, she didn't ever have a career break, she always worked, and to some extent I always used to see her as a milestone of where I'd have to be if I weren't going to be disadvantaged by being at home for 10 years, that sort of … but I did have some awareness, but it was only a good intellect interest. It wasn't naked ambition, or anything like that, I was just interested to see whether or not I had been disadvantaged by having those 10 years at home. (16)

An interesting feature which emerges from the talk about career advancement and recognition is that, any visibility or attempts at 'showing off' one's abilities and successes needs to be managed. Recognition of a job well done is acceptable but praise which is highly visible is seen in a highly negative light. It is not clear whether this would be treated similarly for both men and women within the university sector.

I really don't need glory. I like recognition that I have done it. I'm not self-sacrificing, I don't make that mistake. I like recognition, I like people to acknowledge the fact that I did stuff there, or I have done that or these are the results of what you have done but I don't expect a throne. I don't want slime on me! (17)

I would suggest there is a need to explore further the roots of this 'modesty' discourse and its relationship to women's reticence to apply for senior positions. Do women feel that they don't have the skills or experience? In this research, there was some talk about , 'not being ready' and 'not being able to tick all the boxes'. Or are women more concerned about potential 'risks' associated with taking on a senior position? These questions are important if participants' representations are taken as is. However, there is another explanation which would present a different research route. It may be that the overt expression of ambition is seen as a significant deviation from an expected 'respectable femininity' (Benschop et al., 2013, Sools et al., 2007). Open desire to progress up the hierarchies may be suppressed by women who are trying to manage conflicting identities, the 'effective leader' identity and the 'respectable woman' identity. As the former is strongly associated with 'maleness', there is an inherent conflict between the two which requires a more nuanced impression management process for women who have a desire to take up senior leadership positions.

5.4 Symbolic Violence – Women Blaming and Policing Themselves

Women talk about women in two ways. Firstly, they talk about 'women' as a group. Their talk reproduces essentialist notions of gender and reproduces stereotypes of femininity. They also reproduce masculinist discourses of leadership. Women present other women as 'over emotional' and 'overly cautious. When giving advice to younger women, the focus in on managing their femaleness and is given using traditional male metaphors. Secondly, when women talk about themselves they attribute their career advancement to external factors such as luck or accident. These two different ways in which women talk about themselves and other women represent sensemaking processes driven by internalised hegemonic discourses (Green et al., 2001). Women are speaking with the voice of the masculinist discourse, seeing other women and themselves through a masculinist lens. According to Pierre Bourdieu (2001) this is symbolic violence .

5.4.1 You Can't be the Weak Link

A worrying discourse is the view that the issue of differential and negative experiences due to gender are as a result of a particular stance that women take in the workplace. This ranges from women taking on the 'victim' role to women not being 'tough enough' or being 'oversensitive'. This notion that discrimination is simply an issue of agency suggests that the lack of representation of women in

senior positions is, in the main, due to individual women either choosing to not aim for the top or that they don't have the 'right stuff'.

> *I don't like when women put themselves in that victim role. (8)*

> *I'm extremely supportive of women in senior roles, don't get me wrong, but if you're in a senior position and you think you're not on the table and you have to ask yourself what's going on. Either you've got to talk to your senior management team and tell them that the culture has got to shift, because you're not getting your points across so you've got to look at what you're doing. You can't be the weak link I suppose is putting it a rather different way, is what I'm saying, but we don't realise that. (20)*

> *Often people writing about women and leadership and careers don't acknowledge it very openly, is that if you want to go all the way up to the top, there are sacrifices. You cannot have it all, I don't believe. Whether that sacrifice is like you give up an evening at the theatre to write a lecture. I don't mean necessarily huge ones, but if you look at the people at the top of any profession, they have had to really give quite a lot to get there. It's often tough, and you have to develop often a hard skin. Some want to stab you in the back, it isn't always nice. I think some women make the choice that that's not the lifestyle they want. They could, they're perfectly capable of doing it. There's nothing wrong with ability, but they have decided that is not what they maximally want from life. (8)*

This argument is alluring as it implies that, if I am a woman who has made it to the top, then I do have the 'right stuff'. It helps me to feel that I belong in this elite group. A reliance on this process is understandable given that these women are constantly receiving unconscious messages that they don't belong. The danger with the argument is that it places the focus of inquiry on the individual and on

what women can do to 'improve' their approach to achieve success. It deflects away from potential structural and cultural causes for the lack of women's presence in positions of power and hence, fails to achieve any change in this position.

A further discourse which places the onus for discrimination on women themselves is the negative view expressed about women who openly question sexism. Again there is an incongruence in this talk, as the same women who talk negatively about women who question sexism also go on to recount events when they themselves have challenged sexism. I interpret this through the lens of 'identity regulation' or 'identity work' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Women recognise that if they question sexism or discrimination every time it occurs, then they may take on a negative identity. Thus, they work to develop an identity of the 'safe female'. This is not to say that they are actually 'safe' in terms of not questioning the status quo, in fact a small number of participants at the most senior levels are actively engaged in activities to create change for women in their organisations. I would suggest that because women are in roles for which being female represents deviance from the norm, they have to work much harder at managing their social identities. They truly are engaged in an 'identity struggle' (Alvesson and Willmott, Ibid.). For some this is a conscious process but for most it is unconscious.

> *It would be very hard for me to imagine any of my male*
> *colleagues droning on and on about why they hadn't been*
> *more successful or any the opportunities they missed without*

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somehow diminishing themselves. That's the point. You would be thinking … Whereas if you get to know each of those men they have had significant personal disappointments and difficulties and possible bullying in the workplace or being stitched up.   They don't play that card because they have the wit enough to know if they did it actually diminishes themselves. It's not like anybody is going to be saying, "Oh my goodness now we all need to make it up to you." They'll just be thinking, "What a lightweight." (11)

The comparison between men and women here is interesting as it assumes that men and women in the organisation are engaged with the organisation on equal terms. That is to say that the organisation is somehow gender neutral. Thus, a direct comparison about difficulties faced in career progression between men's experiences and women's experiences is deemed rational. However, if Acker's (Acker and Dillabough, 2007, Acker, 1990, Acker, 2006) model of the gendered organization is correct, then the organisation is, through its design and operation always privileging men over women hence, their engagement with the organisation is unequal leaving a direct comparison of men's and women's experiences inaccurate. When women talk about women in this way, they are, unwittingly, perpetuating a masculinist discourse. Remember that the dominant discourse within organisations, although presented as gender neutral, is not. Thus, when the speaker takes the same subject position as those who create this discourse, she is taking on a stereotypical male way of seeing and interpreting, not a gender neutral view. To use a metaphor, the sea is the best habitat for fish, it is designed for fish and they thrive in this environment. At the same time they remain unaware of the water.

> *… social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)p.127*

Mammals can also swim in the sea but as it is not designed for them, they are not able to engage with this environment in the same way as fish. Some mammals have adapted to live in the sea and have the appearance of fish but they are still mammals. If it is suggested that mammals are 'not doing themselves' any favours by going to the surface for air, they are being judged against the fish standard, which is an incorrect comparison. Instead it should be considered impressive that some mammals have managed to adapt to engage with an environment which was not designed for them. Thus, assessments cannot be made about behaviour separate from the relationship between the context and the individual. Behaviour is always in relationship with context and setting and this includes one's cultural and historical setting. Being and doing 'woman' in the university is like being and doing 'mammal' in the sea whilst being and doing 'man' in the university is like being and doing fish in the sea.

5.4.2 A Woman Wants to Think She's Got a 90% Chance

One of the explanations given by participants for the lack of women in senior positions is that women themselves have different expectations than men for

their own readiness for leadership roles. This view is supported by research which finds that both men and women tend to hold the belief that men are more competent than women and therefor are more worthy of status than women (Correll, 2004). It is also reflected in women's talk about their own career decision making processes which shows a great reticence to apply for senior positions.

> *Now I know that's not everybody's experience. For example, if you look at statistics for (Mathis and Jackson) university, we do not have enough female professors. It may be just the competition, but I think women don't put themselves forward often when they should. In (this university), when you want academic promotion you have to put yourself forward for it. Now I think a man will often put themselves forward, even if they only think they stand a 40% chance. A woman wants to think she's got a 90% chance. (8)*

There is also the view that for women rejection hits harder than for men and that men move on from any rejections more quickly than women.

> *You know, men believe genuinely that if they have a go and they get it, they'll be able to do it. They don't feel so upset if they don't get it, whereas I think a lot of women almost go into themselves and think, "I'm no good, I'm not going to apply for anything else. I've been rejected." I think men will get rid of it much quicker. (8)*

There does seem to be considerable evidence in this research for differing levels of expectations in relation to gender, however, placing this process at the feet of women themselves makes the assumption that women actively choose to have these higher expectations for themselves. The issue of agency is brought to the fore and the effects of structure and culture are minimised. However, it is well

known that gender role related expectations develop through socialisation processes which occur from early childhood. Again, this can be explained by the internalisation of external gender related expectations and social identity processes. The internalisation of hegemonic discourses is likely to affect the whole person, not just her conceptualisations related to whether she is 'ready' for career advancement or not, but also her sense of self efficacy i.e. whether she is 'able' and even whether she is 'worthy'. This can result in a psychological constraint which has its root in structural constraints, or symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001).

5.4.3 I Was Exceptionally Lucky!

A surprising discourse which arose from the question concerning career success and progression was one of 'good fortune', 'serendipity' and 'accidental success'. When probed to provide reasons for their progression, in addition, to the reference to having the necessary skills and experience, participants often talked about and attributed their success to the significant role of 'luck'.

> *Even though now we have really fantastic Faculty Futures*
> *programs, they're called, to identify potential leaders and*
> *orientate them to that. I think a lot of people, it's serendipity.*
> *They might rationalise it afterwards, but it's just things happen*
> *and they do things and they find they really like them and then*
> *go for other things. And that would be the case with me. (3)*

I was exceptionally lucky that I think somebody had perhaps fallen out the search to be head... I was elected as their president and from that position started working with the then Vice-Chancellor who was a truly remarkable woman. (11)

I think my reflection now is that I've been exceptionally lucky by timing and where I have been which is never … That's a very mixed message to give to a further generation because they are going to be thinking, "Well yeah fine for her what if I'm not lucky?" It just sounds too serendipitous. I think the next stage for me will be where I'll have my come uppance … Because now I know myself better and I know what I'd like to be doing more and I will have to put myself on the line and say this is what I would like to do and set about it in a more focused way. (11)

In the last quote there is an element not only of luck playing the key role in the participant's success but that this luck was sure to run out now that she had clear ambitions and desires. This 'happy good fortune' discourse is worrying as it clearly indicates a sense of an external locus of control. That success occurs due to external forces, over which the woman has little or no control rather than internal forces, such as skills and experience. It is difficult to be clear about whether this discourse is a product of a perceived sense of external locus of control or, as discussed earlier, more a product of the need to distance oneself from notions of ambition, drive and planned career progression, which may be deemed as too masculine and hence, one would be deviating away from 'respectable femininity'(Benschop et al., 2013).

5.4.4 Women Tend to Sit Back

When participants give reasons for women in general not progressing to top level positions in universities, they provide a range of reasons but most tend to place the cause with the women themselves rather than with discriminatory structural or cultural practices. Discussions point to an acceptance of gender as an essentialist concept, highlighting how women think and act differently from men, as if these differences are inherent. For example, one reason given for the lack of women who apply for senior roles is that women conceptualise the idea of career success or job success differently from men. Although there is evidence for both a lack of women in senior roles and differences in perceptions of career success, I would suggest that they are merely symptoms and not causes. The interplay between structural, cultural and identity processes results in gender socialisation which in turn acts to constrain the way women engage with and can enact their agency in the workplace. Structural processes create the 'possible pathways' externally whilst gender socialisation processes create 'possible neural pathways' or internal, psychological constraints.   I would suggest that if this unconscious 'blaming' of women from very senior and successful women, is present, then there is an evident need for 'unconscious bias training' for all not just men.

> *I think there are barriers and they're mostly women's own*
> *construction. (20)*

You know, men believe genuinely that if they have a go and they get it, they'll be able to do it. They don't feel so upset if they don't get it, whereas I think a lot of women almost go into themselves and think, "I'm no good, I'm not going to apply for anything else. I've been rejected." I think men will get rid of it much quicker. (8)

These are all the factors that runs in a woman's mind and women think very differently about jobs, I know very well. When I get a job, when women get jobs, their focus is very much on doing the job properly, when a man gets a job, he's not thinking of the job he's got, he's already thinking about the next job. That's a very striking difference between men and women. (25)

However, there was a small number of comments which seems to demonstrate

an understanding of the key roles of socialisation and gender identities.

No, no, once I was there, the fact I was female was neither here nor there, they just satisfied the statistic. But I have to say that my sister who is also an academic, and I talked about this a long, long time ago because she also was basically not really paying any attention (to gender). I know that some women are very conscious when they are in a room of men, but I've actually been used to it all our lives and I think we decided it was because of our father that he had simply brought us up to believe that we could do what we did. If we wanted to do it we would do it, and there wasn't any suggestion that actually we were girls, at all. (14)

What I've said to colleagues here is you'll never get more women at PVC and Dean therefore unless you get women to be able to move in and get the management experience either as a Head of Department or a Head of School. You actually have to encourage women to do that because women will tend to sit back and feel they are being too pushy if they push stuff forward where as men won't do that. (15)

Again, in this last quote, there is evidence of women having to manage their identities, to engage in identity work in a much more complex and nuanced way than most men. It seems that women have to constantly negotiate the boundary of 'respectable femininity', as to 'push themselves forward' or seem 'desiring of promotion' are acts which step outside that boundary.

In this chapter, a range of discriminatory processes have been illuminated. The detailed scrutiny of women's narratives about their career and every day working experiences has resulted in three core themes. What is clear is that these senior women are engaged in regular identity struggles which result from operating in gendered universities. There also appears to be evidence to support Bourdieu's (2001) concept of symbolic violence, where women unconsciously internalise and reproduce the ideology of those who hold power.

6 Discussion

In answer to calls for the use of a Bourdieusian approach in research on women's careers and to use symbolic violence to illuminate everyday sexism in women's career experiences, (Sayce, 2006, Wilkinson, 2010, Powell and Sang, 2015) the aim of this research was to illuminate the experiences and sensemaking of women in senior positions in UK HE with a view to providing an explanation for the dearth of women in places of power. Using Bourdieu's theory of social action, with a particular focus on symbolic violence, the data present a story of nuanced and subtle discrimination. Women experience everyday sexism at all stages in their career journeys. Sometimes this sexism is overt but mostly their experiences are better understood as products of hidden power practices.

The impact of the macro on the micro is evident throughout. For example, neo-liberalist policies in UK HE have resulted in increased managerialism which is causing an adverse impact on women in the academy (White et. al., 2011). Workloads are very heavy with long working hours being the expected norm. There is evidence of horizontal workload expansion, with those being promoted to new roles, having to continue with most or part of their previous role. The workplace, as public space, is still considered to be the primary place for men, with the home, as private space, and consequent caring/family duties is still the primary place for women. Points of transition, especially, gaining a mother identity, often result in a shift in women's visibility status, from visible to invisible.

Finally, in agreement with Hofl and Matilal's (2007) research, women report a lack of any 'real' personal power in their roles.

Throughout women's accounts, there is, in the main, acceptance of dominant and hegemonic discourses. Although a few do take a critical stance or engage in some forms of resistance, this is rare. More often, women make adjustments to their behaviour, practices and identities in line with the habitus present in the field of elite universities. This is a habitus which includes the privileged role of masculine capital (Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010). The internalisation of hegemonic discourses is present in the way that most women talk about the neo-liberal shift in UK HE. Managerialist practices and the marketization of UK HE are accepted as either inevitable or beneficial by most. Although there is considerable debate concerning the impact of this shift, the majority of women in this study did not voice this. Bourdieu's concept of doxa provides an understanding of this lack of resistance. Doxic processes include the unquestioned adherence to the status quo which occurs because the discourses and actions are positioned as 'natural' or 'the only option'. These discourses are unconsciously internalised, and as such, result in individuals' unquestioned compliance to practices which are likely to work against them. For example, managerialism is having a greater negative impact on women than men in UK HE (White et.al. 2011, (Fenton, 2003).

In line with previous research on women's careers, the domestic sphere and the role of family is a key issue (Okin, 2013, O'Neill et al., 2008, Ely et al., 2014, Bianchi et al., 2012). Despite the wide range of domestic arrangements within this group of women, all talked about how this factor has impacted upon their careers. Family and domestic issues are an integral part of women's career decisions. Even where women have considerable support from their spouses, they talk about feelings of guilt concerning their 'handover' of the domestic role and the reduced number of hours they spend with their children. Women still consider the domestic sphere as their responsibility. This is evidence of the internalisation of the dominant discourse which positions women's 'natural' domain as the private sphere i.e. family, home and children. The difficulty that women face when they challenge this view is illustrated by the story of one of the women who was expected to abandon her prestigious career prospects to care for her father upon the death of her mother. She resisted but also talked about how difficult this decision was and how she experienced pressure to conform.

There is also evidence of the differential treatment of women in promotion, selection and evaluations. The double standard, which has been highlighted in both the careers literature and the leadership literature is present for the women in my research too (Morgan et al., 2013, Scott and Brown, 2006). Viewing women as legitimate for senior leadership roles appears to be problematic for both men and women. The hegemonic discourse of the leader as 'naturally' male or masculine helps to understand this process. It also explains why women

often feel that they have to engage in stereotypical masculine behaviours to achieve career advancement. One woman's story in this research highlights this issue. On applying for a senior position, she received signals that she was not 'aggressive' enough. She decided to fake aggression in the interview, and she got the job. This is an example of how women feel that they have to manage their identity to be considered as 'appropriate' for a leadership role.

Identity management and identity issues are present throughout women's accounts. In terms of the idea of developing or possessing a legitimate leader identity, very few leadership theories help to understand why this is more problematic for women than men. However one key theory which does help to explain this is that of Lord et. al. (2001). Their concept of 'leadership prototyping' provides an explanation for the way in which the internalisation process of hegemonic leadership discourses occurs.   Their theory also shows how the prototyping process results in gender bias in performance evaluations of those in positions of authority. It may help to explain why there are systemic and persistent gender related biases in the evaluations of those in leadership. In addition, I suggest that Lord et. al's (2001, 2005) concept of leader prototypes provides the detail concerning how the macro and micro may interact through social cognitive processes. If this is coupled with Bourdieu's (2005) theory of social action, it provides one detailed explanation of how habitus and doxa operate.

Bourdieu's (2005) concept of symbolic violence helps to explain the lack of resistance and active attempts to engage in organisational change. Florence Denmark (1993) also reported that women were not engaging in organisational change. This is not to say that none of the women in this research were actively engaged in organisational change, but most were not. I also do not suggest that this is due to the particular nature or disposition of women who manage to attain positions of power. Rather, I would suggest that this process has more to do with the precarious position of women who make it to the top of the Ivory Tower. In Bourdieusian terms, a woman's relative position in the field of UK HE is determined by her symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is the representation of one's human, social and cultural capital. The gendered nature of capital means that in the field of UK HE, masculine capital has more value than feminine capital (Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010, Miller, 2014, Duberley and Cohen, 2010). This results in women's power to create meaningful change as attenuated. This is illustrated by the stories women in this study tell about how they often have to work through men, for example, giving up ownership of ideas in order to maximise their chances of successful implementation.

The lack of resistance and perceptions of those who engage in resistance is a good example of how symbolic violence results in women 'policing' other women and themselves. In my findings, even women of the academy have a negative view of women who engage in resistance to and questioning of sexism, framing it as *'droning on and on'*.

Using a Bourdieusian lens the interaction and inter-relatedness between the individual and her/his context is recognised. This linking of levels is important as it allows for inference about the macro by examining the micro and conversely the illumination of how macro level issues shape experiences at the micro level (Bourdieu 2004).   In this way, conclusions about grand discourses, especially hegemonic discourses can be made by viewing the way in which individuals make sense of their experiences by examining their narratives. The shared elements in these narratives point to shared experiences and shared interpretations. It is these shared interpretations which become the focus of interest, especially where incongruence and paradox occur. Exploration of these shared narratives and interpretations represent a new way of seeing 'taken for granted' practices and for questioning 'common sense'. In addition, the notions of cultural hegemony and hegemonic masculinity were invoked to demonstrate the link between 'common sense' and the 'taken for granted' as hidden forms of power and oppression. Every day 'taken for granted' practices act to reinforce inequalities, and hegemonic discourses play out in daily social interactions.

When looking at what women say in my research there is some evidence of awareness of discrimination but there are also considerable attempts by women to make sense of this in ways which remove issues of gender and power or at least work to reduce their impact. It is this paradox which provides the key to a new understanding of the lack of women in senior positions in HE.

What I believe has been exposed, or illuminated, in women's narratives in this research, is the reproduction of dominant discourses such as, leadership as normatively male. This process is largely unconscious. In addition, women's narratives provide a number of examples of identity struggles, especially where feminine identities and leadership identities compete. I suggest that Bourdieu's notion of 'symbolic violence' is a useful construct for understanding both the unconscious reproduction of dominant gender and leadership discourses and the experiences of identity struggles. The process of 'symbolic violence' represents the way in which structural or material constraints are internalised to become psychological constraints. In this way, oppressive power is reinforced and maintained through the interrelationship between structure and agency.

Material barriers, such as, a lack of access to power and resources in the academy, are obfuscated through the utilisation of dominant discourses. Examples of key discourses are; 'that the academy is gender neutral and that the academy operates through meritocratic principles (Fletcher et al., 2007, Knights and Richards, 2003, Ramsay and Letherby, 2006). These dominant discourses are then unconsciously internalised and reproduced. Reproduction occurs through both internal and external dialogue. Internal dialogues constitute the psychological constraint for women. This results in a constraint on the ability to express agency and hence a constraint on women's choices. For example,often women have difficulty viewing themselves in leadership positions. They also feel the need to be fully qualified and experienced before they apply for leadership

roles (Benschop et al., 2013). These personal doubts are exacerbated by the erroneous idea that women are not present in many leadership positions due to a 'lack'.

This 'lack' can manifest as a lack of necessary skills or a lack of full commitment to the workplace or organisation. When the focus moves away from an individual deficit model i.e. 'fix the woman' and towards socially situated experiences, ignoring or denying the historical, political and cultural, and hence, issues of power become problematic. The elephant in the room (unequal power relations) becomes wholly visible. As Lorraine Green (2001) and her colleagues suggest, 'discourses and material relations merge and influence each other in a self-perpetuating fashion' p.191 .   It is this interrelationship between material and discourse which helps to obscure and maintain unequal power relations.

Hegemonic discourses act to dissuade women from resisting or wanting to resist inequality. What can be seen in the narratives in my findings is a reproduction of these discourses. In the main when interviewees highlight barriers, discrimination and exclusion, they try to make sense in terms of anything but gender, referring to 'personality' or 'style' as the explanation. As the researcher it is interesting to contrast what I see as clear negative gender effects with the explanations given by the women themselves. This highlights the importance of using a gendered lens to view data. Without engaging in this deeper level of

analysis, it could be easy to read the data very differently. For example, the narratives about women and ambition, if viewed through the lens of essentialism, could result in a conclusion that woman are not as ambitious as men. This would be based on the notion that there is a 'natural' difference between women and men and the notion that ambition is an individual trait. Taking a gendered view results in other questions about the nature of ambition and encourages a deeper exploration of the 'taken for granted' notions of ambition (Benschop et al., 2013).

The unconscious internalisation of dominant discourses is evident in the accounts which describe constant identity struggles. Although most women don't say that leadership is perceived as normatively male, their talk indicates an awareness, sometimes conscious sometimes unconscious, that there is an expectation of stereotypically masculine characteristics and behaviours for progression and inclusion at senior levels. There is very little recognition in women's talk that dominant discourses of leadership act to falsely position leadership as gender neutral. This results in an acceptance of the dominant discourse that leadership is both gender neutral and yet wholly masculine. This is the type of paradox which Bourdieu (2001, 2005) suggests as a useful site for exposure of hidden power. In this way masculinity as associated with leadership is not questioned, but accepted as an objective benchmark against which a woman is to be assessed. The lack of resistance to this idea results in its internalisation. Now, women have not only the material and structural constraints

to their agency but, in addition, these material constraints are internalised to create psychological constraints too.

This internalisation process provides a good explanation for why women feel the need to *'think that she has a 90% chance'* at getting a job. The internalised schema of leader is male and internalised notions of competence and worthiness of status are male whilst at the same time perceived to be gender neutral. It is not surprising that many women are reticent to apply for senior roles, unconsciously women are assessing themselves against a male norm, as if it were gender neutral, and find themselves 'lacking'. This internalised discourse acts to constrain a woman's expression of her agency by creating self-doubt and a concern about self-efficacy. Externally this looks like a woman is choosing to not apply and hence might provide support for Hakim's preference theory (Hakim, 2000). However, I would suggest that this internalisation process means that a woman is unconsciously aware of the risk associated with taking on a leadership identity which will conflict with her feminine identity. She is aware of the identity struggles which will ensue and hence her choices are constrained at two levels, by structural power inequalities, as highlighted by Patricia Lewis and her colleagues (Lewis et al., 2010) and then again by psychological constraints which arise due to the internalisation of structural inequalities.

Symbolic violence is also seen in the reproduction of dominant discourses which perpetuate essentialist, 'falsely naturalized' views of gender and masculinist views of leadership. The focus of the narratives by women in my findings, is on how most women (the term 'women' here is used by the participants to refer to women in general) are 'lacking' in the necessary attributes, behaviours and attitudes to be successful in senior positions. Women in this research, attribute their own success to 'good luck' rather than knowledge, experience, skills or talent. In addition, women are blamed for their lack of presence at the top pointing to their 'over emotionality', saying that rejection hits them harder than men. For example, one participant says that, ' Men can let go of rejection quickly whereas women internalise it'. Here is the discourses of 'lack' and 'emotionality' internalised and reproduced (Czarniawska and Hopfl, 2002, Höpfl and Case, 2007, Höpfl and Matilal, 2007). These very intelligent and accomplished women are unconsciously reproducing the common feminine stereotypes as explanations for a lack of career advancement at the very senior levels. Not only do they view other women's lack of success as their own fault, they also provide advice to younger women to see themselves as 'lacking' and to take care to present their identity as more masculine or as a 'safe' woman. The message is clear, 'manage your femininity and don't challenge your male colleagues'. This supports the view that even when women gain access to positions of power, their ability to enact that power for change is attenuated (Höpfl and Matilal, 2007). In this way, women are engaged in what Bourdieu refers to as self-policing. Through the reproduction of masculinist discourses and the discouragement of

resistance, they act to manage their own behaviour and that of their female counterparts (Bourdieu, 2001).

By shining a light on sensemaking within the narratives of women who have gained access to the top of the ivory tower, I have made visible the subtle and nuanced processes which contribute to the persistence of unequal power relations. Focusing on contradictions and paradox I've been able to theorise about the relationship between the material and the discursive, more particularly, structure, discourse and agency. I suggest that in addition to the material and structural barriers and constraints that women encounter, there also exist psychological constraints. These psychological constraints are internalised representations of the structural and material. This brings into question the concept of 'free agency' and illustrates how women's choices are constrained, not just by material conditions but also by the internalisation of those material conditions. Here I have built on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and doxa to demonstrate how these two processes result in a psychological constraint of one's agency. The internalisation of hegemonic discourses results in action or inaction which has been unconsciously shaped by the boundaries and references of 'acceptabililty' within these discourses. Thus, women's perceived lack of action in the form of applying for posts and openly demonstrating a desire to advance when presented as women's choices is based on a false assumption.

This proposition requires different questions and practices if gender equality of both opportunity and outcomes is to be achieved. Due to the fact that both cultural hegemony and the resulting psychological constraint are hidden processes, there is a need to engage in activities which result in exposure (Savigny 2014). As expressed previously, resistance is difficult when oppression is hidden. This act of exposing or illuminating is necessary in both research and practice. Below, I discuss in more detail how this could be achieved, first by looking at implications and restrictions of my research, then by making suggestions for future research.

7   Conclusion and Implications

7.1   Implications of Findings

One of the major implications of this research is that causal explanations for the dearth of women in very senior positions in organisations should shift away from individual and person focused factors. In addition, a sole focus on structural or policy factors is also likely to be insufficient. What is likely to be more fruitful is a recognition of the interaction between structure, culture and agency. Further, a useful area of examination is at the boundaries or interface of these three forces. The use of the term boundary is to suggest where interactions take place and where different social domains interact e.g. managing social identity/ies between the public and private (Kanji and Cahusac, 2015). If identity construction and development is considered to be a fluid process structured around the concept of narratives, then the narratives people produce to make sense of themselves in their worlds provides a useful point of access for exploring and exposing hegemonic discourses and hence power inequalities (Cohen, 2014, Savigny, 2014).

A further implication which results from the findings of this research is that any organisational activity aimed at increasing access for women to positions of power could be a 'performance' of the equality project rather than a genuine desire to create change. By this I mean that if those who have power are currently engaged in processes which act to maintain their control (as suggested

by Bourdieu, 2005), then it is unlikely that they would give permission to activities which would undermine their control. What can be seen from my research is that Russell Group universities seem to have the chilliest climate for women and yet are the very universities which seem to be more active in terms of schemes to improve women's positions. This is similar to the process of 'Greenwashing' displayed by some organisations which claim to have concern about the environment and sustainability issues but which in reality simply 'perform' visible acts of Green initiatives e.g. recycling whilst continuing with damaging practices (Vos, 2009). It may be that many of the 'top-down' gender equality practices are in fact a kind of 'Genderwashing'.   This positions these types of schemes as potentially continuing oppression rather than being a source for liberation. Those in power can point to their gender equality schemes as evidence for action to bring about equity and fairness and hence signal to all that the organisation has changed. In reality, discrimination continues through covert social processes e.g. opaque promotion decisions. The power of this approach is that resistance becomes very difficult.   Further, collective resistance is extremely difficult as the open evidence of discrimination and oppression is scarce. What occurs, and what can be seen in my research, is the development of a discourse which positions equality for all as achieved and unequal practices as a 'thing of the past'. There is a tendency to present HE as governed by meritocratic principles which is not borne out by my research (Acker, 2006, Fletcher et al., 2007). I am not suggesting that all organisational activities are entirely futile but I am saying

that it is not enough to naively accept that these activities will inevitably result in the advancement of women.

These implications present a landscape for both researchers and practitioners which is complex, nuanced and difficult. With this view there are no lists of 'skills women need to succeed' or descriptions of easy organisational interventions for the advancement of women. Instead, in order to expose powerful hegemonic discourses there is a need to engage in two key skills. Firstly, to develop critical reflexive skills with an aim to raise awareness of symbolic violence and, secondly, to engage in resistance, both individual and collective. As Bourdieu (2005) says, powerful elites will act to conserve their power, it is not given away without a struggle. The oppressed must engage in subversion strategies and/or begin to change the rules of the game.

7.2 Research Limitations

 In this chapter I will address specific shortcomings in my research which, if I were to do it again, I would correct. Limitations of my methods, was covered earlier in the methods chapter. A failure to collect more detailed demographic data, especially in relation to class and family background is a significant limitation. As the issue of structural power emerged I realised that I had not collected sufficient data to help with a fine-grained analysis of the role of socio-economic class. During analysis it also became clear that being a non-traditional student or the first of one's family to attend university may have been a salient issue (Bowl, 2003) and, again I did not collect this data systematically from my participants. Another limitation is the lack of representation of non-white participants. Although this is, in part, due to the severe lack of representation of this group in senior positions in pre-1992 UK HE, in future I would take a more proactive approach to ensure the engagement of this group. Thus, although different nationalities are represented in the sample, there is only one non-white participant. This means that the voices and shared narratives, by and large, are mainly those of white women. The voices of other ethnic groups may result in a different set of analytical conclusions. Finally, as I look back over my chosen techniques for the interviews, I can see that two changes may have improved my data. Firstly, when contradictions between what the participant said about experiencing no gender discrimination and her later descriptions of actual sexist events, I did not challenge this or identify the mismatch. In hindsight, it would

have been useful to gather the participant's understanding for this incongruence.

Secondly, I now know the importance of focusing the research lens on

boundaries and points of conflict and can see the benefit of gaining more in-

depth narratives about these points in women's career journeys e.g. getting

pregnant, moving from industry to academe etc.

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

It is clear from this research that in order to better understand the dearth of women in positions of power it is essential to prioritise scrutiny of the interactions between structure, culture and identity management. In addition, this must include some analysis of the role of power. Although I am advocating for a Bourdieusian approach which views power as grounded in the material, other conceptualisations of power such as, the psychoanalytical (Höpfl and Matilal, 2007) or Foucauldian (1983), are likely to also provide interesting and useful explanations. This calls for more research which examines social processes in action and for exploration at the group, organisational and industry level. One way to achieve this is through the examination of narratives and discourse. As in this research, reference points, schemas, scripts and frames become evident when people express themselves. It is through the analysis of narratives that shared beliefs and assumptions are exposed. Illumination of the hidden allows for open discussion and the opportunity to present different views and explanations. Consequently, what was 'common sense' or 'taken for granted' now becomes contested and exposed. The 'common sense' loses its claim to the status of 'unquestioned truth' and is exposed as socially constructed and hence open to change. Hopefully, it also exposes whose interests are served by the 'common sense' construction.

As I've demonstrated in this research, Bourdieu's (2001,2005) social theory is a useful framework for this type of research. As has been suggested by a number of researchers, (Dobbin, 2008, Vaughan, 2008, Swartz, 2008) Bourdieu's theory has not been as well utilised as it could be in organisational research. When it is used, often it is misapplied through the fragmentation of concepts i.e. just using 'capital' without linking it to 'field' and 'habitus'. According to Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) applying Bourdieu's whole theory would help to illuminate hidden power relations in the form of hierarchical structures, cultural practices and the presence of symbolic violence. For example, one can take the starting point of the 'field' at either the industry level or at the organisational level. At the industry level, such as UK HE, the first act is to *'carve out one's object'* (Ibid.. p.5). This process forces the researcher to engage in a detailed questioning of the nature of the 'field', its players and the power relationships between players. This latter is identified through an analysis of capital. This deeper thinking about the hierarchical relatedness of players in the field begins the process of undoing 'dehistoricization'. With UK HE as the 'field', the role of the church and state come to the fore, as does the history of this field as a place for men (Bagilhole and White, 2011, White et al., 2011, White et al., 2012). Presenting universities as neutral places for knowledge creation and dissemination where meritocratic principles drive promotion is now no longer viable. Another interesting area for research using Bourdieu would be to examine the presence of resistance, where it happens, who is doing it and when it is successful. Again, the whole theory must be applied and fragmentation avoided. Any successful resistance should

be understood in terms of the 'field', 'habitus' and 'capital' thereby ensuring that meanings remain fully embedded in the historical, structural and cultural context. A final area for future research is to further explore the new ideas related to the gendered nature of capital (Huppatz 2009, Miller, 2014) and how they relate to symbolic violence and women's career advancement. In particular, Duberley and Cohen's (2010) concept of the gendered nature of career capital would provide a useful framework for examining how symbolic violence may act to constrain women's ability to envisage their careers.

7.4 Implications for Organisational Change

For organisational change to be effective there needs to be a recognition of the forces which are likely to constrain progress. Firstly, organisations don't operate in a vacuum but the people within them are themselves socially situated and hence subject to the dominant discourses in their environment. Secondly, if the issue of power and power relations is ignored or sidelined, progress is likely to be slow. Thirdly, for most commercial organisations there is likely to be a tension between discourses of capitalism and discourses of emancipation. For example if a firm is working towards efficiency in traditional Scientific Management Taylor (1914) terms, then the tendency is towards worker exploitation i.e. to get more resource out of fewer workers. This 'profit before people' approach is antithetical to the humanist aims of emancipation. Yvonne Benschop and Marieke van den Brink (2014) examined power and resistance in different gender equality strategies. They compared the relative effectiveness of reformist versus radical strategies in various organisational contexts. In their analysis they draw on Benschop and Verloo's (2011) model of change strategies which considers strategies in terms of the target of the change, which is either 'individual focused' or 'structural focused'. The former focuses on 'fixing women' and is reformist or liberal, the latter focuses on changing structures and is radical. They also highlight three main aims associated with change strategies and these are; inclusion, re-evaluation and transformation. Inclusion represents improvements to equality of opportunity, re-evaluation represents notions such as, 'valuing

diversity' and transformation represents equality of outcomes as well as opportunity. What they identify is greater and faster change occurs with radical approaches e.g. quotas, than reformist approaches e.g. work/life projects. The key problems they highlight with reformist approaches are the issues of power and resistance. With reformist approaches there was a need to gain support from senior management who, once engaged, began to make changes to the project. The example they give is the addition of 'organisational effectiveness' as an additional aim to the 'gender equity' aim. In addition, the term 'gender equity' was replaced with the terms, 'ideal workers' and 'work/life issues'. This re-introduces the concept of the abstract and gender neutral worker which obscures the gendered nature of work thereby reintroducing hegemonic discourses. They also say that reformist strategies, because they require collaboration with those in power, provide ample space for covert resistance to change. In contrast, radical strategies result in overt resistance to change which results in open discussion and debate. This exposure of the 'taken for granted' is a key part of creating space for resistance to 'common sense' ideologies and potential for change. They stress that this is the value of radical strategies rather than the immediate improvement for those involved in the strategy. In fact, the likelihood is that those involved, and especially those who are visibly involved, will be the target of the angst expressed by those whose power is being eroded. Thus, radical strategies for change are more effective than reformist strategies but they are likely to be more difficult to instigate and will raise questions about societal

structures and inequalities as well as those in the organisation making the change.

In conclusion, the theoretical contribution I've made with this research is that I have demonstrated how Bourdieu's (2001,2005) social theory can be used to understand why there is a dearth of women in senior positions in the UK HE sector.   By examining women's career narratives I make an empirical contribution by providing support for the gendered nature of UK HE. I have also demonstrated how women have to engage in identity struggles in the workplace. Finally, I have provided support for Bourdieu's (2001) concept of 'symbolic violence' and present the idea that in addition to structural constraints to their agency, women have added psychological constraints.

8 Appendices

8.1 Introductory Email

RESEARCHING WOMEN'S CAREER EXPERIENCES IN UK UNIVERSITIES

Dear

I am contacting you to inform you of my research activity and to elicit your support in gathering information to gain a better understanding of women's experiences in pre-1992 universities as they move up the career ladder into potential leadership positions. I am a part-time PhD student based at the University of Birmingham's Business School.

My research seeks to gain a better understanding of women's experiences in moving into leadership positions in HE in the UK. Please see information sheet attached for more detail.

Research Process and Confidentiality

If you agree to take part, the research will comprise one face to face interview. Due to the very personal nature of our discussions and your very senior position, it is essential for me to stress that the very highest level of confidentiality is being applied to this research. All data will be kept electronically in encrypted files, on the highly secure server at the University of Birmingham. In addition, all participants will be given an alias at the start of the research and I will be the only

person to know the identity of all participants. During discussions with my supervisors I will continue to use aliases, thus at no point will your identity be revealed to anyone but myself, unless you personally choose otherwise.

Given that women, we are still in very small numbers in positions of power in pre-1992 universities, I see it as imperative that we begin to understand what women such as yourself are doing to achieve success and through gaining a better insight, to pass this on to other women and policy makers who can perhaps make it easier for those who may follow us.

I am hoping to conduct interviews in June/July 2013 and the research interview takes approximately 1 hour. If you are willing to take part, can you please reply to this email or call me on ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ to organise a date and time to suit you. Please note that I am currently working in the US and the time difference is -7hours UK time, so I may not answer immediately if you call in the morning.

Thank you for your time and co-operation, I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Faithfully

Wendy Fox-Kirk

8.2 Participant Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham Business School

Participant Information Sheet

Title of study: Reaching the Top of the Ivory Tower: Exploring Leadership

Journeys of Women in Higher Education

You are invited to take part in the research study: Reaching the Top of the Ivory Tower: Exploring the Leadership Journeys of Women in Higher Education. In order to help you to decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

I am a PhD student at the University of Birmingham's Business School, supervised by Professor Joanne Duberley and Professor Kiran Trehan. My research is exploring how women navigate through the 'chilly climate' in HE. What do women perceive to be the barriers and facilitators to moving up the career ladder into potential leadership positions?   I intend to do this by exploring the following:

4.   Experiences of career transitions and decisions

5.   Experiences and perceptions of recruitment, selection, promotion

6.   Experiences and perceptions of taking on a leadership role

7.   Experiences and perceptions of day to day leadership and management

2. Why have I been chosen?

I would like to interview women in pre-1992 HE universities who have achieved a move into a senior position i.e. Dean, Head of School, Head of Faculty, on University Board, Vice Chancellor etc. You have been identified as currently working at this level or have worked at this level.

3. What happens if I take part?

Your involvement in the study would be to take part in an in-depth interview where we will discuss your career experiences in relation to taking on a leadership role and how your gender may or may not, have impacted upon your career decisions, transitions and experiences. We will develop a timeline diagram to create a picture of your journey. Each interview will probably last between 1 hour to 1 ½ hours depending on how much time you have available, and how much information you want to share. I will record the interviews with your permission. The recordings will be transcribed and you are welcome to request a copy to keep. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form and will be provided with a copy of this. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw from the study by December 27, 2013 without a given reason.

4. If I want to take part, what will happen next?

If you decide you want to take part in this study, you can contact me, Wendy Fox-Kirk by email at ████████████████████ I will explain in more detail what the research is about, what will be involved in the interview process and can also answer any questions you might have. You can then decide if you want to go ahead with the interview and we can arrange a suitable time and location.

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. The only contact information required will be either a telephone number or email address. All interview recordings will be destroyed at the end of the research. Your name or any contact details will not be recorded on the interview transcripts. In addition, any details which potentially could identify you will also be removed or changed. My academic supervisors will have access to the transcripts of your interview, but I will be the only person to have access to the original recordings of the interview, your consent form and any of your contact details. Your participation in this study will not be discussed with anyone. Your name will be changed in the research and I will ensure that your involvement remains entirely confidential. I am not under an obligation to report anything you say that could be defined as illegal. However, disclosure may be required if you were to say something that potentially indicated that you or someone else was at risk of harm. If you said something of this type I would indicate this and you could then choose whether or not to continue the discussion. We would also discuss what the next steps would be.

6. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used in my PhD thesis. The material will be presented at academic and professional conferences and in academic journals. The findings will also be shared with research groups and research websites once the study has finished.

Findings from this study will contribute to developing a better understanding of what women such as yourself are doing to achieve success and to identify what key difficulties still remain for women seeking senior positions. Through gaining a better insight I will be able to inform other women and policy makers so that more women are able to achieve significant leadership positions in HE.

8. Contact for further information

Wendy Fox-Kirk   Prof. Joanne Duberley
Tel: Tel:
Mob: Email: j
Email:

8.3 Research Participant Consent Form

Title of study: Reaching the Top of the Ivory Tower: Exploring the Leadership Journeys of

Women in Higher Education

Name of Researcher: Wendy Fox-Kirk   **Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the
    participant information sheet dated   01/09/12 for
    the above study and have had the opportunity to
    ask questions

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and
    that I am free to withdraw at any time, without
    giving any reason, without my legal rights being
    affected.

3. I confirm that I give permission to record the
    interview.

4. I confirm that I give permission to use direct
    quotations*.

 *Note that names will not be associated with direct quotations

_____   _____   _____
Name of Interviewee   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name or Researcher   Date   Signature

8.4   Interview Agenda

Introduce yourself and describe the purpose of the research. Stress the high level of confidentiality and anonymity associated with the research and the processes that are being used to protect their identity. Also, inform the participant that the research has been authorised as ethical by Birmingham Business School's Ethics Committee.

*'Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research which aims to gain a better understanding of how women manage their identities as they progress in their careers in pre 1992 British universities. As explained previously, today we will run through an semi-structured interview which will focus on your career story. The interview will take no longer than 2 hours and you are free at any time to stop the interview process for a break. You are also free to ask questions for clarification throughout the interview. **If for any reason you wish to withdraw from this research at anytime, you are free to do so.** Before we begin, do you have any questions? (Answer questions). As discussed previously, I will be recording this interview for later analysis, do you give your consent for this interview to be recorded?'*

Interview Start

Begin by asking the participant to describe their current role.

Think about the following themes, use prompts and probes where necessary:

Rewards/constraints

Key people

Key plans moving forward

Who will support/block?

Key difficulties

Strategies to manage these

Identity management

Key issues

How do you address these?

What were you aims/dreams at key points in time? (probe and encourage to create metaphors, analogies)

Who were the key influencers (can be people, experiences, TV, Flim etc. – probe and ladder)

What drew you to this work? (probe and ladder)

Was there any work that you ruled out, would definitely not consider? (probe and ladder)

Allow the participant to run with their career story and continue to probe and ladder on key decision points, key people, significant events.

Next ask the participant to identify where they see themselves in 1 year's time.

How will you get there?

Close and thank

8.5 List of Equivalent Titles for Senior Roles in UK Universities

Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Rector, Principal

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Principal

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Vice Principal

Dean of Faculty

Assistant Dean, Associate Dean

Head of Department/School, Director of Institute

Senate/Council Member

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