Appointing Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors in Pre-1992 English Universities:

Managers, Management and Managerialism

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Abstract

The roles of deputy and pro vice chancellors (DPVCs) are changing and so is the way they are being appointed. This study examines (i) why many pre-1992 English universities are moving from an internal, fixed-term secondment model of DPVC appointment to one incorporating external open competition; and (ii) what the implications of change are for individual careers and management capacity building. At a theoretical level, it explores the extent to which DPVC appointment practice is symptomatic of ideal-type managerialism and subjects the prevailing academic narrative - that the power of academics has declined in relation to that of managers - to critical examination in the light of the findings.

The research, which uses a mixed-methods design incorporating a census, online survey and 73 semi-structured interviews, has generated some unexpected findings. Notably, the opening up of DPVC posts to external open competition has resulted in a narrowing, rather than a diversification, of the gender and professional profile of successful candidates. Therefore, although this change to DPVC recruitment practice was motivated by a meritocratic "quest for the best," it cannot be said to have improved management capacity in the sense of increasing the likelihood that the best candidates are attracted and appointed from the widest possible talent pool.

On the contrary, the findings are suggestive of conservatism, homosociability and social closure, whereby academic managers maintain their privileged status by ring-fencing DPVC posts to the exclusion of other occupational groups. DPVCs are also expanding their professional jurisdiction by colonising the university's management space. Far from declining, academics' power is thus being consolidated, albeit by a few elite career track academic managers.

Moreover, although there is some evidence of a managerial ideology with respect to the DPVC appointment model, it is a context-specific 'academic-managerialism' rather than a generic ideal type.

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I am indebted to all my research participants for their time and invaluable input. It was both a privilege and a pleasure to interview such a wide range of senior managers and to be entrusted with their personal stories.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my husband John, for their patience and support during my long PhD journey.

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, who always believed in me.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Aims

1.   Introduction

This doctoral study investigates how and why the appointment of deputy and pro vice chancellors (hereafter abbreviated to DPVCs) is changing in pre-1992 English universities and examines the implications of that change for the careers of individual managers and, more broadly, for institutional management capacity building. The prevailing academic narrative, which asserts that managerialism has pervaded universities and led to a shift in academic-manager power relations, is then subjected to critical analysis in the light of the findings.

This introductory chapter outlines the structure of the thesis and provides essential background information, including definitions of key terms, before readers are presented with details of the research. Section 4 explains the author's perspective as researcher. Section 5 then provides a brief overview of the research context prior to an exposition of the research aims, questions and parameters in Section 6. The final section gives the rationale for the study and locates it within the literature.

2.   Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of eight chapters. As outlined above, this first chapter sets out the context for the research and the research aims and questions. Chapter Two provides the conceptual and theoretical framework for the study, while Chapter Three locates it in empirical and historical context. In Chapter Four, methodological and ethical issues are discussed and justified. Chapter Five presents the findings in relation to the empirical

research questions on the drivers and outcomes of changed DPVC appointment practice. Further empirical evidence on the implications of change for management capacity building is presented in Chapter Six, which also begins the analysis of the findings. This analysis is continued in Chapter Seven in relation to the study's theoretical research questions on managerialism and academic-manager power relations. The conclusions are then given in Chapter Eight, together with a self-critique of the study and suggestions for further research.

In terms of the approach taken to the writing of the thesis, essential quantitative data are summarised in tables within the main body of the text and supporting information is provided in the Appendices. To aid readability, percentages given within the text are rounded up to the nearest whole number. Frequent use is made of quotations from the literature in order to give direct voice to the authors and bring the text alive. The relevant page number is given for all in-text references which include a direct quotation[1]. A full list of references can be found at the end of the thesis.

3.   Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this thesis the following definitions apply:

Vice chancellor is the term used to describe the head of institution, whatever his or her specific job title (e.g. principal or warden).

Deputy and pro vice chancellors (DPVCs) are the main focus of the study. This generic term is used to describe those predominantly, but not exclusively, academic managers at the second tier of university management: that is, at the level immediately below the vice chancellor. It is used to describe all managers in this group, whatever their specific job title. This includes deputy vice chancellors (DVCs) as well as pro vice chancellors (PVCs) even where, as is increasingly the case, the two co-exist with the former holding a distinctive role and status from the latter. The abbreviations DVC and PVC are used whenever there is a need within the text to distinguish between these two sub-groups.

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[1] The only exceptions are online articles or publications which have been accessed online and for which there are no page numbers.

Registrar is the term used to refer to the head of administration, whatever his or her specific job title (e.g. chief operating officer).

Executive management team is the term employed to describe the most senior decision making body of the executive, as opposed to the governance, arm of the university. This is the team that provides policy development and strategic management support to the vice chancellor. Its core membership typically comprises the vice chancellor, DPVCs, registrar and director of finance. Albeit they are on a similar level of seniority in many institutions, the latter two management posts are specifically excluded from the DPVC population except where they have been accorded a DVC or PVC title. This reflects the different history and construction of these posts, which are filled by professional managers on a permanent contract basis.

Third tier managers are those academic and professional services managers at the level below DPVCs who are not members of the executive management team. On the academic side, these are usually deans. However, in institutions where there the DPVC is also a dean, third tier managers are deemed to be those at the next level down the academic hierarchy: that is, heads of department or school. On the administrative side, third tier managers are directors of professional services, such as estates, human resources or external relations, with a direct report to the registrar. Figure 1 illustrates these top three tiers of management within a typical pre-1992 university structure.

Figure 1: Pre-1992 University Executive Management Structure

First Tier: Vice Chancellor

Second Tier: Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors (DPVCs)
Registrar and Director of Finance

Third Tier: Deans of Faculty (or Heads of Department or School)
Directors of Professional Services
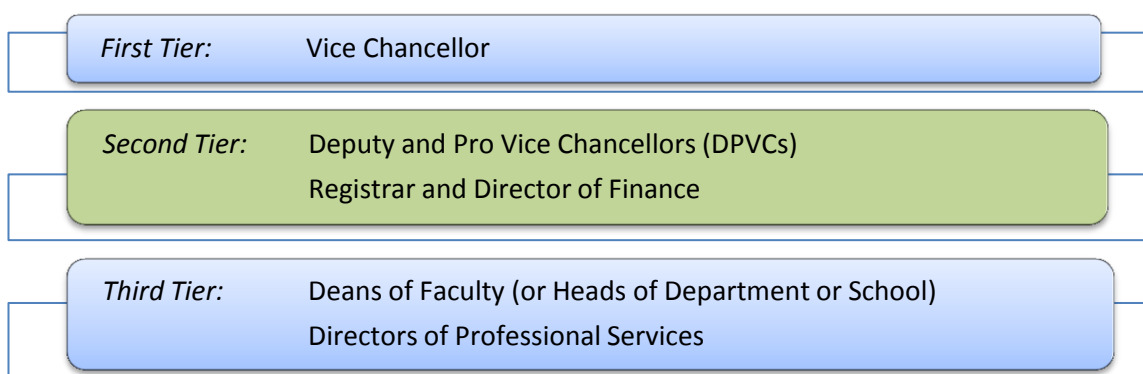
The term **DPVC appointment model** is taken to comprise the following three elements:

(i)   Means of appointment, i.e. internal secondment or open competition

(ii) Terms of appointment, i.e. tenure and contractual basis

(iii) Role construction, i.e. portfolio and management responsibilities.

Pre-1992 universities (or old universities) include the 43 English institutions "regarded as having the status of a university before the provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 came into force"[2] plus the Institute of Education (IOE) and School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). The latter two institutions were included in the study population in order to ensure that all English members of the 1994 Group (a self-declared grouping of medium-sized research-intensive UK universities) and Russell Group (an association of major UK research-intensive universities) were incorporated within the analysis[3]. A list of the 45 pre-1992 institutions falling within this definition is attached for reference as Appendix A.

Post-1992 universities (or new universities) are those English higher education institutions that have been granted university status since 1992.

Key concepts, such as managerialism and new public management (NPM), are defined in Chapter Two.

4.   Researcher Perspective

4.1   Style and Approach

I came to this doctoral study as a seasoned professional with extensive knowledge and experience of university management. Having made the transition to higher education from the private sector I have worked for over fifteen years in a number of different roles within both pre- and post-1992 universities. My choice of research subject is rooted in this professional experience, emanating from the identification of a real life work-based

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[2] http://www.hero.ac.uk/reference_and_subject_resources/groups_and_organisations (accessed 15/01/2009).
[3] It was originally envisaged that comparisons between member institutions of the 1994 and Russell Groups might be undertaken. However, the disbanding of the 1994 Group in 2013 means that any such comparisons would now have limited value. Nevertheless, since data from the IOE and SOAS had already been collected, the decision was made to retain them within the definition of pre-1992 universities and hence within the study population.

phenomenon: changing DPVC appointment models in pre-1992 universities. I approached this issue as a reflective practitioner seeking to understand both its practical and theoretical significance. These two complementary aims have informed the research questions and design from the outset.

My preferred research style acknowledges the pivotal role played by the researcher in the research process and seeks to capitalise on what Maxwell (1996) terms experiential knowledge. Accordingly, I have brought my prior knowledge and experience to the study and utilised it to inform the process of analysis and sense making, whilst guarding against forcing explanations upon the data. I would characterise this approach as coming to the research with an open mind rather than an empty head (Dey 1993).

Although my professional experience makes me an insider to the sector, I am an outsider with regard to my main study group, i.e. university DPVCs. Indeed, as a higher education management consultant and former professional services director, it is likely that I have a quite different viewpoint from that of an academic manager. This fact may be considered both a strength and potential weakness in relation to this study. It is a strength in that it brings a new, and I would argue, welcome research perspective to an area of enquiry that (unsurprisingly perhaps) has hitherto been dominated by researchers from an academic background. This strength would become a weakness, however, were it the case that one set of inherent biases and taken-for-granted assumptions were simply to be replaced by another.

It is because I am aware of this danger that I have been transparent about my own background and perspective and demonstrated integrity throughout the course of the research both in terms of identifying and testing my own assumptions and biases and adopting a reflexive stance. Moreover, I am committed to portraying as accurately as possible the worldview of my research participants, wherever possible in their own words, whilst ensuring that their anonymity is protected. These concerns, which have underpinned my whole approach to the research design and implementation, are explored in more detail as part of the methodology discussion in Chapter Four.

4.2   Voice

I have taken the decision to make occasional use of the first person pronoun in the writing of this thesis. Although I am aware that this may not be standard practice, I believe it is justified in the light of my particular researcher perspective, as described above. Early

attempts to write certain sections of the thesis, such as the previous one, in the third person resulted in an awkward and stilted text. This served to confirm my view that sparing and appropriate use of the first person pronoun would produce a text that is both more natural and more in keeping with the ethos of the research.

5.   Research Context

This section provides a brief overview of the context within which this research takes place in the form of a high-level summary of recent changes within higher education and their impact on university management and the composition of the executive management team. A more detailed discussion of the historical and empirical context for the study is provided in Chapter Three.

5.1   Higher Education Policy Environment

UK higher education has been transformed over the last fifty years with major implications for the management of universities. These changes include a huge expansion in student numbers with the move from an elite to a mass system; the end of the binary divide between pre-1992 universities and the former polytechnics; globalisation; intensified competition, both for students and resources; increased media scrutiny; the introduction of tuition fees; and the construction of students as consumers. This metamorphosis has taken place within the context of severe funding constraints, whereby a significant decline in the amount of funding per student has led to pressure on institutions to increase and diversify their sources of income. The global banking crisis, subsequent recession and cuts in government spending have further added to this financial pressure.

During this period there has been a high level of state intervention and policy steer, particularly in relation to the social inclusion and enterprise agendas, and the imposition of an increased legislative, regulatory and accountability burden. In the 1970s the public sector came under sustained government pressure for change and the resulting NPM reform agenda (Ferlie et al. 1996) saw it subjected to the forces of managerialism and neoliberalism in the quest for more efficient, cost-effective and relevant public services. Higher education also came under scrutiny and the commissioning of the Jarratt Report (CVCP 1985) was an early manifestation of the government's efforts to effect changes in the internal governance of universities in order to make them more efficient (Middlehurst 2004). This report, which recommended the adoption of business management structures

and decision-making processes, is widely seen as the turning point for the introduction of the "new managerialism" which is since perceived to have permeated universities (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 22).

At the same time, the move from an elite to a mass higher education system has led to a commodification of academic practice and conflict over the control of the curriculum and knowledge production – areas in which academics have traditionally been unchallenged. This loss of professional autonomy is deemed to have resulted in the proletarianisation of academic life (Halsey 1992). External regulation, audit and assessment have subjected academic work to explicit scrutiny, effectively demystifying it (Henkel 1997). Working conditions have also deteriorated with the loss of tenure and the casualisation of contracts and there has been a steady decline in academic status relative to other occupational groups. Furthermore, although traditional guild ideas of academic self-governance and autonomy have endured in the academic psyche, there has been a shift of power away from academics' governance of what were once seen as their universities (Dearlove 2002).

These changes have been unwelcome for many academics and something of a misery narrative has developed within the academic community (Shepherd 2014b) that rails against the corporatisation of universities and the rise of managerialism, and laments the perceived marginalisation of academics and decline in academic power in favour of that of managers (Vincent 2011, Currie & Vidovich 2010, Smith, P. & Hussey 2010).

5.2   University Governance and Management

As a result of the government's drive for a more business-like approach, the consensual model of university governance has given way to a corporate one, focusing on the governing body and its relationship to the executive (Shattock 2002). Furthermore, the collegial organisational and cultural model, the collegium, has moved towards that of the bureaucracy and the corporation (McNay 1999).

Meanwhile, the rapid expansion in the size of the sector and in the scale and complexity of its activities has meant that managerial capacity needed to be upgraded (Scott 1995). Accordingly, there has been a shift from administration to management in which the traditional civil service model of administration, characterised by neutral administrators working in a supportive role to the priorities of the academic community, has largely disappeared. The cult of the gifted amateur has given way to an increasing professionalisation of the administration (Middlehurst 1993). Generalist administrators

have been supplemented by specialist managers, such as those in marketing or estates management, often recruited from outside the sector. The boundaries between academic and administrative roles and activity have arguably become less clear cut and the identities of administrators and managers have broadened, with implications for their future career development and aspirations (Whitchurch 2008b).

The general trend towards a more managerial approach has typically taken the form of the consolidation of departments into schools and faculties, the devolution of budgets, the streamlining of committees and the emergence of a stronger executive (Middlehurst 2004). The "steering core" of the university, in the form of the executive management team, has also been strengthened over recent years (Clark, B. R. 2007, p. 5). The role of the vice chancellor as chief executive and accounting officer has been more clearly defined, and the present incumbents perform a function not unlike that of their counterparts in the private sector (Bargh et al. 2000). The DVC is increasingly a full-time, sometimes permanent, post with line management responsibility for heads of school or deans of faculty (Middlehurst 2004). Furthermore, the number of both DVCs and PVCs has been increasing and there is some evidence that they are taking on more wide-ranging portfolios outside traditional research and teaching and learning areas (Shepherd 2014a, Smith, D. & Adams 2008). Together with the registrar and director of finance, these academic managers form the core of the typical pre-1992 university executive management team.

5.3 Executive Team Appointments and Profile

The way that executive management team members are appointed has also been changing. There has been a shift towards a model of appointing vice chancellors for a shorter period of time, typically on a fixed-term basis of five years (Bargh et al. 2000). Posts are now filled by competitive open recruitment and the use of executive search agencies has become almost universal (Shepherd 2011). And, as the expectations and complexity of the vice chancellor's role have grown, so has the specificity and range of required attributes from potential candidates (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a). Despite these changes, however, the recruitment pattern has remained remarkably predictable. Vice chancellors are an intellectual elite of predominantly white 50-something men chosen not only from within higher education, but usually from within the same sub-sector (Bargh et al. 2000). It would appear that conservatism and the binary divide between pre- and post-1992 universities are both still very much in evidence in vice chancellor appointments.

Until recently, this divide has also continued at second tier management level. Whilst the post-1992 universities externally recruit full-time and permanent DPVCs, pre-1992 institutions have traditionally utilised an internal secondment model whereby DPVC appointments are made on a fixed-term, part-time basis from amongst the professoriate. However, the way DPVCs are appointed in pre-1992 universities has begun to change (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). The binary divide has been weakening as an increasing number of pre-1992 institutions supplement, or in a few cases replace, internal secondment with an external open competition appointment model, whereby posts are externally advertised and the services of an executive search agency may be utilised (Shepherd 2014c). A comparison of the two models is given in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Traditional and New Variants of the DPVC Appointment Model
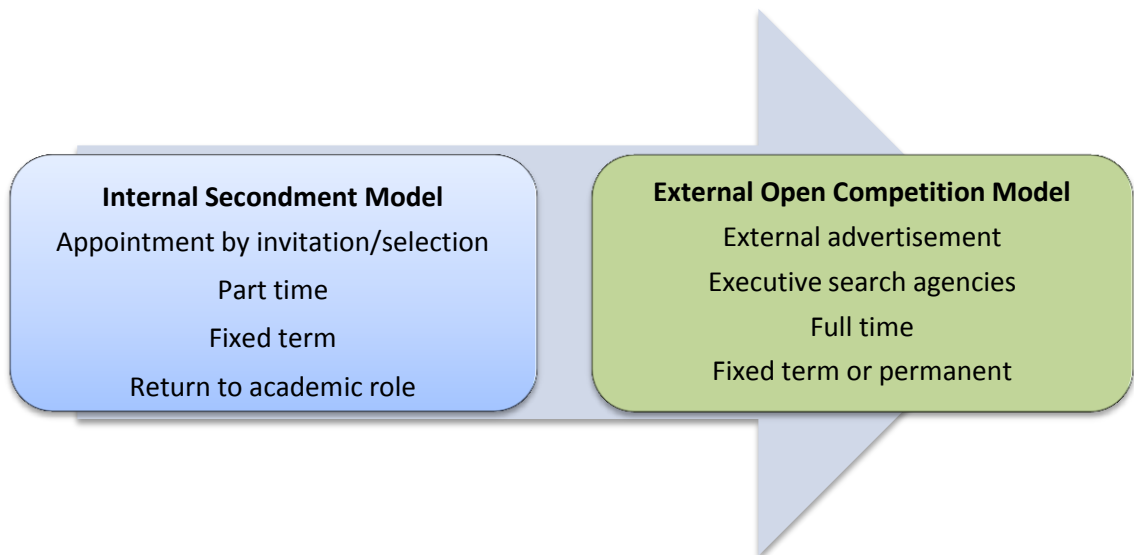
Notwithstanding these recent changes to appointment practice, it appears that the demographic and professional profile of DPVCs has not changed significantly over the years (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). This is despite the increased complexity of the management task, the evolution of the role (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007) and the perceived emergence of a more managerial culture (Deem 2000). Unlike in the National Health Service (NHS), where professional managers have been brought in at the most senior levels, in higher education academics have so far continued to fill the top management positions.

6.   Research Aims and Questions

6.1   Research Aims

This study investigates the nature and drivers of recent change to the way DPVCs are appointed in pre-1992 English universities and the consequences of that change – both intended and otherwise. In addressing this issue the research has two overarching aims. The first is to ascertain whether this has been change for the better in terms of improving management capacity within the sector. That is to say, whether it has increased the likelihood that the best possible candidates will be attracted and appointed from the widest possible pool of talent (UUK 2009).

The second is to explore the theoretical significance of the findings for the notion of managerialism as ideology in a university context. This will involve consideration of two main issues:

(i)   The extent to which change to the DPVC appointment model is symptomatic of an ideal-type managerialism (Chapter Two, 4.2); and

(ii)   The validity of the assumption that academic power is declining in inverse proportion to that of managers.

In this way, it is intended to subject the prevailing academic narrative to critical examination in the light of the empirical findings. This narrative holds that, as managerialism (loosely defined) has pervaded universities, so there has been a shift of power from academics to managers.

It is recognised that these two aims are fundamentally different in nature. This is a conscious decision that reflects the complementary professional and academic interests that prompted this enquiry (4.1) and have shaped its research design. The first is concerned with informing management practice and is designed to have relevance and value for policy makers and higher education professionals. The second seeks to achieve greater conceptual clarity and to generate theory, in the sense of meaningful explanations and insights from empirical data, about how the ideology of managerialism manifests itself in relation to changed DPVC appointment practice and what this implies for academic-manager power relations.

6.2   Research Questions

This study seeks to realise these aims by means of empirical investigation guided by the following central research questions. These questions fall into two categories, reflecting the differing nature of the twin research aims described in the previous section. The first two questions are essentially empirical in nature and the remaining three analytical and/or theoretical.

Empirical Questions

Q.1   What is the case for change to the DPVC appointment model?

Q.2   What are the consequences of change for:

      a. The demographic and professional profile of appointed DPVCs?

      b. The careers of DPVCs appointed via external open competition?

      c. The career aspirations and progression of third tier managers?

Analytical Questions

Q.3   What are the implications of change for institutional management capacity building?

Q.4   To what extent are the findings symptomatic of ideal-type managerialism?

Q.5   What do the findings signify for academic-manager power relations?

The choice of these research questions reflects my desire to elicit as rich and complete a view of the research phenomenon as possible and implies the use of multiple data sources and perspectives. Accordingly, a mixed-methods research design is employed and research participants are drawn from all three top tiers of university management (Figure 1) to include both change agents (i.e. vice chancellors) and those most directly affected by the change (i.e. current and aspiring DPVCs). Figure 3 illustrates the various categories of research participant chosen to provide a multiplicity of perspectives.

The choice of specific methods and their use in relation to each of the above-mentioned research questions is discussed in Chapter Four, 4.3.

Figure 3: Multiple Perspectives on the Research Phenomenon
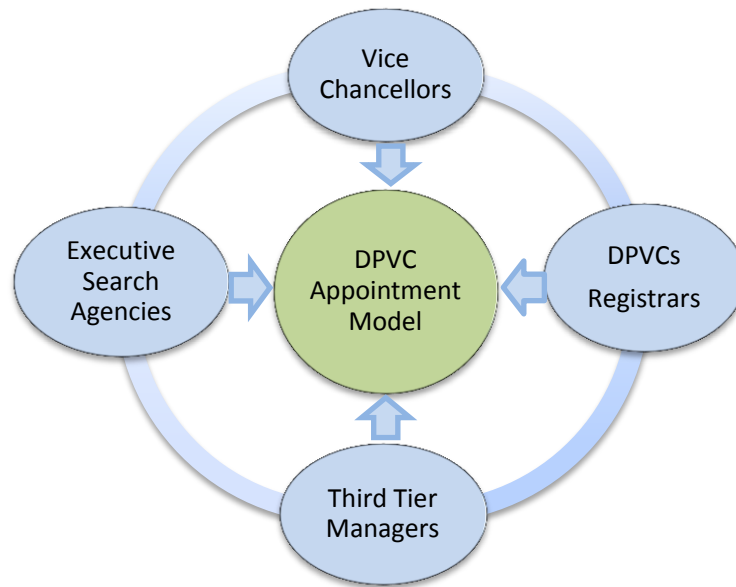
6.3   Research Parameters

This study centres on pre-1992 English universities. Limiting the research geographically had the advantage of restricting the enquiry to those universities within a single higher education system, operating under the same policy and funding regime. It also ensured that the fieldwork was feasible in terms of time and cost constraints. The decision to limit the study population to pre-1992 universities was made on the basis that these institutions have more potential for change in response to the government's NPM reform agenda than their post-1992 counterparts. This is because their internal management and governance system, structure and culture have traditionally been less business-like, or managerial. Moreover, the pre-1992 sub-group of universities are a stable population unlike post-1992 universities, which are growing in number year on year as more higher education institutions are awarded university status.

The specific example of change examined in this study is the movement of many of these pre-1992 universities away from an internal secondment model of DPVC appointment to one incorporating external open competition, more akin to the practice of post-1992 institutions and the private sector. Accordingly, the initial data collection process (via a census and online survey), which is concerned with gaining a macro-level overview of the research phenomenon, includes all pre-1992 universities. The substantive micro-level

semi-structured interview phase then focuses in on those pre-1992 institutions that have made changes to their DPVC appointment model. More details on study populations and sampling strategy are given in Chapter Four.

Other, sometimes difficult, decisions about research parameters had to be made. This decision-making process was guided by two main considerations: a desire to maintain a clear and coherent research focus and to ensure the feasibility of the study within the timeframe. On this basis it was decided that a detailed examination of the following would have to remain outside the scope of this empirical enquiry:

- What DPVCs do and how well they perform
- The perspective of rank-and-file university staff on changes to the DPVC appointment model
- Non-NPM-related factors that have impacted upon university management, for example globalisation and the introduction of tuition fees
- Wider diversity issues in higher education.

Also beyond the scope of this study is an analysis of the difference between management and leadership, a topic that could easily form the subject for a thesis in its own right. I take the view that these are essentially complementary activities, frequently carried out by the same person, and that a "dysfunctional separation" of the two is not particularly helpful (Mintzberg 2004, p. 22). Accordingly, unless otherwise specified, I have made a pragmatic decision to use the term management in this thesis in preference to that of leadership, but in the sense of incorporating elements of both activities.

7.   Rationale

The research is both important and timely. This section summarises why this is the case and indicates how the research builds upon, and addresses gaps in, existing knowledge.

Firstly, in challenging economic times and a fast-moving and competitive higher education environment, the quality of university management – especially at executive management team level – has arguably never been more important. Nevertheless, although there is an extensive literature in the field of higher education management within which this study is primarily located (Shattock 2003, Bargh et al. 2000, Watson 2000, Middlehurst 1993, Green

1988), the amount of published work on the university executive management team remains very limited and the phenomenon of the top team in practice remains relatively unexplored (Kennie & Woodfield 2008b).

Secondly, as effective strategic management becomes more critical, so does the need to secure the best people for the most senior management jobs. However, despite being identified as an important policy issue (Deem 2000), there is little documented research or other evidence on the recruitment and selection of executive management team members in the UK (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a) and it has been recognised that this is an area worthy of further investigation (Middlehurst 2004). The empirical work that has been carried out to date has focused on the appointment of vice chancellors (Goodall 2009, Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a, Bargh et al. 2000). There is now a need to extend this to DPVC level and to examine the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches, including the utilisation of executive search agencies (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a).

Thirdly, DPVCs are of pivotal importance to effective university management. They perform a distinctive and vital role in support of the vice chancellor, as policy developers and catalysts for action (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). Moreover, they form the main recruitment pool from which future university leaders will be appointed. They nevertheless remain an under-researched and under-theorised group that warrants further empirical enquiry (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007).

DPVCs have rarely been the subject of research in their own right, though they have been included in a few wider studies of university senior management (Middlehurst 2004, Deem 2000). Relatively little was known about how they are appointed or what they do until a recent project on the evolution of the DPVC role between 1960 and 2005 (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). This doctoral study builds upon and updates elements of this work in relation to the demographic profile, professional background and appointment of DPVCs. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to examine one important aspect of how pre-1992 universities are changing their approach to management.

Fourthly, now that it has been empirically established that a number of pre-1992 universities are beginning to change their DPVC appointment model (Shepherd 2011), with potentially far-reaching and long-lasting consequences (particularly where permanent DPVC appointments are being made), it is timely to examine the implications of this change in order to inform future practice in this area.

Fifthly, higher education management is an issue of policy as well as practical significance. Successive governments have remained ambivalent at best about the quality of university leadership (Smith, D. & Adams 2008). Despite the fact that universities have performed extraordinarily well in a number of areas including research quality, student satisfaction and contribution to economic growth (Watson 2002), their management and governance has been an enduring government concern, as evidenced, for example, by the Dearing Review in 1997, the Lambert Review in 2003 and the establishment of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in 2004. University management continues to be viewed as problematic and a perception of "leadership deficit" remains (Watson 2008, p. 11).

Finally, the standard discourse within the academic community in relation to managerialism and its impact on academic power warrants investigation. A prevailing academic narrative can be discerned from the higher education management literature (Vincent 2011, Currie & Vidovich 2010, Smith, P. & Hussey 2010), specialist media such as *Times Higher Education*, and day-to-day conversations amongst university colleagues which holds that managerialism is all-pervasive and has resulted in the loss of academic power in favour of managers. It has been acknowledged that this rhetoric needs to be subjected to critical examination in the light of actual behaviour and to take into account a range of different perspectives (Locke & Bennion 2011). This study seeks to do just that in relation to one specific aspect of current management practice: the DPVC appointment model.

In so doing, this study addresses the lack of systematic research concerning the impact of recent public sector reforms on the management of English universities. Hitherto, there has been a tendency to regard higher education as a specific field. However, given that its similarities to other professionalised public services are probably greater than the differences, the value of looking at it from a public management perspective and in the context of wider public sector reform has been recognised (Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani 2008). Although emanating from a desire to understand the specific phenomenon of DPVC appointment practice, this study also serves as a case study examining one particular aspect of the impact of NPM reform on organisational management and governance in a university context.

At a theoretical level it further develops the work of Deem *et al* (2007) on the nature of "new managerialism" in higher education and extends to higher education Exworthy and Halford's (1999) analysis of how public sector reforms are impacting upon professional-managerial dynamics.

It is anticipated that the research will have both scholarly merit and professional value and be of interest to a diverse audience of higher educational researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

8.   Summary

I approached this study as a reflective practitioner with extensive experience of working within higher education, and my choice of research topic emanates from professional interest in an observed work-based phenomenon: that is, changing DPVC appointment models in pre-1992 universities. In this thesis I explore the reasons for this change and its consequences, both for individual careers and for management capacity building.

This research matters because DPVCs not only play an important management role in their own right, but also form the main recruitment pool from which the next generation of vice chancellors will be drawn. The appointment of today's DPVCs therefore has a knock-on effect for future institutional leadership. Furthermore, given the challenge and complexity of managing the modern university, it is crucial that the best people are appointed to DPVC posts from the widest possible talent pool. In order to ensure this outcome, it would be of value to both policy makers and practitioners to have a better understanding of recent changes to the way DPVCs are appointed and their consequences. A high level of interest is already being shown in this study by vice chancellors, the specialist higher education media and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

At a theoretical level, the study examines the significance of a changing DPVC appointment model both for managerialism as ideology in a higher education context and for the seemingly taken-for-granted assumption that academic power is in decline. This is a debate which is heavy on rhetoric and opinion and light on empirical research and considered analysis. This thesis aims to address this imbalance.

As a first step in this process, the following chapter brings greater conceptual clarity to the topic by exploring the origins and definition of managerialism and related concepts, such as NPM and neoliberalism. An ideal-type model of managerialism is then proposed. The second half of Chapter Two outlines the prevailing academic narrative concerning the impact of NPM reform and managerialism on academic work, status and power.

Chapter Two

Managerialism and the Academic Narrative

1.   Introduction

Central to this thesis is an examination of two commonly made assumptions: that managerialism (loosely defined) is all pervasive in higher education, and that it has led to a diminution of academic in favour of managerial power. This chapter discusses the key concepts essential to an understanding of these assumptions and the ideas, theories and evidence that underpin them. This discussion is based on a reading not only of the higher education policy and management literature, but also that drawn from the fields of management and public administration.

The first half of the chapter attempts to bring greater conceptual clarity to the notion of managerialism in two ways. Firstly, managerialism is considered in relation to two cognate concepts with which it is often confused or conflated: neoliberalism and new public management (NPM). Though closely related I conceive of all three as distinct phenomena, with managerialism and neoliberalism comprising the twin ideological foundations of NPM. Secondly, an ideal-type model of managerialism is developed that sets out the ideology's core tenets, or claims. These are presented in Figure 4 together with examples of managerialism's main practical manifestations.

Based on this ideal type, potential indicators of each ideological tenet are proposed in relation to DPVC appointment practice (Table 1). These indicators form an essential part of the research design as they provide a means of linking the theoretical model to what the empirical findings suggest is happening in practice (Chapter Six).

Figure 4: Location and Characteristics of Managerialism as Ideology and Practice
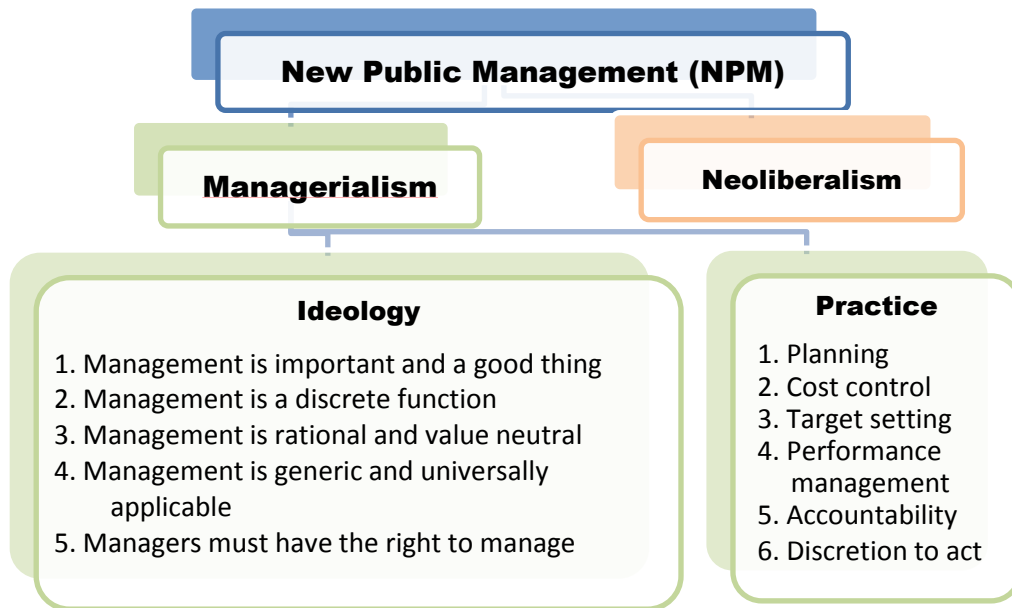
The second half of the chapter explores the perceived impact of the NPM reform agenda, especially managerialism, upon higher education. Specifically, it presents the prevailing academic narrative about changes to academic work and working conditions, as well as to academic status and power. The effects of NPM on university governance and management and the composition of executive management teams are then explored in Chapter Three.

2.   New Public Management

NPM is a contested concept with no single agreed definition. Moreover, there is a lack of clear delineation between NPM and managerialism; the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably as alternative descriptions of the same thing, or as "rival concepts" of public sector management reform emanating from different theoretical perspectives (Deem & Brehony 2005, p. 219). As already noted, I take the view that NPM and managerialism should be considered as related, yet discrete, phenomena. Managerialism

thus can and does exist outside of a public sector context. The following sections explore and define both terms as well as that of their conceptual cousin, neoliberalism.

NPM is a multifaceted concept with complex intellectual and political roots. In broad terms it can be seen as a new paradigm that represents a distinctly different approach to the provision of public services (Clarke, Gerwitz & McLaughlin 2000). More specifically, it refers to the sustained set of reforms of the public sector (and its underpinning doctrines) from the 1980s onwards that represents a shift away from the traditional model of public administration (Hood 1991). These reforms have resulted in a blurring of the division between the public and private sectors with the former recast in the image of the business world (Newman 2000).

This section examines the origins of NPM and its evolution over time, and considers the problems to which NPM was deemed a necessary solution. Although the focus here is on the UK experience, it should be noted that NPM is not a uniquely British development and, indeed, it has been described as one of the most striking international trends in public administration (Hood 1991).

2.1   Origins of NPM

There is no single explanation or interpretation of why NPM caught on (Hood 1991). Although often associated with the politics of the New Right, it is likely that the introduction of NPM had its roots in socio-economic as well as purely political factors (Farnham & Horton 1996). These include the rapid development of information and communications technology, globalisation and concerns about Britain's economic competitiveness

The worldwide recession in the mid-1970s, prompted by the oil crisis following the Arab-Israeli war, hit Britain's already slowing economy particularly hard. The combination of a challenging economic environment and rising public expenditure brought arguments about the appropriate scope and scale of the public sector to the fore and led to a search for new political and economic ideas. The political consensus around the so-called post-war settlement, characterised by a mixed economy based on Keynesian economics and the creation of a welfare state with universal social services, began to come under increasing strain (Farnham & Horton 1996).

The then Labour government started the process of cutting public expenditure and curbing the money supply in monetarist fashion in order to try to reduce inflation (Farnham & Horton 1996). The idea that it was the Thatcher government which brought a sudden end to the post-war consensus and the welfare state is thus somewhat over-simplistic (Flynn, N. 2002) and clichéd (Rhodes 1994). It was rather that Thatcher's government was keener and better placed to reduce public spending and the size of the state than had been previous governments (Flynn, N. 2002). Accordingly, the drive to curb public expenditure intensified after the Conservative's election success in 1979.

This context did not make NPM reforms inevitable, however. Pollitt, for example, is unconvinced by what he terms the "unstoppable forces" argument for the rise of NPM (2003, pp. 35-36). Firstly, because it fails to account for the fact that some countries facing the same conditions (for example, Germany and Japan) did not take an NPM route – at least not until much more recently - and secondly, because it is too deterministic and places insufficient emphasis on human agency. Pollitt views NPM as "chosen" by public servants and politicians to solve perceived problems rather than "caused" (2003, pp. 36-37).

He argues that governments and other influential organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, promoted the easy-to-understand and fashionable ideas of NPM on the promise of financial savings and greater political control and contends that NPM reforms were not primarily ideological in basis. In support of this latter argument, he cites the fact that social-democratic or labour governments, such as those in Australia and New Zealand, have been some of NPM's most active proponents. Others have also made the point that the development of NPM in a range of different political contexts suggests its rise could not be solely a function of the New Right (Ferlie et al. 1996).

NPM is nevertheless closely associated with the New Right's political ideas and in particular their critique of the Keynesian welfare state as:

- Creating a culture of dependency and weakening personal responsibility
- Supplier led, providing what professionals and bureaucrats think people want rather than what they actually want
- Not subject to effective democratic control
- Neglecting other areas of welfare, such as community or voluntary bodies

- Fundamentally inefficient due to its monopoly status and macroeconomic management

- Weakening economic growth and private enterprise.

(Farnham & Horton 1996)

Based on this critique, the New Right were able to prepare the way for NPM reforms by telling "a very effective story" about all that was wrong with the welfare state, including spiralling costs and "scroungers" on benefits (Clarke & Newman 1997, pp. 14-15). In their view, the state had become too big and wasteful and was "crowding out" the growth of the private sector (Pollitt 1990, pp. 43-44). Accordingly, the main focus of the Thatcher government was to reduce the size of the public sector and, where privatisation was not possible (as in the case of health and education), to increase the efficiency of what pubic services remained (Pollitt 1990).

The public sector was not only viewed as inefficient, but also as self-interested and unresponsive to the public. Its very purpose came under attack and public spending came to be regarded as an unproductive cost rather than a social investment (Clarke & Newman 1997, Ranson & Stewart 1994). The Thatcher government described the public sector in "almost exclusively pejorative terms" (McSweeney 1994, p. 237) and this hostility led to a determination to effect reform. The private sector was held up as a model for the public sector to emulate. It was argued that only "by making public sector organisations and their management look as much like the private sector as possible" would performance be improved (Ranson & Stewart 1994, p. 26)**.**

From a New right perspective, the traditional form of public administration, the bureaucracy, and the professionals who worked within it were both identified as problems that needed to be tackled (Flynn, N. 2002). The Weberian impersonal, procedural and mechanistic bureaucratic model, though effective in conditions of relative stability, was deemed unsuited to the rapidly changing and unpredictable world of the 1980s (du Gay 2000). In contrast to the supposed fleet-footedness and efficiency of the new Asian "tigers", bureaucracy was seen as the "bad old dinosaur" (Pollitt 2003, p. 33). The stereotype of the bureaucracy was of a rule-bound, inflexible, costly, inward-looking and hierarchical organisation run by bureaucrats in their own self-interest (Flynn, N. 2002) rather than in the public interest (Boyne et al. 2003). Bureaucrats were portrayed as "hiding behind 'red tape', out of touch and empire building" (Clarke & Newman 1997, p.

15), while adherence to procedure and acceptance of hierarchy were viewed as antithetical to the desired enterprise culture (du Gay 2000).

This portrayal is a caricature of course and, as such, exaggerates public bureaucracy's potential faults and fails to recognise its many virtues. These include an emphasis on due process, equity of treatment, probity and accountability (Ferlie et al. 1996). At its best bureaucracy offers standardised and predictable outputs based on rules and regulations, administered by neutral trained staff who deal with each case fairly (Clarke & Newman 1997). Pollitt questions the assumption that bureaucracies were not sufficiently customer focused (2003) and for du Gay, the representation of public bureaucracies as outmoded, inefficient and unresponsive failed to take account of their crucial ethical and political role (2000). Nevertheless, as du Gay notes, advocates of NPM were incapable of seeing public bureaucracy in anything other than a negative light.

The second perceived problem was that of professionals. Their claim to monopoly provision of certain services was viewed by the New Right as a restraint on trade that had led to an undersupply of overly expensive services (Pollitt 1990). Organisations regulated by professionals were seen as problematic since professionals were deemed to be fundamentally self-serving and not to be trusted to manage themselves effectively (Flynn, N. 2002). Rather, they were perceived as detached from the real world and/or too trendy and liberal (Clarke & Newman 1997) and therefore in need of being brought under political control (Flynn, N. 2002). Indeed, Pollitt (1990) suggests that part of NPM's appeal was the opportunity it provided to more closely manage the work of independent-minded professionals, such as doctors and academics. The impact of NPM on the latter is the subject of the second half of the chapter.

2.2 Characteristics of NPM in Practice

NPM is a broadly based organisational phenomenon driven from the top and evident across a large number of public service settings over a long period of time. Despite its scale and longevity, however, there is a tendency in the literature to adopt an over-coherent view of NPM that conflates policy and practice (Clarke, Gerwitz & McLaughlin 2000, p. 7) and fails to recognise how it has evolved over time. This section provides a brief summary of its practical manifestations and different variants, while the following sections consider its ideological components.

The following main characteristics of NPM in practice can be identified, evidencing both its neoliberal and managerial roots:

- A rational approach to management (e.g. strategic planning and objective setting)
- A strengthening of the line management function (e.g. performance management)
- Flat, rather than hierarchical, structures with devolved responsibilities to executive units
- Adoption of human resource management (HRM) techniques to secure employee commitment
- Greater flexibility of pay and conditions
- Introduction of a more business-like and entrepreneurial culture
- A focus on value for money and 'doing more with less'
- A shift from inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes
- More measurement and quantification of outputs (e.g. performance indicators)
- An emphasis on service quality and consumer orientation and choice
- A shift of priorities from universalism to individualism
- The introduction of market-type mechanisms and competition
- The growth of contractual relationships (e.g. purchaser-provider)
- A blurring of public-private sector boundaries and more scope for private sector provision

(Pollitt 2003, Farnham & Horton 1996, Ferlie et al. 1996, Ranson & Stewart 1994, Hood 1991)

Such a high-level summary inevitably runs the risk of over-simplification. In reality, the NPM reform agenda has endured over a number of years and the ideas underpinning it have evolved during that time, generally in tune with developments in management theory. There was thus no simple shift from public administration to NPM and different variants or phases of NPM can be discerned. Ferlie *et al* identify four distinct NPM models, or ideal types: "the efficiency drive", "downsizing and decentralization", "in search of excellence" and "public service orientation" (1996, pp. 11-15). Though the first of these is described as the earliest, and the fourth as the most recent, these models are not seen as a purely chronological development of NPM.

Rhodes, meanwhile, suggests that NPM's initial "thrust" was all about the "3Es" (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) and the exercise of hierarchical control (1994, p. 144). He argues that this narrow conception of management later broadened somewhat as the era of the Citizen's Charter dawned and consumer interests came to the fore. Ranson and Stewart (1994) observe two distinct phases of public service reform based on different strategies: corporatism and consumerism. The former, initiated in the face of financial crisis by Labour and continued by the Thatcher government, was concerned primarily with centralising power by means of the corporate state. This strategy was rejected in the Conservatives' second and third terms and replaced by one of "empowering the public as consumers in the market of public services" (1994, p. 13).

New Labour continued NPM reforms under the banner of "modernization" and a narrative of imperative: that public services had to change and innovate in order to meet the business and consumer needs of the modern world (Newman 2000, p. 45). These reforms shifted the emphasis from short-term efficiency gains to longer-term effectiveness and from competition to collaboration. Accordingly, the language of "downsizing", "markets" and "contracting out" was replaced by that of "best value", "partnerships" and "democratic renewal" in an attempt at distance the modernisation agenda from Thatcherite NPM reform (Newman 2000, p. 46). However, the degree to which New Labour reforms were actually different from the earlier efficiency-driven ones is debateable.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to undertake a critique of NPM, two points are worth noting. Firstly, the main problem with NPM is seen to be its assumption that private sector practice is applicable to the public sector. For many critics, NPM has adopted the worst features of private sector management without due regard to the fundamental differences between the two sectors (Ranson & Stewart 1994). Secondly, some academic commentators – particularly those from the public administration tradition, such as Hood and Pollitt – appear to be ideologically opposed to NPM and slow or unwilling to concede that the old bureau-professionalism model was no longer optimal and that change was required (Hughes 2003). In considering why NPM caught on, Hughes argues that Hood (1991) therefore neglects the simplest and most important explanation, which was that public administration "did not work any more, and was widely perceived as not working" (2003, p. 50).

2.3   Ideological Roots of NPM

Although NPM has been described as a "pot pourri of ideologies" (Pollitt 1990, p. 46), it is possible to identify two main ideological strands that have informed its development. The first of these has been variously termed the ideology of the New Right (Clarke & Newman 1997), "new institutional economics" (Hood 1991, p. 5), neoliberalism or marketisation. The second is managerialism. Together these represent "a marriage of two different streams of ideas" that may or may not be fully compatible (Hood 1991, p. 5).

Though sometimes conflated in the literature, neoliberalism and managerialism, described in turn in the following sections, are not synonymous. Whereas neoliberalism is individualistic, managerialism has the organisation as its basic social unit (Enteman 1993). Neoliberalism is primarily concerned with economics and has "a definite political programme" whereas "managerial techniques are the guiding principle" of managerialism, which holds that all problems have managerial solutions (Klikauer 2013, p. 5). This fundamental difference between the two points to their different backgrounds: neoliberalism emanates from economics and managerialism from management theory.

3.   Neoliberalism

In essence neoliberalism, or marketisation as it is often termed, is an expression of economic liberalism that conceives of the world as a marketplace and is concerned with opening up trade relations between countries on the basis of free market principles (Maringe 2010). Markets are viewed as the most effective mechanism for the distribution of money, goods and services. A free market economy thus facilitates economic prosperity whilst offering choice to consumers. In this way neoliberalism can be seen as a form of economic democracy that serves the public better than politics (Farnham & Horton 1996).

According to a neoliberal analysis, state intervention is an unnatural intrusion into the workings of the market, distorting it through such means as taxation, monopoly provision and labour market regulation (Clarke & Newman 1997). The New Right neoliberals and neoconservatives believed that markets, not government plans, were the answer to a bloated, inefficient and unresponsive public bureaucracy. By the early 1980s, faith in centralised government planning had waned and optimism about the benefits of an interventionist style of government had largely disappeared. Thatcher, who was scornful of

a "nanny-knows-best" state (Pollitt 1990, p. 40), chose to place her faith instead in "freedom and free markets" (Rhodes 1994, p. 140).

Neoliberalism's claim to legitimacy resides in the championing of the rights of the individual and the promotion of freedom of choice (Ranson & Stewart 1994). Its key values are individualism and personal freedom, rather than collectivism (Farnham & Horton 1996). Neoliberalism builds on public choice theory and Niskanen's seminal text *Bureaucracy and Representative Government* (1971) is regarded as particularly influential. This argued that the large size of many bureaucracies, their monopoly status free from the pressures of competition and lack of performance indicators made them both inefficient and ineffective. The prescription for these public service ills was to reduce the size of the various agencies by breaking them up into smaller units and to improve performance by means of competition and the provision of publically available performance information (Boyne et al. 2003). Formal monitoring mechanisms were seen as necessary to ensure accountability for public money given that informal relations based on trust alone were no longer deemed adequate (Power 1994).

Public choice theory is underpinned by a belief that people always act rationally, i.e. according to their own preferences, and in their own best interests (Flynn, N. 2002). Whether or not this is always true is open to dispute. Furthermore, the universalistic claim of public choice theory – that it is valid in all organisations and situations - has also been rejected as implausible (Boyne et al. 2003). The notion of service user as consumer is not appropriate for some public services and a consumer focus may come at the expense of the interests of the wider community (Ranson & Stewart 1994).

Equally, the concept of a market may not be applicable within the public sector. In any case, many so-called markets are only provider-markets or quasi-markets: universities, for example, are not fully in charge of setting their own fees or student numbers (Williams, J. 2013). Moreover, the process of marketisation may itself change the nature of certain "goods"[4] and reinforce the pre-existing social order and advantage (Ranson & Stewart 1994, p. 49) as in higher education where it has arguably strengthened the existing status hierarchy of institutions.

Despite these criticisms, neoliberalism is said to have become hegemonic, masquerading as "the only acceptable reality" (Vincent 2011, p. 333).

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[4] For example, if many parents choose a good small school it may grow and lose its distinct small school status – the very reason they chose it in the first place (Ranson & Stewart 1994).

4.   Managerialism

4.1   Definition, Origins and Scope

In essence, managerialism can be thought of as "the pursuit of a particular set of management ideas" (Flynn, N. 2002, p. 5) that represent a certain worldview, or ideology. Ideology is taken to mean a systematic framework of values and beliefs, developed and maintained by a social group, about how the world is or should be that justifies and legitimates a course of behaviour (Hartley 1983, cited by (Pollitt 1990)**.**

Managerialism is the belief system of one particular group, arguably the dominant group in an organisation: management (Klikauer 2013). It is self-evidently in the interests of managers to promote managerialism, which has at its core "the special contribution of management" and its "special rights and powers", and to use the mantra of good management practice to justify their own autonomy in the same way academics may cite academic freedom (Pollitt 1990, p. 9).

As an ideology, managerialism can be compared to professionalism in that both are normative systems "concerning what counts as valuable knowledge, who knows it, and who is empowered to act in what way as a consequence" (Clarke, Gerwitz & McLaughlin 2000). Clarke *et al* describe the process of putting managerial ideas into practice as "managerialization" and equate it to "professionalization" as the process of attaining professionalism (2000, p. 8). This managerialisation process is undertaken by means of a series of specific techniques or "control technologies" (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 14). These may take the form of practical measures (such as target setting or performance management), new organisational structures (such as the creation of executive management teams) or propaganda and persuasion designed to effect cultural change (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, Farnham & Horton 1996).

Its description as an ideology does not necessarily imply a close connection between the ideas of managerialism and that of any specific political party (Deem 2004). The implementation of managerialism was not just the work of determined New Right advocates. Rather, a number of diverse interests may have been involved, including those who felt they have no choice or who believed they may benefit. Pollitt suggests that a "sugared pill", in the form of greater authority or financial reward, has sometimes been offered to elite groups in order to get otherwise unpalatable change implemented (1990, pp. 47-48).

Nevertheless, unlike in the private sector where managerialism was market driven, in the public sector it has been politically driven. This places the onus on public sector managers to carry out public policy as "agents of change" (Farnham & Horton 1996, p. 45). For example, in the NHS general managers were used to introduce "management levers" such as value for money reviews (Ferlie et al. 1996, p. 43). From this perspective, managerialism can be seen as the means by which a fundamentally political project like NPM has been implemented (Newman 2000). In other words, managerialism has provided an apparently managerial solution to what were previously conceived of as political problems (Pollitt 1990).

Although managerialism has been seen as a by-product of New Right ideas, its founding principles precede those of the New Right. Just as neoliberalism has its roots in public choice theory, so managerialism emanates from FW Taylor's scientific school of management (1911). Early examples of managerialism are therefore often described as neo-Taylorist (Pollitt 1990). However, over the years its ideas have evolved in line with developments in management thinking, including culture, excellence and change management approaches (Handy 1993, Burnes 1992, Peters & Waterman 1982).

These management ideas are said to have "mutated" into managerialism under the following formula:

"Management + Ideology + Expansion = Managerialism" (Klikauer 2013, p. 3)

In Klikauer's view, managerialism has extended far beyond the realms of organisations into the economic, social, cultural and political spheres and has become so pervasive that it has "infiltrated every eventuality of human existence" (2013, p. 7). Such is its influence that he finds it near impossible to think of an area of society that is not governed by it, or to envisage anything that might cause it to disappear. Indeed, he describes managerialism's effects as akin to "ideological enslavement and asphyxiation" (2013, p. 12).

Whilst such hyperbole appears unwarranted, Klikauer is not alone in viewing managerialism as an all-encompassing force. Entemann (1993) considers it to have become the predominant ideology of society, following on from capitalism, socialism and Marxism, and democracy. In his opinion, managerialism has become "the basic principle" of advanced industrial societies and symptomatic of "deep social change" (1993, p. 156). Whilst these two authors take a fairly extreme view of the reach of managerial ideology, there is little doubt that its influence has become widespread and that it has permeated the thinking of

many, if not most, organisations. Its impact on higher education, as part of the wider NPM reform agenda, is the subject of 5.1 and Chapter Three.

4.2   Ideal-Type Managerialism

Based on a review of the literature, I have developed an ideal-type theoretical model of managerialism, consisting of six key ideological tenets or claims. These include the five tenets illustrated in Figure 4 and an additional one that applies specifically to managerialism in the public sector, i.e. a belief in the superiority of private sector methods.

This ideal type is purely a heuristic device or intellectual tool and, as such, does not claim to depict reality. Rather, it aims to synthesise and organise abstract ideas in a coherent and meaningful way, and to provide a mechanism to link theory and practice through a comparison of the theoretical model with the empirical findings. It is anticipated that the model will prove to have explanatory power not only for this thesis, but also for future empirical studies. As an ideal type, it should at minimum serve as "a clear target for criticism and revision" (Friedson 2001, p. 5).

It is important to note that managerialism's ideological tenets are normative rather than descriptive in nature and therefore reflect the way things *should be* (from a managerial perspective) rather than the way they necessarily *are*. These tenets are outlined in turn in this section, which is intended neither as ideological defence nor critique. They will then be critically examined as part of the analysis of the study's findings in Chapter Seven.

4.2.1   Management is Important and a Good Thing

Managerialism contends that management is both the best form of organisational governance (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007) and the main vehicle for organisational success. If only things were better managed, the argument goes, improvement would follow and the world would be a better place. Objectives would be clear, staff highly motivated and bureaucracy and red tape would be eliminated; supporters of managerialism thus view management as "an optimistic, almost a romantic creed" (Pollitt 1990, p. 1).

Management is not only important, but also a good thing. Beyond the realms of the organisation, it has the capacity to help solve a range of economic and social ills and is seen as "functionally and technically indispensable to the achievement of economic progress, technological development, and social order within any modern political economy." (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 6). Underpinning this aspect of managerialism is a belief that

economic growth is the main route to social prosperity (Pollitt 1990). From this perspective, managerialism can be seen as a progressive social force, with more and better management providing the means for a struggling UK economy to become more globally competitive (Clarke & Newman 1997).

4.2.2 Management is a Discrete Function

Taylor's (1911) scientific management, from which managerialism derives, was a means of reducing tasks to their component parts, measuring work processes and of controlling and rewarding effort. It is an elitist view of management in that it is based on a philosophy of separating the conception and execution of tasks, or 'thinking' from 'doing' (Broadbent, Dietrich & Roberts 1997), with workers defined as unthinking and following orders.

By implication, managers are "the management", i.e. a group separate from those doing the work (Flynn, N. 2002, p. 4) and often remote from the day-to-day functioning of the organisation. This very remoteness supports the notion of a professional management in possession of a generic body of knowledge sufficiently removed from the technical specifics that it is transferable from organisation to organisation (Enteman 1993).

The main purpose of management is seen as undertaking the strategic decision making that enables an organisation to achieve its stated purpose (Ranson & Stewart 1994). The discretion to plan and make strategic decisions gives management its distinctive role in organisations and wider society, whilst the requisite processes of analysis and strategic choice have "intellectualized and professionalized" it (Enteman 1993, p. 164).

Managers are able to justify themselves on the grounds of their superior knowledge and know-how, and their skills and competencies are viewed as critical to organisational survival and success (Farnham & Horton 1996, p. 41). With the development of culture and excellence management approaches, the image of managers has been transformed from that of "dull organisational time servers" to "entrepreneurial and inspirational change agents" (Clarke & Newman 1997, p. 35).

4.2.3 Management is Rational and Value Neutral

With its roots in scientific management theory, managerialism places great faith in the management activities of planning and objective setting as a means of improving performance (Farnham & Horton 1996). The decision-making process that underpins these core management functions is viewed as entirely logical and rational: managers define the

problem, gather relevant data, develop possible solutions, evaluate them and decide on the best course of action. The process is also rational in the sense that the application of what is regarded as superior intelligence via scientific method is inevitably deemed to lead to optimal decisions. By these means, managers constantly refine and improve organisational performance.

From this perspective, management practice is essentially technical and value neutral, offering a non-partisan framework within which decisions can be made away from the partisan claims of particular interest groups (Clarke & Newman 1997). It therefore follows that managers are neutral professionals who can be trusted to manage in an impersonal way and in the organisation's best interests.

4.2.4 Management is Generic and Universally Applicable

Managerialism echoes scientific management in its espousal of the systematic nature and universal applicability of management.   Taylor (1911) holds that anything can and should be managed and that management practice in one arena is transferable to another.

This approach to management theory could be characterised as 'management is management' regardless of where it is practised (Kottler 1981). It views management as a generic set of activities common to all organisations, with managers performing fundamentally the same tasks whatever sector they are in (Ranson & Stewart 1994). For advocates of managerialism, there is little difference between the skills required to run an oil rig or a university (Klikauer 2013). Underpinning managerialism, then, are the twin beliefs that organisations are more similar than different, and that the performance of any type of organisation can be enhanced by the application of generic management skills.

This belief in a generic model of management that minimises the differences between the public and private sector has been one of the key drivers of public sector reform (Pollitt 1990). Accordingly, there has been considerable convergence between the management of the two sectors since the early 1980s, with the language and techniques of business now commonplace throughout the public sector (Farnham & Horton 1996). The 1983 Griffiths Report which introduced general management into the NHS was one manifestation of the government's faith in generic management skills applicable across a range of public and private sector organisations (Exworthy & Halford 1999).

4.2.5 Managers Must Have the Right to Manage

The notion that managers must be granted the freedom to act, or the right to manage, is a key ideological demand of managerialism. Managers must be allowed the discretion to undertake the management functions of planning and decision making, coordination, and monitoring (Enteman 1993). This necessitates that they assume some formal authority and undertake specific management activities to direct the work of others. Although they may lack the particular knowledge, skills and experience to perform that work themselves, they claim "competence to command" based on a form of general knowledge that is superior to specialisation (Friedson 2001, p. 115).

Managerialism is therefore accompanied by the belief that managers must be "in control" and exercise their authority over the managed (Farnham & Horton 1996, p. 275). Accordingly, the workforce are accountable to managers, rather than the other way around (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010). The assumption is that individual managers can and do make a real difference to organisations and impose their personalities upon them (Enteman 1993).

4.2.6 Private Sector Methods are Superior

Managerialism in the public sector is based on the belief that management practices in the private sector are inherently superior and need to be adopted if the efficiency and performance of public services are to be improved (Farnham & Horton 1996). Indeed, managerialism is said to have "announced the conditions of its own necessity" through an articulation of all that was wrong with previous public sector management in comparison to that of the private sector (Clarke & Newman 1997).

The importation of private sector ideas and techniques is therefore an essential characteristic of managerialism in a public sector context - so much so that its use in support of NPM has been described as a "covert form of privatisation" (Farnham & Horton 1996, p. 263).

4.3   Indicators of Managerialism

Table 1 proposes indicators of what each of these six ideological tenets might look like in relation to changing DPVC appointment practice. Although certain indicators could apply to more than one tenet, in order to avoid repetition they are associated with only one. These indicators provide a mechanism to evaluate the extent to which the study's findings are symptomatic of managerialism (Q.4).

Table 1: Indicators of Managerialism in Relation to the DPVC Appointment Model

Ideological Tenet of Managerialism	Key Indicators for the DPVC Appointment Model
1. **Management is important and a good thing**	a. Recognition of the importance of DPVC posts b. Priority given to the appointment process in order to attract the best candidates c. A more managerial interpretation of the role
2. **Management is a discrete function**	a. DPVCs acting in a full-time management capacity b. Management skills and experience as the main criteria for the role c. Value placed on management training and development
3. **Management is rational and value neutral**	a. Appointment based on merit rather than seniority b. Rational and value neutral appointment decisions
4. **Management is generic and universally applicable**	a. Recognition of management skills and experience gained in any sector b. Appointments open to suitably qualified candidates from other occupational groups
5. **Managers must have the right to manage**	a. DPVC roles given appropriate authority and scope for managerial action b. Emphasis on positional, rather than expert, power
6. **Private sector methods are superior**	a. Adoption of private sector appointment practice b. Valuing of candidates from the private sector or with private sector experience

5.   The Academic Narrative

The remainder of this chapter highlights the way in which the transformation of higher education over the past few decades is perceived to have impacted academic work and the relative status and power of the academic profession. Although the focus is on portraying the effects of managerialism, it also refers to the consequences of NPM reforms and wider

societal changes, such as globalisation. This inclusive approach reflects both the difficulty of separating out the impact of managerialism from these other factors, and the reality that the term managerialism is so loosely and broadly used in the literature, often to encompass elements outside the ideal type presented in 4.2.

The description of contemporary higher education given here does not purport to be a complete picture. It is designed rather to reflect one perspective: the predominant view of the academic community as conveyed in the literature[5] which, not surprisingly perhaps, is almost entirely written by academics rather than professional services managers or other members of the university community. This particular view of change can be seen as an academic misery narrative (Shepherd 2014b) reflecting a prevailing mentality within higher education that is "survivalist: one of endurance rather than enjoyment" (McCaffery 2004).

Firstly, the impact of managerialism on higher education in general, and on academic work and working conditions in particular, is described. Section 6 then addresses the issue of academic status and power in relation to managers – a topic that will be returned to in the analysis of the findings in Chapter Seven.

5.1   Managerialism in Higher Education

Although not technically part of the public sector, universities have nevertheless been subject to the effects of the NPM reform agenda. Since the 1980s, the state has increasingly sought to steer higher education in the way that it has other publically funded services and, as a result, universities have been asked to increase productivity, improve value for money, produce graduates who meet the demands of the employment market and contribute to innovation and economic growth (Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani 2008).

As governments and funding bodies have made a series of direct and indirect attempts to modernise universities, they have also become subject to "the bracing ideological winds" of managerialism (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 25). The introduction of managerialism into higher education has been described as "a substitute for a relationship of trust between government and universities" which are deemed incapable of governing themselves effectively (Trow 1994, p. 11).

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[5] Although based on the academic literature, in my experience this is a portrayal that resonates with views expressed by many academics in the specialist higher education press, on social media and in the corridors and common rooms of universities.

Trow argues that the government promotes a 'hard' form of managerialism, as opposed to the 'soft' form favoured by those senior academics and administrators who acknowledge that more effective management is necessary in order to provide low-cost, high-quality higher education. Hard managerialism, on the other hand, holds that the only way to improve higher education is via the imposition of formal management systems, with outcomes assessed and institutions financially rewarded or punished according to their performance. This apparent loss of faith in the ability of universities to spend public money efficiently has led to the imposition of ever more elaborate management and accounting systems (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010).

Such has been the collective impact of NPM and managerialism that they are said to have "seeped into every 'nook and cranny' of university life" (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 27).   This is reflected in the way that the corporate language of targets and performance criteria has become commonplace (Waring 2013) and the managerial discourse of audit trails and mission statements has become the norm (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010). From an academic perspective, this ideological encroachment is almost universally seen as a negative development.

As is the case with most 'isms', managerialism is more often viewed pejoratively than favourably, and frequently used disparagingly to describe organisations that have too much management and/or too many managers (Klikauer 2013). Both are believed to be true of higher education. The notion that universities needed to be managed was an alien one until the 1980s. However, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, managers and explicit management practices are now deemed to have taken over from collegial self-managed communities of scholars and a *laisser-faire* organisational model (Deem 1998). Indeed, the overt management of universities has grown to such an extent that Deem *et al* wonder if they can "survive the domination of management above all else" (2007, p. 66).

In a relatively short space of time, universities are said to have replaced one approach to, or myth of, management with an entirely different one (Ramsden 1998). The first views management as a trivial activity that any academic is capable of undertaking, but which wastes their time and talents.   This lax and amateur approach to university management has been replaced with an overly assertive style that betrays a lack of trust in people. Ramsden argues that neither is appropriate nor effective.

Though many academics view management as an irrelevant business practice that has no legitimate place in a university, others acknowledge that universities do function more effectively when actively managed and recognise that they may benefit from some support in this area. Nevertheless, the imposition of marketisation and managerialism is seen as disproportionate and harmful.

> *"Like grey squirrels, they were introduced for good reasons but have had unforeseen and damaging consequences"* (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010, p. 19).

Much of the perceived damage is felt to have been caused by the way in which university management is being enacted, i.e. against the prevailing institutional culture by "an aggressive managerial cadre" determined to run higher education as a business (McCaffery 2004, p. 3). In this model, management becomes more important than the primary activities that are being managed (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010) and management experience and skills more important than those of the core business (Klikauer 2013).

Smith and Hussey liken the effects of managerialism in higher education to "a fungal attack" (2010, p. 21) due to what they believe to be the three main tendencies of management: to proliferate, to become focused on their own concerns, and to change what they manage to suit their own purposes rather than those for which they were intended. From this management perspective, successes are due to good management whilst failures must be the fault of workers. This results in a modification of the institution's core activities to make them more manageable and the workforce more accountable. The solution is always more management, normally achieved by strengthening the management hierarchy, the "oppressive burden" of which "by its sheer weight, distorts what it squats upon" (2010, p. 27).

Advocates of managerialism portray it as "realism and common sense" when it is actually ideology "masquerading as a managerial reality" (Vincent 2011, p. 339). Managerialism in a higher education context has been described as having the following characteristics:

- An ethos of enterprise and emphasis on income generation
- Government policy focused on universities meeting socio-economic needs
- More market orientation, with increased competition for resources
- A greater separation of academic work and management activity
- Increased control and regulation of academic work by managers

- A perceived shift in authority from academics to managers and consequent weakening of the professional status of academics.

(Whitchurch & Gordon 2010)

The first three of these perhaps owe more to neoliberalism, but the second three relate closely to the ideological tenets of managerialism described in 4.2. They are addressed in more detail in the following sections.

5.2   Academic Work

NPM reforms have transformed the "organizational habitus" of public service professionals, including the workplace and work culture of academics (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 27). Prior to the massification of higher education, academic labour could be thought of as a pre-Fordist craft activity that did not easily lend itself to routinisation or the possibility of external bureaucratic control. However, in a mass system undergraduate teaching has been transformed from an inner-directed artisan process to an outer-directed and quasi-industrial operation, in a commodification of academic work (Dearlove 2002).

The development of the internet has loosened academics' monopoly over knowledge (Yielder & Codling 2004), while the emergence of the knowledge economy has turned knowledge itself into a commodity and heralded an increasingly instrumental view of higher education as a private, rather than a public, good (Williams, J. 2013, p. 38). This has resulted in an emphasis on vocationally-oriented courses and applied research, an expectation that academics will become more entrepreneurial, and a general narrowing of academic activity and autonomy (Currie & Vidovich 2010).

Autonomy has long been regarded as a core academic value fundamental to academics' professional identity and to the nature of the work that they do (Clark, B. R. 1987). Academics must be free to undertake independent enquiry and be prepared to think the unthinkable. The very essence of research implies that academics must be self-motivated and free to manage themselves. Such an approach was supported in a well-funded elite system but has increasingly come under attack.

The imposition of an audit and assessment culture has placed academic work under scrutiny, challenging the longstanding tradition of self-regulation of academic standards (Henkel 1997). Institutions are now subject to explicit external regulation, including institutional audit and quality assessment of both teaching and research. External

assessment means that the quality of academic work can no longer be assumed, leading to "the death of trust" (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010, p. 314). Rather, it has become subject to explicit performance review by administrators as well as senior academics. This process has been described as a form of visualisation of academic work that makes it accessible to others who may evaluate it from a distance without any specialist knowledge (Bleiklie, Hostaker & Vabo 2000). Thus demystified, academic work can be administered like any other service (Henkel 1997).

Meanwhile, an obsession with accountability and measurement has led to a distortion of academic activity, which is increasingly geared towards assessed outputs (Trow 1994). A tendency to measure what is easy to measure rather than what really matters (Woodfield & Kennie 2008) has arguably resulted in 'countability', i.e. what can be counted, rather than genuine accountability (Currie & Vidovich 2010). This desire to measure and quantify academic endeavour has seen academics become "units of resource in an academic labour process of knowledge production and income generation" (Waring 2013, p. 405), a situation likened to an academic assembly line within a McUniversity (Parker & Jary 1995).

Academic work has also been affected by an increased focus within universities on cost containment and wealth creation. A good academic (and a good department) is now the one that brings in the most research income (Vincent 2011). It is alleged that decisions about what research is to be undertaken may be taken out of academic hands, since "once research becomes primarily a source of income, rather than a source of knowledge, it will be accountants who decide upon its value" (Vincent 2011, p. 27). To utilise Bourdieu's terminology, *homo academicus* is being transformed into *homo economicus* (Carvalho & Santiago 2010).

Higher education has been further commercialised by a process of marketisation, whereby universities are forced to compete with each other for resources and students (Williams, J. 2013). The conceptualisation of student as customer has transformed the academic-student relationship into one of economic exchange (Currie & Vidovich 2010) in which academics become providers who must satisfy the demands of student customers. One example of the extent to which a consumerist mentality has taken hold is the introduction of Key Information Sets (KIS), which are likened to "supermarket food labels" for assisting students to choose from the array of educational products on offer (Waring 2013, p. 398).

Overall, managerialism is perceived to have "posed a direct and continuing threat to professional autonomy" (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 21) and led to a greater degree of cognitive control over academic work (Currie & Vidovich 2010) and consequent degrading of it (Kolsaker 2008). In combination with a market ideology, it is said to transformed higher education into an "illegitimate, huckstering, market mechanism, knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing" and to have driven "a coach and horses through the civilising processes of academic freedom" (Vincent 2011, pp. 336-339). Vincent goes on to suggest that it is to academics' profound shame that they have not even challenged this state of affairs.

5.3   Working Conditions

It is not only academic autonomy that has been eroded. A combination of more students, higher expectations and increased scrutiny mean that academic workloads have also increased and working conditions have deteriorated (Currie & Vidovich 2010).   Moreover, a reduction in job security with the loss of tenure and casualisation of contracts is seen as having brought the academic role closer to that of a salaried, even piece-work, labourer (Halsey 1992).

Institutions are increasingly opting for more differentiated and performance-related contracts: research-only contracts for star performers, teaching-only contracts, and fixed-term contracts. More functional differentiation has led to more insecure and inequitable conditions of employment. The growing ranks of contract staff are relatively poorly paid and many feel they operate "at the margins" of their institution (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 86). Nevertheless, many academic staff are finding themselves having to take a series of such insecure temporary posts. Deem *et al* argue that the development of a range of different contract types has considerably undermined collegiality, such as it exists.

Although some academics have managed to retain a balanced teaching and research portfolio, many now focus on one activity or the other. Others have assumed the emergent role of academic manager. An institutional drive for greater efficiency means there is increased role differentiation and specialisation with the emergence of new fields of activity, such as knowledge transfer and research management. Consequently, the traditional notion of the academic "all-rounder" who teaches, researches and undertakes administrative tasks is coming under threat as the role is "subcontracted out to a growing army of para-academics" (Macfarlane 2011, p. 60). These are "specialist professionals"

either employed to undertake a specific academic role (such as learning technologist) based on a more limited set of skills and responsibilities or all-rounders who effectively focus on just one aspect of academic work (such as research-inactive academics or academic managers). This process is described as an "unbundling" of the academic function, resulting in a "hollowing out" of academic life (Macfarlane 2011, p. 60).

Taken together, these changes to academic work have been viewed as part of a broader trend towards the proletarianisation of intellectual labour (Dearlove 2002). This has been defined as a three-fold reduction in (i) the autonomy of academics' work and the security of their employment, (ii) the market position of academics as a class or occupational group and (iii) the power and advantage in academic work (Halsey 1992). Having addressed the first of these, the latter two are discussed in the following section.

6.   Academic Status and Power

This section examines the academic narrative concerning the perceived loss of academic status and power in relation to managers resulting from managerialism and wider NPM reforms.

6.1   Academic Status

Traditionally dons were gentlemen of status, that is to say they had social and professional standing in relation to others. As gentlemen they had no employer or trade union, received remuneration not a rate of pay, and followed a vocation rather than held a job. Although these "quaint arrangements" have not survived into the modern age, they have nevertheless had a deep influence on the self-conception of many academics (Halsey 1992, p. 126), a group of professionals who have enjoyed a degree of personal autonomy as part of a "self-governing guild" rarely, if ever, found amongst other occupational groups (Halsey & Trow 1971, p. 169).

However, academics have gradually lost status over the years, in part due to the massification of higher education. As the number of academics has increased, so their social scarcity and exceptional status has declined (Ramsden 1998). At the same time, the proportion of non-academic staff within universities has grown and some academics feel

they are being "transformed into a minority and witnessing their own inexorable absorption into a mass of staff" (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010, p. 101).

This decline in status has been keenly felt given that status is such an important concept within academic life, where virtually everything is graded in some way: institutions, department and journals. For example, there is said to be a pecking order between disciplines or specialisms in which physicists are highly regarded, historians are seen as better than geographers, and economists "look down on" sociologists (Becher 1989, p. 56). There is also a constant process of implicit and explicit ranking of individuals. The main currency for the academic is not power or wealth, but reputation: to be held in high esteem by one's colleagues and students and to become somebody of consequence in one's field. Much of the driving force behind what academics do is concerned with the building of a professional reputation (Becher & Kogan 1992) within the "prestige economy" of academia (Blackmore, P. & Kandiko 2012).   Academics are also perceived to have lost public esteem and this too has impacted negatively on morale (Halsey 1992).

The "striking decline" in influence and social standing suffered by academic staff as the result of managerialism can be seen as part of a wider attack on professionals (Blackmore, P. & Blackwell 2003, p. 19). Within a university context, this steady loss of status and remuneration has occurred relative to professional services colleagues (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010). As professional services managers have found their expertise more in demand, this has "moved them a few rungs up the status and salary ladders" and challenged "the traditional position of academics at the top of the university hierarchy" (Fearn 2008).

6.2   Academic-Manager Power Relations

Traditionally, academics have been the most powerful and privileged group within the university community. However, the impact of managerialism and NPM is deemed to have led to a fundamental change in the balance of power between academics and managers, mirroring that experienced in the wider public sector between professional groups and the managers to whom they are "formally and substantively accountable" (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 23).

Whereas it used to be the case that administrative staff were "powerless functionaries" (McInnis 1998, p. 170) who ran around after academics "making sure that everything worked", now they "are less easily corralled into a pen outside the senior common room" (Smith, P. & Hussey 2010, p. 108). This has led to a rising level of tension between two

groups of professionals within universities, with the old guard (academics) losing status and authority in favour of the new pretenders (professional services managers) who are "making strong claims for recognition as legitimate partners in the strategic management of the university" (McInnis 1998, p. 171).

New quality assurance procedures, which mean that academic quality has to be managed, have "catapulted into prominence" a new cadre of university managers (Salter & Tapper 2002, p. 251). These specialist professional services managers are assuming high-profile roles within the university that may impinge directly on the core activities of teaching and research (McInnis 1998). As the scope of their activities has grown, so they have fundamentally disturbed the "traditional work jurisdiction" of academics (Dobson & Conway 2003, p. 126).

An increased emphasis on the institutional management of teaching in a mass system has also raised questions about the role of the academic community in an area where it has traditionally been unchallenged (Lapworth 2004). Individual academics and departments have become subject to change instigated by managers purveying what academics regard as "generic and relatively low level knowledge", and institutions have become sites of conflict over core academic business and the "control of the normative space in which academics live and work" (Henkel 2002a, pp. 139-140).

There has been a proliferation of service units, such as quality assurance and human resources. Although the role of the professional managers who run these units is usually described as supporting academic activity, they may also generate policy. The locus of initiative has thus shifted from academic departments to the centre (Henkel 1998) and academics are now likely to feel they are required to meet the needs of administrators, rather than the other way around (Henkel 2002a).

This growth in the numbers of specialist professional services managers, such as those in planning and marketing, is said to represent "a subtle process of 'colonisation' of higher education" by those who are assumed to have little allegiance to the academic mission (McInnis 1998, p. 171). Not only have these managers begun to intrude upon academic territory, but in carrying out their work, they are often seen as change agents for government policy and the "overt conveyers of corporate management practices into universities" (Dobson & Conway 2003, p. 128).

Managers are described as "quite unapologetic ideological functionaries" who use "purportedly neutral procedures" to both nudge and coerce staff and "redesign academic life to fit an ideologically driven 'strategic vision'" (Vincent 2011, pp. 335-336). This has only served to annoy academics and to alienate the two occupational groups. The relationship between the two is characterised by tension and sometimes antagonism, with each group tending to see the other as more powerful and themselves as marginalised (Halsey 1992). The battle between academics and managers has been described as a struggle between two caricatures: "academic populism" and "new managerialism" each based on "toxic stereotypes" (Watson 2009, p. 77).

The movement towards a more managerial approach and the imposition of an audit culture is said to have given institutions "more power to shape the lives, relationships and self-perceptions of academics" (Henkel 2002a, p. 141). Collegiality in the sense of shared decision making has come under pressure as it is considered too slow and unwieldy (Ramsden 1998) and power has been concentrated at the centre of the institution. The adoption of a more executive management style (Chapter Three) has led to the creation of a "separated out" top-down executive management team exerting increased control over employees who have less autonomy over their work (Dearlove 2002, p. 262).

Management is not only a function of the executive management team, however. Rather, it is occurring at different levels of seniority, from the vice chancellor and DPVCs downwards. Despite their collegial culture, universities are increasingly employing human resource management (HRM) tools and techniques out of a belief that performance must be managed by line managers at all levels and "academics must increasingly dance to the tune of managerially defined performance criteria" (Waring 2013, p. 402). Underlying this approach is "an overt concern to assert the rights of management over the whole of the academic labour process" (Dearlove 1998, p. 68). This overly assertive management style, which betrays a fundamental lack of trust in people, is based on the myth that academics are a lazy bunch who need firm management "to get them out of bed earlier in the morning" (Ramsden 1998, p. 4).

As will become apparent in the following chapter, the move to a more corporate model of management and governance has downplayed the role of rank-and-file academics and, although traditional guild ideas of academic self-governance and autonomy have endured in the academic psyche, in reality there has been a shift of power away from academics' governance of what were once seen as their universities (Dearlove 2002). This has resulted

in the diminution of academic participation, with "governance done to, rather than by academics" (Lapworth 2004, p. 301). To some extent, academics have been complicit in this by choosing to opt out of the running of their universities in order to focus on advancing their own careers through research:

> *"Like rich peasants, they till their own patch but display little desire for collective action and little interest in the larger university, to which they are limply attached, as they grumble about the demands it makes on 'their' time and the problem of parking."* (Dearlove 2002, p. 267)

Academics' disengagement from decision-making processes within their institutions has left them isolated and vulnerable, with managers free to make decisions without necessarily paying due heed to academic concerns. The erosion of traditional academic power structures, such as committees, has also made it increasingly difficult for academics to be heard (Waring 2013) and there has arguably been "a gradual silencing of the academic voice" (Kenney 2009, p. 632).

7.   Summary

This chapter explores the concepts and theories that underpin two of the study's central research concerns: the nature and extent of managerialism in higher education and the perceived shift in academic-manager power relations.

The term managerialism tends to be loosely defined and conflated with that of NPM and neoliberalism, or marketisation. This thesis argues that they are in fact distinct concepts, with managerialism and neoliberalism respectively forming the twin ideological pillars of NPM. The latter, which emanates from economics and public choice theory, is concerned with markets and freedom of choice for consumers. The former, which derives from scientific management theory, is concerned with the principles and practice of management.

NPM is essentially political in nature and refers to a sustained set of reforms from the 1980s onwards designed to transform public services in the image of the private sector. A costly and monolithic welfare state, with its inflexible bureaucracy and self-interested professionals, was to be made more efficient, effective and responsive. Though generally

associated with the ideas of the New Right and seen as instigated by the Thatcher government, NPM's origins are actually more complex than this and the reform agenda began before Thatcher and has continued since, albeit in somewhat different guises.

In an attempt to bring greater conceptual clarity to the notion of managerialism, an ideal type has been developed that identifies its six core ideological tenets. These are normative claims, rather than a description of reality, and thus open to contention. Specific indicators have been derived from each of these claims in relation to the research phenomenon: DPVC appointment practice. These indicators are essential to the study as they provide the means of linking the theoretical model and the empirical data and, hence, of examining the nature and extent of managerialism in practice. In so doing, the study will help to address the dearth of research in this area and provide a much-needed empirical counterbalance to the rhetoric.

As the NPM agenda has impacted upon higher education over the last few decades, the twin forces of neoliberalism and managerialism are deemed to have permeated universities. Together with other factors, such as the huge expansion of the sector, they have transformed the working lives of academics. An academic misery narrative can be discerned which views these developments in an almost universally negative light. Academic work is said to have been commodified and devalued, while the academic-student relationship has been turned into one of provider and consumer. The advent of audit and accountability regimes has subjected both teaching and research to greater external scrutiny and control in what has been perceived as a direct threat to academic autonomy.

The working conditions and remuneration of academics are said to have declined and there has been an unbundling of the traditional all-round academic role. Many more academics now focus on one area of activity and are employed on insecure fixed-term contracts. Accordingly, academics feel they have lost power and status relative to other occupational groups, both inside and outside the university, leading to a loss of morale.

At the same time, professional services managers are becoming increasingly influential with respect to university strategic management and the development of policy that affects academic work. A new breed of specialist professional services manager, often recruited from outside the sector, is making claims for professional recognition. Some have argued

that these managers are colonising university management. This has become a source of tension, if not antagonism.

Heavy-handed, centralised top-down management is also the subject of strident criticism. This illustrates the fact that the criticism of management in the academic narrative encompasses both that enacted by professional services *and* academic managers, with little or no clear differentiation between the two.

As some of the quotations in this chapter testify, there is little place for subtlety or nuance in this occasionally hyperbolic misery narrative. The discourse is characterised by opinion and conjecture and is typically the product of armchair theorising rather than empirical research. There is thus an urgent need to subject this discourse to critical empirical examination in the way proposed by this study with respect to the specific case of changing DPVC appointment practice.

The following chapter continues to set the scene for the research by exploring its historical and empirical context, focusing on the impact of managerialism and the wider NPM agenda on university governance and management. In particular, it will trace the development of the executive management team and explore how the profile of its members has evolved over time.

Chapter Three

Change and Continuity in University Management

1.   Introduction

While Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework for the study, this chapter provides historical and empirical context essential to an understanding of the findings and subsequent analysis. Building upon the earlier exposition of the ideological underpinnings of new public management (NPM), Chapter Three examines the impact of this reform agenda upon university governance and management. Against this background, it describes the emergence of the executive management team and reviews what is known about executive team members, especially DPVCs. This approach of addressing the research topic from the outside in is illustrated by Figure 5.

Figure 5: Approach to Locating the Research Phenomenon in Context
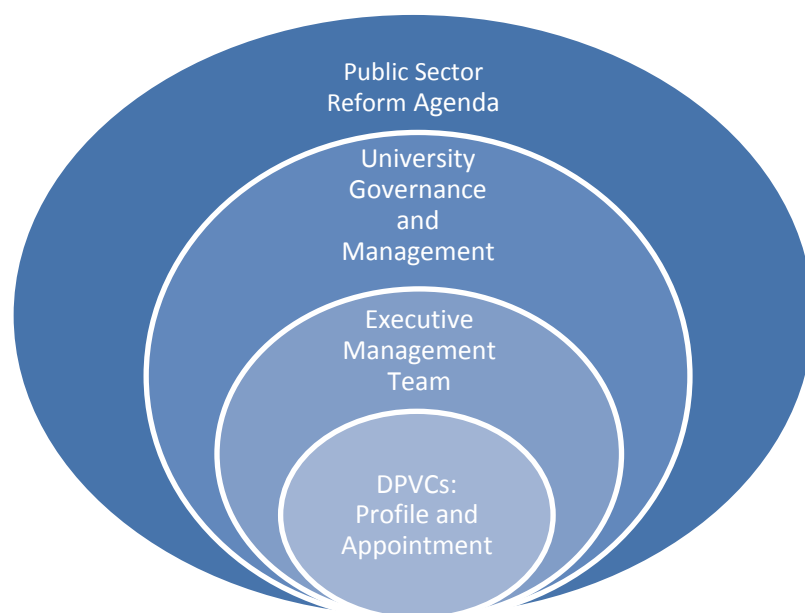
The first part of the chapter provides the historical context for changing DPVC appointment models and identifies the key themes which underpin this research. It begins by outlining how university governance arrangements have changed over time in response to government policy and how this has affected the internal locus of power. It then examines the evolution that has taken place within universities from administration to strategic management and describes the resulting changes to internal management arrangements, including the emergence of the executive management team. In so doing, it draws upon the wider management and sociology of education literatures as well as that from higher education policy and management.

Having examined the transformation of university management, the second half of the chapter situates the study in its immediate empirical context. Specifically, it reviews existing research on the socio-demographic profile of the most senior academic managers, i.e. vice chancellors and DPVCs, their professional background and career paths into the job. Empirical work on the appointment of vice chancellors and DPVCs is then summarised, including selection criteria and procedures. In reviewing what is known, gaps in the knowledge to be addressed by this study are also identified.

For ease of reference a timeline of key events, both external and within higher education, impacting upon university governance and management since the 1963 Robbins Report is provided in Table 2.

2.   University Governance

Universities in the UK are autonomous institutions able to regulate their own affairs within the powers granted to them by the instrument of their incorporation: act of parliament or royal charter. This instrument defines the institution's powers and basic structures of governance, including major committees and principal officers. By the end of the nineteenth century the emerging institutions outside Oxbridge demonstrated the fundamental governance features that still characterise pre-1992 higher education institutions today. These are the senate, the principal academic body; a large, and largely inert, representative body known as the court; and a smaller governing body, or council, with a lay majority.

Table 2: Timeline of Key Events Impacting University Governance and Management

Year	External Environment	Higher Education
1963		*Robbins Report* recommended the expansion of the sector
1970s	Oil crisis and inflation boom	
1979	Election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government; Efficiency Unit established	
1981		*Public Expenditure White Paper* brought in 15% cuts to higher education funding
1983	*Griffiths Report* introduced general management to the NHS	Tenure abolished in pre-1992 universities
1985		*Jarratt Review* of university efficiency, widely perceived as heralding a more managerial approach
1988		*Education Reform Act* freed polytechnics from local authority control and established contractual basis for funding
1989		Universities Funding Council replaced the University Grants Committee
1992	*Cadbury Report* on corporate governance	*Further and Higher Education Act* ended the binary divide by giving polytechnics university status
1993		Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Wales and Scotland established
1994		Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) published guide on university governance
1995	*Greenbury Report* on directors' remuneration	
1996		*Second Nolan Report* into standards in not-for-profit institutions, including higher and further education institutions
1997		*Dearing Review* of higher education, including governance arrangements
1998	*Hampel Report* on corporate governance	
2003	*Higgs Report* on the role and effectiveness of non-executive board directors	*Lambert Review* of university governance from a business collaboration perspective
2004		Leadership Foundation for Higher Education established
2006		£3k top-up fees introduced
2010		*Browne Review* of student funding and finance
2012		Introduction of £9k variable tuition fees payable via student loans

The precise nature of the university governance model – and with it the relative power of the key internal constituencies, i.e. the governing body, the executive and the academic community - has evolved over time in response to the prevailing policy environment. Three main governance phases or models can be identified: civic, consensual and corporate.

2.1   Changing Models of Governance

Under the civic governance model of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the council was the dominant force in higher education governance – its authority in large part resulting from the ability of lay members[6] to raise money on behalf of their institution (Scott 1995). Over time, however, as the state took over the funding of universities and funds became more plentiful and secure[7], the power of the council weakened and the academic community became more influential. Senates took over as policy initiating bodies and councils became largely reactive, rubber-stamping bodies. The vice chancellor was first among equals and subject to academic constraint (Halsey & Trow 1971).

This was the era of donnish dominion (Halsey 1992) in which academic self-management and collegiality were the order of the day and a consensual model of governance became the norm (Shattock 2002). The consensual model was characterised by an elaborate committee structure, widespread consultation and high levels of academic staff involvement. In their seminal work, *Power and Authority in British Universities*, Moodie and Eustace summed up the prevailing view that universities should be governed by academics:

> *"The supreme authority, providing that it is exercised in ways responsive to others, must therefore continue to rest with academics for no one else seems sufficiently qualified to regulate the public affairs of scholars."*
> *(*Moodie & Eustace 1974, p. 233*)*

For some academics, in hindsight at least, this represents a golden age or liberal university ideal: a community of scholars that organised its own affairs independent of scrutiny and to which other players functioned merely "as a supporting cast to the central academic

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[6] These were usually local political and commercial elites, including the founders of the civic institutions, such as the Palmers in Reading and Chamberlain in Birmingham (Scott 1995).
[7] The University Grants Committee (UGC) was established in 1919 to administer university recurrent grants. By 1945, universities were almost completely dependent on state money (Tapper & Salter 1995).

performance" (Salter & Tapper 2002, pp. 247-248). This consensual governance model was neither particularly democratic nor accountable. Although it was based on the concept of collegiality, which has at its core the principle that decisions should be arrived at by discussion and debate with the full participation of peers (Bryman 2007), this was never as widespread nor inclusive as claimed (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007). Rather, it was an elite collegiality centred around a charismatic vice chancellor and the professoriate (Scott 1995), with "autocratic power commonly exerted by professorial 'barons'" (Taylor, J. 2006, p. 252). Around the time of the student revolts in the late 1960s, Scott (1995) discerns a movement towards a more democratic governance phase in which rank-and-file academics as well as students were given more of a voice and the hierarchical power of professors and other senior staff was reduced. This movement was short lived, however.

Within a decade, the pendulum of governance influence began to swing back towards the council. The 1981 financial crisis and resulting drastic cuts to higher education funding, necessitating as they did difficult resourcing decisions, provided the first real challenge to academic self-governance (Shattock 2012). Meanwhile, as described in the previous chapter, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government was beginning to demand greater effectiveness, value for money and accountability from its public services. Following a series of 'scrutinies' of the civil service undertaken by the government's Efficiency Unit under the leadership of Sir Derek Rayner, Joint Managing Director of Marks and Spencer, the government turned its attention to higher education which had failed to convince of "its undisputed claim to do good by doing what academics wanted to do" (Becher & Kogan 1992, p. 179).

The Jarratt Review (1985), commissioned by Sir Keith Joseph, then Secretary of State for Education and Science, was the first manifestation of the government's efforts to improve the efficiency of universities by effecting changes in their institutional governance. The Review was led by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (now Universities UK) under an independent chairman, Sir Alex Jarratt, Chairman of Reed International and Chancellor of the University of Birmingham.

Jarratt was critical of collegial self-government and challenged the dominance of the senate, seeing academic participation in governance as a barrier to necessary change.

> *"The relative decline in the influence exercised by Councils has increased the potential for Senate to resist change and to exercise a national conservatism.*

Vice-Chancellors and university administrators have in the past been trained to believe that harmony between the two bodies should have a very high priority in a university. It may well be, however, that a degree of tension between them is necessary in the circumstances now facing universities, and can be creative and beneficial in the long term. That can only happen if Councils assert themselves." (CVCP 1985, p. 24)

The Report's call for council members to assert their responsibilities for strategy, planning and resource allocation was an attempt to re-balance power between council and senate[8]. As such, it represents an important first step in the move from a consensual to a more corporate style of governance.

Within the next few years, events both inside and outside higher education turned governance into a hot political issue, increasing the pressure for change. In the private sector a series of high-profile governance failures and sleaze allegations, notably the Robert Maxwell fiasco[9], led to the commissioning of the Cadbury (1992) and Hampel (1998) Reports. These were primarily concerned with safeguarding financial probity and their main recommendations were the separation of the managing director role from the chairmanship of the board, and the strengthening of the role of non-executive directors. The development of a common understanding of the term corporate governance is generally agreed to have emanated from the Cadbury Report (1992), which defines it as the system by which organisations are directed and controlled.

Higher education, meanwhile, experienced its own management and governance failures, including at Huddersfield and Portsmouth Universities. At Huddersfield, a staff referendum in June 1994 produced an overwhelming vote of no confidence in the council when staff and students ceased to be members, and the vice chancellor subsequently stepped down with what was considered an excessive severance package. Later that year at Portsmouth there was another staff vote of no confidence, this time in the vice chancellor, who later resigned following an investigation into his expenses (Dearlove 1998).

These incidents led to a loss of confidence by government in university governance arrangements and precipitated a series of initiatives. Firstly, the Higher Education Funding

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[8] Jarratt also made significant recommendations on university management which are discussed in Section 3.
[9] Maxwell's company was found to have drawn on employee pension funds in order to finance its activities.

Council for England investigated the severance packages. Then the Department for Education requested the Committee of University Chairmen (now Committee of University Chairs) to consider the issues raised by the Huddersfield breakdown in governance and produce advice for the sector. As a result, the Committee issued its first substantial guide on governance for members of higher education governing bodies, covering issues such as their legal responsibilities and relationship to university officers (CUC 1994).

In addition, the Nolan Committee (1996), which had been commissioned to make recommendations on appropriate standards in public life, was asked to extend its remit to not-for-profit organisations, including higher and further education. Nolan found no evidence of substantial misconduct in university governance and gave the sector a broadly clean bill of health[10]:

> *"The firm view of our witnesses and those who wrote to us was that standards of*
> *conduct in higher and further education were generally very good."*
> (Nolan 1996, p. 23).

Despite this, the governance of universities remained a government concern and was addressed again in the subsequent Dearing (NCIHE 1997) and Lambert (2003) Reviews.

Dearing was more critical of higher education governance than Nolan (Dearlove 2002). He attempted to bring pre-1992 universities into line with the post-1992 governance model in which the power of the academic board[11] is limited. Dearing saw the governing body's responsibilities as extending well beyond financial oversight to cover all aspects of institutional performance, including academic activities (Shattock 2012). He recommended confirmation of the council as the university's ultimate decision-making body and spelt out the need for governors to steer institutions in the right strategic direction at a time of profound and rapid change. Dearing further proposed a reduction in the size of governing bodies to a maximum of 25, age and term limits for governors, and the introduction of effectiveness reviews so that councils could assess their own performance (NCIHE 1997).

Lambert was a business man with a clear preference for corporate-style governance. He took the view that, although universities had already made significant improvements in this area, as they expanded their collaborative activity with industry they needed to renew their

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[10] Nolan (1996) made some limited recommendations concerning the appointment of governors on merit, the right of students to independent appeal, the need for greater openness and the freedom to whistle blow.

[11] The academic board is the most senior academic-related committee in a post-1992 university.

efforts "to ensure that both management and governance were fit for modern times" (2003, p. 93). Like Dearing before him, Lambert was prescriptive about the size of the governing body, setting an upper limit of 25 members, due to his belief that larger councils are less effective, less well attended and less conducive to constructive debate. He further specified that there should be a lay majority who could bring valuable technical and professional expertise, the capacity for effective environmental scanning and the ability to act as critical friend to the university by constructively challenging the executive. Lambert also recommended that councils conduct regular effectiveness reviews and adopt a Code of Governance. His draft Code[12] clarifies the role of council as the university's pre-eminent decision-making body and assigns it responsibility for strategic and financial management and performance monitoring.

The publication of the Dearing and Lambert Reports marks the high point of government efforts to put pressure on universities to move away from a consensual model of governance in favour of a corporate one focused around the formal powers of the governing body. Universities have responded by developing a more systematic approach to governor training and governance procedures, measures which are considered to have "greatly improved the formal professionalism with which governing bodies approach their task" and made improprieties less likely (Shattock 2012, p. 59).

2.2   Limitations of the Corporate Model

The pre-eminence of the council in determining strategy, legal compliance and the appropriate use of government funds is now assumed in the legal and regulatory framework under which pre-1992 universities operate (Lapworth 2004). However, although councils may see themselves as exercising a larger role in these areas, it is debatable whether there has actually been a "revival of lay power" (Scott 1995, p. 66), with councils asserting themselves in the way Jarratt had intended. This may be due in part to the inherent limitations of the corporate governance model and question marks over its appropriateness in a university context.

The recent banking crisis has illustrated the inability of some corporate boards to exercise adequate control over the conduct of their organisations (Brown 2011). These failures betrayed board members' lack of detailed understanding of the business and an inability or unwillingness to hold to account a headstrong chief executive (Shattock 2013). Events such

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[12] Lambert includes a draft Code of Governance intended to provide a starting point from which the sector could develop its own version.

as these have cast serious doubt on the idea that the corporate model of governance represents good practice or is automatically superior to traditional forms of university governance.

Empirical research in the private sector suggests that non-executive directors sometimes lack the required resources, qualities and independence from management:

> *"Although in theory all directors are equal, it can be difficult for non-executive … directors to challenge autocratic or charismatic leaders, or to insist on raising topics not on the agenda set by the chairman."* (Sternberg 2004, p. 86)

In the public sector, meanwhile, Ashburner's studies of NHS board meetings reveal that non-executive directors have an inbuilt disadvantage due to their lack of time and involvement with the institution compared with the executive. Hence they too often play a purely rubber-stamping role when executives bring decisions to the board for approval. This leads her to conclude that the use of governing bodies in the public sector is a "variable and unproven model of corporate governance" (Ashburner 1977, p. 281).

In a university context, lay members of council are by definition outsiders and thus unlikely to be as well informed about the university as the executive. This limits both their power and effectiveness as, without detailed knowledge, effective and authoritative intervention is not possible (Moodie & Eustace 1974). Recent rapid changes to higher education funding and fees regimes and accountability frameworks mean that specialist technical knowledge is at a premium. As a result, lay council members are heavily dependent upon the recommendations of their vice chancellors on key areas of strategy, such as the setting of tuition fees (Shattock 2013).

Council members, who typically meet only four or five times a year and are isolated from the core business of the university, "have too often become simply reactive to the proposals of their executives and much less able to play the role of the 'critical friend'" (Shattock 2013, p. 223). So, although there is potentially great value in having the external perspective which lay members bring to a council, it may perhaps be unrealistic to expect them to exercise proper control over university activity (Brown 2011). This is exemplified

by the recent financial crisis at London Metropolitan University[13], precipitated by years of inaccurate student number returns.

Councils may also be unable to hold their executives to account effectively (Lapworth 2004). One example of this, which resonates with recent experience in the banking sector, is the spiralling level of vice chancellors' salaries (Shattock 2012). Scott has even suggested that some governing bodies are in the pockets of their executives (2002) and, quoted in a recent *Times Higher Education* article, blamed the recent spate of vice chancellor exits on councils acting "too late and in panic" (Morgan 2014).

Councils may thus be failing to assert themselves, not against the powerful senate which was a feature of the earlier consensual governance model, but rather against an increasingly powerful executive – a phenomenon explored in the following section.

3.   From Administration to Management

As governance models have changed, so has university management. In the early days of the civic governance model, universities were small and management was minimal "with the lightest of touches", but by the time of the consensual model there was a need to upgrade managerial capacity (Scott 1995, pp. 63-64). Institutions had grown, resources needed to be managed and plans submitted. Accordingly, a larger and more sophisticated civil service-style administration developed, comprising generalist administrators acting in a neutral support role to the academic community. Two parallel, yet unequal, academic and administrative cultures emerged with academics in control and administrators "kept firmly in their place as servants of academic committees" (Dearlove 1998, p. 68).

Over time, however, in response to a rapidly changing higher education environment, passive administration began to give way to active management.

3.1   The Jarratt Effect

The Jarratt Review (1985) is generally seen as a significant turning point in the managerialisation of universities. However, the need for better management had already been recognised by some commentators who saw the Review as an opportunity:

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[13] The University was asked to repay an unprecedented £36.5 million to the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

> *"The study should be used to strengthen the role of management as respected activities within universities. Universities will not be able to muddle through the 1990s by continuing to regard management as some minimalist function to be left to administrators who are firmly subservient to their academic masters and possibly to a few senior academics who have run out of research steam. Far from threatening the academic integrity of universities stronger management would provide it with vital underpinning."* (THES 1984, p. 40)

Jarratt found that vice chancellors had virtually no formal constitutional powers and instead relied on influence and persuasion. Accordingly, managerial style and the interpretation of the vice chancellor role varied significantly from institution to institution. Jarratt judged these arrangements inadequate to the management challenge facing universities and proposed that councils should strengthen the role and authority of their vice chancellor as chief executive as well as academic leader. His other recommendations on university management[14] were to:

- Develop institutional plans and performance indicators

- Establish a central planning and resources committee

- Streamline the committee structure

- Delegate budgetary responsibilities to departments

- Introduce staff development and appraisal mechanisms

- Appoint, rather than elect, heads of department and assign them management duties and responsibilities. (CVCP 1985)

Whilst, taken together these proposals represent a more business-like or corporate approach to higher education management than hitherto, this was no slavish imposition of business practice or "an industrial solution" (Richmond 1986, p. 4) onto universities, as sometimes alleged at the time. In fact, the majority of committee members worked in higher education or had direct involvement in it as university chancellors. As a result the Report is broadly sympathetic to, and knowledgeable about, higher education, recognising its importance to the country. It shows an awareness of the complexity and uniqueness of universities as organisations and the complicating factors that make them difficult to manage, notably disciplinary loyalties, tenure and academic self-governance.

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[14] The Report's recommendations on governance are discussed in 2.1.

Furthermore, the Committee recognised the difficult economic and political situation that universities were in at the time and many of its recommendations were actually aimed at the government, Universities Funding Council and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals rather than the universities. Overall, contrary to government expectation and immediate media reaction (Goffin 1988), the Report was not particularly critical of the way universities were managed and did not find significant inefficiencies. As the Leader article in the *Times Higher Education Supplement*[15] of 5th April remarked:

> *"…if the Jarratt exercise was to be regarded as a test, the universities under scrutiny have passed comfortably."* (THES 1985)

Although the Committee proposed improvements to management structures and procedures, especially strategic planning and resource management, these were to be in support of a university's academic mission with management as "the servant, not the master" (CVCP 1985, p. 34). Furthermore, the Report states that change should be sensitive to the academic aims of a university and the need to involve academic staff. Nevertheless, in an unwelcome message for many academics, Jarratt was clear that the university as a whole should take precedence over the needs and wishes of the individual.

> *"We stress that in our view universities are first and foremost corporate enterprises to which subsidiary units and individual academics are responsible and accountable"* (CVCP 1985, p. 22)

Scott suggests that the importance of the Review may have been overstated since it was merely the aggregation of a number of detailed enquiries into different aspects of university management and, as such, "a limited exercise" (1995, p. 65). It is true that from today's perspective Jarratt's recommendations do not seem particularly remarkable or novel, itself a reflection of just how far university management has evolved during the intervening decades.

Nevertheless, the Jarratt Report is generally regarded as a watershed moment in higher education management which ushered in a new managerial approach that is since perceived to have permeated universities (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007). Henkel describes the Report as "a strong call for universities to be managed" (2002b, p. 30) as evidenced, for example, by the language it employs: terminology such as 'corporate enterprise', 'chief

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[15] This publication is now entitled *Times Higher Education*.

executive' and 'performance indicators' had not been used previously in a higher education context.

In my view the Report is highly significant, though as much for symbolic as practical reasons. Although its publication did stimulate changes to universities' internal management arrangements - not least because the following years' funding settlement was contingent on the implementation of a Programme of Action to improve management practices (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007) - it did not spark an overnight management revolution. This was mainly because, as noted by some commentators at the time, the Report's findings provide evidence of the extent to which university management had *already* changed following the expansion of the sector and the financial constraints of the early 1980s (THES 1985). Hence, the universities under scrutiny easily passed the Jarratt test.

The Report's symbolic importance lies firstly in its assertion of the need for good management and for those in senior academic positions, such as deans and DPVCs, to act as managers as well as academic leaders. In this sense, it heavily influenced subsequent discourse about university management (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). Secondly, in championing the need for top-down management, it challenged both the culture of donnish dominion and what was perceived to be an outdated and inefficient civil service administrative model (Smith, D. & Adams 2008). Thirdly, the commissioning of the Report can be seen as evidence of the government's view that universities were not well managed. One of the committee members (Richmond 1986) spoke of an assumption at the outset of the Review that universities were both mismanaged and inefficient and that significant savings would be made, which turned out not to be the case. A perception of "leadership deficit" (Watson 2008, p. 11) was therefore already in evidence.

This deficit view of higher education management and leadership has been a recurring policy theme (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2006), with universities seen as under-managed and run like gentlemen's clubs by self-serving academics (Scott 2002). Subsequent government reports and White Papers have carried a consistent message that universities need to increase efficiency, find new sources of income and improve performance (Middlehurst 2004). For example, the White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*, stated that although some universities were well managed, others had been "propped up rather than turned around" (DES 2003, p. 80). In the same year Lambert described universities as bureaucratic and risk averse and noted that the government "does not seem to have

enough confidence in the way that universities run themselves to give them extra funding without strings attached" (2003, p. 102). The establishment of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in 2004 and various initiatives by the Higher Education Funding Council to promote good leadership, governance and management practice all testify to government determination to improve the way universities are run (Taylor, J. 2006).

Irrespective of government pressure, however, the rapid growth in the size and complexity of the higher education environment over the last few decades necessitated new forms of governance and management (Taylor, J. 2006). In order to survive and flourish in an increasingly competitive global market and during a time of severe financial constraint, universities felt the need to take an increasingly professional approach to management. This can be characterised as a historical progression from university administration to management, and then to a more proactive strategic management (Shattock 2000).

> *"In this new corporate culture strategic and executive management replaces administration as the dominant mode."* (Scott 1995, p. 69)

As a result, higher education management is now unrecognisable from that of forty years ago (Lauwerys 2002), with consequences both for managers and the managed (Taylor, J. 2006). Two major areas of change are the professionalisation of the administration and the emergence of the executive management team. These are addressed in turn in the following sections.

3.2   Professionalisation of the Administration

The traditional civil service model of administration that had characterised the consensual governance phase (2.1) was one in which administrators had been expected to operate in a subservient role to the academic community (Chapter Two, 6.2) and, except for the most senior post holders, "to be seen and not heard at formal meetings and committees" (Lauwerys 2002, p. 94). From the 1980s onwards, however, this model was increasingly seen as inadequate.

Jarratt found that administrators were serving their institutions well but identified further scope for the delegation of managerial responsibility in non-academic areas (CVCP 1985). One of the Committee members, the then Registrar at the University of Sussex, subsequently called for administrators to stop being so humble and self-effacing and step into the limelight and accept responsibility for institutional management (Lockwood 1986).

In Lockwood's view, administrators were the only people qualified to implement Jarratt's recommendations. Others questioned whether universities would ever allow their administrators management powers similar to those being assumed by senior civil servants as part of the government's efficiency agenda (Fielding 1986).

However, the massive expansion in the scale and complexity of university operations since the 1980s made change inevitable. There was a huge increase in student numbers and a consequent growth in financial turnover and the size of the physical estate. New third-stream and other income generation activities were taken on, whilst the manifold external demands of accountability and compliance necessitated the delivery of completely new administrative functions, including strategic planning and quality assurance. The introduction of new funding and fees regimes and the construction of students as consumers (Williams, J. 2011), with its resultant focus on improving the student experience, further added to the administrative burden.   Against this background, the *status quo* was no longer good enough and more professional management was required (Taylor, J. 2006). This, in turn, meant that universities needed managers as well as generalist administrators. Accordingly, "new professionals" emerged with new forms of expertise (Whitchurch 2008a, p. 76) as experienced and high-level specialist managers, such as those in marketing or estates, were recruited from outside the sector on attractive salaries (Lauwerys 2008).

This new-look administration – or professional services as they have increasingly come to be known – are operating in a support and advisory role to the executive rather than in "docile" service of the academic community (Scott 1995, p. 64). As such, they have come to occupy the middle ground between academic managers and rank-and-file academic staff (Whitchurch 2008a). This is not always a happy place to be. If professional services managers provide support to departments, they may be seen as "going native" by those at the centre; however, if they "pursue a corporate line" they may be seen by academics as prioritising managerial concerns (Whitchurch 2007, p. 56). Viewed as the 'administration' they are unwanted bureaucrats, whilst viewed as 'management' they are the agents of managerialism (Chapter Two, 6.2). They are damned either way since both bureaucrats and managers tend to be resented by academics, not least because both bureaucracy and management have negative connotations as something one group does to another (Whitchurch 2008a).

The "managerial revolution" in higher education can be presented as a rational response to external pressures (Salter & Tapper 2002, p. 251) and a necessary transition from a more

rule-oriented to a more enterprising and service-oriented culture (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling 2008b, Gornitzka & Larsen 2004). However, the professionalisation of the administration was also driven by administrators and managers themselves (Scott 1995) and, as the prevailing academic narrative reveals, has not been uncontentious . As noted in the previous chapter, although most academics did not want to take on an expanded administrative role, they did not necessarily support another group doing so, particularly when it entailed real influence over institutional management which, under the consensual governance model, had been their sole preserve (Dobson & Conway 2003, p. 126).

Whilst some still see a clear delineation between academics and managers, characterised by tension and sometimes antagonism (Halsey 1992), others argue that the traditional binary divide between academic and administrative domains is now becoming blurred and a "third space" at the intersection of the two is emerging (Whitchurch 2008c, p. 378). Whitchurch has identified new perimeter roles in this third space for both professional managers and academic staff, including those around widening participation, study skills and regional partnerships. She argues that individuals may work back and forth across these boundaries, creating new functional spaces, knowledge and relationships and envisages a future in which professional and academic identities increasingly coalesce "to create a new, generic form of *third space* professional" (Whitchurch 2008c, p. 387). This study examines whether any such blurring of academic-management boundaries may be occurring at DPVC level.

3.3   The Rise of the Executive

In most universities, the adoption of a more strategic approach to university management has resulted in a number of structural changes along the lines of those proposed by Jarratt, notably the streamlining of the committee system, the devolution of budgets and creation of fewer larger academic units, such as faculties or schools (Middlehurst 2004). Senior management structures have also been reframed (Woodfield & Kennie 2007) with the replacement of the "diarchy" of the vice chancellor and registrar by a small executive management team operating "akin to cabinet government" (Henkel 2002b, p. 32).

The emergence of executive management teams is a relatively recent phenomenon: Jarratt made no reference to them in 1985, suggesting that the concept either did not exist or was not recognised as such at the time. A few years later, executive teams were being created (Henkel 1997), though they were still comparatively new in pre-1992 universities (Scott

1995). It is likely that, after the end of the binary divide, pre-1992 university vice chancellors were influenced by the more top-down executive model of the former polytechnics (Shattock 2012) since, within a decade Lambert noted that many "well run" universities were "developing strong executive management structures" with small, cohesive cabinet-style management teams (2003, pp. 93-94). Almost thirty years after Jarratt, all pre-1992 universities in the study population for this research have some form of executive management team – a good example of the way in which the management approaches of pre- and post-1992 institutions have become more similar (Deem 1998).

These teams emerged as a support mechanism for vice chancellors (Henkel 2002b). As the range and complexity of university management issues grew and become too much for one person to deal with, so executive management teams began to take over many of the responsibilities previously exercised by the head of institution. Nevertheless, vice chancellors remained firmly in charge and are still the biggest single influence on the nature and composition of the executive team (Lauwerys 2008). Each vice chancellor shapes his or her own team, determining its membership and mode of operation (Woodfield & Kennie 2008, p. 411). Accordingly, their size and function varies from institution to institution (Middlehurst 1993).

Although the executive management team may take different forms, there is normally a core team consisting of the vice chancellor, DPVCs, registrar and director of finance[16] (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a). Most institutions have a two-tier system whereby this core team is supported by a wider senior management team, typically including deans and/or heads of department and directors of professional services (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling 2008a). The name of the core team usually provides a good indicator of its status and degree of influence, for example, whether it is an 'advisory' group or a more formally constituted 'board', though apparent informality may belie a team's true scope and authority (Woodfield & Kennie 2008). As a rule, this team is the key decision-making body for the institution as a whole (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling 2008a).

The emergence of executive management teams is a manifestation of the strengthening of the executive, or "steering core" (Clark, B. R. 2007), of the university. Under Mintzberg's (1993) conception of the university as professional bureaucracy, the executive management team as its strategic apex becomes the most important part of the

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[16] This is the definition of an executive management team used in this thesis (Chapter One, Section 3).

organisation. This suggests a movement away from the collegium organisational cultural model, where the operating core of academics dominate, towards a corporate model in which the executive is more powerful (McNay 1999).

Further evidence of the strengthening of the steering core can be seen within the team itself, whose members have increasingly well-defined responsibilities (Henkel 1997). Firstly, as originally proposed by Jarratt, there has been an expansion of the role of vice chancellor as chief executive and chief accounting officer. Pre-1992 vice chancellors have come to resemble more closely their counterparts in post-1992 institutions, who already had real executive authority (Shattock 1999). By the time of the Lambert Report (2003) their role was seen as similar to that of a chief executive in the private sector.

Secondly, a full-time and sometimes permanent DVC post has been created in some institutions to act as a formal deputy to the vice chancellor (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a). This is particularly true of those universities where the vice chancellor has a significant external relations or fundraising brief. Indeed, a few institutions have recently adopted a president-provost model, typical of that found in the United States. DVCs normally work closely with the vice chancellor in a more executive capacity, to a different brief and with a more obviously senior status to PVCs in a "stretched" second management tier (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, p. 2)[17].

Thirdly, there has been a strengthening of the DPVC cohort. Numbers have grown significantly over the years (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007) and there is a movement towards appointing full-time DPVCs with longer periods of tenure (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a). Increasingly, pre-1992 universities are starting to move away from the traditional internal fixed-term DPVC secondment model in favour of appointing some or all of their DPVCs via external open competition (Shepherd 2011). DPVC portfolios are being extended outside of traditional teaching and research areas (Middlehurst 2004) and different variants of the DPVC role are beginning to emerge (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007).

The one executive team post that has arguably weakened in influence is that of the registrar, who traditionally sits at the head of a unitary administration. In some cases, elements of the registrar's responsibilities have now been subsumed into a DVC or provost role or split across DPVC portfolios (Middlehurst 2013). In at least one pre-1992

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[17] In some cases, the authors suggest there may even be a split into two distinct management tiers with the DVC at the second and PVCs at the third tier (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007).

institution[18], the post has disappeared completely. And, although the increasingly influential director of finance is now routinely a member of the core executive management team, there is relatively little evidence of other professional services directors as full members (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a), though they are usually part of a wider senior management team.

The rise of the executive team is not unproblematic. Arguably, the executive are becoming more powerful and less effectively scrutinised, with the governing body effectively rubber-stamping their strategic decisions (Waring 2013). They are also less accountable to the wider academic community, as a result of which "the academic voice has become distanced from central institutional policy debate" (Shattock 2013, p. 230). Some academics have expressed concerns about the small numbers of people involved in strategic decision making and the legitimacy of executive teams in relation to the committee system (Middlehurst 1993). The fitness for purpose of an executive, or corporate, model of management in a university context has also been questioned:

> *"The persistent tendency to equate collegial styles of leadership and management with ineffectiveness and corporate styles of strong top-down decision making with effectiveness misunderstands the cultural attributes of the university and how to get the best from its practices."* (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, p. 45)

As discussed in Chapter Two, executive management teams are considered to have adopted an increasingly directive leadership style (Pilbeam 2009), with a new cadre of externally appointed DPVCs taking on the role of transmitting policy injunctions downwards, rather than policy recommendations upwards (Shattock 2013). These teams are now performing functions traditionally undertaken within faculties and they are supported in this by managers and administrative staff who "professionalise and bureaucratise" the team's activity (Shattock 2013, p. 228).

Accordingly, an intermediary structure has developed between the team and the wider academic community in the form of various academic support units, such as research and quality assurance offices (Henkel 2002b) and the gap is widening between members of the team and rank-and-file academics, or the "academic manager" and the "managed academic" (Winter 2009, p. 121).

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[18] The University of Kent.

4.   Profile of Academic Managers

This section examines the implications of this changed management landscape for those holding the most senior academic management roles. Specifically, it summarises what is known about their socio-demographic profile and how this has changed (or not) over time. The review is located primarily within the higher education management literature, but also makes reference to the sociological literature of elites and the professions.

Given the paucity of empirical research to date on DPVCs, much of the focus of this and the remaining sections in this chapter is on vice chancellors. To a large extent vice chancellors are utilised as a proxy for DPVCs since the former are largely drawn from the DPVC ranks and their profile can therefore be assumed to reflect that of the DPVC community. Moreover, as will become apparent in Chapter Five, appointment practice for vice chancellors tends to set the pattern for what happens at DPVC level.

4.1   Vice Chancellors

The literature provides a virtually continuous socio-demographic profile of university vice chancellors since the 1930s[19], albeit limited in scope by a reliance on publically available data (mainly taken from *Who's Who*, *Times Higher Education* and various higher education directories and handbooks) as well as the particular interest of the researchers. Earlier studies are located within the literature of elites and primarily concerned with vice chancellors' social and educational background.

Prompted by the increasingly prominent role universities were occupying in society following the 1960s' expansion of the sector, Collinson and Millen (1969) examined the social profile of vice chancellors, Oxbridge college principals and university chancellors between 1935 and 1967. Data on club membership, honours and titles and education revealed that, although an Oxbridge education was still common amongst vice chancellors[20], as a group they did not display anything close to the pattern of establishment membership exhibited by university chancellors. Accordingly, Collinson and Millen conclude that vice chancellors "are coming to be recruited more widely" (1969, p. 107).

Szreter (1979) built upon these findings in his two studies of the 54 members of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, first in the academic year 1966/7 and then a

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[19] And back to the 1880s in regard to educational background (Perkin 1978-9).
[20] The authors do acknowledge, however, that their sample is skewed by the high number of heads of Oxbridge colleges (Collinson & Millen 1969).

decade later in 1976/7. He found that the Oxbridge influence remained pronounced, accounting for approximately half of the sample group in both survey years. However, less than a quarter of vice chancellors in 1966/7 attended public school (taken to be a marker of higher social class), a figure which did not alter significantly over the decade. This is deemed to set vice chancellors apart from the more traditional social elites, marking them out rather as an intellectual meritocracy (1979).

Overall, Szreter found little evidence of change in the socio-demographic profile of vice chancellors during what he described as a turbulent decade characterised by the post-Robbins euphoria of the late 1960s and the political uncertainty and severe economic constraint of the early 1970s. He summarised the findings of the second study as a case of "as you were" (1979, p. 1), the notable exception being that the first female vice chancellor had been appointed by 1977. Szreter predicted that this conservative recruitment pattern would continue, though admitted to uncertainty about how well served universities would be by this type of traditional vice chancellor.

In the 1970s, vice chancellors were included in two further studies of elite groups by Wakeford and Wakeford (1974) and Perkin (1978-9). Elites were defined by the former as those "in a position to be exercising considerable political and economic influence" (1974, p. 187) and by the latter as occupying "key positions at the head of the main functional hierarchies in society" (1978-9, p. 222). These two studies echo Szreter's findings: confirming on the one hand the continuing influence of an Oxbridge education and on the other the predominance of a state or grammar, rather than public, school route into university. Like Szreter, Wakeford and Wakeford regard this as evidence that vice chancellors are, on the whole, a meritocratic group.

Perkin's large, longitudinal study of ten major elite groups between 1880 and 1978 allows the socio-demographic data on vice chancellors to be viewed in a broader, historical context. The author concludes that the reduction over time in the proportion of vice chancellors from the upper classes (especially the landed class) and from major public schools in favour of those who are comparatively "poor" or only "modestly affluent" is symptomatic of elite groups increasingly recruiting from the "middle ranges of society" and that, although the proportion of "poor" vice chancellors is higher than that of most other elite groups, it is in line with the overall trend (1978-9, pp. 230-232). From this perspective vice chancellors can be seen as more similar to, than different from, other elite groups. This holds true also in relation to gender. Perkin's data shows that by 1978 only a handful

of women had ever reached the top of any elite group, making the fact that there had only been two female vice chancellors since 1880 somewhat less remarkable.

There subsequently appears to have been a lull in research interest in university leaders until the late 1990s when Farnham and Jones (1998) examined the biographical profile of vice chancellors as part of a wider comparative study of top public service managers in universities, the civil service and the NHS. The start date for their study (1992 to 1997) coincides with the end of the binary divide at which time the former polytechnics were granted university status. It is thus the first demographic profile of this extended cohort of vice chancellors. This study is also noteworthy in that it forms part of a discernible trend of empirical research prompted by a key development in higher education policy, such as that of Collinson and Millen (1969) following the 1963 Robbins Report, Bargh *et al* (2000) after the 1985 Jarratt Report, and Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008a) after the 1997 Dearing Report.

This enlarged cohort of university leaders was still overwhelmingly male (96%), although the number of female vice chancellors had increased to six. It was a more diverse group than previously, with vice chancellors in the 1990s both younger and "more educationally and socially representative" (1998, p. 57).   Only a third of vice chancellors in the early 1990s went to independent schools[21] and a third to Oxbridge, though both figures are higher for vice chancellors of ancient universities. Limited questionnaire data on parents' occupations also suggests that vice chancellors came from predominantly middle class families. They conclude that vice chancellors remain an elite group, albeit a more heterogeneous one than hitherto. Specifically, vice chancellors are considered to be part of an "organizational elite" within their own institutions, a "national, social elite" (i.e. well rewarded and with high social status) and a "political elite" with the ability to influence educational policy both directly and via pressure groups such as the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (1998, p. 54).

The next investigation of the socio-demographic characteristics of vice chancellors was undertaken as part of the largest study to date of the top university leadership role (Bargh et al. 2000). This seminal work tested the hypothesis that, following Jarratt's recommendation to bolster the status of the vice chancellor, new forms of executive leadership would emerge based on managerial expertise. The authors' primary interest

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[21] The precise definition of "independent school" is unknown so it is not possible to compare data directly with participation rates for "public school" (Szreter 1979) or "major public school" (Perkin 1978-9) used in earlier studies.

was not in vice chancellors' social or educational background but rather in what they do and their professional preparation for the role. As such, their study represents a shift away from the investigation of vice chancellors as an elite group to a consideration of their characteristics from a leadership and management perspective.

They nevertheless documented the personal profile of vice chancellors from 1960 to 1996 (thus covering the gap in existing research from the late 1970s to 1992) and concluded that vice chancellors were much the same people they had always been, i.e. white males in their 50s from an academic background. Although an Oxbridge background (if taken to cover both study and employment) remained an important marker of vice chancellors, it did not necessarily mean they belonged to a social elite as a university education was not considered a significant indicator of privileged social status.

Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008a) picked up this theme in updating the socio-demographic data on vice chancellors from 1997 to 2006 and in testing the hypothesis that changes to higher education following the Dearing Report might have precipitated a change in the type of people being appointed as vice chancellors. In broad terms, their data reinforces the findings of Bargh *et al* that vice chancellors were a predominantly white, male 50-something cohort for whom experience of Oxbridge remained significant. This was especially true for heads of pre-1992 universities. One discernible change, however, was in the proportion of female vice chancellors, which had more than doubled from 6% to 15% since 1997, with most female vice chancellors in new universities. The authors suggest that this rise in the number of female vice chancellors may be a reflection of an expanded supply chain given the increase in the proportion of women academics and the broadening of vice chancellors' academic backgrounds away from a largely science base. Interestingly, they found that female vice chancellors were less likely than their male counterparts to be in a long-term relationship or have children, suggesting that for a woman becoming a vice chancellor "may require greater social and domestic sacrifices" (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008b, p. 124).

Overall, the picture that emerges from the literature of UK vice chancellors is of a social group that has changed only slowly and moderately since the 1930s despite the radical transformation of the sector during that period. In short, vice chancellors remain a largely white, male intellectual elite with an Oxbridge bias (Smith, D. et al. 1999).

4.2   DPVCs

Although the socio-demographic profile of university vice chancellors has attracted significant research attention, published data on DPVCs is extremely limited. Smith, Adams and Mount's Leadership Foundation-sponsored study (2007) is the first and, until now, the only attempt to provide a historical context for the role in the UK, including a statistical profile for the period 1960 to 2005 based on data from the *Association of Commonwealth Universities Yearbooks* in six sample years: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2005. The authors found significant continuity in the profile of DPVCs[22] over the 45-year period of their study.

Over 80% of DPVCs across all sample years were professors and are therefore assumed to be academics. Given what is known about the profile of vice chancellors (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a), and the fact that most vice chancellors were previously DPVCs, it is perhaps not surprising that an Oxbridge influence (in terms of awarding institution for first and postgraduate degrees) remained significant for DPVCs in 2005. However, it was not as predominant as in the 1960s at which time the sector was much smaller and hence the range of graduating institutions was much more limited. Science graduates still outnumbered those from the arts and social sciences, though not by a large margin (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). The authors also noted that a small but significant proportion of DPVCs had achieved external recognition as elected fellows of UK learned societies and institutes. In terms of gender, they found the proportion of females amongst those DPVCs for whom gender is known varied over the six sample years between 6% and 34%, without any discernible upward trend. There is also some evidence from a slightly more recent study to suggest that DPVCs are getting younger (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a).

As for DPVC numbers, Smith *et al*'s data for all UK higher education institutions reveals a seemingly dynamic growth in DPVC numbers from 21 to 348 during the 45 year-period from 1960. However, these figures need to be considered in the context of the huge expansion of the higher education system over that time, in which the number of institutions increased from 46 to 118. Rather than compare absolute numbers, therefore, they found it more meaningful to consider the ratio of DPVCs per higher education institution. This had risen from 0.46 in 1960 to 2.95 in 2005, the equivalent of an additional

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[22] The authors use the term PVCs in their study, but their definition also includes DVC posts and so, for the sake of internal consistency, the term DPVC is used here with reference to their work. Data presented are the aggregate for both groups.

two and a half DPVC posts on average over the 45 years - a clear, but less dramatic, upward trend.

The main purpose of Smith *et al*'s study was to test the extent to which there had been an executivisation of the DPVC role in response to the Jarratt Review, as evidenced by an increase in the number of posts and a more managerial interpretation of the role. In relation to the former, they found that the upward trend in DPVC numbers pre-dated Jarratt and was mainly driven by the huge growth in the higher education system. They see the steady rise in the number of DPVCs since 1960 as an indication that universities had started to develop their managerial capacity prior to the 1980s' efficiency drive and thus conclude that rather than a "sudden rush" towards appointing more DPVCs in the wake of Jarratt, increasing numbers were a sign of a "longer term or quiet revolution in management" (2007, p. 19).

5.   Professional Background of Academic Managers

5.1   Vice Chancellors

Whist many of the earlier empirical studies of vice chancellors focused on their social class and education, a few also examined their professional background. The earliest available data, covering the period from 1935 to 1967 (Collinson & Millen 1969), shows that in 1935 virtually all (95%) UK vice chancellors came from academia.   More specifically, nearly half had been vice chancellors, registrars or professors (some of whom had additionally been DPVCs) immediately prior to their appointment, with a further third having held other academic posts. The proportion of vice chancellors from an academic background had fallen to 88% by 1967 due to a small number of appointments from the civil and diplomatic service.

Szreter's study (1979), incorporating two data sets a decade apart, found four vice chancellors in 1966/7 who had been appointed from outside the academy and only three in 1976/7. Szreter described as the most "significant surprise" in his data the fact that "the trend towards the appointment as vice-chancellors of non-academics has not gathered any momentum" and that, as a result, the "typical British vice-chancellor is still the professional-as-administrator" (1979, p. 5). There was therefore an expectation that the post-Robbins expansion, combined with a challenging political and economic environment,

would lead to vice chancellor appointments from outside higher education. Szreter speculates that it may have been the fear of further bureaucratisation that had deterred universities from appointing vice chancellors with a business or political background.

A subsequent study of vice chancellors between 1960 and 1996 sought to identify the "avenues of mobility" to the top job and to ascertain whether these had changed over time (Smith, D. et al. 1999, p. 116). The authors found that, despite post-1992 expansion, the typical route into the vice chancellor role remained that of the academic hierarchy. Over 90% of vice chancellors across their study period were previously career academics, mainly professors many of whom had held academic management posts from head of department to vice chancellor.

Not surprisingly then, academic credentials prevailed with only 10% holding management qualifications. Only one in five of all vice chancellors had undertaken paid employment in the private sector (although vice chancellors of post-1992 institutions were twice as likely as their pre-1992 counterparts to have done so) and almost one third had no experience outside higher education. Accordingly, they conclude that the post of vice chancellor has remained almost "exclusively reserved for academics" (Bargh et al. 2000, p. 155) and that there is no evidence to support their hypothesis that a more executive post-Jarratt interpretation of the vice chancellor role had produced major changes to "the career preparation and professional profiles of those appointed to the top leadership post" (2000, p. 56).

Breakwell and Tytherleigh's follow-up study (2008a, 2008b) found even less evidence of management qualifications, with only one vice chancellor having an MBA. The overwhelming majority of vice chancellors between 1997 and 2006 continued to be appointed from within higher education, although this figure was significantly higher in post-1992 than pre-1992 universities (94% versus 80%). That means that one in five pre-1992 universities appointed non-academics from other public or private sector organisations, some of whom had previously been chief executives elsewhere (2008a). This figure is higher than I would have expected and it is worth noting that a more recent study by the same authors, albeit with a smaller sample size (147 compared to 255), found a somewhat lower proportion (13%) of non-academic appointments in pre-1992 universities (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2010). Nevertheless, it remains the case that pre-1992 universities were more likely to recruit from outside academia (Breakwell & Tytherleigh

2008a), possibly because they felt in a stronger position to take a chance on a non-traditional candidate.

So, whilst there have been occasional examples of vice chancellors appointed from posts in the civil service or business, their numbers have not grown over time as may have been expected. Moreover, there appears to have been a real reluctance to appoint non-academic managers from within higher education to the top post. Accordingly, no registrar or director of professional services who was not, or had not previously been, an academic has been appointed as vice chancellor (Lauwerys 2008).

The typical route into the top job remains that of the career academic, rising through the academic ranks to become a professor and in many cases taking on a series of formal leadership positions along the way. Breakwell and Tytherleigh found that nearly a quarter (23%) of vice chancellors were already in vice chancellor posts at the time of their appointment, compared to 10% in Bargh *et al*'s study (2000)[23]. They suggest that some universities view the appointment of a second-time vice chancellor "as a signal of their importance" and their "position in the status hierarchy" (2008a, p. 44).

They further suggest that there has been a significant increase in the proportion of vice chancellors who were DPVCs prior to appointment, from 14%[24] between 1960 and 1996 to 45% between 1997 and 2006. This may partly be accounted for by the increase in the number of DPVCs since 1960 (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). In any case, it would appear that the DPVC post has become a more important recruiting ground for the top job. The authors see DPVCs as providing "the selection pool for future potential VCs" and view their increasing numbers as a means of helping to solve the reported struggle to fill vice chancellor posts and as a mechanism for "weeding out" unsuitable candidates (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008b, p. 123).

Although most vice chancellors lacked experience of paid employment outside of higher education, they had increasingly gained university-specific management experience as they progressed through various senior academic management roles on their route to the top. Breakwell and Tytherleigh conceptualise this as an "apprenticeship model" of leadership, comprising an extended period of on-the-job training (2008b, p. 112) similar to the rising-

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[23] However, the earlier study identifies a further 17% of vice chancellors who had been head of an Oxbridge college or other higher education institution, so perhaps the difference is not so marked.
[24] This figure relates to the proportion of VCs in Bargh *et al*'s study who were previously PVCs but excludes the further 11% who were previously DVCs (2000, pp. 49-50).

through-the-ranks model found in other public or private organisations. Therefore, although they acknowledge that the acquisition of managerial experience by would-be vice chancellors is neither intentional nor systematic, they argue that it should not be considered as atypical or necessarily ineffective.

5.2   DPVCs

Like vice chancellors, the overwhelming majority of DPVCs have traditionally been – and remain – members of the professoriate. In their study of DPVCs between 1960 and 2005[25], Smith *et al* found that the typical avenue into a DPVC post was that of a successful career academic, as evidenced by the title of professor and by some form of management or leadership activity, for example, as head of department or dean (2007). This route into the DPVC role had not changed during that 45-year period despite the call for universities to become more business-like in their style of leadership. One major reason was that many DPVC posts, particularly those in pre-1992 institutions, were not open to external applicants (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). The normal pattern of recruitment therefore remained from within the academy. They note that, although it is not obligatory to have been a dean to become a DPVC, in practice and custom it helps.

This same study found that DPVC appointees were typically high achievers within their discipline with some experience of leading an academic department or faculty.

> *"Those who have been 'blooded' in various roles – typically heads of department or deans of faculty – are historically the prime candidates for selection."* (2007, p. 28)

As is the case for vice chancellors (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a), they were thus "likely to have been adjudged as competent leaders and managers even if the frameworks on which such judgements are made are inclined to be less than consistent" (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, p. 29). Moreover, the authors conclude that a "significant part of the DPVC's influence is derived from their continuing membership of the academic college", even if the maintenance of an academic presence for many DPVCs is merely tokenistic (2007, p. 49). Interestingly for the career development of DPVCs, their data suggests that the rhetoric of a return to the mainstream academic community at the end of a term of office may be part of the DPVC "mythology" and that, in reality, few serving DPVCs relish the prospect (2007, p. 49). For those end-of-term DPVCs who were not appointed to the top job, retirement or

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[25] Based on 54 in-depth interviews mainly with serving DPVCs in 13 pre and post-1992 higher education institutions.

sideways movement to other senior roles were alternative options to a return to their department.

Preparation for the role of DPVC was strongly experience and practice based, i.e. learning on the job, in a way that echoes the apprenticeship model for vice chancellors described by Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008b). The DPVCs interviewed in the study consistently stated that being a dean or head of department was both a necessary requirement for the role and a more appropriate form of preparation than a training programme. Interviewees provided numerous examples of how their academic and management experience had been indispensable to being a DPVC (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). Formal leadership development for aspiring senior managers was rare. The authors, however, question an approach that leaves new DPVC post holders feeling unclear about what to expect or how to get things done effectively. Some of their interviewees described feeling "dropped in it" in the early stages of their DPVC-ship (2007, p. 4).

Whilst Smith *et al* acknowledge that their findings might be considered as supporting the view that the preparation and training of DPVCs is "unsystematic, even amateur" (2007, p. 32), they point out that the absence of formalised training is not necessarily indicative of a lack of preparation for the job given the emphasis of serving DPVCs on the importance of prior academic management experience.

However, the strength of Smith *et al*'s study as the first contemporary insider account of being a DPVC also entails limitations in terms of providing a DPVC-centric worldview. It could reasonably be argued that DPVCs themselves are unlikely to criticise the normal – and their own - route into the job. One former registrar has challenged the assumption that DPVCs from an academic background have the required management experience or knowledge of professional services "so important to the operation of universities" (Lauwerys 2008, p. 6). Smith *et al*, however, do not overtly question the validity of the DPVCs' perspective on this issue, though they do admit that their research inevitably focuses on the leaders, rather than the led.

A similar criticism could be levelled at recent studies of vice chancellors (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a, 2008b, Goodall 2007, Bargh et al. 2000). There is arguably now a need to ascertain the views of others within the university community, including registrars and professional services directors. Equally, there is a need for a different researcher perspective as it is not clear that those undertaking work in this area have considered their

own potential for bias as academic insiders, including the danger of over-identification with research participants.

6.   Appointment of Academic Managers

6.1   Vice Chancellors

6.1.1 Appointment Practice

There is little empirical evidence on the recruitment of vice chancellors (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a). What we do know from the sparse literature is that vice chancellor posts were not normally publically advertised before the 1970s. Writing in 1969, Collinson and Millen noted that the recent advertisement of posts at Aston and the Open University "seem to be quite exceptional" (1969, p. 108) and Wakeford and Wakeford found that vice chancellor posts had only just begun to be advertised (1974).

Bargh *et al* noted that it was still not unusual in the 1970s for vice chancellors to be appointed without public advertisement (2000). Instead, the typical recruitment process involved the formation of a small selection committee to solicit university opinion, seek and examine potential candidates and then present one or more names to senate for election (Collinson & Millen 1969). Rarely were they elected by the whole collegium of academics (Becher & Kogan 1992). This recruitment method is in contrast to that for mainstream academic posts which were almost always filled by open competition after national advertisement (Halsey & Trow 1971).

Collinson and Millen (1969) found that, whereas Oxbridge vice chancellors were predominantly internal appointments, just over half (53%) of vice chancellors elsewhere were externally appointed. The proportion of external appointments increased to around two thirds between 1960 and 1996, with internal promotion rather more prevalent in post-1992 (43%) than pre-1992 (32%) universities (Bargh et al. 2000). This same study also showed that the binary divide was still very much in evidence in terms of vice chancellor recruitment, with relatively little movement between the two sub sectors and most of that in one direction – from pre to post-1992 institutions. Only one vice chancellor during that period had been appointed from a post- to a pre-1992 university, although there was more movement in the opposite direction with one in five post-1992 vice chancellors appointed from an old university (2000). The situation has not altered much since then: between

1997 and 2006 only two vice chancellors in pre-1992 universities were recruited from post-1992 institutions (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a).

Exactly when the advertisement of the vice chancellor post became the norm is not clear, but the available evidence shows that this change in recruitment practice had taken place by the mid-1980s. Watson's study (2008) on the use of executive search agencies indicates that 15 vice chancellor posts were advertised in the academic year 1986/87, a figure that is consistent with data for the years 2006 to 2011 by which time the external advertisement of vice chancellor posts had become standard practice (Shepherd 2011).

Watson's data also shows that in 1986/7 none of the advertised posts involved the employment of an executive search agency (2008). However, in 2003 their use by "many institutions" was noted and applauded by Lambert as a "more open and professional" process that had led "to some exciting appointments" including from the private sector and abroad (2003, p. 100). By 2010, executive search agents were utilised for almost all (93%) vice chancellor posts in pre-1992 universities (Shepherd 2011). Ironically their use led to the situation whereby, although vice chancellor posts were advertised, leading candidates no longer expected to respond directly but rather wait to be invited to apply (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a).

In this first major study of vice chancellor recruitment and selection, Breakwell and Tytherleigh interviewed executive search agencies who suggested that universities rarely undertake succession planning and "seem to think internal promotion is inappropriate" (2008a, p. 35). The authors take the view that recruitment of vice chancellors from inside higher education, but outside their own institution, may be beneficial, with universities "getting the advantages of continuity and knowledge of the business and the culture without the disadvantages of losing the change-potential of a newcomer" (2008b, p. 113).

Breakwell and Tytherleigh found that responsibility for the search and selection process was usually delegated by the governing body to a smaller search committee, comprised mainly of lay governors. Typically, the committee would recommend a candidate for appointment and it was rare for council to be offered a choice between candidates. The composition and operation of this committee was therefore of real significance. The committee was generally free to decide on how to approach the recruitment process, including which executive search agency to engage. The first step was normally for the executive search agency to establish a profile of the institution, the role and the person

sought and, on this basis, to draw up an advert and candidate information pack. These were designed to bring some transparency to the process and to sell the job. It was commonplace for executive search agencies to approach a number of potential candidates to encourage them to apply. They would then normally interview a long list of 10 to 12 candidates before putting forward a short list of three or four to the search committee for final selection, normally by means of panel interview. Having made its decision, the search committee would seek governing body approval for its preferred candidate.

In contrast to practice in the past, although academic opinion was normally canvassed by executive search agencies and there were likely to be one or more academic staff on the committee, it would appear that the senate typically played no formal role in the appointment process. Rather, the governing body was effectively in charge. The work of O'Meara and Petzall (2005) suggests that in Australia the role of the chair of the governing body is paramount in determining the desired characteristics and in identifying potential candidates and deciding who should be appointed. The dominant role of the chancellor in the appointment process is viewed as legitimate due to the perceived importance of the relationship between the chair and the vice chancellor and in recognition of the need for a correspondence of views between the two. In the UK too, the chair of council plays a vital, if under-supported, role in vice chancellor appointments (Breakwell 2006).

6.1.2   Selection Criteria

Middlehurst (1993) examined adverts and other recruitment material as part of her investigation of documentary evidence (also including legislation, White Papers etc.) on various stakeholders' expectations of the vice chancellor role. From the recruitment literature she identified the key characteristics and skills sought from prospective candidates for the top job. Prominent amongst these were the ability to represent and promote the institution, build collaborative relationships and create and communicate a vision. Financial, analytical, policy making, strategic planning, PR and negotiation skills were also prerequisites. Bargh and colleagues' analysis of vice chancellor adverts indicated a shift in requirements from generalised academic experience to highly specific attributes, many of them managerial in nature such as income generation or change management. Notwithstanding this fact, the most essential criterion remained academic credibility, as evidenced by "an established academic reputation" and an ability to "command the respect of academics" (1993, p. 96).

A more recent analysis of person specifications – the development of which helps the university to articulate what it wants from its vice chancellor – showed that "academic credibility", together with a deep knowledge of, and empathy for, the higher education sector, was still an essential requirement (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a). This is despite the fact that executive search agencies said they believed it was important to attract candidates from outside the sector and the inclusion in some adverts of phrases such as "candidates may come from academia, government or business" (2008a, p. 32). In fact, around half of the adverts were explicit in wanting higher education experience and the authors conclude that "most of the specifications for vice chancellors appeared tailored for candidates from an academic-related background" (2008a, p. 32). This casts some doubt as to how interested universities really are in attracting – yet alone appointing – vice chancellor candidates from outside academe.

However, Breakwell and Tytherleigh argue that the fact so few vice chancellor appointments are made from outside the sector may not simply be the result of deliberate choice. They suggest that the location and wording of adverts may be one factor deterring external applicants and the relatively low pay compared to CEO posts in the private sector may be another. Executive search agencies they interviewed believed that the placement of uninspiring adverts in a limited range of publications deterred external applicants, who may not understand the role of vice chancellor. The authors suggest that the language used in the recruitment material may be too "vague" about the nature of the role to attract applicants from outside the sector (2008b, p. 121).

However, whilst I accept the argument that the vice chancellor position may not be well sold to an external audience, it could be equally be posited that, far from being too vague, the adverts are actually too *specific* about what is required – namely an academic track record and/or credibility. The primacy of this criterion would appear to act as a disincentive to non-academic candidates, if not effectively exclude them. A recent Australian study of vice chancellor selection is relevant here. O'Meara and Petzall found that once the threshold of academic credibility was established by means of a PhD and experience in higher education or a closely related sector, selection committees "did not believe they necessarily required an academic" (2005, p. 30). However, the notable decline they observed in non-academic vice chancellor appointments in Australia suggests that, in reality, career academics - not just those with academic credentials or experience - nevertheless prevail.

Finding candidates who combine both academic credibility and business acumen is recognised as a real challenge. It was suggested by the executive search agencies in Breakwell and Tytherleigh's study that this was an unrealistic expectation and universities had to prioritise one over the other in their selection process. The agencies also suggested the number of senior academics with high management competence was low, but acknowledged that universities were unlikely to find an external candidate with the requisite gravitas and academic track record. The authors argue that, since the advent of executive management teams, vice chancellors no longer need to embody the full range of competencies themselves. Nevertheless, the primacy of academic credibility clearly places academic candidates in a very strong position to demonstrate their suitability and likely acceptance by the university community. Accordingly, Breakwell and Tytherleigh found no reduction in the importance of "collegial charisma" in favour of the importation of "managerial competence" from other sectors (2008b, p. 124).

6.2   DPVCs

6.2.1   Appointment Practice

Smith *et al* (2007) identified two main models of DPVC appointment: selection by invitation or by means of competitive recruitment. A third model of election by senate also existed, but was rare and so did not form a focus for their study. The first of these is essentially a patronage model in the gift of the vice chancellor. It is referred to as a tap-on-the-shoulder model since typically the vice chancellor would approach a senior academic and invite him or her to become a DPVC. Appointment would result from a series of conversations rather than any type of formal interview. One perceived advantage is that it facilitates selection of talented individuals who may not have considered putting themselves forward for the role. However, this necessitates potential candidates getting themselves on the vice chancellor's radar – a task that is undoubtedly easier for academic stars or those already in faculty or departmental leadership positions (who would be prime candidates in any case).

Such a process is considered by many interviewees automatically to introduce an element of gender bias given the under-representation of women amongst the professoriate. Another implication of the patronage model is that it is likely to produce candidates who owe their primary loyalty to the vice chancellor rather than the institution – a fact perceived as both a potential strength and a weakness. A number of the DPVCs interviewed for this study expressed surprise that such an opaque and potentially

discriminatory appointment practice was still in effect, even though they owed their jobs to it. Nor were they always clear how they had emerged as potential candidates.

The second, competitive recruitment, model involves a formal recruitment process in which person specifications are drawn up and posts advertised, either within the institution or open to both internal and external applicants. In the latter case, executive search agencies are sometimes utilised. Typically the selection process involves panel interviews and/or presentations.   Smith *et al* (2007) found that the selection by invitation method was used by pre-1992 universities and competitive recruitment by post-1992 institutions. In fact, they found no instances of the former method in the post-1992 sub-sector which exclusively adopted an open competition model of recruitment, even though it may have resulted in an internal appointment. Amongst their site visits they did, however, find at least four examples of pre-1992 universities that had externally advertised a DPVC post and three that had engaged executive search agencies, thus demonstrating that the process of adopting an open competitive recruitment model at DPVC level had begun by 2005, even if it was still the exception. These findings are corroborated by another small-scale study of ten DPVCs which found a mixture of recruitment methods, including internal selection, external advertisement and the use of executive search agencies (Spendlove 2007).

In their research on executive management teams, Kennie and Woodfield provide a caricature of how top team members, including DPVCs, were traditionally appointed. This highlights many of the limitations of the process.

- *"First, you don't advertise the post externally*
- *Second, you may – but more frequently do not – interview any of the applicants or potential candidates*
- *Third, you select the candidate on the basis of the need to have someone from a particular Unit (Faculty/Department/Discipline) on the team*
- *Fourth, you probably expect the person selected to have a strong track record in some area relatively unconnected to the portfolio on which they will have to deliver (e.g. research)*
- *Fifth, you expect the person selected to do the job on a part-time basis (say 3 days a week)*
- *Sixth, you are unlikely to provide any induction or training for the role*

- *Seventh, you are unlikely to provide the appointed person with any budgetary resources or a personal assistant (PA)*

- *Eighth, you may often pay them less than many of your 'middle managers'*

- *Finally, you should know they will be expected to stand down from the role just as they become proficient (in about 2-3 years from now!)"*

(Kennie & Woodfield 2008a, pp. 11-12)

They found that few institutions had explicit succession plans, and one of their key recommendations was that the issue of succession management and exit strategies should be addressed in a more systematic fashion, particularly where DPVC appointments were made on a fixed-term basis. They also highlighted the need for further empirical work focusing on the recruitment and selection of executive team members (Kennie & Woodfield 2008a).

The most recent study of DPVC appointments from 2006 to 2010 provides more substantial evidence that the binary divide in recruitment practice was beginning to be eroded as pre-1992 universities moved away from the traditional system of fixed-term, part-time internal appointments to one that included full-time post-1992 style appointments made as the result of external open competition (Shepherd 2011). By the end of 2010, half of the 45 pre-1992 institutions had externally advertised at least one DPVC post, typically as part of a mixed appointment model. The use of executive search agencies was also becoming more prevalent at DPVC level in both pre and post-1992 universities (Shepherd 2013).

6.2.2   Selection Criteria

Very little is known about what universities are looking for in their DPVC candidates, although there is a continued emphasis on academic credibility within the identity construction of DPVC roles (Smith, D. & Adams 2008). Only in third-stream (i.e. concerned with the development of business links and the commercialisation of research) portfolios did Smith *et al* find any evidence of DPVCs from less conventional backgrounds (2007).

In what appears to be the only empirical work in the UK focusing on DPVC selection criteria, Shepherd (2011) analysed the adverts for DPVC posts between 2006 and 2010. One reason for the continuity in DPVC profile is immediately apparent from this analysis: in the vast majority of cases, the required attributes for potential post holders could only realistically be found in career academics. This is because, next to leadership and management skills, the most commonly stated criterion was a track record of academic achievement. All of

the advertisements for DVCs and all but five of the 42 for PVCs specifically required some combination of academic achievement, higher education experience or knowledge, and academic credibility. The only exceptions to this were four PVC posts with a third-stream portfolio, for which candidates with entrepreneurial skills or experience were sought. The third-stream DPVC portfolio thus appears to be the only one that is genuinely open to non-academic candidates and/or those from outside the sector.

7.   Summary

This chapter has sought to locate the research phenomenon in its historical and empirical context. It has illustrated how university governance arrangements have changed over time, in three main forms and phases; civic, consensual and corporate. Each has implications for the balance of power within universities between the governing body, the executive and the academic community, and it is important to note that academics have not always been in charge.

The corporate governance model, which is the regulatory framework within which universities now operate, assumes the pre-eminence of the governing body in determining university strategy. However, the technical and specialist nature of university management means that lay members of council are heavily reliant on the advice of the vice chancellor and other members of the executive management team. Thus, it is questionable whether councils have been able to assert themselves in the way that Jarratt, Dearing and Lambert had envisaged. The power of senate has, however, waned.

It is not only the governance model that has evolved over time. A more complex, competitive and challenging higher education policy environment has led to a transformation in university management. This has manifested itself in changes to internal management arrangements, in large part along the lines recommended by Jarratt. In particular, there has been a professionalisation of the administration and a strengthening of the executive. Executive management teams have been created, at the heart of which reside a larger, and arguably more powerful, cadre of DPVCs.

In terms of the composition of executive management teams, there has only been one empirical study to date on DPVCs but there is a virtually continuous socio-demographic profile of vice chancellors since the 1930s. Early work was focused on their social and

educational background and suggests that vice chancellors were an intellectual, rather than a social, elite and a broadly meritocratic group. Subsequent studies have investigated the extent to which key developments in higher education policy, such as the Robbins, Jarratt and Dearing Reports, have led to different people being appointed. However, they have all concluded that the profile of vice chancellors has remained largely unchanged: they are a white, male intellectual elite.

Not surprisingly given that they form the main recruitment pool from which vice chancellors are drawn, DPVCs share a similar profile to that of vice chancellors. Members of both groups are overwhelmingly career academics and the career pathway into the roles has remained largely unchanged despite the transformation of the sector over the last fifty years. An apprenticeship model of rising through the ranks still prevails, albeit there is an increasing expectation of senior-level academic management experience.

Appointment practice has changed, however. At vice chancellor level, external recruitment was introduced in the 1980s and the use of executive search agents a decade later. By 2010 their use was virtually universal for vice chancellor appointments. At DPVC level, the traditional tap-on-the-shoulder appointment method has begun to give way to one of open recruitment – initially undertaken within an institution and more recently extended to external candidates.

Academic achievement and credibility are nevertheless essential prerequisites for post holders. So, although the "cult of the gifted amateur" (Middlehurst 1993) has been replaced within the administration by one of increasing professionalisation, with the recruitment of high-level specialist managers from outside the sector, it continues to be the norm within the ranks of senior academic managers.

The dearth of empirical research on the profile of DPVCs means that further investigation, including an updating of Smith *et al*'s data, is required. In particular, the fact that the nature and complexity of university management – and, by implication, the DPVC role - is changing but the people who undertake it are not, warrants further scrutiny. At the same time, there is a need to understand how and why DPVC appointment practice is changing and what the implications are both for current and aspiring DPVCs and for institutional management capacity building. This study addresses these gaps in knowledge and the following chapter explains the methodology to be adopted for this investigation.

Chapter Four

Methodology and Research Design

1.   Introduction

> *"No inquirer … ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach."*
> (Guba & Lincoln 2004, p. 37)

Researchers need to be aware of, and make explicit, the philosophical orientations, or world view, that they bring to a study (Cresswell 2013). This chapter explains the particular philosophical assumptions and methodological approach that underpin this research. It then describes and provides a rationale for the use of a mixed-methods research design. Three methods are used: a census, online survey and semi-structured interviews. The purpose and procedures for each of the three methods are given in turn, followed by a justification and discussion of the limitations of each. Details of sampling strategy and study populations are also provided, where relevant, together with respondent profiles. The data analysis process, and thinking that informed it, is then outlined. The final section describes the ethical issues relating to the study and the measures taken to mitigate them.

2.   Research Foundations

Figure 6 is a visual representation of the foundations of the research approach, from philosophical assumptions through to the selection of methods. In making the decision making process explicit, the aim is to demonstrate the coherence of the study's internal logic – and, thereby, internal validity.

It is acknowledged, however, that Figure 6 presents a somewhat oversimplified version of my methodological decision making process which was, in reality, neither purely linear nor sequential. For example, I started out on my PhD journey by identifying an area of research interest and only then came to consider how this choice was influenced by my ontological and epistemological beliefs and how these, in turn, were fundamental to the shaping of my research questions and design. There is thus something of a symbiotic relationship between the research paradigm and choice of research topic and design that perhaps is not adequately conveyed by Figure 6. It is, nevertheless, an accurate depiction of the overall logic underpinning the research design.

Figure 6: Foundations of the Research Approach
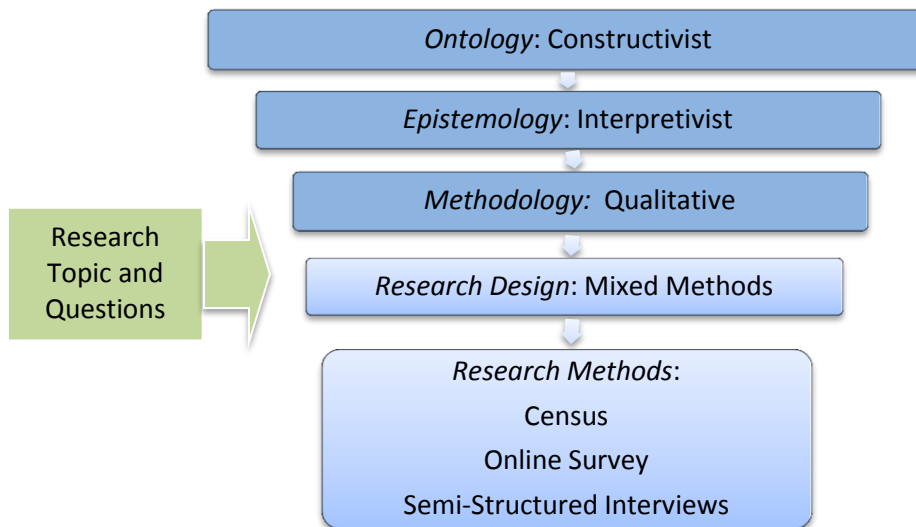
Adapted from (Sarantakos 2005)

3.   Research Paradigm

Ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives reflect a researcher's basic belief system or world view (Guba & Lincoln 2004). Taken together they may be termed a research, or enquiry, paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln 2008). As Figure 6 illustrates, it is this paradigm – together with the nature of the particular research problem or questions being addressed - that should, in turn, inform the development of the research design and the specific methods and procedures that translate this approach into practice (Cresswell 2013).

This section outlines the ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations, or research paradigm, that guided my choice of research design and methods.

3.1   Ontology and Epistemology

The fundamental philosophical assumptions underpinning this research design are a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. In broad terms, ontology relates to the nature of reality and what can be known about it, and epistemology to the theory of knowledge. More specifically, epistemology pertains to what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman 2008) and the relationship between the knower and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln 2004). A researcher's epistemological stance impacts every stage of the research process, from the choice of topic to the framing of interview questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006).

An objectivist ontological stance holds that social phenomena have an objective reality, independent of the researcher or other social actors. Reality is thus singular, 'out there', discoverable and measurable (Cresswell 2013). Constructivism, in contrast, conceives of social reality as subjective, multiple and socially constructed (Cresswell 2013). As such, there is no one specific version of reality that can be regarded as definitive. Instead, reality is fluid and continually emerging from individuals' interaction with the world (Bryman 2008). As a researcher from a constructivist perspective, my aim is to understand how my research participants view and influence the world around them and the meanings they assign to their actions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006). I am interested in posing broad questions and eliciting the complexity of views, rather than distilling meanings into narrow categories or variables.

In terms of epistemology, an interpretivist stance has as its fundamental tenet a rejection of the application of a positivist scientific method to the study of the social world (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006). The positivist epistemology associated with scientific study casts researchers as distant from, and independent of, what or who is being researched and thus able to study an object or phenomenon without influencing it or being influenced by it (Cresswell 2013). An interpretative perspective, on the other hand, holds that such a supposedly value-free and unbiased scientific research approach is both unrealistic and undesirable in relation to the study of people and social phenomena.

As a an interpretivist researcher, I see myself as interacting with my research participants and engaging with them in the joint creation of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln 2004). I

recognise and celebrate the fact that my research is a value-laden enterprise and that my background, experience and assumptions have shaped not only my research interests, but also my interpretation of the data. This issue is discussed in more detail in Section 8 on data analysis.

3.2   Methodology

Methodology represents the means by which these ontological and epistemological principles are translated into guidelines for the conduct of research (Sarantakos 2005). Or, in other words, how researchers go about accessing the data they need and believe to be knowable (Guba & Lincoln 2004).

Consistent with my constructivist and interpretivist philosophical principles and the nature of my research interests and aims, I employed a qualitative methodology. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research is primarily concerned with meaning rather than measurement. It is naturalistic and ideographic in nature as opposed to nomothetic, or based on universal causal laws. This makes it an appropriate methodology for a study like this one which examines particular individuals or groups in a specific social context (Williams, M. 2002) and which seeks rich descriptions and meanings that cannot be experimentally examined or measured.

The intellectual roots of qualitative research include Weber's notion of *Verstehen* (understanding the views and perceptions of individuals as they are experienced and expressed in everyday life) and the phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition. In a qualitative research context, phenomenology is concerned with understanding how individuals make sense of their world and hermeneutics with the theory and method of interpreting human action (Bryman 2008). In both cases, the emphasis is on understanding the perspective of social actors - the primary focus of my research.

Unlike quantitative research in the natural sciences in which hypotheses are proposed and then subjected to empirical testing, qualitative methodology tends to be inductive, or theory generating (Cresswell 2013, Denzin & Lincoln 2008), as is the case here. Rather than starting with theory, my aim was to "generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning" (Cresswell 2013, p. 8). One consideration in the decision to adopt this type of qualitative theory-generating methodology was the relative immaturity of the research field, with very few empirical studies to date and a lack of relevant theory. The particular

approach taken to the use of theory in this study was influenced by the thinking of Glaser and Strauss, the originators of grounded theory.

Glaser and Strauss were dissatisfied with what they saw as an overemphasis on the prevailing hypothesis-verification scientific style of sociological research and saw grounded theory as a defence against this approach. This new methodology was developed in part as a reaction against armchair theorising at a high level of abstraction. Glaser and Strauss view "grand" theory, logically deduced from *a priori* assumptions, as speculative and "only dubiously related to the area of behaviour it purports to explain"(1967, p. 2). They are also highly critical of what they term "exampling", whereby researchers select examples to confirm a speculative theory, thus giving the appearance of proof where none exists, and "tacked on" explanations to empirical studies based on existing theory (1967, pp. 4-5).

This is not to say that theory is unimportant to Glaser and Strauss, quite the reverse. They want qualitative researchers to move away from being merely descriptive and impressionistic and become more theoretical. The development of theory is seen as essential to a deeper understanding of social phenomena (Strauss 1987) and their aim is to utilise "sociological experience" to inform theory development (Metraux 2004, p. 366). Rather than "grand" theory, Glaser and Strauss advocate "grounded" theory, systematically derived from empirical data, that both "fits" and "works", i.e. is relevant and meaningful to those under study (1967, p. 3).

And this is what I am aiming for in the theoretical developments arising from this study: meaningful explanations of what happens in practical situations derived from empirical data, albeit interpreted through the lens of my own experience and ideas. I make no claims to "substantive" or "formal" theory , seeing my research outcomes as "rich conceptual analyses of lived experience and social worlds" rather than "tightly framed theories that generate hypotheses and make explicit predictions" (Charmaz 2004, p. 517).

Even though the study does not employ an overarching theory-testing methodology, it nevertheless involves an element of hypothesis testing. At the level of research aims, one of the key ideas that I am seeking to test is the salience of the prevailing academic narrative about managerialism and academic-manager power relations with regard to the appointment of DPVCs. Moreover, the research design reflects an iterative process of data collection and analysis in which ideas and hunches are tested throughout the course of the

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research process. Whilst primarily inductive in nature, the research design thus also incorporates some deductive strategies.

4.   Research Design

In tandem with my own particular research interests, the philosophical stance and methodology outlined in the previous sections has guided the logic and structure of my research design. The choice of research design and methods is outlined and justified in this section. Details of the aims, procedure and rationale for each method are then provided in Sections 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

4.1   Mixed Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods research design. That is to say, it utilises what are sometimes considered quantitative (census and online survey) as well as qualitative (semi-structured interviews) research methods. The research strategy of employing different methods to produce different types of data from different perspectives was utilised here in the hope of obtaining a more complete, all-round understanding of the research phenomenon and, hence, increasing the robustness of the findings. The use of mixed methods might thus be considered as a form of data – as well as methodological – testing and triangulation (4.1.1).

As well as enhancing the completeness and complementarity of the data, the mixed-methods research design served a developmental purpose. The three methods were used sequentially, as illustrated in Figure 7 with the analysis of each undertaken before the start of the next data collection phase. This iterative approach to data collection and analysis allowed the emerging analysis to shape subsequent data collection and thus avoid the pitfall of amassing lots of unfocused data (Charmaz 2004).

The census and online survey were designed not only to provide useful data in their own right, but also to inform the design of the substantive semi-structured interview phase. For example, one of the aims of the online survey was to test out my initial ideas about what the key issues for further investigation during the interview phase might be. In this respect, the first two methods may be conceived as fulfilling a preparatory and developmental role.

Figure 7: Sequence and Relationship of Methods
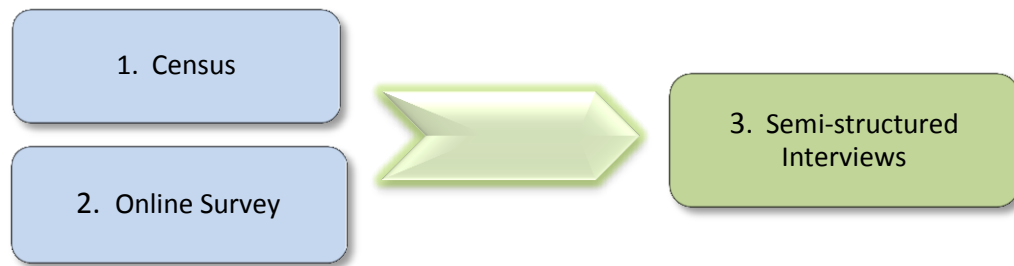
Taken together, the quantitative data from the census and the online survey enabled the scoping of the macro level of the phenomenon and the qualitative (i.e. free text) data from the survey and the interviews were used to examine the micro level. This capacity to explore both macro and micro dimensions and expand the scope of the study from the individual case, or cases, to the entire study population is one of the key advantages of employing a mixed-methods design and makes it particularly appropriate for research like this which explores multi-dimensional social experience (Mason 2006).

4.1.1   Rationale

The choice of a mixed-methods research design was essentially a pragmatic one, made on the basis that this was the approach best suited to meeting my research aims. More specifically, my research questions required the generation of both quantitative and qualitative data (Table 3, 4.3).

In my view, no one method is inherently superior to another, only more or less appropriate to address a particular research question or aim. The major consideration in my choice of research methods was thus how well they work (Denscombe 2007). In principle, I view methods as more autonomous from ontological and epistemological associations than is sometimes assumed and I believe that they can be used legitimately by researchers in different ways and for different purposes, provided that their use is consistent with the internal logic of the research design.

From this perspective, both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used within any research paradigm provided that their use is congruent with the researcher's philosophical world view (Guba & Lincoln 2004). In this case, the research design reflects a pragmatic mixing of methods in support of an essentially qualitative research purpose. This study could not, therefore, be described as a mixed-methods design in the way that Creswell

(2013) conceives of one, i.e. as a third, neither quantitative nor qualitative, research paradigm.

A mixed-methods design provides a useful means of mutual compensation for the strengths and weaknesses of each method employed (Denscombe 2007). One of its main applications, and claimed benefits, is methodological testing or triangulation (Bryman 2008). This involves the cross-checking of results from each research method on the premise that any biases inherent in one may be neutralised when used in conjunction with another (Cresswell 2013). It stems from a belief that quantitative and qualitative methods each have their strengths and weaknesses and that combining them "allows the researcher to offset their weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both" (Bryman 2006, p. 106).

The use of multiple methods and data sources is not in itself intrinsically superior to single-strategy research and this approach needs to be judged in relation to its fitness for purpose and consistency with the underlying research logic. However, it does offer the potential to generate a richer and more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under investigation (Horowitz & Gerson 2002) and the employment of multiple sources of evidence is particularly appropriate to this type of naturalistic, in-depth empirical enquiry that aims to investigate a complex phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin 2009).

4.1.2 Limitations and Issues

In practice a mixed-methods research design may throw up a number of challenges, including the requirement for the researcher to be skilful at more than one research method and able to deal with uncertainty and complexity. Difficulties may arise in handling disparities between findings from the different methods (Denscombe 2007) and in deciding which form of data should take priority. A mixed-methods strategy may tend to lead to outcomes that were not predictable at the outset, although quantitative and qualitative methods "can be fruitfully combined when one generates surprising results that can be understood by employing the other" (Bryman 2006, p. 10).

I regard the potential for a mixed-methods research design to throw up unexpected and contradictory data as a strength, rather than a weakness, for a study such as this one which seeks to explore a complex social phenomenon from multiple perspectives. As Mason argues, multi-dimensional lived experience requires similarly multi-dimensional explanations that "do not have to be internally consensual and neatly consistent to have meaning and to have the capacity to explain" (2006, p. 20). Viewed in this light, tensions

and contradictions in data might be considered as inevitable rather than problematic. Furthermore, the prioritisation of different methods and data sources is less of an issue for researchers like myself who do not consider any single source of data as representing 'the truth'.

4.2   Flexible Design

In keeping with its qualitative and inductive methodology, the study utilised a flexible, iterative research design that was able to take account of new themes and possible topics for enquiry that emerged as the research progressed. A flexible design allowed me to react to, and take advantage of, new ideas emerging from the data and from the development of my own thinking.

That is not to say, however, that I embarked on the data collection process without a clear sense of purpose or direction – one of the criticisms sometimes levelled at the use of a flexible research strategy. On the contrary, I developed an outline empirical plan early on in the research process and kept this under continual review. One version of this plan is included for reference as Appendix B. This provides an indication of the evolution of the research design over time. For example, in this particular iteration of the plan it was envisaged that interviews with vice chancellors would be undertaken as a discrete, final data collection phase in order that the findings could be shared with them and their views ascertained[26]. In reality, the wide geographical spread of the universities in the sample led to a pragmatic decision to conduct interviews with all respondents (including vice chancellors) in each target institution during a single visit.

The attached plan further illustrates how I incorporated a number of fall-back or contingency options in my design in order to ensure that a credible research study could still have been undertaken within the three-year timeframe in spite of any problems that might have occurred with a particular method or methods. Had my online survey or interview requests elicited only a very low response, for example, there were alternative strategies in place, such as the use of documentary analysis or expert interviews, which were less reliant on securing access to large numbers of research participants. As it transpired, response rates were sufficiently high that I did not need to use a back-up plan. Nevertheless, having a contingency plan in place provided a degree of reassurance that a

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[26] In the event, the findings to date were still discussed with vice chancellors and, in addition to the value this opportunity provided to ascertain their views, it is believed that the offer to share the findings with them contributed to the extremely high interview response rate (7.3).

viable research outcome was achievable whatever methodological problems might have been encountered.

4.3   Choice of Methods

The wide range of data collection tools available to qualitative researchers lends a depth to qualitative research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006) but it also necessitates the selection of the most appropriate method or methods. There were a number of factors that influenced my own choice of methods, including cost and time considerations as well as fit with my research style and experience. Foremost amongst them, though, was research purpose: simply stated, different research questions require different methods to answer them.

Table 3 shows the relationship between my research questions (Chapter One, 6.2) and research methods, and gives the study population for each.

Table 3: Relationship between Research Questions, Methods and Study Populations

Research Question	Method	Study Population
Q.1 What is the case for change to the DPVC appointment model?	• Semi-structured interviews • Online survey	• Vice chancellors • Registrars • DPVCs • Third tier managers
Q.2 What are the consequences of change for: a. The demographic and professional profile of appointed DPVCs?	• Census • Tracking of adverts to DPVCs	• DPVCs in all pre-1992 English universities
b. The careers of DPVCs appointed via external open competition	• Semi-structured interviews • Census	• DPVCs appointed via external competition • Executive search agents
c. The career aspirations and progression of third tier managers?	• Online survey • Semi-structured interviews	• Third tier managers • Executive search agents
Q.3 What are the implications of change for institutional management capacity building?	• Analysis of findings	• All
Q.4 To what extent are the findings symptomatic of ideal-type managerialism?	• Comparison of data against indicators of ideal type	• All
Q.5 What do the findings signify for academic-manager power relations?	• Analysis of findings	• All

Sections 5, 6 and 7 provide detailed information for each selected method in turn, including procedures, study population and sampling strategy, response rates and rationale. For the census and online survey, sufficient detail is given on data collection procedures to permit their future replication. The case of the interviews is somewhat different. Given that these involved both researcher and participant in the co-construction of knowledge at a particular point in time, it would not be possible to precisely re-create the interview experience. However, information provided on the planning and conduct of the interviews should enable the overall approach to be replicated.

5.   Census

The initial data collection method was a census, or enumeration of an entire population (Bryman 2008). This had three main aims. Firstly, to provide a snapshot in time of the demographic and career profile of DPVCs in all English pre-1992 universities[27] and thereby provide a current data set against which to measure change over time. Secondly, by cross reference to existing advertisement monitoring data, to identify a sub-group of DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition and enable comparison between them and the remainder of the cohort. Thirdly, to identify a representative sample for the interview phase of the study.

As appropriate to its purpose as a scoping exercise, this initial data collection phase was descriptive rather than explanatory in nature. Descriptive research is of particular value in establishing both the fact, and the dimensions, of a given phenomenon prior to asking the why questions (de Vaus 2001).

5.1   Study Population and Sampling Strategy

Sampling was not an issue for the census since it was aimed at the entire study population of serving DPVCs in the 45 English pre-1992 universities. As of August 2013, this comprised 215 DPVCs for whom demographic data was available plus four vacant posts.

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[27] This is a wholly new census to the one undertaken as a pilot study for 2011 for my unpublished MA dissertation. It also uses a different definition of a DVC and is therefore not directly comparable.

5.2   Procedure

Data on the demographic and career background of DPVCs was collected from institutional websites. Sources included corporate management information, publication schemes, press releases and staff profiles. In addition non-university online sources, such as LinkedIn, were used as necessary to address any data gaps, for example in an individual's career background. A copy of the census data collection template is attached as Appendix C. This shows the units of data that were gathered for each DPVC.

The census was undertaken in July 2012 as the initial phase of data collection. It was then repeated in August 2013 at the end of the interview phase as a way not only of updating the findings, but also of providing some reassurance about the reliability of the initial data. By comparing the two data sets I was able to check that the 2012 census data, which had informed the subsequent research design, did not represent an atypical snapshot in time. In the interests of presenting the most up-to-date picture of the DPVC cohort, it is this more recent 2013 census data that is reported in this thesis. This is a good example of one of the challenges – and limitations – of this study: that is, the fact that it is examining a moving target with an unstable population that changes on a frequent basis.

The 2013 census data was compared to relevant historical data from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) 2006 Yearbook[28] in order to identify any change in profile over time. DPVCs within the census population appointed by means of external open competition were then identified and their profile compared to that of those appointed via an internal-only recruitment process[29].

The identification of this first sub-group was made possible by reference to data from an advertisement monitoring exercise covering job advertisements for all DPVC posts in the two major media for higher education vacancies – *Times Higher Education*[30] and the *jobs.ac.uk* website. Data from this monitoring exercise for a five-year period from January 2006 to December 2010 were presented in the dissertation for my MA in Social Research Methods (Shepherd 2011), undertaken as a pilot study for this PhD. I have continued to add to this data set and there is now eight full years' data up to December 2013. By cross referencing this data with that from the census I was able to track the DPVC advertisement

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[28] The data within the 2006 ACU Handbook relates to the previous year: 2005.
[29] There are five DPVCs in the cohort who are not included in either of these two groups since their appointment method is unclear. This is explained further in 5.4.
[30] Formerly the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* (THES)

to the person who got the job – and hence identify those DPVCs appointed as the result of external open competition.

5.3   Rationale

A census was deemed the most appropriate method for obtaining a macro level overview of the DPVC cohort. It offered the required breadth of coverage across the entire target study population, thus obviating the need for sampling. Use of a census method permitted the collection of structured and consistent data to facilitate mapping across institutions and the generation of accurate and reliable data sets. Moreover, a census has the additional advantages of replicability and non-reactivity in terms of direct researcher effect (Bryman 2008).

The use of a survey rather than a census was considered, but rejected for two main reasons. Firstly, it is highly unlikely that coverage of the whole population could have been obtained. Secondly, in contrast to the subsequent research methods, what was required for this initial descriptive data collection phase was dispassionate evidence, uncoloured by the perspectives of individual institutions or post holders. This was achieved through the adoption of a desk-based approach that did not require the involvement of human participants.

5.4   Issues and Limitations

A census is not normally a feasible approach for large populations as it can be prohibitively expensive and time consuming to achieve complete coverage. In this case, it was possible to estimate the DPVC population within pre-1992 institutions at the outset and make a judgement that it was of a manageable size[31]. The availability of publically available online information meant that no data collection costs were incurred, although the process of gathering the data was intensive as it needed to be completed within a short space of time.

A census method places the onus on researchers to ensure they reach the entire population. In this case I am confident that I did so, at least with regard to the two thirds of pre-1992 institutions (30 of 45) that comprised my interview sample population. This is because during the interviews I was able to confirm DPVC arrangements within these institutions. When I double-checked this information against the census data, in each

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[31] I estimated an average of five DPVCs per institution, or a total population of 225. This compares to the actual census population of 219.

instance I found the census data to be both complete and accurate. This is one example of how a mixed-methods approach provided a valuable means of data triangulation. Moreover, it provided reassurance that a reliance on publically available online information had not proved detrimental to the quality of my findings.

During the course of mapping the census data against that from the advertisement monitoring exercise, I became aware of one limitation to the research design that I had not considered at the outset: my use of external advertisement as the sole indicator that a DPVC had been appointed via external open competition. The census revealed five DPVCs, for whom I had no record of an external advert having being placed, who had come into their current post from another institution[32]. This indicated that they were appointed by means of a process that was not restricted to internal candidates.

It may be that external adverts were placed but either missed by me or not picked up as part of the advertisement monitoring exercise because they were not published in either the *Times Higher Education* or the *jobs.ac.uk* website. However, evidence emerging from the interviews suggests another possible explanation: that some institutions may be undertaking a DPVC recruitment search without placing an external advertisement. This in itself is valuable information and the identification of these five cases is an example of how a mixed-methods research design can highlight apparent inconsistencies in data in a revelatory way.

Given that they did not meet my stated criterion of external advertisement in the *Times Higher Education* or on the *jobs.ac.uk* website[33], these five posts were not included in the sub-group of DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition. Nor was it appropriate to include them in the sub-group appointed via an internal-only process since the precise nature of their appointment is not known. They were therefore excluded from the comparative analysis of the DPVC cohort by appointment method (Chapter Five, 4.2).

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[32] Interestingly, three of these five posts were in one university (Aston) which was not included in my institutional sample group since there was no record of it having placed any external advertisements for DPVC posts.

[33] It is therefore possible that my published data may slightly under-record the number of DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition: 71 rather than 76.

6.   Online Survey

An online survey of third tier university managers was undertaken with three main aims. The first was to elicit the views of these managers as to why change to the DPVC appointment model is happening and what its likely impact might be and, in so doing, to test my own ideas about which issues might be worth pursuing in the subsequent interviews.   The second was to generate data on their aspirations with regard to becoming a DPVC and their experience of applying for externally advertised DPVC posts. The third was to find volunteers for the interview phase of the study.

6.1   Study Population and Sampling Strategy

The online survey was aimed at the entire population of third tier managers in English pre-1992 universities and so there was no sampling strategy *per se*. The rationale for the selection of third tier managers was that they should be the most senior managers below DPVC level, both on the academic and the professional services side of the institution. In most cases, these were deans and senior directors of professional services. However, where the dean was also a DPVC, the study population was taken to be the next tier down of academic managers: that is, heads of department or school.

The survey was sent to all third tier managers for whom an email address could be found. A comprehensive trawl of university websites produced 661 results[34]. It is not possible to state precisely what proportion of the entire third tier manager population this represents but, given the availability of information on the relevant post holders in all 45 institutions, it is my belief that the coverage is at least 95% on the academic manager side. Information was much harder to find for professional services directors who were an invisible online presence in three of the institutions. Nevertheless, overall coverage of this group is believed to be good. It should be borne in mind, however, that this is not a stable population. Just as with the census of DPVCs, the study population is representative only of a given moment in time.

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[34] This is significantly more than my estimated population of 540, based on an average of six academic and six professional services directors per institution. The number was boosted by the large numbers of heads of department in those institutions where the dean was also a DPVC.

6.2   Procedure

A great deal of care was invested in the design of the online survey in order to make it as quick and easy to complete as possible and thus maximise the response rate. Survey length was kept to a minimum at only sixteen questions, and check boxes and drop down lists were utilised wherever possible to facilitate completion. Use of the 'go to' facility meant that respondents only had to answer those questions directly relevant to them and, although the main questions were compulsory, the use of free text boxes, included to allow additional comments or points of clarification, was optional in most cases.

The survey has seven pages in total, including an initial welcome page that gives an outline of the structure of the survey and an estimation of the time it should take to complete (ten minutes) followed by an Anonymity and Data Protection Statement on Page 2. The final page comprises a thank you message. The remaining four pages contain questions under the following headings: About You, Your Views on Changes to Appointment Practice, Your Career, and Invitation to Participate in Follow-up Research. Respondents were able to monitor their progress through the survey by an indicator on each page telling them they were on "Page 1 of 7" and so on. Access to the archived online survey is password protected and only available to registered survey administrators. However, a copy of the questions is provided for reference in Appendix D.

A draft version of the survey was piloted by three colleagues drawn from the target study population: two female professional services directors and one male head of department. They were first invited to read and comment on the invitation email to ensure that it was both comprehensible and sufficiently attractive to elicit a response. They were then asked to test the online survey in my presence and to give feedback on any issues of usability as well as to comment on the wording of the instructions, questions and response options. Given the personal nature of some of the survey questions, those testing the survey were not asked to provide responses[35], and hence any data from these pilots were not submitted or included in the findings.

As a result of this testing process, minor changes were made to the survey instrument and more significant ones to the invitation email, which I believe helped to make it more succinct and appealing – thus aiding the response rate. In order both to personalise the invitation and to bypass gatekeepers, wherever possible this email was sent directly to an

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[35] However, some dummy data were provided for test purposes.

individual's personal email address, rather than to a generic one[36], or to that of a personal assistant. A copy of the invitation email is attached for reference as Appendix E.

The email contained a link to a web-based survey located on the University of Bristol online survey site (http://survey.bris.ac.uk). This host site was used because it is professional, secure and free to licensed users, including the University of Kent. Bristol's online survey development software is easy to use and convenient for analysis. It is also widely known and trusted within higher education. My contact details were included both in the email and on the survey to permit respondents to ask questions or raise any concerns they might have. The survey was open for a two-week period between 1 and 14 November 2012 and a reminder email was sent out during the second week.

6.3   Response Rate and Respondent Profile

An email containing a link to the online survey was sent to 661 third tier managers. Thirteen emails were returned undelivered and 14 return receipt messages were received indicating that the recipients were away for the entire survey period, for example on maternity or study leave. 634 emails, or 96%, or survey invitations are therefore assumed to have been received. 132 recipients completed the survey – a response rate of 20%. There were a further 15 incomplete surveys, taking the overall response rate to 22% (147). For the sake of consistency, incomplete responses are excluded from the analysis.

Table 4: Online Survey Response Rate and Respondent Profile

	Study population		Respondents	
	Number	%	Number	%
Academics	447	67.6	85	64.4
Professional Services Managers	214	32.4	47	35.6
Total	661	100	132	100
Of those for whom gender is known:				
Male	465	71.5	95	72.0
Female	185	28.5	37	28.0
Total	650	100.0	132	100.0

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[36] For example, pvc-research@auniversity.ac.uk.

The respondents are highly representative of the study population in terms of type and gender, as shown by Table 4. In addition, good institutional coverage was achieved with 40 of the 45 (89%) pre-1992 institutions comprising the study population represented. The overwhelming majority of respondents are aged between 41 and 60 (89%), with the largest proportion aged between 51 and 60 (56%) and a further third between 41 and 50 (33%).

The breakdown of respondents by current role is as follows: deans (23%), heads of department or school (36%), professional services managers (36%) and others (5%). The others are academics, most of whom have just stepped down from a dean or head of department role. The largest proportion of academics (44%) is from the sciences, followed by social sciences (28%) and humanities (13%). Most of the remainder (15%) are from engineering and health. The highest proportion of heads of department is from a science background (44%) and deans from a social science background (33%).

6.4   Rationale

A survey was considered the most effective and practical means of reaching this relatively large study population and gaining a macro view of the issues. The use of interviews was considered, but rejected due to the small sample size and unstructured nature of the resulting data. A survey method is considered less intrusive for the posing of sensitive questions, such as the ones in this survey relating to how successful respondents have been in their DPVC job applications. It also has the advantage of minimising interviewer effects.

The main advantages of online over postal questionnaires are lower costs and ease of distribution, follow up and analysis. The University of Bristol survey platform, for example, facilitates the production of summary data and allows the researcher to 'drill down' into the data using filtering and cross-tabulation tools. An online survey has the added benefit of speed of response, perhaps due to the perceived urgency of email as a contact method. Compared to a written questionnaire, an online survey is also likely to result in fewer unanswered questions – mainly due to the technical facility to require a response - and an increased likelihood of eliciting more detailed replies to open questions (Bryman 2008). An online survey can also be completed at the respondents' convenience.

6.5   Issues and Limitations

Use of a survey method does not permit the posing of follow-up questions or probing. However, the design of this study meant that both were at least possible for the small sub-set of survey respondents (12) participating in the subsequent semi-structured interviews.

Lack of internet access is a major potential limitation of online compared to other survey methods. It was not a factor in this study, however, the population for which was selected on the basis of having a valid email address. Other disadvantages of the online survey method include concerns about confidentiality and anonymity and the possibility of multiple replies (Bryman 2008).

A technological issue was experienced in relation to this survey which led to concerns amongst some recipients about the security of accessing the University of Bristol survey site. Since default security settings vary between institutions, some survey recipients got an automated message asking if they were sure they wanted to open the link to the survey and informing them that this option was not recommended. A few recipients contacted me to let me know this had happened and I was able to reassure them that the survey site was safe and secure. However, it is impossible to know how widespread the problem was and how many people received the message and decided not to continue to the survey site. Given that institutional security settings are beyond my control, it is not believed that this problem could have been avoided.

There are mixed views about whether response rates are higher or lower with an online survey than other survey methods, though there is some evidence in the literature that online surveys do tend to obtain a higher response rate (Evans & Mathur 2005). There also appears to be no consensus about what constitutes a good response rate to an online survey. In this case, I set myself a target response rate of 15%, based on my own previous experience in conducting online surveys of relatively large populations without the use of any incentive or sense of obligation (for example, where a survey is conducted by an employer). Although I exceeded this target, the lack of published benchmarks makes it difficult to gauge just how good this response rate really was.

7.   Semi-Structured Interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were employed for the substantive research phase in order to elicit a range of views on the various aspects of the research phenomenon, in particular, the nature of change to the DPVC appointment model, reasons for the change and consequences for the individuals and institutions concerned. The inclusion of different categories of research participant, including DPVCs and those around them, was designed "to construct a metanarrative of the many stories heard from the many interview partners" (Miller & Crabtree 2004, p. 200) and thus gain a more rounded perspective on the research topic than has been the case with research to date.

7.1   Study Population and Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted for the interviews whereby participants were selected from the study population on the basis that they had something to contribute to the research topic (Denscombe 2007).

At an institutional level, the study population comprised:

(i)   The 30[37] English pre-1992 universities that had externally advertised at least one DPVC post in the period covered by the advertisement monitoring exercise; and

(ii) The four executive search agents active in the higher education sector.

Within these institutions, the study population included a total of 155 individuals: a mixture of vice chancellors, DPVCs appointed by means of external advertisement, registrars, third tier managers and executive search consultants with responsibility for senior university appointments. A breakdown of the numbers in each participant category is given in Table 5. The figures in parentheses are the percentage of the respective study population.

As Table 5 illustrates, the entire study population of vice chancellors and executive search agents were included in the sample. This was to secure sufficient numbers given the (misguided, as it transpired) expectation of a fairly low response rate. For the remaining categories of respondents, the following sampling criteria were used with the target of achieving two research participants – and a minimum of one - in each institution.

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[37] As of December 2013, the number of institutions advertising DPVC posts had increased to 33.

Table 5: Overview of Interview Study Population, Sample and Participant Numbers

	Vice Chancellors	*DPVCs*	*Registrars*	*Third Tier Managers*	*Search Consultants*	*All*
Population	30	67	23	31	4	155
Sample	30 (100%)	40 (59.7%)	18[38] (78.3%)	19 (61.3%)	4 (100.0%)	111 (71.6%)
Participants	19 (63%)	26 (38.8%)	8 (34.8%)	17 (54.8%)	3 (75.0%)	73 (47.1%)

DPVCs: a minimum of one DPVC appointed via external open competition from each of the 27[39] institutions which had this type of DPVC in place. Where there was more than one such DPVC in an institution, the sample was selected on the basis of the following criteria, in priority order:

(i)   Gender: females wherever possible in order to ensure women were adequately represented

(ii)   Alphabetical order of surname

(iii)   If the first invited DPVC declined or did not respond, another one was invited according to the same criteria, and so on as required to obtain two participants in total per institution.

Registrars*:* one from those institutions that:

(i)   Had no DPVC appointed via external open competition in post, or

(ii)   In which there were no third tier managers who had volunteered to be interviewed, or

(iii)   Where necessary to obtain two participants in total from each institution.

Third tier managers: one in each category (i.e. academic and professional services manager) per institution, chosen from amongst those who had volunteered to be interviewed when they responded to the online survey. Where there was more than one such third tier

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[38] This figure includes two heads of governance referred by their respective registrar.
[39] Loughborough, UEA and SOAS had no DPVCs in post at the time of the interviews who had been appointed by means of external open competition.

manager in an institution, the sample was selected on the basis of the following criteria, in priority order:

(i)   Gender: females wherever possible in order to ensure women were adequately represented

(ii) Alphabetical order of surname

(iii) If the first invited manager declined or did not respond, another one was invited according to the same criteria, and so on as required to obtain two participants in total per institution.

Table 6 provides further detail of the type of third tier manager included at each stage of the process. The figures in parentheses are the percentage of the respective study population. This shows that there were more academic than professional services managers in the sample.

Table 6: Breakdown of Third Tier Managers by Type

	Deans	*Heads of Department*	*Professional Services Managers*	*Total*
Population	7	14	10	31
Sample	5 (71.4%)	5 (35.7%)	9 (90.0%)	19 (61.3%)
Participants	5 (71.4%)	5 (35.7%)	7 (70.0%)	17 (54.8%)

In total, 111 people across all participant categories were invited for interview, equating to 72% of the total study population.

7.2   Procedure

7.2.1 Interview Approach

The approach I took to the interviews was akin to that of a "traveller" rather than a "miner" in that it was less about unearthing some knowledge or truth through careful and persistent questioning than about encouraging people to give their accounts and "trying to unfold the meaning of their experiences" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 1). These two metaphors represent two different conceptions of interview data as either given or

constructed. In the former, data collection and analysis are discrete activities whilst in the latter, interviewing and analysis are "intertwined phases of knowledge construction" (2009, p. 49).

It is acknowledged that an interview is not a normal conversation, but literally an "inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 20). It is thus an artificial process or "staged communication event" (Miller & Crabtree 2004, p. 194) in which the interviewer plays a key role. My aim as an interviewer was to strike a balance between empathy and social neutrality and to maintain a certain distance in order to create an "impartial emotional space" in which participants could speak openly, akin to someone opening up to a stranger on a train and, in so doing, "step back from their ordinary routines and reflect upon their lives" (Horowitz & Gerson 2002, p. 210).

Kvale and Brinkmann describe the process as "creating a stage" on which the participants feel free and safe to speak of personal issues (2009, p. 16), thus transforming a stranger into a confidant. However, given the personal nature of the interview topic, it was also important to guard against encouraging inappropriate disclosure. The strategies I adopted included maintaining a professional distance, avoiding a confiding tone and not forging close relations with participants (Gillham 2005).

7.2.2   Pilot Interviews

Two pilot interviews were undertaken, one with a male dean and the other with a female third tier manager, and data from both were included in the analysis. The aim was twofold: to test and refine the interview process and to obtain feedback upon it. In particular, I used the pilot interviews to test the feasibility of capturing the interview data by means of simultaneous note taking, rather than audio recording. This experience confirmed that, though challenging, it was possible to take contemporaneous notes and still conduct an effective interview. The issue of note taking versus audio recording is discussed in 7.2.6.

Feedback from the pilot interviews led to the development of an interview guide to be sent out to participants in advance of the meeting as an *aide memoire* on the research topic and the areas to be covered in the interview. I believe this guide served a useful purpose both in allowing participants to prepare for the interviews, if they so wished, and in providing reassurance before the interview even began that it would be conducted in a professional

manner. The guide was tailored to each category of participant. A copy of the version for vice chancellors is attached as Appendix F.

7.2.3 Interview Process

An email requesting an interview was sent individually to everyone in the sample population, wherever possible directly to a personal email address in order to minimise the impact of gatekeepers. A sample invitation email is provided as Appendix G. In order to minimise travel and accommodation costs, sample institutions were geographically clustered and an attempt was made to undertake interviews with all participants within each cluster of institutions during a single visit. An informed consent form (Appendix H) was sent out a few days in advance of each interview together with the interview guide.

In almost all cases, the interviews took place in the participant's office, meaning that the setting was private and the interviews could take place uninterrupted. After a brief introduction and confirmation of the participant's informed consent, the following overarching interview structure was adopted:

(i) Biographical questions to build rapport

(ii) Open-ended questions designed to elicit what the participant thinks or feels about the topic plus prompts and follow-up questions designed to steer or deepen understanding

(iii) Thanks and closing small talk. (Miller & Crabtree 2004)

At the end of the interview, participants were offered the opportunity to review an interview summary, a sample of which is given as Appendix I. This has been edited in order to preserve the anonymity of the research participant.

7.2.4 Respondent Validation

The method of analysis should be taken into consideration in the design of the interview schedule (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). In the case of this study, I had decided on a respondent validation approach to data analysis prior to conducting the interviews and had already designed the interview summary template. I introduced this element of respondent validation for two main reasons. Firstly, in order to allow interview participants to have a say in how the data they provide is interpreted. This has been identified as a key ethical issue associated with interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

The interview summary represents my first attempt at capturing the salient points from the interview, organising these by broad themes and capturing verbatim quotations. As such, I believe it provides a more meaningful mechanism than a transcript for participants to check my understanding not just of what was said, but of my initial interpretation of what was meant. The overall aim was to ensure the integrity of my research in terms of accurately and fairly conveying the views and perspectives of my participants.

The second reason is an ethical one, concerned with my commitment to preserving the anonymity of my participants. Higher education is a relatively small sector and senior figures are well known to each other. I therefore wanted to allow participants the chance to ensure they could not be personally identified through the use of specific examples or anecdotes and thus guard against the risk of accidental disclosure. By including certain phrases or sentences within quotation marks, I was also seeking approval for these words to be published in unattributed form.

The fact that the summaries were relatively short and easy to read not only meant that it was less of an imposition on participants to check them, but also had the added benefit of rendering data from over 70 interviews into a more manageable and accessible form.

Three quarters of participants (55, or 75%) chose to review their interview summary, just over half (53%) of whom made minor amendments whilst the remainder (47%) were content for it to stand without amendment.

7.2.5   Interviewing Elites

Most of my participants might be considered elites in the sense that they are leaders or experts in their field and in positions of power (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Even though I am both an experienced higher education manager and consultant, I am nevertheless a novice researcher and I was aware of the power imbalance between myself and many of my participants. This is in contrast to what is the more usual differential in power relations in favour of the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

Whilst it would be over-simplistic to suggest there is one approach that works for all elite interviews, arguably they do exhibit some generic traits that a researcher needs to bear in mind during the preparation and conduct of the interviews (Harvey 2011). Firstly, in recognition that elite participants are likely to have limited time available, I arranged meetings well in advance and requested a one-hour diary slot with the aim of containing the interview within 50 minutes. And, although my clear preference was for face-to-face

interviews, I was willing to accept a telephone interview as an alternative whenever the former was not possible. In this way, I was able to balance what I wanted (access to participants) with what was feasible for them.

Secondly, since there is some suggestion that elite interviewees tend to assess the interviewer and their knowledge of the subject area (Harvey 2011), I was aware of the need to establish my research credentials by, for example, ensuring I was familiar with the executive management arrangements in place at each institution. Thirdly, elite participants may exhibit a tendency to control interviews and be selective about which questions they answer. Accordingly, researchers may find it difficult to pose difficult questions, probe answers or maintain silences (Harvey 2011). In an attempt to deal with these issues, I adopted strategies of asking warm-up questions at the beginning of the interview in order to reduce tension and build rapport, and of using my findings to date as a means of challenging participants' responses in an unthreatening way.

Overall, I found the biggest difficulty with elite participants was interjecting a question or keeping the questioning on track, i.e. covering the range of questions. Sometimes this meant the conversation was taken off my intended course. Having said that, some rich data emerged when I allowed my participants to focus on the aspect of the topic that was of most interest and relevance to them. To a certain extent, I therefore tried to let the interview develop naturally on the basis that 'off topic' does not necessarily mean irrelevant. There was a degree of structure, but not rigidly imposed. My interview schedule (Appendix J) was designed both to meet my needs in answering the research questions and to address issues of significance to my participants (Bryman 2008). I was fortunate that, given the large number of interviews, I had sufficient data overall on each key theme even though I was not able to cover everything with everyone.

7.2.6 Note Taking Versus Recording

I decided not to record the interviews and instead to rely on contemporaneous notes, quickly followed by the writing up of a respondent validated interview summary. There were a number of important factors influencing this choice of data capture mechanism, both practical and ethical.

The first was to do with the people I was interviewing. Although scholars disagree on whether elite interviews should be recorded (Harvey 2011), on the basis of my previous experience I made a judgement that they would prefer to speak off the record and that not

recording the interviews would thus be more likely to lead to an open and frank conversation. This was particularly the case given the nature of the subject matter under discussion, including private and sensitive issues about their own careers and those of close colleagues. Secondly, I took the view that the interview dynamic and the creation of rapport might be badly affected if a participant chose to object to audio recording at the outset of the interview and I did not want to take this risk.

The third major consideration informing my decision not to record was my desire for respondent validation of the resulting interview data, as discussed in detail in 7.2.4. Finally, I am a very experienced interviewer. As a result, I know how difficult it is to maintain active listening and rapport whilst making notes. On the other hand, my experience has taught me that, provided I review my notes quite soon after completion of the interview, I have good powers of recall and am able to replay the interview experience in my mind. This allows me to 'flesh out' what may be rather sketchy notes and recall the tone and narrative thread of the original conversation – aspects that are often lost in the notes. Moreover, the two pilot interviews provided renewed evidence that note taking without audio recording was a feasible strategy for this study.

Although there were compelling reasons not to record the interviews, there are also disadvantages to such an approach. The act of note taking may impede active listening, whilst a reliance on notes runs the risk of faulty or selective memory (Ruane 2005). The notes – or in this case, the interview summaries resulting from the notes - become the only tangible record of the meeting and there is no recording or transcript to return to for further analysis. This may become an issue where a researcher wishes to re-examine the data from a different perspective or in relation to a theme not originally envisaged when the notes were made. In order to mitigate this risk, I made sure that my interview summaries included all the points from my notes, even where I did not think them directly relevant to my research questions.

7.2.7 Use of Quotations

Perhaps my greatest concern about the decision not to record my interviews was the fact that I did not have a transcript from which I could extract extended quotations. This was a potential loss on two main counts. The first concerns the evidentiary power of extracts from transcribed data. Their inclusion in the research report can be a persuasive means both of conveying the evidence upon which conclusions have been drawn and of allowing others to make judgements about the validity of those claims (Hammersley 2010).

Extended quotations thus perform an important role in helping "to clarify links between data, interpretation and conclusions" (Corden & Sainsbury 2006, p. 98). They should not be used as proof, however, since they are both selected at the discretion of the researcher and presented out of context (Denscombe 2007).

Secondly, extended verbatim quotations may bring the text alive and make it more readable, "balanced" and "convincing" (Corden & Sainsbury 2006, pp. 106-108). More importantly perhaps from the perspective of my own study, their use gives research participants a direct voice in the research outputs, allowing them an opportunity to have their say. At the same time, I was also conscious of the potential detriment to the interests of my research participants. Even when anonymised, extended extracts including specific examples or anecdotes may run the risk of accidental disclosure of institutions or individuals. This fact helped sway my decision towards note taking rather than recording. In broad terms, I decided that I would rather have the more frank and higher quality data I believed I would get by not recording, than the capacity for extended quotations that recording and transcription would permit me. As it transpired, the sacrifice was not as great as I had imagined since I found that I was able to capture in my notes many short verbatim quotations which I believe do give voice to my participants and bring "the talk to life again" in my thesis (Denscombe 2007, p. 196).

Although standard research practice, the assumption that the use of transcribed data is "more rigorous than reliance upon field notes, in the sense that it provides a fuller and more accurate representation of 'what happened'" is questionable (Hammersley 2010, p. 554). Just like note taking, transcription is a process of construction that involves more than simply writing down what was said. Decisions have to be made, for example about what to include or exclude, and thus there can be no one correct transcription (Hammersley 2010)[40] any more than there can be any one correct set of field notes.

Whilst the process of transcription may bring the researcher closer to the data (May 2001), it may also distance them from it if the transcription itself comes to be regarded as 'the data', rather than as a record of the interview as conversation or social encounter (Cohen, L., Manion & Morrison 2000). Written transcripts should thus not be considered "sacred and infallible texts" (Hammersley 2010, p. 565). Rather, they may be viewed as "impoverished, decontextualised renderings of live interview conversations" that fail to

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[40] Hammersley does, however, warn against overplaying the role of the transcriber in the construction of the transcription, which is nevertheless an attempt at representing "more or less adequately 'what occurred'" (2010, p. 558).

take account of the social interaction and the role of the interviewer as co-producer of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 178; 193).

All things considered, I am conscious that there was no right decision about whether to record the interviews or not, only one that had a better fit with my own research style, research purpose and type of participants.

7.3   Response Rate and Respondent Profile

Seventy three interviews were conducted in total, which equates to 47% of the total study population and 66% of the sample (Table 7). The figures in parentheses are the percentage of the sample. This is an impressive strike rate of interview requests to acceptances, which I believe reflects the high level of interest in my research topic and its perceived importance by the key stakeholders in the DPVC appointment process. Moreover, the fact that nearly half of the entire study population participated in the research lends weight and credibility to the findings.

Table 7: Strike Rate of Participants as a Proportion of the Sample

	Vice Chancellors	*DPVCs*	*Registrars*	*Third Tier Managers*	*Search Consultants*	*All*
Sample	30	40	18	19	4	111
Participants	19 (63%)	26 (65.0%)	8 (44.4%)	17 (89.5%)	3 (75.0%)	73 (65.8%)

There was excellent coverage across the various respondent categories and sample institutions. As illustrated in Table 8, women were slightly over-represented amongst DPVC and third tier manager interviewees compared to the study population, reflecting sampling criteria designed to accord them priority.

Given the tremendous response to the interview requests, it is believed that the study reached the point of theoretical saturation, that is, when fresh data would no longer have generated new insights and further data collection would have been of little or no value.

Table 8: Females in the Study Population, Sample and Interview Participants

	Vice Chancellors	DPVCs	Registrars	Third Tier Managers	Search Consultants	All
Population	3 (10.0%)	10 (14.9%)	5 (21.7%)	8 (25.8%)	3 (75.0%)	29 (18.7%)
Sample	3 (10.0%)	9 (22.5%)	4 (22.2%)	7 (35.8%)	3 (75.0%)	27 (24.3%)
Participants	2 (10.5%)	5 (19.2%)	2 (25.0%)	6 (35.3%)	3 (100.0%)	18 (24.7%)

7.4   Rationale

Interviews were selected for this micro phase of data collection since they provide a useful means of exploring respondents' views and feelings about complex phenomena (Denscombe 2007) which would be difficult to access with any other method (Lawler 2002). Interviews can yield both descriptive and explanatory data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006) and they have the potential for eliciting rich, deep and compelling information and generating new insights into people's feelings or opinions (Denscombe 2007). Moreover, the interview method is a good tool for exploring complex and subtle phenomena and provides a good fit with the study's phenomenological approach since it has a unique potential for accessing individuals' descriptions of the lived world (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Qualitative interviews have thus been described as the "gold standard" of qualitative methods (Silverman 2000, pp. 291-292).

The confidentiality of a number of the topics for discussion meant that group interviews or focus groups would not have been practicable and it was therefore an easy decision to undertake them on a one-to-one basis. Face-to-face interviews were chosen in preference to telephone interviews mainly because of the opportunity they present to create a sense of rapport. However, as already discussed (7.2.5), telephone interviews were offered as an alternative where a face-to-face meeting was not possible. The former have the advantage of convenience for both parties as they are easier to diarise, do not involve travel and are thus both more cost and time efficient. Certainly the use of telephone interviews allowed me to include more research participants than would otherwise have been possible and, although the length of interview was generally shorter, the data was of no less value.

A semi-structured interview format is particularly appropriate where, as was the case here, there is a fairly clear research focus, informed by the findings from the census and online survey. One of the particular advantages of this format over that of the structured interview is that it allows people to respond more on their own terms (May 2001).

In the final analysis, the best method is the one that not only provides the best fit to the research aims, but is also the best executed. Interviewing is a "craft" which rests upon the practical skills and judgement of the interviewer, is difficult to do well, and learned through practice (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 17). Interviews were chosen as the primary method for this study in large part because of my own extensive interview experience which I believe added significant value to the quality of the interviews and hence of the subsequent analysis.

7.5   Issues and Limitations

Qualitative interviews tend to rest on the epistemological assumption that individuals are privileged data sources about the social world (Mason 2002). This reliance on interviewees' own narratives and perspectives is also a potential weakness of interviews as a research instrument. Interview data permit the researcher to hear only what interviewees say they do (or the reality of the world they describe) rather than what they actually do (or how things really are) and may also overrate the importance of individual human agency (Mason 2002). This argues for the value of methodological testing and the use of other forms of data which are less reliant on both words and self-report. This one-dimensional aspect of interviews was mitigated in this study by the use of a mixed-methods research design in which data from the census, for example, provide a counterbalance to the reliance in interviewing on individuals' own accounts and on what can be expressed in words (Mason 2002).

It was initially envisaged that the main potential pitfall associated with the use of interviews would be obtaining access and I had contingency plans in place to reduce the study's reliance on interview data if necessary. As it transpired, I had the opposite problem: many more interviews than I had anticipated. This was highly beneficial to the study, but did increase fieldwork costs quite significantly.

Clark (2010) suggests a number of reasons why people may choose to engage with qualitative research, including a subjective interest in the research topic and an introspective interest in talking about themselves and explaining their own ideas and

feelings to an interested third party. I found both to be evident for this study and I suspect that, particularly in the case of vice chancellors, there was an added element of vested interest in relation to finding out what is going on elsewhere in the sector and using this to inform future institutional appointment practice.

Arguably, "the best interviews occur with respondents who want to share their story and knowledge, and, ideally, the interview situation is a rewarding experience for them in and of itself" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006, p. 124). This raises an interesting issue: the degree to which a participant's motivations for engaging in research impact the "type and quality of the research relationship, and subsequently any data that emerge" (Clark, T. 2010, p. 416). It is therefore important to remember that participants may have their own agenda and are no more likely to be neutral than the interviewer.

Since the researcher has no way of knowing whether what their participants say is true or matches their actual behaviour, the validity of an interview should rest on whether the researcher's account is accurate and balanced rather than on whether it gives a "true" picture of their participants (Gillham 2005). And even if it is not a true reflection of their actual views, attitudes or behaviour, interview data may still be illuminative and valuable (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007).

In the case of interviews, the researcher is effectively the "research instrument" (Miller & Crabtree 2004, p. 196). Interview data are mediated by the interviewer as well as the interviewee (May 2001), each of whom has their own motivations, limitations and assumptions. There is always a risk of researchers imposing their own story through interpretation of the interview data and they need to be aware of "the impacts of the 'how' of data collection through qualitative interviewing on the 'what' of the data collected" (Gunasekara 2007, p. 465). This places the onus on researchers to be reflexive, sensitive to the dynamic between themselves and their participants and the way in which their assumptions can affect the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006).

8.   Data Analysis

8.1   Procedure

In approaching the process of analysis, I aimed for a degree of "theoretical sensitivity", whereby I could avoid being unnecessarily constrained by preconceived theory and retain sufficient sensitivity and theoretical insight "to see beneath the obvious to discover the new" (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p. 46).

It is acknowledged that data analysis is essentially a "subjective construction" and that everything new we learn is understood in terms of what we already know, and thus is influenced by our own prior ideas and attitudes (Gillham 2005, p. 6). There is a danger of a projection effect in which researchers' own personal prejudices may affect their interpretation of interview responses (Sarantakos 2005). They therefore need to do the best possible job in interpreting the data and confirming it by other means, taking full account of the context in which it was produced and the inevitable researcher effect (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007).

Accordingly, a process of reflexivity was employed in which my own assumptions and biases – and the extent to which they affect the research process – were critically examined (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006). This could be described as "reflexive objectivity", where researchers strive for objectivity about how their own unavoidable prejudices, or subjectivity, have impacted on the production of knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 242).

I tried to view the data as a whole first and then identify broad themes and organise into topics. Techniques such as asking provocative questions, looking for outliers and possible sources of disconfirmation were employed as part of a process of subjecting my interpretation of data to constant scrutiny (Miles & Huberman 1994). I also used dissemination activities, such as conference presentations and blogs, as an opportunity to gain feedback which helped to inform my own thinking and interpretation of the data.

8.2   Rationale

I considered but rejected the approach to data coding and analysis proposed by grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin 1998) as both overly prescriptive and flawed. I believe it fails to acknowledge the extent of the researchers' role in the process of analysis

and sense making (Denscombe 2007) and the influence their "conceptual baggage" will inevitably have on what they 'see' in the data, thus casting doubt on the over-simplistic assertion that all concepts must be empirically grounded (Robson 2002). In my view, the espoused grounded theory data coding and categorisation process represents a misguided attempt to systematise in a pseudo-scientific way an analytic process I believe to be essentially intuitive.

As Kvale and Brinkmann argue, there are no standard or fixed methods to arrive at the meaning of what was said in an interview and the search for data analysis techniques may be a misguided attempt for find a "technological fix" for what is essentially down to the experience and the craftsmanship of the researcher (2009, p. 192). Ironically, It is probably for this latter reason that the label grounded theory is sometimes utilised by researchers who do not fully follow its methodology in an attempt to provide an appearance of rigour or to gain some stamp of "positivist approval" (Charmaz 2005). So, whilst I have been inspired by grounded theory to place empirical work at the heart of my study and to seek to generate theory – in the form of explanation, insight, enhanced understanding and a meaningful guide to action (Strauss & Corbin 1998) – I do not accept that this will be theory that is *solely* grounded in the data.

9. Ethical Considerations

The research received approval from the University of Kent's Social Sciences Research Ethics Advisory Group for Human Participants and was undertaken in accordance with the ESRC's *Framework for Research Ethics.* My fundamental ethical stance was not one of compliance, however. Rather than rely solely on ethics codes and committees, I took personal responsibility for ethical issues (Gregory 2003) and for maintaining the transparency, impartiality and integrity of my research.

I made strenuous efforts to maintain the implicit contract between myself as researcher and the research participants, that is, openness in return for anonymity. By anonymity I mean that there is no link between the presentation of the data and the person who provided it (Ruane 2005). Ideally, there should be reciprocity between what participants give and what they get from the research process (Cohen, L., Manion & Morrison 2000). Interviews can be a rewarding experience for those who wish to share their story (Hesse-

Biber & Leavy 2006) or to inform research which might be of value to themselves or others. But researchers need to weigh the importance of the research project against its potential for harm.

The main risk to participants identified in this study was that of accidental disclosure. This study collected sensitive data from participants concerning, for example, their job applications and aspirations. They are therefore subject to the potential for personal embarrassment – and possibly more serious career implications – if accidental disclosure of their identity should occur during the conduct or writing up of the research. This is of particular concern for this study population since they are a small elite group, in many cases well known to each other.

The following measures were taken to mitigate this risk in those phases of the study involving human participants:

Online survey: Personal data provided by survey respondents has been used only for data management and analysis purposes. Published findings in whatever form have been, and will continue to be, anonymised and no data individually or institutionally attributed. Free text comments have been edited to ensure that respondents cannot be identified.

Semi-structured interviews: Interview summaries, using respondent codes rather than names, were produced based on my interview notes. Participants were offered the opportunity to review the summary of their interview and to amend any content they felt may identify them (by, for example, reference to a specific incident or event which may be recognisable to colleagues). The researcher's original interview notes were then destroyed. Caution was exercised in the writing up process in order to avoid inadvertent disclosure of an individual's identity, for example, because their institution is recognisable.

The informed consent form (Appendix H) sets out the procedures that were followed in relation to the responsible handling of data, the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity, and the avoidance of harm or detriment to participants. No disclosure of personal information has been, or will be, made to a third party without the permission of the participant concerned unless required by law. Participants are able to view personal data held on them upon request.

For ethical reasons, only research participants who were not close colleagues were included in the study.

10. Summary

This is a qualitative study which has its philosophical roots in a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. It utilises a mixed-methods design, comprising both 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' methods, in support of an essentially qualitative purpose. The choice of methods was based on a pragmatic assessment of how well they would work in answering a specific research question. The census and online survey allowed me to establish the macro aspects of the phenomenon whilst the interviews provided a means of exploring the micro level, lived experience and perspectives of my research participants.

Although it draws on the ideas of Glaser and Strauss (1967) in relation to sociological theory, the study does not employ a grounded theory methodology *per se*. It is, however, broadly inductive and theory generating in its approach and seeks research outcomes that are grounded in rich, multi-dimensional empirical data, yet that also reflect my own experience and ideas.

The whole study was underpinned by a commitment to accurately and fairly represent the perspectives and views of my research participants and to preserve their anonymity. The respondent validation process was one important means of fulfilling this commitment, as was my reflexive approach to data analysis and interpretation. Taken together, these strategies ensured that the research was conducted with integrity and mindful of the need to avoid harm to my research participants.

The response rate for the interviews was extremely high and is testament to the perceived importance of the study within the sector. Moreover, the fact that almost half the target study population participated in the interviews lends weight and credence to the findings. These are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Drivers and Outcomes of Change

1.   Introduction

The research findings are presented in this and the following two chapters, organised thematically by research question. Data in relation to the first two empirical research questions are given without commentary in this chapter.   These are then discussed and analysed in Chapters Six and Seven as part of the consideration of the final three analytical and theoretical research questions.

This chapter opens by establishing the nature and extent of change to the DPVC appointment model, i.e. the means and terms of appointment and role construction (Section 2). It then turns to presenting the evidence in answer to the empirical research questions. Section 3 examines the case for change (Q.1), with an emphasis on the perspective of vice chancellors as the main change agents. Section 4 outlines the profile of serving DPVCs and the impact of changed appointment practice upon it (Q.2a). Sections 5 and 6 then present the data on the consequences of change for the careers and aspirations of DPVCs and third tier managers respectively (Q.2 b and c).

The overall approach taken to the writing up of interview findings is to present exemplars that are illustrative of the sample population. Short verbatim quotations are used wherever possible in order to give a direct voice to research participants. In general, quotations have been selected on the basis that they are representative of commonly held views. However, they are sometimes used to illustrate exceptions to the main body of opinion and, where this is the case, it is indicated in the text.

In order to prevent accidental disclosure of the identity of research participants, minimal attribution of quotations is given. The following abbreviations are used to denote different types of participant: VC (vice chancellor); DPVC (deputy or pro vice chancellor); R (registrar);

Dean/HOD (dean or head of department/school); PSM (professional services manager) and ESA (executive search agent). The number that follows each quotation is the assigned interview code for that individual. Inclusion of these code numbers evidences the presentation of a wide range of different 'voices'.

2.   Nature and Extent of Change

This section presents empirical evidence to support the fundamental premise of this thesis that the DPVC appointment model is changing in pre-1992 English universities. Data from the interviews, census and updated advertisement monitoring exercise[41] are utilised to illustrate the nature and extent of this change.

2.1   Means of Appointment

The trend towards an external open competition means of DPVC appointment in English pre-1992 universities (Shepherd 2011) is continuing. Pre-1992 universities accounted for 39% of DPVC posts advertised by all English universities[42] between January 2006 and December 2013, placing 112 of the 288 advertisements. Thirty three of 45 (73%) pre-1992 universities externally advertised at least one DPVC post during this eight-year period, with an average of 3.4 posts per advertising institution. Details of DPVC advertisements are attached for reference as Appendix K.

The number of pre-1992 universities placing a DPVC advert has been growing year on year, with four institutions advertising a DPVC post, or posts, for the first time in 2013 (Brunel, LSE, Reading and SOAS). However, only four of the 33 advertising institutions have adopted a model of external open competition for *all* their DPVC posts. The large majority employ a mixed model of internal and external appointments, with the result that within the same executive management team there are DPVCs who have been appointed by different means. This reflects that fact that vice chancellors' decisions on appointment method tend to be made on a pragmatic, case-by-case basis rather than as a matter of policy.

> *"There is no dogmatism."* (VC 14)

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[41] This exercise was initially undertaken for my MA dissertation (Shepherd 2011) and subsequently extended for this doctoral study (Chapter Four, 5.2).

[42] This has not been a stable population over the period, but currently stands at 98 (Universities UK).

Only 12 pre-1992 universities (27%) utilise an internal-only appointment process for all DPVC posts.

The use of executive search agencies for DPVC posts is now commonplace, though has not yet reached the virtually universal level (98%) for vice chancellor appointments. Executive search agencies are employed in 61% of cases where a DPVC post is externally advertised and pre-1992 universities are just as likely as their post-1992 counterparts to use them. There are four big players in the DPVC executive search market[43], who between them account for 84% of DPVC posts within pre-1992 universities. Perrett Laver is the clear market leader and is involved in almost half (48%) of externally advertised DPVC appointments.

2.2   Terms of Appointment

In most cases being a DPVC is now a full-time job, though some retain a notional time allocation for research - typically one day a week. The majority of DPVCs undertake the role on a fixed-term basis for between three and five years (usually renewable for a second term by mutual agreement) with an underlying open-ended academic contract. This remains the normal basis of employment for DPVCs regardless of their means of appointment. There are a few examples of DPVCs appointed to the role on an open-ended contract, though they remain in the minority.

Vice chancellors expressed strong views both for and against permanent DPVC appointments. The minority of vice chancellors in favour suggest that people respond differently to the job if it is permanent, with permanent DPVCs thought to be more willing to make decisions and be more accountable for them in the long term (VC 2). Moreover, a permanent appointment is perceived as sending a message:

> *"You are clearly saying 'this is a leadership position'."* (PSM 5)

Making the positions open ended is seen as an important signal of the increasing professionalism of university management and the reality that "these are jobs not roles":

> *"If you want to do it properly, give open-ended contracts."* (VC 16)

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[43] These are Perrett Laver, Heidrick & Struggles, Harvey Nash and Saxton Bampfylde. Odgers Berndtson is also a major player in the wider higher education executive search market.

Whereas open-ended contracts signify a permanent management cadre (VC 19), fixed-term contracts have a symbolic importance in maintaining the notion that DPVCs are academics who will return to the ranks (DPVC 12).

> *"The principle of PVCs having a fixed-term role is very important and making them permanent would change the culture quite dramatically." (R 6)*

Most vice chancellors prefer fixed-term DPVC appointments which are said to provide "a natural break point" (VC 11), offer flexibility to "refresh roles and bring in new ideas and perspectives" (VC 19) and "trigger a review" which is useful for both the individual and the institution (VC 12). The downsides are that good DPVCs have a limited term, although one or two vice chancellors suggest that the rules can be "fiddled a bit" if necessary (VC 19). The DPVC term also has a bearing on the attractiveness of the job for some external candidates.

> *"Some people are happy to work on short-term contracts, but I would like more security."* (DPVC 12)

> *"If my term had been fixed term, I might not have moved."* (DPVC 17)

For many vice chancellors, however, the term of appointment is considered an irrelevance in practice since high-achieving DPVCs are likely to move on to other roles and under-performing ones have to be dealt with regardless of whether or not they are on open-ended or fixed-term contracts.

> *"I'm not terribly fussed about the term of the contract. If someone is not performing there are ways of dealing with that."* (VC 18)

> *"If an appointment were problematic you would have to deal with it whether it were fixed term or not."* (VC 2)

2.3   Role Construction

There have been four main changes to the construction of the DPVC role during the eight-year period from 2005 to 2013. Firstly, the stretching of the second tier of management observed by Smith *et al* (2007) has become more prevalent as the number of DVCs with a distinct and more senior role to that of PVCs has grown. In 2005, the executive

management team in most pre-1992 universities (25 of 42, or 59%[44]) comprised an apparently undifferentiated group of DPVCs. By August 2013, however, the majority of institutions (33 of 45, or 73%) had both PVCs *and* one or more DVCs. In a few cases, this reflects a move to a president and provost executive management model.

Secondly, an entirely new type of DPVC has emerged: the DPVC/Dean, typically combining a cross-institution policy role with the executive management of a faculty. According to the 2006 ACU Yearbook, there were no such posts in 2005 but by 2013 there were 40 DPVC/Deans, 18% of the entire DPVC cohort. Twelve of the 45 pre-1992 universities have at least one DPVC/Dean.   Thirdly, there is evidence from both university websites and interview data to suggest that some DPVCs are assuming executive management responsibilities for professional services functions in a management model more akin to that found in the post-1992 sector. This provides empirical confirmation of Middlehurst's recent observation that some DPVCs are taking over line management responsibilities from registrars (2013). Fourthly, an examination of job titles reveals that the range of portfolios for which DPVCs now have responsibility has continued to grow well beyond the traditional ones of research and teaching and learning (Shepherd 2014a). For example, in the 2013 cohort there are DPVCs with portfolios for internationalisation, student experience, enterprise and engagement, development and external relations.

Taken together these findings evidence the fact that traditional DPVCs with cross-institutional policy responsibilities are being supplemented by new more executive variants of the role, often with significant budgetary and/or line management responsibilities. Policy and executive DPVCs often sit side by side on the same team or, in the case of DPVC/Deans, the two activities may be incorporated within a single post.

The distinction between types of DPVC may extend to the means and terms of their appointment. Policy DPVCs are more typically on internal secondment while executive DPVCs are somewhat more likely to have been appointed by means of external open competition. There are also implications for salary levels given that a number of vice chancellors indicated the move to an external appointment model has acted as a salary escalator. Those securing a DPVC role by this route may therefore be more highly remunerated than those on internal secondment. It is worth noting at this point that the higher recruitment and salary costs incurred as a result of an external appointment process

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[44] 2005 data was only available for 42 of the 45 pre-1992 universities.

are seen as a disadvantage of this method compared to internal secondment. However, for many vice chancellors this is a price worth paying to secure the right candidate.

3.   The Case for Change

This section addresses the first research question regarding the case for change to the DPVC appointment model. It summarises the main arguments advanced by interview participants, presented in order of perceived importance. Taken together, these are indicative of a deficit case for change, typically initiated as a means of solving a perceived problem or improving the university's performance.

3.1   Securing the Best Candidates

The primary motivation for vice chancellors to adopt an external open competition appointment model for one or more of their DPVC positions is a desire to secure the best person for the job. This approach is characterised by one vice chancellor as "a quest for the best" (VC 8). Certainly, the bar appears to have been set very high.

> *"We do want the very, very best." (VC 8)*

> *"If they are not the best in the world, they will not get the job." (VC 1)*

Vice chancellors point to a number of reasons why only the best candidates will do. Firstly, the DPVC role has become more complex and demanding.

> *"What's being asked of managers is radically different and they are just not the same roles." (Dean/HOD 10)*

Executive management team members now have "power and responsibility" and are expected "to drive change" (VC 12). There is more on a DPVC's agenda and "there is pressure to do more with less and quicker" so "you can't afford to take people who'll be learning on the job" (VC 18). As the demands of the post grow, so do the requirements of post holders.

Secondly, though not all vice chancellors agree, the DPVC role is generally viewed as having become more important.   At any rate, the role is being taken more seriously and it is acknowledged that a good appointment can make a real difference for the better, and *vice*

versa (Dean/HOD 1). Given the increased demands and expectations of the role, DPVCs are now seen as "high risk appointments" for universities (Dean/HOD 2) and considered by many participants as "too important to leave to the vagaries of who is available internally" (Dean/HOD 1).

> *"PVC management positions are now much more exposed with a much higher level of risk and so the appointment process has to be different." (DPVC 12)*

Thirdly, marketisation and the move from a collegial to a more corporate organisational model "with power at the top" (VC 12), are having a strong influence on the need to recruit high calibre DPVCs. For many participants the change to an external open competition appointment model can be seen as "a natural consequence of a whole series of changes in HE [higher education]" (VC 13) and as "a symptom of something much deeper that's happening in HE" (VC 12).

> *"Universities are more managerialist"* and *"the sector is recruiting a different kind of person, more suited to what is needed now." (DPVC 6)*

In a highly competitive market, universities must be well managed – and recruit people accordingly. Universities "can't afford to fail" and need good people (VC 1). There is thus "an ever more insistent search for greater skills" (VC 17).

> *"The system is more competitive and to succeed you need very good DVCs and PVCs." (VC 13)*

A number of vice chancellors refer to universities as big businesses that "can't be run in an amateur way" (VC 10). One vice chancellor describes the internal secondment DPVC appointment model as "a commitment to amateurism" and "the cult of the amateur manager" that had to give way to "a professionalisation of management" (VC 13). Meanwhile, one registrar views it as:

> *"A historical relic from a time when people didn't want to do these jobs and when management and leadership were not taken very seriously." (R 5)*

Many interviewees suggested that universities "can no longer afford to have anything other than professional management" and need to look outside for talent (DPVC 5). This is particularly the case where an institution is judged to be underperforming and/or where the vice chancellor has instituted a strategy to improve performance (VC 17). This places "a certain expectation of performance" on the incoming DPVC (VC 2).

In order to appoint such high-calibre individuals, vice chancellors say they must be able to select from the widest possible pool of candidates and this can only be achieved by opening up the positions to external competition.

> *"The logic was to get to the best candidates to get the best people." (VC 16)*

> *"The whole thrust has been to attract the best calibre person from the best pool of applicants." (DPVC 3)*

3.2   Plugging a Skills Gap

The decision to externally advertise a given DPVC post is generally made in cases where the vice chancellor believes there to be no, or too few, suitably qualified internal candidates.

> *"To take second rate internal candidates to avoid going out to external competition would be wrong." (PSM 5)*

> *"It's all about the match between what we need and potential internal candidates at that point in time." (VC 11)*

For two or three vice chancellors, the size of their institutions is seen as a limiting factor.

> *"There's a bit less chance to grow your own in a small institution." (VC 11)*

However, for most vice chancellors the issue is more one of quality than quantity. For example, one describes his university as having "a paucity of talent" in terms of management with "not much appetite for being a manager" in what is a "difficult-to-manage institution" (VC 13).

The need to address a perceived skills gap is thus a key driver of change.

> *"The previous VC realised that he couldn't solve the problems here with the people he had." (DPVC 5)*

3.3   Testing Internal Candidates

Even where there are strong internal candidates, many vice chancellors believe that it is still important to open up the posts to external competition in order to test internal staff against the field. An external appointment process "puts internal and external candidates up on the same basis so that you can compare one against the other" (VC 10).

Making internal candidates compete against "the best available candidates" (VC 1) is seen as a good thing not only for the institution, but also for the candidates themselves. This is because appointment via a competitive process is thought "to validate the individual who comes in" (VC 8).

> *"The transparency of the external recruitment process helps internal candidates to get the esteem of their peers." (VC 10)*

This view is echoed by many DPVCs appointed via an external open competition process who believe that getting the job in this way gives them "increased credibility" and "more of a mandate" (DPVC 1).

> *"Open competition strengthens the position of internal appointments as people know they haven't just been given the nod." (DPVC 17)*

Another factor in the decision to make internal candidates apply via external open competition is vice chancellors' desire to appoint DPVCs who are prepared to demonstrate that they really want the job.

> *"We want people to put their heads above the parapet" (VC 10).*

3.4   Bringing in "New Blood"

Although an external open competition process does not necessarily lead to the appointment of someone from outside the institution, a desire to bring in an external is a key driver of change for many vice chancellors.

In a competitive higher education market, experience in another institution has become more valuable and "the balance between internal versus external knowledge has shifted" (VC 17). One registrar suggests that "relying on internal talent is a mistake" and advises people seeking the most senior posts to leave their institution to gain experience elsewhere (R 5). Another agrees that "spending time in other institutions is a good thing" (R 6).

External appointees are seen as bringing fresh ideas and perspectives from elsewhere and offering "the opportunity to look at the institution via a slightly different lens" (VC 5). They also permit the challenge of prevailing ideas, something deemed necessary as "institutions need to think forwards, not backwards" (DPVC 7).

> *"I want PVCs who will force us to think through what we're doing." (VC 4)*

In some cases, it is considered necessary to make external appointments in order to bring in fresh blood and avoid "going stale" (Dean/HOD 8). This is particularly true where the institution is seen as too introspective or where there are long-serving executive management team members.

> *"It's too inward looking to have people in post too long" (R 6)*

However, some DPVCs point to the potential dangers of exclusively appointing external candidates.

> *"What you don't want is an entire SMT [senior management team] imposed as an alien entity." (DPVC 6)*

> *"It is good to have a mixture of new blood and those who have come from the grass roots of the institution." (DPVC 16)*

3.5   Driving Change

Vice chancellors may advertise DPVC posts with the specific aim of appointing an external candidate when they are looking for someone to drive forward a change agenda. In such cases, they are likely to judge that someone from outside the organisation may be better suited to the task.

> *"If you want to break the mould, an internal person – however good – would probably not work." (VC 18)*

Vice chancellors may see things that need changing but "find it difficult to effect change in an established, settled environment characterised by inertia" (Dean/HOD 2).

> *"You must know what you want. If a bit of the organisation is failing, you might need new blood." (VC 18)*

Internal candidates may be considered as having vested interests or as resistant to change. Moreover, where underperformance is an issue, internal candidates are sometimes viewed as part of the problem.

> *"Those people who want to maintain the status quo tend to be internal appointments." (VC 4)*

3.6   Other Factors

Whilst most vice chancellors are focused on widening the applicant pool in order to secure the best candidates, a few also specifically mention increased diversity as a goal. Those who acknowledge that their current executive management team is not sufficiently diverse believe that external open competition "has a better chance of redressing that imbalance" (VC 1) and suggest that external appointments can bring diversity "in experience as well as personal profile" (VC 8). However, the majority of vice chancellors are focused on quality rather than diversity as a driver of change.

For a few, adopting an external open competition model is simply a matter of bringing appointment practice for DPVCs into line with that for other university staff. Since external recruitment is the norm for most other posts in the institution, one vice chancellor questions why it should be different at a more senior level (VC 5). There is also a compliance aspect to the change, whereby a move to an external open competition model is viewed as a means of demonstrating to members of the governing body that the appropriate procedures are in place. One participant described his vice chancellor's decision to undertake "an open and transparent" external open competition process as motivated in part by a desire "to be seen to be doing the right thing" (PSM 1).

> *"The decision to choose internal or external appointment method is as much of a political judgement as anything else – it can be politically easier to go external."*
> (VC 13)

In some cases there may be an element of "following trends" or an "other places are doing it so maybe we should do it" type of mentality (Dean/HOD 2). One professional services director who came from the public sector suggests that the appointment process in higher education is quite naïve and that universities tend to follow the pattern of what others are doing (PSM 1). Even though, perhaps unsurprisingly, vice chancellors do not mention following trends as a decision-making factor, over half (55%) of third tier managers surveyed agree with the proposition that following the example of peer institutions is a likely motivation for change.

3.7   Vice Chancellors as Change Agents

Whereas chairs of university governing bodies are responsible for the hiring and firing of the vice chancellor, it appears they are generally less heavily involved in DPVC appointments. That is not to say that they do not take a keen interest in proceedings: a

member of council usually sits on the appointment panel and it has to ratify the appointment and salary level. Nevertheless, it is vice chancellors who "call the shots" (DPVC 7) in the appointment of DPVCs, in terms both of the choice of appointment method and of the successful candidate.

> *"No candidate will be appointed without the agreement of the VC. I would have changed PVC appointment practice if I thought it was not working" (VC 9)*

Right from the outset one vice chancellor says he was "explicit that getting the right senior team was important to me and I wanted the support of council to do it" (VC 11). The expectation is that not only the governing body, but also the senate, will "go along with" the vice chancellor's choice of DPVC (R 1).

> *"The chief executive needs to have the team he wants. The VC can ultimately do what they like." (VC 11)*

The over-riding view of vice chancellors is that they "must have the final say" over who is in the team because it is they who are accountable for the delivery of the institutional strategy (VC 1).

> *"It is not possible to run an institution by management group where that group is not shaped, or where people on it are not aligned to what the institution is trying to do." (VC 4)*

Not surprisingly, vice chancellors are looking for people they can work with and trust.

> *"A VC understandably wants his[45] own team." (Dean/HOD 7)*

> *"Personal chemistry is also important." (DPVC 7)*

It is suggested that "the next generation of VCs will be keener to recruit externally" (VC 11) in order "to put their own stamp on things and appoint people they trust" (DPVC 7).

> *"There is a sense in which you are someone else's team if you are inherited by a new VC." (DPVC 7)*

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[45] It is noticeable how often participants refer to a vice chancellor as being male, even when talking in generic terms rather than about a specific individual. Perhaps this is not surprising given the preponderance of male vice chancellors not only amongst research participants (89.5%), but also the entire study population (90%).

Moreover, one DPVC suggested that a new vice chancellor may be more comfortable recruiting someone from outside who does not have an internal power base (DPVC 2).

A tendency for incoming vice chancellors to change the incumbent executive management team is noted by some participants. One DPVC says his previous vice chancellor "went through the team, choosing those to keep and those to go" (DPVC 26). Although a number of vice chancellors describe how they have made changes to their own team, most suggest it is a mistake to do this straight away.

> *"It would have sent out the wrong message to staff"* and *"imply an immediate distrust of colleagues. You need a strong team around you but you should not rush to judgement." (VC 14)*

> *"It would be very foolish for an incoming VC to sweep aside an existing team, and this is pretty rare." (VC 17)*

A premature restructuring of an executive management team is seen as "an assertion of power and to be avoided" (Dean/HOD 8). One vice chancellor likens the tendency of some colleagues to make early changes to their team as "a bit like dogs lifting their legs and pissing to mark out their own territory" (VC 10).

> *"It's not a good idea for a new VC to come in and decapitate the team. Unless the institution is in crisis, this sends out all the wrong signals." (DPVC 15)*

4.   Consequences for the DPVC Profile

This section addresses the first part of the second research question (Q.2a) concerning changes to the DPVC profile.   Firstly, it presents data drawn from the census on the demographic and professional profile of the entire 2013 DPVC cohort. It then examines the impact of external open competition on the profile of those getting the jobs.

4.1   Profile of Serving DPVCs

The number of DPVCs has increased significantly in the eight years between 2005 and 2013[46]. There were 219 DPVC posts in August 2013 (including four vacancies[47]) compared

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[46] 2013 data is from the census and 2005 data from the 2006 *Association of Commonwealth Universities Yearbook*.

to 152 in 2005 (Table 9). This represents a 44% increase overall and an average of 5% per year. This is higher than the 3.8% year-on-year increase in DPVC numbers between 2000 and 2005 for all UK higher education institutions (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). It also far outstrips the 2.6% growth in the student[48] and 7.6% in the staff population[49] between 2005/6 and 2012/13, suggesting that the expansion of the sector does not by itself adequately account for the growth in DPVC numbers. The ratio of DPVC posts per institution has risen from 3.6 to 4.9, or more than one additional post per institution.

Table 9: Comparison of DPVC Numbers in 2005 and 2013

2005 (ACU Yearbook)				2013 (Census)			
DVC	*PVC*	*PVC/Dean*	*Total*	*DVC*	*PVC*	*PVC/Dean*	*Total*
20	132	0	152	40	139	40	219
13.2	86.8	0.0	100.0	18.3	63.5	18.3	100.0

Over half of the additional posts are new DPVC/Deans. In addition, seven senior professional services posts, such as registrar or director of finance, have been re-titled as DPVCs[50] and one joint DPVC/Librarian post has been created at Leicester. Taken together, these newly defined DPVC posts account for 48 of the 67 (72%) additional posts since 2005. The rise in DPVC numbers can thus be explained in large part by a re-categorisation of existing executive level posts and/or reconfiguration of the executive management team structure and membership. Accordingly, there has not been the proliferation of senior management posts that might be assumed from the increase in numbers of those with a DPVC job title.

DPVCs remain predominantly white male professors. The 2013 cohort is overwhelmingly white, with a mere 4% from ethnic minorities[51]. This is consistent with the most recent available data which shows that only 4.1% of UK professors (and 5.8% of academic staff[52]

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[47] Demographic data is therefore available for 215 DPVCs.

[48] Total UK staff numbers were 355,415 in 2005/6 and 382,515 in 2012/13 (Higher Education Statistics Agency).

[49] Total UK student numbers were 2,281,235 in 2005/6 and 2,340,275 in 2012/13 – a fall from a high of 2,2501,295 in 2010/11 (Higher Education Statistics Agency).

[50] The institutions concerned are Birkbeck, Bradford, IOE, Kent, Liverpool and Surrey (two posts).

[51] Based on publically available biographical and/or photographic data.

[52] Figures for UK black and ethnic minority staff in UK higher education institutions in 2011/12. The corresponding figure for professional and support staff is 7% (Equality Challenge Unit).

are of ethnic minority origin. It is not possible to map change over time in the ethnicity of the DPVC population since historical data is not available.

Over three quarters (76%) of serving DPVCs are male, with only 51 female DPVCs out of a cohort of 215. A straightforward comparison with 2005 would be misleading given that gender is not specified for one in five of the DPVCs listed in the ACU Yearbook[53]. It is therefore more appropriate to compare changes in the proportion of those DPVCs for whom gender is known: this figure rose from 21% in 2005 to 24% in 2013. There has thus been a relatively small (3%) increase in the proportion of female DPVCs over the last eight years, equivalent to a mere 0.4% *per annum*. Nevertheless, a serious gender imbalance in favour of men persists. In eight pre-1992 universities the vice chancellor and all the DPVCs are male.

The typical avenue of mobility into the DPVC role remains that of the career academic. A large majority of DPVCs have a professorial title. At 90%, this figure has increased slightly from 87% in 2005 and is higher than the 80% average across all sample years of Smith *et al*'s study (i.e. 1960 to 2005). A further eight DPVCs in 2013 have the title 'Dr', six of whom were previously in an academic post and are assumed to be career academics. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the vast majority (94%) of DPVCs previously worked in an academic role (4.2).

4.2   Impact of Changed Appointment Practice

Seventy one, or approximately one third, of the 2013 DPVC cohort was appointed following external open competition[54]. A comparison was made between the profile of these 'external' DPVCs and the 139 'internal' DPVCs appointed by means of an internal-only process (Table 10). The appointment method for the remaining five DPVCs in the 2013 cohort is not known and so they are omitted from the analysis.

Table 10 shows that the adoption of an external open competition model has had virtually no impact on the ethnicity, but a very significant impact on the gender balance, of those securing the jobs. An even higher proportion of DPVCs appointed via external open competition are men: 84% compared to 73% via an internal-only process. In other words, only 15% of 'external' DPVCs are women compared to 27% of 'internals'. It is thus female

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[53] Some entries in the ACU Yearbook have initials only.
[54] It is important to bear in mind in interpreting these findings that this sub-group, though growing in size year by year, still represents a minority of serving DPVCs.

DPVCs appointed via an internal-only appointment process that are largely responsible for keeping the proportion of women in the overall 2013 DPVC cohort at 24%.

Table 10: Comparison of DPVC Profile by Appointment Method

	External Open Competition (n=71)		Internal Appointment (n=139)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Male	60	84.5	101	72.7
Female	11	15.5	38	27.3
White	68	95.8	134	96.4
Ethnic Minority	3	4.2	5	3.6
Professor	67	94.4	124	89.2
Non Professor	4	5.6	15	10.8
Career Academic	67	94.4	132	95.0
Non Academic	4	5.6	7	5.0

In terms of professional background, Table 10 illustrates that 'external' DPVCs are slightly more likely to be professors than those appointed by means of an internal process. Moreover, the opening up of DPVC posts to external open competition has made no significant difference to the proportion of non-academic managers securing the roles. The seven non-academics in the 'internals' column are the re-titled professional services managers described in 4.1. Of the four non-academic appointments resulting from external competition, two are from another university and one each from the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the private sector[55].

In fact, external open competition has led to a firming up of the academic management route into the role. Table 11 shows that a higher proportion of 'external' than 'internal' DPVCs have previously held some kind of academic manager post (89% versus 79%), generally at a higher level of seniority. Indeed, DPVCs appointed by external advertisement

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[55] In addition, there was one DPVC appointed from the public sector, but this person was a career academic and is therefore not included as a non-academic appointment. This person is however included in Table 12 as having a 'non-university' previous institution.

are almost twice as likely as those appointed via an internal-only process to be, or have previously been, a DPVC: 39% compared to 22%.

Table 11: Previous Role of DPVCs by Appointment Method

Previous Post	External Open Competition (n=71)		Internal Appointment (n=139)	
	Number	%	Number	%
DPVC	28	39.4	30	21.6
Dean	17	23.9	26	18.7
Head of Department/School	10	14.1	35	25.2
Other Academic Manager	8	11.4	19	13.7
Professor	3	4.2	21	15.1
Other	5*	7.0	8	5.7
Total	*71*	*100.0*	*139*	*100.0*

* Includes two from a non-academic university post and three from outside higher education

A growing number of DPVCs are thus moving from one DPVC post to another, as exemplified by the DPVC research participants, a third of whom (9 of 26, or 35%) have previously held a DPVC post. The broadening of the types of DPVC role (2.3) may be a factor here as it means there is more scope to move from a policy to executive DPVC role, or *vice versa,* and upwards from a PVC to a more senior DVC position.

Although the opening up of DPVC posts to external competition has resulted in increased staff mobility, the binary divide is still very much in evidence and there is relatively little movement between pre- and post-1992 universities (Table 12). Almost half (34 of 71, or 48%) of those DPVCs appointed as a result of external open competition came into their post from another pre-1992 university compared to only five, or a mere 7% from a post-1992 institution. This finding is corroborated by DPVC interviewees who suggest that what little movement there is across the binary divide tends to be one way: from pre to post-1992 institutions.

> *"There's still something of a bias and an artificial distinction between the two."*
> (DPVC 25)

Some view this as "a form of academic snobbery" aided and abetted by executive search agencies and chairs of governing bodies in post-1992 institutions who "may be dazzled by Russell Group candidates" (DPVC 15).

Table 12: Previous Institution of DPVCs Appointed by External Open Competition

Previous Institution	External Open Competition (n=71)	
	Number	%
Other Pre-1992 University	34	47.9
Post-1992 University	5	7.0
Overseas University	5	7.0
Same University	24	33.9
Non-University	3	4.2
Total	*71*	*100.0*

Only five DPVCs came from an overseas university and there is virtually no movement into a DPVC role from those holding non-university positions. It is also important to note that the introduction of an external open competition process does not necessarily lead to an external appointment. In fact, as Table 12 shows, a third (34%) of DPVCs appointed via external open competition are internal candidates.

5.   Consequences for DPVC Careers

This section addresses part two of the second research question (Q.2b) about the careers of DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition. It presents evidence from interviews with this newly created group of DPVCs on their route into the role, experience of being a DPVC and future career plans and aspirations.

5.1   Becoming a DPVC

5.1.1   Route into the Role
With one exception, a DPVC who describes himself variously as having been "cajoled" into management and "not seeing it as his career" (DPVC 7), the DPVCs in my study population all spoke of having made a conscious decision to become a manager.

> *"I was embarking on an alternative career, one of academic management."*
> (DPVC 13)

> *"I made an active decision to be an academic manager – it was a turning point in my career."* (DPVC 12)

However the timing of this decision, or the overt acknowledgement of having taken "a management track" (DPVC 22), varied by individual. A few had clear management ambitions from the outset.

> *"I was mindful that I wanted to be a manager"* and to focus on *"managing people rather than a molecule."* (DPVC 22)

For most, though, the key decision point or "fork in the junction" (VC 10) came at the end of their term as head of department.

> *"The big choice is at HOD level. You can still go back to the ranks after this and for some it is a relief to go back."* (DPVC 26)

Being a head of department was an opportunity to find out whether or not they were suited to academic management (R 6) and was thus "a test bed for a new career route" (DPVC 17).

Not many DPVCs started their career with becoming a DPVC in mind. Despite generally coming into the job via a series of increasingly senior academic management roles, not everyone sees themselves as having made "predictable" (DPVC 26) or "linear" (DPVC 4) career decisions. One describes his career as "serendipitous" (DPVC 4) and another as "a series of accidents along the way" (DPVC 7).

However, realising that there was "a ladder to be ascended" (Dean/HOD 8), the majority have adopted a more planned and proactive approach to their careers.

> *"A ladder is developing and you need to climb more steps now to succeed."* (VC 13)

One spoke of "looking up one step at a time" throughout his career (DPVC 2) and another of always having had "the next job in sight" (DPVC 1).

This experience accords with vice chancellors' observations that academics are now paying more attention to "what pattern their career might take" (VC 4) and choosing "a more

entrepreneurial career route" (VC 17). Those academics with ambitions to become a vice chancellor are planning their careers accordingly.

> *"Academics need to make a personal decision to go down a management route and to build up the skills and competencies to do a senior management job."* (VC 7)

5.1.2 Management Development

A number of DPVCs have attended the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme (TMP). Though some found it helpful from a management development perspective, the programme's main benefit is said to be networking. It is seen as an important forum for "making connections that can get you a job" (DPVC 12) and for "enhancing your own career" (DPVC 18). This is despite the fact that some of those making senior management appointments, i.e. vice chancellors and chairs of governing bodies, are sceptical – or "extremely sniffy" (DPVC 22) – about its value.

Taking the TMP is, however, an important means for academics to signal their interest in pursuing an executive management career, both to those inside and outside their university.   The latter is important since TMP alumni often feature on potential candidate databases of executive search agencies. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the TMP has become part of the career plan for academics with their sights set on the top job and "something of a rite of passage to becoming a VC" (Dean/HOD 2).

> *"There is naked ambition on the TMP. There were some people with a very clear eye on the goal."* (Dean/HOD 8)

The programme is described as "a little hot house of gossip" where everyone "is watching the moves of others" (DPVC 2). It not only attracts the ambitious, but may also help to shape career aspirations.

> *"Ambition has become more legitimised and more naked."* (DPVC 2)

> *"The TMP has worked people up into a frenzy about becoming a VC."* (DPVC 5)

The TMP may also influence participants' expectations of the DPVC role.

> *"There is an expectation of a certain form of behaviour* [in senior managers] *and the TMP has contributed to this." (R 1)*

5.1.3 Motivations

Becoming a DPVC is "no longer one last throw of the dice before retiring" (VC 4).

> *"There is a different notion now of being an academic manager and different motivations for the careers of individuals." (*VC 13)

DPVCs in my sample that have been through an external open competition process "are a self-selected group who want to put themselves forward" (DPVC 17). The most commonly cited reason for doing so is the desire to work at a more strategic level "in a wider university role" (DPVC 11).

> *"A seat at the top table was the main draw."* (DPVC 12)

Taking on a DPVC role was seen as providing an opportunity to have a real impact at this top level.

> *"The real appeal was the opportunity to turn the university around."* (DPVC 16)

> *"It's my one chance to paint on a really big canvas"* and *"to really change things."* (DPVC 13)

Most DPVCs were attracted by the idea of leading and managing others.

> *"I want to lead from the front."* (DPVC 23)

> *"Although I've always been scornful of administration and managers, I've always wanted to lead and had a management drive."* (DPVC 2)

Power was thus an explicit or implicit motivation. One chose a DPVC/Dean over a policy DPVC role because of the fact that greater budgetary and line management responsibilities "give you greater power" (DPVC 3).

> *"I like the being-in-charge angle"* (DPVC 17)

> *"Many academics like power more than they are prepared to admit."* (DPVC 8)

Some were attracted by the chance to challenge themselves in a different job rather than "just tick over" (DPVC 9) and to acquire new skills.

> *"Some people don't want to move on. They've reached the level they want to be and feel they can relax and enjoy the job, but I'm more of a risk taker."* (DPVC 2)

> *"I saw it as a big learning opportunity."* (DPVC 12)

For a few, an academic job had lost its appeal. One admitted that he had realised he was never "going to be a Nobel Prize winner" (DPVC 17) and that his future lay elsewhere.

> *"Research is a bit of a grind. The feasibility and attractiveness of an academic role is just not there."* (DPVC 22)

There is also a financial incentive in taking on a DPVC role.

> *"Senior managers are well rewarded and this is not unattractive."* (DPVC 22)

It was suggested that salary "is more of a motivator for academics than is often admitted" (DPVC 17), with the difference a higher pension can make in retirement of particular importance (DPVC 2).

> *"No one goes into academia for money – this is not a motivator." But I have a young family and so am as motivated by money as anyone in this situation."* (DPVC 24)

5.2   Being a DPVC

5.2.1   The Role

What is clear from DPVCs' own accounts is that this is "primarily a management role" (DPVC 7).

> *"It's a commercial, market-driven job."* (DPVC 17)

> *"This is a full-time management role."* (DPVC 21)

Being a DPVC involves negotiation as well as strategy development and so relationship building (DPVC 7) and the "soft skills of influencing and persuasion" are seen as important (DPVC 23). At the same time, it is a harder edged role than was the case in the past.

> *"Universities need leaders who can make things happen."* (DPVC 14)

> *"You need to be firm and prepared to make hard decisions. Many academics are not very good at this." (*DPVC 23)

The management of people and performance are critical elements of the job.

"It's more managerial now. You are often doing difficult things like making people redundant." (DPVC 26)

"I had to establish who was underperforming and make decisions on whether they should go." (DPVC 16)

The extent to which DPVCs are expected to play a managerial role depends on the particular perspective of the vice chancellor. The more managerial their approach is, the more managerial the role construction of their DPVCs. Most vice chancellors see their DPVCs as managers as well as academic leaders who need "both vision and implementation" (VC 8).

"DPVCs are performing a management role and being a DPVC is now very much part of a person's persona." (VC 4)

However, a few do not want DPVCs to line manage or to "get sucked into the operational" (VC 7).

"Most academics are not very good managers, and I include myself in that. I expect them to be inspirational academic leaders." (VC 14)

Regardless of the detail of their role, however, DPVCs' performance is coming under increased scrutiny: DPVCs are held responsible for ensuring plans are implemented (VC 12) and have to be "100% accountable in the role" (DPVC 15).

"The VC is very clear about performance management and what he wants from `senior managers." (R 1)

DPVCs seem to accept this as a necessary requirement of the job.

"I work to targets and if I don't perform I will need to move on." (DPVC 23)

"If you don't perform well, it is right you should be moved on." (DPVC 17)

For their part, vice chancellors appear willing to tackle any perceived underperformance.

"I will assess people in the job. I inherited one or two time servers who had to be paid off." (VC 1)

Despite performance pressure and high workloads, however, the majority of DPVCs enjoy their job, describing it as "exciting" (DPVC 8), an "incredibly valuable" experience (DPVC 12) and "very interesting" (DPVC 14).

5.2.2 Inherent Tensions

Nevertheless, being a DPVC is not always straightforward or comfortable. They often find themselves at the point of tension both between managerial and collegial cultures and between the executive management team and the wider academic community.

> *"PVCs are walking a line between the collegial cultural norm and what's expected of them in making change happen. Academics think PVCs are too corporate and council sees them as too academic. They are in a difficult position in the middle."* (VC 12)

Unlike a head of department or dean, DPVCs do not represent a particular academic constituency.   Rather, they are expected to be dispassionate about their own faculty and portfolio (DPVC 8) and "think about the university as whole" (DPVC 7).

> *"A DPVC needs a complete focus on the institution."* (VC 12)

DPVCs are "not one of the troops anymore" and must be willing to support difficult decisions, such as closing a failing department (R 3). They are no longer "representing the academic heartland" and are "more the VC's creatures than academic creatures" (R 1).

> *"Being on the SMT [*senior management team*] demands a different set of skills and you have to be more detached from the academic community."* (DPVC 26)

The particular nature of the DVC role means that post holders "must be in total alignment with the VC" (DPVC 10). However, all DPVCs are expected to become "part of a management team with responsibility for the institution and to the VC" (VC 4).

> *"It's all about taking cabinet responsibility."* (DPVC 23)

It is suggested that appointed, rather than seconded, DPVCs are more likely to have their primary allegiance to the vice chancellor.

> *"External appointees have their loyalty to the VC."* (DPVC 21)

> *"Appointed PVCs soon become the VC's creatures."* (DPVC 2)

There is another fundamental tension in the DPVC role. Although the majority describe their role as one of management, some nevertheless describe themselves "as an academic first" (DPVC 7). Maintaining an academic identity is seen as important part of their ability to do the job effectively.

> *"I'm an academic-manager, not a manager-manager. I try to send out signals that I'm both an academic and a manager."* (DPVC 23)

Nevertheless, although many DPVCs were trying to maintain some research activity, most found this extremely difficult or even impossible given the time-consuming nature of the job.

> *"I'm tinkering with research but it is more difficult to do anything new."* (DPVC 23)

> *"You need to do research full time in order to maintain your competitive edge."* (DPVC 13)

Ironically although being, or having been, an academic is still a prerequisite for becoming a DPVC, once in the post many find they have to sacrifice their research career.

> *"I knew I was leaving my research career behind"* (DPVC 22)

> *"People go through a mourning process when giving up their academic career."* (VC 12)

Furthermore, they may encounter resistance, even hostility, from the wider academic community.

> *"I enjoy being a manager, but it is true that many academics feel I have turned to the dark side. There is a huge residual belief that management is destructive."* (DPVC 22)

> *"I have sometimes had to put my head on the block. It drains you and I might not have done it if I knew what was involved."* (DPVC 7)

Even though they may not wish to be described as "management" (VC 12), as far as rank-and-file academics are concerned a DPVC is likely to be perceived as "a suit" (DPVC 5) rather than as an academic.

5.3   Exit Strategies and Future Plans

5.3.1 Exit Strategies

Many DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition regard the exit strategy at the end of their term as problematic, mainly because going back to an academic role is not a feasible option.

> *"I couldn't go back as I no longer have a research profile and have burned my bridges as an academic researcher."* (DPVC 1)

> *"Once you make the break from research it's almost impossible to go back – whether you understand it or not at the time."* (DPVC 8)

For DPVCs coming into the post from another institution, the prospect may be even less realistic because they have "no secure foundation in a department" (DPVC 22), no "research infrastructure" (DPVC 17) or, in one case, no department in their discipline (DPVC 14). There was also some suggestion that a return to research may be more difficult for scientists. Interestingly, this was given as a reason why there may be more scientists in executive management posts.

> *"I'm almost always competing with medics or scientists for senior posts."* (DPVC 26)

Even in those cases where a return to an academic role is possible, it is often viewed as an unattractive prospect.

> *"If your motivation in becoming a PVC was to do something different, why would you want to go back?"* (DPVC2)

> *"It would be very difficult to go back to the back benches after having made difficult decisions."* (DPVC 23)

Some DPVCs would miss the challenge and excitement of a management role.

> *"Going back to the ranks can be very difficult. Being a senior manager is a highly charged existence. You get used to living with the pressure and, if you enjoy the pressure, you may get bored."* (VC 19)

Others realise that during their time as DPVC personal relationships with academic colleagues have been put under strain.

> *"It's hard to stay in your own institution and go back to the ranks as you will have pissed off too many people."* (DPVC 26)

> *"If you are a manager you are not generally peoples' friend."* (DPVC 6)

There is also the practical consideration of a substantial cut in salary.

> *"You would have to take a big pay cut to be a professor."* (VC 1)

> *"My salary would be halved."* (DPVC 25)

Viewed in this light, the increasing level of financial reward for DPVCs may be one means of offering a degree of financial security to offset the increasing personal risk entailed in negotiating an exit strategy from the role.

Vice chancellors are aware of the dangers of taking on a DPVC job.

> *"This may be a dead end for academics and not in their best interests."* (VC 3)

> *"There's really no going back and I ask candidates if they're prepared for this."* (VC 18)

Though one vice chancellor suggested that university leaders needed to talk to potential DPVCs about career choices and their implications, it appears this is not always happening.

> *"VCs are not good at career support and the development of their team."* (DPVC 26)

In fact, rather than go back to an academic role most DPVCs would prefer to move into another DPVC or vice chancellor position, either in their own institution or elsewhere. However, "not everyone can do this" and "it can be extremely difficult for some people as they come to the end of their second term" (VC 14).

> *"There are probably three times as many PVCs as VCs so not everyone can go further up the ladder."* (VC 16)

> *"Most have aspirations for VC positions but their chances are very small."* (R 6)

Moreover, not everyone will have the necessary capabilities.

> *"Some PVCs who are assuming they can run an institution may need to recognise that being a PVC may actually be a top-of-the-tree appointment for them."* (DPVC 26)

Nevertheless, there is an expectation amongst vice chancellors that good people will move on.

> *"There's a more military-style mentality now of get up or get out."* (DPVC 5)

> *"The expectation is that a good person will get a VC-ship within five years."* (DPVC 14)

Even DPVCs who have not yet reached the end of their second term may find themselves in a vulnerable position. Firstly, there is a sense in which there is a natural lifespan to the role of around five years.

> *"After this they have used all their energy and momentum and it is not in the institutional interest for them to do a second term."* (VC 11)

Not only are DPVC roles extremely challenging, but also there may be a time limit on an individual's credibility in the role.

> *"PVCs can feel their credibility ebbing away and this is a constraint on how long they can be in the role. The clock is ticking for those on an academic management route."* (VC 12)

Furthermore, institutional needs and priorities may change with consequences for DPVC roles.

> *"The VC might want to shake up the portfolios as positions become vacant. Portfolios have a life for a particular period then disappear."* (DPVC 7)

DPVCs are particularly vulnerable when there is a new vice chancellor since it is likely that the incoming leader will want to make changes.

> *"All PVCs have to be prepared to go when a new VC comes in."* (VC 14)

> *"Working at this level you are quite exposed. With a new VC anything can happen."* (DPVC 12)

> *"A new VC may change the dynamic. Most don't get rid of people who are performing well, though some do this."* (DPVC 17)

Overall then "it is potentially risky to become a PVC" particularly for those who are "at a precarious age" by the end of their second term (DPVC 7) or who have been unable to continue their research.

> *"I have seen colleagues focus 100% on their management role. If they can move on, fine. But, if not, they are in a very difficult position."* (VC 16)

> *"Moves now are for higher stakes and when you change job you are making a conscious move to give up a degree of certainty."* (VC 18)

5.3.2 Career Aspirations
The DPVCs I interviewed are ambitious. The ultimate ambition for most is to become a vice chancellor.

> *"The natural next step would be as a VC."* (DPVC 20)

> *"I want to become a VC next."* (DPVC 23)

A number of DPVCs had already applied for vice chancellor positions with varying degrees of success. Two had been offered vice chancellor jobs: the first had declined two "bad VC jobs" but might apply again "if a good job comes along" (DPVC 5) and the second had already accepted a vice chancellor position by the time of the interview.

Though there are fewer of them, female DPVCs are no less likely to aspire to the top job. Two of the five female DPVCs had already applied for vice chancellor posts, but had been unsuccessful. Both had been told they were not yet ready but remain confident about their future career progression and intend to reapply.

> *"I've had an insight into how a VC works and feel there's not a bit that's missing. I will definitely be a VC."* (DPVC 14)

> *"I will run an institution myself or some other kind of organisation, not necessarily in HE or in the UK."* (DPVC 26)

A third female DPVC, though relatively new in post, admits that there is "a risk" she could go down the road of applying for vice chancellor roles and she "couldn't rule it out" since she had become a DPVC without having particularly aspired to the role (DPVC 3).

The two non-academic DPVCs are sanguine about the fact they believe they have no realistic prospect of becoming a vice chancellor.

> *""My aim is to become a registrar in a large pre-92. I have the leadership skills but never in a month of Sundays will I get to be a VC."* (DPVC 25)

One of them had been approached by an executive search agency for a vice chancellor position and persuaded to apply on the basis that the institution in question "was genuinely interested in casting the net widely", but his application went no further.

> *"You are not seen as credible if you have no academic background. Generally speaking you are just not on the radar."* (DPVC 15)

Those DPVCs who do not aspire to become a vice chancellor are generally older and close to retirement.

> *"It's too late in my career."* (DPVC 4)

> *"Ten years ago I would have liked to be a VC but it's not appropriate at my career stage."* (DPVC 11)

For younger DPVCs who do not wish to be a vice chancellor it is most often because the "glad handing" aspects of the role do not appeal (DPVC 3) either to them or to their spouse "who might not wish to be a corporate wife" (DPVC 20). Four DPVCs are considering the prospect of a non-academic role, such as higher education consultant, but only one is actively planning such a move (DPVC 10).

The interviews provide further evidence of the recirculation of DPVCs identified by the census (4.2). Not only have a third of the DPVCs interviewed previously been in a DPVC post, but also a number are contemplating a move to another DPVC post elsewhere. This might be a sideways move designed to broaden their experience or "for a change of scenery" (DPVC 11). Alternatively, it might be a strategic career move on their way to the top job, typically to a more senior post and/or to a bigger or better institution.

Vice chancellors noted that "a pattern of inter-institutional movement" (VC 16) was emerging, with short-lists for DPVC jobs increasingly comprising "professional PVCs moving from portfolio to portfolio" (DPVC 7).

> *"I've seen the emergence of the career PVC."* (VC 16)

6.   Consequences for Third Tier Manager Careers

This section addresses the final part of the second research question (Q.2c): the impact of the change to DPVC appointment practice on the career progression and aspirations of third tier managers, i.e. those at the next level of management down from DPVC level. The experiences of both academic and professional services third tier managers are explored in turn utilising data drawn from the interviews and online survey.

6.1   Deans and Heads of Department

6.1.1 Interview Participants

The career progression of the five deans and five heads of department interviewed has followed a similar pattern to that of the DPVCs. Some were initially reluctant managers or had made "an accidental choice to take a management route" (Dean/HOD), while for others it was "a conscious decision over time" to focus on management rather than research (Dean/HOD 6). For one, this had come relatively late in his career:

> *"In my early 50s I realised that there's a whole new career ladder."* (Dean/HOD 8)

More typically it was being a head of department that was the turning point. Although this experience could be "completely off-putting" for some, others enjoyed it and found they were suited to academic management (Dean/HOD 5).

> *"Your experience as you go along makes a difference to your aspirations from then on."* (Dean/HOD 5)

Only one academic manager says he started out with a senior management role in mind.

> *"I always expected my career to be in management. I started from a position of not wanting people telling me what to do."* (Dean/HOD 10)

However, most enjoy management and "like running things" (Dean/HOD 6).

> *"I'm a person of strong opinions and like leading."* (Dean/HOD 10)

On the whole, these academic third tier managers are an ambitious group and most aspire to climb the next rung up the academic management ladder. Part of the appeal of the DPVC role is the opportunity to work at a strategic level and "make an impact" (Dean/HOD 6). One is motivated by the thought of doing "a different kind of job" (Dean/HOD 1). Another mentions the big financial incentive of an executive team role (Dean/HOD 1).

Two say they had good research credentials, but wish to move on from a research role.

> *"I'm nearing the end of my days being REF-able and have no burning desire to carry on my research."* (Dean/HOD 3)

> *"I've realised a life of scholarly contemplation is not for me."* (Dean/HOD 6)

Most are fairly sanguine about the fact that, in taking on a DPVC role, they would be giving up on their research career. In fact, most feel they have already made this decision and are happy not to go back to the ranks.

> *"I couldn't go back to an academic role. I made a decision when I became dean to cross the Rubicon and become a manager and a leader."* (Dean/HOD 10)

> *"It would be a bit boring and annoying having other people make decisions for you."* (Dean/HOD 4)

> *"Going back in amongst people you were managing would mean difficult personal dynamics."* (Dean/HOD 5)

Nevertheless, the primary identity of academic managers at this level remains that of an academic. In response to the online survey question[56], the overwhelming majority (82%) of deans and heads of department describe themselves primarily as academics. Only nine of 85 (11%) see themselves primarily as managers, while a further three see themselves as both academics and managers.

In terms of their future career progression, the opening up of DPVC posts to external open competition has benefited these third tier academic managers by making jobs outside their own institution available.   Most are taking full advantage. Only three of the ten of the interview participants are not already in the process of applying for a more senior management role: one because he is close to retirement and would not enjoy the "meet-and-greet presidential side of being a VC" (Dean/HOD 8), the second because family commitments mean she is not able to relocate, and the third because he has just stepped down from a head of school role and is still considering his options.

Of the remainder, five have already applied for DPVC jobs mostly in other institutions, two successfully. Interestingly, both of the successful candidates are men and two of the unsuccessful ones are women. The sixth (a woman) has just been promoted from head of

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[56] Response options were: academic, manager or other.

department to interim head of school and would like to be a DPVC. The final participant, who is dean of a large faculty and a member of the executive management team, has already applied for two vice chancellor positions.

> *"I am ambitious and would like to be a VC. I'd be prepared to make an interim step on the way to becoming a VC but one which offers me more scope than my current role and there are not many."* (Dean/HOD 10)

However, both he and a colleague reflect that it would not be "the end of the world" (Dean/HOD 3) if they did not make it to the top job.

> *"The truth is that it's highly competitive and maybe you reach a natural level."* (Dean/HOD 8)

6.1.2 Online Survey Respondents

The online survey provides a picture of the career aspirations of a wider population of 85 academic third tier managers. This data reveals that over four out of ten (compared to seven out of ten for the interview participants) indicate some likelihood of applying for a DPVC post in future, with little overall difference between the genders: 45% for men and 43% for women (Table 13).

Table 13: Third Tier Academic Managers' Likelihood of Applying for a DPVC Post

Response Option	Male (n=64)		Female (n=21)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Very Likely	14	21.9	6	28.6
Somewhat Likely	15	23.4	3	14.3
Somewhat Unlikely	10	15.6	3	14.3
Very Unlikely	20	31.2	8	38.1
Would Rather Not Say	2	3.1	0	0
Don't Know	3	4.7	1	4.8

Just over half of women (52%) and just under half of men (47%) say they are unlikely to apply for a PVC post in future. However, a slightly higher proportion of women (29%) than men (22%) say they are very likely to apply. These findings suggest that there is no lack of female ambition at this level.

Nevertheless, a slightly higher proportion of male than female academic third tier managers have already submitted an application for a DPVC job (Table 14). The gender difference is not marked in relation to applications within the respondents' own institutions (16% versus 14%), but over double the proportion of men than women have applied for a DPVC post in another pre-1992 university: 22% compared to 9%. Men are thus more likely to have applied for a DPVC job in another university than their own, whilst the reverse is true for women.

Table 14: Third Tier Academic Managers' DPVC Applications to Date

Application Made To:	*Male (n=64)*		*Female (n=21)*	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*
Own University	10	15.6	3	14.3
Other Pre-1992 University	14	21.9	2	9.5

All thirteen applications made for DPVC posts in the respondents' own university reached at least the long listing stage and five made it on to the short list. One man and one woman were offered DPVC jobs. Applications to another pre-1992 institution were somewhat less successful, with seven of the sixteen long listed and five short listed. None resulted in a job offer.

In terms of future career aspirations, academic third tier managers who indicate they are likely to apply for a DPVC position view this as "a natural career progression" and as offering a new and welcome challenge. Those not considering applying do not see the DPVC role as an attractive prospect, typically because they want to retain an academic career.

> *"Horrific jobs that block academic development."*

> *"I prefer the academic role to the managerial role."*

The other main determining factor is age, with all respondents 61 and over considering themselves too old to take the next step up the ladder. The vast majority (82%) of those indicating some likelihood of applying for a DPVC role in future were between 41 and 60 years of age.

6.2   Professional Services Managers

6.2.1 Interview Participants

The seven professional services managers interviewed are all specialists, in human resource management, research services, marketing and communications, and commercial services. All have extensive experience working in either the public or private sector, or both. Five came into their posts directly from outside higher education and two via a post in another university.

Like deans and heads of department, they are ambitious and "career driven" (PSM 7). One of the participants is already a member of the university's executive management team in his current role and a further three aspire to a job at this next tier of management. However, unlike their academic counterparts, they see little realistic prospect of advancement within higher education. The overall impression is of a professional ceiling for non-academic managers.

> "As a professional services director, what can you do next?" (R 7)

The only promotion opportunity available within a university for professional services managers is said to be that of registrar.

> "There isn't really a progression within HE except as registrar." (PSM 4)

However, this role holds little appeal for any of the interview participants who would prefer to stay within their own specialism. Not all want to be a DPVC either. For one manager, who is already on the executive team, becoming a DPVC would not be a promotion. In fact, he argues it "could be a disadvantage" since it is a role that is not well understood outside the sector and therefore "might not allow me to demonstrate my specialist credentials" to non-higher education employers (PSM 3). A second is contemplating whether or not "to redress the balance of work" and reduce her hours (PSM 4).

For the remainder, a DPVC role within their specialist portfolio is seen as an attractive career option and two aspire to such a role.

> "Whether this is realistic or not is another matter." (PSM 7)

Others, however, have already dismissed the possibility.

> "There's no realistic option to become a PVC." (PSM 4)

> *"I am not an academic so PVC roles are out."* (PSM 2)

Although they are all aware that DPVC posts are now being externally advertised, none has submitted an application. One has received approaches from executive search agents about DPVC roles, but not pursued them. This same manager is the only one who believes that the opening up of DPVC posts to external open competition has benefited him.

> *"External recruitment is a good thing for me as it's enhanced my chances of getting a PVC job – there are now more posts to choose from."* (PSM 7)

For the remainder, the change to DPVC appointment practice has been of no direct benefit.

> *"The move to external advertisement has not enhanced the chances of non-academics getting a PVC role. It's a closed shop."* (PSM 4)

It is argued that there is a "discriminatory" approach to DPVC recruitment that limits the roles to researchers or those with academic credibility (PSM 2).

> *"There's a preponderance of academics at top team level. They don't view professional services people as credible candidates for a PVC role."* (PSM 1)

This view was borne out by a registrar (R 1) who gave the example of a "very strong" professional services manager who had applied for a DPVC job at his own institution. Although this individual was taken sufficiently seriously to be given an interview, he was not appointed despite the fact that the academic who got the job "was nowhere near as credible" in terms of the specific portfolio. Another registrar describes having one or two professional services managers in his team "who could work at board level, but they would not be allowed to" (R 7).

Most would consider moving to a more senior post outside higher education. This is partly because they realise that their chances of promotion within the sector are very small and partly a positive career choice.

> *"I am open to ideas about the future, like changing sectors and can adapt my kit bag accordingly."* (PSM 3)

> *"Lack of opportunity is not necessarily a problem as I would probably not want to stay in HE for ever anyway."* (PSM 2)

6.2.2 Online Survey Participants

The view that there is no point in a non-academic making an application for a DPVC post is shared by the overwhelming majority of the 47 professional services managers responding to the online survey. There have only been two applications for a DPVC position to date, both made by men (Table 15). Of these, the application to the respondent's own institution was successful and the one to another institution was not.

Table 15: Professional Services Managers' DPVC Applications to Date

	Male (n=31)		Female (n=16)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Own University	1	3.2	0	0.0
Other Pre-1992 University	1	3.2	0	0.0

Not surprisingly given the perceived professional ceiling, around two thirds of professional services managers are unlikely to make a DPVC application in future: 68% for men and 63% for women (Table 16). Moreover, the largest proportion of both men and women indicate that they are very unlikely to apply.

The overwhelming reason given by professional services managers for not having made, or not planning to make, an application for a DPVC position is that they are not academics.

> "As I am not an academic I don't think I'd get a look in!"

> "I am not an academic and I think that's a major barrier."

> "These roles are invariably steered towards academics even though I fully match the skillset required and head hunters often ask my advice on suitable ACADEMIC candidates."

Nevertheless, some do still indicate that they are likely to apply for a DPVC role in future. Though numbers are small, there are a higher proportion of women than men in this group. Overall, however, the proportion of professional services third tier managers indicating that they are likely to make a DPVC job application in future is less than half of that of their academic counterparts: 21% compared to 45%.

Table 16: Professional Service Managers' Likelihood of Applying for a DPVC Post

	Male (n=31)		Female (n=16)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Very Likely	0	0.0	2	12.5
Somewhat Likely	7	22.6	3	18.8
Somewhat Unlikely	7	22.6	3	18.8
Very Unlikely	14	45.2	7	43.8
Would Rather Not Say	1	3.2	1	6.2
Don't Know	2	6.5	0	0.0

7.   Summary

This chapter has presented data in support of the contention that the DPVC appointment model is changing and in answer to the first two empirical research questions.

These findings show that over 70% of pre-1992 English universities have externally advertised at least one DPVC post over the last eight years and the number of institutions doing so is growing year on year. In most cases, a mixed appointment model is in operation with the decision on appointment method made on a case-by-case basis. The use of executive search agencies is also now commonplace.

Being a DPVC is increasingly a full-time job. Despite the adoption of external open competition, most DPVCs are in post for a fixed term with a permanent underlying academic contract. In practice the term of office may be a bit of an irrelevance, though a fixed term retains a symbolic importance in signalling that DPVCs come from – and will return to – the academic ranks. New executive variants of the DPVC role are emerging: the more senior DVC, or provost; the DPVC/Dean; and DPVCs with executive management responsibility for one or more professional services directorates. DPVC portfolios are also expanding into new functional areas.

Vice chancellors are the primary drivers of change to an external open competition appointment model and they are motivated first and foremost by a desire to secure the best candidates for the jobs in order to improve the quality of university management. External competition for a DPVC post is more likely where there is an identified skills gap, a perceived need for new blood and/or where the institution is embarking on a change

agenda. It is seen as a useful means of testing and validating internal candidates against the market.

The profile of serving DPVCs has changed little over the years: DPVCs remain predominantly white, male professors. The adoption of external open competition has impacted the profile of successful DPVC candidates in two main ways. Firstly, it has had an adverse effect on the proportion of women being appointed. Secondly, it has led to a firming up of the academic management route into the role, with DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition nearly twice as likely as those appointed via an internal-only process to have already held a DPVC post. Moreover, there has been no rise in the proportion of non-academic appointments either from inside or outside higher education. Overall then the opening up of DPVC posts has led to a narrowing, rather than a diversification, in the profile of those getting DPVC jobs.

However, although the demographic profile of DPVCs shows remarkable continuity, it disguises real change in the motivations and attitudes of the newly created group of DPVCs appointed by external open competition. On the whole, these are highly ambitious individuals – many aiming for a vice chancellor job – who have made an active decision to take an academic management route and are making strategic career decisions.

Being a DPVC is a more demanding and managerial role than hitherto and post holders are under increasing performance pressure. Nevertheless, generally speaking, they are enjoying the role. Although many retain an academic identity, which is seen as an important part of their ability to undertake the job, in practice they struggle to maintain their research activity. Their primary loyalty is to the institution and the executive management team, particularly the vice chancellor who appointed them, rather than to any academic constituency and they are likely to be viewed as 'management' by the academic community.

These factors in combination serve to make a return to the academic ranks at the end of a DPVC term increasingly untenable, as well as unattractive. Exit strategies can thus be difficult, especially for those who are younger and/or no longer research active. Though most of these DPVCs desire to climb further up the academic management ladder, this will not be possible for everyone. Even mid-term, DPVCs may be vulnerable to a change of vice chancellor since this is liable to instigate a review of portfolios or the wider executive management team structure and composition. There is then an increasing degree of

personal risk involved in taking on a DPVC role, albeit compensated for by a generous salary.

Third tier academic managers have had much the same career route into their current role and tend to share the same aspirations as DPVCs. Many aim to climb the academic management ladder to DPVC roles and beyond. Indeed, a number have already submitted applications for a DPVC post, in some cases successfully. There would appear to be no lack of ambition from female academic managers. In fact, a higher proportion of women than men indicate that they are very likely to apply for a DPVC role in future.

Professional services managers on the other hand have not benefited in the same way from the opening up of DPVC posts to external competition. Even if they aspire to become a DPVC, they realise that the role is not currently open to non-academic candidates. The overwhelming majority have therefore chosen not to apply, though one in five still says they are likely to submit an application in future.

This chapter has presented findings which demonstrate the extent of the change to DPVC appointment model, explain the case for change and illustrate its consequences for the DPVC profile and the careers of current and aspiring DPVCs. The next chapter builds upon these findings in addressing the practical implications of change for management capacity building. Chapter Seven then analyses the significance of the study's findings for managerialism as ideology and academic-manager power relations.

Chapter Six

Management Capacity Building

1.   Introduction

Building upon the findings presented in Chapter Five in answer to the study's empirical research questions, this chapter addresses the first of the analytical questions on the practical implications of changed DPVC appointment practice for management capacity building (Q.3). In so doing, it both presents new data and begins the process of analysis. This analysis is then continued in Chapter Seven, which answers the remaining two research questions relating to the study's theoretical concerns (Q.4 and Q.5).

The first part of the chapter presents data on key aspects of changed DPVC appointment practice, including the use of executive search agencies, and considers their implications. In particular, the impact of change in relation to gender is discussed and a number of possible explanations are explored for why the adoption of external open competition has led to a narrowing in the profile of those getting the jobs: the framing of the posts, social closure, conservatism and homosociability. The concept of meritocracy is then analysed and the theory advanced that it provides a means of justifying the maintenance of the *status quo* at the expense of diversity. Finally, an assessment is made of whether or not the adoption of external open competition has been change for the better in terms of management capacity building.

2.   Consequences of Change

This section analyses the main outcomes of change to DPVC appointment practice, including a discussion of perceived advantages and disadvantages.

2.1   Choice of Appointment Method

As outlined in the previous chapter, the majority of pre-1992 universities are now utilising an external open competition appointment method for at least one of their DPVC posts and approximately one third of the 2013 cohort were appointed by these means. This is a growing trend and one which looks set to continue. It is anticipated that more DPVCs within more institutions will be appointed via external open competition in the coming years. This is in part due to the tendency of universities to follow peer group institutions via "casual benchmarking" (Tourish 2011), i.e. copying what others are doing based on the assumption that, since a particular practice is being widely adopted, it must work.

More fundamentally, it reflects that fact that the case for change made by vice chancellors (Chapter Five, 3) is likely to become even more compelling as the demands on university management intensify.   Vice chancellors, often appointed on a change mandate and under pressure to improve university rankings, will probably be keener than ever to bring in new blood. An "adaptive view" of outsider selection[57] holds that external appointees can more easily initiate and implement change than insiders (Cannella & Lubatkin 1993, p. 765) and so external appointments at the top are more likely where the organisation is deemed to be underperforming (Hambrick & Mason 1984). External appointments may in turn lead to further external appointments, thus introducing a self-perpetuating aspect to change.

Only four pre-1992 universities have adopted an external open competition model as a matter of policy for all their DPVC appointments, although there is some evidence to suggest this is becoming the default option in a few others. Nevertheless, most vice chancellors do not see wholesale adoption of an external open competition model of DPVC recruitment as desirable.   Indeed, one goes so far as to suggest that such an approach would be "very dismissive of internal colleagues" and "an admission of failure" (VC 14). Rather it is anticipated that the current mixed appointment model, in which vice chancellors make pragmatic case-by-case decisions on which method to use, will continue to predominate.

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[57] This is contrasted with an "inertia view", whereby large organisations cling to outdated administrative forms and resist outsider selections even in a dynamic environment and despite poor performance. This provides an interesting perspective both on why some pre-1992 universities have retained an internal secondment DPVC appointment model, and on why nearly all pre-1992s have resisted the selection of outsider appointments in the sense of those from outside higher education.

> *"A mixed model allows you to draw on expertise from outside and retain*
> *institutional knowledge. There is a danger in going wholeheartedly for one or other*
> *model."* (VC 11)

A mixed model is generally thought to offer "the best of both worlds" (Dean/HOD 1) since it permits institutions to keep open the internal promotion route, without being dependent upon it. By providing this "internal route to the top" ambitious academic staff within an institution can see there is "not a glass ceiling they cannot rise above" (DPVC 12).

2.2   Internal Staff and Succession Management

As data from this study shows, good internal candidates can – and in a third of cases, do - get externally advertised DPVC jobs. Nevertheless, the opening up of DPVC posts to external competition has limited the overall chances of someone from within the institution securing a position. The fact that two thirds of the jobs go to external candidates is unsurprising given search agents' observation that "in most cases, the expectation is to appoint someone from outside" (ESA 2).

It is not normally part of an executive search agency's brief to seek out internal candidates, although if internals do apply they are said to be assessed in the same way as all other candidates (ESA 3). Opinion is divided as to whether or not an internal candidate is at an advantage, although it appears that sometimes an institution will tell an executive search agency "it must have an internal candidate on the short list for political reasons" (ESA 1).

One potential downside of external open competition is that, now universities can bring in experienced DPVCs from elsewhere, they may not be investing sufficient effort in the development of internal talent or in succession management, i.e. the systematic identification, nurturing and development of those individuals with high potential.

> *"Universities need to take responsibility for internal mentoring and development."*
> (VC 18)

In the private sector, the identification and grooming of an heir apparent is considered by stakeholders as a key responsibility of the chief executive (Cannella & Lubatkin 1993). However, in general it is felt that universities are not very good at developing people with the potential to be future leaders.

> *"Universities are astonishingly profligate and unsupportive of management talent. They need to be identifying people, training them, mentoring them and finding career development opportunities for them"* (Dean/HOD 10)

These findings accord with those from two recent studies. The first found little or no evidence of formal succession management policies and processes for DPVC positions (Spendlove 2007). The second showed that, despite recognising the importance of succession management, few executive management teams pay it any attention (Woodfield & Kennie 2007). Accordingly, the authors conclude that a more explicit and systematic approach to identifying talented staff and providing them with structured training and development opportunities is required.

2.3   Staff Mobility

The introduction of an external open competition DPVC appointment model has increased staff mobility. This is perceived to have both advantages and disadvantages, with the former outweighing the latter.

> *"Increased job mobility is a good thing for individuals and the sector."* (DPVC 23)

On the one hand, senior managers get the opportunity to gain experience in more than one institution and, on the other, institutions get the benefit of new ideas and expertise to help them meet future challenges. Research in the private sector has shown that at a time of change longstanding service inside an organisation is unlikely to be a good thing for either profitability or growth since "executives who have spent their entire careers in one organization can be assumed to have relatively limited perspectives" (Hambrick & Mason 1984, p. 200). If the entire team are insiders, they are likely to have a very restricted knowledge base to deal with radical change and therefore external appointments would appear to make good business sense.

On the other hand, increased staff mobility can lead to a loss of continuity and "organisational memory" (VC 2) and have an initial destabilising effect. Moreover, there are some concerns about the potential for "job hopping" (VC 1), with DPVCs coming in as "a stepping stone" to a better job and "not staying around until the effects of what they have done become apparent" (Dean/HOD 8).

> *"Short-term stakeholders in the institution are to be avoided."* (Dean/HOD 8)

Either way, individuals with academic management ambitions are realising the value of moving institution in order to gain experience and enhance their employability.

"I believed it would be sensible to move to expand my CV." (DPVC 22)

This demonstrates the growing importance of external, as opposed to internal, career capital (Floyd & Dimmock 2011). The first relates to knowledge and experience accumulated in one's own institution and the second to that gained elsewhere. The fact that the latter has become increasingly important in relation to DPVC appointments has implications in terms of equity. Not all aspiring DPVCs, especially ones with family commitments, are able to move institutions to grow their career capital and/or gain promotion elsewhere. Although this is not a new problem, it is one which is becoming more pertinent at DPVC level given both the increased expectation that DPVCs will have worked in more than one university and the reduced opportunity for promotion within one's own institution.

2.4   Executive Search Agencies

The involvement of executive search agencies in the appointment of senior university managers is a relatively new phenomenon. However, uptake of their services during the last few years has been rapid and, as this study shows, they are now used for over half of externally advertised DPVC posts. Nevertheless, opinion about the value search agencies bring to DPVC appointments is deeply divided, ranging from ringing endorsement to deep cynicism. This section discusses some of the perceived pros and cons. The issue of executive search agencies and gender is addressed in 3.1.

2.4.1   Perceived Benefits

The main reason that vice chancellors elect to use executive search agencies is because they can undertake a breadth of search that universities themselves have neither the time nor resource for.

"They are the only way to get to the best candidates." (VC1)

The comprehensive nature of the search has the added benefit of reassuring the governing body "about the rigour of the process" (VC 9). Using an executive search agency is regarded as a means of demonstrating due diligence with respect to checking out the background of potential candidates and thus "mitigating the risks of appointing an

unknown" (VC 18). Many vice chancellors also value the independent, dispassionate and "objective" assessment of candidates they get from search consultants (VC 1).

> *"They have good judgement about the ability and potential of each candidate."*
> (VC 4)

In essence, employing an executive search agency is seen both as a means of managing the risk of making a poor appointment and as a form of protection from getting the appointment process wrong with respect to equal opportunities.

> *"Universities are all so worried about equality and diversity issues. They are hoping to outsource the issue by using head hunters."* (VC 24)

This same vice chancellor likens universities' motivations for using executive search to outsourcing their cleaning services:

> *"If you get complaints you can change the cleaning company. Do rooms get any cleaner? No. You may be suspicious the cleaning company is employing illegal workers and you are contracting out this risk."* (VC 24)

Such an approach has its downsides. Executive search agencies have become "a comfort blanket" (VC 18) for some universities which are said to be handing over too much control.

> *"You are outsourcing the process, but not the responsibility."* (VC 4)

Another major reason why universities are turning to executive search agencies is because they are aware they cannot rely on an advertisement alone to find the best candidates. With executive search agents now established in the higher education recruitment market, it has become "a point of pride" (VC 14) that senior people are no longer willing to apply for a post directly.

> *"People don't respond to ads any more – they expect to be contacted directly."*
> (VC 1)

> *"I wouldn't dream of applying directly for a senior post."* (DPVC 11)

The use of executive search agencies thus offers universities the ability to reach candidates they could not access via an advertisement.

> *"Good people are already in secure positions. Potential PVCs are not looking, but waiting."* (PSM 3)

> *"As a client, you want head hunters to go out and find people who have not made an application, but should have."* (VC 8)

Executive search consultants "know people who are interested in moving" (VC 7) and excel "at winkling people out" of existing posts (VC 10). They act as advocates for an institution and can "embark on a campaign of persuasion" to get someone to apply (VC 11). To use a sporting term, they provide a mechanism for universities to 'tap up' current and aspiring DPVCs already in posts elsewhere. It is in facilitating access to these candidates that executive search agencies provide most value-added to their university clients.

The resulting recirculation of existing DPVCs, evidenced by this study, is made possible because there is both supply and demand in the market. On the supply side, there are DPVCs interested in changing institutions either to gain external career capital via a sideways move or to secure a more senior role on their way to a vice-chancellorship. A few DPVCs may also feel they need to move on either because they are coming to the end of their term or because the arrival of a new vice chancellor is imminent. On the demand side, there are a number of universities wanting to hire experienced DPVCs.

Search consultants are able to approach potential candidates and sound them out in a way that the university itself could not easily do. As such, they "fill a little gap" between the institution and the candidate (VC 5) and "act as a kind of dating agency" (VC 7). This can be beneficial for both parties, allowing each an "arms-length opportunity" to discuss the role (DPVC 11) and ask the difficult questions they may not otherwise be able to do (DPVC 20). Good search consultants provide valuable feedback to candidates and act "almost as career advisors" (VC 3).   However, their privileged "intermediary role" (ESA 1) also means they are able to ask questions on the university's behalf "that the university could not ask – about families, schools etc." (VC 1) and this may be problematic from an equality and diversity perspective.

Executive search consultants admit they ask candidates about "the softer stuff" such as their motivations and personal circumstances with respect to moving location, though insist "we don't ask them anything illegal or discriminatory" (ESA 3). One consultant suggests that the information is largely volunteered by candidates because they feel it is to their advantage. She gives the example of a female candidate who has been at the same institution for twenty years and tells the consultant that she stayed there because of her children. This information is volunteered in order to demonstrate that staying in one

institution does not mean the candidate lacks ambition and to indicate that she is now able and ready to move on. Another search consultant says that, in her experience, "male candidates are just as likely as female ones to raise the issue of other things going on in their life – their partner's job, children, aged parents and so on" (ESA 3). The issues associated with the use of executive search agencies are thus rather more complex and nuanced than sometimes assumed in the literature.

2.4.2   Perceived Disadvantages

Although executive search agencies target a wider pool of potential applicants (typically 120-150 initial contacts) than universities could, the outcome in terms of selection is nevertheless "more of the same" and this has had the effect of "homogenising the senior team" (VC 3). One vice chancellor argues that one inequitable system of DPVC selection (the tap-on-the-shoulder invitation model) may simply have given way to another, with executive search agents now "giving the tap on the shoulder rather than VCs" (VC 11).

Previous studies on vice chancellor recruitment have concluded that executive search agencies are overly prescriptive in what they are looking for and use this as a "filter to minimise their work" (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a, p. 41). Such an approach makes it more difficult for non-standard candidates to succeed and is said to have led to the creation of a "competitive waiting room" of potential candidates, mainly comprising 55-year-old men (Watson 2008, p. 10). In Watson's experience, this group is becoming less diverse as younger, more interesting candidates drop out after being encouraged by executive search agencies to apply but not succeeding.   He suggests that individuals are "either permanently sitting in the waiting room or constantly being begged and/or seduced to be there" by search consultants trying to put a plausible short list together (2008, p. 10). In his view, it is in the agents' interests to feed the illusion that everyone comes second so that they can be persuaded to put their names forward again.

Data from this study confirm the lack of diversity in the candidate pool at DPVC level. The degree to which this is solely the responsibility of executive search agencies is questionable, however, given that they are working to a person specification laid down by the university and it is the university that makes the selection decisions. One vice chancellor describes executive search consultants rather as "selecting agents, presenting universities with the candidates they want to receive" (VC 7).

The findings also resonate with Watson's portrayal of a competitive waiting room of potential candidates approached, occasionally relentlessly, by search consultants whose

job it is to "chase applications" (ESA 2).   Whilst some of these potential candidates are waiting to be contacted, others are not necessarily looking to move.   In the latter case, one consultant admits "it's our job to unsettle them" (ESA 2). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that executive search agencies are criticised for creating a lot of "churn" in the market (DPVC 13). It is said that their presence "can create ambition in candidates who had not thought of applying for a role" (VC 11).

> *"I didn't know I wanted to move when I was approached."* (VC 1)

> *"Without the head hunter's intervention, I wouldn't have applied for my current job."* (DPVC 6)

The dominance of the higher education recruitment market by a small number of agencies is also a concern. With just four agencies accounting for such a large share of senior management appointments (Shepherd 2011), it is debatable whether each search can be genuinely fresh, especially given that agents have a vested interest in "moving players along" (Watson 2008, p. 11). Where one agency has multiple university clients there is also real potential for conflicts of interest despite an "off limits" policy for certain clients and individual candidates (ESA 3). One agency in particular, with a substantial market share, is seen to have become too influential in shaping the market and even individual careers.

Finally, the use of executive search agencies can be off-putting for internal candidates who may view it as a signal that an institution wants to appoint someone from outside and that internal candidates are not encouraged to apply (Shine 2010). This can result in well-qualified internal candidates not applying for obvious career moves. If so, vice chancellors' wish of testing internals against the market will not be realised – or only partially so – and the outcome may be a loss of morale amongst internal staff with management ambitions.

2.4.3   No Viable Alternative
Even though some vice chancellors and DPVCs are deeply sceptical about the value of executive search agencies, there is a growing sense that universities have no choice but to use them[58]. Now that a DPVC recruitment market has been created, many believe that it is not possible to "legislate against it" (DPVC 24) and so using executive search is considered the only viable option.

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[58] It is worth noting here that two pre-1992 universities in the sample have decided to adopt an alternative approach: conducting their own internal search for a DPVC. Although this was said to have required a large investment of time, in both cases it was deemed to have led to a good outcome.

> *"If you go external, it's difficult to imagine not using executive search, unless you knew who you wanted."* (VC 18)

> *"An institution would have to be very brave to make an external appointment without them."* (DPVC 6)

Some participants described the use of executive search as "obligatory" because "everyone is doing it" (Dean/HOD 1).

> *"People buy into using head hunters because everyone else is buying into it – it's a bit like pyramid selling."* (VC 16)

Not using an agency can be interpreted as signalling that an institution is either not that serious about a position or that it already has an internal candidate in mind (Registrar 3).

The overall impression is that their use has become "self-perpetuating" (VC 11) and, for some, a necessary evil.

> *"Would the world be a better place if we didn't have executive search agents? Probably yes, but you can't put the genie back in the bottle."* (VC 6)

3.   Gender

There is something of a mismatch between expectation and reality in terms of the effects external open competition is having on the number of female DPVCs being appointed. A number of vice chancellors expected it to lead to more women being appointed and third tier managers were also confident about the potential benefits of change from an equality and diversity perspective. The overwhelming majority (96%) surveyed agreed with the proposition that the adoption of external open competition for DPVC posts was likely to result in a diversification of the applicant pool[59] and also lead to a fairer (70%) and more effective (67%) appointment process.

Despite such optimism, DPVCs remain "overwhelmingly white men of a certain age and a very uniform group" (VC 7) and there are still "the same faces around the table" (PSM 1).

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[59] One caveat is that in retrospect, the wording of the survey response option as a "diversification" rather than a "widening" of the pool of applicants was not optimal as it makes interpretation of this response ambiguous. Many of the free text comments indicate that survey respondents are actually referring to a potential widening in the pool of applicants.

In fact, the opening up the posts to external competition has had a negative impact on the number of female DPVCs being appointed.   This led a few participants to question whether changes to DPVC appointment practice are just "window dressing" or "going through the motions" (PSM 2) from a gender inclusiveness perspective.

This section considers the issue of gender, both in relation to the role of executive search agencies and that of the universities themselves.

3.1   Executive Search and Gender

Opinion is divided as to whether or not executive search agencies are a help or a hindrance in terms of gender inclusiveness. A number of participants suggest that an executive search agency can support universities with their equal opportunities agenda and, for some, this is an important factor in their decision to utilise one.

> *"They are more aware of gender issues than some universities."* (DPVC 6)

> *"They make it easier for women and ethnic minorities to get on the short list and this is one reason why universities are quite keen to use them."* (DPVC 26)

Indeed, the employment of an executive search agency may be interpreted as a sign that universities are taking the issue seriously (DPVC 11). For their part, search agencies say they are fully committed to equality and diversity.

> *"We don't need to be instructed to produce a diverse list."* (ESA 1)

The evidence suggests that they play an important role in encouraging women to apply for DPVC posts (VC 14) and in reassuring them that their applications "will be looked at" (ESA 1). A number of female DPVCs, and those aspiring to the role, say that they would not have put themselves forward without the encouragement of a search consultant.

> *"I would not have got the job without the head hunter as I wasn't convinced I was ready for, or would get, a PVC role."* (DPVC 4)

However, the presence of executive search agencies can work against women's interests if they find themselves pressured to apply for jobs "too early in their career" or when "it is not in their best interests" (VC 8). Some female participants spoke of being bombarded with calls, and there was some cynicism about the motives of agencies that appear to view female candidates as valuable commodities to be moved around.

Although search consultants insist that they would only approach female candidates who meet the candidate brief, there is a feeling that women are sometimes used as "long list fodder" (DPVC 26). It should be noted, however, that this can be true for men too since the nature of the process means that some candidates are "set up to fail" (VC 14).

> *"Women are getting on short lists because universities are telling search agents*
> *they must have a woman. But in the end they won't be picked. There is no*
> *sponsorship of females right up to the last stage of the process".* (DPVC 26)

Executive search agencies are actively seeking female candidates for their long lists, encouraged by universities keen to redress the lack of diversity in their executive management teams.

> *"We are usually asked to have women candidates on the long list"* (ESA 2).

Search consultants insist that they would not put anyone onto a long list – male or female - who is not up to the job.

> *"We don't want to put people forward who are not going to be successful."* (ESA 1)

However, vice chancellors say that the women they see on their long lists are often not credible candidates. This begs the question as to why this perception gap exists between search agencies and their clients and what it might tell us about the selection process and the criteria by which candidates are assessed – issues that are addressed later in this chapter. In any case, universities "are not interviewing women for the sake of it as that's in nobody's interests" (ESA 2).

> *"You can't appoint someone who is not up to it for equal opportunities' sake."*
> (VC 6)

There are also concerns about the lack of transparency of the search process. Successful candidates are not always clear how they got onto the search agent's initial list and aspiring DPVCs are not necessarily aware of how they might go about doing so.

> *"Maybe I should declare an interest to head hunters but I'm not sure how to woo*
> *them."* (DPVC 18)

Potential candidates have to get themselves on the consultants' radar and play the networking game. This may favour male candidates, as does the fact that executive search agencies tend to focus their search on those in next-tier roles, such as dean or head of

school, and those with a national role or profile. Agencies also rely on recommendations from a fairly narrow range of sources, including vice chancellors.

> *"You need powerful sponsorship from people above to ensure you get recommended."* (DPVC 10)

This is widely seen as problematic from a gender inclusiveness perspective and has been described as "replacing one old boys' network with another" (VC 18).

> *"Head hunters are speaking to an unrepresentative, elite group for recommendations – and people tend to reproduce themselves."* (VC 16)

Although there are legitimate concerns about the use of executive search agencies from a gender perspective, the findings from this study do not support the view that executive search agencies are having a negative impact on the number of women being appointed. Of the 71 DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition, the proportion of women is slightly higher where an executive search agency is used than when an institution relies on external advertisement alone (Table 17).

Table 17: Proportion of Female DPVCs Appointed With and Without Executive Search

	Females	*All*	*%*
External Advertisement plus Executive Search	8	46	17.4
External Advertisement Alone	3	25	12.0
Total	*11*	*71*	*15.5*

It would therefore be wrong to assign sole responsibility for the gender imbalance in DPVC appointments to executive search agencies. Instead, closer scrutiny of universities' own approach to the DPVC appointment process, and the assumptions and behaviours which underpin it, is required.

3.2   University Selection and Gender

The "massive gender imbalance" (VC 6) at executive management team level is generally recognised as a problem that needs to be addressed. Some of the reasons participants

advance to explain why so few female DPVCs are appointed are a lack of "desire and motivation" and/or confidence (VC 15) and limits on geographical mobility (though it is acknowledged this is an issue that may apply to men too).

Other perceived barriers are "a very male culture at PVC level" (DPVC 3), lack of career support and sponsorship through to the final stage of the selection process (DPVC 26), and "the focus on research as a criterion" (Dean/HOD 4).

> *"It's not active discrimination, more about the nature of what is being looked for in a candidate – like a research track record."* (PSM 3)

A number of vice chancellors refer to the dearth of women in the pipeline and executive search agencies testify to the relative lack of women in the DPVC applicant pool. Since 90% of DPVCs are drawn from the professoriate and only one in five professors is female, the representation of women in the candidate pool is seriously limited. Furthermore, only 24% of third tier academic managers are women. Nevertheless, the pipeline issue is not by itself sufficient explanation for why a mere 15% of DPVCs appointed via external open competition are female, a figure that drops still further at vice chancellor level.

Given that the findings reveal no lack of ambition from women at head of department and dean level to attain DPVC (and, indeed, vice chancellor) positions, it would appear that women's agency alone fails to provide an adequate explanation. Rather, a number of structural factors associated with external open competition (with or without the use of executive search agencies) may help to explain the relative lack of female appointments. These are discussed in the following sections.

4.   Making Sense of Change

This section analyses some of the main issues surrounding changed DPVC appointment practice and presents possible explanations for why the opening up of DPVC positions to external competition has resulted in a narrowing in the profile of those securing the jobs.

Firstly, it explores how non-academic candidates are excluded from consideration by the way the posts are framed and by a process of social closure. Secondly, it examines how female and other non-standard DPVC candidates are disadvantaged by a conservative and risk-averse approach to recruitment and an emphasis on 'fit' which collectively amount to

homosociability. Finally, it theorises that the culturally established ideals of meritocracy and excellence are prevailing over that of diversity in relation to DPVC appointments.

4.1   Framing of the Post

The framing of DPVC posts, especially in the form of the person specification, is perhaps the single most important factor in determining the diversity, or otherwise, of the DPVC applicant pool. This section explores the essential criteria and considers their appropriateness in the light of the changing construction of the DPVC role and the management needs of the university.

4.1.1 Person Specification

The primary stated criterion for a DPVC job is a track record of research excellence.

> *"We need someone who is a first class researcher."* (VC 6)

However, the requirement for researchers "with a pedigree" (VC 15) may not be quite what it seems.

> *"Research excellence is what is mainly sought, but this is open to interpretation and institutions don't always mean it."* (VC 5)

Although "a prestigious institution won't compromise on research credentials" (ESA 3), some vice chancellors acknowledge that research excellence is an ideal – possibly an increasingly unrealistic one. Firstly, top researchers may not wish to do a job that means they may have to give up their research, at least for a few years.

> *"Research superstars are much too selfish to do it, but you do need research esteem."* (VC 10)

If, as has been argued, top scholars make the best leaders (Goodall 2009), this would be a source of concern.

Secondly, academic managers are unlikely to have an active research profile – a fact that goes to the heart of the inherent tension in framing the person specification for a DPVC post: top managers are not generally top researchers and *vice versa*. A compromise therefore has to be made.

> *"Institutions are starting to make a trade-off between a research star and someone with experience of an academic management role."* (ESA 2)

Executive search consultants confirm that, although according to the rhetoric a research track record is the most important criterion, in practice experience as an academic manager may take precedence. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the person specification is likely to disadvantage female candidates, given the gendered nature of a research career.

Even though the requirement for research excellence is sometimes negotiable, academic credibility is not. This remains a prerequisite for a DPVC since it is believed that without it appointees will be unacceptable to the main internal constituencies over whom leadership will be exercised, i.e. rank and file academics (Bargh et al. 2000). In this sense, the concept of academic credibility is not only about the individual themselves, but also about how people respond to them. Conventional wisdom has it that "academics are more willing to believe and trust someone who has a demonstrable academic track record and hence may be more likely to 'follow' them" (Bolden et al. 2012, p. 8).

> *"Even though academics sometimes see a suit when talking to me, they know I have done an academic job."* (DPVC 5)

In reality, academic credibility is unlikely to derive solely from a current reputation as a cutting-edge researcher, since it is almost impossible for many DPVCs to maintain an active research profile (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). In fact, they are more likely to be trading on past research and an already established reputation.

> *"It's more about what you were than what you are."* (VC 12)

> *"The challenge is to maintain a cloak of scholarship based on a good academic record."* (DPVC 25)

In order to be in possession of academic credibility, it is believed that one must be a career academic. Therefore, the overwhelming view of both vice chancellors and DPVCs is that post holders must be "first and foremost" academics with "a shared set of values" (VC 4). It is considered essential that candidates should have academic experience, "complete familiarity with the core mission" and "credibility in making decisions in an academic environment" (VC 9).

> *"You could not stand up in front of academic colleagues if you hadn't done the job yourself. You've got to have credibility. I've earned this even if my time is spent on other things."* (DPVC 23)

> *"I could not have done the job without having been an academic, even if I'm not one now."* (DPVC 18)

In the same way that one must be an academic to have academic credibility, so it is assumed that one must have academic management experience to be a DPVC. Little or no consideration has been given as to whether equivalent experience gained outside higher education might also be suitable. This is despite recent Universities UK guidance (2009) which recommends that each stated attribute in a person specification should be both legitimate (i.e. reflecting a genuine requirement) and proportionate (i.e. not excessively demanding nor discriminatory) and focus on necessary skills rather than stereotypes.

> *"To keep the talent pool open to as many people as possible, you should keep the description as general as possible."* (UUK 2009, p. 11)

4.1.2   Preparation for the Role

It is still assumed that the required management experience for a DPVC post "can be taken for granted as part of the career pathway to the top" for academic staff (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a, p. 43).   However, some professional services managers challenge the idea that an academic career is an appropriate qualification for a DPVC role.

> *"Academic training does not prepare you to be a good manager of people. How much of a PVC role actually relates to the skills of an academic? Probably not a lot."* (PSM 4)

> *"Leadership is much less about technical expertise than generic skills."* (Registrar 6)

Executive search consultants also observe that "it is not enough in itself just to be someone from the academy" noting that DPVCs need a broader set of skills than simply academic ones including, for example, political nous (ESA 1). This confirms the findings from a number of recent empirical studies which have shown that academics do not necessarily have the right skill set to be effective managers and may find themselves promoted to a position of authority for which their expertise is inappropriately matched (Yielder & Codling 2004).

Heads of department, for example, sometimes find that an academic career has not been a good preparation for a role as an academic manager (Johnson 2002). Accordingly, many find themselves facing a steep learning curve and some struggle to cope (Floyd & Dimmock 2011). At DPVC level, Pilbeam found that not all academics have the communication, networking and social skills deemed essential for what he terms the DPVC's "boundary spanner" role (2010, p. 771). These are not the skills which form the basis for academic promotion, underlining the fundamentally different nature of academic and management functions.

DPVCs in this study highlighted the clear differentiation between their academic and DPVC roles, typically describing taking on the latter as a new challenge or even "an alternative career" (DPVC 13). Furthermore, most suggest that the two require completely different skill sets. This implies that an academic background may in fact be a poor preparation for a management role. In reality, academic managers may lack both the skills and desire to deal with the inevitable organisational and personal conflict they will face.

> *"…academics want to govern themselves but they rarely want to manage; they are often poor managers when they do manage; and yet they deny rights of management to others."* (Dearlove 1998, p. 73)

Seen from the perspective of professional services managers, academics have not necessarily acquired the requisite professional management skills and are often not viewed as credible managers.

> *"Universities are still run by amateurs not professionals."* (R 6)

DPVCs may also lack appropriate training. There has been a false assumption in higher education that any intelligent person can manage and that there is therefore no need for training (McCaffery 2004). However, a relative lack of formal training calls the legitimacy of academic managers into question as far as professional services staff are concerned (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007).

4.1.3 Social and Cultural Capital

In the absence of management credentials, a candidate's eligibility for selection as DPVC is more the product of their membership of a particular community of practice (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). Aspiring DPVCs are therefore heavily dependent on their social capital, i.e. networks and contacts accessed through membership of this group.

> *"For manager-academics,* whom *they know may become more important than*
> what *they know."* (Deem 2006, p. 220)

Deem goes on to propose that, since they are often not trained in management and so have not acquired much cultural capital in management *per se,* academic managers may tend to de-emphasise training in favour of experience. This is the case for DPVC appointments. Rather, the assumption seems to be that "they already have much of what they require in terms of experience, knowledge and skills relevant to undertaking their management role in their new career field" (Deem 2006, p. 219).

Professional services managers, on the other hand, lack the social capital gained through academic networking (Spendlove 2007). Despite the fact that some have higher degrees, they are also deemed to lack cultural capital relevant to higher education. This helps to explain why, from an academic perspective, non-academics are not considered credible candidates for DPVC positions.

4.2   Social Closure

A sizeable minority (45%) of third tier managers surveyed envisage that a likely outcome of external open competition will be the attraction of more candidates from outside higher education and a third (33%) agree that more non-academic candidates from within the sector are likely to be attracted. However, in fact, the adoption of an external open competition model for DPVC posts has not increased the likelihood of a non-academic appointment of either type.

Most vice chancellors cannot envisage appointing a DPVC from outside higher education.

> *"Higher education is not like the NHS where someone could be selling Mars bars*
> *today and running a hospital tomorrow."* (VC 4)

> *"Good managers from outside HE cannot make the transition."* (VC 7)

The fact that universities are not interested in appointing these candidates is confirmed by the executive search agents.

> *"In my experience, universities are not looking for people from outside the sector.*
> *HE is inherently conservative and people are suspicious of those from outside the*
> *academy."* (ESA 1)

> *"A pre-92 is very unlikely to be interested in a non-academic or someone from outside HE."* (ESA 2)

This is in contrast to vice chancellor appointments where "the influence of lay members of council is so much greater" (ESA 1) and non-higher education candidates tend to be considered, even though they do not usually end up getting the job.

> *"The sense of wanting apples and oranges at VC level has not made it down to the next level. The first question councils ask is 'Do we need a businessman or someone from industry or government?'"* (DPVC 26)

For DPVC posts, however, not only are those from outside higher education not considered, nor are professional services managers already within universities.

> *"I would have a real concern about a professional manager as PVC."* (DPVC 4)

Professional services managers are effectively excluded from these posts by the lack of an academic track record and have to move on to another sector in order to gain promotion. Although this is not necessarily a problem for those specialist professional services managers who are happy to move out of higher education, it can be more of an issue for the generic higher education manager, for whom such an option might is not so readily available (Bacon 2009).

A few senior figures within the pre-1992 university sector are beginning to question this state of affairs. One former registrar, for example, has argued that professional services managers "must be able to see the possibility of progression to the most senior posts in universities" (Lauwerys 2008, p. 5). Although very much in the minority, one or two academic participants agree that the exclusion of professional managers is to the detriment of university management.

> *"It's regrettable that universities don't get a mix of talents. There's no question that there is a vested interest in preserving the difference between academics and non-academics."* (VC 3)

> *"Universities don't respect the disciplines and expertise of their professional services directors. They still have amateurs in charge. If you wanted work done on your house, you'd get a builder."* (DPVC 25)

Nevertheless, it remains the case that DPVCs in pre-1992 universities are almost always career academics. As yet there has been no successful resolution to the problem of how to combine a desire for more professional management with the continued requirement for academic credibility (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007). Since the former cannot easily displace the latter, career academics continue to dominate DPVC positions. This is in contrast to the experience of some other professions where the dominance of "managerial professionals" appointed on the basis of their professional reputations, rather than their management competence, has come under serious challenge (Laffin 1998). The fact that this has not been the case in academia suggests that social closure remains strong. This may in part be the result of early socialisation into the culture of a disciplinary "tribe" that helps academics to "define their own identities and defend their own patches of intellectual ground by employing a variety of devices geared to the exclusion of illegal immigrants" (Becher 1989, p. 24).

Social closure has been defined as "the capacity for, and strategies of, social groups to exclude, or usurp, other groups in a struggle for control of scarce resources, valued social locations, and their associated privileges and status" (Flynn, R. 1999, p. 22). It is thus an exercise of power "in which one group secures its advantages by closing off the opportunities of another group beneath it that it defines as inferior and ineligible" (Murphy 1984, p. 548). Murphy argues that, by implication, closure is a means of domination. Within organisations this is often achieved through the monopolisation of positions. The effective exclusion by academics of other occupational groups from DPVC positions is a prime example of social closure.

The issue of relative power of academics and professional services managers is returned to in Chapter Seven.

4.3   Conservatism and Homosociability

Another key factor explaining the continued lack of diversity in the profile of DPVCs is the conservative and risk-averse approach taken by universities to the recruitment process and to selection decisions. This is tending to result in safe appointments of the same kind of people, in a form of homosociability, and to disadvantage non-standard candidates.

4.3.1 A Conservative and Risk-Averse Approach
Whilst the method of appointing DPVCs may be changing, the overall approach remains "quite cautious" (DPVC 1).

> *"Universities are extremely risk averse – they tend to take a risk in a half-hearted way and select the same person as always."* (DPVC 17)

This conservative and risk averse approach, symptomatic of a wider university culture, has been exacerbated by the current challenging higher education environment.

> *"Harsh times may lead to even more conservatism."* (VC 10)

Moreover, as the stakes with respect to DPVC appointments get higher, and the perceived costs of a bad appointment increase, the avoidance of risk becomes even more of a concern. This is especially true when executive search agencies are utilised since the expense and potential reputational fallout of a failed exercise would make this "a very expensive mistake" (PSM 3).

One former vice chancellor suggests that universities' risk-averse attitude in part stems from an unhealthy focus on not being sued that can lead to "paralysis by fear" and an "admit nothing" or "do nothing outside the guidelines" culture which leaves those making appointments feeling "straitjacketed into formulaic procedures" (Watson 2009, p. 72).

> *"Traditional selection processes tend to drive you to conservatism. It's all about risk management."* (Dean/HOD 10)

In order to limit the chances of choosing the wrong candidate, appointment panels appear to be using experience as the main indicator of quality. Since no one can demonstrate experience better than someone who is already undertaking the role, it follows that existing DPVCs become the prime candidates.

> *"You increasingly have to do the job before you get it."* (DPVC 10)

Although the prioritisation of experience makes sense in the light of vice chancellor's stated desire for DPVCs who can hit the ground running, it is a somewhat limited and limiting approach that fails to take account of a candidate's potential. A talented but less experienced female candidate, for example, may thus be viewed as too high risk.

> *"A successful candidate needs to demonstrate their experience and this makes for a certain conservatism."* (ESA 2)

Experience may also be confused with achievement. The former is relatively easy to evidence, but the quality of a candidate's contribution is harder to assess. A dean who has been through the DPVC appointment process makes the point that, whilst there is plenty of

objective evidence that helps to rank candidates for academic positions (research income, citations, etc.), there are not many objective indicators of management and leadership achievement.

> *"Candidates can demonstrate experience, but not how good they are at management. How are panels to know how good they are as managers?"* (Dean/HOD 10)

This same participant notes the paradox that, despite their risk aversion, many universities have chosen to adopt an inherently riskier DPVC appointment method. With external open competition, panels have to rely on CVs, interviews and references rather than first-hand knowledge of the candidate, as would be the case with an internal process.

> *"Ironically, an external process may be riskier yet lead to the appointment of a safer candidate as the more experienced person tends to win."* (Dean/HOD 10)

The emphasis on experience serves to offset some of this risk. However, it also means that only senior academic managers, ideally those already in a DPVC role, are considered as serious candidates. Therefore, despite the widening of the pool of potential applicants resulting from the opening up of DPVC posts to external competition and the use of executive search agencies, the actual outcome is a narrowing of the field.

According to Universities UK guidelines, the nature of the appointment process is a "major determinant" of the demographic profile of successful candidates and, hence, the breadth of talent on the executive management team (UUK 2009). Although the guidelines strongly encourage the use of a range of complementary approaches to candidate evaluation, there is still a heavy reliance on panel interviews and presentations for DPVC appointments.

> *"Selection mechanisms are important because they determine who is excluded as well as included."* (Deem 2000, p. 16)

Even where executive search agencies are used, the short listing and final selection decisions are normally undertaken by a university search committee, or appointments panel, which can have "tight perceptions" about posts (VC 16).

> *"The academics may have too much to say and they often go for the safer candidate."* (DPVC 23)

This resonates with earlier research on vice chancellor recruitment (Bargh et al. 2000) that found search committees to be highly conservative, with a tendency to recruit people who matched their own values and experiences and who were seen as acceptable to the academic community. Executive search agencies were also said to regard the power of academics in the selection process as a deterrent to appointing outsiders (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a).   The presence of academics on appointment panels is also seen by one of the search consultants in this study as having a conservative effect.

> *"Many of those on an institution's appointments panel are likely to have come through the traditional academic route themselves and may be more likely to favour candidates who have done the same."* (ESA 1)

Whereas a vice chancellor who is internally selecting a DPVC may be prepared to "balance out diversity and potential", appointment panels are "much less willing to take a reach or make a bold decision as they are bound to traditional characteristics" (VC 9).

> *"One of the hardest aspects of maintaining diversity is getting search committees to see beyond paper qualifications. The formality of the process may reinforce stereotypes."* (VC 9)

A conservative interpretation of the person specification by appointment panels thus leads to an even further narrowing of the pool of eligible candidates.

4.3.2 Homosociability

As these findings confirm, regardless of the university's written procedure, vice chancellors "nearly always have the whip-hand" in appointing DPVCs (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, p. 3). The centrality of the vice chancellor to the selection process may serve to reinforce the tendency to appoint like-minded people.

> *"A VC may bring in people who share his view of the world." (VC 16)*

A few participants who have been through the DPVC appointment process spoke of how they became aware of a requirement for a clear sense of "fit" with the existing executive team, leading to the appointment of "more of the same" (Dean/HOD 2). It has also been suggested that some vice chancellors are "much more comfortable with members of their team who are drawn from an academic background than from a professional background" (Lauwerys 2008, p. 9).

> *"There's not a receptiveness to consider non-standard candidates brought forward by executive search agencies. People tend to recruit those made in their own self-image."* (DPVC 25)

Research into principal selection in Australia found that a "quest for certainty and safety", symptomatic of the DPVC appointment process described in this study, resulted in the same kinds of people being appointed (Blackmore, J., Thomson & Barty 2006, p. 297). Accordingly, they describe this type of selection process as a "reproductive technology" of homosociability, or "the tendency to select people just like oneself" (2006, p. 297). On the evidence of this study, DPVC appointments are symptomatic of homosociability.

This inevitably leads to homogeneous executive management teams, a situation that is not optimal for any organisation, including universities.

> *"Some VCs like a senior management team that is not too combative, but this is not a recipe for a successful institution. The ideal is to have a team with loyalty to the institution but who form their own opinion."* (VC 14)

A homogenous team runs the risk of inferior decision making and "group think" or the "restricted generation and assessment of alternatives" (Hambrick & Mason 1984, p. 202). As part of their development of upper echelons theory, Hambrick and Mason propose that, although homogenous teams may operate quickly and effectively in stable conditions, in a complex and turbulent environment, a heterogenic team will be more successful.

Given the established link between an executive team's demographic and behavioural diversity and their strategic effectiveness (Jarzabkowski & Searle 2004), there is thus a strong business - as well as a social justice - case for a more inclusive approach to DPVC appointments.

4.4   Meritocracy

Meritocracy has been defined as "a political philosophy which holds that power should be vested in individuals almost exclusively according to merit" (Wikipedia[60]). The term was coined by Michael Young in a satirical essay that envisaged a future in which merit was favoured above all else (1958). As originally conceived, the term had distinctly negative connotations since Young was warning against a system whereby elites used the notion of merit to maintain their own status, and hence social inequality (Warikoo & Fuhr 2014).

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[60] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meritocracy accessed 16th September 2014.

Over the years, meritocracy has taken on a more positive connotation. Since its fundamental premise is that status is achieved rather than inherited, its proponents see it as a fair system that can help address social disadvantage. For its critics, however, it is no more than a myth which serves to justify the *status quo*. This is because it is the dominant group, or meritocratic class, which has a monopoly on defining what constitutes merit.

> *"Merit can be defined as whatever it is that is required to be successful. Therefore, those who have been successful can claim to have (and thus determine) merit."*
> (Sealy 2010, p. 185)

In this way, merit becomes linked to the dominant group rather than open to all, allowing it to perpetuate its own power and privilege. Meritocracy is thus not a neutral concept but rather an ideology according to the definition proposed in Chapter Two (4.1), i.e. a set of values and beliefs proposed by a particular group to legitimate a course of behaviour.

Meritocracy has become so influential that it is now a fundamental assumption of western economies that organisations function on the basis of meritocratic principles. It has become part of individuals' psychological contract with their organisation "that their potential for career progression will be based on their ability and talent demonstrated within their role" (Sealy 2010, p. 184). Although this meritocratic ideal may be attractive, research has shown that it does not lead to appointments being made on the basis of talent alone.

In a meritocratic system, the selection of individuals is in theory made "purely on the basis of merit, without any reference to the social or cultural characteristics such as gender or the socio-political networks of the individuals selected" (Deem 2009, p. 4). However, in practice the low representation of women at senior management level demonstrates that systems of merit cannot be equitable since the criteria to measure merit and the means used to assess it are both likely to be biased (Sealy 2010). Nevertheless, there is a reluctance to acknowledge that it is "a violation of meritocracy" that has led to so few women reaching the most senior positions and hence other theories are proposed, such as women choosing to opt out (2010, p. 187).

Sealy's research shows that, although women may start off their careers believing that if they behave like a man they will accordingly be promoted on merit, over time they come to realise that merit tends to be defined less by human capital than by the social capital associated with, for example, the old boys' network. Eventually, some tire of playing a

game they cannot win and decide to return to their authentic selves. In this way the opt-out theory becomes self-fulfilling.

In a higher education context, the notion of meritocracy is well established. Vice chancellors, for example, have long been regarded as an intellectual meritocracy (Chapter Three, 4.1) and the same can be said of DPVCs. Meritocracy is closely linked to another concept of central importance in academia, i.e. excellence, or the possession of very high-quality characteristics in a given area of activity or field of endeavour. In an interesting and pertinent analysis, Deem (2009) contrasts these two concepts with that of diversity Whereas in essence both excellence and meritocracy are concerned with selection and exclusion, diversity has inclusion as its basic premise. There is thus a fundamental tension between them.

> *"The very social and cultural characteristics that are allegedly ignored in pursuit of excellence and meritocracy are central to the creation and maintenance of diversity."* (2009, pp. 4-5)

Deem argues that, whilst diversity may be seen as desirable at an abstract level, universities have struggled to reconcile it with a culture based around excellence and meritocracy. Concerns over the latter tend to take preference over those of improving diversity and tackling inequality – perhaps not surprising given that "those at the top are highly likely to have succeeded in a meritocratic context themselves and hence may have little desire to change the system" (2009, p. 9).

As a result, she concludes that excellence and meritocracy prevail over diversity in most aspects of academic life, with one notable exception: the appointment of senior academic managers. In this case, as data in this study has confirmed, past academic reputation rather than management qualifications are seen as more important. Therefore, it is not clear that a commitment to excellence is a driving factor:

> *"Meritocracy, it seems, has its limits."* (Deem 2009, p. 14)

Findings from this study reveal that vice chancellors' discourse about DPVC appointments is an overwhelmingly meritocratic one, with securing the best candidates as the primary motivation for change. One or two vice chancellors, however, acknowledge that this perspective is a little simplistic.

> *"The idea that it is all about getting the best person is a crass proposition. Who is the best? … All you can do is get the best person you can get at that moment with the best fit. Universities have all turned down outstanding people who would not be right for a particular role and team."* (VC 5)

Either way, not everyone is convinced that DPVC appointment is meritocratic, at least in the sense of it being equitable.

> *"The notion that external open competition is a meritocracy is a nonsense and it clearly does not work from a gender perspective."* (VC 5)

> *"External open competition is only a meritocracy for those who play the game well."* (DPVC 3)

> *"It would only be meritocratic if men and women had a 50:50 equal start and opportunities, which is not the case."* (Dean/HOD 4)

The tension between the quest for the best candidates and the need for diversity is therefore recognised by a few participants. In the main, however, this was not articulated and one vice chancellor confidently asserts that DPVC appointments in his institution are "entirely meritocratic" and, since "meritocracy means equality of opportunity", he is "not sure what fairness has got to do with it" (VC 1).

Although the meritocratic ideal is the dominant narrative, the perpetuation of such a male-dominated DPVC cadre in the face of the rising (albeit still seriously limited) number of female academics in management roles, makes this claim increasingly untenable. It defies logic to believe that the skills and qualities required to be a DPVC are so disproportionately distributed in favour of male candidates, even though prior experience in the role undoubtedly still is.

So long as academic management experience continues to be a key determinant of merit, women will continue to be disadvantaged, as will any less experienced candidates. Ironically, the outcome of the current, supposedly meritocratic, approach is that appointments are effectively made on the basis of seniority. Furthermore, whilst a track record of research excellence and academic credibility remain prime requirements, non-academic candidates will continue to be excluded from serious consideration.

The criteria for merit in relation to DPVC appointments reflect the background and achievements of the current incumbents and the vice chancellors who select them. For as

long as this "reproductive technology" prevails (Blackmore, J., Thomson & Barty 2006, p. 297), it is unlikely that the *status quo* will be disturbed, not least because it is not in the interests of this dominant group.

The exclusion of non-academics is not considered problematic, but rather a necessary means of social closure. In contrast, the relative dearth of female academics securing DPVC jobs is increasingly seen as problematic. Interestingly, however, although it is recognised that women may be at a disadvantage, there is no overt acknowledgement amongst those who have succeeded in becoming vice chancellors and DPVCs of the nature of their own advantage and how this is being perpetuated.

A recent piece of research into undergraduate admissions at Oxford undergraduates is pertinent here. Warikoo and Fuhr (2014) found that, whilst current students were able to acknowledge that others may be at a disadvantage in terms of gaining entry to the university, they were unable to acknowledge their own advantage in having done so.

> *"Through this perspective, students did not have to compromise the legitimization of their own status achievement based on merit and thus their elite status itself."*
> (2014, p. 713)

5.   Evaluating Change

The majority (61%) of third tier managers surveyed agree with the proposition that the change to external open competition for DPVC posts should be a good thing overall in terms of future leadership[61] capacity building. The main reason for this is a belief that it will lead to a bigger pool of applicants and more competition and that this can only be beneficial for the quality of those securing the jobs.

On the other hand, some feel that it may discourage universities from building capacity from within, block off internal promotion routes, attract "peripatetic" managers and create a gulf between management and staff. Furthermore, they are not convinced that the diversity and quality of applicants will necessary improve:

> *"… if the culture is based on one where the 'safe' option is to appoint white middle-aged academics, then little will change."*

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[61] The term "leadership" rather than "management" was used in the survey response option.

Vice chancellors and DPVCs also regard external open competition as having "both pros and cons" (DPVC 4), although for most part the positives are thought to outweigh the negatives.

> *"Overall we're gaining more than we're losing"* (VC 17)

The general feeling is that overall the move to external open competition for DPVC posts is probably change for the better, but there is also a sense of inevitability about it.

> *"The change to external recruitment is not good or bad. It is what it is now."* (VC 13)

> *"It's an inescapable change. As soon as you have a market you have to use it or it will leave you behind."* (DPVC 24)

Although vice chancellors' primary motivation in adopting external open competition is to secure the best people as DPVCs, there is some scepticism as to whether it has actually led to the appointment of better quality candidates.

> *"There are no more good managers than the sector has had in the past. We're just moving them around a bit more."* (VC 13)

The outcome has rather been the appointment of ever more senior and experienced candidates, an increasing number of whom are already DPVCs. This emphasis on prior experience precludes consideration of a more diverse candidate pool and thus fails to tap into all the available talent.   The adoption of external open competition cannot therefore be said to have been change for the better in the sense of having improved management capacity as it does not meet the following criteria of effective recruitment as defined by the sector's own guidance:

> *"Effective recruitment secures the best possible candidate from the widest possible pool of talent, in a manner that is both fair and transparent."*
> (UUK 2009, p. 2)

Rather, it is arguably a short-term fix that does nothing to support longer-term management capacity building in the sector, especially where external candidates are brought in at the expense of internal talent development and succession management.

6.   Summary

This chapter has explored change to DPVC appointment practice and its implications for management capacity building.

The trend towards an external open competition method of appointing DPVCs looks set to continue as universities strive to improve their performance. This creates more DPVC job opportunities and has led to an increase in staff mobility, which is generally viewed as a good thing for both individual managers and institutions. On the other hand, it limits internal promotion opportunities and may result in too little attention being paid to internal staff development and succession management. Aspiring managers who are not geographically mobile may be disadvantaged and there is a danger of job-hopping DPVCs who do not stay long enough to experience the consequences of their actions.

Executive search agencies have firmly established themselves in the higher education recruitment market and their use for DPVC appointments is now widespread. They nevertheless divide opinion: some vice chancellors view them as invaluable, others are more cynical. Even so, many feel their use is now inevitable where a university has decided on external open competition.

Search agencies are able to undertake a comprehensive search, but the real value they bring to university clients is their ability to 'tap up' potential candidates already in senior posts elsewhere. In this respect, they have made themselves invaluable since their presence in the market means that senior people are now often unwilling to apply for jobs directly. The agencies are able to identify the experienced managers universities are looking for and persuade them to move. They act as an intermediary between the university and the candidate, which can be beneficial to both, but also raises concerns from an equality and diversity perspective. There are similar concerns about the agencies' reliance on a limited network of senior managers for candidate recommendations.

The main charge that tends to be levelled at executive search agencies is that they perpetuate the *status quo* by imposing a narrow stereotype of what a DPVC looks like. However, this study has found that the use of search agencies is not having a negative effect on the numbers of women getting DPVC jobs, albeit that the adoption of an external open competition appointment method is. I would contend that universities are as much, if not more, responsible for the narrowing of the profile of candidates and appointees.

There are a number of reasons for this, including the way DPVC posts are framed. The person specification can only be met by a select group of experienced academic managers with a record of research achievement. Since academic credibility remains a prerequisite, non-academic candidates are effectively excluded from consideration. This amounts to a form of social closure.

Moreover, female academics and other non-standard candidates are disadvantaged by a conservative and risk-averse approach to recruitment in which experience is used as the main indicator of quality. Combined with a desire to ensure candidates fit with the existing team, this amounts to homosociability, which has led to the perpetuation of more of the same kind of people securing the jobs.   The fact that the widest possible talent pool is not being tapped means that the move to external open competition cannot be said to have been change for the better in terms of management capacity building.

Furthermore, despite a discourse of meritocracy, the change to appointment practice has not necessarily led either to the appointment of the 'best' candidates nor to the most equitable outcome. It has rather served to maintain the *status quo* in terms of ensuring that the dominant academic elite continue to monopolise these senior positions. The issue of power relations is analysed in more detail in the following chapter, which also examines the extent to which DPVC appointment practice is symptomatic of ideal-type managerialism.

Chapter Seven

Managerialism and Power

1.   Introduction

This chapter analyses the data presented in Chapters Five and Six in order to answer the final two research questions. Firstly, the evidence of the indicators of managerialism outlined in Chapter Two (4.2) is examined and an assessment made of the extent to which DPVC appointment practice is symptomatic of ideal-type managerialism (Q.4). In the light of these findings, the prevailing academic narrative (Chapter Two, 6.2) on the impact of managerialism in higher education is reconsidered. The final research question on the significance of the findings for academic-manager power relations (Q.5) is then addressed and an alternative interpretation to that of a simple shift of power from academics to managers is proposed. The study's conclusions are presented in Chapter Eight.

2.   Managerialism and DPVC Appointments

This section explores the significance of the findings for managerialism as ideology, both from an empirical and theoretical perspective.

2.1   Indicators of Managerialism

Table 18 provides an at-a-glance analysis of whether or not each indicator of ideal-type managerialism (Chapter Two, 4.2) is supported by the data. The use of parentheses in the table indicates a qualified judgement made on the basis of the overall weight of evidence.

In order to avoid unnecessary repetition of data already presented elsewhere, full details of the underlying evidence are provided in Appendix L rather than in the main text. In essence, what this evidence shows is that the ideology of managerialism is not as all-pervasive in respect of DPVC appointments as the wider academic narrative might suggest.

Furthermore, the indicators point to a context-specific, academic-managerialism, rather than a generic ideal type.

Table 18: Summary of Evidence to Support Indicators of Ideal-Type Managerialism

Ideological Tenet	Indicators for DPVC Appointment	Evidenced by Data?
2. **Management is important and a good thing**	a. Recognition of the importance of DPVC posts b. Priority given to the appointment process in order to attract the best candidates c. A more managerial interpretation of the DPVC role	• Yes • Yes • (Yes)
3. **Management is a discrete function**	a. DPVCs acting in a full-time permanent management capacity b. Management skills and experience as the main criteria for the role c. Value placed on management training and development	• (Yes) • (No) • (Yes)
4. **Management is rational and value neutral**	a. Appointment based on merit rather than seniority b. Rational and value neutral appointment decisions	• (No) • No
5. **Management is generic and universally applicable**	a. Recognition of management skills and experience gained in any sector b. Appointments open to suitably qualified candidates from other occupational groups	• No • No
6. **Managers must have the right to manage**	a. DPVC roles given appropriate authority and scope for managerial action b. Emphasis on positional, rather than expert, power	• (Yes) • (No)
7. **Private sector methods are superior**	a. Adoption of private sector appointment practice b. Valuing of candidates from the private sector or with private sector experience	• (Yes) • No

2.2   Evidence of Ideal-Type Managerialism

Based upon the evidence of managerial indicators summarised in Table 18, this section evaluates the degree to which the DPVC appointment model is symptomatic of each ideological claim of ideal-type managerialism (Chapter Two, 4.2). Where relevant, it also considers the significance of the findings for the validity of these ideological claims.

2.2.1   Management is Important and a Good Thing

Some evidence of all three indicators can be found, making this the managerial tenet that is most well supported in terms of DPVC appointment practice.

Until recently the legitimacy of management in higher education was questioned not only by the managed, but also by those who occupied management positions (McCaffery 2004). The findings from this study suggest that at the most senior level this is no longer the case. Vice chancellors and DPVCs appear to have fully accepted the idea that university management is necessary and beneficial. Vice chancellors in particular spoke at length about the need for more and better management in order to deal with a challenging and competitive higher education environment. This supports both managerialism's claim that management is the best means to organisational success and the academic narrative which holds that university senior managers have internalised managerial ideology (Vincent 2011).

It also resonates with recent research which found that senior university managers could envisage no viable alternative to becoming more business-like if they were to survive (Waring 2013). Interestingly, however, in Waring's research these same managers did not accept that their institution had become more managerial, seeing it simply as better managed whilst still retaining its collegial ethos – a view also expressed by some vice chancellors in this study.

Acceptance of managerialism's claim that management is a good thing implies that attempts to improve the quality of management are, in turn, desirable. The aim of better management therefore has a broad appeal and can be presented as "common sense, a grasp of hard realities, or some form of neutral rational truth about the social and economic world" (Vincent 2011, p. 335). This makes it difficult to oppose change without being characterised as old-fashioned and "out of touch with reality" (Waring 2013, p. 413).

2.2.2 Management is a Distinct Function

Evidence that academic management is becoming a distinct function within universities is growing, especially with respect to the construction of the DPVC role. Many DPVCs appointed via external open competition are not only engaged full time in management, but have also embarked upon an academic management career track with little or no intention of going back to an academic role.

Although they may maintain an academic identity, most DPVCs are largely divorced from day-to-day academic work, leading to an increased separation of management and frontline academic activities. They are expected to serve institutional needs and to pledge their primary allegiance to the executive management team - and the vice chancellor in particular - rather than to academic colleagues in their department or faculty. This executive team has assumed responsibility for strategic thinking and planning, and the gap between it and the staff carrying out the work has widened. As a consequence, "management" has emerged as "a distinctive social group" with different interests (Deem & Brehony 2005, p. 231).

2.2.3 Management is Rational and Value Neutral

The recent change in practice in relation to the appointment of DPVCs does not support the claim that management is rational and value neutral. Indeed, it raises questions about the viability of the claim in any context.

At the most fundamental level, there is some doubt about whether or not rational decision making is even possible given that rationality is influenced by institutional norms and values and subject to taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations (Simon 1957). Appointment practice, for example, tends to be embedded in the institutional fabric and reflect 'the way things are done around here'. It may be difficult for outsiders to understand exactly what is expected since much remains tacit and it is therefore not surprising when the outcome is the appointment of more of the same kind of people.

More broadly, although managerialism is presented as a set of neutral "unquestioned truths" and made to appear "as common sense requiring no further explanation" (Klikauer 2013, pp. 3-4), the assertion that a set of management principles based on a particular belief system or ideology could be purely technical and value free is refuted by many commentators. In the public sector, for example, politicians take a view on the best way to

manage based on their political beliefs, whilst managers themselves have their own opinions on which services should be provided (Flynn, N. 2002).

In higher education, a managerial agenda couched in terms of "the need to live in the real world" may be used as smokescreen by vice chancellors to legitimate difficult organisational changes that they would like to make in any case (Deem 2004, p. 63). A major study found that most senior academic managers are willing to utilise elements of managerialism to serve their own needs and interests, even if they do not wholeheartedly embrace every aspect of it (Deem & Brehony 2005). Interestingly, this is said to be particularly true of those managers not intending to return to the academic ranks.

Whatever their underpinning values, Deem and Brehony found that some senior academic managers convince themselves that what they are doing is for "the greater good" whilst using managerialism "to legitimate their actions and interests, which are not necessarily the same interests as those of their staff." (2005, p. 230). There may therefore be something of a discontinuity between the values and beliefs academic managers espouse and those they actually practice (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007).

If management itself is not a technical and value free activity, then the claim that managers are merely neutral professionals also looks unconvincing. On the contrary, the exercise of managerialism is inherently political with winners and losers (Flynn, N. 2002, Clarke, Gerwitz & McLaughlin 2000), making it "a practical issue of organizational power" and a "continually contested regime" (Clarke & Newman 1997, p. 57). These issues of micro-politics and power are explored further in Section 4.

2.2.4 Management is Generic and Universally Applicable

The claim of managerialism that good management techniques are generic and universally applicable is not supported. The notion of generic and transferable management skills implies both the possibility of greater mobility between sectors and an increasing role for general managers rather than specialist managers or professionals (Farnham & Horton 1996). The findings suggest that neither of these is true with regard to DPVC appointments. On the whole, academics do not accept that there is a generic management role in universities (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007), possibly because they do not want to be governed by a general manager (PSM 5).

Universities are seen as special, if not unique, organisations and the notion that management skills and experience from other sectors (or even from within higher

education where non-academic managers are concerned) are relevant or transferable to the DPVC role is largely dismissed. This is despite the fact that universities regularly hire professional services managers from outside higher education, albeit arguably on the basis of their specialist rather than generic management skills.

Even though the case made for academic exceptionalism in terms of DPVC appointments is not entirely convincing, the findings nevertheless call into the question the validity of managerialism's fundamental claim that management is both generic and universally applicable. This relates to a longstanding debate in the literature about whether management practice really is transferable between one setting and another, and whether generic management skills can in fact improve the performance of any organisation.

Kottler (1981) considers the extent to which different types of organisations in both the public and private sectors require different types of management and concludes that environmental factors may have more influence on management processes than is acknowledged by the generic view of management. Accordingly, he suggests there might be some value in considering the public and private sectors separately.

The view that the two sectors are more different than similar is widely held. The not-for-profit sector is said to face particular strategic issues which mean they should be treated as a distinct category of organisation (Bowman & Asch 1987). Accordingly, the strategic management model in the private sector, which is focused on enhancing a firm's competitive edge and profitability, may not be a helpful one for the public domain (Ranson & Stewart 1994). Other important differences between the two sectors include the nature of their ownership and stakeholders, organisational structures, values and goals. However, many believe the distinctions have been blurred as a result of NPM reform, which has seen the language and values of private sector management becoming the norm in both (Farnham & Horton 1996).

Perhaps as a result, a more recent study has found limited support for the idea that there are major differences between the two sectors and hence few solid empirical grounds for rejecting the transferability of private sector management practice to the public sector (Boyne 2002). For Boyne, the problem is more that there is no established body of knowledge on what constitutes successful management practice in the private sector, i.e. which management strategies and techniques actually lead to improved performance. In the absence of this, there has arguably been an "overmechanistic" transfer of ideas from

the private to the public sectors (Pettigrew, Ferlie & McKee 1992, p. 13) without any clear evidence of what works or what benefits public sector managers might derive (2.2.6).

2.2.5 Managers Must Have the Right to Manage

Widespread acceptance of the need for effective university management, coupled with a hierarchical management approach more dependent on positional power[62], has led to an increasing expectation that DPVCs should have the right to manage. Furthermore, the trend towards a full-time managerial conception of the DPVC role, shared experience of top management training, and the legitimation of academic management as a career have all increased the likelihood that DPVCs will be willing to assume that right.

The first-among-equals academic leadership typical of a collegial culture has arguably been "consumed" by a corporate management assumption of the right to manage based on a position in the management hierarchy (Yielder & Codling 2004, p. 319). This corporate approach used to be more typical of post-1992 universities, but is now increasingly prevalent in the pre-1992 sector. This is noteworthy for two reasons: firstly, because it is the newer universities which are seen as providing the management model to emulate and secondly, because this more managerial model is apparently being adopted in the absence of empirical evidence that it has actually enhanced performance in those universities where it has been applied. This mirrors the transfer of private sector methods to the public sector without evidence of their effectiveness (2.2.4).

The literature suggests that it is not only the most senior academic managers who have asserted their right to manage. Universities are increasingly using "ideologically driven" management techniques, such as human resource management (HRM), predicated on the need to direct and monitor the activities and performance of workers in pursuit of a single common organisational purpose (Waring 2013, p. 398). This places the onus on academic managers at all levels to be "line managers" and to assert their right to manage other academics via goal setting and performance management, "legitimated via the soft language of development" (2013, p. 402). This allows managers to allocate responsibilities, set targets and identify areas of under-performance.

Despite these pressures on managers to manage, there are nevertheless many inherent constraints on management in the organised anarchy of a university (Cohen, M. D. & March

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[62] However, in the case of DPVCs, positional power is accorded on the basis of expert power. Expert power thus retains a great deal of importance, not least in providing a rationale for the exclusion of non-academic candidates.

1974). Universities have been described as integrative organisations that have multiple and complex goals and competing priorities, making them much harder to manage than purposive, single-aim organisations (Temple 2008). They are "inherently messy places" in terms of how work is organised (Dearlove 1998, p. 71) and outcomes are hard to measure. In addition, a fragmented disciplinary culture coupled with a belief in collegiality and academic autonomy mean that the workforce is difficult to direct, resistant to change and resentful of management. The scope for top-down management is limited in this type of consent-based organisation (Dearlove 2002) and therefore a strategy of "issuing instructions increasingly loudly from the centre may not produce results" (Blackmore, P. & Kandiko 2012, p. 4).

2.2.6 Private Sector Methods are Superior

The evidence in relation to managerialism's claim for the superiority of private sector methods is mixed. Private sector methods, such as the use of executive search agencies, are increasingly being adopted for DPVC appointments – and more widely for other senior university management posts. In addition, specialist managers are being recruited from other sectors to run professional services functions. However, when it comes to DPVC appointments, private sector experience is deemed neither relevant nor valid (2.2.4).

3.   Managerialism and the Academic Narrative

This section broadens out the analysis of managerialism by relating findings from this study to the academic narrative presented in Chapter Two (6.2). An alternative perspective is advanced that questions the doom-and-gloom scenario of this misery narrative and its portrayal of managerialism as all-pervasive, externally imposed and universally resisted. The assertion that managerialism has resulted in a loss of academic power in favour of managers will then be critically examined in Section 4.

3.1   Managerialism as All-Pervasive and Externally Imposed

The extent to which managerialism's ideas and practices have found their way into universities as part of an alleged "relentless rise of managerialism in university life" is beginning to come under question (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, p. 7). Firstly, managerialism has been significantly less radical in scope in higher education than in the

NHS, for example, where managers recruited from the private sector have taken on a much more extensive restructuring role (Clegg & McAuley 2005).

Secondly, the "thesis of loss" which characterises the academic narrative fails to provide sufficient explanation for what is actually happening on the ground (Locke & Bennion 2011, p. 194). This misery narrative may rather reflect a tendency for academics to feel that, unless they agree morale is at rock bottom, they may somehow be "letting the side down" or making it too easy for managers (Watson 2009, p. 3). Watson suggests that, even though most academics enjoy their work, they may thus feel obliged to join in the tirade against managerialism.

Thirdly, the somewhat over-simplistic standard narrative that managerialism has been externally imposed on higher education as part of the government's NPM reform agenda warrants further scrutiny. Its growth may, in fact, owe as much to "the internal dynamics of institutional development as to external pressure applied by the government or the market" (Scott 1995, p. 65). As discussed in Chapter Three (3.2), higher education has had to react to the massive expansion of the sector itself and of the scope and complexity of its activities (McCaffery 2004). In addition, as the findings illustrate, the adoption of a more business-like approach to university management has also been internally driven by vice chancellors and DPVCs (2.2.1).

Henkel's work (2002b) suggests that the impetus for change has not come solely from the executive management team. Academic departments may themselves be adopting a more managerial style and structure. Counter to traditional academic values and practice, Henkel found an increasing formalisation of work, greater specialisation and more quasi-hierarchical forms of relationship within departments, leading to transparent inequalities and less tolerance of the unproductive. It would therefore appear that some academics may not only be "reasonably comfortable" working in managerial regimes, but also "instrumental in sustaining them" (Kolsaker 2008, p. 522).

Pollitt's work (1990) is instructive in this regard. He argues that ideologies do not just happen, they need to be systematically articulated and reinforced. Although there may be a few true believers, wholescale conversion of followers is not required, only the turning of a few individuals – in this case, vice chancellors and DPVCs. Others may adopt the rhetoric of at least some aspects of managerialism, even if they do not "subscribe to the full 'package'" (1990, pp. 9-10). Moreover, a "dispersed managerial consciousness" whereby

staff begin to frame their decisions and actions according to managerial considerations, such as budgets and performance management, may also serve to embed managerialism throughout an organisation (Clarke & Newman 1997, p. 77). This may be especially the case where an ideology is hegemonic and no viable alternative can be envisaged.

3.2   Academic Response to Managerialism

The prevailing narrative suggests that managerialism is universally perceived as a bad thing. In fact, an increasingly segmented academic profession is unlikely to hold a common view of managerialism and responses will therefore vary (Locke & Bennion 2011). These may range from outright rejection or denial, through subversion, to positive support in one's own interests (Deem & Brehony 2005).

At one end of the spectrum, Deem *et al*'s research on the impact of managerialism in higher education found some examples of routine resistance and avoidance strategies (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007). This parallels the experience of doctors in the NHS, who may use their "micropower" to resist changes by means of silent non-compliance or a refusal to engage (Hunter 1998, p. 18). In academia, there has been little practical dissent or widespread opposition and the reaction is more likely to have been passive than active resistance (Locke & Bennion 2011). Rather than mounting any serious challenge, academics have tended to indulge in "minor acts of game playing and passive dissent" which allow them "to carry on as they always had" (Waring 2013, p. 413). Forms may be filled and boxes ticked simply to satisfy administrative requirements and demonstrate apparent compliance without any real change to core academic interests and values.

The fact that academics have mustered so little effective resistance to such radical change arguably implies tacit approval (Kolsaker 2008). As time passes, academics may become more attuned to managerialism or, in the case of newer staff, simply know no other way. Kolsaker argues that, despite worsening conditions, academics are actually more positive and pragmatic than much of the literature suggests. They realise that they are no more badly affected than other public service professionals and, on the whole, accept managerialism as a means of enhancing their performance, professionalism and status.

> *"Far from becoming disenchanted by the impact of managerialism upon their daily life, they appear, on the whole, to be making sense of and adapting to the changing environment whilst retaining a strong sense of identity."* (2008, pp. 522-523)

She therefore concludes that the academic narrative overplays the notion of managerialism as "a structuring force" in opposition to professionalism (2008, p. 522). This resonates with work in the NHS which found little evidence to support the imposition of managerialism upon doctors.

> *"The idea of managerialism rolling over professionals like tanks occupying a capital city and crushing resistance is unrealistic."* (Thomas & Hewitt 2011, p. 1388)

Back in academia Taylor (2006) found that, although some academics have been reluctant to surrender supremacy in the strategic management and governance of their universities, for most it is not a major point of contention. Not only do they see management and administration as an unwelcome distraction from teaching and research, but they are also supportive of the more professional management that has ensued.

Some academics may have internalised a managerialist ideology for their own career advancement (Locke & Bennion 2011) while, as these findings confirm, many academics in leadership positions have actively embraced managerialism and the career opportunities it affords them (Deem & Brehony 2005). Overall, then the academic response to managerialism has been much more complex and varied than the prevailing academic narrative suggests. Moreover, studies such as this one are evidencing the dissonance between the rhetoric and the reality on the ground.

4.   Academic-Manager Power Relations

The remainder of this chapter addresses the final research question relating to the significance of the findings for academic-manager power relations (Q.5).

This section reconsiders the assertion of the prevailing academic narrative described in Chapter Two (6.2) - that managerialism has led to a unilateral transfer of power from academics to managers - and offers a more nuanced view. This proposes that, despite growing in policy influence, professional services managers still face a glass ceiling in terms of advancement to the most senior management posts. On the other hand, despite losing influence in the management and governance of their universities, rank-and-file academics still retain a good degree of professional autonomy. This analysis draws upon data from

this study as well as the literature on managerialism and professional-managerial dynamics in higher education and the NHS.

The discussion begins with a brief definition of power in an organisational context.

4.1   Power

Power is a complex and contested concept and a detailed examination is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is appropriate to set out a working definition for the purposes of the subsequent analysis of academic-manager power relations,

At its most fundamental level, power can be conceived as "the capacity to achieve outcomes" (Giddens 1984, p. 257). In management terms this can be translated into the capacity to make strategic decisions or determine outcomes within an organisation based on differential access to information, finance or authority (Ranson & Stewart 1994). Power is a major driver of organisational development and managerial change since, behind the scenes, competing interests and micro-politics influence day-to-day activity (Ball 1987). In order to understand the mechanisms and effects of power, it is thus necessary to look below the apparently rational surface.

Management systems and decisions, for example, are heavily influenced by the interests of the group who controls an organisation (Pettigrew 1973). This dominant group ensures that organisational policies and priorities reflect its own values and objectives and will enter into a power struggle if necessary in order to get what it wants. This is what Lumby (2013) terms the first dimension of power, whereby one individual or group controls another. The second dimension is conflict avoidance, in which contention is controlled and does not surface.

> *"However, power does not disappear by being made less visible."*
> (Clarke & Newman 1997, p. 72)

In fact, power may become institutionalised in the roles, rules and authority relations in an organisation so that its management processes become an expression of the interests of the dominant group.

> *"The powerful can influence the scope of decision making, determining which*
> *'issues' enter the decision arena"* (Ranson & Stewart 1994, p. 43).

In this way, power is enacted "covertly through the structures, processes and agency that shape what can be thought, what can be discussed and what can be disputed or resisted" (Lumby 2012, p. 580). Covert power conditions people to accept the existing order because they can see no alternative or do not believe it can be changed. The failure of academics to mount an effective challenge against managerialism may be one such example.

However, the exercise of power is arguably at its greatest and most insidious in the third dimension when the dominant group think and act in ways that benefit themselves or others without necessarily even being conscious of it.   The group remains unaware of its sectional claims because they are woven into the very fabric of the organisation.

> *"…the preferences of the dominant group may appear so normal, so everyday to themselves and others, that both their dominance and their contestability does not even occur to people."* (Lumby 2013, p. 585)

I will argue that an exercise of covert power underlies the monopolisation of DPVC posts by an elite group of career track academic managers who effectively keep consideration of non-academic candidates off the agenda. The colonisation of the university management space by this elite group (Section 5) is a further exercise of power which ensures control of strategic decision making at the expense of both rank-and-file academics and professional services managers.

4.2   Professional Services Managers and Power

A key strand of the academic narrative describes a simple shift of power from academics to professional services managers. The evidence from this study suggests that, with respect to DPVC appointments specifically, no such shift is occurring. More broadly, the extent to which professional services managers wield power over the work of academics has probably been overstated.

For many academics, the increased visibility of a more active and professional administration (Chapter Three, 3.2) translates into power (Szekeres 2004). Szekeres notes that, even though professional service staff may be just as "downtrodden" as academics, they are nevertheless seen as the "instruments" of a neoliberal agenda (2004, p. 19). As such, they are both an unwelcome presence from an academic perspective and perceived as taking over. However, far from working against academic interests, Trow suggests that

academics actually owe professional services staff, especially managers, a great debt since they have proved to be "the best defence of university autonomy" against the worst excesses of managerialism "in a game whose rules are invented by others and are constantly changing" (1994, p. 17).

In reality, professional services managers tend to view their roles as entirely complementary to that of academics, with clear boundaries between them (Gornitzka & Larsen 2004). They see themselves "as supporting academics rather than as wielding power over them" (Henkel 1998, p. 175).   Although managers in quality assurance, for example, have found their role growing as new audit regimes have given them the authority to "open the black box" of academic decision making, others have had their roles downgraded or displaced to some extent by academics (Henkel 1997, p. 140).

Moreover, despite claims of burgeoning numbers, the proportion of administrative and support staff has declined slightly over recent years, while that of academics has risen by 4%, from 44% in 2003/4 to 48% in 2011/12[63]. Academics are also more highly paid: 26% of academic staff earned a salary of over £50k in 2011/12 compared to only 5% of professional services staff. This reflects the fact that most of the top jobs in universities are held by career academics.

The findings from this study confirm this pattern. Professional services managers are an invisible group to those making DPVC appointment decisions. Vice chancellors do not consider them as suitable candidates and are not actively seeking them for DPVC posts – as confirmed by executive search agencies. For their part, professional services managers realise they have little or no chance of getting a DPVC job and so, even if they are interested, they are generally not applying. They face a glass ceiling and cannot climb to the top of the university management hierarchy within pre-1992 institutions. This is a source of frustration to some, compounded by widespread dissatisfaction with the unquestioned assumption that a research career is adequate preparation for a DPVC role.

Professional services managers know that they are critical to the successful running of the university and resent the belittling of their role by academics who undervalue what they do. Perhaps the biggest source of tension between academics and professional services

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[63] Higher Education Statistics Agency.

managers comes from the lack of acknowledgement the latter feel they receive from the former for their increasingly specialist skills and knowledge (McInnis 1998). Although on a one-to-one level they may work very well together with academic colleagues, "this value is not necessarily reflected when they are considered as a collective" and instead become management (Whitchurch 2007, p. 55).

Lack of peer esteem from the institution in general and from academics in particular has been identified as perhaps the biggest barrier to attracting and retaining good professional services managers (Lauwerys 2002). Parity of esteem with academic colleagues seems impossible to achieve, even where professional services managers have doctorates and their academic colleagues have no teaching qualification and are research inactive (Blackmore, P. & Blackwell 2003). Nevertheless, professional services staff rarely get re-categorised as academics although the authors argue it should be possible for staff "to cross the divide, in either direction, with no alteration in status" (2003, p. 24).

Lewis (2012) gives an interesting example from his own experience of how professional services managers are seen by academic colleagues. He noticed that he was regarded differently by academic colleagues as soon as he mentioned that he was undertaking doctoral study. Academics spoke of him as "advancing" by "progressing into the academy" even though he did not see entering the academy as career advancement. In fact, for Lewis, the perception that he was bettering himself via a PhD "inherently undervalued my identity as a professional administrator" (2012, p. 13). This example illustrates how some academics regard management and administration as second-class activities.

Lewis examines the case for higher education administration to become a profession. He concludes that, although higher education managers possess "the necessary tools to construct an identity as a professional" they "lack the collective self-confidence" to claim university administration as a profession (2012, p. 2). It should be noted here that academics' claim to be a profession is also contentious since they fail to meet some key criteria, for example, control over entry and continuing professional development requirements. Control over professional standards and ethics also tends to be somewhat lax and implicit rather than codified. An already weak claim to being a profession (Blackmore, P. & Blackwell 2003) may be further diluted by disciplinary and organisational

fragmentation (Henkel 1998). Nevertheless, the popular conception is still one of an academic profession.

This problem of achieving professional status is not unique to managers in higher education; it has been very difficult for managers in general. Reed and Anthony (1992) argue that there are a number of factors which explain this, notably that managers are too dependent on their organisation for employment, status and authority and that they lack a monopoly over a knowledge base. As a result, their scope for discretion is limited and their jurisdictional claim is weak.

Managers in higher education face another major problem: only academic managers are deemed to have legitimacy to manage other academics. Given the notion of professional autonomy, there is continued sensitivity about who should be allowed to control academic activities.

> *"The legitimacy associated with 'management', therefore, is likely to vary according to whether it is practised by an academic or professional member of staff"*
> (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling 2008a, p. 38)

What is management when undertaken by academics therefore becomes managerialism when undertaken by managers, as managerial activities are deemed to be those that take place "outside a policy framework that has the assent of the academic community" (Whitchurch 2008a, p. 267). Attempts to professionalise academic leadership through the introduction of non-academic senior managers, as has happened in the NHS, are therefore viewed as "both undesirable and unworkable" (2008a, p. 26).

4.3 Academics and Autonomy

The other side of this power relations equation is the assertion that academic power is on the wane. This is considered to have two distinct aspects. The first is what might be called professional power derived from membership of a professional group that affords autonomy over one's work. The second is managerial power, or the capacity to determine management decisions or outcomes (4.1). The first of these is analysed in this section as it relates to the wider academic community and the second is discussed with respect to academic managers in Section 5.

The academic narrative is predicated on a thesis of "loss, alienation, and retreat" in which academics are proletarianised, demoralised and disengaged from decision making (Locke & Bennion 2011, p. 194). Quoted in a *Times Higher Education* article (Reisz 2012), Scott calls it "a standard discourse of decline and fall" in which academic autonomy is being eroded in the face of the "irresistible rise of managerial power". He argues that a necessary corrective is required in the form of a more nuanced account of managerialism's impact on power and authority in universities.

Such an account might suggest that, status and power differentials between academics and managers are ambiguous (Henkel 1997) and that the extent to which NPM and managerialism have actually reduced collegiality or shifted power relations between academics and managers is debatable (McInnis 1998). Indeed, a simple dichotomy between academic authority and managerialism may itself be over simplistic and misleading (Bolden et al. 2012).

Although academics are said to have lost autonomy, in fact they nevertheless retain a good deal of control over what they do (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007). The state grants academics monopoly to provide higher education and academic freedom in return for the upholding values and standards; this is in large part because universities themselves enjoy a relatively high level of independence compared to other publically funded bodies (Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani 2008). Accordingly, academics receive much less scrutiny than some other professional groups, including pilots and doctors. Viewed from this perspective, academic autonomy may thus appear as self-interest "from a favoured occupational group seeking to protect itself from rational examination" (Ramsden 1998, p. 26).

Contrary to expectation, managerialism may actually have provided a mechanism to preserve autonomy. Academics recognise that managerialism helps reassure the public by means of accountability mechanisms and that this "may help maintain the professional status and position of academics in society" and thus professional autonomy (Kolsaker 2008, p. 522). Academic autonomy may even have been strengthened by formal mechanisms for assessing research quality such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF)[64]. Not only have academics retained control but assessment panels are disproportionately comprised of those from pre-1992 universities and funds mainly

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[64] Formerly the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

allocated to the most prestigious institutions. This could be taken as evidence that the most powerful mechanisms of control remain in the hands of academics (Henkel 1998). It is one example of how academics have found a way to sustain their dominance (Salter & Tapper 2002). DPVC appointments are another.

The literature is thus "overly pessimistic" and over-simplistic, underplaying the complexity of power relations in universities (Kolsaker 2008, p. 522).

> *"The literature presents a persuasive picture of academics in retreat and, as the body of literature grows, the language of defeat proliferates. A casual visitor to an English university may be surprised, therefore, to encounter an environment where academics seemingly come and go as they please, have a relatively free hand in course design, and disappear to do 'real work' (research) for days on end. Faced with this reality, we need to consider whether authority is really sapping away from academics."* (Kolsaker 2008, p. 516)

5.   Academic Managers and Power

This section addresses the issue of academic managers and power. It discusses how the adoption of external open competition has led to the emergence of a growing cadre of career track DPVCs within pre-1992 universities. It explores how they differ from hybrid managers and discusses the gap that is emerging between themselves and rank-and-file academic staff. It goes on to argue that career track DPVCs and other members of an elite group of senior academic managers are consolidating their power and status by expanding their management jurisdiction at the expense of other academics and professional services managers.

5.1   Career Track DPVCs

Although fixed-term, internally seconded DPVCs still account for the majority of post holders in pre-1992 universities, the adoption of an external open competition appointment model has led to an increase in the numbers of a relatively new type of DPVC: the full-time, career track academic manager.

"A cadre of professional academic managers is being created. Traditionally, pre-92s did not have these." (VC 13)

Career track DPVCs are not a new phenomenon. However, until recently they were predominantly found in post-1992 universities. Deem and colleagues identified the "career track" manager as one of three typical routes into an academic management role, the others being the "reluctant" manager and the "good citizen" manager (2007, p. 35). Reluctant managers reject the label manager, seeing themselves rather as academic leaders who plan to return to an academic role. Their motivation is likely to be to protect their discipline or to prevent others from taking over. Good citizen managers are typically near the end of their career and have an altruistic desire to give something back to their university.

Reluctant and good citizen managers only exist "because there is no conception that assuming such a position should be a career aspiration" (Dearlove 2002, p. 270). The fact that reluctant managers are now few and far between at DPVC level, while good citizen managers may also be on the decline, is indicative of a change of culture as those "with more pronounced management intentions" emerge (Johnson 2002, p. 36).

Whereas in the past, academic managers may have feigned reluctance in order to appease other academics who may not like ambitious would-be managers, they no longer feel the need to be quite so coy about their management ambitions. In Bolden *et al*'s study (2008a), about 90% of deans and heads of department expressed a desire to progress up the management ladder, either at their own or another institution. Findings from this study also show that an academic management career has become more legitimate, echoing the situation in the NHS where senior doctor-managers are no longer regarded as "failed clinicians" (Harrison 1999, p. 58), even though they may still be seen as "traitors" or as having "copped out" by their colleagues (Hunter 1998, p. 30).

As the name implies, career track DPVCs have decided to made academic management their career. They are full-time managers who are increasingly divorced from day-to-day frontline academic activity and have little or no intention of going back to an academic role. Their expectations of management may have been in part shaped by a shared experience of the Leadership Foundation's TMP, seen by one participant as facilitating the development of "a mandarin class of professionals who believe their role is to manage others" (DPVC 2).

"I have seen the emergence of a cadre of people who enjoy being academic managers and are aware of taking an academic management career route, moving from job to job up the ladder." (ESA 1)

These career track academic managers may have more in common with professional services managers than they do with other academics (Deem 2002). They are working to a common purpose and a joint community of practice may be developing (Bacon 2009). In fact, the distinction between the two groups of managers has "more to do with the endemic, elitist ethos that prevails within many institutions" than with the reality of how universities operate (McCaffery 2004, p. 5).

Career track DPVCs are no longer hybrid academic managers who perform the role on a part-time, fixed-term basis whilst maintaining their academic activity. The crossover to a full-time academic management role has been perceived as a move away from being an all-round academic to becoming a specialist para-professional (Macfarlane 2011). An alternate view is that this "new breed of academics" have been developing a "more rounded set of skills" to add to those of teaching and research (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling 2008a, p. 28) via the accumulation of "managerial assets" (Causer & Exworthy 1999, p. 101).

The strength of hybrid managers is that they are able to combine specialist knowledge with credibility with professional colleagues (Fitzgerald & Ferlie 2000). To take an NHS example, hybrid clinician managers have acted as a bridge between the medical profession and general managers and have been able to take on intractable quality issues that "few general managers have dared to deal with" (Ferlie et al. 1996, p. 186). Moreover, these hybrid managers have not become "surrogate general managers" but retained their professional values (1996, p. 190). However, "these advantages are lost if the professional gives up their professional practice, because they quickly become out of date, are distanced from colleagues and worse, are seen, politically, to have gone over to management" (Fitzgerald & Ferlie 2000, p. 729).

DPVCs' move from hybrid manager to full-time career track academic manager may thus have its downsides. Firstly, professional credibility becomes increasingly difficult to maintain. Although they may still hang on to an academic identity, career track DPVCs no longer tend to be perceived as academics by academic colleagues outside of the executive management team. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain the illusion that these are hybrid academic roles, undertaken by academics who will return to the ranks. Though this

is more myth than reality for many DPVC posts, it is essential that the roles are only open to career academics if social closure is to be maintained.

There is a real irony here, given that DPVC posts are framed on the basis firstly that academic credibility is essential to carry out the role effectively and secondly, that the academic community will only accept fellow academics in these roles. In fact, once in post DPVCs tend to be viewed no differently to the registrar or any of the other management 'suits' which may help to explain why the academic narrative fails to distinguish between academic and professional services managers.

Secondly, despite the fact that they have previously worked as academics, a "growing chasm" is said to be emerging between career track managers and the wider academic community (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, p. 85). Deem (2008) gives a tangible example of how remote some have become. When she and her fellow researchers were conducting interviews with senior academic managers, they discovered they were often quite hard to locate, hidden away in inaccessible suites of offices where other staff rarely ventured.

One major difference between career track DPVCs and their academic colleagues is that the former owe their primary allegiance to the university as a whole, whereas for most academics their key loyalty is to their subject discipline.

> *"There is no more stunning fact about the academic profession anywhere in the world than the simple one that academics are possessed by disciplines, fields of study, even as they are located in institutions."* (Clark, B. R. 1987, p. 25)

These disciplines have been conceived as the invisible colleges that bind academics together and in which their identities flourish (Kogan 2000).

Arguably, their new-found detachment from their academic discipline and core academic activities means that taking on a career track academic management job is a move not only into a new working life, but also into a new community of practice (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007). Career track managers may find that their "legitimacy, authority, and self-identity progressively come to rest more on their role as a manager than on their scholarly activities" (2007, p. 139).

For some commentators, however, the distinction between these managers and the managed is somewhat over-simplistic given that more academics are participating in university management at all levels (Henkel 1998) and that the same individuals are

increasingly likely to be managers in one setting and the managed in another (Whitchurch & Gordon 2010). Empirical work in the NHS has concluded that an either/or notion of being a professional or a manager may no longer be appropriate as professional work is increasingly a combination of the two activities (Causer & Exworthy 1999).

In contrast, others view it as creating an "identity schism" within the academic community between "academic managers" and the "managed academic" in which the former adopt managerial values while the latter do not (Winter 2009, p. 121). There is thus assumed to be a conflict of managerial versus professional ideologies and value systems between the two groups, with academic managers pitted in ideological opposition to their academic colleagues. From this perspective, managerial approaches are believed to "reinforce the sense of a separation and even a polarization of academic and management activity, and an 'othering' of management" (Gordon & Whitchurch 2010, p. 172).

Of course, career track academic managers may argue that they are assuming these roles in order to protect the interests of their profession. Although the presence of professional managers may be seen to erode the notion of equality of competence that lies at the heart of professionalism (Causer & Exworthy 1999), keeping control of professional standards in their hands can be seen as a way of maintaining or even extending professional autonomy (Ferlie et al. 1996). Moreover, as proponents of soft rather than hard NPM, professional managers may also serve "to protect the professional rank and file from managerial excess" (Ferlie & Geraghty 2005, p. 438). Ensuring that quality control of professional activity is exercised from within the profession may be the best defence against the imposition of external controls (Fitzgerald & Ferlie 2000).

On the other hand, academics may rather see these managers as having 'sold out' to managerialism in asserting their right to manage academic colleagues. Rowley and Sherman, for example, suggest that vice chancellors and DPVCs "look at their jobs as synonymous to top level managers in large corporations and adopt a leadership style that reflects that type of position" (2003, p. 1060). They further suggest that those managers who plan to return to their faculty at the end of their term may adopt a different management style from those who either intend to retire or move elsewhere.

Managed academics may feel managers are "using managerialism for their own purposes and future careers" (Waring 2013, p. 129). This claim of managerial self-interest is supported by critics of managerialism who argue that "managements of organizations try

to make the best possible arrangements for themselves (first) and their organizations (second)" (Enteman 1993, p. 160). For Enteman, it is no surprise to find that an ideology created *by* managers is also an ideology *for* managers.

5.2   DPVCs Colonising the Management Space

Differentials in power and status amongst academics are nothing new. Whenever professionals operate in an organisational setting, such as a university, "occupational control" requires that the profession becomes "stratified by administrative authority" as some members become supervisors or managers (Friedson 2001, p. 84). However, these differentials have become more explicit and institutionalised over recent years (Henkel 1998). This reflects the fact that professions are "hierarchically layered" rather than homogeneous, with elites at both national (macro) and institutional (meso) as well as frontline deliverers at the micro level (Laffin 1998, p. 12).

This hierarchy has always provided career progression opportunities for professionals (Pollitt 1990). Just as professionals working within organisations "colonised" the new bureaucratic structures and "extended the principle of professional exclusivity up the organisational hierarchy to include the top jobs" (Laffin 1998, p. 4), so career track academic managers have done the same within new more managerial structures. Managerialism has thus been used by professionals themselves, both as a personal career strategy and as a means of improving the status and esteem of their professional group (Evetts 2011).

The literature on the sociology of the professions regards organisations as sites for "inter-professional competition as well as professional conquest" (Evetts 2011, p. 418). Professionals compete by taking over each other's tasks or jurisdictions; one profession's jurisdiction pre-empts another's and so one cannot occupy another's jurisdiction "without either finding it vacant or fighting for it" (Abbott 1988, p. 86). The development of new knowledge or skills, for example management, may thus either "consolidate jurisdictional hold or may facilitate expansion at others' expense" (1988, p. 96).

As DPVC posts become more managerial in nature and the scope of their responsibilities is growing, career track DPVCs are making incursions into the management jurisdiction. Rather than professional services managers colonising management as has been alleged, it is rather DPVCs who are doing so. This may be in response to a perceived threat either

external (government interference) or internal (growing influence of professional services managers and perhaps also lay members of council).

One DPVC in the study suggests that where there are "amateur managers it creates space in an organisation" and that there is a danger that this management gap may be filled by a strong registrar or other professional services manager. He argues that it is therefore important to find the right internal balance in order to ensure that "professional management does not get too strong" (DPVC 8). Others spoke of the need for DPVCs to be academics so that there will be academic ownership of university decision making (DPVC 8) and "a shift back to academics and academic freedom" (DPVC 14).

This analysis also finds some support in the literature. In their discussion of the movement of universities from an organisational model of bureaucracy to that of the corporation, Dopson and McNay argue that there has been a transfer of power from the registrar (and the administration) to academic managers as "senior academics have recaptured control: it is from the ranks of the collegium that leaders have been recruited" (1996, p. 30).

Deem *et al* found senior academic managers were happy to use managerialism "in maintaining relations of power and dominance" (2005, p. 231) and see the emergence of the academic manager as an example of the "blurring of boundaries between those who are 'just' academics and those whose work was once the main preserve of career-managers and administrators" (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007, pp. 78-79). In other words, there has been an encroachment of academic managers on managerial territory. A former registrar suggests that much of the tension between professional services managers and academics is said to result from "the desire of the academic body, and particularly the senior academic leadership, to control the agenda and make all the key decisions and thereby to limit the authority of the professional senior managers" (Lauwerys 2008, p. 9).

Since professional managers are assumed to bring a managerial value system, Deem and colleagues have argued that it is vital to keep them out of senior management positions in order to avoid managerialism being "successfully implemented and academic autonomy, as it is currently understood, curtailed if not lost" (Deem et al 2007 p.59). Academics are therefore urged to better prepare themselves for management or risk "the implosion of HE" which would result from a possible future scenario in which only non-academic managers are appointed to senior management posts (2007, p. 159). In this way, academics' efforts

at maintaining their monopoly of DPVC positions and colonising the management space can be seen as a means both of increasing their own status and power and of fending off potential incursion of that space by professional services managers. In doing so, they are consolidating both their professional and managerial power.

6.   Summary

This chapter has presented an analysis to address the final two research questions on managerialism and academic-manager power relations.

Managerialism is not as pervasive in relation to DPVC appointments as the wider academic narrative might suggest. Nevertheless, the claim that management is important and a good thing has been fully accepted by vice chancellors and DPVCs and the construction of many DPVC posts as full-time management roles also indicates an increasing recognition of management as a distinct function. However, managerialism's claims to be rational and neutral as well as generic and universally applicable are not well supported. There is widespread scepticism of the transferability of management experience and skills from other sectors. Rather, universities are seen as unique organisations within which only career academics have the legitimacy to manage other academics. Managerialism in higher education is thus of a context-specific rather than a generic variety, that may be termed academic-managerialism.

The doom-and-gloom scenario resulting from the impact of managerialism and NPM on universities portrayed in the academic narrative is questioned. It is proposed that managerialism has been internally driven as well as externally imposed, and that it has not been universally opposed or resisted, as suggested. Although there has been some minor resistance and game playing, many academics have either accepted or welcomed the changes, whilst a few have used managerialism for their own benefit.

It is further argued that there has been no simple and unilateral transfer of power from academics to managers. In fact, although growing in policy influence, professional services managers face a glass ceiling in terms of advancement and are effectively excluded from consideration for DPVC posts. Contrary to the academic narrative, academics have managed to retain a considerable amount of professional autonomy over their work.

At management level, a cadre of career track DPVCs is emerging in pre-1992 universities, in part in response to the opening up of posts to external open competition. These are full-time, specialist – rather than hybrid – managers, with little or no intention of returning to the academic ranks. As such they are increasingly divorced from frontline academic activities and from rank-and-file academic colleagues, who tend to view them as part of "management". Although they may see themselves as managing in the interests of their fellow academic professionals, they may be regarded as acting in a managerial capacity and/or in their own self-interest.

As they assume an expanded and more managerial role, career track DPVCs are extending their professional jurisdiction into the management sphere of the university. In so doing, they are increasing their own status and power and fending off any potential incursion by professional services managers.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Critical Reflection

1. Introduction

This chapter sets out the research conclusions and offers a critical reflection on the research process. The latter takes the form of a self-critique of the study, including a consideration of the limitations of the data and possible alternative methodological approaches. The final section focuses on what still remains to be done, proposing further avenues for empirical research emanating from this study.

2. Conclusions

In answer to each of the study's central research questions set out in Chapter One (6.2), the following conclusions are drawn.

2.1 The Case for Change

There is a deficit case for change whereby an external open competition DPVC appointment model is adopted as a response to a perceived problem. This may be an internal skills gap, the need to address an inward-looking executive management team or to deal with institutional underperformance. Vice chancellors' overriding concern is to make the best appointment possible in order to improve the quality of university management in what is a challenging and highly competitive environment. This increasingly means bringing in a DPVC from another institution.

Change is typically pragmatic rather than policy driven. The majority of pre-1992 English universities have a mixed model of DPVC appointment, whereby vice chancellors make

case-by-case decisions on the appointment process, dependent on such factors as the depth of the internal talent pool for that particular DPVC portfolio. Only a handful of universities externally advertise all their DPVC posts as a matter of policy, though there is evidence to suggest that external open competition is becoming the default option in a few others.

Vice chancellors are the main drivers of change to DPVC appointment practice and also the key decision makers in terms of the selection of candidates. Although councils have to formally approve DPVC appointments, in general they appear willing to accede to the wishes of their vice chancellor. Indeed, some vice chancellors made it very clear from the outset that they expected the support of their council in this regard.

Whilst it is understandable that vice chancellors would wish to choose their own executive team, the outcome has been the appointment of more of the same type of individuals. This runs the risk of group think and a lack of appropriate challenge, neither of which is conducive to the effective management of a university. On the contrary, there is both a strong social justice and business case for a heterogeneous executive management team that reflects a diversity of backgrounds and talents.

2.2   DPVC Profile and Careers

DPVCs are still predominantly white male professors. The imperviousness of the DPVC profile, even in the face of transformational change to university governance and management as a result of the government's NPM reform agenda, confirms findings from earlier studies that the recruitment pattern of the most senior university managers has remained predictable despite significant policy change (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, Bargh et al. 2000).

However, the continuity in the demographic profile of those DPVCs appointed via external open competition disguises an important change in their motivations and approach. These are individuals who have made a conscious decision to take a management route, enjoy management and are ambitious to progress to the top job. They are typically career track rather than reluctant or good citizen managers (Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007), some of whom will become "career PVCs" making strategic career moves from one DPVC role to another, typically to a bigger and better institution.

Becoming a DPVC, though increasingly well remunerated, is a more high-risk strategy than hitherto, particularly for younger post holders. This is because, if they are not at retirement age when their term of office expires, exit strategies can be difficult. Going back to an underlying academic role, though never unproblematic, is nowadays neither a viable, nor a desirable, option for many DPVCs. They are heavily reliant on the patronage of the vice chancellor who appointed them and their position becomes vulnerable when a new leader comes in who wants to create his or her own executive team.

2.3   Management Capacity Building

The increasing adoption of an external open competition model of DPVC appointment in pre-1992 universities can be seen as a logical response to the need for more and better management. However, the way that the model is being implemented in practice is problematic and has resulted in some apparently unintended consequences – notably the narrowing both of the field of preferred candidates and the professional and gender profile of those securing the jobs. Opening up DPVC posts to external competition cannot therefore be said to have enhanced management capacity in the sense of attracting and appointing the best candidates from the widest possible talent pool.

On the contrary, the way DPVCs are appointed can be seen as a means of social closure (2.6). The framing of the posts effectively excludes non-academic candidates, with neither managers from outside higher education nor professional services managers with extensive experience of, and empathy with, universities considered suitable for DPVC posts. In addition, a risk-averse and conservative approach to recruitment has led to an increasing emphasis on experience as an indicator of quality. This precludes serious consideration of a more diverse candidate pool, putting non-standard candidates at a disadvantage and representing a form of bed-blocking for younger managers. The outcome has been the appointment of safer, more experienced candidates achieved via a recirculation of existing DPVCs as part of a self-perpetuating, predominantly male, hierarchy.

Although such appointments meet vice chancellors' stated desire for people who can hit the ground running, it is not clear that the quality of candidates has actually improved. A reliance on buying in experienced individuals is arguably a short-term fix to the pressing problem of how to improve university management. Moreover, if external open competition is introduced at the expense of internal talent development and succession management, it militates against longer-term management capacity building in the sector.

2.4   Gender

The adoption of an external open competition appointment model has led to fewer women securing DPVC jobs. These findings challenge some commonly held assumptions about why there is this continuing gender imbalance at executive management level. Firstly, it is often said that the dearth of women in senior positions is an issue of agency (or a lack of it), but the data reveal no lack of ambition amongst female deans and heads of school. Rather, the evidence suggests there may be structural impediments for women associated with changed DPVC appointment practice, including the framing of the posts, increasing expectation of geographical mobility, and use of existing elite networks for candidate recommendations.

Secondly, the leaky pipeline argument alone fails to explain why a mere 15% of DPVCs appointed via external open competition are women given that they comprise 24% of third tier academic managers – the main recruitment pool. Alternative explanations are that the risk-averse and conservative nature of DPVC appointment practice is resulting in homosociability, or the tendency to appoint in one's own image, and the predominance of the culturally established ideals of excellence and meritocracy over that of diversity.

Thirdly, executive search agencies are often accused of perpetuating narrow stereotypes of what a DPVC looks like and of having a negative impact on the diversity of appointees, but these findings show that the proportion of women appointed to DPVC roles is slightly higher when an executive search agency is used than where a university relies on external advertisement alone. Whilst there are real concerns regarding the use of executive search agencies, the temptation to blame them for the gender imbalance in DPVC appointments should be avoided. The responsibility for determining the appointment process, framing DPVC posts and making selection decisions rests firmly with the universities themselves.

2.5   Managerialism

Although higher education in general is undoubtedly experiencing a more managerial 'turn', ideal-type managerialism is not as pervasive as the academic narrative might suggest with respect to DPVC appointments. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence of two ideological tenets of managerialism: that management is important and a good thing, and that managers should assert their right to manage. The latter reflects an increasingly managerial interpretation of the DPVC role.

However, this is a context-specific variant of managerialism rather than the generic ideal-type. There is virtually no recognition of the transferability of management skills and experience from other sectors or the relevance or appropriateness of those offered by professional services managers. The managerial ideology identified in this study is therefore higher education specific and could thus be conceived of as 'academic-managerialism'. Whilst this in part reflects a belief in the uniqueness of universities as organisations, it also raises questions about the viability in any context of managerialism's ideological claim that management is generic and universally applicable.

Moreover, in terms of DPVC appointments, managerialism's assertion that management is rational and value neutral is unfounded. In reality, the appointment process is characterised by social closure and micro-politics in the form of the maintenance of self-interest, power and status. Given that the recruitment and selection process in other organisations – and indeed any example of management decision making - is likely to be subject to similar influences, this casts doubt on the validity of managerialism's wider ideological claim for the rationality and neutrality of management and managers.

2.6   Academic-Manager Power Relations

The belief within pre-1992 English universities that DPVCs must be career academics remains undimmed. This is consistent with earlier studies that have found that non-academic managers have not been appointed despite expectations to the contrary given the increasingly managerial interpretation of the role (Smith, D., Adams & Mount 2007, Szreter 1979). It can be seen as a continuation of the amateur-manager approach and the apprenticeship model of learning on the job (Breakwell & Tytherleigh 2008a).

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the performance of DPVCs and make a judgement as to whether or not the academic managers in these roles are doing a good job, I believe it is appropriate to question the seemingly taken-for-granted assumption that DPVCs *must* be career academics, as clearly signalled by the person specification. This is especially so given that the testimony of serving DPVCs shows that this role is very different from their previous academic one and requires a different skill set.

Moreover, as the positional power of the DPVC increases, there is arguably less necessity for the post holder to rely on expert power and this should mean that specialist knowledge and academic credibility is of relatively less importance. Nevertheless, academic credibility,

as opposed to personal credibility, is seen as a non-negotiable requirement and thus expert power retains its critical role.

The particular way in which merit is defined, i.e. a track record of research excellence, academic credibility and academic management experience, can be seen as a means of legitimating the domination of DPVC positions by senior academic managers and maintaining the *status quo* by ensuring that more of the same type of people continue to get these top jobs. Arguably, academics have always been adept at maintaining their elite status in the face of imposed change, such as the Research Assessment Exercise (Salter & Tapper 2002). The ring-fencing of DPVC posts appears to be yet another example of this.

The prevailing academic narrative holds that there has been a transfer of power from academics to managers. In the broadest sense of the word manager, this may be true. However, the real shift of power has not been from academics to professional services managers, as often suggested, but from rank-and-file academics to an elite group of academic managers, including a new cadre of career track DPVCs. At a practical level, this is indicative of the schism that is developing between the "academic manager" and the "managed academic" (Winter 2009, p. 121), whilst at theoretical level, it can be conceived as a stratification of the academic profession (Friedson 2001).

In an exercise of that power, this elite group of career track DPVCs are expanding their jurisdiction by colonising the management domain in universities. Not only are they assuming line management responsibility for some professional services functions, but also taking control of the strategic decision-making agenda at the expense of the wider academic community. Far from declining in authority, this elite group of DPVCs (and vice chancellors) are arguably taking full advantage of managerialism to consolidate both their professional *and* managerial power.

3.   Critical Reflection

This section identifies some of the limitations of the study in terms of scope and methodology.

3.1   Limitations of the Data

In addition to the potential weaknesses of each of the selected methods discussed in the chapter on methodology (Chapter Four), the following limitations of the data presented in this thesis are acknowledged.

Moving target: The nature of the research design means that the findings represent a snapshot in time of a population of DPVCs that is neither fixed nor stable. The study thus suffers from moving target syndrome, whereby the data captured are in constant flux and almost immediately become out of date.

Comparator group: The interview phase of this study is limited to pre-1992 universities that have changed their DPVC appointment model. Although the decision to focus on those institutions which are effecting change is appropriate to the study's aims, it would nevertheless have been useful and illuminating to contextualise the interview findings by reference to experience elsewhere. Potential comparator groups of particular value include those pre-1992s that have retained an internal secondment DPVC appointment model and post-1992 institutions that have years of experience working with an external open external competition appointment model.

Balance of interview sample: The majority of research participants are academic managers. This reflects the reality that DPVCs are overwhelmingly drawn from the academic community. However, in the interests both of balance and of my own stated desire to examine the career aspirations and opportunities of professional services managers, it would have been beneficial to have included more non-academic managers in my interview sample.

Indicator of external open competition: External advertisement is used as the sole indicator that a post holder was appointed by means of external open competition. As discussed in Chapter Four (5.4) there are five cases where a DPVC was appointed from another institution with no record of an external advertisement having been placed. These individuals were thus not included in the interview sample.

Extended quotations: My decision not to record and transcribe the interviews together with my commitment to preserving the anonymity of my research participants meant that the thesis does not include extended transcript extracts. This may have impacted on the readability and persuasiveness of the text. However, the process of respondent validation of interview summaries and the inclusion of shorter verbatim quotations allowed

participants the opportunity to 'have their say' in the interpretation and presentation of the findings, whilst still guarding against the potential for accidental disclosure.

Restrictions on what is reported: Given the word limit and the need to maintain a coherent research story, some of the findings and much of the reading and analysis have not been included within the thesis. It thus represents only part of the overall doctoral study. However, recognising what needed to be excluded and how this missing material may be utilised in a future publications strategy was an important part of the learning process.

Despite these acknowledged limitations, it is hoped that the data analysis presented in this thesis will prove of relevance and value both to higher education practitioners and policy makers, as well as making an original contribution to knowledge.

3.2   Limitations of the Research Design

Although I believe that my chosen methodology worked well in capturing the macro and micro aspects of, and different perspectives on, the research phenomenon, I appreciate that a quite different research design could also have been adopted. I originally considered a case study research strategy in order to locate the empirical investigation within an institutional context, using interviews as the main method, supplemented by documentary evidence and observation of the DPVC recruitment process.

I believe this type of in-depth, situated case study would have the potential to produce rich and interesting data. However, after much consideration, I rejected this methodological approach as impractical for a number of reasons. Firstly, I took the view that it would be too difficult to gain access to the required number and type of individuals within each case study institution. Secondly, where a vice chancellor did grant permission on behalf of an institution, this may have entailed other senior staff being volunteered rather than participating freely.

Thirdly, it would not have been possible to preserve the anonymity of interviewees from their colleagues within the same institution – something that was enabled in this study because participants were approached individually, in most cases without the use of gatekeepers. Under these circumstances, it is likely they may have been unwilling to speak openly about each other and their institutional circumstances. Fourthly, such a close focus on specific institutions, whilst valuable in its own right, runs the risk of accidental disclosure in the writing up process and resultant harm to the research participants. As noted

elsewhere, this is a relatively small community where senior managers are well known to each other.

Finally, even if the timing had made it possible, it would have been difficult to secure agreement to observe the DPVC recruitment process given the number of stakeholders and ethical issues to consider, not least the effect that the observation itself may have had on the process. Overall, then, I felt that a case study methodology would not have been feasible for this doctoral study. However, it may be an option worth considering for future research.

There is a second issue in relation to the overall research approach that needs to be acknowledged. If I had embarked on the study with the aim of examining the effects of managerialism in pre-1992 institutions, I would not necessarily have chosen DPVC appointment as my empirical focus. However, this was not my initial motivation for undertaking this research. As noted in the introduction, I approached it rather from a reflective practitioner perspective with a particular interest in DPVC appointments and a desire not only to explore what was happening empirically, but also to understand its theoretical context and implications.

The research strategy was therefore an appropriate one in meeting the aims of this particular study and, in fact, the phenomenon of changing DPVC appointment models also serves as a useful case study of the effects of managerialism. Moreover, it provides a framework, in the form of an ideal-type model, by which the impact of managerialism can be explored in relation to other areas of practice inside or outside a university context.

4.   Avenues for Further Research

Like all research projects, this doctoral research is limited in its scope and therefore does not explore all the relevant issues. A number of gaps in understanding remain and, inevitably, this study leaves many questions unanswered. Building upon these findings, the following options are suggested as avenues worthy of further empirical investigation.

- Extending the research to ***those pre-1992s that have retained an internal-only DPVC appointment model*** to understand their perspective on the pros and cons of

the traditional appointment model, how they view change and the likelihood they
will also adopt an external open competition model.

- Extending the research to ***post-1992 universities*** to understand more about the
  DPVC appointment model towards which their pre-1992 counterparts appear to be
  moving and its perceived advantages and disadvantages in practice.

- Extending the research to include ***chairs of council*** to understand the precise
  nature of their involvement in the recruitment of executive management team
  members and the degree of influence they have over selection decisions.

- Extending the research to ***vice chancellor level*** to understand how appointment
  practice for vice chancellors compares to that for DPVC appointments and the
  extent to which the greater involvement of the governing body impacts on the
  process and its outcomes.

- Extending the research to include the ***perceptions of rank-and-file academic staff***
  on DPVC appointments and to understand the extent to which changes to practice
  may be contributing to the widening of the gap between academic staff and
  executive management team members.

- Extending the research by undertaking a more in-depth study of the use of
  executive search agents in higher education – an area increasingly seen as
  problematic. Though it is recognised it would be challenging to design such a
  project and secure the participation of the various stakeholders, it would be
  extremely valuable to understand the extent to which perceptions of executive
  search agencies expressed in this study reflect actual practice, including how
  influential they are in the decision making process.

- Extending the research into *the **international arena*** to understand how the
  appointment and profile of university leaders in England compares to that
  elsewhere and ascertain what might be learned from their experience.

- ***Repeating some or all of the study*** at a later date in order to monitor change over time, for example in DPVC profile and the number of institutions externally advertising DPVC posts, and test the reliability of these findings.

- ***Undertaking a critique of the study*** by using an alternative methodological approach to test the reliability of the findings and/or the validity of the analysis and resultant conclusions.

- ***Repeating some or all of the study***

Appendices

Appendix A: 45 Pre-1992 English Universities

Date of charter or incorporation included in brackets

Oxford
Cambridge

Aston (1966)
Bath (1966)
Birkbeck (1920)
Birmingham (1900)
Bradford (1966)
Bristol (1909)
Brunel (1966)
City (1966)
Cranfield (1969)
Durham (1832)
Essex (1965)
Exeter (1955)
Goldsmiths (1904)
Hull (1954)
Keele (1962)
Kent (1965)
Imperial (1907)
Kings College (1836)
Lancaster (1966)
Leeds (1904)
Leicester (1957)
Liverpool (1903)
London (1836)
Loughborough (1966)
LSE (1900)
Manchester (2004, originally 1880)
Newcastle (1963)
Nottingham (1948)
Open University (1969)
Queen Mary (1915)
Reading (1926)
Royal Holloway (1900)
Salford (1967)
Sheffield (1905)
Southampton (1952)
Surrey (1966)

Sussex (1961)
UEA (1964)
University College (1836)
Warwick (1965)
York (1963)

Institutions without pre-1992 university status included as members of the 1994 Group (disestablished in 2013):

IOE (1932)
SOAS (1916)

Appendix B: Sample Empirical Research Plan

Outline Proposal for Empirical Work: Version 4
7 March 2012

Core research question:
Why are pre-1992 universities changing the way they appoint PVCs and are the changes helping or hindering leadership capacity building?

   A) **Proposed Research Strategy**
Specific empirical questions and associated research methods are indicated below

---

Preliminary

P) What is the extent and pattern of external advertisement of PVC posts in pre-1992 universities since 2006?

P) What do the adverts tell us about the perceived requirements of the role and candidate?

Method: Desk research. Update advert monitoring exercise (MA dissertation) with 2011 data

Scope: All advertised EMT posts in English HEIs, 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Dec 2011 (THES, jobs.ac.uk)

Timeframe: Completed Feb 2012 (but may need to update again over the course of the PhD?)

Phase One

1) What is the demographic and career profile of serving PVCs and how does this compare to that in 2006?

2) What impact, if any, has the external advertisement of posts had on the demographic and career profile of serving PVCs?

Method: Desk research.

(a) Census of **PVCs** using publically available information, (esp. university websites, publication schemes, statutes and ordinances) and compare to ACU Yearbook data and prior empirical work

 (b) Track adverts to specific post holders and compare their profile to remainder of population

Scope: Entire population of DVC/PVCs in 45 pre-1992 universities (estimate 4 per HEI, so 180)

 Timeframe: Summer 2012

Phase Two

3) What impact are changes to the DVC/PVC appointment process having on the career development and aspirations of next-tier managers?

Method: Online survey using University of Bristol software. Direct email invitation to participate. All respondents asked if they would be prepared to be interviewed for Phase Four

Scope: **Deans/Heads of School and Professional Heads of Service** in all 45 pre-1992 universities

(estimate 12 per HEI, so 540 possible respondents)

Timeframe: Autumn 2012

Phase Three

4) What do next-tier managers perceive to be the effect of change to their institution's PVC appointment practice at an individual and institutional level?

Method: Semi-structured interviews. Summarised and respondent validated

Sample: Purposeful sample of **Deans/Heads of School and Professional Heads of Service** in those pre-1992 universities that have changed their DVC/PVC appointment process (estimated population of 12 post holders in each of 26 institutions, so 312). Aim for 10% of population, or 30 interviews

Timeframe: Spring/Summer 2013

Phase Four

5) What do VCs believe to be the main drivers, benefits and outcomes of change to the DVC/PVC appointment process at an individual and institutional level?

Method: Semi-structured interviews. Summarised and respondent validated??

 Sample: **VCs** from those 26 pre-1992 institutions identified in Phase One as having changed their DVC/PVC appointment process. Estimate 40-60% coverage (10-16 interviews)

Timeframe: Summer/Autumn 2013

Perceived advantages over earlier iterations:

Mixed method approach with a quantitative element

Variety of data sources

Some potential 'redundancy' built in

Less reliant on access to elite interviewees

Avoids the need for gatekeepers

Contingency plans in place

Movement from macro to micro level

Viewpoints of different stakeholders on the phenomenon

Can present findings in a way that does not jeopardise individual or institutional confidentiality

Respondent validation of interview data

B) Fall-Back Positions:

Contingency Plan One

If there is insufficient response to **Phase Two**, extend it to VCs from *all* pre-1992 institutions. This would allow comparison of changed and non-changed PVC appointment models.

OR

Contingency Plan Two

If there is insufficient response to **Phase Two and Three**, conduct *expert interviews* with ESAs, HEFCE, UUK, Equality Challenge Unit etc.

OR

Contingency Plan Three

If there is insufficient response to **Phase Two and Three**, undertake documentary analysis to understand government perception of HE management and leadership deficit

Appendix C : Sample Census Data Collection Template

Post	PVC	PVC	PVC
Portfolio/Area	Research and Enterprise	Learning and Teaching	Engagement
Professor?	Y	Y	Y
Gender	M	M	M
Ethnicity	W	W	W
Name	John Hay	Glen Burgess	Ian Pashby
Email	Pvc-re	Pvc-lt	Pvc-eng
Month of appt.	April	Feb	Jan
Year of appt.	2012	2010	2013
Previous role	Dean, Health and Medical Sciences	HOD, History and Deputy Dean for Research	Provost and CEO
Institution	**Surrey**	Hull	**Nottingham** Malaysia campus
LM responsibilities?	Y	Y	Y
Full time?	Y	Y	Y
Fixed term?	No	No	No
Advertised?	Nov 2011	Nov 2009	May 2012
ESA	Heidrick	Veredus	Saxton Bampfylde
Previous			John Leach
Now			PVC Sheffield Hallam

Institution: Hull   Data accessed: 16 August 2013

Email suffix:@hull.ac.uk   Telephone: 01482-346311

Vice-Chancellor: Professor Calie Pistorius (Sept 2009) Formerly VC at Pretorius

Appendix D: Online Survey Questions

Anonymity and Data Protection Statement
All data collected in this survey will be held securely in the UK and fairly and lawfully processed for the specific purposes for which it was collected. Personal data is requested for data management and analysis purposes only.
Research findings published in any form will be anonymised and no data you provide will be personally or institutionally attributed. Free text comments will be edited, as required, to ensure that respondents cannot be identified.

Section One: About You

1. Your current role:
   - Dean or Head of Faculty/Division
   - Head of School or Department
   - Director or Head of a Professional Services Division/Department
   - Other (please specify)
2. Your institution *(select from drop down list)*
3. Your gender:
   - Male
   - Female
4. Your age:
   - 40 or under
   - 41 to 45
   - 46 to 50
   - 51 to 60
   - 61 and over
5. You would describe yourself as primarily:
   - An academic
   - A manager
   - Other (please specify)

   If an academic, your academic discipline sits within:
   - Humanities
   - Sciences (including ICT)
   - Social Sciences
   - Other (please specify)

Section Two: Your Views on Changes to Appointment Practice

6. Has your own institution externally advertised any PVC posts?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don't know

7. *Please indicate on the grid below the level of your agreement, or otherwise, with the following propositions (Options: Strongly agree; somewhat agree; somewhat disagree; strongly disagree; don't know)*

   The change from an internal secondment model of DPVC appointment to one of external advertisement is likely **to be motivated by a desire to**:

   a. Increase the effectiveness of the appointment process
   b. Comply with equal opportunities good practice
   c. Follow the example of other peer group institutions
   d. Diversify the applicant pool
   e. Improve the quality of institutional management
   f. Adopt a more 'managerial' approach

8. Please note below any other likely motivations for change not included in the previous question

9. *Please indicate on the grid below the level of your agreement, or otherwise, with the following propositions (Options: Strongly agree; somewhat agree; somewhat disagree; strongly disagree; don't know)*

   The change from an internal secondment model of DPVC appointment to one of external advertisement is likely **to result in:**

   a. A more effective appointment process
   b. A fairer appointment process (in terms of equal opportunities)
   c. The attraction of a more diverse pool of applicants
   d. The appointment of more candidates from outside HE
   e. The appointment of more non-academic candidates from within HE (e.g. directors of professional services)
   f. No significant change to the profile of successful candidates
   g. An improvement in the quality of institutional management
   h. Increased 'managerialism' within an institution

10. Please note below any other likely outcomes of change not included in the previous question

11. Overall, do you believe the adoption of an external advertisement model of DPVC appointment will enhance future leadership capacity building in the sector?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure
    - Don't know

    11a. Please give reasons for your answer

Section Three: Your Career

12. Have you ever applied for an advertised DPVC post in **your own university**?
    - Yes
    - No

12a. If yes, what was the outcome of your application?
- Application did not reach long listing stage
- Long listed
- Short listed
- Offered post and accepted
- Offered post but declined
- Would rather not say
- Other (please specify)

13. Have you applied for an advertised post in **another pre-1992 university**?
    - Yes
    - No

13a. If yes, what was the outcome of your application?
- Application did not reach long listing stage
- Long listed
- Short listed
- Offered post and accepted
- Offered post but declined
- Would rather not say
- Other (please specify)

14. How likely are you to apply for an advertised DPVC post in a pre-1992 university (including your own) in future?
    - Very likely
    - Somewhat likely
    - Somewhat unlikely
    - Very unlikely
    - Would rather not say
    - Not sure

14a. Please give reasons for your answer

15. What do you consider to be the main obstacle, if any, to your becoming a DPVC in a pre-1992 university?

Section Four: An Invitation to Participate in Further Research

16. Would you be willing to be interviewed in order to discuss these issues in more detail?

Appendix E: Invitation Email for Online Survey

Subject: Your Views Sought on University Leadership

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to participate in ESRC-funded doctoral research into the appointment of Deputy and Pro Vice-chancellors (DPVCs) in pre-1992 English universities. This study aims to produce outcomes of practical relevance and value for future HE leadership development.

Given that DPVCs perform a distinctive and important role within a university's senior management team, it is essential that the best people are appointed. My research has shown that many pre-1992 universities are moving away from the traditional, fixed-term internal secondment model of DPVC appointment to one of open competition by external advertisement, often utilising the services of executive search agencies.

As a senior HE professional, any such change to DPVC appointment practice is likely to affect you directly. You probably work closely with DPVCs and, moreover, research shows that you are a member of the main 'recruitment pool' for future DPVC appointments. Your views are therefore particularly important in informing this research.

Accordingly, I would be very grateful if you could spare ten minutes of your time to complete a short online survey. This can be accessed by clicking on the link below. Since the survey is located on a secure University of Bristol website, please select Yes if your browser asks for confirmation of whether you wish to continue.

https://www.survey.kent.ac.uk/dpvc-appointment

The survey will be available for a two-week period between 1 and 15 November. It has been designed to be as quick and easy to complete as possible.   However, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at this email address.

I thank you in advance for your participation.

Kind regards,

Sue Shepherd
PhD Student, School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research
University of Kent

Appendix F: Interview Guide for Vice Chancellors

Appointing Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors in Pre-1992 Universities

Research Overview

Many pre-1992 universities are moving away from the traditional fixed-term, internal secondment model of appointment for Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors (DPVCs) to one of open competition by means of external advertisement, often utilising the services of an executive search agency. The empirical element of my PhD is concerned with investigating why this change to DPVC appointment practice is happening and what the consequences are both for the managers concerned and for their institutions. More broadly, I am interested in whether this has been change for the better in terms of improving management capacity within the sector.

Interview Topics

This will be a semi-structured interview and the intention is to allow plenty of flexibility to focus on those areas of greatest relevance and mutual interest and to explore other issues as they arise. Nevertheless, the broad areas I would like to cover are:

Current DPVC appointment practice and roles in your institution

Drivers and motivations for changing DPVC appointment practice

Your experience of the DPVC recruitment process

The utilisation of executive search agencies ("head hunters")

The development of the person specification and experience sought from DPVC candidates

Benefits and disadvantages of change

The legacy of change for future Vice Chancellors

Your views on whether, overall, this has been change for the better in terms of improved management capacity

Any other issues you would like to raise

Sue Shepherd

PhD Student, School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research

University of Kent

Appendix G: Invitation Email for Vice Chancellor Interviews

Subject: Invitation to Participate

Dear **XX**

I am writing to invite you to participate in an ESRC-funded doctoral research study into changing appointment practice for Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors (DPVCs).

As you will be aware, many pre-1992 universities are moving away from the traditional fixed-term, internal secondment model of DPVC appointment to one of open competition by means of external advertisement, often utilising the services of an executive search agency. The empirical element of my PhD is concerned with investigating why this change to DPVC appointment practice is happening and what the consequences are both for the managers concerned and for their institutions. More broadly, I am interested in whether this has been change for the better in terms of improving management capacity within the sector.

My evidence suggests that your university has externally advertised at least one DPVC post over recent years and I would like to seek your views as Vice Chancellor on the factors that prompted this change to appointment practice and what the anticipated and actual outcomes have been. In addition to hearing about your own experience of the DPVC appointment process, I would also like to seek your views on the wider significance of change for university management. For my part, I would be happy to share with you my research findings to date, including the impact of changed appointment practice on the profile of current post holders and on the career aspirations of potential and aspiring DPVCs. Your feedback on these initial findings would be most welcome.

Please be reassured that your anonymity will be respected and no comments you make will be individually or institutionally attributed. An informed consent form will be send to all participants explaining procedures for the responsible handling of data and for preserving confidentiality and anonymity.

With the above in mind, I would be very grateful if you could spare me an hour of your time to discuss these issues. I am planning to conduct interviews in **XX** on **XX**. If you would be willing to be interviewed, perhaps you could kindly let me know your availability on this date or, alternatively, put me in touch with your PA to arrange a convenient appointment.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Sue Shepherd
PhD student, School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research
University of Kent

Appendix H: Consent Form to Participate in Research

Appointing Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors in Pre-1992 Universities

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sue Shepherd, who is a doctoral student from the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR) at the University of Kent. Professor Sarah Vickerstaff is her primary research supervisor. Ms Shepherd is conducting this investigation for her doctorate, which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a senior HE professional in an English university. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have before deciding whether or not to participate.

1.   **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study examines the drivers of recent change to the way Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors (DPVCs) are being appointed in pre-1992 English universities and its consequences, both intended and otherwise. It aims to ascertain whether this has been change for the better in terms of improving management capacity within the sector and to explore the theoretical significance of change for the notion of managerialism in a university context. In so doing, the study seeks both to inform management practice and to make an original contribution to knowledge through the generation of theory in a hitherto under-researched and under-theorised area of enquiry.

2.   **PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in a semi-structured interview lasting no more than one hour.

3.   **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

 If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

4.   **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is not anticipated that you will benefit directly from participation in this study. However, by furthering understanding of the implications of recent changes to the appointment of senior managers, it is hoped that opportunities to improve current management practice within universities may be identified.

5.   **POTENTIAL HARM OR DETRIMENT**

We do not anticipate that your participation in this research will result in any harm or detriment. The researcher is, however, mindful of the potential risk to participants of any unintended public disclosure of their identity in relation to the research findings. In order to mitigate this risk, participants will be given the option of reviewing the researcher's interview summary and making any amendments necessary in order to ensure that they cannot be personally identified from this information. Additionally, every effort will be

made not to breach the anonymity of research participants in any form of publication of the research findings. No comments will be individually or institutionally attributed.

6.   **RESPONSIBLE HANDLING OF DATA**

The researcher will comply with all legal requirements in relation to the secure storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998). Any personal data relating to you that is obtained in connection with this study will be disclosed to third parties only with your permission or as required by law.

7.   CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

The confidentiality of personal data will be maintained throughout the research process by means of a coding system. We will not use your name in any of the information we get from this study or in any of the research reports. When the study is finished, we will destroy the list that shows which code number goes with your name.   Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. Ms. Shepherd will, however, use the non-attributed information collected in her thesis and other publications.

8.   RESEARCH APPROVAL AND CODE OF PRACTICE

This study received approval from the University of Kent's Social Sciences Research Ethics Advisory Group for Human Participants on 11 June 2012. It will be conducted according to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s *Framework for Research Ethics (2010).*

9.   IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Ms Sue Shepherd   Professor Sarah Vickerstaff
Principal Investigator   Professor of Work and
Employment and
SSPSSR   Head of SSPSSR
University of Kent   University of Kent
Canterbury   Canterbury
Kent CT2 7NF   Kent CT2 7NF
ss780@kent.ac.uk   s.a.vickerstaff@kent.ac.uk

_____

I understand the procedures described above and I agree to participate in this study.

_____

Printed Name of Subject

_____

Signed   Date

Appendix I: Sample Interview Summary

Interviewee Number: A.11

Post: VC

Gender: Male

Respondent Validated: Yes

-**Management Arrangements**
• *This section is omitted in order to preserve the anonymity of the institution/interviewee*

Appointment Practice
• These executive posts are appointed by open external competition, as are those of professional services directors
• HHs are not necessarily used for the external recruitment process
• For example, HHs are not being used for the currently advertised DVC post
• PVCs are internally appointed
• Selection of traditional PVCs "is an open process but they do let individuals who would be on their 'hit list' know they are invited to apply"
• In the most recent PVC appointment "there were three or four people they made sure knew the post was vacant"
• The most recent PVC appointment process was:
    • *This section is omitted in order to preserve the anonymity of the institution/interviewee*
• There were "a couple of people that put themselves forward for whom it might have been a bit too soon and they were dissuaded from applying and there was one who didn't apply that we would have liked to apply"
• "The process was to inform the VC in the making of the decision"
• "There is a tacit recognition that the VC had a power of veto"
• "As it happened, it was a unanimous choice"
• "The most important criterion was that the person must have the confidence of the VC"
• "The PVC contract is 'for up to five years, or for as long as they hold the confidence of the VC'"
• When he was appointed to the job he was "explicit that getting the right senior team was very important to him and that he wanted the support of Council to do it"
• *This section is omitted in order to preserve the anonymity of the institution/interviewee*
• "The chief executive needs to have the team he wants"
• "The VC can ultimately do what they like"

HHs
• Have a contractual arrangement with a HH who they will use as their preferred company
• They undergo a tender process every few years

- They have a very good relationship with this HH which has been involved in the recruitment of virtually the whole senior team and they know each other well
- The decision on whether or not to use the HHs for a post is based "on a judgement about the post and the nature of the market"
- In the case of the DVC post, believes it is "a sufficiently attractive post"
- "Anyone looking will see the advert, so why use HHs?"
- Also "want to move relatively quickly and you can't do this with HHs"
- Can save money "as HHs are not cheap"
- Also "they have good internal people, so are confident of getting a field"
- Have found that HHs have not always generated a good field, for example with professional services posts
- Have an agreement with the HH that they will not poach staff from any other of their HE clients
- They will not approach people in these institutions, but it is OK if the individual approaches them
- This restricts the field somewhat
- Feels "there is a general PR issue with the use of HHs"
- "Heavyweight institutions use them to say 'we are a serious player'"
- If institutions don't use them, "it may give off a signal that they are a bit strapped for cash"
- There is now a question as to whether good candidates will apply if there is an advert alone without the use of HHs
- Their use is thus "a bit self-perpetuating"
- The use of HHs may not be helping in relation to diversity
- The fact that you have to get on a HHs' radar might make "the profile of candidates narrower"
- "It may be that HHs are giving the 'tap on the shoulder' rather than VCs"
- "HHs can embark on a campaign of persuasion to get someone"
- "HHs can create ambition in candidates who had not thought of applying for a role"
- "All senior people are bombarded by calls from HHs – rarely go two weeks without getting a call -but it is important not to be flattered by it"
- "HHs play a role in the firming up of career routes"

Person sought
- What is sought depends a bit on the particular PVC portfolio
- You must have a research record to be PVC (Research) and "a leading academic" to be PVC (Education), though not necessarily a research record
- "A PVC must have credibility with their academic peers"
- "Would generally expect appointees to be academics"
- A PVC (External Relations) may be someone from outside the sector

Role
- Traditional PVCs are full-time posts, bought out at 0.7fte with 0.3fte in the department

- "There is no special expectation they will be REF-able – some are but it depends on the individual"
- Very hard for a PVC to go back to an academic career, especially those in science and medicine
- "Exit strategies for DVC/PVCs are more individual than they used to be"
- They move out and up, go back to their academic role or have an extension to their term
- Senior roles are increasingly challenging and "there is a natural lifespan of five to seven years"
- "After this they have used all their energy and momentum and it is not in the institutional interest for them to do a second term"
- A fixed term post provides "a natural break point"

Motivations for changing PVC appointment practice
- "There is a bit less chance to grow your own in a small institution"
- "It is strongly in the institution's interest to have a mixed model of recruitment where you can keep open the internal promotion route, but not be dependent upon it"
- "A mixed model allows you to draw on expertise from outside and retain institutional knowledge"
- Relying solely on the internal pool limits your options in terms of diversity and external recruitment can help maintain the diversity of the team (theirs is not "hugely diverse" at present)
- "There is a danger in going wholeheartedly for one or other model"
- He "would be opposed to wholly external appointment and even more opposed to wholly internal appointments"
- Internal only appointments "would be channelling amateurism"
- Universities are so competitive now and "need the best people"
- "The direction of travel is towards external recruitment"
- Believes "the next generation of VCs will be keener to recruit externally"

Other
- There may be "a geographical pattern to diversity" and large metropolitan universities may find it easier to have a more diverse senior team
- There are more senior staff who commute long distances due to the housing market, finances, schools etc.

Appendix J: Interview Schedule for Vice Chancellors

PVC Recruitment Practice
- How do you currently recruit your PVCs?
- Does the same method apply to all PVC posts and, if not, what is the rationale for this?
- What is the case for external recruitment? What is the problem that needed to be fixed?
- Do you think change is a recognition of the increasing importance of the PVC role?
- Are you as VC the key driver of change? Do you envisage making further change?
- What might the legacy be for the next VC?
- Do VCs have a vested interest in making external appointments/bringing in own people?

Role and Appointment Basis
- Are PVC posts made on a fixed term or open ended basis and what is the rationale for this?
- What is the typical exit strategy for PVCs?
- Do you expect your PVCs to act as managers and to 'manage'?
- Is the PVC role primarily an academic or a management one?
- Do PVCs now have more positional power than under the internal secondment model?

Person Sought
- What are the key requirements you are looking for in a PVC?
- How important are management training and experience?
- How open are you to considering candidates from the private sector or with private sector experience, including non-academic candidates from within the university?
- What was the candidate mix (internal/external; male/female; academic/non-academic) for your recent PVC appointments?
- Is there an element of professional closure in the framing of the PVC role and, if so, is this problematic?

Head Hunters
- What is the rationale for using/not using HHs?
- What are the pros and cons of using HHs?
- Is there any sense in which the sector has replaced one old boys' network with another?

Motivations versus Outcomes
- Why do you think the sector as a whole is moving to external recruitment?
- Would you describe the appointment process as "entirely meritocratic"?
- Do you believe a more diverse pool of applicants is being attracted?

- Are there any particular barriers to women getting a PVC role and what steps are you taking to address the gender imbalance?
- What have been the benefits of change?
- Do you think the quality of people appointed has improved?
- Are there any negative or unintended consequences?
- Has anything important been lost in the move away from the internal secondment model?

Appendix K: DPVC Advertisements for Pre-1992 English Universities (2006 – 2013)

University	Post	Closing Date	Executive Search
DVC			
Queen Mary	Vice-Principal	02/06/2006	
Birmingham	Vice-Principal	13/06/2007	Saxton Bampfylde
Bristol	Deputy Vice-chancellor	22/10/2007	
Keele	Deputy Vice-chancellor	06/12/2007	Perrett Laver
Bradford	DVC (Academic)	21/11/2008	
Surrey	DVC (Research and Innovation)	21/03/2008	Perrett Laver
Surrey	DVC (Academic Development)	21/03/2008	Perrett Laver
Surrey	Senior Deputy Vice-chancellor	01/03/2009	Perrett Laver
Surrey	Deputy Vice-chancellor (Academic Development)	01/07/2009	Perrett Laver
Bradford	DVC (Academic)	03/06/2011	
Imperial	Provost	28/05/2012	Perrett Laver
Lancaster	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	22/06/2012	
Bristol	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	03/11/2013	
Brunel	Vice-Principal (Education and International)	13/05/2013	Saxton Bampfylde
Brunel	Vice-Principal (Academic)	23/.9/2013	Saxton Bampfylde
Keele	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost	29/08/2013	
LSE	Deputy Director and Provost	06/05/2013	Perrett Laver
Salford	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	02/07/2013	
Surrey	Vice-President and DVC (Research and Innovation)	11/04/2013	Perrett Laver
Warwick	Provost	26/07/2013	
PVC			
Durham	PVC (Student Experience)	24/04/2006	Norman Broadbent
Kent	PVC (Research)	28/04/2006	
Loughborough	PVC (Enterprise)	30/07/2006	
OU	PVC (Curriculum and Awards)	13/10/2006	Heidrick & Struggles
OU	PVC (Learning and Teaching)	13/10/2006	Heidrick & Struggles
Oxford	PVC (Research, Academic Services & University Collections)	27/02/2006	
Oxford	PVC (Planning and Resources)	06/10/2006	
Sussex	PVC (Enterprise)	23/02/2006	Perrett Laver
Sussex	PVC (Research)	23/02/2006	Perrett Laver
Sussex	PVC (Teaching and Learning)	23/02/2006	Perrett Laver
Kent	PVC (Medway)	18/01/2007	
Kent	PVC (External)	18/01/2007	
Newcastle	PVC and Head of Humanities and Social Sciences	10/10/2007	Tribal Resourcing
Durham	PVC (Research)	21/02/2008	Perrett Laver
Durham	PVC (Learning and Teaching)	14/02/2008	
KCL	Vice Principal (Research & Innovation)	28/03/2008	Heidrick & Struggles
Leicester	PVC (Resources)	01/07/2008	Harvey Nash
Leicester	PVC and Head of College of Arts, Humanities and Law	01/07/2008	Harvey Nash
Leicester	PVC and Head of College of Social Sciences	01/07/2008	Harvey Nash

Leicester	PVC and Head of College of Science and Engineering	01/07/2008	Harvey Nash
Loughborough	PVC (Enterprise)	20/10/2008	
Newcastle	PVC (Research and Innovation)	11/02/2008	Tribal Resourcing
Newcastle	PVC (Engagement)	11/02/2008	Tribal Resourcing
Sheffield	PVC (Research and Innovation)	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC (Learning and Teaching)	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC (External Affairs)	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC and Head of Arts	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC and Head of Engineering	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC and Head of Medicine	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC and Head of Pure Science	18/01/2008	
Sheffield	PVC and Head of Social Science	18/01/2008	
Bath	PVC (Learning & Teaching)	02/09/2009	
Durham	PVC (Science)	27/03/2009	
Hull	PVC (Learning & Teaching)	20/11/2009	Veredus
Hull	PVC (Engagement)	20/11/2009	Veredus
Leicester	PVC (Research and Enterprise)	05/10/2009	Harvey Nash
Liverpool	Executive PVC (Health & Life Sciences)	17/08/2009	
Liverpool	Executive PVC (Human & Social Sciences)	17/08/2009	
Liverpool	PVC for Internationalisation	17/08/2009	
Sussex	PVC (International)	07/05/2009	Perrett Laver
Sussex	PVC (Teaching and Learning)	19/11/2009	Perrett Laver
UCL	Vice-Provost (Operations)	15/04/2009	Perrett Laver
Birmingham	PVC (Education)	22/09/2010	Perrett Laver
Birmingham	PVC (Research and Knowledge Transfer)	22/09/2010	Perrett Laver
Lancaster	PVC (International)	23/07/2010	
Liverpool	PVC (Student Experience)	12/03/2010	
Manchester	Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities	06/01/2010	Perrett Laver
Manchester	Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences	04/11/2010	Saxton Bampfylde
Newcastle	PVC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)	01/10/2010	
Oxford	PVC (Development and External Affairs)	01/03/2010	
Queen Mary	Vice-Principal and Executive Dean (Science and Engineering)	24/03/2010	Perrett Laver
Queen Mary	Vice-Principal and Executive Dean (Warden of Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry)	28/10/2010	Perrett Laver
Salford	PVC (Academic)	25/02/2010	Heidrick & Struggles
Sheffield	PVC (Arts and Humanities)	03/05/2010	
Sheffield	PVC (External Affairs)	03/05/2010	
Birmingham	PVC and Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences	01/04/2011	Perrett Laver
City	PVC (Research and Enterprise)	12/05/2011	Perrett Laver
Hull	PVC (Research and Enterprise)	04/11/2011	Heidrick & Struggles
Imperial	Pro Rector (Research)	11/04/2011	Perrett Laver
Newcastle	PVC (Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering)	13/06/2011	Saxton Bampfylde
OU	PVC (Research)	16/03/2011	Perrett Laver
RHUL	Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise)	18/04/2011	Perrett Laver

Salford	PVC (Research & Innovation) & Dean (Science & Technology)	02/11/2011	Saxton Bampfylde
UCL	Vice-Provost (Education)	29/07/2011	Odgers Berndtson
Bath	PVC (Internationalisation)	01/01/2012	
Birmingham	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College of Medical and Dental Sciences	11/10/2012	Perrett Laver
Durham	PVC (Education)	30/03/2012	
UEA	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	01/10/2012	Perrett Laver
Hull	PVC (Engagement)	18/05/2012	Saxton Bampfylde
Imperial	Pro Rector (Education)	18/04/2012	Perrett Laver
IOE	Pro-Director (Strategy and Organisation) and Secretary	23/03/2012	
KCL	Vice-Principal (Arts and Sciences)	26/07/2012	Heidrick & Struggles
KCL	Vice-Principal (Education)	11/10/2012	Heidrick & Struggles
OU	PVC (Academic)	29/02/2012	Perrett Laver
OU	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)	20/12/2012	Perrett Laver
Salford	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Health and Social Care)	04/10/2012	Heidrick & Struggles
Sheffield	PVC (Social Sciences)	05/01/2012	
Sheffield	PVC (Arts and Humanities)		
Surrey	PVC (International Relations)	17/04/2012	Perrett Laver
Sussex	PVC (Research)	22/05/2012	Heidrick & Struggles
Warwick	Pro-Vice-Chancellor	18/07/2012	
Warwick	Joint PVC (Monash-Warwick Alliance)	08/06/2012	Perrett Laver
Kent	PVC (Research & Innovation)	07/10/2013	Odgers Berndtson
Kent	PVC (Teaching & Learning)	28/10/2013	Odgers Berndtson
IOE	Pro-Director (Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation)	22/08/2013	
Leicester	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College (Arts, Humanities and Law)	01/03/2013	Harvey Nash
Leicester	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College (Social Sciences)	01/03/2013	Harvey Nash
Queen Mary	VP (International)	04/12/2013	Perrett Laver
Reading	PVC (Global Engagement)	14/10/2013	Odgers Berndtson
Reading	PVC (Academic Planning & Resource)	14/10/2013	Odgers Berndtson
SOAS	Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise)	28/02/2013	
UCL	VP (International)	16/12/2013	Heidrick & Struggles

Appendix L: Evidence to Support Indicators of Ideal-Type Managerialism

1.   **Management is Important and a Good Thing**

Indicator 1a: Recognition of the importance of DPVC posts
Vice chancellors recognise the importance of the DPVC role and believe it is essential to get the right people into these posts. These are increasingly seen as high-risk appointments that can make a real difference, for better or worse, to the quality of university management. Accordingly there is an emphasis on securing the best candidates.

Indicator 1b: Priority given to the appointment process in order to attract the best candidates
A high priority is accorded to the DPVC appointment process, as demonstrated by the time and cost investment universities have made in adopting external open competition and utilising the services of executive search agencies. Even where the decision is taken to make an internal DPVC appointment, a formal open competition process, rather than the traditional tap-on-the-shoulder model, is now standard practice.

Indicator 1c: A more managerial interpretation of the DPVC role
Vice chancellors' expectations of post holders and DPVCs' own narratives both testify to the emergence of a more managerial interpretation of the DPVC role. More executive variants of DPVC are emerging with line management and budgetary, as well as policy, responsibilities and there is a high expectation of performance from post holders. For most DPVCs appointed by means of external open competition, a part-time, add-on DPVC role has been transformed into a full-time management job. Indeed, it was the prospect of effecting change and leading and managing others that attracted many of them to the role.

On the other hand, some vice chancellors hold a more traditional view of the DPVC role as one of policy development and academic leadership. Universities – and their vice chancellors – might best be conceived as located somewhere along a continuum from highly collegial to highly managerial. Their position on this continuum is a key determinant of how managerial the DPVC role is likely to be. Furthermore, even within the same university there may be traditional policy DPVCs as well as those with a more executive-style brief.

2.   **Management is a Discrete Function**

Indicator 2a: DPVCs acting in a full-time permanent management capacity
In purely contractual terms, being a DPVC is not a full-time and permanent management job since the norm remains a fixed-term DPVC appointment with an underlying open-ended academic contract. In practice, however, for most DPVCs appointed via external open competition it is less a part-time, fixed-term role than a full-time management job undertaken as part of an ongoing academic management career.

Although some DPVCs retain a notional time allocation for research, in reality most find it difficult to maintain their research activity. Furthermore, few DPVCs wish to return to an academic role at the end of their term and, for the most part, recognise they have left their teaching and research careers behind them.

Indicator 2b: Management skills and experience as the main criteria for the role

The main stated criterion for most DPVC roles, almost regardless of the specific portfolio, is a track record of research excellence. This reflects the fact that academic experience and credibility are still seen as prerequisites for the DPVC job. In reality, however, management experience has become increasingly important – albeit the expectation is that this must have been gained within a higher education context. The ideal DPVC candidate would be able to offer experience as both stellar researcher and academic manager, but in most cases a balance has to be struck between the two. The longer a DPVC has been on an academic management track, the less likely it is that they will be at the forefront of research in their area.

Indicator 2c: Value placed on management training and development

On-the-job training via a series of academic management roles is more highly valued than management training credentials and remains the normal preparation for a DPVC role. Nevertheless, more DPVCs (and those who aspire to the role) do now undertake some kind of formal management training programme, such as that provided by the Leadership Foundation. This is despite the fact that some vice chancellors and other senior decision makers are sceptical of its value. Such as it is, management training is higher education specific rather than generic.

3.   Management is Rational and Value Neutral

Indicator 3a: Appointment based on merit rather than seniority

Although most vice chancellors assert that DPVC appointments are based on merit, the emphasis on academic management experience means that in practice the jobs tend to go to the most senior academic managers, a substantial number of whom are already in DPVC jobs elsewhere.   These may also be the best candidates, though the evidence suggests they are not drawn from the widest possible talent pool. An apparently meritocratic approach is not necessarily leading to an optimal or fair outcome.

Indicator 3b: Rational and value neutral appointment decisions

Though the appointment process itself was not observed and it is therefore not possible to draw a definitive conclusion, the outcomes of external open competition for DPVC posts in terms of gender and professional balance are not indicative of rational and value neutral selection decisions. On the contrary, DPVC appointment practice appears to reflect a combination of conservatism, homosociability and social closure. The recirculation of existing DPVCs, for example, suggests a degree of self-interest and reinforcement of the *status quo*.

4.   Management is Generic and Universally Applicable

Indicator 4a: Recognition of management skills and experience gained in any sector
Management skills and experience gained outside higher education are neither sought nor recognised in DPVC candidates. The only exception is in respect of DPVCs with a third stream portfolio where the value of industry experience is acknowledged – even though the vast majority of successful candidates are nevertheless career academics. Only a handful of DPVCs in any portfolio have been appointed from outside higher education.

The move to external open competition for DPVC posts has, however, resulted in greater opportunities for current and aspiring DPVCs to move from one university to another, showing that management skills are increasingly seen as generic and transferable *within* higher education – primarily within the pre-1992 sub-sector.

Indicator 4b: Appointments open to suitably qualified candidates from other occupational groups
DPVC posts are framed in such a way that they are effectively closed to non-academic candidates, whether from inside or outside higher education. Universities are seen as unique organisations in which academics alone are considered to have the credibility and legitimacy to manage other academics. Not even those professional services managers who meet many of the key requirements for the role, such as specialist higher education knowledge and an empathy with the academic mission, are deemed viable DPVC candidates (except for a very small number of registrar-type DPVC posts).

5.   Managers Must Have the Right to Manage

Indicator 5a: DPVC roles given appropriate authority and scope for managerial action
DPVCs appointed via external open competition are increasingly acting in a managerial capacity and regard themselves as managers. Many posts are designed with strategic and line management, as well as policy development, responsibilities. Moreover, managing change and the performance of staff are key elements of the DPVC's job. In this sense, the roles are constructed on the basis that DPVCs will assert their right to manage. For their part, DPVCs seem to accept and embrace this aspect of their role and are willing to assert their managerial authority. On the other hand, as already noted, not all DPVC posts are managerial in nature and the scope for hierarchical line management is limited in a university context.

Indicator 5b: Emphasis on positional, rather than expert, power
Executive DPVC posts arguably have more positional power than that of traditional policy DPVCs. Nevertheless, expert power derived from credibility as a researcher (or in some cases, teaching) is still regarded as a prerequisite for the role, since management legitimated by positional power alone is deemed inappropriate and ineffective in a university culture. In other words, DPVCs may be accorded some positional power, but qualify for the role on the basis of their expert power. Expert power thus retains a great

deal of importance, not least in providing a rationale for the exclusion of non-academic candidates.

6.   Private Sector Methods are Superior

Indicator 6a: Adoption of private sector appointment practice
Pre-1992 universities are increasingly adopting DPVC appointment practice that might be considered typical of the private sector, i.e. external advertisement and executive search. However, implementation is suboptimal. For example, universities are failing to use executive search agencies to maximum effect. For their part, search agents suggest that higher education lags well behind practice in other sectors with regard to equality and diversity.

Indicator 6b: Valuing of candidates from the private sector or with private sector experience
Candidates from the private sector are not considered suitable for DPVC posts (with the possible exception of those with a third stream portfolio) and there is no evidence that private sector experience is valued in DPVC candidates. In fact, there is widespread scepticism amongst vice chancellors and DPVCs about the transferability of management skills from other sectors. This is despite the fact that many managers have been recruited from the private sector to lead professional services functions.

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