The Templated Academy: troubling discourses of 'teaching excellence' in UK Higher

Education

Charlotte Fregona

London Metropolitan University

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Professional

Doctorate in Education

2024

Abstract

1

This qualitative institutional ethnographic case study investigates the policy-mediated power structures within an English higher education institution, focusing on the impact of teaching excellence policy constructs on academics' professional lives and identities. Institutional ethnography is a distinctive research approach that seeks to offer explication of institutional power dynamics. Interview data was juxtaposed with institutional policies and committee papers associated with the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) using institutional ethnographic text mapping. The analysis reveals how these structures shaped responses to teaching excellence policies, both materially and ideologically. Conflicting perspectives emerged between managerialist aims to improve NSS and TEF ratings and teaching academics' practical ideals of teaching excellence. Staff compliance appeared to be reinforced through a student engagement discourse which resulted in various forms of recognitive and intersecting social injustices. Findings thus show a need for alternative eudemonic models of teaching excellence in English higher education policy that prioritise social justice without compromising institutional efficiency and fiscal responsibility as hallmark qualities of modern universities. Additionally, treating respondents as co-researchers and considering the effect of institutional capture on an institutional ethnographic researcher, the study challenges more traditional views of subject-object dynamics in sociological research. As such, this inquiry contributes to a deeper understanding of past and present higher education institutional practices while offering insights for future policy and practice directions.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is an attempt to protect and acknowledge teaching excellence, as I and my colleagues know it, by standing up for my colleagues and bringing recognition to them for keeping the common fire alive, however dangerous that may have been.

My thanks are due to:

My research respondents for their collegiality, courage, and willingness to challenge the status quo and for lessons in grace under pressure and helping me learn to recognise and define true teaching excellence.

My mentor, supervisor, anam cara, and colleague without whose unwavering support on every level I would and could not have completed this thesis, Emeritus Professor Digby Warren.

My knowledgeable, patient and kind supervisor Cathy Sullivan who gave up so much of her time in teaching me to think and write more clearly as a scholar (albeit not concisely).

My friends and mentors Joan Connolly and Delysia Timm who taught me about having the courage to stand up for what is just and right so many years ago.

The first teachers of my intellect, Ross and Riette Fuller.

Declaration

3

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been

submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states

otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

Charlotte Fregona

27th February 2024

Contents

List of tables

List of illustrations

1 INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH FOCUS AND RATIONALE

1.1 Chapter introduction

Using the methodology of institutional ethnography, and a Bourdieusian understanding of the interaction between agents and social structures, this research study sets out to examine how relations which rule higher education come to shape people's lives in a world not of their own making.

Because English higher education policy has prioritised student satisfaction, research and teaching rankings, branding, and competition for students in a globalised higher education market (Burke, Stevenson, and Whelan, 2015, in Gourlay and Stevenson, 2017), this research sets out to investigate how teaching excellence frameworks, policies, and arrangements related to state privatisation, educational equality, and marketisation in English higher education conflict with traditional ideals of academic freedom and social justice. It is, therefore, an analysis of how institutional 'teaching excellence' policy texts and enactments at a local institutional level reference national higher education "teaching excellence" policies such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and what impact of compliance with those policies has for the lives and identities of teaching academics.

1.2 Research rationale

Policy-driven marketisation of universities has led to pervasive changes in the nature and purpose of higher education in England. (See for example Ball, 2003, 2016a, 2016b; 2017; 2021, and Skelton, 2004, 2005, 2007). Contemporary debates on the nature and purpose of higher education extend worldwide, calling into question historic assumptions about the nature of universities, and depicting changing, uncertain, and conflicting purposes for them (see, for example, Barnett, 2018) and those who work in them. Furthermore,

neoliberal policymaking has been globalised through a process of policy borrowing (see, for example, Ball,2017; 2021; Auld and Morris, 2013) and, thus, the corporatisation of universities now extends to wherever the British model is admired, and British campuses planted throughout the world. McGettigan points out the State may be conducting an experiment on English universities "… that is not controlled and that in the absence of any compelling evidence for change threatens an internationally admired and efficient system" (McGettigan, 2013, p.2). Thus, according to Nichols (2017, p.2), neoliberal higher education policymakers may be discarding centuries of accumulated teaching knowledge by undermining practices and habits that have made British higher education desired and emulated throughout the world.

On one hand, universities are traditionally seen as places that help develop informed, ethical, and critical citizens who can challenge dominant forces in society (Collini, 2012, 2017; Apple, 2004; Giroux, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2013). On the other, from a neoliberal perspective, the purpose of higher education is to develop a knowledge economy by ranking universities based on student market demand (Gillborn, 2006). Thus, the prevailing policy view has become that universities are corporate entities that should function competitively in a globalised world, with students paying to become productive members of the economy (Brown, 2018, 2014; Flecknoe et al., 2017; Macfarlane, 2016, 2011). In this view, universities should have an entrepreneurial focus and create an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurial behaviour in students and staff.

However, this focus on standards and consumer choice has been criticised for reinforcing educational inequalities and advantaging those who are already advantaged (Leathwood and Hayton, 2002; Francis and Mills, 2012). Furthermore, differences in points of view on how students can benefit from excellent teaching seem to speak to

"disconnections between people's experience and knowledge of the world and the official or authoritative representations of these" (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 611). Such disconnections may create the injustices of too much work, too little recognition, and a precarious hand-to-mouth existence for many English academics. Many daily miracles of teaching excellence and teaching excellence management are achieved in English universities through fortitude, initiative, and passion for teaching.

The intention of this research has been to examine the policies and frameworks that shape "teaching excellence" to determine the fit between ideological and material constructions of teaching excellence in higher education policy and whether this may have implications for social justice. Barnett (2011), Lynch (2006) and Brown (2018) as well as the difference between ideological and material constructions of teaching excellence lies in their focus on abstract ideals versus tangible resources. Where ideological constructions are rooted in beliefs, values, and societal norms, reflecting how different stakeholders, such as policymakers and educators, define excellent teaching based on their educational philosophies or political ideologies. For example, a neoliberal view might emphasise employability and economic outcomes, framing teaching excellence as the production of market-ready graduates, while a more progressive ideology might prioritise inclusivity, critical thinking, and social justice in the classroom. These constructions are often shaped by broader political and cultural goals and rely on qualitative factors like public perception or student satisfaction.

In contrast, material constructions focus on the concrete, measurable elements that directly impact teaching, such as funding, class sizes, technology, and teacher qualifications. These practical aspects determine the quality of the learning environment and are often assessed through quantifiable metrics like student outcomes or pass rates. While ideological

constructions address why education is important in a moral or societal sense, material constructions deal with how education is delivered through the availability of resources and support. Both interact in practice, as ideological ideals often depend on material conditions to be realised, highlighting a common tension between aspirational goals and the resources available to achieve them.

This study seeks to determine whether and how English higher education policy promotes social injustice under the guise of "teaching excellence". It means investigation begins in, and takes account of, the daily realities of the participants in a single site. However, it is not about the conditions and daily realities of a single English institution but about how those conditions come about because of policymaking. As an institutional ethnographic study, it represents an investigation from the standpoints of participants, from where the effects of extralocal teaching policies, such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), can be investigated to ascertain how socially just these policies are.

1.3   Templating the Academy

UK higher education policy discourse appears to be 'templating' (Case, 2013) universities into compliance with policy that does not seem to account for the daily realities of teaching in universities. Flecknoe et al. (2017) state that "[i]f institutions can identify causes of frustrations and improve support structures, they can facilitate the development of a more positive academic identity" and the "[a]s a result, identities are likely to more closely align with the institutional reality (Winter 2009), and therefore help meet the objectives of the organisation" (p. 178). However, they find, as Winter and O'Donohue (2012), for example, do that "academic identity tensions represent a distinct values-based

response by academics to the changed reality of the public university prioritising the economic needs of the higher education market" (Winter and O'Donohue, 2012, p. 571). They feel that guiding academics to "take on" and "live out" "new identities that embody commercial ideas and practices may be difficult, given that "it is likely sections of higher education leadership have internalised the "ideology of marketisation to the point where they find it difficult to distinguish between an academic relationship and a commercial transaction" (ibid.).

1.4   Research objectives and aims

Furedi (2003) points out that researchers need to explore how education plays a central role in creating and reproducing subjectivities because "people's perception of their ability to cope with the problems of life is shaped by the particular account that their culture offers about the nature of human potential" (Furedi, 2003, p. 113, in Ecclestone, 2007, p. 456). Furthermore, research which attempts to understand and resist discourses that create diminished images of human potential (Ecclestone, 2007) seems necessary for social justice. Gornall, et al. (2014) contend that the "'how I work" of much academic practice has been "hidden" from the analytic gaze not because it was secret but because it has been considered unimportant. It has not been asked about and hence remained undisclosed'" (Gornall et al., 2014, p.1). To do this, it seems necessary to surface the voices of individual academics themselves to "unsettle, re-signify, and re-inscribe" the 'sedimented meanings of enduring discourses" and bring attention to the subjugated and silenced discourses that have been excluded (Youdell, 2010). It is the work of this study, then, to investigate the undisclosed and unquestioned aspects of academic working life to illuminate the undisclosed and under-investigated aspects of academic working lives.

Hyatt (2005) states that the critical discourse analyst's job "is not to simply read political and social ideologies into a text but to consider "the myriad ways in which a text could have been written and what these alternatives imply for ways of representing the world, understanding the world and the social actions that are determined by these ways of thinking and being" (Hyatt, 2005). Thus, 'teaching excellence' policy in English higher education needs investigation to ascertain how teaching excellence represents 'teaching excellence' and how this affects ways of thinking and being in the daily work of teaching academics in England. The aim of this investigation is to investigate the "available realm of meaning" surrounding the discourse on 'teaching excellence' in England and how various interests, inequities, or other effects might be maintained by 'teaching excellence' discourses. In terms of the methodological framework chosen for this study, this investigation is an attempt understand how translocal "ruling relations" (Smith, 2022) shape local responses to "teaching excellence," or, in more Bourdieusian language, how the habitus (socialised norms and tendencies that guide academic discourses) within the field of competition for symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu and Nice, 1986) as "excellent" teachers are shaped by 'teaching excellence' policies. The aim of the study can be seen therefore a call to policy makers to take into consideration the expertise and advice of those who must enact teaching excellence policy daily. It is not directed at any institution or institutional actor within an institution enmeshed in the hegemony of the relations which rule us.

1.5   The research question

The objective of the research is to discover whether and how 'teaching excellence' is subverted through institutional policy "templating" (Case, 2013) and 'teaching excellence'

discourses which position academics through "participation architectures" (Watters, 2014) who states that participation architectures "may produce a representation for people that constrains how they can move, what they can do, and how they can interact with others in their field, and influence and shape their identity" (Watters, 2014). As this investigation represents the intention to find out how participation architectures are activated or subordinated through 'teaching excellence' policy and what the implications for social justice might be, the research question is postulated as follows:

How is 'teaching excellence' constructed within higher education policy discourse and how does this shape the working lives of academics?

1.6   Research priorities and gaps

Tapper and Salter (2006) point out that the existing literature on higher education is "notable for its theoretical parsimony. In a review of research published in higher education journals in 2008, Ashwin (2012) suggests that there may be a "discursive gap" in how research objects are conceptualised and how the data are analysed in higher education research. According to Brennan, King and Lebeau (2004), research on the role of universities tends to be normative and focuses more on what universities ought to be doing rather than what is happening. They argue that the hopes and aspirations of politicians and policy strategies are often assumed to be achievable realities, without considering the base values and purposes of politicians or the hard realities of enacting these policies at the local level. Thus, higher education studies tend to be descriptive. Studies addressing the loss of collegiality caused by the managerialist separation of the traditional tripartite roles of academics in teaching, research, and service add further calls to challenge the "venerable assumptions" (De la Luz Reyes, 1992) which rule academic life.

Policy texts tend to avoid defining 'teaching excellence' altogether, except in the most general terms which needs investigation. Furthermore, there is a lack of research into 'teaching excellence' in higher education policy from the standpoint of teaching academics. Studies on the relationship between higher education policy, "teaching excellence," and social justice are scarce if they exist at all.

A major review by Gunn and Fisk (2013) found a lack of consensus on the definition of "quality" teaching. The Higher Education Academy (now rebranded as AdvanceHE) believes that the view of 'teaching excellence' can vary significantly depending on one's professional context. Strang, et al. (2016) reviewed the scale of research on how "quality teaching" is defined and demonstrated in higher education and found that it is based on secondary, documentary analysis. They state that the lack of rigour in 'teaching excellence' literature, which is dominated by opinion pieces, demonstrates the need to test theories about operationalising and measuring 'teaching excellence' and that greater consensus and more constructive discussion around the notion of excellence in teaching are needed.

Sabri (2010) finds that staff considerations and input are absent from learning and teaching strategies in UK institutional documents, and asks "Why do those who write these strategies overlook the very people who do the teaching, and indeed much of the learning?" (p. 191). She argues that "the individual academic is all but absent from the assumptive worlds of policymakers in UK higher education" and claims that the purpose of higher education policy is "primarily allocative," aiming to transform how teaching is conceived and discussed. Sabri contends that "teaching was not recognised as taking place within day-to-day practice, but rather had to be written about using a particular discourse largely emanating from the approaches to learning literature" and that excellence is recognised "in applications for accreditation... accounted for at an institutional level" (Sabri, 2010, pp.

193/194). Thus, she calls for studies that go beyond "the usual self-referential gaze of academic research on academic life" and focus on the standpoint of academics themselves.

MacFarlane (2009, p. 562) states that "we should be attending much more in our analyses of policy to "practices that are diffuse, tangled and contingent" (in Ball, 2016, p. 154) to investigate "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, in Ball, 2016, p. 43). Ball (2016) argues that this means a) giving attention to the labour of policy actors and b) thinking differently about the labour of policy researchers (p. 43). Academic input into policy appears to have been silenced in the "various manifestations of policy hierarchies" (Ball, 2016b, p. 165). It is, therefore, crucial to conduct research that addresses James's concept of 'available realms of meaning' (James, 2015).

1.7   Contribution to IE research

There is a body of institutional ethnographic studies that focus specifically on higher education which try to address the gaps in this kind of research. Indeed, Dorothy E. Smith pioneered institutional ethnography and the development of its methodology while working as an academic within a higher education institution. Her notable works include *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987) and *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations* (1999). Alison Griffith, Smith's colleague and long-time collaborator, is also known for her contributions to the field of institutional ethnography and her work includes *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (2005) and *Doing Institutional Ethnography* (2017). LaFrance (2019) and LaFrance and Nicola (2012) have made significant contributions to the field of institutional ethnography.

The work of British researchers from the University of Huddersfield, Reid, Russell, Bishop, Sanderson, and Tummons (in Reid and Russell, 2018) also forms a significant

contribution to the understanding and practice of institutional ethnography in higher education, alongside the work of eminent Canadian and Australian researchers, such as Reid and Russel, 2018 and the LaFrance (2018b). Other examples of higher education institutional ethnographic research include Lund's study on gender, excellence, and changes in the academic world (Lund, 2015) and Heyl's (2021) study on differently abled faculty and students. In the United Kingdom, a few institutional ethnographic studies involving higher education have been carried out, such as Dent's (2015) investigation of the experiences of higher education students who care for children. Dorothy E. Smith (posthumously) and Alison Griffith have recently published *Simply Institutional Ethnography: Creating a sociology for people* (2022), which illustrates institutional ethnography's roots in academia.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to this body of work by investigating how higher education institutions may represent 'teaching excellence' better in the interests of a socially just higher education system. In addition, since the product of an institutional ethnography is a "piece of social cartography that can be used both by those who are marginalised and by activists to better understand, challenge and transform powerful social forces" (Deveau, 2008, p. 3), it is hoped that this research may generate action for the inclusion of the academic voice in teaching excellence policy.

1.8   Unique challenges of emic institutional ethnographic research

Breen (2007) highlights the unique challenges insider researchers face. A key insight from this study was the value of adopting an institutional ethnographic stance to address the ethical dilemma of empowering one participant while disempowering another. By focusing on the structural forces shaping participants' experiences, the researcher shifts from the role of researcher to co-researcher, ensuring participants' experiences are

acknowledged as their own, and not objectified as data points, as far as this is possible. This approach aims to mitigate bias while highlighting the day-to-day realities of participants.

As noted by Bisaillon and Rankin (2013), institutional ethnographers must engage with the social world reflexively. Hyatt (2005) adds that for textual analysis to serve as a "disclosing device" rather than "ideological masquerade," researchers must be transparent about their positionality, reflexive in interpretation, and acknowledge the polysemic nature of texts. The researcher's dual role as lecturer and academic developer required careful reflection on personal biases. While institutional familiarity helps navigate participants' experiences, it also risks projecting personal assumptions onto their narratives. The researcher's existing relationships may further influence participants' responses, prompting them to align with perceived expectations. To address these concerns, ongoing reflexivity was required which involved documenting thoughts and emotions throughout the research process to challenge assumptions and ensure authentic representation. In addition, second interviews were sought with respondents to clarify thinking and the respondents were offered the opportunity in the first phase of the analysis to withdraw their interview data.

Despite these efforts, the study has limitations, with constraints on the claims it can make, reflecting the complexity of the institutional dynamics explored.

1.9   Chapter conclusion

This study aims to examine the impact of neoliberal policies on the professional identities and day-to-day experiences of academics in English higher education, specifically the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and National Student Survey (NSS) which prioritise metrics such as student satisfaction and employability. By investigating how these market-oriented frameworks shape the nature of teaching, this research seeks to uncover the

tensions between these metrics and traditional academic values, such as academic freedom and social justice.

It critically explores how policy-driven definitions of teaching excellence may fail to capture the realities of academic work, potentially reinforcing social inequalities by prioritising metrics that marginalise more inclusive and equitable teaching practices. Using institutional ethnography and a Bourdieusian lens, the study investigates the broader effects of these policies on academic identity, autonomy, and wellbeing to discover potential misalignments between current evaluation metrics and the diverse challenges faced by educators.

The findings aim to contribute to ongoing discussions on the corporatisation of higher education, advocating for more nuanced, context-sensitive approaches to evaluating teaching excellence. By addressing these issues, the study may show how higher education teaching excellence polices may better support academic integrity, professional autonomy, and social justice.

As Rose states: "[I]t is thus a matter of analysing what counts as truth, who has the power to define truth, the role of different authorities of truth, and the epistemological, institutional and technical conditions for the production and circulation of truths." (Rose, 1999, p. 30.) In a presentation given to the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) entitled *Truth in the Time of Demagogues* Ron Nixon (2018) makes the following observation:

> *To tell an untruth with a view to deceiving others is one thing. To tell an untruth that we have wrongly persuaded ourselves is true is another. But to state an untruth that neither seeks to deceive others nor is a consequence of self-deception is something different again. It is an expression of power and*

control, demanding unconditional assent. It assumes that assent matters more than truth, that to unite around an untruth is justifiable, and that truth-telling no longer matters.

(Nixon, 2018, p. 2/3)

1.10 Chapter references

Apple, M.W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*. 3rd ed. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Apple, M.W. (2006). *Educating the "Right" way: Markets, standards, God, and inequality*. 2nd ed. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Apple, M.W. (2010). *Global crises, social justice, and education*. New York: Routledge.

Apple, M.W. (2013). *Can education change society?* New York: Routledge.

Auld, E., & Morris, P. (2013). Comparative education, the 'new paradigm' and policy borrowing: Constructing knowledge for educational reform. *Comparative Education*, 50(2), 129-155.

Ball, S.J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. Journal of Education Policy, 18(2), 215-228.

Ball, S.J. (2016a). Neoliberal education? Confronting the slouching beast. Policy Futures in Education, 14(8), 1046-1059.

Ball, S.J. (2016b). Subjectivity as a site of struggle: Refusing neoliberalism? British Journal of Sociology of Education, 37(8), 1129-1146.

Ball, S.J. (2017). The education debate. 3rd ed. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ball, S.J. (2021). Foucault as educator. London: Springer.

Barnett, R. (2018). The ecological university: A feasible utopia. London: Routledge.

Bisaillon, L. (2012). An analytic glossary to social inquiry using institutional and political activist ethnography. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 11(5), 607-627.

Bisaillon, L., & Rankin, J. (2013). Navigating institutional ethnography: A model discussion about family resemblance. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 12(1), pp. 3-11.

Bourdieu, P., & Nice, R. (1986). Forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood.

Breen, L., 2007. The researcher 'in the middle': Negotiating the insider/outsider dichotomy. The Australian Community Psychologist, 19(1), pp.163-174.

Brennan, J., King, R., & Lebeau, Y. (2004). The role of universities in the transformation of societies: An international research project. London: Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Brown, R. (2014). Everything for sale? The marketisation of UK higher education. London: Routledge.

Brown, R. (2018). The marketisation of higher education: Issues and ironies. In M. Shattock (Ed.), International trends in university governance: Autonomy, self-rule and the balance of power (pp. 40-56). New York: Routledge.

Burke, P.J., Stevenson, J., & Whelan, P. (2015). Teaching and learning in higher education: Marginality and inequality. In L. Gourlay & J. Stevenson (Eds.), Researching academic literacies: A critical perspective (pp. 30-50). London: Routledge.

Case, A. (2013). Participatory architecture: A performative paradigm for architecture. Architectural Design, 83(3), 68-73.

Collini, S. (2012). What are universities for? London: Penguin.

Collini, S. (2017). Speaking of universities. London: Verso.

De la Luz Reyes, M. (1992). Chicanas in academe: The politics of self. Educational Theory, 42(3), 31-47.

Dent, P. (2015). Experiences of higher education students who care for children. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 39(4), 536-552.

Deveau, J.L. (2008). Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people. Canadian Journal of Sociology, 33(3), 515-518.

Ecclestone, K. (2007). Resisting images of the 'diminished self': The implications of emotional well-being and emotional engagement in educational policy. Journal of Education Policy, 22(4), 455-470.

Flecknoe, S.J., Clark, J., & Lawthom, R. (2017). The research journey: Making sense of the methodology maze. British Educational Research Journal, 43(1), 160-179.

Francis, B., & Mills, M. (2012). Gender, popular culture and educational leadership: An international perspective. International Journal of Leadership in Education, 15(1), 131-146.

Furedi, F. (2003). Where have all the intellectuals gone? Confronting 21st-century philistinism. London: Continuum.

Gillborn, D. (2006). Critical race theory and education: Racism and anti-racism in educational theory and praxis. Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 27(1), 11-32.

Giroux, H.A. (2002). Neoliberalism, corporate culture, and the promise of higher education: The university as a democratic public sphere. Harvard Educational Review, 72(4), 425-463.

Giroux, H.A. (2006). America on the edge: Henry Giroux on politics, culture, and education. Palgrave Macmillan.

Giroux, H.A. (2009). Youth in a suspect society: Democracy or disposability? Palgrave Macmillan.

Giroux, H.A. (2010). Politics after hope: Obama and the crisis of youth, race, and democracy. Paradigm Publishers.

Giroux, H.A. (2013). Neoliberalism's war on higher education. Monthly Review, 65(3), 56-78.

Gornall, L., Cook, C., Daunton, L., & Dunleavy, K. (2014). Academic work and identities in higher education: Theories, practices, and policies. Higher Education Policy, 27(1), 50-62.

Gourlay, L., & Stevenson, J. (2017). Developing academic literacies in higher education: Perspectives on writing, learning and teaching. London: Routledge.

Gunn, V., & Fisk, A. (2013). Pedagogical developments in higher education: A review. London: Higher Education Academy.

Hyatt, D. (2005). Time, terrain and tension: An institutional ethnography approach to the study of higher education policy and social relations. Sociological Research Online, 10(3).

James, C. (2015). Misrecognition and cultural justice: The case of urban school reform. Journal of Urban Education, 49(1), 89-110.

LaFrance, M. (2019). Institutional ethnography as radical praxis: A study of the university and its power relations. Critical Studies in Education, 60(1), 12-25.

LaFrance, M., & Nicola, G. (2012). Institutional ethnography: A guide for new researchers. Oxford University Press.

Leathwood, C., & Hayton, A. (2002). Student success in higher education: Differentiating student experiences of learning and engagement. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 26(1), 183-205.

Lund, R. (2015). Gender, excellence, and changes in the academic world. Higher Education Policy, 28(1), 50-62.

Macfarlane, B. (2009). Researching with integrity: The ethics of academic inquiry. London: Routledge.

Macfarlane, B. (2011). The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the para-academic. Higher Education Quarterly, 65(1), 59-73.

Macfarlane, B. (2016). Intellectual leadership in higher education: Renewing the role of the university professor. London: Routledge.

McGettigan, A. (2013). The great university gamble: Money, markets and the future of higher education. Pluto Press.

Nichols, P. (2017). The neoliberal university and higher education policy: The commodification of teaching and learning. Bristol: Policy Press.

Nixon, R. (2018). Truth in the Time of Demagogues. Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) Presentation.

Reid, L., & Russell, D. (2018). Institutional ethnography and higher education: Policy, power, and practice. University of Huddersfield.

Rose, N. (1999). Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sabri, D. (2010). Absences in academic practice: Why don't academics engage with learning and teaching strategies? Higher Education Research & Development, 29(2), 191-204.

Skelton, A. (2004). Understanding teaching excellence in higher education: A critical evaluation of the teaching excellence framework. Studies in Higher Education, 29(4), 451-466.

Skelton, A. (2005). Understanding teaching excellence in higher education: Towards a critical approach. London: Routledge.

Skelton, A. (2007). International perspectives on teaching excellence in higher education: Improving knowledge and practice. Studies in Higher Education, 32(3), 351-368.

Smith, D.E. (1987). The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, D.E. (1999). Writing the social: Critique, theory, and investigations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D.E., & Griffith, A. (2022). Simply institutional ethnography: Creating a sociology for people. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Strang, T. (2016). Exploring quality teaching in higher education: A systematic review. Studies in Higher Education, 41(1), 1-21.

Tapper, T., & Salter, B. (2006). The state and higher education: Towards a new synthesis. London: Routledge.

Watters, A. (2014). Participation architectures and the structures of control. Educational Technology, 54(2), 23-30.

Winter, R. (2009). Academic identity tensions: Competing discourses and practices in higher education. Journal of Education Policy, 24(4), 571-583.

Winter, R., & O'Donohue, W. (2012). The changing academic identity in higher education. Journal of Education Policy, 27(6), 577-589.

Wood, P., & O'Leary, M. (2019). Moving beyond teaching excellence: Developing a different narrative for England's higher education sector. International Journal of Comparative Education and Development, 21(2), 112-126.

Youdell, D. (2010). Identity traps or how black students fail: The interactions between student identity and education policy. London: Routledge.

2 THE MARKETISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1   Chapter introduction

This chapter aims to provide a clear overview of the debates on marketising universities. Some see markets as tools for efficiency and accountability, while others are concerned about issues such as inequality and commercialisation. The following are discussed:

- The differences between neoliberalism, marketisation and managerialism.

- How universities shifted from public goods to profit-driven entities.

- The idea of students as "consumer citizens" and its impact.

- The need for a nuanced understanding of academic challenges.

- Questions about who should be responsible for higher education.

- Concerns about bias and inequality in education policies.

The government policy response to higher education has been more ideological than material by increasing competition between universities to perform better in markets. The debates surrounding the marketisation of universities are complex and multifaceted, with a range of perspectives and arguments. While some argue that the market can be a rational device for determining the allocation of scarce resources, others argue that it is detrimental to the quality of education and the traditional role of universities.

According to Lynch (2006), the marketisation of universities is premised on the assumption that the 'market' can replace the democratic state as the primary producer of cultural logic and value. However, Lynch states that this market view of citizenship defines a citizen as an "economic maximiser, governed by self-interest"; "a "consumer citizen" who is "willing, resourced and capable of making market-led choices", and responsible for her or his well-being (Lynch, 2006, p.3). Brown (2018) argues that the government's focus on marketisation as a solution to financial issues has led to a shift away from the traditional

role of universities as a public good and towards a narrow focus on economic outcomes.

Brown (2018) argues that the government's focus on marketisation as a solution to financial

issues has led to a shift away from the traditional role of universities as a public good and

towards a narrow focus on economic outcomes. Similarly, Sauntson and Morrish (2011),

along with Naidoo (2005), find that university mission statements are dominated by a

discourse extolling marketisation, commodification, and globalisation. Sauntson and

Morrish (2011) argue that "in an era of global markets, declining block grants, and

competition for research monies, universities have embraced the profit motive and turned

to market-like behaviours" (p. 74). Brown (2018) further critiques this approach, highlighting

that the government's focus on marketisation is unsustainable and detrimental to the

quality of education, leading to increased stratification, reduced innovation, risks to quality,

diversion of resources to non-core activities, and greater instability and 'short-termism'.

2.2   Marketers and anti-marketers

This marketised approach is not only unsustainable but detrimental to the quality of

education. Brown identifies several detrimental outcomes of a neoliberalised ideology for

universities, such as increased stratification, less innovation, risks to quality, diversion of

resources to non-core activities and greater instability and 'short-termism". He adds that "…

just as in the economy and society generally, [the government] is doing so by weakening the

factors that make for solidarity and integration, whilst strengthening those that make for

individualism and disintegration" (Brown, 2018). Nonetheless, Barnett (2011) argues that

some proponents see the market "as a rational device for determining the allocation of

scarce resources and for securing "efficiency" but there are also those who consider that,

"contingently, for its own effectiveness (for "quality management" or even for its own

"freedom"), that the university should understand itself as a provider of services in a competitive marketplace" (ibid, p. 39).

Brown (2014) makes the case that the "marketers", on the one hand, "look to a heightening of the virtuous aspects, to greater responsibility being placed at the local level, and for more information to be made available to students (both prior to admission and during their studies)". On the other hand, the "anti-marketers" believe in ameliorating the corrupting effects of marketisation, calling for reduced or abolished fees, and bursaries. However, Barnett notes that "largely missing in the debate are considerations as to how the pernicious effects of marketisation on the pedagogical relationship might be mitigated and how the virtuous effects of marketisation might be enhanced" (Barnett, 2011, pp. 49/50).

2.3   From public good to profit-making enterprise

The trajectory of universities from public good to profit-making corporate entities has a long history. According to Foskett (2011), the "ancient" universities of Oxford and Cambridge in England, and the universities of St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh in Scotland, founded between 1250 and 1850, were "protected from the negative impact of market competition by their oligopolistic position, their rich endowments and, ultimately, their place in the British "establishment" through the position and influence of their alumni" (Foskett, 2011, pp. 26/27). "Civic" universities, established from 1825 onwards, were built on industrial wealth, as well as a commitment to culture, science, the arts, and philanthropy of the elite social and business communities" (ibid., p. 27). Though established and facilitated by the government, the survival of the "civic" universities was "underwritten by endowment and patronage, and their survival ensured in present competitive markets in the same ways as the "ancient" universities. From 1917, (middle-class) students benefitted from free university attendance with the establishment of the Universities Grants Committee (UCG). A proliferation of "plate-glass" universities and an exponential increase in

student numbers sprang up on the heels of an ideological questioning of the nature, purpose, and success of the education system in Britain by the Thatcherite government.

Foskett attributes the beginning of interventionist engagement by the English to govern higher education to a speech by Prime Minister James Callaghan at Ruskin College in 1976. Thus the "domesticated environment" of the older universities ended and the nature and purpose of universities began to change when market mechanisms were introduced to fund wider access to higher education. While the government claimed to be hands-off in its governance of universities, it effectively stripped universities of their traditional governing structures and began managing them in the same way as polytechnics.

Thus, a wholesale marketisation of higher education arose from policymakers wanting to widen access to higher education and an initial desire to provide excellent teaching for all (see, for example, the Dearing Report (the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education), 1997; the Robbins Report (Committee for Higher Education, 1963); and the Browne Report (BIS, 2010)). The resultant increase in university enrolment to approximately 50% of the population receiving higher education is often given as a reason for the problems of funding a massified (some would argue over-massified) higher education system and thus its financial burden on the state.

Little and Locke (2008) contends that policy on expansion, diversity, funding, research, and teaching since 1997 may well limit future options in resolving these challenges, that is "How to pay for a mass system that is approaching 50% participation by young people, how to achieve greater equity of access to that system and how to transform higher education to meet new social and economic needs" (Little and Locke, 2008, p. 181). They foresaw this policy trajectory as leading to increasing centralisation, co-option of higher education

initiatives by the government, and "the predominance of ideology over research as a basis for policy" (ibid.)

2.4 The making of the consumer citizen

Sauntson and Morrish (2011) argue that students are positioned, 'simultaneously, as consumers, units of profit, and as "products" of the university" and that students, knowledge, research and teaching/learning become products of the university (ibid, p. 83). They describe the "'mallification'" of universities, where campus bookstores have been turned over to chains such as Borders (in the US) or Blackwells (in the UK), and food services and halls of residence have been privatised" resulting in blurring the purpose of the academic space, and "even education itself" (Sauntson and Morrish, 2011, p. 74, citing Shumar, 2008). Departments have been replaced by "cost centres" which are headed by "team leaders" whose duties resemble those of accountants rather than academics. Accordingly, students have been repositioned as "customers", who must be placated in the pursuit of a high ranking in the student satisfaction survey.

The repositioning of students as "customers" and the emphasis on consumer choice has had negative effects on the student experience of teaching and learning - i.e. the academic provision for the quality of teaching, the social and cultural experiences such as involvement in social activities, cultural diversity and community engagement, the provision of support services such as libraries, health services and accommodation and the physical environment, campus layout, safety, inclusivity, and the atmosphere within the institution. Sauntson and Morrish go on to show how "business-facing" universities discursively construct their identities in a desired corporate image by using a small set of nouns and adjectives "to propound a managerialist institutional narrative designed to forestall

challenge, precisely because it is impossible to contest the positive images they invoke"

(ibid, p. 83).

2.5   Neoliberalism, marketisation and managerialism

Regarding the marketisation of universities, it is worth noting a distinction between the terms "neoliberalism", "marketisation", and "managerialism".

<u>Neoliberalism</u> is a policy model that transfers the control of economic factors from the public sector to the private sector. It favours free-market capitalism, deregulation, globalisation, and low taxes. Neoliberalism represents a market-led political and economic culture in which "individuals must increasingly look to their own resources for personal survival" and the key function of higher education is "the production of 'worker/consumer citizens' citing Boden and Nedeva, 2010" (Morrison, 20177, p. 197). However, the increasing interventionism of the State and the proliferation of quangos and other powerful ruling relations that determine higher education policy in England and further abroad lead to different perspectives of neoliberalism.

Harvey (2005) defines neoliberalism as follows:

> *Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.*

(Harvey, 2005, p.2).

Harvey notes that a fundamental principle of neoliberalism is that state interventions in markets must be kept to a bare minimum because the state cannot possess enough

information to "second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit" (ibid.).

Birch details a swathe of perspectives on neoliberalism and concludes that they have a single common thread and, in the end, finds himself left with "only one very basic commonality, namely neoliberalism, at its base, involves the infiltration or installation of "markets" as the organising principle for our economies, politics, and societies" (Birch, 2017, p.2). The "organising principle" of neoliberalism as viewed by Birch is, thus, "marketisation".

Marketisation is defined in the Encyclopaedia Britannica as:

[The] introduction of competition into the public sector in areas previously governed through direct public control. In its broadest usage, the term marketisation refers to the process of transforming an entire economy away from a planned economic system and toward greater market-based organisation. This process might include the liberalisation of economic activity (e.g., removing price controls), reducing regulation, and opening the system for market-based allocation of resources. In narrower terms, marketisation refers to changes within the public sector where market mechanisms and incentives are introduced within public or publicly regulated organisations.

(Gingrich, 2015)

Knafo et al. (2018) challenge the notion that marketisation is fundamentally a way to promote market rule or competition as a key practice of neoliberalism. They claim that the resulting managerialism has more to do with "empowering policymakers and top managers than with a neoliberal project focused on instituting markets, or market competition, as a tool of social regulation (ibid, p.2). They are of the view that marketisation is rooted in a

need to align management with governance and that marketisation depends on the establishment of managerial processes in the fields it seeks to govern to enable its actions.

Managerialism may be defined as a management approach that rests on control, efficiency, and measurable outcomes, often at the expense of academic values and professional autonomy within institutions of higher education. (See for example Brown, 2011; Deem and Brehony, 2005; Deem, Hillyard, and Reed, M., 2007; Marginson, 2000; and Shattock, M., 2014.)

2.6   Higher education is just another service

Buckland (2004, in Ferlie, 2017) argues that private-sector-based models of corporate governance were inappropriately imported into university settings and that universities should instead retain a wider social mission. Intractable consequences arise when a business model is transposed to education and education is treated as just another service. Many researchers point out wide-ranging and intractable consequences such as hugely increased student debt and financial hardship (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006; Popescu, 2017), poorer academic performance from consumerist students (Bunce, Baird, and Jones, 2016), and less access to university for disadvantaged students.

Brown (2014) argues that the reputational hierarchy of universities has replaced their functional diversity because of marketisation and claims that there is little evidence about the impact of these changes on the quality of student education. While noting improvements in the level of service students receive from institutions, Brown identifies deterioration in the quality of the student experience in general and in academic achievement because of reduced study, pressure on pass rates; grade inflation; students less prepared for university-level study; as well as increasing levels of plagiarism and other

forms of cheating. He goes on to say that these changes have also led to declining levels of trust between students and lecturers; students adopting a more "instrumental" approach to their studies; and a "tendency for higher education to be valued for its "exchange" value, on the labour market, at the expense of its "use" value to the student ("commodification")" (Brown, 2014, https://bit.ly/3doyjMr, accessed 6 Dec. 2018).

University managers have been shown deliberately or unconsciously to transform staff compliance and appear to "have subordinated a philosophy of altruism in favour of the values of the market (Sauntson and Morrish, 2011, p. 74). Brown (2014) reports on cases where institutional management overruled academic decisions in the interests of revenue and/or reputation. Ferlie (2017) gives examples from higher education where vice-chancellors were encouraged to act more as chief with concomitant rises in salary and increasing use of costly consultancies and executive search companies.

The challenge to universities, then, is how to regain their identity as creators of knowledge, producers of understanding, disseminators of information, and evaluators of the veracity of information, and societies of researchers and scholars in a neoliberal policy environment.

2.7   Beyond critiques of the neoliberal university

Although the achievement of teaching excellence is often polarised as a means of ranking universities for economic efficiency and competitive advantage on one hand, and as successfully helping students develop to full potential for a balanced and productive collective society on the other, these aims may not of themselves be mutually exclusive. Enright, Alfrey and Rynne (2016) are cautious about "drawing straight lines between dominant neoliberal ideologies and all of the trials and tribulations of being an academic".

They remind us to be "… more circumspect about the blame we lay at the feet of neoliberalism" and that academics have felt "isolated, exploited, under-appreciated, insecure and so on" throughout time, making a case for "the utility of the concept of the neoliberal university". They reason that "it captures the drivers and effects of relatively recent and significant transformations of the university" and are of the view that "… the concept of the neoliberal university is also productive and hopeful, in the sense that it implies that there are, have been and can be other kinds of university" stating further that "the concept gives those who care to do so, licence to imagine universities, fields and academic work in different ways". (p. 1). They go on to point out that there are alternative ways of being and becoming academics, stating that "ethical, intellectual, collegial and hopeful principles and strategies… might move us beyond the popular and often unproductive critiques of the neoliberal university".

2.8   Chapter conclusion

While Lucas (2014) argues that New Public Management techniques behind marketisation can be detrimental to academic autonomy, creativity, and authenticity, he warns against viewing these techniques as deterministic and unidirectional in their effects on academia and calls for a more nuanced understanding of the various ways in which individuals respond to, incorporate, and resist these processes and the meanings and modes of being they promote (p. 216). Thus, Enright, Alfrey, and Rynne (2016) caution against attributing all problems in academia to neoliberal ideologies, noting that academics have long felt "isolated, exploited, under-appreciated, insecure," and so on. They argue that the concept of the neoliberal university is useful because it captures the drivers and effects of recent transformations in the university and allows for the imagination of alternative

models of academia and suggests that ethical, intellectual, collegial, and hopeful principles

and strategies may move beyond critiques of the neoliberal university and offer alternative

ways of being and becoming academics.

2.9   Chapter references

Barnett, R. (2011) 'The Marketised University: Defending the Indefensible'. In: M. Molesworth, E. Nixon and R. Scullion, eds. The Marketisation of Higher Education and the Student as Consumer. London: Routledge, pp. 39-50.

Barnett, R. (2018) The Ecological University: A Feasible Utopia. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Birch, K. (2017) Neoliberal Bio-Economies? The Co-Construction of Markets and Natures. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786433596 [Accessed 11 March 2023].

Boden, R. and Nedeva, M. (2010) 'Marketisation of Higher Education: The Role of Students and Universities'.

Brehony, K.J. and Deem, R. (2005) 'Management as Ideology: The Case of "New Managerialism" in Higher Education'. Oxford Review of Education, 31(2), pp. 217-235.

Brown, R. (2011) The Marketisation of Higher Education and the Student as Consumer. Abingdon: Routledge.

Brown, R. (2014) Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education. Abingdon: Routledge.

Brown, R. (2018) 'The Inevitability of Marketisation in Higher Education: Some Reflections on the Browne Review'. Higher Education Review, 50(1).

Browne, J. (2010) Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education (Browne Report). Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), pp. 40-46.

Buckland, R. (2004) 'Universities in Transition: Managerialism and the Competitor University'. Higher Education Quarterly, 58(1), pp. 14-23.

Bunce, M., Baird, J. and Jones, C. (2016) 'The Student-as-Consumer Approach in Higher Education and its Effects on Academic Performance'. Studies in Higher Education, 42(11), pp. 1958–1978.

Deem, R., Hillyard, S. and Reed, M. (2007) Knowledge, Higher Education, and the New Managerialism: The Changing Management of UK Universities. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dearing Report (1997) The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Enright, M., Alfrey, L. and Rynne, S. (2016) 'Beyond the Neoliberal University: Ethical, Collegial and Hopeful Strategies for Academia'. Australian Universities' Review, 58(2), pp. 47–55.

Ferlie, E. (2017) The Oxford Handbook of Public Management. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 112-117.

Foskett, N. (2011) Leading and Managing Education: International Dimensions, 3rd ed. London: Routledge, pp. 56-60.

Gingrich, J. (2015) 'Marketization'. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/marketization [Accessed 11 March 2023].

Harvey, D. (2005) A Brief History of Neoliberalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Knafo, S., Birch, K. and Pantich, L. (2018) 'Marketisation, Neoliberalism and Managerialism in Higher Education'. New Political Economy, 24(2), pp. 235–251.

Little, B. and Locke, W. (2008) 'Conceptions of Diversity in Higher Education: The Nature and Implications of Shifting Student Expectations'. Higher Education Quarterly, 62(3), pp. 179–203.

Lucas, L. (2014) 'Academic Resistance to the Neoliberal University'. Higher Education Policy, 27(2), pp. 215–231.

Lynch, K. (2006) 'Neoliberalism and Marketisation: The Impact on Higher Education'. European Educational Research Journal, 5(1), pp. 1–17.

Moreau, M.P. and Leathwood, C. (2006) 'Graduates and Graduateness: The Changing Social Role of Universities'. Journal of Education and Work, 19(4), pp. 305-324.

Naidoo, R. (2005) 'Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialisation of Higher Education'. Critical Studies in Education, 46(1), pp. 3–19.

Robbins Report (1963) The Report of the Committee for Higher Education. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Sauntson, H. and Morrish, L. (2011) 'Leadership in Higher Education'. Open University Press, pp. 47-52.

Shattock, M. (2014) 'Managerialism in Higher Education: From Cultural Critique to Critical Theory'. Higher Education, 67(2), pp. 193-208.

Shumar, W. (2008) Higher Education and the Public Good. London: Routledge.

3   TEACHING EXCELLENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Chapter introduction

In establishing the context for this research, this chapter focuses on the policy texts around the Higher Education and Research Act of 2017 and the establishment of the Office for Students to investigate the emergence and maintenance of various interests, inequities, and other effects which maintained a doctrinaire construction of "teaching excellence' at the time of the study. How the government finally achieved withdrawal from its fiscal responsibilities for supporting teaching excellence as a common good, recasting it as a mechanism for marketisation via a discourse of "excellence", can be traced along a policy trajectory that was set into motion well before the promulgation of the Higher Education and Research Act of 2017.

Two notable higher education "teaching excellence" policies which were the significant instruments in controlling higher education during the political turbulence of the Coalition, Cameron, and Johnson Governments were the National Survey (NSS) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), as will be shown subsequently. The National Student Survey (NSS) in the UK is an annual survey aimed at final-year undergraduate students in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the NSS is to gather students' opinions on the quality of their courses and the overall satisfaction with their university or college experience. It covers various aspects of the student experience, including teaching quality, academic support, organisation, and management, learning resources, assessment and feedback, personal development, and overall satisfaction. The results of the NSS are publicly available and are used by prospective students to help make informed choices about where and what to study. Universities and colleges use the data to identify areas of strength and areas where improvements can be made to enhance the student experience.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is designed to assess the quality of teaching and learning environments within higher education institutions. It categorises institutions based on the excellence of their pedagogical practices, the learning experience provided to students, and the outcomes achieved by graduates. A Gold designation signifies exemplary teaching practices and outstanding learning outcomes, Silver denotes high-quality teaching and positive student outcomes, while Bronze indicates that the institution meets the national quality requirements but has areas that require enhancement. How these policies acted to template the Academy is described is central to this thesis and will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent sections.

In the context of English higher education, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) acts as a pivotal policy templating mechanism in perpetuating a metrics-driven market within the sector.

Using Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence and policy framing as a method of analysis, Tomlinson, Enders and Naidoo (2020) demonstrate the TEF's role in reinforcing institutional dynamics that favour market-oriented policies by examining how the TEF consolidates three main aspects of the marketisation of English higher education:

- the portrayal of students as consumers and universities as service providers

- the focus on graduate employability and economic outcomes, and

- the use of metrics to represent the performance value of institutions.

Moreover, they reveal how the policy disguises itself as enhancing student empowerment and quality assurance, thereby facilitating a misrecognition of its true market-driven intentions. Notably, they advocate for scholarly and political efforts to develop strategies of resistance against these trends.

3.2   Turbulent times in English higher education

Education policy in England has increasingly been about developing control mechanisms to regulate higher education. Students of the past two decades are "markets to be managed" and universities, traditionally viewed as independent and autonomous, are seen as docile instruments for the fiscal and ideological intentions of the government of the day. Reflecting turbulent economic and political times, fiscal responsibility for higher education can be traced through a dizzying number of mergers, name changes and recreations of parliamentary units as rapidly successive parliamentary Cabinets tossed the hot potato of university funding from one minister to another.

TABLE 1: MINISTERS OF EDUCATION 2010 -2022

DATE	CABINET	MINISTER	DEPARTMENT
May 2010	Minister for Universities and Science	David Willets	Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
July 2014	Minister for Universities and Science	Greg Clark	Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
May 2015	Minister of State for Universities and Science	Jo Johnson	Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
July to January 2019	Minister of State for Universities, Research and Innovation	Jo Johnson	Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
January to November 2018	Joint Minister for Higher Education	Sam Gyimah	Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
July to September 2019	Minister of State attending Cabinet	Jo Johnson	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for Education
September 2019 to February 2020	Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation	Chris Skidmore	Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
July to September 2019	Minister of State attending Cabinet	Chris Skidmore	Department for Education and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

DATE	CABINET	MINISTER	DEPARTMENT
February 2020	Minister of State for Universities	Michelle Donelan	Department for Education
September 2022	Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs	Gillian Keegan	Department for Education

Table 2 below details significant higher education policies and papers promulgated between 2010 and 2021 which shows the policy trajectory of higher education marketisation:

TABLE 2 HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY BETWEEN 2010 - 2022	
2010	The Browne Review - Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance
2011	Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System (BIS)
2017	The Higher Education and Research Act of 2017 and The Office for Students
2017	The Bell Review - Report of the Review Group on UK Higher Education Sector Agencies
2016	Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)
2019	The Augar Review of Post-18 Education and Funding
2019	The Pearce Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)
2021	Government response to Dame Shirley Pearce's Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence and The Bell Review - Report of the Review Group on UK Higher Education Sector Agencies Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)
2021	Interim Conclusion of the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding
2022	The Post-18 Education and Funding Review: Government conclusion 2022

3.3 The end of funding for teaching enhancement

British universities are seen as among the best in the world, making them a lucrative source of income for the British government. In 2021, international students generated £28.8 billion (Hillman, 2021, p. 1). The "excellent" reputation of UK universities was built during a time of academic freedom, independence, and autonomy in universities when "excellence" was well funded by non-hypothecation (Bolton, 2021, p. 2). However, according to Bolton (2021, p. 2), while research funding has been maintained since 2010, support through the funding for teaching was severely cut from 2012 to 2015, with the 2020 total for teaching allocated by the government 78% below the 2010-11 figure in real terms. And, of course, students are funding universities and repaying loans to do so. As Choat

(2017, pp. 142/143) states, "… fees are not just about who pays for universities: they embody and effect a specific understanding and model of higher education".

According to the 2018 Education Annual Report on Education Spending in England (Belfield, et al., 2018, p. 2), the second-largest proportion of public service spending was education representing 4.3% of the national income and the level of UK education spending "grew particularly fast from the late 1990s through to the late 2000s, before falling in real terms from 2010 onward". Significantly, the report notes that reforms to higher education funding had increased university resources but made little difference to the long-run cost to the public purse and was therefore a matter of fiscal concern to the government.

2018 was the first year the UK Government provided no funding at all for teaching enhancement initiatives (Kernohan et al., 2018, p. 3). Kernohan et al. describe how the State, dealing with the disastrous financial crash of 2008, stopped providing support for teaching excellence between 2010 and 2018 altogether. Up until 2018, the Government had invested a non-hypothecated billion pounds over thirty years in attempts to improve the quality of higher education teaching through bodies such as Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Kernohan et al. suggest the billions in investment over thirty years to improve the quality of UK higher education was being discounted altogether, stating "a government-sponsored industry – or if you prefer, a subject discipline complete with a sizeable literature [academic and professional development] – grow, and now virtually disappear'.

Furthermore, the emphasis on recognition, such as TEF awards as forms of institutional recognition, and positional good for its own sake was detracting from broader notions of higher education and the public good. In addition, narratives, revealed for example by an analysis of national and international rankings of UK higher education institutions by Little

and Locke, show reputational factors, rather than the quality or performance of the institutions, were reinforcing and refining existing "hierarchies of prestige". The apparently simple messages represented by the language of "league tables" were becoming "more and more influential among prospective students and increasingly being taken up by members of institutional governing bodies mainly drawn from outside higher education". Little and Locke state where "difference and diversity might have been delineated using horizontal classifications (between disciplines, between fields of research)" there had been "an increasing emphasis on vertical stratifications which seek an 'aura of exceptionality', but which cannot easily be measured" (Little and Locke, 2008, p. 4).

3.4   The student as a consumer: The Browne Review 2010

The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance of 2010, known as the Browne Report, signalled the beginning of the ideological construction of students as clients and funders of higher education. The report proposed removing the cap on university tuition fees and creating a market in higher education by allowing institutions to choose their fee rates with no up-front fees. Instead, higher-earning graduates were to pay back more than lower-earning graduates in their future careers. The report recommended allowing popular institutions to expand and envisaged student choice as creating a new higher education landscape.

In May 2010, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition governments published a coalition agreement, which aimed to attract a higher proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education. The aim was to get an estimated 60,000 more university students to attend universities each year. To fund these expansion plans any university or college wanting to charge maximum amounts for tuition had to have an

access agreement approved by the independent Director of Fair Access. In October 2010, an independent review of the higher education funding system – *Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education: An independent review of higher education funding and student finance in England* (The Browne Report) (BIS, 2010) - recommended increasing access to the UK's top institutions for students from low-income backgrounds and expected universities that charged higher tuition fees to increase financial support for students from low-income families, thereby shifting state financial responsibility for plans to massify higher education squarely on to the shoulders of fee-paying students while saving political face.

In 2011, a consultation on whether to implement the reforms of the review, the Browne Report, led to a government response paper - *Students at the heart of the system* - which outlined plans to increase financial support for students from low-income families.

3.5   The Rubicon crossed: The Higher Education Act of 2017

The Higher Education and Research Act represented the final takeover by the state of the governance and management of universities as corporate entities. The Act made provisions for higher education and research; and "about alternative payments to students in higher or further education" (Legislation.gov.uk, 2017, p. 1). The Act gave the government wide-ranging legal powers to take control of higher education in the UK. Its main thrust was to replace HEFCE with the Office for Students (OfS) and to incorporate the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) within the OfS to regulate fair access to HE education for lower income and under-represented students through access agreements, giving the OfS direct responsibility for the National Survey of Students, currently called the National Student Survey, (NSS) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Legislation.gov.uk, 2017, p. 1).

Despite some resistance from the House of Lords regarding the loss of academic freedom and autonomy of universities, the Act was passed on the 27th of April 2017. Arguably, this Act and the resultant establishment of the Office for Students (OfS) on its heels may represent the apogee of the marketisation of universities. Apart from making the OfS legally responsible for the regulatory framework of higher education by the appointment of a State Regulator, the Act abolished the post of Director of Fair Access to Higher Education and provided for the right to enter and search university premises to enforce the Act. Part One of the Act legitimises the government's power to regulate universities through the Office for Students (OfS). Moreover, the 2017 Higher Education Act made it easier for private providers to gain university status and to compete with public universities for students.

In summary, the 2017 Act stipulates the following:

A register of English higher education providers: Mandatory ongoing registration conditions for all providers, mandatory transparency conditions and fee limit conditions for certain providers, as well as mandatory access and participation plan conditions for certain institutions. The right of a register to enforce ongoing registration conditions, including imposing monetary penalties, suspending registration, and refusing to renew an access and participation plan.

Quality and standards: The power to assess and rate the quality of, and the standards applied to higher education, to create a Quality Assessment Committee, and to perform assessment functions by a designated body with the power to charge fees.

Access and participation: The power to approve an access and participation plan regarding fees and equality of opportunity, to advise on good practice and to take on the duty to protect academic freedom.

Student transfers: A duty to monitor the provision of arrangements for student

transfers

Powers to give financial support: Powers to give financial support for registered higher

education providers and "certain institutions".

Powers to grant degrees: The OfS is given the authority to grant and validate degrees as

well as authorising the use of "university" in the title of an institution.

Financial sustainability: The duty to monitor and report on financial sustainability and

to undertake efficiency studies for improving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

(Adapted from The Higher Education and Research Act of 2017, 2017, p. 1)

3.6   Open for business: The Bell Review 2017

The *Report of the Review Group on UK Higher Education Sector Agencies* (Bell Review,

2017), a joint review undertaken by Universities UK, GuildHE, the Equality Challenge Unit

(ECU), the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and the Leadership Foundation for Higher

Education (LFHE), followed in December 2017 (Universities UK, 2017, p. 12). The report

speaks to a higher education system that is ready for business.

The Review states that the stimulus was "unarguably a concern over subscription levels"

(Universities UK, 2017, p. 12). As central funding had been removed or reduced for a

number of HE agencies, a shift towards subscription-based business models was proposed.

According to the report, the key concerns of the stakeholders were "issues around

coordination, responsiveness, reducing duplication and enhancing value for money".

However, the review group widened this narrow remit unilaterally into "a strategic

exercise for understanding the future service needs of universities and other higher

education providers, and how the landscape needs to adapt to meet these (Universities UK, 2017, p. 12).

3.7   Creating a panopticon: Office for Students (OfS) 2018

Justine Greener Education and Research Act of 2017, the [then] Education Secretary, Justine Green, appointed a Board to represent the interests of employers and students in the new higher education landscape. As a result, the Office for Students (OfS) came into force in January 2018 "to hold universities to account and promote students' interests "(GOV.UK, 2018).

Its main function was to ensure teaching quality by implementing a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to make universities accountable for respecting students' rights and complying with consumer law. (See (GOV.UK,2018, https://bit.ly/3cMN4Yi, p. 1). The Office for Students (OfS) was given the authority to define which institutions of higher learning are designated as "universities" in addition to managing the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the National Survey of Students (NSS) under the Department for Education.

3.8   A story of both care and neglect: The Augar Review 2019

The *Augar Review of Post-18 Education and Training* was launched in May 2019. The Department for Education published an interim response in January 2021 and the final response was announced on 2 Mar 2022. In February 2018, a "wide-ranging review into post-18 education" consultation was announced. The need for the review was seen by the May government as a response to "increased debate around the cost and value of higher education following a period of reform which saw tuition fees rise to £9,250 per year,

maintenance grants abolished, and typical student debt rise to £47,000 from a three-year degree" (gov.uk, p. 1).

Prime Minister, Teresa May, had expressed disappointment at the lack of a competitive higher education market, with no variable tuition fees according to cost, quality, and length of courses, stating further that the "competitive market between universities which the system of variable tuition fees envisaged has simply not emerged" and that the level of fees charged had not related to the cost or quality of the course. Accordingly, "[w]e now have one of the most expensive systems of university tuition in the world" (GOV.UK,2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-the-right-education-for-everyone, p. 1).

It should be noted that in 2018, Scottish higher education had the same fees as for students from the devolved nations of the UK but was effectively free to students from Scotland and the EU. Germany, France, the Nordic countries, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic Greece, Italy and Spain offered higher education at little or no cost to British students. Understandably, overall international student numbers in the UK had increased by only 3% in the previous decade - while the US had increased by 40%, Australia by 45% and Canada by 57%. (Coughlan, 2018, p. 1)

The Independent Panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (DfE a, 2019, p. 1) paper was published on 30 May 2019. The review was largely about the effects of replacing the mechanism of a teaching grant with the mechanism of tuition fees. Known as the Augar Review, it contained funding proposals and fifty-three recommendations on the future structure of the post-school sector, acknowledging that post-18 education in England was a "story of both care and neglect". A core principle of the Augar Review was that the market alone could not deliver hoped-for policy outcomes and that "government policy must play a role and that the key problems to be solved are the decline in overall

participation in post-18 education since 2010/11, a lack of equity and flexibility in the post-18 system and the rise of "low-value" higher education – courses that do not deliver outcomes in line with the imagined aspirations of the students choosing to study them, or a return on investment for the taxpayer" (The Augar review: the essential overview for HE | Wonkhe: accessed 09/01/2022, p. 1).

The review recommended addressing the imbalance caused to the further education sector (FE) by the reforms in higher education and thus recommended the creation of a new joined-up post-18 education system. It also recommended that the HE sector absorb a further freeze on resources in universities to help fund investment in other parts of the post-18 education system.

In a response to the Augar Report, the Russell universities sounded out a general alarm. Some recommendations were welcomed, such as the reintroduction of maintenance grants for disadvantaged students and removing the real rate of interest charged on loans during study. However, they pointed out that students would ultimately suffer as the result of a fee cut and proposed changes and increase the burden on women and low and middle earners. Their parliamentary briefing paper states: "If fees are cut to £7,500 the Government will need to invest at least £1.8bn in English universities based on 2018/19 student numbers. This funding will need to grow as demand for university places increases. There will be a 23% increase in the total number of 18-year-olds by 2030, so per student funding needs to keep pace with demand to ensure future generations can achieve their aspirations for higher education study". Furthermore, a focus on "high value" subjects risked penalising disciplines such as languages, social sciences, humanities, and arts as well as the creative industries sectors. According to the Russell Group, there would be, in addition, a major impact on the teaching, equipment and services such as careers support. Nonetheless, an

assault on the funding of humanities disciplines followed. According to the Russell Group, an independent KPMG analysis found an average deficit of £650 per student per year for engineering courses in 2016/17. Accordingly, classroom-based subjects such as English, law and languages cost an average of £8,800 to teach - £1,300 more than the proposed £7,500 fee which meant universities would be forced to operate these courses with a substantial deficit under the Augar proposal The Russell Group urged the Government to avoid deprioritising other disciplines which are also important to the economy, culture and society " (Russell Group, 2019; McVitty, et al., 2019, p. 1).

Ruggeri (2019, p. 1) reports 56% of UK employers as saying their staff lacked essential teamwork skills and that a 2017 study found that the fastest-growing jobs in the US in the last thirty years have almost all required a high level of social skills. She states that a LinkedIn study of the most sought-after job skills by employers in 2019 are those that focus on humanities rather than science degrees. She reports the tech giant Microsoft as claiming: "As computers behave more like humans, the social sciences and humanities will become even more important. Languages, art, history, economics, ethics, philosophy, psychology, and human development courses can teach critical, philosophical, and ethics-based skills that will be instrumental in the development and management of AI solutions" (Microsoft, in Ruggeri, 2019, p. 1).

The *Higher Education Policy Statement & Reform Consultation* (2022, p. 1) launched by the government in February 2022 represented intentions emerging from Augar Review. It signified intentions for further government regulation of HE (student numbers cap, minimum eligibility requirements) alongside stricter student loan repayment requirements) (see the Advance HE summary: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-

hub/department-education-higher-education-policy-statement-and-reform-consultation-augar).

3.9   Chapter conclusion

The redefinition of students as consumers, propelled by the Browne Review's advocacy for deregulated tuition fees and a competitive education sector shifted responsibility for financing university education from public funding to student-financed higher education through the rise of tuition fees and reduced government teaching grants. How marketisation erodes higher education's broader educational and societal roles, evidenced by funding reductions and the competitive positioning of universities central to the consideration of teaching excellence in UK education.

3.10 Chapter references

Augar Review (2019). Post-18 review of Education and funding: Independent Panel Report. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-18-review-of-education-and-funding-independent-panel-report [Accessed 3 February 2023].

Belfield, C., Farquharson, C. & Sibieta, L. (2018). 2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England. Institute for Fiscal Studies, Nuffield Foundation. Available at: https://ifs.org.uk/publications/2018-annual-report-education-spending-england [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Bell Review (2017). Report of the Review Group on UK Higher Education Sector Agencies. Universities UK. Available at: https://www.sconul.ac.uk/publication/uuk-review-of-higher-sector-agencies [Accessed 3 February 2023].

BIS (2010). Securing a sustainable future for higher education (Browne Report). Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, pp. 40-46.

BIS (2016a). Success as a knowledge economy: Teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

BIS (2016b). Technical paper: Implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Choat, S. (2017). "Tuition fees and the neoliberal university: Responding to the 2017 Higher Education and Research Act." Renewal, 25(3/4). Available at: https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/renewal/25-3-4/tuition-fees-and-the-neoliberal-university [Accessed 2018].

Coughlan, S. (2018). "The UK's £9,000-a-year university dilemma." BBC News. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/education-45078679 [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011). Students at the Heart of the System. London: The Stationery Office.

Department for Education (2019). Independent Panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-panel-report-to-the-review-of-post-18-education-and-funding [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Department for Education (2021a). Government response to the Independent Review of TEF. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-review-of-tef [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Department for Education (2021b). Post-18 education and funding review: Interim conclusion. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-18-education-and-funding-review-interim-conclusion [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Department for Education (2022). Teaching excellence and student outcomes framework. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teaching-excellence-framework [Accessed 5 February 2023].

GOV.UK (2018a). Office for Students (OfS). Available at: https://bit.ly/3cMN4Yi [Accessed 5 February 2023].

GOV.UK (2018b). "PM: The right education for everyone." Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-the-right-education-for-everyone [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Hillman, N. (2021). "International students are worth £28.8 billion to the UK." HEPI. Available at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/09/09/international-students-are-worth-28-8-billion-to-the-uk/ [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Kernohan, D. et al. (2018). "After the goldrush: 30 Years of teaching quality enhancement." Wonkhe. Available at: https://wonkhe.com/blogs/after-the-goldrush-30-years-of-teaching-quality-enhancement/ [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Lewis, J. & Bolton, P. (2022). "The Post-18 Education and Funding Review: Government conclusion." UK Parliament. The House of Commons Library. Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9348/ [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Little, B. & Locke, T. (2008). The education debate. Policy Press.

McVitty, J., et al. (2019). "The economic impact of the Augar Review on higher education institutions." Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41075-019-00080-x [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Murray, J. (2023). "The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023: An Employment Focused Overview." Industrial Law Journal, 52(3), pp. 791–811. https://doi.org/10.1093/indlaw/dwad019.

Office for Students (2018a). The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). Office for Students.

Office for Students (2018b). The Office for Students Regulatory Framework. Office for Students.

Office for Students (2023a). "Future TEF Framework." Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching-excellence-and-student-outcomes-framework-tef/future-tef-framework/ [Accessed on: 2023-02-05].

Office for Students (2023b). "Future TEF Framework." Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching-excellence-and-student-outcomes-framework-tef/future-tef-framework/ [Accessed on: 2023-02-05].

Parliament of the United Kingdom (2019a). Augar Review of Post-18 Education and Training. Hubble.

Parliament of the United Kingdom (2019b). "Augar Review." Available at: https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-06-26/HCWS734/ [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Pearce, D. (2019). Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). Report presented to Parliament.

Ruggeri, A. (2019). "What employers want in new hires, and where to find it." LinkedIn. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-employers-want-new-hires-where-find-it-andrea-ruggeri/ [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Russell Group (2019). "Briefing paper: post-18 education and funding review." Available at: https://russellgroup.ac.uk/briefing-paper-post-18-education-and-funding-review/ [Accessed 5 February 2023].

Shattock, M. (2018). Higher education and policy in the United Kingdom. Oxford University Press.

Tomlinson, M., Enders, J. & Naidoo, R. (2020) 'The Teaching Excellence Framework: Symbolic Violence and the Measured Market in Higher Education', Critical Studies in Education, 61(5), pp. 627–642. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2018.1553793 (Accessed: 27 February 2023).

4 IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE

59

4.1   Chapter introduction

difficulty of defining the term "teaching excellence" and the consequences of policy based on marketised views of what "teaching excellence" entails are discussed in this chapter. Reviewed in this chapter are texts that focus on ideological constructions of "teaching excellence" and how such constructions may impact the daily realities of delivering teaching in a higher education institution.

4.2   Teaching excellence: policy descriptor or professional practice?

Wood and O'Leary (2019) explore the tension between two contrasting approaches to teaching excellence in higher education. They highlight a "top-down" managerialism, where metrics, accountability, and performance measures dominate, versus a more contextual and holistic practice development approach that focuses on the pedagogical relationships essential to learning. This distinction emphasises the need for a more nuanced and more meaningful understanding of teaching excellence, which moves beyond narrow, performance-driven interpretations that often reduce education to a box-ticking exercise.

In policy contexts, "teaching excellence" typically refers to specific criteria or metrics established by governing bodies, universities, or institutions to evaluate and reward teaching performance. These policies tend to emphasise measurable outcomes, such as student satisfaction, retention rates, or examination results. The concept is often institutionalised through frameworks such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which aims to standardise and assess teaching quality across institutions. In this sense, teaching excellence is primarily about meeting predefined external standards and demonstrating compliance with established benchmarks. Conversely, teaching excellence as professional practice is rooted in the day-to-day actions, reflections, and personal

commitments of individual educators. It includes the pedagogical methods and innovative

strategies that teachers use, but also the relationships they cultivate with students, and as a

commitment to improve their skills, knowledge, and teaching practice. This form of

excellence is seen as more organic and contextual, reflecting a teacher's professional

identity and adaptability. In distinguishing these two interpretations, it becomes evident

that while policies emphasise accountability and benchmarking, professional practice

focuses on a more holistic and contextual understanding of teaching, valuing personal

engagement and adaptability over standardised measures. This investigation examines how

differences in understanding these two forms of teaching excellence may create conditions

for misrecognition (James, 2015) which is based on the notion of méconnaissance

(Bourdieu, 1989), symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1989), and status subordination (Fraser,

2000).

James (2015) clarifies that misrecognition occurs when a phenomenon is understood

through a different realm of meaning that obscures the reality. This makes a distinction

between the concept of recognition in the work of Nancy Fraser and the idea of recognition

in a Bourdieusian sense. According to Bourdieu, doxa contributes to its own reproduction in

social institutions, structures, and links, as well as in the minds, bodies, expectations, and

behaviours of people. The "doxa", or what seems natural and can be explained by the doxa,

allows agents who have gained advantages of capital within a field—whether cultural,

economic, social, or symbolic—to "misrecognise" the "logics of practice" within that field,

'so that even when confronted with the field's social (re)productive purpose, social agents

are able to explain it away' (Thomson, 2008, p. 70).

Bourdieu argues that méconnaissance operates in the education system by the

naturalisation of an arbitrary curriculum, which transforms social classifications into

academic ones. Instead of being experienced for what they are (i.e., partial and technical hierarchies), such social classifications become "total" hierarchies, experienced as if they were grounded in nature (Grenfell and James, 1998, pp. 23–24, in James, 2015, p. 100). These total hierarchies may be seen as akin to the "participation architectures" that circumscribe representations of the self as described by Case (2013) and Watters (2014).

This study does not address the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) or scholarly practices that enhance teaching per se. Instead, texts are reviewed institutionally and ethnographically to ascertain how 'teaching excellence' has been constructed in higher education discourse. Richlin and Cox (2007) describe SoTL as resulting in "a formal, peer-reviewed communication in appropriate media or venues, which then becomes part of the knowledge base of teaching and learning in higher education" (in Martin, 2007, p.3).

4.3   What is "excellence"?

It appears that teaching excellence has fallen prey to the discourses which may have resulted in universities which, as Barnett states, "have been emptied of all serious purpose" by policy views in which "[e]xcellence is a vapid concept", one which "any institution can interpret it in any way whatsoever…" (Barnett, 2004. p. 64), leading Readings (1996, in Barnett, 2004) to question whether "the responsibility of the twenty-first-century university is to be 'excellent', with the idea of excellence standing for no purpose, no ideal and no concept in particular" (Barnett, 2004, p. 64).

Recurring critical themes within the literature were presciently summed up by Little and Locke (2011) at a CHER conference in 2008. They found the focus on teaching (and to a lesser extent learning) excellence was symptomatic of the desire to measure HE performance "by means of standardised criteria and quasi-scientific practices". Performance

measures to compile institutional rankings were constructing "broader notions of "excellence" and "world-class" qualities" in ways that were reinforced by marketisation and the repositioning of students as consumers. They also found "aggregations of available data" arising from institutional rankings were biased towards research reputation and academic prestige, reducing teaching "excellence" to "the numerical ratios between students and academic faculty" and learning to "the results of student satisfaction surveys".

Clegg (2019) critiques the "excellence" agenda in higher education, emphasising that it reduces teaching and learning to mere performance metrics like student satisfaction and employability. She argues that this marketised perspective prioritises institutional rankings over the intrinsic value of pedagogy, distorting the core purpose of higher education and exacerbating inequalities among institutions. Clegg calls for a reconceptualisation of excellence that recognises the diverse, context-specific realities of teaching and learning.

Biases "in favour of particular notions of "excellence" [were] even more apparent in the increasingly influential world rankings of institutions: with Western ideals, English language and 'big science' values predominating" (Little and Locke, 2011, p. 117 – 137).

According to Gourlay and Stevenson, (2017) researchers were concerned with the construction of "excellence" as a "technology of neoliberal ideology"; leading to social injustice, the reproduction of social privilege and prohibitive student debt; the erosion of core academic values and the loss of "nuance, relationality, academic freedom and the emergent nature of the pedagogic relationship"; and ignoring disciplinarity, socio-political context and student need in teaching excellence (Gourlay and Stevenson, 2017, pp. 391 to 395.) For example, Bahia et al. (2017, p.394), reflecting a European perspective of global policy borrowing, highlight the "uneven playing field" between rich and poor institutions, and refer to the "illusion" that excellence is equally available to all". They find the

"excellence" discourse" creates tensions and emotional pressure on academic staff, who value academic freedom but see "the multiple performance requirements of the contemporary period as "suffocating" and "generating" mistrust, simulation, threat to identity and loss of autonomy in an atmosphere where the "customer" must be satisfied" (in Gourlay and Stevenson, 2017, p. 392). Behari-LeeK and McKenna (2017) question the extent to which "excellence" characterises social injustice and whether the notion of "excellence" as a competitive, marketised discourse elides the complexities of socioeconomic and disciplinary context" leads to mediocrity (ibid., p.392) even though, as Behari-Leek and McKenna point out, "a focus on teaching excellence can be helpful in challenging notions of teaching as craft or common sense" (in Gourlay and Stevenson, 2017, p. 392).

Saunders and Blanco Ramirez (2017, p. 392) point out the construct of "excellence" is presented as an "a priori ideal" that enables the commodification of higher education and show how this plays out "via assessment regimes, course evaluations, student satisfaction and league table rankings" education). They see "excellence" as a "technology of neoliberal ideology" "in which a focus on satisfaction leads us away from the benefits of exploration, challenge and even failure" (ibid, p.394).

4.4 "Teaching excellence": a nebulous, conflicting, and contested term

The Miriam Webster dictionary defines "excellence" as "very good of its kind: eminently good." "Enhancement" is defined as an "increase or improvement in value, quality, desirability, or attractiveness." However, when it comes to learning and teaching. Dixon and Pilkington (2017) contend:

Since any definition of excellence in teaching and learning is led by government policy, which is subject to constant modification, and the many players who define and interpret it are subject to refining, organisational change and restructure, the term becomes easier to manipulate. This also affects its measurement: lacking definition, excellence is not easily quantified rather the parameters for measuring it shift over time and with agency. This fits with Foucault's idea of the dynamic and shifting nature of discourse. If a term is not defined, it is difficult to argue whether or not it has been achieved. This view is supported by Harper (2013, 9) who argues that what excellent or outstanding teaching consists of is a matter of debate, depending upon a range of variables such as who defines it, their purpose and the criteria used to reach a judgement.

(Dixon and Pilkington, 2017, p. 439.)

Arguably the lack of agreement about what the term 'teaching excellence' means goes beyond agreement on what teaching excellence is. Much of how "teaching excellence" is defined depends on differences in axiological, ontological, and/or epistemological standpoints of policymakers, researchers, and academics. As Grifoll (in Brusoni, 2014, p.21) states, "many possible definitions can be found, the selection of a universal meaning is complicated, because it is simultaneously linked to the social and cultural environments (values and principles, for example) and to the political and economic contexts... Excellence in higher education, therefore, depends on the person defining the term." A variety of views of what teaching excellence in higher education might be are expressed by researchers such as Skelton (2004; 2005; 2007); Land and Gordon (2015); and others. Brusoni et al. (2014) acknowledge the sheer difficulty of judging excellent teaching in different social, economic, and political contexts and state that judging qualitative and quantitative differences between poor university teaching, satisfactory university teaching, and excellent university

teaching depends largely on who is defining that type of "excellence." Tsui (2015, p.5) illustrates the complexity of defining 'teaching excellence' by asking for a consideration of who and what is being recognised; what facets of teaching are recognised; what the level of recognition is; what criteria are used to determine the level of excellence; and whether it is possible to have universal criteria for 'teaching excellence'. Skelton (2007) identifies four broad categorizations of teaching, each of which may have different notions of excellence: traditional, psychological, performative, and critical forms of teaching.

Studies on "teaching excellence" thus make a distinction between teaching excellence as system-wide conceptions of excellence relating to the sector, institutions, and disciplines and teacher excellence as conceptions of excellence related to individual philosophies and practices that are rewarded and recognised as excellent teaching. Billot (2010), noting the poor alignment between institutional expectations and the support offered to academics, claims academic work is being constructed "around an idealized image of corporate efficiency and a strong managerial culture" (Billot, 2010, p. 709). Studies such as those by Gunn and Fisk (2013), Brusoni, et al. (2014), and Strang et al. (2016) find that the lack of recognised principles and conceptualisations of 'teaching excellence' lead to institutionally generated definitions and operational responses, rather than a common standard for teaching excellence.

Trowler, Ashwin, and Saunders (2013, p.6/7) see teaching excellence as the "enhancement of teaching and learning," but state the word "enhancement" "is much used but rarely defined in the sector" and that the term conveys multiple meanings. Conceptualising "enhancement" as a continuum, they state that enhancement policy is shaped by educational ideology, realised in policy aims, and then translated into policy instruments and mechanisms. Thus, as Land and Gordon (2015, p.3) state, "'teaching

66

excellence' may be less about excellent teaching, and more about the politics of ranking and funding universities", the term remaining, therefore, "somewhat protean". Gunn et al. (2014) find that academics themselves tend to have no 'straightforward, universal, or fixed definitions of excellence and that personal dispositions, motivations, and behaviours together formed personal frameworks of excellence for individual excellence' (p. 12). Furthermore, they find that academics tend to define teaching excellence in terms of how well students engaged in their learning and how many resources were available in terms of time to spend with their students and on improving their skills.

Currently the concept of 'teaching excellence' remains a complex and contested topic in higher education, influenced by numerous factors such as the individual's standpoint, institutional context, and political climate. Moreover, in an analysis of the discourse pertaining to teaching excellence (TE), Wilcox (2021) identifies four distinct narratives: those centred on enhancing quality, on ensuring its maintenance, on broadening access, and on bolstering graduates' employability. She suggests that the pervasive emphasis on performance metrics associated with these narratives inadvertently steers institutions towards prioritising concerns of accountability and reputation, at the expense of fostering a nuanced understanding of teaching excellence within higher education that integrates broader, more holistic methodologies.

While researchers have proposed various frameworks and categorisations for understanding teaching excellence, there is still no universally accepted definition, making empirical research on this topic challenging. However, exploring the diverse definitions and conceptualisations of teaching excellence, Sanders, et al. (2020) consider various influences shaping these definitions. They examine how these conceptualisations highlight tensions between performative and transformative perspectives of teaching excellence, and

emphasise the relational, emotional, and moral dimensions of teaching. Instead of promoting a singular definition, they suggest that "teaching excellences" should reflect sector diversity and varied disciplinary contexts. Additionally, they call for a deeper exploration of teaching excellence's intersections with institutional change drivers like student engagement, diversity, participation, and retention.

Thus, as Brusoni et al. (2014) conclude, 'teaching excellence' is a nebulous, conflicting and contested concept which is located in shifting social, economic and political contexts. Indeed, Moore et al. (2017) question whether the pervasive rhetoric of "excellence" in higher education means anything at all, stating that "this fungible and unreliable term" has no intrinsic meaning except as a linguistic interchange mechanism to compare disciplinary practices and one which distorts research practice "while failing to provide a reliable means of distinguishing among competing projects, institutions, or people" (p.3).

Brusoni et al. (2014), representing the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), argue that the term "excellence" has been widely used to define institutional service quality rather than teaching quality. They believe it is possible to ascertain levels of excellence in logical and operational standards of performance, but that it is more difficult to define excellent academic quality and standards concerning teaching, students" capabilities, resource provision and student achievement. Like many others, they conclude that definitions of "excellence" depend on the different purposes and areas of quality assurance (ibid., p. 9).

Wood and O'Leary (2019) discuss the contentious state of "teaching excellence" in English higher education. They argue that the divergence between managerial change and academic inquiry into teaching excellence is at odds and that this divergence, exemplified by frameworks like the TEF, has led to a vague understanding of excellence in teaching. They

68

advocate for reevaluating and reintegrating holistic pedagogical approaches into the discourse surrounding teaching excellence, addressing conceptual fractures and promoting critical engagement within institutions and the HE sector.

Furthermore, Tomlinson, Enders, and Naidoo (2020) see the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) as a mechanism that reinforces neoliberal ideologies within the higher education sector. They argue that the TEF imposes quantifiable metrics for assessing teaching quality resulting in the commodification of education and a prioritisation of market values over educational integrity. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, the authors highlight how the TEF perpetuates social inequalities by legitimising certain forms of knowledge while marginalising others. The article critiques the TEF for simplifying the complexity of teaching and learning, exacerbating institutional inequalities, and aligning universities with market-driven priorities rather than fostering genuine pedagogical innovation and diversity. Ultimately, the TEF is presented as a policy tool that strengthens existing power structures within higher education, to the detriment of both educators and students.

4.5   What is an excellent teacher?

Gunn and Fisk (2013, p. 28) characterise excellent teaching being delivered by teachers who excel in at communication and subject knowledge, have a passion for teaching, and are sensitive to the needs of students, and who can inculcate the intellectual qualities of critical thinking, problem-solving, curiosity, and scepticism in students but suggest that while academics have as their primary desires the opportunity for intellectually stimulating work, a genuine passion for their field of study, and the opportunity to

contribute to developing new knowledge, academic work is being reshaped by an ideological construction of teaching excellence.

In this study, an "excellent "teacher is defined in agreement with Gunn and Fisk (2013):

> *An excellent teacher is not merely one who excels at communication, has a firm grasp of the subject, a passion for teaching, cares for students or is sensitive to their needs; nor is excellence guaranteed by the teaching methodologies he or she uses. At the heart of teaching excellence lies the teacher's ability to inculcate and strengthen intellectual qualities such as independent learning, thinking, and inquiry; critical thinking, creative problem solving, intellectual curiosity, intellectual scepticism, making informed judgments.*
>
> *Gunn and Fisk (2013, p. 28)*

For this study, the following definitions are intended:

Excellent learning is defined, by Gun and Fisk, as "qualitatively higher levels of understanding and meaning making from forms of abstract, contextual, and situational knowledge intrinsically linked to both the disciplines studied and the environments in which they are studied" (Gunn and Fisk, 2013, p. 19).

Teaching enhancement is defined as any initiative that helps lecturers to inspire students to actualise their potential and to find meaning, purpose and accomplishment in their lives through learning.

Academic teaching is defined as any combination of sound, capable, effective teaching, research, or scholarship where the contractual role of an academic is teaching in a classroom, lecture hall or seminar room. We turn now to a review of research on views of 'teaching excellence' in policy discourse.

4.6   "Teaching excellence" standards, rankings and economic objectives

According to Little et al. (2007), "excellence" in teaching at the system-wide level is often associated with international standards, rankings, and meeting national economic objectives, rather than the quality of teaching itself. Moore et al. (2017) point out that "excellence" is a global standard in the university world, with institutions often proclaiming an "international reputation for excellence" in their mission statements or advertisements (p. 1). According to Nowotny, (2014, in Moore, et al., 2017), even higher education "[f]unding agencies use excellence to recognise excellence". Moore et al. (2017, p. 2) aptly state the term "excellent":

> *… can describe alike the activities of the world's top research universities and its smallest liberal arts colleges. It applies to their teaching, research, and management. It encompasses simultaneously the work of their Synthetic Biologists and Urban Sociologists, their Anglo-Saxonists and Concert Pianists. It defines their Centres for Excellence in Teaching and their Centres of Excellence for Mechanical Systems Innovation (The University of Tokyo Global Center of Excellence, 2016; "USC Center for Excellence in Teaching", 2016), their multiculturalism (Office of Excellence and Multicultural Student Success 2016) and their athletic training programmes (Excellence Academy, 2016). "Excellence" is used to define success in academic endeavour from Montreal to Mumbai.*

> *(Moore et al., 2017, p.2.)*

Watermeyer and Olssen (2016) argue that the 'competition fetish 'to be "excellent" in the neoliberal UK university system has resulted in the "instrumentalisation of academic research and the diminution of academic freedom, autonomy, and criticality" (p. 1). Naidoo (2016) claims, while the discourse of "excellence" gives the appearance of creating a global

meritocracy, it results in "intensifying competition for status, in which social justice and broader purposes of education suffer" (p. 2). Stevenson, et al. (2014) find that performative accounts of "teaching excellence" in the documents of many UK universities are seldom challenged and that the term is frequently invoked without proper elaboration on its meaning (p. 17). In fact, Stevenson, et al. (2014) argue that the unqualified use of the term "excellence" is a "pernicious and dangerous rhetoric that undermines the very foundations of good research and scholarship" (p. 1). Furthermore, Brusoni et al. (2014) state that excellence is easily achieved and often used by politicians without proper consideration. Skelton (2007) sees "teaching excellence" as appealing to policymakers because it serves a range of neoliberal interests, such as expansion, efficiency, choice, and maintaining standards, while also shifting responsibility from the state to "enthusiastic and self-regulating individuals, teams, and institutions."

4.7   Ideological constructions of "teaching excellence

The literature on the impact of these ideological constructions of "teaching excellence" reveals a troubling hollowing out of academic identity, a divided Academy, academic workload fabrications, and the brutal commodification of academics based on the creation of a 'precariat' class (Standing, 2014) characterised by precarious employment and an absence of stable occupational identity. According to Standing, members of the precariat class often possess educational qualifications far exceeding their occupation requirements, which results in status-related dissatisfaction. Lacking non-wage benefits and comprehensive rights, they experience income volatility, economic uncertainty, and unmanageable debt. Consequently, they are plagued by relative deprivation, anxiety, anomie, alienation, and indignation. Moreover, Worthington and Hodgson (2005), invoking

Morley's work, claim that higher education quality assurance has become a "micro-political system of accountability, surveillance and regulation of the academic labour process, social relations and subjectivities... in effect a totalising form of governmentality; a regime of power/knowledge involving normative working practices, various evaluations, classifications and judgements about academic work that are designed specifically to re-engineer academics' professional identity and subjectivity" (Worthington and Hodgson, 2005, p. 98). [image] (2023) further supports this by emphasising the increasing stress on mid-career academics in the UK, particularly as they struggle to balance teaching and research responsibilities, which heightens the risk of burnout and further alienation within the workforce (Kim, 2023, p. 234).

4.7.1   The hollowing out of academic identity

Whitchurch (2013) and others have highlighted the valuable role of "third space" professionals who operate collaboratively, innovatively, and supportively at the "third space" interface of academic and professional spheres. Nonetheless, policy shifts and structural changes in higher education seem to result in a transformation of academic identity, with individual self-esteem and the sense of identity based on scholarly discipline and academic freedom suffering as academics try to rebalance their priorities and forge novel collegial endeavours. Flecknoe et al. (2017, p. 176), for example, explore the tensions faced by precarious, early-career academics in Australia who are under pressure to efficiently produce "monetisable deliverables." They also find that academics who have reached the top of their academic level are unable to be promoted due to their inability to fulfil the research-related criteria for TR (teaching and research) academics (p. 177). Recent research by O'Leary, Cui and French (2021) examines how UK academics increasingly report

feeling disconnected from their core academic identity because of performance-driven pressures imposed by the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which prioritises quantifiable outcomes over academic freedom (O'Leary, Cui and French, 2021, p. 278). Similarly, recent research by Kim (2023) also reveals that many mid-career academics in the UK report an identity crisis, particularly in light of their inability to achieve promotions without excelling in both teaching and research, further exacerbating professional dissatisfaction. Kim reveals that the pressures of meeting both sets of criteria for promotions often exacerbate dissatisfaction, particularly for those mid-career individuals and adds that this has led to an increased sense of role ambiguity and anxiety among mid-career academics, further exacerbating the identity crisis within academia (Kim, 2023, p. 234).

Similarly, O'Leary, Cui, and French (2019) further explore the implications of the TEF, highlighting how the emphasis on student satisfaction scores and employment outcomes distorts the evaluation of teaching quality. Their study reveals that these performance metrics have exacerbated workload pressures, reduced professional autonomy, and contributed to widespread dissatisfaction among higher education staff.

Lamont and Nordbergand Nordberg (2014, p. 12) state that these changes "have left some academics with a sense that their scope for agency – and perhaps with it their sense of academic freedom itself – has been constrained."

Macfarlane (2011) describes the "tripartite role" of academics in teaching, research, and service activities as a "cornerstone of conventional assumptions about higher education" (p. 59) and that employment patterns and reward and recognition systems within the higher education sector continue to reflect these assumptions. However, argues that the "unbundling" of academic purpose, in which certain activities are prioritized

over others, undermines the holistic nature of professional identity and leads to a strategic disengagement from broader elements of occupational responsibility (Macfarlane, 2011, p. 60). This shift has resulted in the displacement of all-round academics by "para-academics" such as student skills advisers, educational developers, learning technologists, and research management staff (p. 59).

Furthermore, Kim and Locke (2010, pp. 588-589) states that skills, which were formerly understood as complex social processes, have been deconstructed into "finite, isolable "competences"" that are seen as the property of the individual, leading to a disconnection from the larger context in which they are used and Luka et al. (2015) describe the "identity struggles" (Skelton, 2012) that academics face as they try to balance the competing demands of research, life, and teaching innovation to become teaching specialists. More tellingly, Perkins (2018), argues that the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is likely to increase levels of identity conflict. He asserts that the greater demands and pressures of this framework result in identity conflict because individuals are 'subjugated by a desired version of themselves that is being moved further from reach," making it difficult for them to realise a "desirable state of self as an excellent performer" (ibid., p. 297).

A report by O'Leary, Cui and French (2019) for UCU reveals widespread dissatisfaction among the over 6,000 respondents who perceived the TEF as divisive and market-oriented, neglecting the collective nature of teaching, with many of them feeling excluded from decision-making processes. Furthermore, the TEF had led to an increased workload and that the respondents had concerns about the TEF's legitimacy as a measure of teaching excellence. The report recommends including a national debate on teaching excellence, a fundamental review of the TEF, increased staff involvement, recognition of TEF-related

workload, dedicated teaching development time, and the integration of the TEF within the wider HE policy landscape.

Drawing on this report, O'Leary, Cui, and French and (2021) voice major methodological and conceptual concerns regarding the TEF's suitability and its disregard for the views of higher education staff. According to the authors, the TEF lacked legitimacy in assessing teaching excellence across all staff levels and relied on economic metrics rather than on teaching quality. Furthermore, the TEF overlooked the experiences of teaching staff by undermining their crucial role in higher education quality and development.

4.7.2   The divided Academy

Collegiality, long considered a distinguishing feature of academic life, is in retreat according to Macfarlane (2016 a). Kligyte and Barrie (2014) suggest that collegiality consists of at least three elements: consensual decision-making within governance structures at both university and faculty level; a shared commitment to advancing knowledge in the discipline through collaboration with other researchers; and a "behavioural norm" to work respectfully alongside others and contribute to service or "academic citizenship" activities roles (Macfarlane, 2007). Beyond this threefold definition, collegiality is seen as a distinguishing feature of a "university" as opposed to an organisation working in the service of tertiary education (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2010). It is, hence, regarded as a distinctive element of what makes higher education 'special' (Macfarlane, 2016 a, p. 32).

However, Macfarlane argues that the model of the corporate university has eroded the collegiality which distinguishes academic work from corporate life, thereby opening the divide between managers and academics. In Macfarlane's words, "forget cultural collegiality across institutions. We live in a divided academy" (2016 a, "Collegiality" has become an

empty word | THE Comment (timeshighereducation.com)). Collegiality and collaboration are now only encouraged when they "bring benefits to the bottom line: more publications, more research grants and so on," resulting in a "collegiality-as-performativity – or competition in disguise" (Macfarlane, 2016 b).

The essence of collegiality has been hollowed out as the private behaviour of academics "belies our public platitudes" and "the real order of the day" is to get on with the next paper or grant application (Macfarlane, 2016 b). Furthermore, Macfarlane argues collegiality is in retreat "as the language of audits, targets and performance reviews becomes ever more pervasive," leading him to ask, "who is prepared to review papers anymore, second-mark an assignment, write a book review and mentor junior colleagues?" Collegiality in this view is thus in retreat as academics struggle to meet administrative and performance targets.

The divide between managerial and academic constructions of collegiality is illustrated by Marini and Reale (2015), who examine if and how the co-presence of managerialism and "collegialism" [sic] can come about in a managerially led university and which factors permit the survival and improvement of collegialism. However, they assume managers should be given trust and confidence by academics to serve the entrepreneurial university: "Given that managerialism is a rising trend throughout Europe, the next step would be to understand what permits mistrust to brew, or trust to blossom, at the basis of the academic sphere. Such information would be a further contribution towards more competitive and vital, in one word entrepreneurial, universities" (p. 14). They conclude that "Managerialism, to rule the university well, must also accommodate and guarantee room for some forms of collegialism, particularly to govern academic issues such as research and teaching". However, as this study shows in later chapters, many of the activities that are required for

good academic delivery are unseen, unrecorded, unrecognised and unrewarded in marketised universities. Marini and Reale discover, it seems anew, that collegiality is an effective way of getting things done within a managerial framework by assuming the purpose is to serve an *entrepreneurial* university which means the cost-effectiveness of educational delivery can be maintained through unpaid collegial work.

4.7.3   Academic workload fabrications

The professional divide between "academic managers" and "managed academics" has led to increased workload and responsibilities for academic staff. Billot (2010) points out the tensions in the professional divide between "academic managers" and "managed academics," with the latter feeling constrained and asked to do more. The workload of academic staff has become unmanageable and unsustainable for most academics, with over two unpaid days worked per week on average, resulting in work-related stress and the neglect of professional and career development.

Malcolm and Zukas (2009) argue that official policy discourse, which portrays teaching, research, and administration as discrete elements of academic life, contradicts the "messy experience" of academic work. They suggest that purposive disciplinary practice is fundamental to academic experience and identity, but it is fragmented by managerialist policies such as workload allocation forms. Managerialist policies have fragmented purposive disciplinary practice. Arguably, such administrative templating has led to an increased reliance on part-time lecturers and doctoral students for teaching, and a sizeable proportion of staff in universities now hold teaching-only appointments without opportunities for research or professional development.

Tight (2010) found that UK academics have had an average 55-hour working week for five decades, despite being paid for a 35-hour "notional" working week. Gornall and Salisbury (2012) discovered that academics participating in their study worked a minimum of 55 hours per week with no upper limit and spent long hours working at home. The University College Union's UCU Workload Survey (2016) found that academic staff in higher education and further education sectors were working an average of more than two unpaid days per week and that workloads were unmanageable and unsustainable for most staff. Staff were taking on more responsibility and administration, and professional and career development was suffering because of workload pressures. The survey found that academic staff were working an average of 50.9 hours full-time equivalent (FTE), with almost 40% working more than 50 hours per week and 28.5% working more than 55 hours per week. Over 25% of respondents said their workloads were unmanageable all or most of the time, and two-thirds stated that their workload was unsustainable. In addition, 55% of respondents reported experiencing work-related stress, with 17% stating that they had experienced stress "most or all of the time."

4.7.4   Invisible academics – brutal commodification

Invidious forms of injustice may be hidden behind "comfortable" views of the neoliberal university that academics have short days, plenty of time off and long holidays. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2014), 284,060 academic staff were employed on a permanent or open-ended basis, and 135,650 academic staff were employed on fixed-term contracts in 2016/17 in the UK. However, HESA also reports that staff on zero-hour contracts do not fall into any of its categories. This makes these staff "invisible" to higher education policy. The University and College Union estimated in 2013

that 47% of "teaching-only" contracts were zero-hours contracts, with no certainty on hours of employment or income. Reay (2014) notes that academics on zero-hours contracts are unable to make financial or employment plans and can be driven to resort to "bin diving" for food. This trend towards increasing numbers of badly paid, unheard, insecure, and overworked staff also generates a loss of professional dignity.

The situation is doubly bad for sessional lecturers. Many sessional staff (part-time or associate lecturers who are difficult to identify as a group), do not appear in these statistics. According to Bradley (2008), sessional staff at Sheffield Hallam University, a Post 1992 institution with approximately 28,000 students and 1,100 full- and part-time faculty, are supported by "approximately 1000 sessional contracts delivered by 232 sessional teachers" from a variety of backgrounds, including full-time professionals from outside the institution, portfolio workers who work at multiple higher education institutions, freelance/consultants, part-time professionals, retired faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and technicians (pp. 47/48). These sessional staff are often paid less than their colleagues and are excluded from the academic community. They do not have incremental scales or grades, and the longer they work in sessional roles, the less likely they are to gain a more secure and recognised teaching position due to an "accumulated deficit." Sheffield Hallam is not alone among the managerialised universities in England in this regard. Sessional staff do not hold academic posts and instead deliver ad hoc teaching sessions without the rights even of part-time or casual academics. Some sessional staff are unable to receive the necessary professional formation as academic teachers. They experience insecurity, uncertainty, and precarity due to short-term contracts with no guarantee of renewal. This can lead to practical difficulties, low self-esteem, and low commitment to their job. According to Bryson (2013), being disempowered and marginalised as a sessional staff member has insidious and invidious

consequences, including a lack of support and development, and being treated as a second-class citizen.

Bryson's arresting words (2013) speak volumes about the plight of sessional staff:

...those outside universities tend to view the role of university teaching as worthy of high esteem. This contrasts with part-time teachers" own view of their position at the bottom of the academic hierarchy due to being part-time, temporary and doing a teaching-only role. We can note that many of the part-time teachers act to further marginalise themselves...Their interactions and socialisation with other staff are confined to their own group. They have no "voice" and are unwilling or unable to act to influence the systems and full-time colleagues to change the situation.... And from the same study, in the words of a sessional staff member: I've said to myself, how long can I put up with all of this? I'm worth more than this.

(Bryson, 2013, p. 5.)

4.8   Challenging venerable assumptions

The task of the critical researcher is to bring to light how and why these things are allowed to happen, particularly in a profession premised on care, compassion and a duty to challenge the "venerable assumptions" (see De la Luz Reyes, 1992). However, as Whitty (2001, p. 289, in Gillborn, 2003, p. 538) holds, challenging the language of 'teaching excellence' in the field of higher education may serve to challenge existing relations of domination. As Whitty points out "[e]ducation reforms [in general] couched in the rhetoric of choice, difference and diversity often turn out to be sophisticated ways of reproducing existing hierarchies of class and race" (2001, p. 289, in Colley, 2003, p. 538). Perhaps, it is as Gillborn states, "education is too "nice" a field (i.e., too majoritarian, too conservative, and too self-satisfied) to ever take forward such a radical challenge" (Gillborn, 2005, p. 497,

citing Gloria Ladson- Billings, 1998). While there are no 'straight lines between dominant

neoliberal ideologies and all of the trials and tribulations of being an academic" as Enright,

Alfrey and Rynne (2016) suggest, challenging the concept of the neoliberal university may

be "productive and hopeful" as there "have been and can be other kinds of university". It

may be that imagining "universities, fields and academic work in different ways" by "ethical,

intellectual, collegial and hopeful principles and strategies" can take us "beyond the popular

and often unproductive critiques of the neoliberal university" (See Rynne et al., 2016, p. 1).

French and Carruthers Thomas (2020) challenge the TEF's reductionist approach to

teaching excellence, which focuses on measurable student outcomes and post-degree

salaries, critiquing its failure to foster a deeper understanding of teaching and learning's

intrinsic values. Davis (2021) in his review of French and Carruthers Thomas's (2020) book,

Challenging the Teaching Excellence Framework: Diversity Deficits in Higher Education states

that French and Carruthers Thomas acknowledge the disillusionment experienced by many

educators within a system heavily influenced by neoliberal ideologies, where teaching and

learning are simplified to measurable results. Yet, according to Davis, French and Carruthers

Thomas present a vision of "hopeful resistance" and present strategies for academics to

help underrepresented groups "navigate and resist their marginalisation in higher

education" (Davis, 2021, p. 799).

French and Carruthers Thomas (2020) and their contributing authors' advocacy for

creative resistance as a temporary but powerful means for academics to reclaim agency and

foster collaborative knowledge production and call for educators to engage in acts of

creative resistance against the commodification of education, suggesting that there is room

for hope and agency even within a neoliberal educational framework.

4.9 Chapter conclusion

This review of the literature dealing with aspects of the realities of academic practice has highlighted two broad areas of interest for the research question in this study: *How is 'teaching excellence' constructed within higher education policy discourse and how does this shape the working lives of academics?* These appear to be the "hollowing out" of academic identity through the loss of academic freedom and collegiality and the injustice of untenable workloads characterised by administrative burdens, loss of personal dignity, and financial security. The tensions between institutional demands and personal pedagogical values, driven by frameworks like the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and National Student Survey (NSS), appear to be central to understanding the challenges faced by academics in balancing professional identity and workload. The pressure to meet quantifiable metrics often leads to a sense of misrecognition, where the intellectual and emotional labour involved in teaching is devalued. The emphasis on compliance with externally imposed benchmarks alienates academics from their core professional identities, prompting a critical need for reform. However, there are suggestions that the performative grip of neoliberal ruling relations may be resisted in creative and hopeful ways. Several practical and professional implications for those working in higher education (HE) can be deduced from this review. In essence, the critical tension between managerial, metrics-driven interpretations of "teaching excellence," which emphasise quantifiable outcomes such as student satisfaction and employability, and more nuanced, relationally grounded approaches that highlight the complexities inherent in pedagogical practices has been revealed. A reconceptualisation of teaching excellence is therefore necessary to ensure that metrics do not diminish the broader purpose of higher education, which encompasses

intellectual growth, critical thinking, and the cultivation of socially just pedagogies (Barnett, 2011; Skelton, 2005). A more sophisticated understanding of "teaching excellence" would recognise the contextual variability of teaching, the importance of educator-student relationships, and the holistic nature of pedagogical excellence, thereby aligning institutional policies more closely with the realities of academic practice.

Thus, higher education professionals must advocate for policies that recognise and reward the complex, relational, and reflective dimensions of teaching, fostering environments that support both academic autonomy and pedagogical integrity, as Clegg, (2012) and Ball, 2016) say. The marketisation of teaching excellence is shown to disproportionately benefit well-resourced institutions, exacerbating social inequalities within higher education. Institutions with greater financial and social capital often leave less advantaged institutions and their students at a significant disadvantage. The importance of developing equitable frameworks that account for the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which teaching occurs is called for. This means actively engaging in policy reform efforts that challenge the neoliberal assumptions underlying these metrics and ensuring that teaching excellence is defined in ways that promote inclusivity, diversity, and social justice (Francis & Mills, 2012; Leathwood & Hayton, 2002). Thus, higher education professionals have an opportunity to reflect on their own roles within a marketised system and consider ways to resist, reform, and advocate for policies that support a more inclusive, authentic, and sustainable approach to teaching excellence. An exploration of these tensions and complexities has shaped this study's investigation into the institutional construction of "teaching excellence" and its profound impact on the working lives and professional identities of academics.

4.10 Chapter references

Barnett, R. (2011). The Marketised University: Defending the Indefensible. In M. Molesworth, E. Nixon, & R. Scullion (Eds.), The Marketisation of Higher Education and the Student as Consumer (pp. 39-50). London: Routledge.

Behari-Leek, K., & McKenna, S. (2017). Generic Gold-standard or Contextualized Public Good? Teaching Excellence Awards in Postcolonial South Africa. Teaching in Higher Education. doi:10.1080/13562517.2017.1301910.

Billot, J. (2010). The Imagined and the Real: Identifying the Tensions for Academic Identity. Higher Education Research and Development, 29(6), 709-721.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social Space and Symbolic Power. Sociological Theory, 7(1), 14.

Bradley, S. (2008). Sessional Teaching Staff and Learning, Teaching, and Assessment: Engaging the Marginalised. Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching, 1, 47-53.

Brusoni, M., Damian, R., Sauri, J., Jackson, S., Kömürcügil, H., Malmedy, M., et al. (2014). The Concept of Excellence in Higher Education. ENQA. Available at: https://enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/occasional-papers/ENQA%20Excellence%20WG%20Report_The%20Concept%20of%20Excellence%20in%20Higher%20Education.pdf [Accessed 6 Jan. 2019].

Clegg, S. (2019). Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education. In D. Bottrell and C. Manathunga (eds), Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education Volume I: Seeing Through the Cracks. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 37-50.

Colley, H. (2003). Engagement Mentoring for "Disaffected" Youth: A New Model of Mentoring for Social Inclusion. British Educational Research Journal, 29(4), 521-542.

Davis, C. (2021). Review of Challenging the Teaching Excellence Framework: Diversity Deficits in Higher Education Evaluations. Educational Review, 73(6), 799–805.

De La Luz Reyes, M. (1992). Challenging Venerable Assumptions: Literacy Instruction for Linguistically Different Students. Harvard Educational Review, 62(4), 427-447. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.62.4.d522623315485031

Dixon, F., & Pilkington, R. (2017). Poor Relations? Tensions and Torment; A View of Excellence in Teaching and Learning from the Cinderella Sector. Teaching in Higher Education, 22(4), 437-450.

Enright, E., Alfrey, L., & Rynne, S. (2016). Being and Becoming an Academic in the Neoliberal University: A Necessary Conversation. Sport, Education and Society, 22(1), 1-4.

Flecknoe, S., Choate, J., Davis, E., Hodgson, Y., Johaneson, P., Macaulay, J., et al. (2017). Redefining Academic Identity in an Evolving Higher Education Landscape. Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, 14(2). Available at: Http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol14/iss2/2 [Accessed 17 Jan. 2018].

Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. New Left Review, 3, 107.

French, A., & Carruthers Thomas, K. (Eds.) (2020). Challenging the Teaching Excellence Framework: Diversity Deficits in Higher Education Evaluations. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Gillborn, D. (2005). Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory, and Education Reform. Journal of Education Policy, 20(4), 485–505. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930500132346.

Gornall, L., & Salisbury, J. (2012). Compulsive Working, "Hyperprofessionality" and the Unseen Pleasures of Academic Work. Higher Education Quarterly, 66(2), 135-154.

Gourlay, B., & Stevenson, J. (2017). Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives. Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives. Taylor and Francis Online. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13562517.2017.1304632 [Accessed Nov. 26, 2022].

Gunn, V., & Fisk, A. (2013). Considering Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: 2007-2013 A Literature Review.

HESA (2014). Staff in Higher Education 2013/14. Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/23-01-2014/sfr198-staff [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019].

HESA (2018). Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2016/17. Available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/18-01-2018/sfr248-higher-education-staff-statistics [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019].

Kim, T., & Locke, W. (2010). Transnational academic mobility and the academic profession. In: Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI), Higher Education and Society: A Research Report, The Open University, pp. 25-34

Kim, A., 2023. Navigating Academic Identity Crises: Challenges for Mid-Career Academics. Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 234.

Land, R., & Gordon, G. (2015). Teaching Excellence Initiatives: Modalities and Operational Factors. Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/teaching_excellence_initiatives_report_land_gordon.pdf.

Little, B., Locke, W., Parker, J., & Richardson, J. (2007). Excellence in Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Literature for the Higher Education Academy. The Open University. Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/litreview_excellence_in_tl_cheri_jul07.pdf [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019].

Lopez, A., & Dewan, I. (2015). Precarious Pedagogies? The Impact of Casual and Zero-Hour Contracts in Higher Education. Journal of Feminist Scholarship, 7/8 (Fall 2014/Spring 2015), 28-42.

Luka, M., Harvey, A., Hogan, M., Shepherd, T., & Zeffiro, A. (2016). Scholarship as Cultural Production in the Neoliberal University: Working Within and Against "Deliverables." Studies in Social Justice, 9(2), 176.

Macfarlane, B. (2011). The Morphing of Academic Practice: Unbundling and the Rise of the Para-academic. Higher Education Quarterly, 65(1), 59-73.

Macfarlane, B. (2016a). Collegiality and Performativity in a Competitive Academic Culture. Higher Education Review, 48(2), 31-50.

Malcolm, J., & Zukas, M. (2009). Making a Mess of Academic Work: Experience, Purpose, and Identity. Teaching in Higher Education, 14(5), 495-506.

Marini, G., & Reale, E. (2015). How Does Collegiality Survive in Managerially Led Universities? European Journal of Higher Education, 6(2), 111-127.

Moore, S., Neylon, C., Paul Eve, M., O'Donnell, D., & Pattinson, D. (2017). "Excellence R Us": University Research and the Fetishisation of Excellence. Palgrave Communications, 3(16105), 17010. Available at: https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms2016105.pdf.

Naidoo, R. (2016). The Competition Fetish in Higher Education: Varieties, Animators, and Consequences. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 37(1), 1-10.

Nowotny, H. (2014). Excellence Attracts Excellence—And What About the Rest? Reflections on Excellence and Inclusion. [online] Available at: http://www.helga-nowotny.eu/downloads/helga_nowotny_b160.pdf [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019].

O'Leary, M., Cui, V., & French, A. (2019). Understanding, Recognising and Rewarding Teaching Quality in Higher Education: An Exploration of the Impact and Implications of the Teaching Excellence Framework. London: University and College Union (UCU).

O'Leary, M., Cui, V., & French, A. (2021). How the UK's Teaching Excellence Framework fails to capture the voice of university staff. Studies in Higher Education, 46(9), pp. 1756-1770.

Perkins, G. (2018). The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Its Impact on Academic Identity Within a Research-Intensive University. Higher Education Policy. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41307-018-0082-z.

Readings, B. (1996). The University in Ruins. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Reay, D. (2014). From Academic Freedom to Academic Capitalism. Discover Society. Available at: https://discoversociety.org/2014/02/15/on-the-frontline-from-academic-freedom-to-academic-capitalism/.

Sanders, J., Moore, J., & Mountford-Zimdars, A. (2020). Elusive and Elastic, and 'Incorrigibly Plural': Definitions and Conceptualisations of Teaching Excellence. In K. C. Thomas & A. French (Eds.), Challenging the Teaching Excellence Framework (Great Debates in Higher Education) (pp. 11-46). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78769-533-720201003.

Saunders, D., & Blanco Ramírez, D. (2017). Against 'Teaching Excellence': Ideology, Commodification, and Enabling the Neoliberalization of Postsecondary Education. Teaching in Higher Education, 22(4), 396-407. DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2017.1301913.

Skelton, A. (2012). Teacher Identities in a Research-Led Institution: In the Ascendancy or on the Retreat? British Educational Research Journal, 38(1), 23-39. doi:10.1080/01411926.2010.523454.

Skelton, A. (2004). Understanding Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: A Critical Evaluation of the National Teaching Fellowships Scheme. Studies in Higher Education, 29(4), 451-468. https://doi.org/10.1080/0307507042000236362.

Skelton, A. (2005). Understanding Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Towards a Critical Approach. Routledge.

Skelton, A. (2007). International Perspectives on Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Improving Knowledge and Practice. Routledge.

Stevenson, J., Burke, P., Wheelan, P., Sealey, P., & Ploner, J. (2014). Pedagogic Stratification and the Shifting Landscape of Higher Education.

Standing, G. (2014). The Precariat. Contexts, American Sociological Association, 13(4), 10–12. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214558209.

Strang, L., Bélanger, J., Manville, C., & Meads, C. (2016). Review of the Research Literature on Defining and Demonstrating Quality Teaching and Impact in Higher Education. Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/defining_and_demonstrating_teaching_quality_and_impact.pdf [Accessed 14 Feb. 2018].

Tight, M. (2010). Are Academic Workloads Increasing? The Post-War Survey Evidence in the UK. Higher Education Quarterly, 64, 200-215. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2273.2009.00433.x.

Thomas, K. C., & French, A. (Eds.) (2020). Challenging the Teaching Excellence Framework (Great Debates in Higher Education). Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Tsui, A. (2015). A Critical Commentary on Ray Land and George Gordon's "Teaching Excellence Initiatives: Modalities and Operational Factors." Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/tsui_commentary_to_land_and_gordon.pdf [Accessed 3 Dec. 2018].

UCU. (2016). University and College Workload Survey.

Watermeyer, R., & Olssen, M. (2016). Excellence and Exclusion: The Individual Costs of Institutional Competitiveness. Minerva, 54(2), 201-218. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-016-9298-5.

Whitty, G. (2001). Education, Social Class, and Social Exclusion. Journal of Education Policy, 16(4), 287-295.

Wilcox, K. (2021). Interrogating the Discourses of 'Teaching Excellence' in Higher Education. European Educational Research Journal, 20(1), 42-58.

Winter, R., & O'Donohue, W. (2012). Academic Identity Tensions in the Public University: Which Values Really Matter? Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 34(6), 565-573.

Worthington, F., & Hodgson, J. (2005). Academic Labour and the Politics of Quality in Higher Education: A Critical Evaluation of the Conditions of Possibility of Resistance. Critical Quarterly, 47(1-2), 96-110.

Wood, P., & O'Leary, M. (2019). Moving beyond teaching excellence: Developing a different narrative for England's higher education sector. International Journal of Comparative Education and Development, 21(2), pp. 112-126.

5   THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PROBLEMATIC

5.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter focuses on

- how ideological constructions of teaching excellence can contribute to injustice by distorting the material teaching expertise of academics through policy interpretations,

- the use of institutional ethnography to investigate complex issues of social justice, and

- how mechanisms of control and exclusion operate ideologically through templating processes.

The misrecognition of the respondents in this study is discussed and "ubuntu" is advocated as a guiding principle to promote the recognition of shared humanity and mutual respect in higher education policymaking.

5.2 What is social justice?

Cross-disciplinary research in higher education focuses on shaping policies, practices, and instructional methods to promote fairness, diversity, and inclusivity. It delves into disparities in access and experiences among marginalised groups with the aim of fostering inclusive environments and delves into the integration principles of social justice into curriculum and teaching to foster critical thinking and societal awareness. Furthermore, such studies assess the influence of student activism on institutional change and the effectiveness of policies aimed at addressing social justice and explores the role of higher education in addressing broader social issues through community partnerships and outreach endeavours. However, to be clear the focus in this study is on parity or participation as social justice as it pertains to institutional ethnography.

5.2.1 Defining social justice

There is possibly greater consensus perhaps on what constitutes 'social justice" and a 'socially just society" than on what might constitute 'teaching excellence'. As Dixon and Pilkington (2017) have stated, definitions are subject to ideological modification by those who define and interpret them and, thus, a definition of social justice as interpreted in institutional ethnography is offered here.

The work of pre-eminent institutional ethnographic researchers like George W. Smith (1988); Deveau (2009), Alison Griffith (with Dorothy Smith – see for example 2022a; 2022b), Marie L. Campbell, (see for example 2004), Michelle LaFrance (example 2019) and Dorothy E. Smith herself exemplifies the importance of addressing systemic inequalities rooted in institutional practices and structures. By critically examining institutional practices, they aim to understand the role of systemic inequalities perpetuating social inequalities and advocates for greater equity and justice in society by investigating power dynamics within institutions and their role in perpetuating social injustices and to examine how bureaucratic structures or policies contribute to inequalities, particularly concerning race, gender, or class, and commonly analyse how institutional practices affect social justice, aiming to uncover their implications for inequality. Social justice then, as understood within institutional ethnography, entails challenging power dynamics, advocating for marginalized individuals and groups, and fostering fairness and inclusivity. In this study Nancy Fraser's (2000; 2007; 2008) definitions of social justice, which are as rooted in feminism as institutional ethnography is, regarding her notion 'parity of participation' is taken as a frame for fundamental human justice.

According to Young (2014, pp. 3-4), social justice focuses on challenging the limitations imposed by domination and oppression on individuals and groups. This enables the development of individual capacities and fosters collective cooperation, implicitly acknowledging the importance of agency. This is somewhat akin to Martha Nussbaum's (2011) concept of "capabilities." Similarly, Nancy Fraser's (2005) tripartite model of social justice emphasises redistribution (economic), recognition (cultural), and representation (political).

Both Young and Fraser address the structural barriers that inhibit equal participation and the realisation of justice. Young focuses on the need to dismantle systemic oppression, allowing individuals to fully express their potential in a cooperative society. Fraser expands this by recognising that social justice also demands political representation, without which both economic and cultural equality cannot be achieved. Together, their frameworks provide a comprehensive lens for understanding and addressing the multi-faceted dimensions of social justice.

These elements are also evident in a definition by Stage Left Productions which highlights the distribution of resources (redistribution), self-determination (recognition), and democratic interaction (representation). There is perhaps no clearer description of the nature and purposes of social justice than one offered by Stage Left Productions (https://bit.ly/3cW7E91). Founded by award-winning Canadian theatre director and social justice advocate Michele Decottignies for marginalised artists, Stage Left Productions addresses decolonisation, anti-racism, and anti-oppression in Arts equity. While the organisation attests to the difficulty of finding justice in a society steeped in oppression, it highlights the need to define and analyse oppression to understand how injustice operates in personal, cultural, and societal ways. Accordingly, in this study, social justice is seen as

both a process and a goal involving actors who have a sense of their agency, and a sense of

social responsibility toward and with others and society, entailing a democratic and

participatory process that is inclusive, and that affirms human agency:

> *The goal of social justice is the full and equal participation of all groups in a society*
> *that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of*
> *society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are*
> *physically and psychologically safe and secure. A socially just society is one in which*
> *individuals are both self-determining (able to develop their full capacities) and*
> *interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others).*

(Stage Left Productions, n.d.)

The difficulty of striving for social justice "from within a society (including higher

education sector) that is manifestly unjust" (McArthur, 2014, p. 1) has been made apparent

in more than one study. Heyl, for example, found that differently-abled students were often

not consulted in policy and systemic decision-making, and thus aspects of their identity

were "forgotten, misunderstood, and invalidated" (Heyl, n.d., p.6).

5.2.2 'Parity of participation' versus misrecognition

Defining social justice as "parity of participation", Fraser's (2008) "radical-democratic

interpretation of the principle of equal moral worth" is one which sees all individuals

participating as peers in society. Accordingly, social injustice is a denial or

misrecognition of the rights of a person to participate as a peer in social life:

> *People can be impeded from full participation by economic structures that deny*
> *them the resources they need to interact with others as peers; in that case they*
> *suffer from distributive injustice or maldistribution. They can also be prevented*
> *from interacting on terms of parity by institutionalised hierarchies of cultural value*

that deny them the requisite standing; in that case, they suffer from status
inequality or misrecognition.

(Fraser, 2008, p. 17.)

Fraser sees this kind of misrecognition as a denial of common humanity (in James, 2015) and argues that recognition is a basic condition for justice – "one becomes an individual subject only in virtue of recognising, and being recognised by, another subject" (Fraser, 2000, p. 2). She states further that recognising the status of a person means that institutionalised patterns of cultural value should be examined for their effects on the relative standing of social actors to ascertain that these patterns constitute actors as peers who can participate on par with one another in social life. This, according to Fraser, constitutes reciprocal recognition and status equality.

However, when these patterns constitute some actors "as inferior, excluded, wholly other, or simply invisible—in other words, as less than full partners in social interaction - then we can speak of misrecognition and status subordination (Fraser, 2000, p. 4) and she states that misrecognition is:

> *… neither a psychic deformation nor a free-standing cultural harm but an institutionalised relation of social subordination. To be misrecognised, accordingly, is not simply to be thought ill of, looked down upon or devalued in others" attitudes, beliefs or representations. It is rather to be denied the status of a full partner in social interaction, as a consequence of institutionalised patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem.*

(Fraser, 2000, p. 4.)

5.2.3   Higher education status inequality

A striking illustration of status inequality and misrecognition (recognitive injustice), as well as maldistribution (distributive injustice), is the report on sessional staff by Bradley (2008). Bradley showed how sessional staff suffer inconsistencies in institutional procedures and contracts, such as the timeliness of payment for contracts being ignored and sessional staff not getting additional time for marking and preparation included in their contracts. As Bradley states: "This fosters the notion of exploitation of this group of staff, where goodwill does not pay the mortgage" (Bradley, 2008, p. 49). Since, as Fraser agues (2008), such extreme distributive injustice is intersectional and based on the deliberate misrecognition of sessional staff it is an example of recognitive social justice which relates to status inequality.

An even starker picture of recognitive misrecognition emerges in Bryson's (2013) examination of the relationship between university senior managers, human resource managers and sessional staff concerning institutional policies. Bryson found that many universities do not ensure that sessional staff academic teachers get access to the same support and infrastructure as permanent members of staff. Bryson states:

Conversely, the majority took a more negative approach, by adopting a differentiation strategy. This was driven by a "risk-management" philosophy. They sought to ensure that sessional staff would not be eligible for equal treatment with "academic lecturers" by making their roles distinct and restricted; they could therefore justify a minimalist approach to supporting them (for example, arguing that responsibility for their professional support and development lay outside the university, as they were not "full" members of the university). In a legal context, this was designed to enable an "objective justification" to treat sessional teachers differently to other academic teachers.

(Bryson, 2013, pp. 6/7)

Arguably, restricting parity of participation allows neoliberal universities in effect to justify a "risk management" strategy based on the legal pretext of "objective justification". This means that universities can, and do, relieve themselves of the responsibility for the professional support and development of sessional staff by the operation of (ostensibly legal) ruling relations by denying the parity of sessional staff status.

5.3   The violence of misrecognition

The emotional damage done by robbing people of their agency by misrecognising them is well documented in the work of institutional ethnographers like George W. Smith (1988) and Deveau (2009).

In his seminal article, George W. Smith (1988) describes how police observations of gay men who engaged in sex in a bathhouse were worked up into a police report to fit in with a law which criminalised gay sex. The report which coordinated the subsequent judicial process was regulated in turn by the observational procedures that produced the report, rather than the behaviour of the men themselves. In this process, the realities of the men's experience were ignored and thus their participation in the subsequent judicial processes was substituted by an ideological construction of a reality made to fit the police account.

Referring to George W. Smith's (1988) study, Deveau (2009) explains the unprecedented number of arrests made during the gay bathhouse incident has been ascribed by various researchers to the "discriminative animus" and "attitudinal barriers" of the arresting officers. He argues, however, that ascribing the reason for the misrecognition to "negative attitudes" transfers agency from people and hooks them into an ideological way of knowing.

Deveau (2009) also shows how a lived experience can be subsumed by ideological ways of knowing which derive and maintain their power to rule people through generative "official" texts by describing a particularly poignant and personal instance of the kind of "pre-supposed" ruling relations which template people in this way. His awful experience of the official police processes following his mother's unexpected death is an example of how ideological reports may be constructed.

5.3.1 Construction of ideological reports

Campbell explains an ideological report as "inserting a ruling conceptual frame and suppressing the experience of the 'subject'" of the lived actuality that the account claims to be about (2001, p. 243, in Deveau, p.8). Still distraught at finding his mother dead in her bed during a visit to his family home, Deveau was required to give a statement to police to explain the circumstances which had led to him finding his mother. Deveau's emotions after his mother's death were seen as having no relevance to its legal and medical construction in the official processes required to register her death.

The brutal impact of the misrecognition of Deveau's emotions is described best in his own words:

> *The fact that I needed to do this twice, consecutively, and that during the second narrative, the police officer meticulously wrote down every word I used to describe what had happened; the fact that I had to sign this statement after it was read back to me orally by the police officer: all of this struck me as being totally at odds and out of sync with what we as a family had just experienced. This is because the narrative provided to the police contained nothing about the lived experience which my father, my youngest son and I had been through during the wee hours of that early morning. Made to contain mundane facts about my mother's prior medical history, her recent visits to her physicians, the fact that she had not been well after*

supper the evening before and how my father had come upstairs to awaken me at 1:50 a.m., this official process of constructing a death bore none of our embodied experience during those gruesome early hours of that day. My mother's passing was dealt with in an abstract manner. There was no place in the police report for the true and accurate recollection of my lived experience: the misgivings I felt about having to duplicate my story for the police simply to acquit all those who were present in the house at the time of my mother's death; the feelings of disgust I experienced when the paramedics dragged my mother off the end of the bed and onto the floor, like a dead horse being tractor-pulled off a knoll; the panic I felt when I saw my 12-year-old son come downstairs to witness the tragic events of that dark, early morning; the devastation experienced when the paramedic kneeling down before my dad said that they had done everything they could to revive my mom.

(Deveau, 2009, pp. 7/8.)

In such an extreme example of misrecognition, invidious, insidiousness emotional violence is more than apparent. Deveau rightly states: "This experience of 'motherloss' happens to most of us and deserves to be responded to by other human beings in the same manner and at the same level as where we are located" (ibid, p.8). Thus, in every recognitive injustice which denies a person's requisite standing by being prevented from interacting on terms of parity (Fraser, 2008, p. 17.) there is some degree of emotional pain. When power excludes the participation of the less powerful by superficially benign and well-meaning discourses, ruling relations and concomitant recognitive injustice can be said to be operating in ways that make both oppressor and oppressed less than human.

Mangione and Norton (2020) propose the concept of pedagogic vulnerability as an essential, but often overlooked, aspect of teaching excellence in higher education. In a higher education landscape increasingly dominated by market-driven metrics, academics may feel compelled to hide their vulnerabilities to maintain professional credibility. This

pressure creates a facade of strength and conceals the emotional and intellectual challenges that are integral to teaching. They argue by embracing vulnerability, academics can engage in a more authentic and compassionate form of pedagogy. However, current teaching excellence policy fails to recognise this, and thus perpetuating emotional and professional alienation. This exclusion of vulnerability from the metrics of excellence represents another form of the violence of misrecognition, as it denies the full personhood of educators and devalues the emotional labour involved in teaching.

Furthermore, it has been shown by Fraser that where recognitive injustice occurs, the intersecting human rights of gender, race, culture, class, creed, sexual orientation, and being differently abled, are affected. In policy terms, these kinds of exclusions, deeply entrenched, and perpetuating dominant discourses in English education (see for example Gillborn, 2007) lead to conflicting standpoints which may result in unintended stalemates of action, overt and covert resistance, disappointment, and anger.

However, there is more to social justice than the experience of one person. Fraser gives voice to the "psychological damage to individual selves that might follow denigration of a group" (James, 2015, p. 99). Thus, individual examples of injustice may sustain and reflect injustice on a larger scale than just an individual experience of it.

5.3.2   Higher education policy borrowing and misframing

The incorporation of New Public Management technologies into the governance of higher education is observable across the international HE community (see for example, Watermeyer and Olssen, 2016) and the subsequent commodification of learning through neoliberal ideological market valorising and legitimising is iteratively and globally compounded by "policy borrowing" (Auld and Morris, 2013; Ball, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi,

2016). Wisker and Masika (2017), for example, flag the notion that increased inequalities within higher education are operating worldwide, as well as in the UK. They find "deepening educational and social stratification" and "new forms of inequalities influenced by different sorts of HE on offer". Furthermore, they point out the possibility that higher education may be entrenching and replicating social injustice by continuing to stratify along the lines of institutional status, ease of access and employment prospects (Wisker and Masika, 2017, p. 57). According to Fraser (2008), struggles against maldistribution and misrecognition cannot proceed, let alone succeed, because they occur within and interrelate with meta-political injustice "which arises as a result of the division of political space into bounded polities… which furnish the stage on which struggles over distribution and recognition are played out". Thus, there is the danger that HE policy borrowing reproduces the recognitive social injustices observed in the small space of this case study on a significant scale.

5.3.3   Higher education curricula and institutional ethnography

Reviewing and redesigning curricula in collaboration with students is a form of institutional ethnographic work, as it uncovers the ways in which institutional routines reinforce or challenge existing inequalities. The approach explored in Warren and Khan's (2023) research-based chapter on "Education for Social Justice: An Integrative Structured Approach for Inclusive Curriculum Redesign" adheres to the principles of institutional ethnography by scrutinising and interrogating institutional practices that exacerbate racial disparities in higher education. The process of involving students in this collaboration exemplifies how institutional ethnography, even unrecognised as such, can reveal the hidden mechanisms that either sustain or disrupt inequalities within educational systems. Thus, Warren and Khan's (2023) focus on how systemic structures of universities contribute

to unequal outcomes for students from different social and cultural backgrounds can be aligned with the central concerns of institutional ethnographic scholars like Marie L. Campbell (2004) and Michelle LaFrance (2019). Institutional ethnography is also reflected in their focus on staff experiences and how staff values, teaching practices, and engagement with curriculum development influence broader institutional change.

Warren and Khan's (2023) commitment to involving both staff and students in curriculum redesign highlights the importance of understanding how institutional policies are lived and experienced by those within the institution, a key principle of institutional ethnography. By capturing the experiential knowledge of staff and students, their approach to drive broader institutional change aligns with institutional ethnography's goal of disrupting the ruling relations that perpetuate social inequities.

Furthermore, Warren and Khan (2023) reflect the participatory nature of institutional ethnography, where the voices and lived experiences of those directly involved are central to uncovering the ruling relations that shape institutional practices. By involving staff and students in curriculum co-design, they show that institutional change is informed by those who experience it firsthand. As a method, it resonates with the goal of institutional ethnography to expose how institutional policies and practices are experienced on the ground and to challenge the power dynamics that maintain inequalities.

5.4 The mechanisms of misrecognition

It is argued that the participants in this study were misrecognised by a process of exclusion emanating from the institutional circuits of ruling relations governing English HE excellence policy; that is, they were held to account as teachers by managerialist ideological constructions of teaching excellence rather than the material achievement of that

excellence. In turn the managerial responses were formulated within the ideology of the "boss" texts emanating from the institutional circuits of ruling relations. All respondents were coordinated by an ideological representation of 'teaching excellence' through extra-local, translocal and local governing texts which functioned as ideological representations of teaching excellence (see Hak, 1998). Thus, it was shown that ruling relations established and maintained managerial control and accountability in ways that conflicted in many aspects with the daily working knowledge of teaching excellence of the policy balancers and enactors at the institution.

The ouroboric process of the response to the NSS and TEF scores arising from different actors' interpretations of reasons for the lack of teaching excellence at the institution is illustrated below (Illustration 3):

ILLUSTRATION 1: THE MECHANISM OF MISRECOGNITION

Chart Fregona (Charl.Fregona@iosh.com) is signed in

ASSUMPTION
❑ NSS and TEF rating is the result of poor teaching

ACTION
❑ Implement Student Outcomes Improvement Programme
❑ Implement Management Observation of Teaching

RESULT
❑ Templating response to implementation (i.e.) Silence academic voice, co-opt student 'engagement' discourse.
❑ Take direct control of teaching and teaching development
❑ Use technology to implement managerial decisions
❑ Use student engagement for ensuring compliance

EFFECT
❑ Negative staff reaction

"Disjoints" in standpoint between representations of 'teaching excellence' which arose may be seen as the result of competing student engagement discourses at the institution and the displacement, in part, of the collegial relations that had governed daily

life in this respect with specific reference to the institutional performance enhancement committee.

For example, on the one hand 'student engagement" was considered as involving students in their studies through mutual partnership and collaboration between teacher and learner; on the other, a way of co-opting students to template compliance with the "boss" or "governing" texts (Smith, 2010) of the NSS and TEF. Thus, the educational needs of the student may have been commandeered by an institution forced to compete for status and finance within larger legitimising institutional circuits (Atkinson, 2016) in hidden ways which were detrimental to the achievement of teaching excellence. In this study, ensuring the compliance of policy enactors and policy balancers by the more powerful policy enforcers may have provided a microcosm of a larger "teaching excellence" problem in English higher education.

5.4.1 Misrecognition of study respondents

LaFrance (2019) argues the methods of institutional ethnography provide a means to investigate how institutional discourse compels and shapes practice and how norms of practice "speak to, for, and over individuals". This research investigation aimed to discover whether and how 'teaching excellence' may be subverted through institutional policy "templating" (Case, 2013), creating "architectures of participation" that constrain how people "can move, what they can do, and how they can interact with others in their field, and influence and shape their identity" (Watters, 2014). Evidence of this templating was found using institutional ethnographic investigative techniques. Material constructions of teaching excellence were discarded in favour of ideological constructions of "teaching

excellence" and, like many academics in the UK, the standpoints of these policy balancers and enforcers tended to be misunderstood or invalidated by the institution they serve.

Examples of recognitive injustice emerged in different ways in reaction to initiatives instituted by the management to improve NSS and TEF scores. The excerpts which follow illustrate the lived experiences of the respondents where the displacement of local knowledge and expertise acted to template compliance with ideological constructions of "teaching excellence" policy.

Institutional misrecognition often occurs through the processes that govern policy development and implementation. Both policy balancers and policy enactors experience varying degrees of misrecognition in their professional roles, leading to a lack of agency, ownership, and authentic participation in decision-making.

5.4.2   Institutional misrecognition

Institutional misrecognition refers to the failure of institutions to meaningfully engage policy balancers and enactors in decision-making processes, resulting in their expertise and autonomy being disregarded through tokenistic consultation and top-down impositions. Below are examples of how misrecognition played out for "policy balancers" and "policy enactors' within the context of policy implementation in this study. There is a detailed discussion of how these participant categories were arrived at in the data collection, analysis and findings chapter.

In short, the term 'policy balancers' refers to those individuals who are involved in bridging policy directives with practice. They are often responsible for ensuring policies are implemented at an operational level while trying to maintain pedagogical and institutional

integrity. However, they frequently encounter misrecognition in the form of tokenistic consultation, lack of ownership over the process, and the displacement of their expertise.

"Policy enactors" are those who directly implement institutional policies, often experiencing misrecognition through rigid, top-down directives that leave little room for personalisation or professional discretion. They are tasked with delivering on management-imposed goals while often lacking the agency to influence these decisions.

The semblance of consultation was as discernible a theme in policy enactor standpoints, as it was in the standpoints of policy balancers as the following examples show.

5.4.3 Policy balancer misrecognition

Example 1: An Illusion of consultation: The first example shows a misleading semblance of consultation. The policy balancer expected an open dialogue and ample time for collaborative course redesign, but management swiftly obtained an "in principle" agreement and enforced rapid implementation. This approach eroded the balancer's sense of ownership and undermined the idea of good practice in course design.

POLICY BALANCER: MISRECOGNITION EXAMPLE 1 – AN ILLUSION OF CONSULTATION
They spent a year wasting their already heavy teaching load time talking, and at the end of that year, whatever was going to be implemented was implemented anyway. And then suddenly, people had like a month to revive all their degree programmes for revalidation. If you wanted real communication, you could have been honest and said, look, this is what we want. We want yearlong degrees, I support that... Isn't... I, yeah... yearlong courses. So no, I don't have a problem, with that... because this is what we want. We want the yearlong courses. We want the embedding of digital literacies and things like that. So, you've got a year to get into course teams and interdisciplinary teams to work out the best way of doing that. And then revalidate your degrees. That could have been something dialogic and positive. Instead, you had the illusion of consultation and then the implementation of something which was fine in principle.

> People then only had a few months to implement, so they could only implement it against the clock.
>
> So, this is what I see the, the illusion of dialogue, the illusion of consultation, and then things being imposed in such a way that it's almost impossible for good practice and ownership to happen.

Example 2: Co-option of expertise: In the following example from this study, the policy balancer highlighted the displacement of their own expertise, revealing that committees they once worked on no longer existed, reflecting a broader displacement of academic input. The policy balancer spoke of senior managers as saying they would be "using students to bully staff" into compliance with top-down directives related to "teaching excellence."

POLICY BALANCER: MISRECOGNITION EXAMPLE 2 – THE CO-OPTION OF EXPERTISE
… and apparently, it's meant to still be ongoing even though there's now a management observation teaching. I've sat in, in… in spaces where... whereas I used to be the coordinator for [..]. So, I used to be co-opted in, onto some of those learning, those committees that now no longer exist, and also sort of the lower-level version of them that used to exist within the schools. So, I, I've heard on, all… in all of those spaces, managers and senior managers talk about, um, using students to bully staff into doing what they're told, and hoping that things like the peer review of teaching could be used. I wish it had teeth, they said, wish it had teeth, so that we could get rid of useless teachers. So, as I see that the management observation of teaching is a way to give it teeth, it's brought in under the pretence of the test, that by putting more managers into classrooms observing the teaching, you'll get a better dialogue going about teaching. I… yeah, really?

Example 3: The Violence of Misrecognition:

This example highlights the severe personal and professional impacts of misrecognition. An experienced developer, who had faced redundancy and was then re-employed as sessional staff, expressed the emotional toll of misrecognition. Despite being recognised as an outstanding teacher, the institutional restructuring left them sidelined and excluded from teaching students, contributing to a deep sense of marginalisation.

POLICY BALANCER MISRECOGNITION EXAMPLE 3 – THE VIOLENCE OF MISRECOGNITION
I'm older, I'm not around for much longer in this institution, even if they don't make me redundant again. So... an older de... Uh, older demotions of me and older sidelining of me. Whilst I think I am quite a proud person in some ways. I haven't let it damage me; I hope. No ego destruction, you know, and if it is likely the thing would be that I shouldn't be fighting for my own ego in the first place, but I'm not that pure. [Laughs] But now like, you know, and I'll still be here, and now that I'm not allowed to work with students, we try and do this on the facilitating student learning module. Then we're disrupted that and it's…

5.4.1   Policy enactor misrecognition

Example 1: An illusion of consultation: Similar to the experience of policy balancers, policy enactors faced the illusion of consultation during a year-long review of the undergraduate experience. They were invited to discuss potential changes, but, in the end, management swiftly imposed decisions with little regard for their input.

POLICY ENACTOR MISRECOGNITION EXAMPLE 1 – AN ILLUSION OF CONSULTATION
… the yearlong review of the undergraduate experience, it was a yearlong charade. People were invited in to talk. They spent a year wasting their already heavy teaching load time talking, and at the end of that year, whatever was going to be implemented was implemented anyway. And then, suddenly, people had like a month to revive all their degree programmes for revalidation. If you wanted real communication, you could have been honest and said, look, this is what we want…

Example 2: Robbing of Agency: In this example a senior manager dictates the annual performance appraisal goals for staff, stripping policy enactors of their agency which shows recognitive misrecognition at work. A senior manager dictates the annual performance appraisal goals of staff, thereby robbing the agency of the enactor by leaving little room for personalisation of goals:

POLICY ENACTOR MISRECOGNITION EXAMPLE 2 – ROBBING OF AGENCY
Now, what happens if you don't achieve your goals for this university? There is nothing [nothing] no accountability to it, so it's a complete waste of time. So, you could, um, ... and this year, the Dean [OMITTED] actually dictated what our goals were. So… which is

> the opposite of what we know about goal setting, which is the individual should own a goal and set it yourselves [mmm] and if... if that isn't the case there is no motivation to achieve that goal [mmm]. So, it's a ...
>   [ ]
> The... the previous year we were required to set goals and identify which of the university's strategic goals [mmm] that is feeding into; now that makes a lot of sense [yes]. Or, um, and even before that we would set goals and that would still have to be agreed by our line manager [mmm], but now we have gone a step further in the wrong direction where we were actually sent the goals that we had to put in our performance review. That's an incompetence in terms of leadership.

Example 3 – Resistance to Lack of Agency: The enactor had to conform "outwardly" with perceived expectations of new institutional policies ("show certain actions") while also trying to preserve educational practices which could be achieved by quietly "doing other things". This strategy represents a form of resistance to imposed policies that do not align with their values as educators and constitutes covert resistance and the need to maintain agency.

POLICY ENACTOR MISRECOGNITION EXAMPLE 2 – RESISTENCE TO LACK OF AGENCY
POLICY ENACTOR In some ways what you need are like-minded people around you to be able to, to, to actually achieve your goals. If you've got people around you that are on... a completely different wavelength in terms of a strategy and an approach, um, then, then obviously, there's going to be quite a difficult thing because especially if it's your boss that has a different, an entirely different approach., um... And, so, what you have to do is craft, really carefully, your programme and how you go about the programme that incorporates what you want in there. But you're perceived to do the other things that some of the [so it's somewhat of a double life] so what you have to do is outwardly show certain actions. But then, underneath that you're doing other things that quietly contribute the way that you feel that it needs to be done. Not accepting someone's point of view about how they see and experience things de facto is a failure to recognise a person as the expert in her/his own life and work.

This enactor in this example is describing the "bifurcation of consciousness" needed to outwardly conform to institutional policies while covertly maintaining their own educational practices. Bifurcation or "double consciousness" is the internal conflict first defined by W.E.B. DuBois (1903) as the internal conflict experienced by African Americans as they

navigate their identity in a racially oppressive society. (See Section 8.2 in the next chapter which addresses this notion more fully.)

Both policy balancers and enactors experience institutional misrecognition, which undermines their professional autonomy and contributions. While the roles and responsibilities of each group may differ, the structural mechanisms of misrecognition— whether through an illusion of consultation, lack of promotion pathways, or imposed goals—perpetuate a disconnect between institutional policies and the lived experiences of those tasked with implementing them. Thus, it can be shown that the "participation architectures" set up to ensure compliance with a constructed ideology of "teaching excellence" to improve NSS and TEF scores in the institution conflicted with, and circumscribed, representations of self through misrecognition.

5.4.2   Co-optation for compliance

From the beginning of the managerialism institutional restructuring of teaching, students were co-opted in the attempt to improve the NSS and TEF ratings - to the extent that "student engagement" was rewarded with prizes such as Amazon vouchers for participation in the SOIP initiatives and opportunities for paid student employment, to ensure compliance plans for teaching excellence. The performance enhancement committee was advised that a prize draw had been established to encourage student participation in course evaluation and professional service department surveys to "encourage student participation" and the prize draw would be publicised to students via email and flyers. The committee was asked to "reflect on what steps are possible (e.g., cross-promotion with NSS or better visibility in class sessions)" to improve the poor response rates for the survey. The "Heads of Student Experience" were reported as

coordinating "awareness raising" in core module classes to boost participation in surveys and that staff from "Engagement" were coordinating publicity for the surveys and prize draw "to incentivise participation".

This calls to mind the ongoing "mallification" and market-like behaviours of universities and the blurring of the purpose of higher education described by Sauntson and Morrish (2011) who argue that students are positioned, 'simultaneously, as consumers, units of profit, and as "products" of the university" and that students, knowledge, research and teaching/learning become products of the university (ibid., citing Shumar, 2008), p. 83).

It is worth noting here that the Office for Students felt it necessary in 2021 to issue a policy for "Procedures for investigating allegations of inappropriate influence on survey results" stating that "In view of its uses, the UK funding and regulatory bodies need to ensure the integrity and robustness of the NSS data. All users should be reassured that students who complete the survey have responded in a manner that wholly reflects their true opinion, and that they have not been influenced by their provider, other students, student organisations or other parties" (OfS, 2021, p. 2). Guidance includes advice on how to report inappropriate influence and the consequences of influencing students as follows: "If an investigation were to find that promotional activities or marketing materials had resulted in inappropriate influence, whether intentional or unintentional, the integrity of the NSS data could be called into question. The OfS (in partnership with the relevant funding partners) could take action to suppress the affected NSS data for the provider. This means that no NSS results would be published for the affected courses at the provider that year". The OfS warning includes any attempt to

- Advise or ask students to respond in a certain way.

- Make entering a prize draw conditional on completing the NSS.

- Link the NSS to league tables, the TEF, job prospects and the perceived value of students" degrees.

- Indicate that the survey is compulsory.

- Make it a requirement or pressure students to attend dedicated NSS sessions.

- Take students through the survey on an individual basis.

An example of policy enactor responses to these surveys indicates the degree of this type of student influencing at the institution, revealing how time was made in class for students to "rant" about issues to forestall negative responses to the NSS questionnaire:

POLICY ENACTOR
And what's interesting is that... I've been put in charge of... last year, I was put in charge of doing the NSS, myself. So, I took each group of students, in small groups that they, there are, and, um, I sat them down and I asked them before they started, as you know, we have an open door policy that anybody can come talk to us anytime, and there's also the feedback situation which ask, we ask our students to feedback to us if there's issues arising. And I said before you take this test, sorry, this, um, questionnaire, I said, um, are there any issues arising? Because I said, I'm on the [indistinct] down there. And that's a lack of respect for me if you don't tell me now, if you've got an issue. I need to know what those issues are, and as you should have told us ages ago] indistinct]. So, what we do is have a half an hour to three-quarters an hour of them ranting and then they take the test. Once they've got the writing out the way and we've discussed it, or ways of... they're fine. But you need to give them a point to rant.

Since the purpose of higher education was seen by the respondents in this study, and many other academics and researchers, as fostering student autonomy and their ability to engage fully as citizens for the common good in society, it seems paradoxical that teaching excellence policy was shown to represent neoliberal goal of using HE to serve the labour market rather than the full and equal participation of all groups to participate equally in a co-created society. Furthermore, that misrecognition is the engine-room of compliance in a higher education institute for ideology is reprehensible. The question' then, is how can we

ensure parity of participation for enforcers, balancers, and enactors and in ruling relations in policy?

If the goal of social justice is the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs, the question arises whether academics, who must deliver the complex and difficult processes of teaching students to participate equally in decisions on the purpose and nature of their learning, are to be treated in the same socially just way. The answer lies, small part, by ensuring that the voices of all marginalised groups, including academics themselves, are included in policies to do with teaching. In addition, a common endeavour to define "teaching excellence" that is represented by "parity of policy" is called for in research. That is, a recognition and understanding of how "things actually are" for all concerned must be achieved in policy and in practice.

5.5   Ubuntu: a possible antidote for systemic misrecognition

Misrecognition by any means of "how things actually are" for a person is a denial of their personhood and, it is argued, the foundation for recognitive social injustice. The standpoints in this study speak of social injustice of the most surreptitious kind cloaked in the discourse of "excellence". Therefore, a plea is made here that English higher education could do well to consider less Western-centric Nguni concept of ubuntu in policymaking and practice. Institutional ethnography incorporates a conception of justice is arguably akin to a widely held African recognition of personhood. Ubuntu is based on recognition that hinges on connectedness with another as a being fundamental to one's humanity. This, in turn, aligns with Nancy Fraser's (2008) notion of "parity of participation'.

According to Beja (2021), the Zulu phrase *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* means to be human is to recognise the humanity of others. Beja states "… Ubuntu is showing care and

concern for your neighbour. It's lending a helping hand and displaying an understanding of the dignity with which human beings ought to be treated — for the simple reason that they are human" (Beja, 2021). Thompsell (2022) explains ubuntu thus: "One meaning of Ubuntu is correct behaviour but correct in this sense is defined by a person's relations with other people. Ubuntu refers to behaving well towards others or acting in ways that benefit the community. Such acts could be as simple as helping a stranger in need, or much more complex ways of relating with others. A person who behaves in these ways has ubuntu. He or she is a full person" (Thompsell, 2022).

Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes ubuntu as the essence of being human:

It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness; it speaks about compassion. A person with ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are.

(Tutu, 2004, p. 24.)

Ubuntu in the daily life of academics, students and managers appears to be in short supply. A moving auto-ethnographic study by Professor Rosalind Gill (2010) in which she reports on her day-to-day work over a year captures the lack of ubuntu hiding in the "comfortable assumptions" of English higher education. Gill addresses the links between local institutional macro-organisational practice on the one hand, and the experiences and

112

affective states of academics caught up in the workings of neoliberal managerialist policy on the other. She describes the silence which allows hegemonic domination to operate almost unhindered in higher education settings and questions how we might engage with "the multiple moments in which individuals report being at breaking point, 'saying my work is crap" or I'm going to be found out", asking "how we might connect these feelings with neoliberal practices of power in the Western University?" (Gill, 2009, p.2). In her words:

> *It speaks of many things: exhaustion, stress, overload, insomnia, anxiety, shame, aggression, hurt, guilt and feelings of out-of-placeness, fraudulence and fear of exposure within the contemporary academy. These feelings, these affective embodied experiences, occupy a strange position in relation to questions of secrecy and silence. They are at once ordinary and everyday, yet at the same time remain largely secret and silenced in the public spaces of the academy. They are spoken in a different, less privileged register; they are the stuff of the chat in the corridor, coffee break conversations and intimate exchanges between friends, but not, it would seem, the keynote speech or the journal article.*

(Gill, 2010, p.2)

Such an account speaks to the violence of hegemonic templating. The misrecognition of Rosalind Gill as less than who she is by ideological constructions is thus an unacceptable form of recognitive injustice which cuts across the intersections of race, gender, sexual identity, and any other misrecognition to which she may be subject. Misrecognition, where systemic biases prevent individuals from being recognised as equal participants in society, can be considered an operating mechanism for the power to withhold parity of participation and is arguably a driving force for templating compliance and docility in achieving dominant and powerful intentions.

Recognition of another's common humanity plays a role in all forms of justice. Given that social justice is both a goal and process that demands parity of participation, the

absence of recognition of the other constitutes recognitive injustice. Wacquant describes Bourdieu's view that the social agent is embodied and embedded in a social space, but subject to a game of mirrors; that is "who exists first and last in the eyes of others, via a recursive 'game of mirrors' in which social fictions becomes reality insofar as they rest on shared categories and common beliefs that ground consonant actions" (Wacquant and Akçaoğlu, 2017, p.57). This creates the possibility of misrecognition or a lack of consciousness of the other which could result in the other being recognised/not being recognised to maintain interests other than our own. This should not happen in an Academy which is intended to be and should be, a place where the discovery of justice and truth is a raison d'être and which, hypocritically, in prevailing discourse, sees itself as inclusive and non-discriminatory. Bourdieu holds that "those excluded or without a voice are denied part of what it is to be fully human" (James, 2015, p. 101) and Fraser sees the misrecognition of another as a denial of their common humanity (James, 2015). Thus, the "brutal commodification of the self" cloaked in the guise of human relationships (Colley, 2003, p. 15) of, and even by, academics needs our urgent attention.

We turn now to a discussion of institutional ethnography as a suitable theoretical framework for critiquing English higher education policy's impact on 'teaching excellence'.

5.6 Chapter references

Atkinson, P. (2016). Ethnographic practice and the production of knowledge. In Ethnographic Practice in the Present (pp. 1-26). Routledge.

Auld, E. and Morris, P. (2013). Comparative education, the "New Paradigm" and policy borrowing: Constructing knowledge for educational reform. Comparative Education, [online] 50(2), pp.129-155. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2013.826497 [Accessed 30 Nov. 2017].

Ball, S. (2012). Global Education Inc.: New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary. Routledge.

Beja, A. (2021). Ubuntu as Recognition: A Study of Personhood in Africa.

Bradley, J. (2008). The exploitation of sessional staff in Australian universities. Journal of Industrial Relations, 50(1), 43-62.

Bryson, V. (2013). Exploitation and differentiation: the role of universities in shaping the academic workforce. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 35(3), 312-325.

Campbell, M. and Gregor, F. (2004) 'Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography', AltaMira Press.

Case, A. (2013). Participatory architecture: A performative paradigm for architecture. Architectural Design, 83(3), 68-73.

Colley, L. (2003). 'Brutal commodification' and 'the self': an institutional ethnographic study of a British university. Ethnography and Education, 1(1), 13-33.

Decottignies, M. (n.d.). Stage Left Productions. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3cW7E91

Deveau, P. (2009). Méconnaissance in the institutional ethnography of police process. Canadian Journal of Sociology, 26(2), 1-30.

Dixon, J. and Pilkington, A. (2017). Social justice and higher education: A critical review of the literature. Journal of Education Policy, 32(5), 691-708.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903). The Souls of Black Folk. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm

Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking recognition. New Left Review, 3, 107-120.

Fraser, N. (2007). Transnationalizing the public sphere: On the legitimation and democratization of the public sphere. Public Culture, 19(3), 335-354.

Fraser, N. (2008). Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World. Columbia University Press.

Gill, R. (2009). Breaking Point: Emotion, Neoliberalism, and the Academy.

Gill, R. (2010). Silence and Secrecy in the Academy: An Auto-Ethnographic Study.

Hak, T. (1998). "There Are Clear Delusions." The Production of a Factual Account.Human Studies, 21(4), pp.419-436.

Heyl, B. (n.d.). Forgotten, misunderstood, and invalidated: The experiences of differently abled students in higher education.

James, D. (2015). How Bourdieu bites back: Recognising misrecognition in education and educational research. Cambridge Journal of Education, 45(1), 97-112. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2014.987644

LaFrance, M. (2019). Institutional Ethnography. In: Liamputtong, P. (ed.) Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_82

Mangione, D., & Norton, L. (2020). Problematising the notion of 'the excellent teacher': daring to be vulnerable in higher education. Teaching in Higher Education, 25(7), 883–897. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1812565.

McArthur, J. (2014). Strivings for social justice "from within a society (including higher education sector) that is manifestly unjust".

Rose, N. (1999). Powers of Freedom. Cambridge University Press.

Sauntson, A. and Morrish, J. (2011). Leadership in Higher Education. Open University Press, pp. 47-52.

Shumar, W. (2008). Higher Education and the Public Good. Routledge, pp. 20-25.

Smith, D.E. (1987) The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology. University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D.E. and Griffith, J. (2022 a) Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Routledge.

Smith, D.E. and Griffith, J. (2022 b) 'Institutional Ethnography: The Interplay of Discourse and Practice'. In Smith, D.E. and Griffith, J. (eds.) Institutional Ethnography: A Contemporary Guide, pp. 1-18. Canadian Scholar Press.

Smith, G. W. (1988). Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2016). New Directions in policy borrowing research. Asia Pacific Education Review, 17(3), pp. 381–390. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-016-9442-9

Thompsell, C. (2022). Ubuntu: A Study of Correct Behavior in Africa.

Tutu, D. (2004). No Future Without Forgiveness. Image.

Wacquant, L., and Akçaoğlu, A. (2017). Bourdieu and the Question of Identity. Polity.

Warren, D. & Khan, Z. (2023) Education for Social Justice: An Integrative Structured Approach for Inclusive Curriculum Redesign to Enable Fair Outcomes and Promote Social Change. In *Integrative Curricula: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Pedagogy, I*nnovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning, vol. 50, pp. 25-45. Emerald Publishing Limited. DOI: 10.1108/S2055-364120230000050003.

Watermeyer, R and Olssen, M 2016, ""Excellence" and exclusion: the individual costs of institutional competitiveness", Minerva, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 201-218. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-016-9298-5

Watters, A. (2014). Ed-Tech and the Templated Self: Thoughts from the "Reclaim Your Domain" Hackathon. [online] Hack Education. Available at: http://hackeducation.com/2014/07/22/reclaim-your-domain-hackathon [Accessed 2 Sep. 2017].

Wisker, G., and Masika, R. (2017). Global inequality and higher education: Whose interests are we serving? New York: Routledge.

6 ONTO-EPISTEMOLOGY OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

6.1 Chapter introduction

6.2 Critical purpose of institutional ethnography

6.3 What is institutional ethnography?

6.4 Ethno-onto-epistemology of institutional ethnography

6.5 A rationale for using institutional ethnography

6.6 Theoretics in institutional ethnography

6.7 Critiques of institutional ethnography

6.8 Chapter conclusion

6.9 Chapter references

6.1 Chapter introduction

Presented in this chapter is a rationale for institutional ethnography as a suitable approach for investigating how 'teaching excellence' constructed within higher education policy discourse works to template the working lives of academics. Institutional ethnography's suitability for a qualitative, interpretivist case study rooted in Marxism and feminism such as this one is defended. Institutional ethnography and its constructs, such as "standpoint", "ruling relations", "texts", work" and "problematic", are examined as the conceptual means "to move from conventional ethnographic description into an explication of the institutional regimes in which experiences happen" (Rankin, 2017a, p.4). The chapter concludes by discussing some of the critiques levelled at institutional ethnography.

6.2 Critical purpose of institutional ethnography

A critical element of institutional ethnography is the concept of "standpoint," which highlights the importance of understanding social relations from the perspectives of marginalised individuals. This notion asserts that people who experience social inequalities possess unique insights that can challenge dominant narratives and reveal the complexity of their lived realities. While rooted in feminist theory, the concept of standpoint has been broadened to encompass diverse social positions beyond gender, recognising the insights of all individuals situated outside the dominant power structures (Smith, 2005; Smith, 2006). According to Givens (2008), critical research approaches affirm that the structures and processes of dominance shape the behaviour and meaning of individuals and groups. This perspective underscores the relevance of standpoint theory in revealing the lived experiences of those marginalised by societal power dynamics and illustrates how such

research can examine injustices caused by ideological constructions of reality (Xenitidou and Gilbert, 2009, p. 33).

While this study is concerned with the standpoints of teaching academics (policy enactors), studies on the standpoints of students (policy receivers), academic managers (policy enforcers), and policymakers (policy ruler) are needed to provide a richer understanding of the impact of national frameworks (NSS and TEF) on teaching excellence. Exploring the experiences of academic managers, who are equally affected by policy-driven demands, is essential. Furthermore, broader inclusion of policymakers' standpoints is crucial for developing a more comprehensive view of how ruling relations impact on teaching excellence across the institutions and regions of the UK.

The term "ruling relations" refers to the complex social processes and power dynamics that organise and regulate people's lives within institutions. It involves understanding how institutional authorities and discourses shape behaviours, opportunities, and social identities. Through the lens of institutional ethnography, researchers can uncover how these ruling relations are maintained and perpetuated, thus enabling a deeper examination of the injustices and inequalities that affect individuals and groups in various contexts (Xenitidou and Gilbert, 2009, p. 33). Its focus on the materialist Marxist ontology and its assumption that people are experts in their own lives, active in local settings, and shaped by translocal forces allows for the examination of injustices caused by ideological constructions of reality. According to Givens (2008), critical research approaches affirm that the structures and processes of dominance shape the behaviour and meaning of individuals and groups.

Bohman (2016) states that a theory is broadly critical "to the extent that it seeks human "emancipation from slavery", acts as a "liberating … influence", and works "to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers" of human beings" (Bohman, 2016, p. 1).

Accordingly, if the job of critical theory is to discover how to empower individuals so they have some level of control over what they require for self-determination, the task of a critical researcher is to bring light to bear on circumstances of disempowerment. "They [critical theorists] do not merely seek to provide the means to achieve some independent goal, but rather (as in Horkheimer's famous definition…) to seek "human emancipation" in circumstances of domination and oppression" (Bohman, 2016, p. 1).

As a critical theory, institutional ethnography provides "descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms" (Bohman, 2016, p. 1). Critical research can reveal "patterns of locally, nationally, and internationally situated dominance and control; the ways in which they are sustained and reproduced; and the responses of individuals and groups to these structures and power differentials…" and that such research may involve, "agency, resistance, voice, and various forms of advocacy". (Givens, 2008, p. 5).

As part of this critical research tradition, institutional ethnography seems to offer an approach for investigating how academics are stitched into social relations and how their policy responses are shaped within the "psycho-social nexus" (Wetherall, 2006, in Ecclestone, 2007, p. 456) of a university, providing a way to "link, describe and explicate" the tensions apparent in the discourse of" teaching excellence". The approaches and methods of institutional ethnography may thus "uncover and explore stories" which may have been obscured by disciplinary and pedagogical ideals and what Gillborn (2005) has called "too nice" a field to take forward radical challenges to its thinking (p. 497 citing Gloria Ladson- Billings, 1998).

6.3   What is institutional ethnography?

Institutional ethnography is a qualitative research method developed primarily by

Dorothy E. Smith, focusing on the text-based organisation of social relations. It investigates

how people's experiences and actions are shaped by the institutional contexts in which they

occur. This approach seeks to illuminate structural injustices and is based on the epistemic

assumption that all knowledge is socially constructed and organised. Institutional

ethnography emphasizes authentic lived experience, revealing the often-implicit

connections between institutional discourses and the practices that govern daily life (Smith,

2006).

Institutional ethnography is used to study how social practices and power relations are

organised within and across different institutions. According to DeVault (2021), it is a

distinct strategy for investigating ruling relations and processes that are outside the site of a

local institution as provides a means of revealing how "the (often implicit and/or erasing)

connections between work processes and institutional discourses" are coordinated by

uncovering how ideological "institutional circuits" govern people through the texts that

operate in local and trans-local institutional settings.

Institutional ethnography holds that by taking up ruling discourses, individuals become

enmeshed in ruling practices and interests, and institutional ethnography aims to discover

"just how our everyday worlds are being put together within social relations beyond the

scope of our experience" (Smith, 2005, p. 32, in Campbell and Gregor, 2004, in Bishop and

Sanderson, 2018, p. 128). While the research informant is the centre of concern in

institutional ethnography, it is not actually the person that is being studied. "The inquiry is

always about circumstances located in the world of the subject, even if it is outside the

subject's experience and knowledge" (Campbell and Gregor, 2004, p. 59). This makes institutional ethnography a useful approach for understanding whether experiences of injustice in academia are shaped by idiosyncratic realities or if the interplay of structural forces and agency creates local realities. According to Bishop and Sanderson (2018, p. 128), an institutional ethnography can be understood as "beginning in a particular experience, and the conditions under which that experience arises and is lived by someone (Campbell and Gregor, 2004)". Therefore, the focus of the investigation is on the conditions "under which experiences arise and are lived by someone" (Campbell and Gregor, 2004, p. 5), rather than the experiences themselves.

As institutional ethnography has drawn aspects of its approach from ethnography and is thus often confused with it. According to Bishop and Sanderson (2018), the term "institutional ethnography" "… does not designate a bounded organisational space (as might be suggested when undertaking a school ethnography), rather it refers to the investigation of a "complex of ruling relations" – that is to say, the multiple activities of individuals, organisations, professional associations, and agencies, and (crucially) "the discourses they produce and circulate that are organised around a particular function"" (Bishop and Sanderson, 2018, p. 128).

6.4   Ethico-onto-epistemology of institutional ethnography

Institutional ethnography is based on the epistemic assumption that all knowledge is socially organised and that it is socially constructed (Rankin, 2017, p. 20). While institutional ethnography draws some of its methodology from ethnography, it has a unique way of applying method to discover and, more importantly, to actualize ontology as "an approach to inquiry and a method of inquiry" (Carpenter and Mojab, 2008, p.2). Institutional

ethnography has an ethico-onto-epistemological base; a term coined by physicist-philosopher Karen Barad (2007) to describe the inseparability of ethics, ontology, and epistemology when engaging in knowledge production, scientific practices, and the world and its inhabitants.

According to Carpenter and Mojab (2008) institutional ethnography's dialectical, ontological grounding can be explicated by seeing it as an approach to inquiry, and b) its unique application of method is what actualises its ontology. This approach should not be reduced to fieldwork techniques of ethnography. They state: "We fear that to approach institutional ethnography in a different way would lead us to misrepresent the entirety of the project and risk reducing this approach to tips and tricks on fieldwork" (Carpenter and Mojab, 2008, p.2). However, knowing is a distributed practice that includes a larger material arrangement, and we participate in scientific or other practices of knowing as part of a larger material configuration of the world and its ongoing open-ended articulation (Barad, 2007, p. 342). Thus, institutional ethnography cannot be isolated from other research perspectives and should be located within larger frameworks of research according to Barad (2007) and Carpenter and Mojab (2008).

6.5   A rationale for using institutional ethnography

Initially, a form of critical discourse analysis known as Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) was chosen to guide the investigation because it has a transformative rather than an emancipatory agenda (Sunderland, 2006, p. 175). According to Sunderland, Baxter (2008; 2010) describes FPDA as a "feminist approach to analysing the ways in which speakers negotiate their identities, relationships, and positions in the world according to the ways they are located by interwoven discourses" (Baxter, 2009, p. 137).

FPDA incorporates Judith Butler's (1999, 2010) feminist ideas about performativity (see

Wodak, 2009) and poststructuralist interpretations of power and position, so it has a

feminist agenda for understanding how power relations are discursively constructed.

Baxter's intention is "not to polarise males as villains and females as victims in any

oppositional sense, nor even to presume that women as a category are necessarily

powerless, disadvantaged, or oppressed by "the other"" (Baxter, 2003:55 in Sunderland,

2006:60). Similarly, Smith's work avoids polarising genders as victims and oppressors, or

seeing women as necessarily disadvantaged, oppressed, or powerless (Baxter, 2003).

However, there is a risk of hegemony in every narrative, and justice can be seen as being for

or against any one person in any given situation. As Fraser (1997, p. 234) argues that the age

of precarity has transformed gender inequality from "didactic relations of mastery and

subjection to more impersonal structural mechanisms that are lived through more fluid

cultural forms", an institutional ethnographic approach appeared to be axiologically rational

and morally acceptable for this study. While Baxter offers no practical solution to the

feminist dilemma of disempowering one person to empower another, institutional

ethnography offers a practical solution to this ethical paradox by starting where the person

is to do research, rather than objectifying the subject. Therefore, institutional ethnography

was chosen as a more appropriate theoretical framework instead of FPDA.

The methods of institutional ethnography provide a means to investigate how

institutional discourse "compels and shapes practice(s) and/or how norms of practice speak

to, for, and over individuals." Accordingly, it is a means to uncover how participation in work

gives "material face" to institutions which govern the social world. The following excerpt

from an extensive review of institutional ethnography by Malachowski, Skorobohacz and

Stasiulis (2017) explains how useful institutional ethnography is as an investigative tool. They state that institutional ethnography can:

> *"…explicate the social organisation of knowledge; depict textually-mediated relations; highlight contradictions between authoritative knowledge and practical knowledge and experience; make the often invisible work of particular people visible to others; show how ruling relations, discourses, and forms of institutional power organise and regulate people's lives; map out particular work processes; demonstrate how people's work in certain spheres of contemporary society is changing or being reorganised; question taken-for-granted assumptions, practices, or knowledge; and provide an alternative analysis that shows or tells something new or different from previous work.*

> *(Malachowski, Skorobohacz and Stasiulis, 2017, p. 106)*

LaFrance (2019) summarises the value and scope of institutional ethnography as a legitimate choice for this investigation:

> *Because IE sees institutions as hierarchically ordered, rule-governed, and textually mediated workplaces and as complex rhetorical, social, and material entities that shape what we do and how we do it, ethnographers who adapt the IE framework can systematically account for individual practices within the interconnected sites of programs, units, and institutions. IE is concerned with the specifics of difference, divergence, and disjunction within sites of writing; it brings to visibility what happens in local sites below the level of professional, managerial, pedagogical, and other free-floating discourses. The methodology offers us the opportunity to uncover and explore stories that are often otherwise erased by the field's preoccupation with generalized disciplinary and pedagogical ideals.*

> *(LaFrance, 2019, p.25)*

As institutional ethnography is concerned with the sites "where we work, the people we work most closely with, the generative power of institutional texts and discourse" (LaFrance. 2018b, p. 457), institutional ethnography's critique of objectified knowledge and its use in uncovering institutional life illustrate how "frequently, and in how in systematic ways, the categories and conceptual frameworks of administration are inattentive to the actual circumstances of the diverse lives people live in contemporary societies" (Xenitidou and Gilbert, 2009, p. 33). Furthermore, institutional ethnography shifts the focus from administrative concerns and objectified knowledge to the "puzzle" of people's everyday lives and aims to "empirically link, describe, and explicate tensions embedded in people's practices not to theorise them (Rankin, 2017b, p.2). T According to Campbell, the "enmeshing of the local with extra-local, of ruling interests and purposes being enacted in everyday sites by people who draw on their own knowledge, skills and purposes, creates for them a landscape of intertwined and confusing beliefs and commitments" (Campbell, 2015, p. 253). The express purpose of institutional ethnography's analytical methods is to shift into view hidden forms of structural injustice which may otherwise remain embedded in the unconscious biases of their social relations. The methods of institutional ethnography, then, provide a means to investigate how institutional discourse "compels and shapes practice(s) and/or how norms of practice speak to, for, and over individuals". Accordingly, it is a means to uncover how participation in work gives "material face" to institutions which govern the social world (ibid.). Thus, Institutional ethnography offers a way to shed light on the effects of the ideological templating of managerialist 'teaching excellence' discourse.

6.6 Theoretics in institutional ethnography

Institutional ethnography is based on the epistemic assumption that all knowledge is socially organised and constructed (Rankin, 2017, p. 20). While it draws some of its methodology from ethnography, it has a unique way of applying method to discover and actualise ontology as "an approach to inquiry and a method of inquiry" (Carpenter and Mojab, 2008, p. 2). Institutional ethnography has an ethico-onto-epistemological base; a term coined by physicist-philosopher Karen Barad (2007) that describes the inseparability of ethics, ontology, and epistemology in knowledge production.

According to Carpenter and Mojab (2008, a) institutional ethnography's dialectical, ontological grounding can be viewed as an approach to inquiry, and b) its unique application of method is what actualises its ontology. They caution against reducing institutional ethnography to mere fieldwork techniques, stating: "We fear that to approach it differently would risk misrepresenting the entirety of the project" (Carpenter and Mojab, 2008, a, p. 2). Knowing is a distributed practice that includes larger material arrangements, and we participate in practices of knowing as part of a broader configuration of the world (Barad, 2007, p. 342). Thus, institutional ethnography cannot be isolated from other research perspectives and should be located within larger frameworks of inquiry (Barad, 2007; Carpenter and Mojab, 2008). This positioning is essential as it allows researchers to draw connections across different dimensions of social life and probe the institutional structures that often go unnoticed.

Arguably the atheoretical stress in institutional ethnography highlights the significance of collaborative knowledge production, wherein the voices of those experiencing inequalities are central to the inquiry. Researchers in institutional ethnography engage with

participants to unpack the intricacies of their experiences, extending beyond mere observation to an active co-construction of knowledge, facilitating a deeper understanding of the social fabric that shapes lives.

5.5 A Rationale for Using Institutional Ethnography

Initially, a form of critical discourse analysis known as Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) was chosen to guide the investigation because it has a transformative rather than an emancipatory agenda (Sunderland, 2006, p. 175). Baxter (2008; 2010) describes FPDA as a "feminist approach to analysing the ways in which speakers negotiate their identities, relationships, and positions in the world according to interwoven discourses" (Baxter, 2009, p. 137). This approach incorporates Judith Butler's feminist ideas about performativity and poststructuralist interpretations of power and position.

Baxter's intention is "not to polarise males as villains and females as victims" (Baxter, 2003:55 in Sunderland, 2006:60). However, there is a risk of hegemony in each narrative, as Fraser (1997, p. 234) argues that the age of precarity has transformed gender inequality from "didactic relations of mastery and subjection to more impersonal structural mechanisms that are lived through more fluid cultural forms." While Baxter offers no practical solution to the dilemma of disempowering one person to empower another, institutional ethnography provides a noteworthy methodology by focusing on the lived experiences of individuals rather than abstract categories.

Indeed, it illustrates how social categories and identities are constructed and negotiated within specific contexts. By starting the inquiry where the individual is situated, institutional ethnography permits an analysis that avoids essentialist views on gender and other identities. This reflexive approach contributes to a more nuanced understanding of

power dynamics and social structures, offering a more direct path to understanding the lived realities of individuals experiencing diverse forms of oppression. Thus, institutional ethnography was chosen as a more appropriate theoretical framework instead of FPDA.

5.6 Theoretics in Institutional Ethnography

Institutional ethnography focuses on how people "do the social," rather than theorising it (Smith, 2014, loc. 241 of 6152). Such an approach involves an openness to the diverse activities of individuals that are not predetermined or pre-theorised (Smith, 2005, p. 50, in Kearney et al., 2019). Unlike traditional research, which often relies on theories that can constrain selection and interpretation, institutional ethnography permits open-ended discovery, allowing researchers to adapt their inquiries based on participant experiences (DeVault and McCoy; Smith and Griffith, 2022).

A significant challenge within this methodology is illustrated by Smith's notion of the "14th floor effect." This phenomenon describes how theoretical constructs can overshadow the social relations they are meant to exemplify, particularly when researchers become overly immersed in their theories (Smith, 2008). For example, researchers may develop frameworks or models that dominate their understanding, leading them to neglect the nuanced realities and lived experiences of individuals involved in their studies. Such immersion can result in overlooking the actual social dynamics that should be the primary focus of research, ultimately leading to misinterpretations of relationships and contexts.

This notion is particularly relevant in institutional ethnography, as the methodology encourages a fluid and responsive approach to research. By allowing the research direction to unfold naturally, institutional ethnography fosters deeper engagement with social relations without the constraints imposed by predetermined theories (Kearney et al., 2019, p. 18/19). This flexibility enables researchers to document and analyse lived experiences

more accurately and meaningfully, counteracting the risks associated with the "14th floor effect."

However, institutional ethnography is not entirely atheoretical; it draws similarities from Bourdieusian theory, particularly regarding how recognition is conceptualised (Reid, 2017, p. 79). When Carroll (2010) asked Smith whether her approach entailed principles like communicative democracy or Fraser's (1997) "parity of participation," Smith acknowledged the differing perspectives researchers have on shared goals (Smith, in Carroll, 2010, p. 24). Indeed, Stanley (2018) challenges the notion that Smith's work lacks a theoretical base by asserting that the complexity of her work often defies generalisation (p. 115). Nonetheless, the ideas of Karen Barad (2007), which suggest that we participate in practices of knowing as part of a larger material configuration, apply to institutional ethnography just as they do to any other approach.

The distinctions among Smith, Fraser, and Bourdieu may lie in institutional ethnography's emphasis on practical critical responses within theory as a means to achieve social justice, contrasting with the more descriptively philosophical approaches of Fraser and Bourdieu. Similarities between institutional ethnography and habitus as methods can be found in their references to Marx and Wittgenstein, along with phenomenological perspectives (Throop and Murphy, 2002).

Despite Smith's criticisms of Bourdieu's use of "masculinist and confrontational metaphors, evocation of symbolic power, and determinism" (Smith, 2005, p. 56), several other scholars identify meaningful similarities between institutional ethnography and Bourdieu's contributions (Reid, 2017, p. 79), as noted by Gerrard and Farrell (2013). Influential concepts from both Bourdieu and Nancy Fraser concerning social justice and the

Bourdieusian concept of méconnaissance are integral to institutional ethnography (James, 2015; Atkinson, 2016; Reid, 2017).

The Bourdieusian term "méconnaissance" captures the absence of recognition within power structures and involves misrecognition or false consciousness, referring to how individuals may misunderstand their position within these dynamics. In legal contexts, méconnaissance indicates a failure to recognise a legal right or claim, while philosophically, it signifies the inability to appreciate the true nature or value of something (Bourdieu, 2000).

According to Bourdieu, méconnaissance occurs when individuals fail to recognise everyday processes due to the constraints of their habitus, leading to concealed interests and inequities often maintained by dominant social groups (James, 2015, p. 100). James distinguishes between the concepts of recognition in Fraser's framework and the Bourdieusian perspective, emphasizing the significance of awareness and acknowledgment in understanding social structures. This comparative analysis invites a broader conversation about how knowledge is produced and disseminated within different sociological frameworks, ultimately enhancing the discourse surrounding institutional ethnography's role in unveiling and challenging systemic inequalities.

6.7   Critiques of institutional ethnography

Institutional ethnography has also been accused of weak theoretical claims for its distinct methods and processes of analysing data and, despite its roots, as well as no longer being about feminism. Criticisms, such as questions of the relationship between truth, actuality, and foundations in institutional ethnography; and whether Smith's sociology can be "for" people are also grist for this mill. Smith's involvement in feminism underpins her

approach, so it is understandable that critiques of institutional ethnography question whether institutional ethnography can claim to be a feminist approach. Smith, however, has responded to criticisms that institutional ethnography ignores, or brackets, matters of race, sexuality, and so on "with clarity across a number of publications" (Stanley, 2018, p. 108).

Malachowski, Skorobohacz and Stasiulis (2017) detail some of the criticisms in a comprehensive study of peer-reviewed journal publications on institutional ethnography between 2003 and 2013.

6.7.1 It's no longer about feminism

There is criticism that institutional ethnography is no longer a feminist project because its emphasis has shifted to people. This leads to charges that institutional ethnography does not consider the socially constructed inequalities in the relations between women and men because gender is taken for granted. Stanley questions "whether and to what extent feminist work can be positioned entirely in "people" terms, rather than foregrounding the exclusion of women and what is necessary to remake sociology in a way that does not dissolve women into people". Therefore, there is concern "the dynamics and outcomes of women's exclusion specifically is lost or at least bracketed" (Stanley, 2018, p.108). Furthermore, critics argue that Smith does not construct or use analytic categories or variables, and thus gender is subsumed in how the standpoints of people intersect within their local social relations and how they deal with the problematics that arise.

Smith indeed appears to refer to gender indirectly without considering the socially constructed inequalities in relations between women and men. Smith, however, consciously expanded the gendered exclusion of women to include all people whose standpoint is outside the apparatus of ruling, most notably in the renaming of her 1997 work, A Sociology

for Women, as A Sociology for People in 2005. Thus Smith "fully recognises the gendered (sub) text of academic disciplines and wider institutional practices, and equally fully recognises the exclusionary aspects of how gender relations are constituted" (Stanley, 2018, p. 108). And so, the critique that institutional ethnography has forgotten its feminist roots may be challenged without relinquishing the knowledge that many women are still unacceptably and continually subject to intersecting forms of denigration by race, gender, class or culture in common with any and all marginalised people.

6.7.2   It's just another standpoint theory

The claim is made that institutional ethnography is not a distinct sociology but just another version of standpoint theory.

However, according to Stanley, the idea of standpoint is an aspect of Smith's work which is often misunderstood, "with critics giving the impression of them having read only the secondary literature and not engaging with what Smith herself has written" (Stanley, 2018, p. 110). Stanley remarks wryly that "… Smith doesn't do what the category women's or feminist standpoint theory has been constructed as, therefore she is criticised even though she has not associated herself with this other than earlier having used the term standpoint in a different way" (Stanley, 2018, p. 110).

Smith's spirited rejection of those who depict her work as 'standpoint theory" (Harding 1988, p. 8) is discussed in the methodology chapter.

6.7.3   It fails to acknowledge its own social relations

Walby (2007) maintains that institutional ethnography does not support Smith's claim to preserve the presence of the subject because it does not acknowledge its own

social relations. There may be some merit in Walby's claims that institutional ethnography "demystifies conceptual practices of power by placing them in the context of their production only to re-mystify knowledge production (to a lesser degree of objectification) in its own method of configuring the social relations of research" (p.1009). However, I would argue against Walby's claim that institutional ethnography does not acknowledge how research" produces rather than preserves the presence of the subject, how interviewing is constitutive of the account, how transcription is an interpretive instead of a straightforward process, and how as reflexive researchers, we face 'degrees of reflexivity' (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) and thus degrees of objectification" (Walby, 2007, pp.1009/1010). It will be seen that an enormous amount of care is taken in institutional ethnography to reduce, as far as this is possible, objectifying the subject of the research, which may be seen in the researcher's approach to obtaining data for this study.

6.7.4   Is it ontological gerrymandering?

Malachowski, Skorobohacz and Stasiulis (2017) find that institutional ethnography is being used in combination with other theories, methodologies, or analytic tools to a significant extent and that it is regularly taken up as a methodology and as a method in combination with the work of other major theorists such as Foucault, Arendt, and, as in this thesis, Bourdieu and Fraser. Therefore, they are of the view that institutional ethnography opens a "can of worms" regarding its need to make an ontological shift from conceptual and theoretical explanations to the material world of people's everyday activities. Consequently, they believe that institutional ethnography opens its claims for its distinct methods and processes of analysing data as "tantamount to mixing ontologies and epistemologies, which some researchers "liken to a kind of ""ontological gerrymandering" "(ibid., p. 107). Although

Smith "rejects the dominance of theory" (2005, p. 49), the critique that institutional ethnography is theoretically driven and, like all social scientific practice, produces its results by analysis is valid.

Nonetheless, Malachowski, Skorobohacz and Stasiulis point out that controversies and tensions in mixing different ontologies and epistemologies are familiar in mixed methods and mixed research debates. Institutional ethnographers give the rationale for their mixed theoretical approach as a way of "explicitly and implicitly" addressing social research questions" that could not be answered by institutional ethnography on its own. For example, Peacock (2017) states that "Bourdieu's sociology, critical race theory, reflexive ethnography, and Foucauldian governmentality theory have all been utilised to help IE studies to better trace the workings of power operating through the relations entangling practices, texts, and discourses" (Peacock, 2017, p.93). Thus, institutional ethnography's theoretical pluralism is seen by many as an advantage rather than as confused theoretical "gerrymandering". However, it remains a good idea for researchers to question their own 'social relations of research" as Walby advises.

Institutional ethnography, then, appears to offer a way to investigate the policy-mediated structures of institutional power in an integrated and sociologically legitimate way. According to Hart and McKinnon (2010), institutional ethnography provides a way to investigate policy-mediated structures of institutional power in a sociologically legitimate way. Its ethnomethodological strategies and ontology bring into focus the ruling relations which may act to "template" local responses within an institution, and its dialogic methodological approach aligns conceptually with discursive investigations. Hart and McKinnon believe that free communication with others allows us to align our consciousnesses, focus on shared experiences, correct misunderstandings, and construct

social reality. It has been argued in this chapter that institutional ethnography remains an apt approach for the investigation of the research problem despite such critiques, provided that the social relations of the research itself are acknowledged at each stage of the research process. Therefore, this study is an attempt to construct the truth of their social reality through shared conversational interviews, and an examination of 'teaching excellence' policy texts that template their daily lives

6.8   Chapter conclusion

This chapter, a rationale for using institutional ethnography to investigate how 'teaching excellence' is constructed within higher education policy discourse and how it influences the working lives of academics was offered. The suitability of institutional ethnography, which is rooted in Marxism and feminism, is argued as appropriate for a qualitative case study for an investigation which seeks to uncover the hidden realities of daily academic life. Key concepts, including "standpoint," "ruling relations," and "texts," were introduced to demonstrate how institutional regimes shape individual experiences. Institutional ethnography's critical focus on power dynamics and structural injustices was explored, alongside responses to critiques regarding its feminist origins and theoretical framework. The method is positioned as an effective way to examine how teaching excellence policy discourse impacts academic practice, while recognising challenges related to reflexivity and the integration of various research approaches. The methodology of institutional ethnography is discussed in more detail the next chapter.

6.9   Chapter references

Barad, K. (2007) Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning. Durham: Duke University Press.

Baxter, J. (2003) Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baxter, J. (2008) Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: A New Theoretical and Methodological Approach?. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baxter, J. (2009) 'Discourse-analytic approaches to text and talk', in P. Gee (ed.) Discourse Analysis: An Introduction. New York: Routledge, pp. 137-155.

Baxter, J. (2010) The Language of Female Leadership. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bishop, C. and Sanderson, D. (2018) 'Institutional ethnography as a tool for knowledge creation and distribution', Journal of Knowledge Studies, 8(2), pp. 123-135.

Bohman, J. (2016) Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000) Pascalian Meditations. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Butler, J. (1999) Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. 2nd edn. New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2010) Performative Agency: Interrogating the Limits of Sexual Harassment. 2nd edn. New York: Routledge.

Campbell, M. and Gregor, F. (2004) Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Institutional Ethnography. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Carpenter, S. and Mojab, S. (2008) Institutional Ethnography as a Critical Research Approach. Lanham: Lexington Books.

DeVault, M. (2021) 'Investigating ruling relations: institutional ethnography as a method', Journal of Critical Social Inquiry, 17(4), pp. 87-112.

Ecclestone, K. (2007) 'Resilience and neoliberalism in education', Journal of Educational Policy, 22(4), pp. 455-472.

Fraser, N. (1997) Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition. New York: Routledge.

Gerrard, J. and Farrell, L. (2013) 'Remaking the academy: institutional ethnography as an approach to critical educational research', Journal of Curriculum Inquiry, 43(1), pp. 118-137.

Givens, N. (2008) Ruling Relations in the Context of Institutional Research. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Gillborn, D. (2005) 'Education policy as an act of white supremacy: whiteness, critical race theory and education reform', Journal of Educational Policy, 20(4), pp. 485-505.

Harding, S. (1988) Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hart, A. and McKinnon, L. (2010) 'Institutional ethnography and the study of higher education policy', Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 32(1), pp. 95-106.

James, M. (2015) 'Recognition and méconnaissance in critical race theory', Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 22(4), pp. 100-120.

Kearney, M., LaFrance, M. and Sanderson, D. (2019) Doing Institutional Ethnography: Analyzing the Social Organization of Knowledge. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

LaFrance, M. (2018) 'The rhetoric of policy and the lived experiences of educators: institutional ethnography and the study of education', Journal of Educational Ethnography, 8(2), pp. 457-475.

LaFrance, M. (2019) 'Institutional ethnography: uncovering invisible work in educational contexts', Journal of Critical Educational Policy Studies, 12(2), pp. 25-40.

Malachowski, D., Skorobohacz, J. and Stasiulis, K. (2017) 'The utility of institutional ethnography as a research method in higher education studies', Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 39(2), pp. 100-110.

Peacock, M. (2017) 'Institutional ethnography: a means for revealing work, power, and control in educational settings', Journal of Critical Discourse Studies, 14(1), pp. 87-98.

Rankin, J. (2017a) 'Conducting analysis in institutional ethnography: analytical tools to guide beginners', Sociology of Knowledge Journal, 16(1), pp. 1-19.

Rankin, J. (2017b) 'Institutional ethnography and the study of power in social institutions', Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 22(2), pp. 1-15.

Reid, D. (2017) Bourdieu's Habitus and Institutional Ethnography. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Smith, D.E. (2005) Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Smith, D.E. (2006) Text, Work, and Social Relations: Selected Writings. New York: Routledge.

Smith, D.E. (2008) 'The 14th floor effect: investigating the role of texts in the social organization of ruling relations', Journal of Sociology of Knowledge, 12(1), pp. 13-25.

Smith, D.E. and Griffith, A. (2022) Texts in Institutional Ethnography: Analysis and Action. New York: Routledge.

Stanley, L. (2018) 'Feminist institutional ethnography: its roots, current practices, and potential futures', Journal of Feminist Sociology, 8(2), pp. 105-120.

Sunderland, J. (2006) Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Theories and Applications. New York: Routledge.

Throop, C. and Murphy, K. (2002) 'Phenomenology and institutional ethnography: ontological reflections', Journal of Sociology of Knowledge, 22(1), pp. 33-50.

Walby, K. (2007) 'On the social relations of research: a critical assessment of institutional ethnography', Qualitative Inquiry, 13(7), pp. 1008-1030.

Wodak, R. (2009) Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology. 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications.

Xenitidou, M. and Gilbert, N. (2009) 'Institutional ethnography and the study of ruling relations', Journal of Critical Sociology, 34(1), pp. 29-40.

7   THE METHODOLOGY OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

7.1 Chapter introduction

7.2 The methodological approach

7.3 Mapping in institutional ethnography

7.4 Mapping ruling relations

7.4 The problematic

7.5 Chapter conclusion

7.6 Chapter references

7.1   Chapter introduction

This chapter establishes the methodological framework guiding this research which is based on institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography signifies a departure from traditional research methodologies prevalent in the fields of education and social sciences in that it emphasises the lived experiences of individuals while critically examining the institutional texts that shape and inform those experiences.

This emphasis on lived experiences allows researchers to unearth the complexities and contradictions confronted by individuals functioning within institutional frameworks. During interviews, the respondents in this study were invited to articulate the difficulties they had in reconciling their pedagogical values with institutional expectations imposed by the institution in response to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the National Student Survey (NSS). The qualitative insights which resulted reflected the reality of navigating these competing demands, thereby revealing how institutional policies can sometimes undermine their professional identities and commitment to teaching which is arguably more difficult to do using other methodological means.

7.2   A systemic focus

In institutional ethnography, personal characteristics such as age, gender, or work experience are not the primary focus of data analysis and interpretation because the methodology is aimed at uncovering how social relations and institutional processes organise people's activities

Dorothy Smith (2005) emphasises that the goal of institutional ethnography is to examine how people's everyday experiences are shaped by broader institutional relations, not to explain their actions based on personal characteristics. The purpose is to investigate

the "relations of ruling"- the complex of administrative, managerial, and textual processes that govern people's activities. Therefore, the analysis of data in this study centres on how these larger processes operate, rather than on the respondents themselves. Smith argues that the standpoints of individuals in an organisation are used as an entry point into understanding the larger institutional processes. In institutional ethnography, "standpoint" refers to the position from which individuals experience institutional processes, but not on fixed personal characteristic such as age or gender. Rather, standpoint is a methodological tool for mapping how individuals' work is organised by institutional relations (Smith, 2005) and serves to connect individual's experiences to the broader social organisation of those experiences, rather than analysing their personal attributes.

Rankin (2017) supports the view that institutional ethnography uses the accounts of individuals to trace how institutional texts and practices shape their everyday work and how their work is coordinated by external institutional factors (Rankin, 2017). Thus, the aim is to reveal the processes that organise actions and interactions, making personal characteristics secondary to the study. Additionally, Walby (2007) argues that institutional ethnography avoids focusing on personal characteristics by prioritising the exploration of institutional practices. Walby notes that institutional ethnography is concerned with how texts, policies, and procedures organise people's actions and that the focus on institutional coordination means that the analysis centres on ruling relations and social organisation, rather than on personal identity or demographic details (Walby, 2007).

7.3   Methodological approach

At the heart of institutional ethnography lies the foundational understanding that the lived experiences of individuals cannot be divorced from the institutional structures that

govern them. Traditional methodologies often prioritise quantitative data to achieve

generalisability across broader populations, potentially overlooking the nuanced realities of

individual lives. In contrast, institutional ethnography is deeply qualitative to capture the

intricacies of individuals' everyday experiences. To achieve the aims of institutional

ethnography, a comprehensive methodological approach involving qualitative interviews

and critical analyses of institutional texts was employed. This dual methodology allowed for

an in-depth exploration of both individual and institutional perspectives, providing a holistic

understanding of the constructs of teaching excellence. Using thematic juxtaposition,

qualitative data from interviews to identify recurring themes concerning teaching excellence

and institutional pressure was systematically coded. Subsequently, these themes were

compared against relevant institutional texts, illuminating tensions between the academic

voices of respondents and the directives articulated in policy documents. For example,

academics expressed apprehensions regarding the NSS and TEF as measures of teaching

quality. By contrasting these sentiments with the language employed in institutional

documents, the policy framing of teaching excellence was revealed as often capturing the

complexities of academic life inadequately, leading to a significant disjoint between policy

expectations and pedagogical realities.

Concurrently, a critical analysis of institutional documents, scrutinising both overt and

covert messages communicated through policy texts was undertaken. This analysis unveiled

the ways in which the institutional narratives embodied ideologies that constrained

teaching excellence. Key texts related to the TEF and NSS - primarily the papers of the

institutional performance enhancement committee during the time of the study - were

examined to unearth underlying assumptions regarding student engagement and

educational quality, thereby shedding light on how these frameworks exacerbated systemic inequalities.

The mapping techniques mentioned above were employed to visually represent the connections between individual experiences and institutional texts. Thus, the methodological approach facilitated a comprehensive examination of how policies influenced the work of respondents and revealed the power dynamics that shaped their experiences within the institution. In documenting these relationships institutionally ethnographically, a demonstration of how institutional mechanisms intersect with individual narratives to create a complex web of influences that inform "teaching excellence" was made possible.

Dorothy Smith (1987, 2022) highlighted the problematic nature of the everyday world; insisting that researchers must prioritise the voices of those embedded within the institutions that shape their lives. By exemplifying this approach, the interviews conducted, and university committee papers examined in this study yielded a series of narratives that illuminated the challenges of achieving teaching excellence in an English higher education institution. By centring these voices, this research avoids overly simplistic interpretations that fail to account for the intricate dynamics of academic life. However, despite the primary focus on lived experiences, a cornerstone of institutional ethnography is its attention to institutional texts - the policies, guidelines, reports, and other formal documents that dictate and regulate behaviour within institutions. While individual interviews provide individual experiences for analysis, institutional ethnographic analysis focuses on institutional texts in juxtaposition with qualitative data from interviews to uncover the mechanisms through which local institutional policies are enacted and interpreted. As a result of this approach, examining various institutional documents, including the TEF

criteria, NSS reports, and internal performance enhancement policy papers allowed

connections between the textual representations of policies and the realities experienced

by academic staff to emerge.

An examination of institutional texts, therefore, allowed for a deeper understanding of

the disciplinary language and ideological frameworks that underlie policy implementation.

Thus, the rigorous engagement with textual analysis demanded by institutional ethnography

served to amplify the voices of individuals by situating their narratives within the broader

institutional context. As Smith contends, documents serve as instrumental means through

which the ruling relations of society are perpetuated; thus, their examination yields valuable

insights into how individual experiences are shaped and constrained by institutions.

Dorothy E. Smith examines how institutions structure people's lives and how

understanding these structures can reveal the workings of power in society and discusses

the role of documents in perpetuating ruling relations and shaping individual experiences

through institutions in "The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology" (1987). In

this book, she explores how everyday life and social relations are organised and maintained

through institutional texts, offering a feminist critique of how power operates through

seemingly mundane practices like the use of documents. This work is foundational in her

development of institutional ethnography. In addition to this, she explores the role of

documents in other key works. In "Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of

Ruling" (1990) she delves further into how texts (including documents) function as tools that

shape and perpetuate societal power relations and discusses how these texts coordinate

people's actions within institutions, affecting how individuals experience their social worlds.

In "Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People" (2005) she emphasises the

importance of examining documents and texts as central to understanding institutional

practices. She argues that documents are crucial for tracking how institutional power

structures are enacted and maintained across different settings.

7.3.1   Mapping in institutional ethnography

Mapping out ruling relations that extend beyond the local and the everyday is a

central feature of institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987, 2005; Waters, 2015). There is no

single approach to institutional ethnographic mapping, and maps are used in different ways

to organise the unique information systems of different research projects (Underwood,

Smith, and Martin, 2018). Usually, an institutional ethnographic map is the result or

outcome of a study, with the map used to make visible the many different mechanisms

through which informants are linked and hooked into ruling relations (Smith, 1999).

Dalmer (2021) states that maps provide orientation to the "social landscape"

comprising the problematic under investigation and serve "as a guide through a complex

ruling apparatus" (DeVault and McCoy, 2002, p. 754 in Dalmer, 2021, p. 81). They are

particularly useful "as institutional ethnographers are often searching through unwaged,

unnoticed, and marginalised forms of work that are required to carry out leisure, domestic,

or other everyday activities" (ibid., p. 85). Dalmer emphasises that ruling relations are the

objects of analysis in institutional ethnography and should not be considered as the

research findings.

The mapping process serves as the "empirical tracing of sequences of work and texts

from a starting place in people's accounts into institutional work processes and action"

(Dalmer, 2021, citing Watters, 2015), progressively tracing the ruling relations revealed by

the emerging problematic. The advantages of mapping include grounding the researcher in

the everyday experiences of informants, privileging their knowledge of work, and helping to reveal invisible work processes (Dalmer, 2021, pp. 91/92).

7.3.2 Mapping ruling relations

The methodological objective of institutional ethnography is to map the ruling relations that underpin social practices. Ruling relations refer to the complex interplay of power and authority embedded within institutional structures, which can dictate the roles and experiences of individuals. This type of mapping facilitates understanding of the mechanisms of power that influence daily academic practices. Mapping techniques were used in this study to visually represent the relationships between the narratives of academic staff and the institutional texts governing their actions. For example, while respondents provided subjective accounts of their experiences with teaching excellence policies, the analysis concurrently scrutinised how these narratives were shaped or constrained by the institutional policies they encountered. This dual focus revealed the tensions and disjunctures between the intended purposes of policies and the lived experiences of these academics. Empirical and visual mapping not only highlighted discrepancies between management's intentions to improve quality and the actual experiences of educators but also unearthed structural inequities that may otherwise have remained obscured. By employing institutional ethnographic principles, this thesis critically interrogates the prevailing hierarchies and power dynamics operating within the institution, elucidating how these structures can perpetuate inequality and restrict meaningful engagement with pedagogical practices.

7.3.3 Ruling relations

Dorothy Smith describes ruling relations as "that extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organise our everyday lives—the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them" (Smith, 2005, p. 10). We are "ruled by forms of organisation vested in and mediated by texts and documents...whether on paper or in computer, and the creation of a world in texts as a site of action" (Smith, 1987, p.3).

Texts derive their power to rule people from generative translocal forces known as "ruling relations." These are relations that, while we participate in them, impose their objectified modes upon us (Smith and Griffith, 2022) and co-order and coordinate people's activities and actions in and across various multiple local settings (DeVault and McCoy, 2002). Ruling relations "originate outside the direct experience of the actors concerned, mediate people's social relations in concealed ways" (Smith, 2005). That is, extra-local modes of ruling transcribe local actualities into "abstracted and generalised forms of objectified and impersonal modes of consciousness. Texts in institutional ethnography coordinate what is being done "as a moment in the sequence of action among people - a social relation" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.50). They are not seen as an independent focus of investigation as they might be in other forms of discourse analysis. By tracing how the activities of people as they work are coordinated "with and through texts," ruling relations can be explored "from within the everyday of people's experience" (Smith and Griffith, 2022 a, p.50). Smith (2005) notes that texts originating outside the direct experience of the actors concerned mediate people's social relations in hidden ways, and forms of consciousness created in this way are

properties of the organisation or discourse rather than those of individual informants (Smith, 1987, p.89). Extra-local modes of ruling transcribe local actualities into "abstracted and generalised forms of objectified and impersonal modes of consciousness in concealed ways" (Smith, 2005) and produce forms of consciousness that are properties of the organisation or discourse, rather than those of individual informants (Smith, 1987, p.89).

7.3.4   The problematic

According to Smith (1987:91), a "problematic" in institutional ethnography is a method of guiding and focusing inquiry that helps researchers choose among "complex threads" of data and discern connections between disconnected standpoints, such as the disconnections between policy enforcers" and policy enactors" perspectives. This method is described by Rankin (2017b) as a critical heuristic device and by Bisaillon (2012) as a "line of fault," a "place of epistemological rupture" that is a contested space between the inside and outside of a politico-administrative regime. The purpose of identifying a problematic is to find and describe "disjoints" in texts such as recorded conversations of respondents or policy papers.

The problematic begins "in the actualities of people's lives with a focus of investigation that comes from how they participate in or are hooked up into institutional relations" (Smith, 2005:227) in ways not of their own making. According to Rankin (2017b:3), formulating a problematic keeps the institutional ethnography researcher closely aligned with the discipline's core interest in the social organisation of knowledge in relation to how differently located people (and their knowledge) are organised differently. The problematic is a methodological tool that provides a means to track and map ruling relations, which is generated by investigating "the everyday events in people's lives, and in

their problems of knowing - being told one thing, but in fact knowing otherwise on the basis of personal experience" (G.W. Smith, 1995:21, in Rankin, 2000:3, 2017).

The discursive "threads" provided by clusters of similar viewpoints constituted entry points for the development of a problematic as a tool for uncovering complex and interrelated issues of social justice that are hard to express using other methods of investigation.

7.3.5 Standpoint

Following its feminist roots, institutional ethnography takes up the standpoint of the subjugated group as a legitimate source of knowledge about the world. However, the concept of 'standpoint" is differently understood in institutional ethnography than in other forms of feminist standpoint theory. According to Underwood, Smith, and Martin (2018, p. 135), Smith describes standpoint as a social position that allows a particular type of knowledge. Standpoint is seen as revealing how subordinate groups are conditioned to view the world from the perspective of the dominant group, 'since the perspective of the latter is embedded in the institutions and practices of that world" (Appelrouth and Edles, L., 2010, pp. 320/321).

However, Bisaillon and Rankin (2013, p. 35S) state that standpoint in institutional ethnography "is not standpoint epistemology, where knowledge of one group of people is favoured over that of another" but rather "an empirical means of explicating social relations". Like Baxter (2008, 2010) and other standpoint theorists such as Collins (1986, 2000), Hartsock (2004), and Sandra Harding (1991, 2004), Smith argues that the standpoint of women "is constituted outside the realm of abstraction and the apparatuses that rule society" and that the experience of women is constituted "mainly in the here and now, in a particular setting, with particular people" (Smith in Connell, 1992, p. 82).

However, Smith differs fiercely from Harding and Hartsock in her interpretation of what standpoint is. She believes that knowledge is socially organised and cannot be an act or an attribute of individual consciousness. Her notion of standpoint "doesn't privilege a knower" but 'shifts the ground of knowing, the place where inquiry begins" (Smith, 1992, p. 91). Thus, the idea of 'standpoint" in institutional ethnography can be understood as both 'starting point" and "process," meaning that the investigation is initiated via the experience of a person or group that then leads to an understanding of how local and translocal institutional processes have shaped that experience (Bishop and Sanderson, 2018, p. 128).

Furthermore, Rankin argues that in institutional ethnographic theory, a standpoint is not a "perspective," and therefore an institutional ethnographic researcher is not obliged to describe or accommodate multiple perspectives. Respondents" knowledge should not be "valorised, made special, or even accepted as "true"" (Rankin, 2017 b, p. 2). However, respondents should be seen as experts in their knowledge of their daily work, meaning respecting their views as legitimately representing the structural forces impacting their lives.

7.3.6   Institutional circuits

The concept of "institutional circuits" grew from the construct of an "ideological circle" (Smith (George), 1988, p.645) which Smith (Dorothy) and Turner (2014, p. 133) see as a sequence of textually mediated official actions providing "the means of accounting for actual activities going on in the everyday world in terms of the formal categories which coordinate objectively, rationally, a ruling apparatus". Institutional circuits are "recognisable and traceable sequences of institutional action in which work is done to produce texts that select from actualities to build textual representations fitting an authoritative or "boss" text

(law, policy, managerial objectives, frames of discourse, etc.) in such a way that they are recognisable to those they are intended to coordinate" (Smith, 1987, p. 3).

The concept of institutional circuits allows the discovery of how ruling relations are created and maintained within an institution, offering a way to trace how people's actions and experiences are shaped by the texts and documents that govern their lives, as well as how texts and documents are produced and used to coordinate people's actions across multiple local settings. By understanding how institutional circuits operate, a better understanding of how ruling relations impact people's lives and how they might be challenged or transformed can be achieved.

The ordering of texts at one level establishes "the frames and concepts" that control texts at lower levels and texts at lower levels are inversely "fitted to the frames and concepts of higher order texts" (Smith, 2005): "It is in these connections, the modes of coordinating sequences or circuits of institutional action, that we return to texts as major coordinators" (p. 211).

Atkinson (2016) sees sequences of textual control as "circuits of power" and as an extension of Bourdieu's "legitimising circuits" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 106) – the fields "in which the symbolic content of a position-taking is recognised by those not within the field it was generated in" (Atkinson, 2016, p. 32).

7.4 The specialised lexicon of institutional ethnography

"Texts," "discourse" and "work" are specialised terms in institutional ethnography.

- <u>Texts</u> operate as organisational tools, coordinating roles and responsibilities through policies, documents, and visual materials that guide daily interactions

and align activities across institutional contexts (Campbell, 2015; Smith and Griffith, 2022).

- <u>Discourse</u> functions as a methodological approach in institutional ethnography, exploring institutional language practices that subtly regulate individuals' actions and relations within organisational structures. Together, work, texts, and discourse reveal the power dynamics that shape social relations and influence individuals' everyday experiences.

- <u>Work</u> is understood broadly, encompassing activities that require time and effort, often extending to unpaid or unrecognised tasks shaped by social and technological changes (Smith and Griffith, 2022).

7.4.1 Texts in institutional ethnography

According to Campbell(2015), institutions "routinely and discursively" organise people through textual means in ways they do not recognise to enmesh them in ruling practices and interests, creating a "landscape of intertwined and confusing beliefs and commitments" (p. 253) .Institutional texts shape and are shaped by the everyday interactions and practices of people within an institution by defining the roles and responsibilities, establishing procedures and protocols, and forming relationships between different groups and departments within the organisation. Consequently, texts coordinate the activities being done "as a moment in the sequence of action among people - a social relation" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.50). Thus, studying them may reveal the power dynamics and social relations that shape the institution.

"Texts include any written or visual materials that are used in the everyday work practices of an institution (Smith, 2020) such as documents, policies, procedures, reports,

emails, or other written materials as well as visual materials such as charts, graphs, diagrams, or other forms of visual communication and can be anything from documents and policies to name badges and emails They are the 'glue' that holds an institution together, shaping and defining the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the organisation, and the relationships between different groups and departments [Assistant, 2023]."

Governing local and extra-local "boss" texts coordinate individuals over time and space. These texts "carry rhetorical influence, granting agency and authority, casting representations of people and their work, and sanctioning activities" using everything from name badges to emails and formal written procedures (LaFrance, 2019, p. 42). Texts are not seen as the independent focus of investigation, but rather as a way of tracing how the activities of people as they work are coordinated "with and through texts" and exploring ruling relations "from within the everyday of people's experience" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.50).

In institutional ethnography, the concept of "work-text-work" refers to how texts (such as documents, policies, or other written materials) are used in the everyday work practices of an institution. They form sequences of action which have been referred to as "assemblies of sequences" by Smith (2005) as "a series of texts that are part of the work that people do" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p. 58/59). In this study, "text-work-text" sequences of action and the complex of institutional activities comprising "teaching excellence" in the institution were mapped by "mining" interview transcripts, university papers, and national "teaching excellence" policy papers.

Policies control "the processes by which front-line work and its management occur" and make the activities involved accountable by turning "real activities" into stripped-down institutional categories (Stanley, 2019, p.59), such as "diversity and inclusion", "wellbeing",

"teaching excellence" and student engagement". According to the Collins Dictionary, policy statements such as the Higher Education and Research Act of 2017 are "declarations of the plans and intentions of an organisation or government" (Collins Dictionary, 2020). Thus, high-level policy texts, in the form of policy statements, are used to organise and control what happens in people's lives in their daily work. Texts, in institutional ethnography do not have to be concrete policy statements to template institutional behaviour. Instead, they may mediate people's social relations in hidden ways, creating forms of consciousness that are properties of the organisation or discourse rather than those of individual informants (Smith, 1987, p.89). This means that social relations may be governed by organisational logic and exigencies rather than by the needs of people. These stripped-down categories appear in texts that are used to make workers accountable in specific ways, "which thereby become managerially actionable and controllable" (Stanley, 2018, pp. 59/60). As a result, objectified modes of coordinating people's actions make people's actualities representable and actionable within the institutional frames that authorise institutional action (Smith and Turner, 2014, p. 254).

As will be shown in a later chapter, local policy texts, interview transcripts, and university committee papers revealed the organisational logic and exigencies that governed the social relations of teaching excellence in the institution. These texts also revealed how the activities of teaching excellence were made accountable using stripped-down institutional categories.

7.4.2   Discourse in institutional ethnography

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a useful approach for examining the relationship between discourse and power in society, including how discourses mirror, legitimate, or

undermine existing power structures (Willey-Sthapit et al, 2020, p.129). Peacock (2018) has shown how people selectively draw from, appropriate, and rework prevailing discourses as they circulate texts in their work in institutional ethnography and claims that CDA is useful in analysing ruling relations (ibid., p.96).

However, in institutional ethnography, "discourse" is also used as a tool to turn the direction of interest towards institutional language practices that the researcher may not be familiar with (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.10). It is a way to recognise the social relations in which the work of many is coordinated by texts (ibid., p 33/34).

Smith and Griffith define "discourse" as a specialised practice in reproducible texts that constitutes a shared world for participants and is actively created and distributed textually. It establishes a conceptual order that identifies and connects what becomes objects of knowledge and organises for participants what is to be said, written, or otherwise represented, while also excluding certain things (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.39).

In essence, "discourse" is a dialogic method for explicating social relations from texts in two distinct phases: 1) when the researcher engages with people as a source of knowledge about their work (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.10) and 2) when the researcher engages with what has been learned from respondents and/or their observations (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.119). In this study, the researcher is using discourse as a tool to organise and direct attention to the topic of mapping the ruling relations within institutional circuits of "teaching excellence" from evidence gained in juxtaposing text-work-text "assemblies of sequences" by Smith (2005) with institutional and national policy and paper discourse, and to ensure that the interviews do not wander off topic (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.30).

7.4.3 Work in institutional ethnography

"Work" has a "generous" meaning in institutional ethnography and is defined as anything that people do that takes time, and effort, and is intended as work, but may not be easily recognised as such (Smith and Griffith, 2022, pp. 45/46). This generous conception of work includes invisible work beyond what is recognised and paid for in the economic sense. The shift of work from paid to unpaid work in people's lives is one of the aspects of social relations that are not visible as relations between people and is increasingly prevalent in contemporary life. For example, Smith and Griffith (2022, pp. 45/46) point out how much work previously done by bank clerks and shop assistants is now left for customers to do using ATMs and self-checkout machines. Artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of chatbots, self-help medical diagnoses, etc., is rapidly re-engineering human work relations according to neoliberal interests.

The aim of collecting and analysing data in institutional ethnography is to distinguish material knowledge from ideological knowledge of informants by uncovering traces of ruling relations within their descriptions of everyday work. In this study, the work of explicating ruling relations involves distinguishing ideological from material knowledge in standpoints on teaching excellence policy texts in an English higher education institution.

According to Rankin, people's knowledge of their work can be divided into two categories: a) ideological - the theories and explanations used to name and explain problems, and b) material - what people know about what goes on from doing the work. Rankin states that "the theories and explanations that circle discursively that they use to name and explain their problems" are ideological and that understanding their work as material constitutes "the empirical data critical to an IE analysis; that is what people know

about what goes on, knowledge gained from doing the work)" (Rankin, 2012 b, p.2). An experience of incongruity in these two types of knowing leads to a "disjoint." A "disjoint" is defined as evidence of bifurcated consciousness, meaning the informant is aware of having to perform in a particular way but is not comfortable with it or suggests a view contrary to the established policy. These disjoints occur when knowledge generated from doing the work of teaching excellence is abstracted into something else, such as when academics' knowledge of teaching excellence differs from policymakers" conceptualisation of the same.

7.5   Material versus ideological knowledge

Institutional ethnography views institutional sites as "dynamic shapeshifters that use texts to mediate, organise, and lend value to the social practices of diverse and knowing individuals" (LaFrance, 2019, p. 457). The aim of collecting and analysing data in an institutional ethnography is to distinguish the material knowledge from the ideological knowledge of informants by uncovering traces of ruling relations within the descriptions of their everyday work; in this study, the aim is explicating ruling relations by distinguishing ideological from material knowledge in standpoints on teaching excellence policy texts in an English higher education institution.

Stemming from critical theory, the notion of ideological knowledge is intended to maintain and extend the existing social order for the benefit of dominant groups. This mission is accomplished by masking the power dynamics of the dominant groups through the discourse of abstract concepts such as "diversity" and "meritocracy". Conversely, material knowledge emerges from lived experiences of marginalised and oppressed people dealing with the concrete realities of inequality and oppression in the subjugation of the dominant group. Material knowledge rooted in the everyday struggles of marginalised

people exposes the exploitative nature of existing systems. Understanding this crucial distinction allows critical analysis of knowledge claims, recognition of the veiled interests behind dominant ideologies, and advocacy of the voices of those silenced by them. It facilitates, therefore, deeper examination of power dynamics, social movements, and the production of knowledge for the purposes of a socially just and equitable society.

The methodology of institutional ethnography for accomplishing this aim is neatly summed up by Rankin:

> *Standpoint, ruling relations, and problematic are core terms for IE research. They are the tools that support analysis. They guide the researcher to move from conventional ethnographic description into an explication of the institutional regimes in which experiences happen. A researcher works on behalf of people who are positioned there (the standpoint) within a complex set of ruling relations to explicate a problematic.*
>
> *Rankin (2017a, p.4)*

Smith and Griffith suggest these concepts are not intended to impose interpretation or a selective frame on the investigation but rather to what may be drawn from people's experiential knowledge that will be useful in developing the ethnography (ibid., p.10). In addition to the notion of "texts", several other concepts useful in directing attention to what may be drawn from people's experiential knowledge and the complex of relations that rule over them are "discourse", and "work" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p.10).

7.6 Chapter conclusion

This section established the methodological framework of this institutional ethnographic study which diverges from conventional research approaches by examining

lived experiences while focusing on how institutional texts shape the realities of daily life. The research aim is to explores how academic staff reconcile personal pedagogical values with institutional demands shaped by policies like the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and National Student Survey (NSS) in order to discover the impact of teaching excellence policy. The methods of institutional ethnography combine qualitative interviews with institutional text analysis, to identify tensions between policy expectations and the realities of institutional work. This approach highlights how institutional policies often undermine professional identities and commitment which may be overlooked by other research methodologies.

Mapping techniques are used to trace ruling relations and power dynamics, revealing systemic inequalities within the institution. The analytic method distinguishes between ideological knowledge which reinforces dominant power structures and material knowledge which emerges from everyday experiences. By examining institutional texts, such as TEF criteria and internal policy papers, the methods of institutional ethnography uncover how these texts mediate and coordinate academic activities, perpetuating ruling relations and structural inequities.

7.7   Chapter references

Appelrouth, S. and Edles, L., 2010. Sociological Theory in the Contemporary Era: Text and Readings. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Atkinson, P., 2016. Thinking Ethnographically. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Baxter, J., 2008. Feminist Institutionalism. Politics & Gender, 4(1), pp.133-139.

Baxter, J., 2010. Gender Equality in Australian Higher Education. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bishop, M. and Sanderson, J., 2018. Standpoint Theory in Institutional Ethnography. In: C. Grant and A. Steele, eds. Critical Perspectives in Educational Research. London: Sage, pp. 124-139.

Bisaillon, L. (2012). Cordon sanitaire or healthy policy? How prospective immigrants with HIV are organised by Canada's mandatory HIV screening policy. *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(4), 614-621.

Bourdieu, P., 2000. Pascalian Meditations. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Campbell, M., 2015. Mapping Institutional Circuits in Higher Education Policy. Social Analysis Journal, 59(4), pp.250-270.

Campbell, M. and Gregor, F., 2004. Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Collins, P.H., 1986. Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. Social Problems, 33(6), pp. S14-S32.

Collins, P.H., 2000. Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Connell, R.W., 1992. Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dalmer, N., 2021. Mapping Ruling Relations: A Guide for Institutional Ethnography. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20, pp.80-95.

DeVault, M.L. and McCoy, L., 2002. Institutional Ethnography: Using Interviews to Investigate Ruling Relations. In: J. Gubrium and J. Holstein, eds. Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.751-776.

Hak, T., 1998. Institutional and Policy Ethnography in Higher Education. London: Routledge.

Harding, S., 1991. Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S., 2004. The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies. New York: Routledge.

Hartsock, N.C.M., 2004. The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism. In: S. Harding, ed. The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies. New York: Routledge, pp. 35-53.

Kearney, D., Underwood, J. and Smith, D., 2019. Mapping Social Relations in Educational Contexts: An Institutional Ethnographic Approach. Journal of Institutional Research, 24(2), pp.120-140.

LaFrance, M., 2016. Institutional Mapping and Ruling Relations in Ethnographic Studies. Sociology Review, 44(3), pp.102-111.

LaFrance, M., 2019. Teaching with Feminist Pedagogy: Power, Discourse, and Institutional Texts. Feminist Review, 122(3), pp.45-60.

Little, B., Locke, W., Parker, J. and Richardson, J., 2007. Excellence in Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Literature for the Higher Education Academy. York: Higher Education Academy.

Peacock, D., 2018. Critical Discourse Analysis and Institutional Ethnography: A Complementary Approach. Discourse & Society, 29(1), pp.89-106.

Rankin, J., 2000. Ruling Nursing: Institutional Ethnography as a Method of Inquiry. [online] PhD. University of Toronto. Available at: https://www.library.yorku.ca [Accessed 26 September 2024].

Rankin, J., 2012. Conducting Institutional Ethnography: A Critical Heuristic Tool for Nursing Research. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rankin, J., 2017a. Institutional Ethnography and the Materiality of Texts. Sociology Compass, 11(2), pp.1-13.

Rankin, J., 2017b. Institutional Ethnography and the Social Organisation of Knowledge. Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 23(1), pp.3-10.

Smith, D.E., 1987. The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, D.E., 1990. Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling. London: Routledge.

Smith, D.E., 1999. Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D.E., 2005. Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Smith, D.E., & Griffith, A.I. (2022). Texts, Social Relations, and Ruling: The Essential Readings in Institutional Ethnography. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D.E. and Turner, S.M., 2014. Ruling Relations, Institutional Ethnography, and the Coordination of Work. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Stanley, L., 2018. Institutional Ethnography and the Power of Policy Texts. Journal of Sociological Inquiry, 52(1), pp.55-64.

Stanley, L., 2019. The Uses of Policy Documents in Institutional Ethnography. Qualitative Sociology Review, 15(4), pp.57-68.

Underwood, J., Smith, D.E. and Martin, L., 2018. Standpoints in Institutional Ethnography: Mapping Social Relations. Qualitative Sociology, 31(1), pp.129-142.

Walby, K., 2007. Institutional Ethnography and Textually-Mediated Social Organisation. Sociology Compass, 1(1), pp.144-162.

Watters, E., 2015. Mapping Ruling Relations: An IE Perspective. Journal of Institutional Research, 23(2), pp.70-84.

Willey-Sthapit, C. et al., 2020. Critical Discourse Analysis in Institutional Texts: Feminist Applications. Journal of Feminist Inquiry, 28(2), pp.125-138.

8 DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND FINDINGS

8.1 Chapter introduction

The chapter begins by outlining the research setting and explaining the participant selection process. The role of the pilot study is also discussed, emphasising its importance in refining the overall methodological approach and key research instrument. The pilot study not only tested the effectiveness of interview questions and survey tools but also revealed critical themes that shaped the final research design with regard to the classification of participants and the need for a different methodological framework. An overview of the data collection process is presented which involved a detailed analysis of both interview transcripts and as university standards committee papers using iterative computer-based analyses. The interview data and standards committee papers data were then juxtaposed and re-examined on the same way. This dual analysis allowed the identification of replicable "sequences of work" and similar moments of bifurcation in the discourse surrounding teaching excellence policies at the institution.

Participants were categorised into three distinct groups based on their roles within the institutional hierarchy: that is, as "policy enforcers," "policy balancers," and "policy enactors". This classification served as a structural framework for understanding how academics interact with and interpret institutional policies. By juxtaposing interview data with institutional texts, the analysis revealed the underlying ruling relations that shape and constrain the everyday practices of academics. This approach provided valuable insights into how individuals at different hierarchical levels engage with and respond to teaching excellence policies, as well as how these policies influence their professional activities and identities.

A key theme that emerged from the analysis is the concept of "recognitive misrecognition", which highlights how institutional policies impose ideological constructions of teaching excellence. This concept illustrates the tension between academic autonomy and the institutional push for standardisation and compliance. The study suggests that recognitive misrecognition operates as a mechanism through which teaching excellence is framed in ways that align with institutional priorities, often marginalising more holistic or reflective teaching practices.

The chapter concludes by presenting the findings from the analysis, illustrating how they lived experiences of academics are shaped by the broader institutional pressures to conform to externally imposed metrics of teaching excellence. By mapping the interactions between personal agency and institutional policy, the complex power dynamics that permeate the higher education sector were revealed. Ultimately, a nuanced understanding of the impact of teaching excellence policies on academic identity, autonomy, and professional practice, was revealed, offering a critical perspective on the ongoing tension between performative metrics and genuine pedagogical development in the English higher education sector.

8.2   Bifurcation of consciousness

By way clarifying the importance of the notion of bifurcation of consciousness for this study, an explanation of Du Bios' (1903) work is offered here. In The Souls of Black Folk (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois, the very first African American to receive a doctorate and to lecture at a university (Harvard), articulated the notion of "bifurcation of consciousness" through his term "double consciousness." In this work, he described the experience of African Americans as living with two conflicting identities: one shaped by their personal aspirations

and the other dictated by the prejudiced perceptions of a racist society. Using the metaphor of a veil, Du Bois illustrated the psychological tension this duality creates as individuals strive to reconcile their self-image with societal stereotypes.

Du Bois critiques systemic racism and underscores the need for social justice and equality. He sheds light on the psychological effects of systemic oppression, demonstrating how a bifurcated consciousness influences the lived experiences of marginalised individuals. Thus, his work remains crucial to this day for understanding the complexities of identity and the intersectionality of race, identity, and social perception.

8.3   Research design

The research design was constructed to examine how teaching excellence policies are navigated and enacted by academics across different levels of institutional hierarchy. Drawing on institutional ethnography, the design was iteratively developed, with a pilot study playing a key role in refining the methodology. The pilot not only tested survey instruments and interview questions but also revealed key themes such as the tension between performative metrics and more relational aspects of teaching. These findings informed both the classification of participants and the overall research approach, ensuring a thorough investigation of how policy is interpreted and enacted within various organisational roles.

8.4   The role of the pilot study

A pilot study was undertaken to refine the interview process and questions used in this study. The pilot was crucial in shaping the methodology and focus of this study. By testing survey instruments, refining interview questions, and trialling participant recruitment

strategies, the pilot revealed potential challenges, which refined the research design herein.

The pilot provided initial data on how teaching excellence is perceived across different institutional roles and revealed key themes, such as the tension between performative metrics and more organic, relational aspects of teaching. These insights directly informed this investigation, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of how academics navigate and respond to policies on teaching excellence.

The selection of participants for the pilot study involved a two-fold process: recruiting a broad range of academics and learning support staff and categorising them according to their roles within the higher education hierarchy. This approach aimed to capture diverse perspectives on teaching excellence and to ensure that a wide range of professional experiences were represented in the data.

The pilot study's findings suggested that the initial methodology used was unsatisfactory in investigating why academic voices were not reflected in teaching excellence policies. However, the pilot study did reveal distinct categories of response to teaching excellence that seemed to correspond with the participant's status in the institutional hierarchy. Therefore, these categories were used to classify informants in this study to map ruling relations as advocated by institutional ethnography.

An online survey was distributed the via social media platforms and academic networks, using tools such as Twitter and LinkedIn to reach potential participants. This allowed for a quick and broad distribution of the survey across various institutions, primarily targeting academics involved in teaching or learning support roles within higher education in England. The survey included both open-ended qualitative questions and quantitative demographic questions to collect detailed background information on the participants. Respondents had to meet specific criteria, including being based in England and working within a higher

education context, whether as full-time faculty, part-time lecturers, or learning support staff.

Out of twenty respondents who completed the survey, nine expressed willingness to participate in follow-up interviews for the main study, providing a strong basis for future in-depth qualitative research. These nine participants represented a diverse group in terms of their roles, experience, and institutional positions, which was crucial for understanding how teaching excellence was perceived across different layers of academic hierarchy.

To better analyse the responses and understand the various institutional roles, Trowler's (2012) policy implementation staircase model was used to categorise participants into three main groups: Policy Interpreters and Makers, Policy Balancers, and Policy Enactors. This categorisation helped to clarify how participants related to and interacted with institutional and national policies on teaching excellence, allowing the exploration of how different layers of the higher education hierarchy responded to the notion of teaching excellence, particularly in terms of how policies were interpreted and enacted.

Policy Interpreters and Makers (referred to as Policy Enforcers in this study): This group consisted of individuals in senior academic leadership roles, such as associate deans and academic leaders, who are responsible for interpreting national policy and making decisions at the institutional level. These participants were involved in shaping how teaching excellence frameworks, like the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), were implemented within their institutions. Their responses were critical in understanding how top-down policy decisions influenced perceptions of teaching excellence across the university.

Policy balancers: This category included heads of departments and academic staff, who operate at a middle-management level. These individuals were responsible for balancing the competing pressures of policy implementation while managing departmental needs and

expectations. They often acted as intermediaries between senior management and teaching staff, negotiating institutional policies and ensuring they were adaptable to the specific contexts of their departments. Their insights were valuable in identifying the challenges faced when trying to implement teaching excellence policies while maintaining the quality of day-to-day teaching.

Policy Enactors: Policy enactors included lecturers, senior lecturers, and hourly-paid teaching staff, who are the primary agents responsible for carrying out institutional policies in their teaching practices. These participants provided a more ground-level view of how teaching excellence is experienced within the classroom, and how institutional frameworks impact their daily interactions with students. Their feedback was particularly revealing in terms of the frustrations and challenges they faced in meeting performative metrics, such as student satisfaction scores or research expectations, alongside their teaching responsibilities. The roles participants played within their institutions significantly shaped their perspectives on teaching excellence, with senior leaders often focusing on policy compliance and metrics, while teaching staff highlighted the relational and pedagogical aspects of their work.

The recruitment method through social media, while efficient, raised some concerns about representativeness. Most of the respondents were either connected to me through my professional network or worked within institutions where I had existing contacts. This raised the possibility of selection bias, as participants who were familiar with my research interests might have been more inclined to participate and provide favourable responses. Despite this limitation, the diversity of roles and experiences among participants ensured that a range of perspectives on teaching excellence was captured in the pilot study.

A summary of the pilot study can be found in Appendix 3.

8.5 Classification of respondents

The thematic categories used to classify the respondents in this study are thus:

- *Policy enforcer:* Associate deans, academic leaders and managers are classified as interpreters of national teaching excellence policy but makers and enforcers of institutional policy.

- *Policy balancer:* Departmental heads and academic and professional developers are classified as interpreters and enactors of institutional policy.

- P*olicy enactor:* Hourly paid lecturers, associate lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers, and principal lecturers.

- Table 3 below shows the classification that resulted from the pilot study.

• *TABLE 3 CLASSIFICATION OF INFORMANTS' ORGANISATIONAL ROLES*			
Informant	Policy level	Role of informants	Example of indicative pilot response
Policy makers	National	Outside the scope of the pilot study but dealt with in the main study	"Government makes formal HE policy and establishes funding regime (outside scope of pilot)."
Policy enforcers	Institutional	Associate/Deputy Dean Academic Leader (Other)	"University top teams interpret and respond to policy as appropriate to their context."
Policy balancers	Departmental/School	Departmental Head Professional and/or academic development – e.g., educational developer	"HoDs balance competing pressures, ignoring, adapting or applying policy as they can and consider best. They negotiate or reconstruct the discursive repertoires in which policy is encoded."
Policy enactors	Individual	Hourly Paid Lecturer Associate lecturer Lecturer Senior Lecturer Principal lecturer	'Staff interpret policy in different ways and apply, ignore or adapt it as they think appropriate. In some cases, they are not aware of it."
Policy receivers	Student Outside the scope of the main study	Outside the scope of the pilot study and the main study	'Students respond in unpredicted ways changing relationships and practices in learning and teaching situations. There are unintended consequences."

Note: While students (policy receivers) play their part in institutional policy process, their role is outside the scope of this study.

8.6   Sampling technique

The sampling method employed in this study was purposive sampling, specifically designed to select participants based on their roles and experiences relevant to teaching excellence within the institution. This targeted approach enabled the researcher to focus on individuals whose insights were most likely to shed light on how teaching excellence policies are interpreted and enacted at various levels of the institutional hierarchy. Unlike snowball sampling, which Glen (2020) defines as a non-probability method that relies on participants referring others in similar circumstances, purposive sampling allowed for the deliberate inclusion of participants whose experiences directly aligned with the study's objectives. This approach ensured that the sample captured the breadth of institutional perspectives necessary for a thorough exploration of the research questions.

The purposive sampling process was informed by preliminary findings from a pilot study, which provided early insights into key tensions between performative metrics and the more relational, organic aspects of teaching. These findings guided the selection of participants, ensuring the inclusion of those most directly involved with or affected by teaching excellence policies. The pilot study was crucial in revealing categories of response based on participants' institutional roles, which were then used to structure the main study's sample, as illustrated in Table 3.

Ethical considerations played a significant role in the decision to use purposive sampling over snowball sampling. Snowball sampling can raise ethical concerns in insider research contexts, particularly in relation to maintaining participant confidentiality and anonymity. This is especially relevant in institutions undergoing significant restructuring and job losses, where participants may be reluctant to express candid opinions about teaching

excellence policies. The pilot study uncovered these ethical challenges, as three participants withdrew their interview transcripts due to fears of repercussions. These concerns reinforced the need for a more controlled sampling method that prioritised participant safety and confidentiality, which purposive sampling provided.

However, one limitation of purposive sampling is the difficulty in making broad population inferences, as it does not yield a random or representative sample. This concern is mitigated by the fact that the goal of this study, situated within the framework of institutional ethnography, is not to generalise findings across larger populations. Instead, institutional ethnography seeks to reveal the workings of translocal ruling relations within specific local contexts, focusing on how policies and governing texts interact with the everyday experiences of individuals within the institution.

Institutional ethnography transcends the confines of individual case studies by engaging with the standardising processes that shape experiences across different institutional settings. As Givens (2008, p. 435) explains, each study contributes to a broader understanding of how ruling relations operate and influence everyday practices. In this study, the use of purposive sampling was critical for identifying those participants whose roles and experiences were most relevant to understanding the enactment of teaching excellence policies, thereby allowing for a detailed exploration of institutional power dynamics and policy interpretation.

In conclusion, the adoption of purposive sampling in this study was both a practical and ethical decision, enabling the selection of participants who provided relevant, nuanced insights into the research questions. By focusing on participants based on their roles and experiences within the institution, this method facilitated a detailed examination of how teaching excellence policies are enacted, interpreted, and contested across different levels

of the institutional hierarchy. The findings from this study contribute to the wider body of knowledge on teaching excellence and institutional policy, providing a foundation for further research into these critical issues.

8.7   How themes were developed

In the pilot study, themes were primarily developed using an online survey distributed via social media platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn, targeting higher education academics and learning support staff in England. The survey included open-ended qualitative questions and quantitative demographic questions. The pilot revealed early insights into tensions between performative metrics like the National Student Survey (NSS) and more relational, organic aspects of teaching. Academics expressed frustration over the dominance of student satisfaction metrics, which were perceived as neglecting the deeper, reflective teaching practices. This frustration became a key theme in the pilot, revealing the challenges of aligning institutional teaching excellence policies with the lived experiences of academics. Categories of policy enforcers, balancers, and enactors were established to reflect participants' hierarchical roles within institutions, using Trowler's (2012) policy implementation staircase model. The pilot study's findings suggested that academics felt their voices were not adequately reflected in teaching excellence policies, leading to the further refinement of interview questions and participant categorisations.

In the main study, themes from the pilot were further developed and reinterpreted using institutional ethnographic methods, focusing on how teaching excellence policies were enacted across different institutional roles. This involved collecting and analysing data through in-depth interviews with participants categorised as policy 'enforcers', 'balancers',

or' enactors', alongside the analysis of institutional texts like the university performance standards committee minutes.

Through the juxtaposition of interview transcripts and these institutional texts, the study traced how ruling relations shaped academics' daily practices, particularly regarding the disconnect between policy expectations and teaching realities. A central theme of "recognitive misrecognition" emerged, highlighting how institutional policies templated compliance with ideological constructions of teaching excellence, often at the expense of academic autonomy and genuine pedagogical development. The iterative analysis of interviews and institutional texts enabled a detailed understanding of how power dynamics and policy frameworks influenced teaching practices, further enriching the themes initially identified in the pilot study.

8.8   Analysis of interview material

The interview material was processed using a qualitative methodology rooted in institutional ethnography. Respondents were asked to articulate their challenges in balancing their pedagogical values with institutional expectations regarding he TEF and NSS frameworks. The responses were thematically coded to identify recurring patterns related to teaching excellence and institutional pressures. These themes were then systematically compared with institutional texts, such as policy documents, to uncover discrepancies, referred to as "disjoints" in institutional ethnography, between academic experiences and policy expectations. This juxtaposition of data highlighted how institutional directives often conflict with professional identities, and illustrated the tensions academics face in navigating institutional policies that may undermine their pedagogical integrity.

The analysis not only reflected individual academic concerns but also mapped the broader ruling relations that govern institutional practices. By combining lived experiences with the analysis of institutional documents, a more comprehensive view was developed of how institutional mechanisms exert control and shape the professional identities of academics and their day-to-day work, in often restrictive ways.

8.9   Analysis of institutional texts

The analysis of institutional texts focused on both explicit directives and the implicit messages within institutional texts, shedding light on the managerial control mechanisms embedded in these policies. References to policy documents relating to the TEF and the NSS, which were found in the mainly in the committee minutes and papers from institutional performance enhancement committee, were critically examined to reveal the ideological frameworks driving policies. These texts were analysed in conjunction with qualitative interview data to map how institutional policies and academic realities intersected.

The recurring themes identified in both the committee papers and interviews were subjected to critical discourse analysis, uncovering the tensions between institutional policies and their implementation. By comparing the committee materials with the narratives provided by the interviewees, it became evident that these institutional policies often conflicted with the values and experiences of academics, particularly those concerning teaching excellence and student engagement.

The documents from the committee meetings revealed institutional narratives that constrained pedagogical autonomy and reinforced the power dynamics and systemic inequalities within the institution. These policies were instrumental in shaping institutional

practices but frequently undermined the autonomy of academics, illuminating how managerial control of teaching excellence was maintained through institutional texts and policies. A detailed explanation of how this was done is found in the section on phase two of the development of the problematic.

8.10   Phases of data collection and analysis

The first phase of analysis was undertaken to understand the standpoints of informants as policy enforcers, policy balancers, and policy enactors. The purpose was to become more deeply acquainted with informants through their data in response to questions introduced at various points in the conversational interviews. The focus was on how the informants' experiences of teaching excellence arose and were lived by them (Campbell and Gregor, 2004), rather than on the experiences themselves, providing a broad understanding of informant standpoints in accordance with the five questions in relation to the hierarchical role of an informant within the institution.

The second phase of analysis consisted of mapping "assemblies of sequences" as "a series of texts that are part of the work that people do" (Smith and Griffith, 2022, p. 58/59) within and across the interviews to identify possible problematics within the discourse of the informants. This involved examining reactions by informants for instances of "bifurcation of consciousness" (see p. 160) or "disjoint" in relation to the intentions of local policies developed by managers in response to the translocal policies aimed at improving teaching. The aim was to examine the data for evidence that standpoint knowledge of teaching excellence, garnered from the day-to-day experience of teaching, differed from the standpoints of those who had developed teaching excellence policies to discover the problematics arising.

The third phase of analysis consisted of examining the data from committee papers to identify and list teaching excellence policies that had been mentioned by the informants in the interviews. Subsequently, data in the institutional texts were examined in juxtaposition with the data yielded by the questions in interview transcriptions. This approach was adopted because, as Hak (1998) has shown, analysis of only the interview data would have provided some insights about the work of teaching excellence but not necessarily in understanding how governing texts function as ideological representations of institutional processes. Conversely, an analysis of the policy texts on their own would not have shown how these function in the daily work of academics as forms of managerial control and accountability. Thus, the two data sets were examined in juxtaposition to develop a broader, deeper understanding of informant standpoints in accordance with the five questions which structured the interviews about the hierarchical role of the informant within the organisation.

8.11 Phase one: initial interviews

In this phase of the research, interview questions were designed to uncover the varying standpoints of participants on key issues related to higher education, teaching excellence, and institutional practices using findings from the pilot study as a guide. The following section presents a detailed exploration of these standpoints. By analysing these responses, this study aimed to highlight the underlying themes and tensions between policy expectations and academic experiences. The insights provided by participants from different roles within the institution—policy enforcers, policy balancers, and policy enactors—offered a comprehensive understanding of how teaching excellence is conceptualised, enacted, and contested within the broader context of institutional policy.

Interviews were set up as collegial, conversational explorations of the respondents' standpoints, inviting them to "tell" their stories and allowing them to be listened to rather than interpreted. Thus, they were structured to stimulate conversation about teaching excellence using in-depth interview techniques and designed to provide a naturalised discourse on the question topic. This resulted in 34 hours of recorded data from 15 interviews, with 4 of the informants having a second interview to clarify their standpoints.

8.11.1 Computer analysis of texts

Smith warns that coding and other qualitative methods of interpreting data, particularly with computer-driven analytic software, may result in organising the data in a way that reduces whatever has been learned from the individuals into categories that can be treated as properties of individuals. Nonetheless, computer applications to provide transcripts of interviews and then the means of examining data across a number of interview transcripts were useful.

- *Otter.ai* was used to transcribe the recorded interviews automatically after the recordings had been listened to several times in full.

- *MaxQDA*, a similar decoding application to *nVivo*, was used to analyse the transcribed interview texts; firstly, to group responses to the questions by the five interview questions and, secondly, to classify the responses to each question by pre-determined categories according to the hierarchical identification of participants as policy enforcers, policy balancers, or policy enactors.

8.11.2 Question One: What is the purpose of higher education?

All participants from all three groups saw the purpose of higher education as the development of students as critical thinkers able to make their way in the world as actualised and contributing citizens in both public and private spaces. Their standpoints on the purpose of higher education evidenced common understandings that the purpose of higher education helping students to:

- travel the journey towards higher more complex forms of learning.

- create lives of consequence.

- serve the civic space.

- prepare for productive economic work.

- work towards achieving social justice in the world.

Some excepts which illustrate responses to standpoints on the purpose of education are offered below:

POLICY ENFORCER
um... ah, and it encompasses things like innovation and creativity which should be impactful, uh, innovation and creativity should be impactful, again you can measure that in all ways, um... uh... but it gets back to being an effective citizen and helping our humans... to create the future. There are questions about is the purpose of education to redress social imbalances? Is the purpose of education to address injustice? Um... ah... And the answer is to me, is that, to those questions is… yes, it includes that, but it is not just to do with simply that, actually. Essentially, it's about creating autonomous individuals who can think for themselves…

POLICY BALANCER
My vision is, you know, my ideal vision is that the university should continue to be a service of a public good… civic function of be… being spaces that are able to explore and debate the key issues relevant to the society and to provide a critical

space… a safe critical space on which that exploration can happen while at the same time, offering qualifications that do have practical purpose.

POLICY ENACTOR

I think it's to prepare them personally for what is ahead... whatever that is... it's job or life or... interacting with each other, interact, find, you know, connecting with people. It's not just about job. There's, there's life skills beyond the job, that, that, that... I think that university gives them social skills. It gives them connect... you know, how to connect with people, how not to connect with people. You know, so... it's not all about the job. I don't think we're, we're just necessarily producing people for work... we're producing people ... as individuals to interact with society and culture and have conscious… and have, um, an understanding and a recognition of what's happening in the world...

The policy enforcer posits that higher education should cultivate innovation and creativity, equipping individuals with the ability to think critically and contribute meaningfully to societal progress. In contrast, the policy balancer stresses the role of universities as platforms for civic responsibility and public debate, while also recognising their vocational function in preparing students for professional roles. Meanwhile, the policy enactor highlights a broader vision for higher education, suggesting that its purpose extends beyond mere employment preparation, encompassing the fostering of social skills, cultural engagement, and personal development, enabling individuals to navigate both professional and societal spheres effectively.

As the following excerpts regarding the purpose of higher education show, all three respondent groups shared a uniform awareness of the purpose of higher education as creating a workforce for industry. However, in general, informants at all three levels were not comfortable with the encroachment of government-directed policies on their teaching expertise, as can be seen in the interview excerpts below. The policy enforcer believes the significance of nurturing graduates is for them to become "active citizens," as well as

preparing them for entry into industry. The policy balancer emphasises the university's civic responsibility as a "critical arena" to "debate key issues relevant to society" alongside its "vocational function" of educating people for professions and occupations, while the policy enactor recognises the advantages of incorporating practical learning into undergraduate courses but grapples with the "dilemma" of student expectations that "they will go out and instantly get a job".

Standpoints on purpose of higher education as employability

POLICY ENFORCER

The next level down will be, um, something about, um, helping to create effective citizens, citizens who can operate with some agency on the future. And not creating graduates, in our case, not particularly graduates… com… who go to, as it were, join industry... Uh, I, I, tend to resist saying that. I think what we're in the business of doing is, is, is having to, uh... produce graduates who graduate to live lives of consequence and... to create the future.

POLICY BALANCER

[Universities] are carriers of cultural heritage and cultural knowledge, historic knowledge. They aren't places which will, you know, there's still places of research. There are spaces in which to keep exploring the frontiers of knowledge. They always have continued… continue to have a vocational function in terms of educating people who can, you know, enter professions and occupations that require that level of training, you know, level of education. We know that many students come to university because they're looking to get a qualification which can translate ultimately in you know, a job or jobs down the track. The problem is that although, they are these multiple functions, some get emphasised over others according to you know, political pressures and national, national policies, which, which, shape these things? My vision is, you know, my ideal vision is that the university should continue to be a service of a public good civic function of be being spaces that are able to explore and debate the key issues relevant to the society and to provide a critical space a safe critical space on which that exploration can happen while at the same time, offering qualifications that do have practical purpose…

POLICY ENACTOR

So, there's a right rather than, um, then you earn, earn the right. Um, so it, it is an interesting dilemma that, that we now face, um, I think that f... for those that I, I see coming in now, they feel it's a steppingstone in, n... not necessarily to go on [to a Masters] - not in our, our area - they, they feel that the three years is for undergraduate. They will go out and instantly get a job and they feel that with the degree that they are more likely to get a job, but also because they also

think we will get them a job. Now, in some cases that is quite true, we can because we have the contacts and we do get students jobs, but, um, and then through the programme, uh, especially because we have work related learning now, which is now integrated. The students have more contact with industry than they ever had before um,.. they... but they're also taught by industry…

Here the policy enforcer emphasises that higher education should go beyond preparing students for immediate employment, aiming instead to produce graduates who live meaningful lives and have the capacity to influence future developments. This perspective prioritises the long-term societal contributions of graduates over the short-term goal of job readiness. In contrast, the policy balancer recognises the importance of vocational training but expresses concern that political pressures often skew universities' priorities toward employability at the expense of fostering critical thinking and civic responsibility. While acknowledging employability is necessary, the balancer stresses that universities should maintain their broader educational mission. The policy enactor further expands on this by observing that, although students may primarily view higher education as a pathway to employment, the experience also offers significant opportunities for personal growth, social development, and cultural engagement, which are crucial for navigating both professional and social environments.

Together, these perspectives illustrate a tension between the functional, societal, and personal roles of higher education, highlighting differing emphases on employability versus holistic development.

8.11.3 Question Two: How do you define teaching excellence?

As seen in previous chapters, ambiguity, lack of understanding and confusion of terminology have been shown to hurt official policy attempts to improve teaching (Little et

al., 2007, for example). It is thus notable how uniformly teaching excellence is defined by informants in all three groups, and how differently the academics at this location define teaching excellence compared to official definitions within the TEF and NSS policy documents. Nonetheless, one policy enforcer acknowledges the difficulty of defining teaching excellence stating, "And so teaching excellence, if it's worth anything, must be something which prompts learning at a high level. So, to me, um, I would say, teaching excellence is... it's, it's very difficult at defining it, it's not simple, I'm not being evasive, but it isn't."

In the following examples from interviews, an enforcer sees teaching excellence as helping to "maximise the distance travelled by students" between "the entry point and the endpoint" and enabling them to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills and "fulfil [their] potential". The balancer sees teaching excellence as a "multi-facetted concept" involving student-centred practice that inspires "love of one's subject". For the enactor, teaching excellence is about facilitating an "ethos" and a "culture" whereby students are "nurtured and challenged" in the process of exploring "profound concepts", "interrogating the world" and in their own growth as individuals.

How do you define teaching excellence?

POLICY ENFORCER
Um, but there's something about, um, how helping to maximise the distance travelled by the students. From the entry point exit points, there should be a distance travelled… For there is something about the endpoint, uh, the endpoint may be the same, it may be different. Uh... There's also something about the distance travelled between the entry point and the endpoint, in the terms of the students" critical thinking skills and independence and, uh, capacity to reason and capacity to solve puzzling problems. […] Even a parrot can solve problems they've seen before … A thrush can break open the shell of a snail, um, but ca... can…higher level skill is having the capacity to resolve on the scene previously unseen problems without needing to ask the person who taught you ten years before. [yes] Have we, have we, have we produced an autonomous individual…

It's about the distance travelled. Did you, did you help this learner to move over a long distance and to really fulfil potential?

POLICY BALANCER

I find it difficult to reduce it down to one quality. I mean, I think my earlier answer about [mm] understanding that teaching excellence is a… a rich and, sort of multi-facetted concept that involves all the things I have mentioned which is about, um, placing the students at the centre of one's practice, but also communicating that love of one's subject which actually inspires, um… … students to…. be ignited by that same sense of passion and to then want to run with it … in ways that, uh, work for them, you know, um, and I think, um… for me it's, it's got to do with an approach which… is generative ultimately.

POLICY ENACTOR

Well, um, I, [draws a breath], I believe it's ... um ... an ethos and ... a culture ... and structures and processes , whereby ..,students of higher education, um ... are enabled and nurtured, to explore, profound concepts and ideas… within a particular field but which also, encourage the growth of the individual ... to expand... their, their understandings of the world in which they live ... of themselves as an individual. So, teaching excellence will, will both nurture and challenge, the individual students. It will allow the world to speak to them and for them to find within that, uh, teaching space, um, things that they're ... puzzled about, excited about, to find ways of interrogating the world and their, and their, f... and their lives, ... and their, their field in particular.

The policy balancer and policy enactor provide complementary views on teaching excellence, both focussing on the holistic development of students but emphasising different aspects of the educational process. The policy balancer sees teaching excellence as dynamic and multi-faceted, with the core goal of inspiring a passion for learning and positioning students as undertaking an educational journey. This respondent stresses the importance of engaging students deeply in the learning process and fostering an environment that prioritizes their intellectual curiosity and self-motivation.

In contrast, the policy enactor defines teaching excellence through the creation of a nurturing yet challenging environment. This view emphasises helping students engage profoundly with complex ideas while encouraging personal and academic growth. For the

policy enactor, teaching excellence is about providing a supportive space where students can be pushed to their intellectual limits while being guided through their development as individuals.

Both perspectives are relevant because they reflect a shared belief that teaching excellence goes beyond mere knowledge transmission. They emphasise the importance of fostering student-centred environments that support critical thinking, personal development, and lifelong learning. Together, they evidence a broader understanding of the role of higher education, underscoring that while vocational preparation is essential, it must be balanced with a deeper mission of helping students grow as engaged, thoughtful individuals.

Enforcers seemed more ambiguous about teaching excellence, the idea that learning was a journey was common to informants in all three groups. The ability to create the conditions for a student to accomplish this journey was seen as a sign of good teaching. The idea of helping a student to travel towards increased knowledge and skill was also seen in policy enactor standpoints on the definition of teaching excellence, for example: "And so, what I am saying is the journey is the important thing. The journey of how they've got there. And they may not achieve everything by the end, but they have a good understanding of what it is, and how to get there. Whereas some people would say, you know, they have to have everything at the end".

One of the policy balancers viewed successful teaching rather beautifully: "There's, there's something in the nature of excellent teaching that it… …if you sort of take like a cooking metaphor, it's like putting the right combination of ingredients [mm] on the sort of kitchen counter, uh, [mm], whi… that enables students to ultimately create their own lavish

dishes [mm, mm], but you've also provided some of the, you know, different kinds of recipes that they could look at, um,.. to, you know, empower them in that way".

8.11.4 Question Three: What is being done to achieve teaching excellence?

Standpoints on the institution's efforts to achieve teaching excellence reveal significant disparities depending on the respondent's role, whether as a policy enforcer, balancer, or enactor. The policy enactor, in particular, offers a critical view of management-led initiatives such as the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP), arguing that these efforts are overly focused on student engagement metrics and fail to address the professional development needs of academic staff. This enactor suggests that SOIP's impact on their teaching practice was minimal, likely due to timing or their peripheral role in the institutional structure. Additionally, the enactor contends that SOIP initiatives are too student-centric, neglecting the critical role of staff development in enhancing teaching quality. Frustration is expressed over the perceived regressive nature of these programmes, which are seen as unnecessarily reinventing previously effective policies, rather than promoting meaningful progress in teaching excellence. Policy enactor standpoints on achieve teaching excellence

The standpoints of the enactors were characterised by a positive response to the role of the professional development unit within the institution and a negative response to management-led initiatives.

What is being done to achieve teaching excellence*?*

POLICY ENACTOR
I mean I, I, I think that, I think that as a tut[or]... having, having done this... when I first started the job, I was, I felt so out of... I didn't understand the role... fully.

And it was exhausting because you're not given the support from the off, and the only support that I felt was worth anything at all, and to this day, is still brilliant, is coming to [THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT] and doing, doing the PG Cert. and doing the MA. [OMMITTED TEXT] For me that was the, probably the... it was the best experience I've had being in the university because it felt supportive, collegial... you could always talk to someone, you had, you felt there, there was... there was a real basis of friendship and understanding. Never achieved that sense anywhere else. [ ] ... you see, you see through the PG Cert. and the MA it was all about the process and the practice, and about learning about yourself and learning about who you are within what you do. And which is the way that I teach now I, you know, you teach the learning, you try and help the students to learn who they are.

By contrast, the standpoint of policy enactors on managerial attempts to achieve teaching excellence was uniformly negative, displaying a sense of alienation and frustration because of a managerial focus on student engagement to improve NSS scores rather than on professional development for the improvement of teaching.

:

POLICY ENACTOR

Well, um, so, I mean, obviously the, um, the SOIP [CURRENT PART OF MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE TEACHING], um, the series of groups which was like the [FORMER MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE TEACHING] when, when we were there, so they've got a series of management who are looking into... actions I suppose to actually raise, raise the standards and raise, I don't know, attendance and retention. But in terms of staff, apart from this TOBM [UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE TEACHING], absolutely nothing. I seriously, I don't think anything's happening in terms of staff whatsoever. So, everything is, is.... The problem is everything is student focused, and it doesn't actually focus on staff at all in any way, shape or form. You know, you may have once a year an away day or something that discusses [IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING] but that's problematic...

1.1.1.1   Policy balancer standpoints on achieve teaching excellence

Policy balancers recognised a commitment by the institution to enhance teaching excellence:

POLICY BALANCER

…so as well [yeah, yeah] as those schemes, um, there's also been the… more recently there's been the staff awards scheme which, mm, I… I like because it's a peer-nominated scheme, and that is another avenue in terms of which individuals, and, interestingly, teams can be…celebrated for the excellence of what do in terms of teaching and learning, so we have had, in recent years, team awards coming through that route, um, and of course we have the University's commitment, uh, to the work of, you know, what was [A PREVIOUS ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL UNIT] and then [A PREVIOUS ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL UNIT], and is now [THE CURRENT ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT] but, I mean the whole, um, you know, rationale for having such a structure in the university has been to promote and facilitate, uh, enhancement of teaching and, and teaching excellence, you know.

However, this policy balancer pointed out the tensions involved in trying to achieve teaching excellence, and the impact of three restructurings of the professional development unit within the space of a few years:" I think there are tensions here because I think you… y- you know, it's a complex institutional culture where, where, um… there are various initiatives which try to put out those positive messages about the value and importance of teaching and its enhancement, and, and aspiring for excellence, uh, you know ."

1.1.1.2   Policy enforcer standpoints on achieve teaching excellence

While other policy enforcers saw their task as supporting the enhancement of teaching, one policy enforcer viewed the work of the leadership as "continually bearing down" and being "relentlessly slightly dissatisfied" with current levels of teaching to improve them. The standpoint of this enforcer to the question of what was being done at the institution to improve teaching excellence produced the point of entry into the data described later in this study.

Notably, the informant stated that programmes were not construed as programmes to improve teaching excellence, but rather as programmes to improve student outcomes.

POLICY ENFORCER

As to the other question, what's being done to achieve Teaching Excellence in, in my university? Um... First of all, there's an enormous strand of work, er, er, led by the leadership of the academic institution, which is the Heads of Subjects. Departments and Deans and the Pro... deputy VCs here and the Vice Chancellor, which is about uh, actually, uh, uh continually bearing down and being relentlessly slightly dissatisfied with the levels, the current levels of teaching to improve them. This is critical to maintain a constant upward pressure. And in this particular institution, the last two places I've worked, we've had very specific programmes, but the programmes are not construed as programmes to improve teaching excellence. They're construed as programmes to improve student outcomes, which is another way of looking at the same thing. What, what I'm interested in, is, again, having excellent teachers is important. The mo... most important thing is having excellent student outcomes and having improved student outcomes.

8.11.5 Question Four: What challenges are there in achieving teaching excellence?

A comparison of the standpoints shows markedly different viewpoints concerning the challenges of achieving teaching excellence within the institution. In the case of the policy enforcer, the poor NSS result is seen as evidence of a "poor, poor result", expressing confidence in the NSS survey as "there is no survey that matches it". A policy balancer, on the other hand, expresses frustration with management attempts to help achieve teaching excellence, stating bluntly, "I would say it is not. In fact, everything that the management can do to get in the way of teaching excellence they are doing." The informant sees the well-meaning involvement by management as a sign of inadvertent co-option, stating: "They don't… honestly, don't see that the way they're enacting that is taking away the space, the voice and the power of their staff. They honestly don't see that".

Another policy enactor sees lack of time given for professional development and research as a barrier – "that is one of the, one of the, uh, barriers [yes] because of issues of time, but that should be a, it's to give lecturers, for example, just to go to conferences, for

th... to give time for lecturers to, to explore their subject areas, do a research... and then practice".

Thinking about your role, what challenges are there in achieving teaching excellence at your university?

POLICY ENFORCER

... Okay, there's a few things, um, uh, uh, I don't accept that anything in the university... is sufficiently powerful to prevent the achievement of teaching excellence. There's no reason why we should... we should not have teaching excellence in this institution – and as a matter of fact we have pockets where we do have teaching excellence. [Yeah, we do, yeah.] But we have large areas where we don't. It's just at this particular institution, um, when students rate the institution on a nationally bench-marked basis they rate the institution, um, in surveys, certainly in the NSS, they rated the scores at [SCORE] of question twenty-two and the national average is eighty-six. [OMITTED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY]. This is a really poor, poor result.

POLICY BALANCER

I suppose I get frustrated because I don't think, if you know, if I had to say how is teaching excellence being supported by the university, I would say it is not. In fact, everything that the management can do to get in the way of teaching excellence they are doing. And even though if you sat down and spoke with them, many of them who are engaged in these OBMOTs [PART OF THE MANAGEMENT's PROGRAMME OF INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE TEACHING] individually, are persons who are lovely, they themselves do not, I don't do not see themselves being co-opted. I think that's the way this is being done that a lot of thwarted people are seeing that they've got a space to have a voice and to actually enact things that they think would be good. They don't... honestly, don't see that the way they're enacting that is taking away the space, the voice and the power of their staff. They honestly don't see that.

8.11.6 Question Five: Is there anything else you wish to add?

Being inspiring as a teacher and being able to keep up to date in the discipline were common themes as indicated in an example response: "it's essential to do some research, you know, and ourselves, to continue being learners, er, not to g... lose touch with learning practice so that we can find, you know, new ways of teaching from this learning experience as well".

Predictably perhaps, the comparison of standpoints relating to this question shows that the informants have a passion for teaching in general. They believe in what they are doing as being useful and necessary as one policy balancer response shows: "… what makes for excellent teaching as opposed… excellent teaching as opposed to good teaching… relates not so much in terms of the, if you like, sort of showmanship quality or charismatic… quality of, of teachers. It's more… relates much more to the extent to which… the educational processes inspire, enthuse, engage students, um, ignite a sense of passion for the subject, uh, that take students beyond the immediacies of, you know, meeting… the sort of threshold learning outcomes [mm, mm] it really, you know, inspires them to become deep learners and, and to, ah, apply that learning to their lives in all sorts of ways and, you know, be, be enthused to explore new horizons, and so on. I think, I think it has that quality to it".

Here the following interview excerpts show an enforcer wanting to add that "passion" is core to excellent teaching, where people fully "believe in what they're doing" as educators. A balancer adds the idea that excellent teaching involves critical reflection on one's practice, informed by feedback from students and peers, by educational literature and new pedagogical approaches. An enactor wants to show that excellent teaching is "transformative" in how it energises students as well as staff for whom teaching is a "passion".

> ### *Is there anything else you wish to add about excellent teaching at universities?*
>
> POLICY ENFORCER
>
> INTERVIEWER: Is there anything else you want to add to our conversation this afternoon, any thoughts you may have that's, that's...
>
> I think that what I find fascinating now with I'm not a young person anymore [laughing] is that twenty years down the line, I'm still very passionate about the job, which is something that you sometimes don't find in other professions.

Some professions obviously are very vocational and... but there are people I know that are either bored or you know can't wait to, you know... they're counting time to the other time and to anything like that. And I think what is very peculiar about all of that, and I'm sure it's true in other institutions as well, is the passion. People really, um, believe in what they're doing.

POLICY BALANCER

I also think that excellent teaching is different from good teaching. I think that it... it entails, um, constantly thinking about the nature of one's practice, and, and [mm, yeah] and trying think about how one can transform it for the better which may be through, um, you know, reflecting on what's working well, obtaining feedback from, from students and peers, um... but also from, you know, looking to see what is coming out of educational research, educational literature, um, educational theory to find sort of new, you know, inspiration and new approaches and new models, and practices

POLICY ENACTOR

So, for me to, to work after a fantastic lesson, for example, I come out of my lesson, and I feel super energised. My students are completely exhausted but energised as well. And the whole group together was so important because they played a key role in, in having this fascinating experience that will not be reproduced at any other time. It's... each lesson for me is a unique experience. And even though I've been teaching [THE DISCIPLINE] for so many years, you know, I just love this, you know, this, um, this, this space where we, you have different people every time and you're there, you know what you're teaching in a sense, but it's not boring because it's coming together differently every time and, uh, you know, it's transformative I find, you know, and I, I just loved it, this is my really, my passion, you know, for, for teaching. I... you know...

The development of a problematic in this phase of analysis revealed significant tensions between authorised-ideological and experiential-material knowledge, particularly regarding the National Student Survey (NSS) scores and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Divergent standpoints on the NSS as an indicator of teaching excellence and the effectiveness of the TEF to genuinely capture teaching quality were thus found in texts.

The introduction of management-led initiatives, specifically the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP) and Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM), intended to enhance teaching practices faced substantial resistance. These initiatives were

criticised for being misaligned with the realities of teaching excellence, being overly

managerial, and lacking in genuine developmental support for academic staff.

The need for a more collaborative, evidence-based approach to improving teaching

excellence that respects the professional judgment of academic staff and policies that

meaningfully engage with their experiential knowledge emerged from the analysis.

8.11.7 Phase two: Development of the problematic

In institutional ethnography, the development of a problematic is a methodological step

used to explore tensions and disjoints between institutional policies (the ruling relations)

and the lived experiences of those enacting them. A problematic does not refer to a specific

problem, but rather to the underlying tensions or contradictions that emerge from the

institutional processes, which are often invisible or misrepresented in formal accounts. It is

a way to map out how ruling relations shape the everyday work and experiences of

individuals within an institution. The problematic helps to reveal these hidden dynamics and

the power relations that inform policy implementation and practice. (See Appendix 3 for

details on how a problematic is developed in institutional ethnography.)

The second phase in the analysis of the interviews in this study may be considered as an

examination of interview transcripts to "reveal troubles arising in (or conflicts between)

authorised and experiential knowledge whereby the tensions that respondents know about,

and experience are either invisible or misrepresented within the authorised accounts…"

(Rankin, 2017, p.3). The tensions in authorised (policy enforcer) and experiential (policy

balancer and policy enactor) knowledge were identified and categorised (assembles of

sequences) to reveal the contours of possible problematics regarding teaching excellence at the institution.

The standpoint of one policy enforcer interview offered several possibilities for explicating methodologically useful clues to the puzzling issue of why things were happening as they were at the institution (the entry into the data). Identifying standpoint sequences within and across the interviews subsequently revealed distinctive counter-narratives to this policy enforcer informant's views on reasons for the poor National Student Survey (NSS) scores.

As noted in a previous chapter, a single set of data can produce any number of "problematics," but the many threads of the problematic identified in this analysis emerged when reactions and responses seemed to converge on a significant disjoint between the managerial (local) policy makers' intentions to achieve teaching excellence at the institution as a way of increasing the institution's NSS rankings and TEF classifications and the reactions of the respondents to those attempts. The problematic is thus a lens through which to understand the complex and interconnected sets of relationships and power dynamics that shape and are shaped by the everyday experiences and practices of teaching excellence by the individuals in the ethnography of this institution. The development of the problematic which this study focused on began with a statement by a standpoint informant in the interview data suggesting that improving "poor" teaching at the institution would lead to higher National Student Survey (NSS) scores. This statement formed the starting point, or "thread," for the problematic focused on standpoints on teaching excellence of the informants in the study.

8.11.8 The data entry point

LaFrance (2016:107) states that the point of entry into data as an institutional ethnographic method is a "dynamic problematic" or 'situated point of entry" into the complex processes that make up institutional processes. Any problematic represents only one of myriad problematics that can be traced in a data set and must be recognised as one instance of many smaller problematics that can be linked within larger institutional circuits. The focus in developing problematics is therefore not on individual accounts, but on discovering the connections between one account and the next in the sequence of investigation, typically done by "mapping" texts to a revealed problematic (Kearney et al., 2019). From the myriad possibilities some problematics began to emerge more strongly as analysis progressed.

A policy enforcer, responding to the question of the barriers preventing the achievement of teaching excellence (and expressing dismay at the poor scores for NSS giving these as the reason for the barriers to the achievement of teaching excellence at the institution) provided the point of entry into the data for the development of the problematic. The informant expressed confidence in the NSS as an indicator of teaching excellence but acknowledged the 'spread of intake tariff" and the number of students with "low tariffs" as making the achievement of teaching excellence difficult and ascribed the poor NSS results to a lack of teaching excellence and a staff unwillingness to "continually improve their work" in response "to feedback telling them it's well short of the average". The informant expresses the view that the students taken in by the institution who have "very low tariffs" (meaning those with poor school results) are therefore challenging to teach.

This, this particular institution takes students in with very low tariffs, with low and [emphatically tapping on the desk to emphasise the point] very low tariffs. And having a first-year group which has people with low tariffs and then people with very low tariffs… it's a big challenge to teach people like that.

[ ] Why is that the case? Um, and um, so, what are the barriers, er… … … I think there's not enough excellent teaching in this institution, the pockets are too small, and there's not enough. This a very… This is hard-to-hear news for colleagues here but it's true.

[ ] "So, when students are asked to rate the courses here on the, on the, single l… largest survey we have – not that I [indistinct] – but the biggest survey, there is no survey that matches it, this institution scores really badly.

[ ]"… and, um, there's another problem... here which I see… [omitted sentence to protect the informant's identity] that… there's a culture abroad, the evidence suggests that there's a culture abroad where the academic staff and tutors of this [taps table] institution have not [tapping the table forcefully] felt it necessary to seek continually to improve their work in response to feedback telling them it's well short of the average national…

[ ]"There's a... there's a sense of denial and disbelief of the data - a distrust of the data – um, so when – it's a common psychological problem when someone… when you get feedback that's rather unflattering, one of our first responses is to be fearful, to de… to in some way question the data, question the feedback, say it's not true...

[] Yeah, well, I mean at [the name of the university], I mean, we have on the hand, um… since 2007… So that's ten years running now, um, had a University Teaching Fellowships scheme which, um, was set up as a way to, um, you know, recognise and reward outstanding teachers…

8.11.9 Standpoints on the National Student Survey (NSS)

Divergent enactor standpoints ranged from rejection of the NSS scores as an indicator of

teaching excellence to indifference regarding the impact of the scores on teaching practice,

which emerged as a counternarrative, for example by this policy enactor: "It was needed in

my view, but equally there was something about... the independence of higher education.

Just a feeling that I had… it was being becoming compromised by this reductionist kind of

forms, that were possibly, uh, developed policies by people who may be rather scared of

higher education."

Another policy enforcer's comment (below), responding to National Student Survey

scores, is typical of policy balancer standpoints on the NSS where they question the efficacy

of a survey for capturing the "transformational experience" of student learning.

POLICY ENFORCER
INTERVIEWER: Okay, so, so, um, how would you re... respond to the National Student Survey as a mark of excellence, of teaching excellence? POLICY ENFORCER Well, I think that is the issue that you always have with surveys, in my opinion. Um, it is very difficult to quantify a transformational experience even with 22, 24 questions, whatever they are, and they keep changing, you know. Um, and especially when learners have to, you know, grade their experience and have certain choices, you know, agree, strongly agree, etc.

One enactor standpoint informant believed that the institution was presenting a

misleading interpretation of NSS data in press releases and thereby impacting the credibility

of the institution. The informant is a teaching fellow at the institution:

POLICY ENACTOR
The, the University was presenting some... an interpretation of numbers... um, based on data that is widely available. Everybody can go in and find our NSS results, so if we presenting, if we're interpreting our NSS results in a misleading way then somebody who is actually genuinely interested in the NSS results; any prospective student, if they really cared about the NSS results, they can go in and see our NSS results. They are not going to just look at the press release from [THE UNIVERSITY], which is misleading, they're going to actually look at it in relation to all of the universities they are considering. [YES]. Therefore, when they do that, they will see that were misleading them, we are deliberately misleading them, and they would not want to study here at a university where they are being deliberately mislead. So, I wanted to challenge that as a critical being to create progress for the university so that we are not deliberately misleading, we want to enhance our credibly at the institute.

The following enactor informant is not convinced that the NSS measures what it purports to measure, inferring that the practice of influencing students in their standpoints on the NSS is widespread.

POLICY ENACTOR
INTERVIEWER: What do you think about the, the, the way universities are ranked through the, the National Student Survey
Oh, I think that's interesting. Now, the National Student Survey, um... depending on the university, some universities take all the students into a room, and they make them answer it and they tell them what to answer. Others just let them do whatever they need to do. But also, it's the phrasing of the questions which is so poor and the phrasing of the questions to a certain dynamic of students may mean that they don't answer them quite correctly.

8.11.10   Standpoints on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

During the period of collecting data for this study, the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) was introduced, a trial year was completed, and the first iteration was implemented. The TEF, which purported to measure the quality of undergraduate teaching as a mechanism to determine whether state-funded providers were permitted to raise tuition fees, has been fully described in previous chapters.

Policy enactors appeared to be largely unaffected by the TEF policy which had not been disseminated within the institution and largely focused on the NSS. Those policy enactors who knew of the TEF, while engaging with the concept of teaching excellence, seemed to grapple with its practical translation into the TEF.

Policy balancers articulated a more critical viewpoint, identifying structural biases within the TEF that could perpetuate existing inequalities among universities. They expressed scepticism about the framework's focus on outcomes, questioning its genuine commitment to fostering teaching excellence. They lamented the absence of metrics that recognise

institutional efforts towards pedagogical improvement, relating the missed opportunities to encourage meaningful enhancements in teaching practices. Moreover, they challenged the TEF's foundational premise expressing profound concern that the framework may not truly capture the essence of teaching quality, and instead narrow its focus to easily quantifiable aspects.

Policy enforcers, on the other hand, expressed standpoints towards the TEF, which highlighted its inherent challenges and potential pitfalls in terms of reputational risks posed by the TEF, cautioning against a simplistic stratification of institutions that might tarnish the collective prestige of the UK's higher education landscape.

The following excerpts illustrate the multifaceted nature of standpoints on the TEF which range from cautious engagement to critical scepticism, in turn reflecting the broader national responses. The enactor's view that the move to TEF seen as an irreversible trend towards bringing HE more "under the gaze of central governments" as with schools, likely to evoke "frustrations" represents a general response from this group.

POLICY ENACTOR
Not really. Um, it means something to me only in some… and I haven't read it. So, it means something to me only in as far as is, similar things happening in schools. Teaching excellence was a, a key concept and I suppose we tried to, uh, translate that into policy, lesson plans. And therefore, some of the, uh, forms that I started to see in higher education echoed that in schools. [I see. I see] And I did think to myself, that's interesting they, um, HE is coming under the gaze of central governments in the same way that schools are. I had felt, rightly or wrongly, that somehow, uh, the, the way in which we relate to higher education as a society has profoundly shifted... and... all sorts of things have been happening and now it's got to a kind of key point, um, where it seems as if it couldn't go back, but, um, in a way there was, um, a sense... I'm only telling you my feelings because I can't really tell you the, um, that there was a very positive thing, uh, of the [sigh] frustrations.

POLICY BALANCERS
POLICY BALANCER: I tend to see the teaching excellence framework as very much aligned to the, um, agenda that's being driven by the Conservative party in the way they've reshaped the direction of higher education, um… … in the name of apparent recognising, uh, teaching excellence, but in this case, they're talking about, uh, institutional rankings [mm]. Uh, they've developed a system which, which is likely to

continue to perpetuate the kind of hierarchies within the [yes] um, institutional landscape in higher education (mm) uh, because it, it uses a set of criteria and metrics and so on, which continued to enable [the better-resourced universities to score better.

POLICY BALANCER: Um, and was actually quite harsh uh, in, in the way it might apply to … … in inverted commas, less successful, universities. You know, for example, - it applies penalties for falling short of benchmarks, but it doesn't balance those by, uh… allow… allowing commensurate reward for s… succeeding on other benchmarks. It's not as though they say okay, well you're good at these six but you're down on these three, so overall that's fine… The negatives outweigh the positives, so it's very skewed in th.. that sense [mm] um, … it's difficult for me to, to what extent it is genuinely about teaching excellence because it's looking largely at outcomes, um, and we know that ……… it's reductionist to try and, er, …… make judgements about the quality of teaching purely in terms of the performance of students because it's you know, learning is a complex process. It requires investment by, you know, [mm] All of those involved in the process [yeah, sure] uh, um, so only looking at, you know, student behaviour and outcomes is only looking at one part of the…"

POLICY BALANCER: Well it's, it's just emphasising only that, that aspect of it, and what is also to me very disheartening in terms of the, um, … … where the TEF has ended up, I think one of the early proposals it included indicators such as, uh, you know, percentage of staff that had teaching qualifications or HEA Fellowship, um, … there were hints that it might also include some indicator about the extent to which universities actually invest in teaching development or teaching enhancement, but those have all been removed [mm]. So, there's nothing in the, in the current version of the TEF which is about the extent to which universities are actually showing… actively showing… commitment to developing and enhancing teaching excellence [mm, mm] um, you know, so the indicators about what they're investing into that have been removed from the picture. Um, so it's focussed largely on outcomes and a lot of, you know, uh, you know… … … which also include employment outcomes are among the indicators there."

POLICY BALANCER: It makes me violently ill. Because, you know, I mean, for one thing, we know that the rest, the research excellent framework, is a sneaky trick to divert all the research funds into the Russell Group universities. We know how many research institutes our own institution has lost as it becomes more agile, and flexible, and rational. We lose the very nature of an educational institution, we lose what it means to be conti... contingent and contiguous with good research, because it all goes to the worth of all institutions. And, yeah, and you start talking about the Teaching Excellence Framework as if it's got anything to do with teaching it to which of course it hasn't, you know, it's about measuring. It doesn't measure value added. Like if, if you want to measure teaching excellence, you could say this is the baseline of the students as they came in, this is where they are now, that bit in the middle could be due, in part to teaching excellence. So, all the Russell Group would be at a disadvantage here, wouldn't they, because the baseline would be here? The output wouldn't be that much higher. So, where's the teaching excellence? If it was teaching excellence, you'd look at an institution like ours and say, yeah, there's a bit... this is the baseline but, bloody hell, look, look where they go. Look how they leave us. Look how differently they feel. Look at their qualifications now.

POLICY BALANCER: Nobody challenged that our students are Mickey Mouse. Nobody challenged that our degrees are Mickey Mouse and yet all the evidence from people here who are external examiners elsewhere is that we assess more and more harshly than

other institutions. That is the reality. But the ex... discussion is that we are crap that our students are crap, that we're all no better than we should be. And TEF is about taking what little money places like this get and giving them to the already privileged I see it as a very cynical move. Absolutely nothing to do with teaching excellence at all. The maintenance of privilege... Anyone of intellect who accepts that the TEF has got anything to do with teaching excellence? Well, I don't know. But it's got nothing to do with teaching excellence. So, it's being imposed. It's a whole new way of bullying academic staff and taking their power away. Instead of, I mean, Teaching Excellence... excellent teaching comes when there's... We know that learning happens when students can own their own learning. I think teachers of goodwill have to be allowed to own their teaching in some way. It can't be dictated. It can't be micromanaged. It can't be corralled and chained and wrapped up.
POLICY ENFORCER
POLICY ENFORCER: But the next one, the final thing I want to say, um, is that right now we have a policy change which is going to bring us a teaching excellence framework. [Mmm.] It's very difficult to argue against [Indistinct] measuring the excellence of our teaching. Of course, it's a good idea, uh, because it's important how we should, we should pay attention to how measure it and so on. But the way that the policymakers have launched the idea right now - we've just had a green paper published – has enormous dangers and there are enormous dangers that this notion of having first-rate, second-rate, third-rate, and fourth-rate, gold, silver and bronze, or level one two, three and four in TEF outcomes, uh, is in danger of labelling the majority of institutions as being of level two, three and four and a small few at level one so UK PLC is saying to the world, uh, we have these elite institutions with excellent teaching and then we've got most of them are rather second, third or fourth rate.

Such standpoints suggest that the TEF may not capture the full scope of what effective teaching involves. Moreover, it could be that the nuanced and diverse teaching practices that exist across different universities may be obscured by the TEF and further entrench existing disparities between institutions, rather than genuinely improving teaching standards, if these views by experienced academics are not considered in policymaking.

8.11.11   Resistance to management-led enhancement initiatives

Particularly strong reactions to two of the initiatives by management to enhance teaching quality emerged on further analysis. Institutional ethnographic mapping of the interview texts resulted in refining the problematic as one of misrecognition. These initiatives were a student outcomes

enhancement programme (SOIP) [NAME CHANGED] and a programme to involve managers in observing lecturers teaching to identify poor teaching, ostensibly to enhance NSS and TEF scores, but believed by some respondents to be a way of getting rid of poor teachers. The latter initiative is referred to as Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM) [NAME CHANGED] in this study.

8.11.12   The Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP)

The management set about instituting a programme designed to "drive up the quality of teaching" to improve student engagement for a better rating by students in the NSS survey. This was felt necessary in the face of a perceived indifference to and/or outright rejection of the NSS scores by staff as an indicator of teaching excellence. The change programme was arguably a direct response to managerial perceptions of   staff resisting and refusing to respond to the evidence provided by the Teaching Excellent Framework. A suite of local policies to improve student outcomes in response to the National Student Survey results as well as to the Teaching Excellent Framework award given to the institution was set up at the time of this study. Known as the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP) [NAME CHANGED}, it was operationalised in the form of "work streams", each headed by a policy enforcer. The projects were:

1. Student achievement

2. Delivery of teaching

3. Marketing, recruitment, and induction

4. Student learning by enhancing the virtual learning environment and assisting learning

5. Academic workforce improvement

6. Research and enterprise

There were three iterations of SOIP during the time of the investigation. The difficulty of implementing the programme became evident in the later analysis of university papers which illustrate the way the management went about implementing it and in staff responses to it revealed in the interview transcripts.

From the standpoint of the institutional policymakers (the policy enforcers), it was perhaps an attempt to change the idea that the academic staff and tutors did not finding it necessary to seek continually to improve their work in response to feedback. However, examined from the standpoints of the staff who had to introduce the policy (the policy balancers), and the staff who had to realise the policy in concrete terms (the policy enactors), there may have been reasons for the failure of the programme other than staff unwillingness to improve their teaching. SOIP was closed altogether in 2020.

In answer to the question of what is being done to improve teaching excellence at the institution, a policy enforcer summarised the purpose of the SOIP programme as follows:

POLICY ENFORCER
So those six projects together constitute a programme for improving student outcomes [Yes]. They're involved in enhancing the outcome, reducing dropouts, increasing engagement, having more peer-assisted learning, giving students much more agency in the process, involving them in curriculum redesign, involving students in doing module feedback and then tutors responding to feedback from students.

One policy enforcer provided a detailed description of managerial intentions for the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme:

POLICY ENFORCER
So, what we have in this institution is, it's one programme. It actually consists of six projects. Um... It breaks down like this.

> First one is on student achievement. Um, uh, and that unpacks with a bit of complexity.
>
> The second one is on the delivery of teaching led, by [X}.
>
> Third one is on, it looks rather boring, marketing, recruitment and induction. Um... But it's about, um, rethinking induction, and it's also about, in our case, engaging with students who seem to be at risk and using big data.
>
> [OMITTED]
>
> Um, another one is on student learning. Uh, and that involves... just two big things on that. One is, uh, enhancing our virtual learning environment which you know all about. But X is working on that. [yeah, yeah]. And another one is the [NAME OF SCHEME] scheme … assisting learning. It's having... organising so our students [pass].
>
> Then there's a project, the fifth one is on academic workforce improvement on ensuring that we drive up the number of people here who have some qualifications to teach beyond their PhD. [OMITTED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY] These days we have training programmes for that. It's far more sensible to have them…
> [OMITTED]
> So, driving up the number of people who are taught; having, enhancing our peer-to-peer observation scheme of teaching, um, and, uh, um, having a three-year scholarship action plan as, if it is higher education, it should involve scholarship as well. That's on academic workforce improvement.
>
> And then we got a six, sixth strand which affects student outcomes and that's on research and enterprise, on ensuring that we are actually doing a scholarship and research and building in this enterprise and creativity into our programmes for students who decide not to particularly work for somebody else or may want to be working for themselves. This is an aspect of being an effective citizen.

An oblique reference by a policy balancer may illustrate a disjoint in standpoint because of tensions caused by a "complex institutional culture". In this excerpt the financial pressures driving the management of the institution, arguably being templated within a complex of ruling relations, is evident. The balancer states that one of the drivers behind managerial efforts to improve student retention was to "get a better performance indicator which will feed into the TEF and all that" and that "in the new era of fee-driven higher

education, student retention has a direct and immediate impact on the financial viability of the, of the university".

8.11.13   Standpoints on the SOIP

Policy enforcers intended the SOIP to enhance teaching practice to get better NSS and TEF scores. Previously the responsibility for improving teaching excellence had been handed on to the continuing professional development (CPD) as the unit responsible for academic and professional development at the university. However, the policy enforcers decided to become directly responsible for the SOIP. The takeover of these functions in operational, as well as policy terms from the CPD, put policy balancers in a difficult position, stating, for example: "And unfortunately, it also meant that there have been some recent um, developments where because we've been absent from that kind of level of discussion, um, I think it's resulted in some confused policymaking." In the initial phase of the SOIP, which initially targeted first-year students, educational expertise was only enlisted when deemed necessary. However, in subsequent rounds, university management acknowledged the necessity for a more coordinated approach to SOIP, involving formal participation from the professional development unit. Policy balancers' responses to the SOIP initiative indicated disjointed viewpoints between a) the intention of policy enforcers to improve teaching excellence, and b) the responses of policy enactors to the SOIP programme

 In this excerpt, a policy balancer can be seen trying to reconcile the attempts of policy enforcers to produce practical outcomes to the problem of the NSS scores:

POLICY BALANCER
INTERVIEWER: But how does that [SOIP], how does that get to, you know, Jack or Jill Lecturer who has to operate within this policy environment?
My understanding of the way SOIP operates, and it's organised around the six workstreams or strands which has got a dedicated focus, whether it's, you know,

quality of provision or assessment and feedback or First Year Experience or Student Support. those, those are the typical kinds of strands. Each of those strands is led by one Head of School and one Student Experience. um, and for me, it was very interesting that in the first two years of SOIP that, you know, [our unit] was not given responsibility at the workstream level, although we were involved where our expertise was deemed to be needed.

So obviously, around HEA fellowship, there was very close consultation with us, our management observation teaching and doing the training for that. There was, um, partly under a bit of pressure from myself, we were able to feed into the strand on assessment and feedback which was led by [X], and [X], no, correction, [X] and [X], uh... We were more actively sought out in terms of helping with digital teaching and learning and embedding academic skills, these initiatives that have been focused initially on the first year. Um...

But it's only been in the current academic year where there was a recognition that SOIP needs to be more collaboratively coordinated. Um... That, [X], [X], [X] set up a structure which is called the SOIP Board, although it doesn't have, it's not a formal committee. It's more of a kind of a forum that coordinates the work of SOIP. Um, on to which I was then formally invited to sit, you know, in a, in a formal function of a being referred to represent [THE UNIT] as opposed to previously where we were consulted where people thought they might need to use our help.

There were no positive responses to the SOIP programme by policy enactors

discernible in the interviews, despite extensive reading and lexical analysis of the interviews.

From the point of view of enactors, there is an apparent lack of managerial understanding of

requirements for excellent teaching such as the need for disciplinary expertise:

POLICY ENACTOR
There was a, um, cost save initiative where there was a... was a blanket, um, the refusal of HPL's. So, the point when I confirmed my […] leave and looked at what needed to be covered, I recruited several HPL's who I, um, who I checked their... their quality [yeah yeah] and whether they would be able to deliver... with the [INDISTINCT] that needed to be delivered and the university didn't authorise the funding of those HPL's and instead tried to cover the [NAME OF THE COURSE] course with colleagues [FROM A DIFFERENT DISCIPLINE] who were not qualified to teach on those modules and the result has been disastrous. The previous year the course scored 100 per cent in the NSS survey and this year the, um, the second-year students, um, scored us... gave us eight percent satisfaction rating and the final year students gave us a twenty-five per cent satisfaction.

The negative standpoints regarding the SOIP initiative are further evident in the responses of many policy enactors, who gave reasons such as the programme was:

- not changing teaching practice

- counteractive to a previously strong way of working – that the previous "good" strategy and policy was being compromised by being reinvented and regressive in terms of improving teaching practice

- compromised by a focus on students and none on the staff, and

- too dependent on contingent and superficial student feedback on teaching performance.

Examples from policy enactor interview excerpts which follow provide further evidence of the disjoint between the informants regarding the SOIP policy initiatives.

Example 1 SOIP- failing to change teaching practice

POLICY ENACTOR
Um... Yes, well, because, um, the data that I gave you in the first interview is based on my experience as an hourly paid lecturer over a six-year period, [yes, yes] but I think before these policies really came in... um... I don't want to say "aggressively, I'm searching for ... [please be honest and open, because....] Well, they didn't really touch my... practice. So, I think the timing of them, when they were being really implemented, robustly, [laughing] if that's all right, but... um, it didn't, it didn't really affect my experience too much. And that maybe because I was, because of the timing, or because I was outside the radar, radar, I was less important, really.

The view above endorses another policy balance's view regarding the exclusion of staff expertise from the programme as resulting in little change in teaching.

POLICY BALANCER
Now we, you know, I can see some practical... achievements coming out of SOIP so far on these, but I, it's difficult to see to what extent they've translated down to the level of actual practice. [OMITTED]

> Um ... then there was a document in which students wrote, they, you know, wrote good advice for the students on how to make the most out of assessment and feedback, which I think was really a brilliant document. But again, I don't know. You know, what impact it's having, is it being shared back to students, are students looking at it, using it? Are the staff encouraging students to look at it and use it? I don't see any evidence of that.

Example 2: SOIP – too student focussed, and staff input disregarded

POLICY ENACTOR
Well, um, so, I mean, obviously the, um, the SOIP, um, the series of groups which was like [a previous initiative] when, when we were there, so they've got a series of management who are looking into... actions I suppose to actually raise, raise the standards and raise, I don't know, attendance and retention. But in terms of staff, apart from this TOBM [Teaching Observation by Management], absolutely nothing. I seriously, I don't think anything's happening in terms of staff whatsoever. So, everything is, is.... The problem is everything is student-focused, and it doesn't actually focus on staff at all in any way, shape or form.

Example 4: SOIP – a reinvented, regressive policy

POLICY ENACTOR
And the problem with the SOIP... I haven't been able to go to the, to the new, the new one headed by [SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF] very often, and, um, somebody else has to go. But it is just like they're reinventing the wheel. They're, just because they've been given a task, they can't, you know... we had a good strategy. We had a good policy, we had a strong way of working, and now they just sort of seemed to be going backwards again. I, I, I just don't understand it. I really don't.

Moving now to how TOBM was received by policy enactors, it will be seen that enactor viewpoints align with the less nuanced and more directly negative responses expressed by the latter policy balancer.

8.11.14   The TOBM initiative

The intention to improve teaching was operationalised via a sub-policy called Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM) [NAME CHANGED]. Reactions to TOBM were

examined from the standpoints of policy balancers and policy enactors before moving to the third phase of the data collection and analysis. TOBM required managers to observe lecturers teaching and to provide feedback about their performance and claimed that the new programmes would work through the processes of evaluation, feedback and reflection. Apart from TOBM, there was direct pressure on students to provide feedback directly to the management about the teaching performance of lecturers via the initiatives from the Delivery of Teaching and the Student Learning workstreams of SOIP.

TOBM was originally introduced in 2015/16 in support of the standard Peer Review of Teaching programme run by the CPD unit to develop teaching practice and support staff development. However, the Peer Review of Teaching programme developed and managed by the unit, was largely ignored by the institutional performance enhancement committee between 2016 and 2018. The CPD unit was, nonetheless, instructed by the executive to train managers to carry out the TOBM exercise. The co-option of the CPD unit's functions emerged in this second, as well as later in the third, phase of the data collection and analysis.

8.11.15   Policy enactor TOBM standpoints

There were no positive responses to TOBM discernible in policy enactor responses despite repeated lexical analysis of the interviews. Responses ranged from lukewarm acceptance to outrage. TOBM was seen as a tick-box exercise by policy enactors. Some saw TOBM as tokenistic and as an attempt to rank staff; others saw it as "absolutely wrong." When an enactor was asked what the best way would be to ensure that people did achieve excellent teaching, the answer was as follows.

POLICY ENACTOR

Well, it certainly isn't the TOBM system they've just employed. I can tell you now.

INTERVIEWER: The TOBM system?

Well, they just ... [A POLICY ENFORCER] and the SOIP group have just introduced something called the Management Observation... something, you know, training... management observation, something... [teaching, perhaps] teaching, yeah. So basically, the management come in... anybody, any PL (principal lecturer)comes in, and they'll observe you teaching and then they've given a whole set of like a Rubic's cube of criteria that you're supposed to set out and um, based, basically, based on the, the good learning and teaching strategies, um, and somebody comes in and they rank you.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean "rank"?

Literally Good. Excellent.

The enactor clearly views TOBM as a tokenistic, box-ticking exercise that fails to address the deeper issues of teaching quality and does little to genuinely improve academic practices.

This enactor describes a response to TOBM at a meeting as a non-developmental exercise:

POLICY ENACTOR
Um, and a member of staff who was sort of leading it said, well, of course, we will address, sorry, we will address, um, things that where modules look like they're going wrong through the TOBM. And we all went, of God, no!

And so I put my hand up and [X], [X] sort of flew in and went, whoa, because he could see that I was gunning for him and I said, you know, I have to say that I said, that is not what the TOBM is supposed to be about, you observing whether um, you know, if the module is going wrong... and... you know, looking how that tutor works. That tutor shouldn't be in... if things are going wrong, that tutor should not be in the position to be able to do that. It should be taken out long before the observation... they, something else has to happen before that. That's a, that's a, that's a... it's not, it's not about observation.

INTERVIEWER: So, are you saying... are you saying that the process isn't developmental?

No, It's judgmental. Absolutely 100% judgmental. No development. No, um, I can't challenge anything. It's one sided. Um... It's, it's, you know, it's a personal |

stance. You know this, this particular person in my TOBM said to me, um, I want to join in but if I join in, I'll take over. And I thought well, you... this is not about you.

Some enactors referred to the exercise as tokenistic.

TOKENISM: REPONSES BY POLICY ENACTORS
I felt, where we were all supposed to be, um, evaluating each other and I found that to be token, token, tokenistic and I feel as if my colleagues probably just saw it as something of going through the motions.
Well, they just ... [A MANAGER] and the SOIP group have just introduced something called the Management Observation... something, you know, training... management observation, something... [teaching, perhaps] teaching, yeah. So basically, the management come in... anybody, any PL[[principal lecturer] comes in, and they'll observe you teaching and then they've given a whole set of like a Rubic's cube of criteria that you're supposed to set out and um, based, basically, based on the, the good learning and teaching strategies, um, and somebody comes in and they rank you...
It's judgmental. Absolutely 100% judgmental. No development No, um, I can't challenge anything. It's one-sided. Um... It's, it's, you know, it's a personal stance. You know this, this particular person in my TOBM said to me, um, I want to join in but if I join in, I'll take over. And I thought well, uh... this is not about you.

Several policy enactors saw TOBM as a tick-box exercise:

TICK-BOX EXERCISE: RESPONSES BY POLICY ENACTORS
Is this about… is, if this, this was truly about learning and teaching, it would be somebody from learning and teaching coming in and doing this, but it isn't. It's a tick list that they go through and it's whether they deem it within their vein or not. It's a very, it's a difficult process and, um, [absolutely] it's not, it's not easy at all …
and in terms of ... of staff development, I mean I get quite frustrated with these staff development events, which seem to be just a tick box exercise when we're... we're told how to... to suck eggs and were told things that we already should know [mmm] if we don't, we really shouldn't be teaching at the university [mmm]. I think people should be engaged in the peer review process [mmm] because that is where I learn... that's where I develop myself [yes of course yeah].
So, to... just go to a ... a tick box exercise event here I am given a few slides on what good formative feedback looks like, I know that [mmm] you know, why is it... it's a waste my time, you..., but when I'm in the peer review process you know they are challenging me and [indeed] there is a real you know, carrot and the end of that process why I am so highly motivated and it's improving my writing

A tick-the-box exercise, you know, about things that you have done. And I find that, you know, here, obviously, you know, um, teaching excellence, the definition of teaching, excellence has changed a lot.
I didn't care, you know, and I said this is a joke. It's a tick-the-box exercise that has nothing to do about, you know, your teaching, excellence in teaching x, no, it's not that. No, it's not at all it's a tick-the-box exercise.
It's a tick-the-box exercise that has nothing to do about, you know, your teaching, excellence in teaching x, no, it's not that. No, it's not at all it's a tick-the-box exercise. With my, with my manager, I never discussed teaching.
Yeah. Tick, tick, tick.
Yes, it was a kind of tick-box mechanism. I think these, these kinds of templates are, but you don't have to use them as such.

One policy enactor observed that several management observers had not taught for several years or had not received any formal pedagogical training and even those who argued that having taught for five years or more was qualification enough to do the observing were not necessarily good teachers simply because of having taught for a length of time: The enactor is concerned that some of the managers tasked with observing teaching lack the necessary pedagogical training or experience, undermining the legitimacy of the TOBM system.

POLICY ENACTOR
Th... so this is, this is, you know, and that's my instance and other peoples have different instances, and it is really quite a difficult thing where management who not necessarily got the pedagogical training themselves. They've inherited a position through various different ways but not ever done any formal... I'm not necessarily saying have to do formal training, but according to some management, if you've taught for more than five years, it gives you the right to do many different things.... which is not necessary, it could be teaching very badly for five years. Um. however, my point, my point is that I think, uh, it's very difficult. It's such, it's so subjective...

Here the view is expressed that managers a) should themselves undergo the same

processes of TOBM to ensure that they are expert teachers and b) the triangulation of

scores with other sources of information such as student satisfaction score is necessary:

POLICY ENACTOR
Um, so I think there should be more observation of teaching [by the managers themselves?] Um, I think there could... there should maybe be different tracks by which that could happen, so the managers, um, and peers [mmm] so then it becomes more of, uh, learning process form the... the ... from peer-to-peer [mmm]. Um, but then also managers to... to ensure that... that the standards are what they should be, but making sure that we actually... the managers that are making these observations are teaching experts themselves [themselves] because if we... if we have a... a manager who isn't... is a manager because they weren't a good teacher or who is a manager because they weren't a good researcher, then that is not necessarily a very good [yes] quality check. Then to triangulate that with other sources of information [mmm], which is the student satisfaction scores.

Another policy enactor calls for a "quieter way" of staff development through

collaboration, describing the nature of the methods advocated for by policy balancers and

the raison d'être behind the successful peer review programme previously run by the CDP

unit.

POLICY ENACTOR
That's why I think it should be much more... the observation of teaching or the sort of collaboration of teaching would be a far better way of looking at it. So if you decided that you would collaborate each year with a different person, or a number of different tutors, with from different disciplines, maybe through a project, maybe through a short project, maybe a one-week project, two-week project, you would share practice, you would see how each other teaches, you would do something. So, I think points of collaboration would grow staff and staff training would be greater, and then far more a quieter way of staff training through collaboration... than necessarily doing a top-down approach.

Below is a policy balancer view of the experience of being peer reviewed in a "quieter way":

POLICY ENACTOR
I think people should be engaged in the peer review process [mmm] because that is where I learn... that's where I develop myself [yes of course yeah]. So, and you know, because that's with like the... you know real academics real experts in my

field. So, to... just go to a ... a tick box exercise event here I am given a few slides on what good formative feedback looks like, I know that [mmm] you know, why is it... it's a waste of time, you..., but when I'm in the peer review process you know they are challenging me and [indeed] there is a real you know, carrot and the end of that process why I am so highly motivated and it's improving my writing [mmm] and for... for me that's when I'm talking about critical beings my... the... I assess that primarily through... in the written form [yeah]. So, it's about developing a... a written argument [mmm] so if my writing is being put under pressure and developed then these are the skills, I'm... I'm [passing on] passing on...on to my students [yeah]. Now if colleagues are unable to write because they are not engaged [mmm] in writing [yeah sure] then how can they possibly teach our students how to write [mmm].

The impact of these attempts to template teaching excellence has a cost which calls into question the treatment of academics who themselves must treat students with fairness and consideration The following excerpt shows (shockingly) a "climate of fear" and "disrespectful" treatment of colleagues and the loss of staff morale evident in many responses to the TOBM initiative.

POLICY ENACTOR
So, that's one thing. The second thing is, um, I would say is the morale, you know. Whoever you speak to seems to feel... not looked after, cared for and supported by the management. Um, so, that is, I think is tragic because, within the university, we know how to support and care for students. We know what promotes learning and motivation. We're, we're supposed to be excellent at doing this and what we are getting from our managers, you know, it's just the other way around. If you don't do this, you will go to disciplinary panel, I was threatened of disciplinary action, um, about a month ago. You know, unheard of at [THE UNIVERSITY]. Um, so, you know, it's, it's a climate of fear. If you don't do something, there will be a serious consequence and the reputation of the university will be at stake because of what you've done. So, it's, it's, it's a, it's a kind... of thinking from fifty years ago, you know... uh, so... but it was not always like this at [THE UNIVERSITY] because I remember [THE UNIVERSITY], you know, when we were supported, and we were cared for and looked after much better than now. Now, I think, I think it's, it's really...; and this is why my, my colleague has just resigned, uh, you know, a month ago, because he's just, he loves his job, but he simply cannot be treated this way anymore, you know. It's disrespectful.

Clearly, from the point of view of those who had to enact the policy directives emanating from the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP), the Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM) exercise was unpopular and by no means achieved

the intentions of policy enactors to improve the quality of teaching. TOBM ceased to exist in 2019.

8.11.16   Policy balancer TOBM standpoints

From the policy balancers' standpoints, SOIP could not succeed as it failed to represent a peer review of teaching where you "go in to look for what's not working so well" in a dialogic way. The policy balancer below states, "All these things have been got rid of. And, instead, you've got middle managers running SOIPs that now tell people what to do…" In this informant's view, this approach has created a fraught atmosphere and taken away staff ownership of their practice. The TOBM initiative is seen as another form of "bullying" by management in an institution "that's already given all the managers the right to manage" teaching practice:

POLICY BALANCER
Well, it's starting to, to [become] fraught an atmosphere. It, the peer review of teaching, a sustained and supported peer review of teaching where the, the idea is an appreciative inquiry, where you go in to look for what's working well and have a chat about what's not working so well and come to some ideas about solutions. That sort of dialogic, appreciative inquiry method would be really good. But management observation of teaching in an institution that's already given all the managers the right to manage, that's taken away more and more staff ownership of their own practice cannot be experienced… it's another form of bullying.

In a different interview, a policy balancer expresses reservations that the TOBM is being used as a mechanism to "inspect" staff:

POLICY BALANCER
I was very worried when the University first announced that was going to introduce a management observation of teaching scheme because I was worried that it was going to be used as a mechanism, basically to, in inverted commas, to "inspect" staff, um...

> INTERVIEWER: And has that been the case?
>
> And identify, you know, who might be the problem cases, etc, etc. Um... Because I was able to participate in the formulation, contribute towards the formulation of the scheme and directly, you know, to the training of it, you know, so the scheme was originally set up.

The policy balancer describes the need to counter the "evaluative" approach of the

TOBM which was now linked to quality assurance and quality enhancement and

professional development. The attempt to displace the balancer's expertise by the manager

to legitimise the enforcer's intentions for the TOBM initiative is evident in the balancer's

counter-response.

POLICY BALANCER
Colleague A was the one who was given the job but, but, you know, I worked with him, um, by giving him feedback on various parts of the scheme documentation, but importantly, um, I, in consultation with him, ran the training and tried to therefore, put the emphasis because, b... well, one on the one hand, the scheme is different from peer review of teaching, in the sense that it does end up by making a formal evaluation, the end of it, once the staff member has been observed. When they get their feedback, they get the feedback that indicates how they've performed against the different criteria.
So, there's a formal evaluation is made and that's why it's different to the peer review teaching, um, but they also get feedback. Um, and that meant that there was an opportunity even within an evaluative, er, model to still make it developmental. And so, the training has emphasised that aspect of it.

The policy balancer views this managerial colleague's approach to TOBM as locating it

within the various quality assurance and quality enhancement mechanisms but putting

"more of a policy spin on it". The balancer sees this manager as presenting TOBM "within a

narrative that was around, um, maybe using the management of observation of teaching to

get feedback on an aspect of your teaching which, uh, students have commented on and

module evaluations" thus providing evidence that students are seen as a way of getting staff

to comply with policy enforcer attempts to get staff to respond to negative NSS feedback.

The balancer is concerned to find "a space within what could have been a very regimented,

um, and largely accountability-driven scheme and seeing space enough to make it

developmental." However, the policy balancer expresses the intention to "identify some

aspirational goal in terms of professional development in interactions with the manager so

it could be linked back that way" to a more developmental approach.

Some policy enforcers were as uncomfortable with TOBM as the balancers and

enactors were as this balancer excerpt shows:

POLICY BALANCER
Um... But I was really, you know, it really struck me when I was doing the training, we had a whole session dedicated to feedback. Um ... I could see so many of the managers in the room, were really very concerned about not compromising their working relationship with their colleagues, um, not wanting to, to come in and, and have to, you know, execute judgement over them. They really were very keen to... make it as constructive an experience as possible.

Several policy enforcers were concerned that TOBM would adversely affect the good

working relationships they had built up and tried to exercise a developmental rather than a

policing approach to the intentions of the executive as the policy balancer indicates:

POLICY BALANCER
Management observation team? Yes, that's right. Which was set up two years ago, I helped... I made a contribution to the scheme to try and... ensure that there was a developmental emphasis in it. Um... And I was also very directly involved in doing the training around the scheme. Um... So, for example, um ...... I organised training sessions around giving feedback, as a result of a manager having observed a colleague teach. Um ... And I was very impressed when I did that... Um ...about what I could see was the really genuine concern and commitment managers that came to the training was showing in terms of wanting to make, make the experience a positive and supportive and developmental one for their colleagues. They really took seriously how important it was to be able to give constructive, sensitive feedback.

When asked if the TOBM was working, the balancer responded as follows, indicating that some managers tried to implement the initiative developmentally:

POLICY BALANCER
INTERVIEWER: Have you, have you had any feedback from those have been observed as to how that, how that's working? Not much, but I have as I said, through the HEA process, with… staff have mentioned I have, I know that in… eventually some staff really got very good, good feedback from their managers. That may well be a factor of the particular, um, you know, personality and, uh, professionalism etc of, of the manager concerned. I mean in this particular case I, I do know who... the manager was who gave very detailed, helpful feedback. Um, and it is what you would expect of that particular colleague.

In summary, in policy enactors' critiques of institutional initiatives like the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP) highlight concerns that these efforts are too focused on student engagement metrics while neglecting the vital need for staff development to enhance teaching excellence. Many enactors report that SOIP had little impact on their teaching practice, due to their peripheral role within the institutional framework, leading to the perception that management's efforts were poorly timed and failed to address the real needs of academic staff. Furthermore, there is notable frustration that these initiatives are seen as regressive, unnecessarily reinventing previously effective policies instead of promoting genuine progress in teaching excellence. This reflects a broader tension between management-driven reforms and the practical realities of teaching staff, with a heavy emphasis on students at the expense of supporting the development and wellbeing of educators.

Similarly, enactors express dissatisfaction with the Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM) initiative, which they view as a top-down, evaluative exercise that fails to provide the developmental feedback necessary for professional growth. TOBM is largely perceived as a tick-box exercise for management, rather than a meaningful tool for

improving teaching practice. This critique mirrors the negative perspectives voiced by policy balancers, with both groups expressing concern that TOBM prioritises managerial oversight over fostering genuine professional development. As a result, these initiatives are seen as undermining their intended goal of improving teaching quality by neglecting to engage with and support academic staff in a constructive and impactful manner.

8.12 Phase three: juxtaposition of policy texts and interview data

The texts which represented the ruling relations determining the realities of implementing 'teaching excellence' at the institution are illustrated by a conceptual model which shows the flow of textually mediated ruling relations, sustained by the replication of these texts, in the everyday world of the institution (Illustration 1).

ILLUSTRATION 2: MODEL FOR TEXT MAPPING
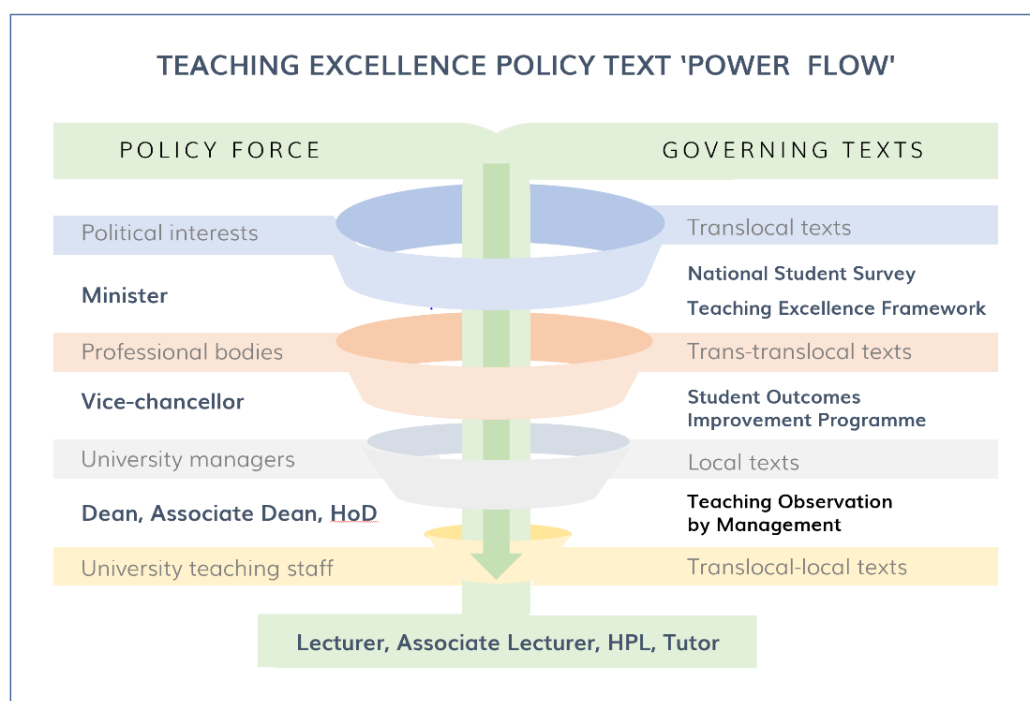
As seen in the model, the "texts" controlled the processes and management of front-end "teaching excellence" work from afar (NSS and TEF) and were reproduced in the activities of day-to-day work through institutional policy texts (SOIP and TOBM). Thus, an examination of texts to do with standards for teaching excellence within the institution constitutes the third phase of analysis in this study; specifically, the minutes and papers of the performance enhancement committee in juxtaposition with the findings in the first two phases. These committee texts were mapped to translocal governing texts within wider institutional circuits of control; specifically, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the National Student Survey (NSS), arising from Higher Education Acts and units of State management of HE – OfS (Office for Students) and HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council) at parliamentary level.

8.12.1 Illuminating ruling relations

In this phase of analysis, specific references to the TEF, the NSS, the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP) and the programme to improve teaching by instituting direct observation of teaching by members of management (TOBM) in the committee texts were examined in juxtaposition with references in the interview texts to these. Assemblies of sequences, that is, clusters concerning the most frequently mentioned policy initiatives, were identified in the minutes of the committee meetings of the institutional performance enhancement committee in the same way they were identified in the interview transcripts in the second phase of the analysis. As will be seen, examining this set of committee minutes and papers in juxtaposition with the assemblies of sequences revealed in the interviews revealed how ruling relations concerning "teaching excellence" manifested at the institution as the policy events unfolded between 2016 and 2018.

Transnational and local policies were ranked by the frequency with which they were mentioned in the standpoint interviews and compared with how frequently they were mentioned in institutional performance enhancement committee papers. The most frequently mentioned references to policy of any kind in both the interview transcripts and the committee papers were chosen for detailed examination by the kind of critical discourse analysis advocated by institutional ethnography (see the results in Table 4 below). Both the interview and committee paper data sets were iteratively examined in conjunction with one another several times.

TABLE 4: FREQUENCY OF POLICY MENTIONS IN TEXTS

FREQUENCY OF POLICY MENTIONS	Interviews	Committee papers
Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP)	60	341
National Student Survey NSS	26	227
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)	24	141
Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM)	23	23
HEA Fellowship	12	0
Student Teaching Excellence Award	1	0
University Teaching Fellowship	1	1
CPD Framework	2	3
University Teaching Excellence Award	2	0
National Teaching Fellowship	1	1
Collaborative Awards in Teaching Excellence (CATE) – HEA	1	0

Policy names changed for confidentiality and anonymity purposes

The four most frequently mentioned policies in the table above were selected for detailed analysis. These were the:

1. _Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP):_ The local policy developed by university managers in response to poor results in the National Student Survey and the poor TEF award of the institution.

2. _National Student Survey (NSS):_ The translocal policy at a national level (managed by the Office for Students (OfS) on behalf of the UK HE funding and regulatory bodies.

3. _Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF):_ The translocal policy administered by the Office for Students (OfS) developed in response to the White Paper "Students at the Heart of the System" (June 2011) put out by the BIS Department of Business, Innovation and Skills in response to the Browne Review, the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance of 2010).

4. _Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM):_ A local policy developed by university managers as a subset of the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme policy above.
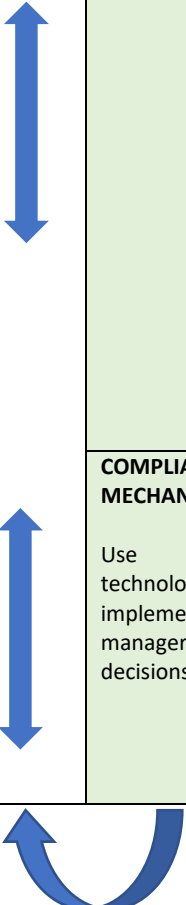
8.12.2 How the institutional texts mapped to ruling relations

Analysis of the interview data in this way led to new insights into the daily work of teaching excellence in the institution as well as an understanding of how extra-local, translocal, and local governing texts functioned as ideological representations of teaching excellence (Hak, 1998) to establish and maintain managerial control and accountability. Below (Illustration 2) is one example of the mapping process that revealed how the underlying mechanisms of misrecognition emerged from the processes of iterative data collection and analysis as a self-reinforcing ouroboric circle.

TEMPLATING PROCESS	*Standpoint*	INDICATIVE STANDPOINTS
ASSUMPTION: NSS and TEF *ratings a*re a result of poor teaching.	Poor NSS and TEF results due to poor teaching and staff denial of NSS and TEF evidence of poor teaching.	'so, there's a distrust of data and, and a distrust of management and leadership which is a great shame because what we, what we end up getting is, er, er, repeated self-defeating behaviour leading to low scores from students, leading to reducing applications."
ACTION: Implement the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme.	Implementing a revised management controlled SOIP using business methods will address poor teaching and, thereby, improve NSS and TEF results.	Report of SOIP and SOIP Governor Oversight Group 5.1 Alongside the SOIP KPI "front sheet", Appendix 1.2 also presents a table showing the specific KPIs each workstream is targeting, anticipated outputs, how impact will be measured, timescales and any additional costs. Now much of the initial scoping has been completed by workstream leads, this will be revised to tighten specificity on outputs, impact measures, timescales and costs. Launch a university-wide scheme for management observation of classroom teaching aimed at improving the quality of our teaching. [TOBM]
REACTION: Negative reaction by staff.	Staff unwilling to carry out SOIP (TOBM in particular) because of cost-cutting, resource constraints, overwork, and distrust of managerial knowledge of the realities of teaching.	"... we had good strategy. We had good policy, we had a strong way of working, and now they just sort of seemed to be going backwards again. I, I, I just don't understand it. I really don't... you need to give your staff training, you need to employ them in time, time, in a timely manner to be able to do that, but then also you need to give the staff support to those that are on the ground on a day-to-day basis to also help that happen. It's very simple, very simple...

		COUNTER REACTION: Exclude academic *voice*.	Restructure academic decision-making bodies and replace them with managerially controlled entities. Restructure the managerial units of the institution and replace academic managers with business managers. Dictate assessment and feedback processes. Replace peer observation of teaching by management observation of teaching.	Agenda items marked with a ★ are included primarily for information. They will not normally be discussed at the meeting unless a member requests this in advance. All requests should be made to the Secretary and will be considered by the Chair of the Committee in advance of the meeting. STARRED ITEMS 156.1. The Committee noted the changes to the process whereby starred items were now to be received/noted and were not to be discussed at the meeting. 156.2. The Committee confirmed the starred items on the agenda. [MINUTES FOOTNOTE] Confidential - not for distribution
		COMPLIANCE MECHANISM Use technology to implement managerial decisions.	Use technology to give feedback on student results. Use student surveys to tailor to shape student NSS responses. Use VLE to track "at risk" students and use student "ambassadors" to shape the student experience". Use the institutional website to announce management decisions.	

8.13 Chapter conclusion

In summary, a disjoint between managerial goals to improve teaching quality for better NSS and TEF rankings and the lived experiences of academic staff revealed a consensus on the purpose of higher education but varied views on how to achieve teaching excellence, with tensions emerging between ideological and material knowledge of teaching excellence. Divergent perspectives emerged, especially from policy enactors who

questioned the validity of NSS scores and the effectiveness of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in capturing true teaching quality. The introduction of management-led initiatives like the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP) and Teaching Observation by Management (TOBM) met with resistance, as they were perceived as attempts to enforce compliance rather than genuine efforts to enhance teaching quality.

The analysis of institutional texts in juxtaposition with interview data further revealed how the various "texts" mediated ruling relations, often misrepresenting, or coopting the material knowledge of teaching staff and then using the discourse of student "engagement" as the means of ensuring compliance with policies developed in response to poor NSS and TEF scores. This misrecognition led to scepticism and resistance towards managerial initiatives designed by the management to improve teaching excellence and a need for more inclusive policymaking.

We turn now, in the next chapter, to the mechanisms of managerial control overshadowed academic expertise, prioritising financial and reputational goals over teaching quality.

8.14 Chapter references

Campbell, M. and Gregor, F. (2004) Mapping social relations: a primer in doing institutional ethnography. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Hak, T. (1998) 'Textual analysis and institutional ethnography', Journal of Pragmatics, 30(3), pp. 329-357.

Kearney, M., Smith, D. E. and Griffith, A. (2019) Institutional ethnography as practice. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

LaFrance, M. (2016) 'The institutional ethnography of power in organisations', Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management, 11(2), pp. 101-120.

Rankin, J. M. (2017) Institutional ethnography and the materiality of texts. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Smith, D. E. and Griffith, A. (2022) The conceptual practices of power: a feminist sociology of knowledge. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (2011) Students at the heart of the system. London: BIS. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31384/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf (Accessed: 25 September 2024).

9 ETHICS AND LIMITATIONS

9.1 Chapter introduction

9.2 The methodology of institutional ethnography

9.3 Limitations of this study

9.4 Ethical considerations

9.5 Chapter conclusion

9.6 Chapter references

9.1 Chapter introduction

As a case study of a single institution, no claims of generalisability are made nor is it the aim of this institutional ethnographic study to make such a claim. It is intended only as a "window from a different angle."

> Givens (2008) states that institutional ethnographies:
> … do not just produce case studies. As institutional ethnographies reach into the translocal ruling relations, they engage with and explicate relations that are generalised and that generalise, create commensurabilities, and standardise. Generalisation appears in what is described and analysed. It is there in the ethnographer's data. Each study creates a window from a different angle into the generalising social relations that rule our societies. Even though each may address a different institutional function, it contributes to our knowledge of how the ruling relations work.
>
> (Givens, 2008, p.435).

The purpose of this institutional case study was to illuminate any injustices that might otherwise be hidden in plain sight so that the findings may add to the larger body of institutional ethnographic studies, thus providing a more complete picture of larger, hidden, complex, and interrelated ruling relations. Nonetheless, there are limitations present in this study. These are as follows:

a) The devolved nations of the United Kingdom have different philosophies, systems, and responses to education. Despite the ruling relations shaping local teaching excellence policies being centred in Westminster, this is a specifically English study. It does not provide a Scottish, Welsh, or Irish understanding of teaching excellence; the study of which may prove a great deal kinder to the cause of teaching excellence.

b) The standpoint of academics in a single institution is the basis of this study. Here, the standpoints of students, managers, and policymakers themselves would enrich the picture. Additional case studies of this kind in other institutions may provide a different perspective altogether.

c) There is a specific need to research the demands made on academic managers as they are caught up in ruling relations that impact their working lives and identities as severely as they do on academics.

d) There is an even greater need to include the standpoints of policymakers themselves.

As this study serves as a case study of a single institution, no claims of generalisability are asserted. However, there is considerable merit in expanding the scope of future research to encompass multiple institutions across the United Kingdom. Such an approach would provide a broader lens through which to examine teaching excellence. By integrating multiple case studies, researchers may illuminate how complex, interrelated ruling relations manifest across different educational settings, thus contributing to a better understanding of systemic injustices that might otherwise remain obscured.

Thus, the present study is rooted in the standpoint of academics within a single institution, which presents an incomplete picture of the educational landscape in England and the UK. While this study is firmly situated within a specific English context, there is a compelling need for comparative analyses that explore the educational philosophies and systems of the devolved nations of the United Kingdom. By investigating how Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland approach teaching excellence, researchers could uncover valuable insights regarding the diverse responses to ruling relations in educational practice. Such comparative studies would not only enrich the existing body of institutional

ethnography; they would also provide critical reflections on how various contexts can shape the understanding of educational quality and equity.

Inherent within this study is the recognition that an examination of educational policies is vital to comprehending the dynamics of ruling relations. Future research would benefit from an analysis that foregrounds how policies affect various stakeholders, including academic managers and students. Understanding these impacts can reveal the often hidden complexities of institutional life and elucidate ways in which policy decisions contribute to or mitigate injustices within educational systems. By including policymakers' perspectives, researchers can offer a more holistic view of how governing relations shape the experiences of those within the institution.

Nonetheless, an opportunity for methodological refinement through the adoption of a mixed-methods approach exists. By integrating qualitative ethnographic investigations with quantitative data analysis, future studies may yield a more comprehensive understanding of institutional dynamics. Such a blend can capture both the rich, contextualised experiences of individuals and broader trends affecting teaching excellence in higher education. The complex interplay of institutional factors can be assessed in a manner that reveals the subtleties and patterns within the ruling relations at play.

Finally, it is vital to foster interdisciplinary collaboration in future research endeavours. By engaging with scholars from diverse fields such as sociology, political science, and education, researchers can enrich the analysis of the complex ruling relations that shape institutional practices.

9.2   Ethical considerations

In addition to the accepted norms of ethical research, there are specific issues that arise in an insider case study using an institutional ethnographic approach, including:

9.2.1   The importance of reflexive positioning by the researcher

Some of the ethical issues that arose due to the approach and limitations of an emic institutional ethnographic study are now presented. According to Bisaillon (2012), institutional ethnographers must approach the social world dynamically and reflexively. Hyatt (2005) added that to ensure that an act of textual analysis is valuable as a "disclosing device" rather than as an act of "ideological cloaking and masquerade," researchers must be open about their own positioning, provide a reflexive account of their interpretation, and be aware that textual encodings are polysemic (Hyatt, 2005:520).

In conducting this insider case study, it was essential for me to acknowledge and explicitly reflect on my own positionality as a researcher embedded within the institution. My experiences as a lecturer and academic developer not only provided me with unique insights into the institutional culture but also posed certain challenges regarding bias and subjectivity. While my familiarity with the institutional dynamics allowed me to navigate the complexities of participants' realities more adeptly, it also introduced the potential for blind spots in interpreting their narratives. For example, my background in higher education may have led me to unintentionally project my own values and beliefs onto the participants, shaping my understanding of their experiences in ways that did not fully align with their lived realities. Furthermore, I was acutely aware that the relationships I established within the institution could influence how informants expressed themselves, potentially encouraging them to align their responses with what they believed I wanted to hear. Thus,

mindful of these challenges throughout the research process, I continually engaged in reflexive practice - documenting my thought processes on my responses to the data in a series of notes as I went along. This ongoing reflection enabled me to assess my assumptions and biases, thereby striving to present an authentic representation of the participants' voices and experiences.

I experienced fully the view of Breen (2007) that insider institutional ethnographic researchers may face methodological and ethical issues that may not be relevant to outsider researchers. However, a profoundly significant insight for me was that an institutional ethnographic stance as a researcher would allow me to address the dilemma of empowering one individual while inadvertently disempowering another. Adopting this framework helped me to consider the ways in which I may have been marginalising participants by treating individuals as isolated subjects of study, rather than focusing on the structural forces and power dynamics shaping their realities. By shifting the understanding of my role from a researcher to a co-researcher who sought to accord due recognition to participants' standpoints, and convey them in their own voices, I could better acknowledge the lived experiences of individuals in the university setting as theirs and not my own. I believe this this approach mitigated the risk of distorting reality by objectifying participants as mere data points, ensuring that their day-to-day experiences were understood as crucial, valid components of the research. However, as with any research, there are limitations to what this study can reveal or claim.

The need to protect anonymity and confidentiality

Mercer (2007) and Greene (2014), among others, described the challenges of being an insider researcher in an educational setting. There was a responsibility to prevent

reputational damage to the institution while intending to illuminate the common plight of many universities struggling to enhance teaching in the face of misrecognition of the realities of teaching. Thus, the imperative to protect both the institution and the standpoint informants from harm became a paramount and ongoing concern.

The study took place at a time of severe institutional restructuring and job loss, as well as the struggle of the institution (along with many other educational institutions) to survive financially by being ranked for "excellence" by students. As an insider researcher, it was crucial for me to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of informants in this study, as well as to guard against reputational consequences to the institution from negative findings. Participating in a study of this nature created anxiety that the study could possibly make it difficult for colleagues to retain their jobs during severe restructuring and job loss. This context required constant reflection on the ethical implications of participant involvement and the potential repercussions of the findings. The degree of discomfort experienced by both participants and me was a matter of reflection and a significant concern throughout this investigation. It was a deeply ethical matter to design the opportunity for informants to withdraw any interview or part of an interview before the publication of the study. As a result, several participants withdrew their interview transcripts after their interviews out of fear that they could be identified. However, since the informants themselves were researchers by profession and as lecturers they understood the processes involved, those whose standpoints were included were willing to participate once they grasped the intention of the study and were reassured about confidentiality and anonymity. Nonetheless, some parts of the interviews used were obliterated from the recordings and transcripts either by me or by the informants themselves to further protect anonymity.

One informant provided a nuanced response to the questions of anonymity and

confidentiality, revealing the importance of careful consideration regarding what data

should and could be included in a study of this nature. It is hoped that this excerpt illustrates

the egalitarian respect and acceptance between researcher and researched regarding their

respective research expertise. After reading the consent form:

POLICY ENACTOR
INTERVIEWER: … I'm present with my interviewee. … and… um… an excellent point has been brought up about, um, the difference between confidentially and anonymity… uh … because it's anonymity and confidentiality that I'm guaranteeing… So, I'd like that as a matter of record … Do you want to make a comment? PARTICIPANT: Good. Thank you… that's very helpful. As I was saying earlier, um, a lot of data collected in research is usable so long as it's anonymised and non-attributable… and that's absolutely in order…and that's what your consent form does. Um… but also, it's possible that in collecting research data something of a truly confidential nature might be revealed. It could for instance be a disclosure about a disability … um, and that by virtue of it being confidential has to remain confidential and it cannot en… cannot even enter into the research data. … Uh, and I think, um, the terminology or, or the way we write informed consent, uh, statements should be sharply aware of the distinction there between protecting [yeah, yuh] anonymity and protecting confidentiality. INTERVIEWER: Yes. Yeah. I think so. But by recording this, I want to guarantee that, you know, your voice transcripts will never be shared with anyone because somebody could recognise your voice. So, once I've, er, transcribed, um, and I keep the transcriptions, I actually keep the recording in a secure, um, vault on the internet, uh, to which only I have a password, it's encrypted, it's very difficult to, to get through it. PARTICIPANT: And that's a very, a good example of, uh, ensuring the anonymity. INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes indeed. PARTICIPANT: And... and, sort of indirectly in a sense protecting, predicting confidentiality as well [yes] um… but the confidentiality would extend to anything said of a confidential nature that could not be quoted or included in the research [yes] data.

The semi-structured conversational approach used in the interviews was conducive to

levelling some of the power and standpoint that a researcher has with the researched.

Presented below is an example which illustrates an informant's response to the benefits of

this co-creative and participatory interview technique despite the anxieties and concerns

reflected upon above.

POLICY ENACTOR
INTERVIEWER: Now, just to finish off, X, again, thank you so much. But is there anything you want to say? Or any questions you want to ask me. POLICY ENACTOR: No, just that I didn't actually expect... I expected this to be interesting, as an int... uh, you know, this process, but I didn't expect it to be, um, as profound for me as a personal experience. So, if you ever wanted a, apart from writing about teaching excellence, so if you're ever interested in exploring, um, the whole process of research [yes] and how it can change someone, INTERVIEWER: Yes, I am very. We should work together. POLICY ENACTOR: It occurred to me that this is a very profound conversation, whether or not it was part of it. It's, it's a different conversation because of the context. Nevertheless, um, it certainly wasn't just about me giving you information, it was about me exploring.

The response in a second level interview response to a second interview by an hourly

paid policy enactor illustrates the care I took to protect confidentiality, but also speaks to

the efficacy of the 'conversational' interview method in levelling researcher and researched.

FIRST LEVEL RESPONSE INTERVIEW 09
I was impressed by the scrupulousness of your actions to protect confidentiality as an insider researcher. Could you send me a copy of the permission form as an example of excellent practice? I also appreciate your offer to send your interpretation of any excerpts you use from the transcripts of our 'conversation'. I feel this is an excellent, manageable way of making data more reflexive and robust, and will now use this approach in my own work. Moreover, as an interviewee, I was required to engage in a profound conversation that prompted me to reflect on, and later appraise, 'deep conceptualisations' of how my practice/ experience/ dispositions sat within discourses of HE. This set up an iterative chain of thought immediately after the interview that gave me new insights into how I

have made sense of my experience as an HPL [HOURLY PAID LECTURER] trying to be an excellent HE teacher in a specific HE site.

In particular, I feel that [THE UNIVERSITY]'s dependence on HPLs required management actions to facilitate the inclusion of the HPL voice in developing practice, especially in innovative, creative ways. Instead, managerialism seemed to overwhelm those, such as course and programme leaders, who might otherwise have enabled and nurtured these more inclusive spaces. (I would, therefore, appreciate 'second level engagement' in data production as offered above.) In this sense, you were very effective in producing a dialogic space for exploration versus description or even 'ventriloquism'. (t may be that, in the future, we could collaborate on a paper about this data gathering process.

The approach to ethics in my study highlights the intricate ethical challenges faced by insider researchers within educational settings, particularly during times of institutional restructuring. Balancing the need to protect both the institution and participants' confidentiality with the aim of uncovering deeper insights required constant reflection. The 'conversational' interview method proved instrumental in creating a more balanced dynamic between researcher and participant, thus I believe allowing for a deeper level of engagement and reflection. This approach not only supported the ethical demands of the research but enriched the data collected, highlighting the transformative power of research as a co-creative process. The nature of research means the importance of maintaining transparency and ethical sensitivity to safeguard all parties involved cannot be absolute, and co-participation and equity remains an ideal worth striving for. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the attempt at recognitive social justice research practice served.

The extreme need for confidential and anonymity in this insider study means I cannot produce a copy of university ethics approval details. However, the approval may be verified by my supervisors and the university research committee on request.

9.2.2 The need to overcome institutional capture

The insistence that the emphasis on the study was to allow respondents to speak for themselves rather than treating the responses as discreet bits of decontextualised "data" meant it was difficult to meet the institutional limits on thesis word length without damaging the presence of the respondents while maintaining scholarly arguments and conventions.

The need to overcome institutional capture as a researcher while being expected to follow the research practices in the institution was a difficulty commonly experienced by institutional ethnographers (Norstedt and Breimo, 2016). According to Bisaillon and Rankin (2013), a standpoint which is "outside of authoritative or official ways of knowing," and "outside the frame of dominant institutions" is difficult to maintain. It is, "a research commitment and political decision" (Bisaillon and Rankin, 2013, p.3) that may conflict with research practices and processes upheld within an institution, creating ethical dilemmas for the researcher. Such conflicts were experienced as ethical dilemmas during this study. According to Smith, sociology formulates "the phenomena of organisations and institutions in lexical forms of organisation, institution, information, communication and the like" in ways that suppress "the presence of subjects and the local practices that produce the extra-local and objective" (Smith, 2001, p. 159). Social relations in research settings may well be governed by organisational logic and exigencies rather than the veracity of the research itself. Thus, the misrecognition of extra-local interests could subdue researchers' activist commitments (Campbell, 2015, p.253), just as it could subdue the researched informants' concerns. However, in their call for higher education policy to reconcile with institutional

realities, Flecknoe et al. (2017) questioned whether researchers might themselves take on and live out a certain doxa.

Given that a researcher held a particular standpoint and positioning, I found myself subject to invidious forms of "institutional" as opposed to "regulatory" capture (DeVault and McCoy, 2018). Thus, the ruling relations that guided my research, as well as those that governed the researched, had to be accounted for in this study. Regulatory capture (see Stigler, 1971) occurs when a regulatory agency created in the public interest ends up advancing the political or commercial concerns of the people, companies, or entities it is supposed to regulate, so that the interests of political groups or companies become more important than those of the public. "Institutional capture" is defined by Smith as a "… discursive practice, regulated by the institutional procedures of text-reader conversations, through which institutional discourse overrides and reconstructs experiential talk and writing" (Smith, 2005, p. 119). As a result, as much care as possible had to be taken to ensure that the concepts being investigated did not themselves become a part of the ruling relations that coordinate the work of researchers, lest "[t]hrough proximity and personal investment, we might... neglect to interrogate and challenge the very language, concepts, notions, and ideas that we are accustomed to using (p. 614)" (Bisaillon, 2012, in Adams, Carryer and Wilkinson, 2015, p. 20).

These consideration on my part became an important issue for reflection and contemplation throughout the study, for which my supervisors are owed grateful thanks.

9.3 Chapter conclusion

Since illumination of a situation is at the heart of institutional ethnography, rather than generalisability, this study may show how subtly and pervasively the mechanisms of discourse can be used to achieve a particular end and thus this study does give credence to institutional ethnography as a way of outing subtle forms and hidden forms of domination and injustice which is difficult to accomplish in any study. Social capital in the academic habitus expresses itself in fields that are dynamic, shifting, and interrelated. The research is a single case study and, like all research may have limitations. However, as a case study, it may add to an overall understanding of how neoliberal, managerialist policy has impacted teaching excellence and call attention to what to do about the negatives that affect teaching excellence. Therefore, this study is a snapshot in time of the ways things happened as they did in a single institution. Nonetheless, the findings in this study, as will be seen, may speak for the recognition of all stakeholders in the development of teaching excellence policy by recognising and including the understandings of teaching gathered in the daily realities and perspectives as they enact policies of teaching excellence developed extra- and trans-locally.

9.4 Chapter references

Baxter, J. (2003) 'Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology', Palgrave Macmillan.

Adams, P., Carryer, J., and Wilkinson, J., 2015. Institutional capture: An institutional ethnography of nurse education in New Zealand. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 71(3), pp. 614-624.

Bisaillon, L. (2012). An analytic glossary to social inquiry using institutional and political activist ethnography. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 11(5), 607-627.

Bisaillon, L., & Rankin, J. (2013). Navigating institutional ethnography: A model discussion about family resemblance. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 12(1), 3-11..

Breen, L., 2007. The researcher 'in the middle': Negotiating the insider/outsider dichotomy. The Australian Community Psychologist, 19(1), pp.163-174.

Campbell, M., 2015. Institutional ethnography and experience as data. Qualitative Sociology Review, 11(1), pp.252-261.

DeVault, M., and McCoy, L., 2018. Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to investigate ruling relations. In Handbook of Interview Research, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 752-762.

Flecknoe, M., et al., 2017. Embedding teaching excellence: A situational analysis of policy enactment in English universities. Educational Review, 69(4), pp. 546-563.

Givens, J., 2008. Institutional ethnography. In Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods. SAGE Publications, p. 435.

Greene, M., 2014. On the inside looking in: Methodological insights and challenges in conducting qualitative insider research. Qualitative Social Work, 13(4), pp.531-548.

Hyatt, S., 2005. Poverty in a "post-welfare" landscape: Tenant management policies, self-governance and the democratization of knowledge in Great Britain. In: Anthropology and Institutional Ethnography. Oxford: Blackwell, pp.520-544.

Mercer, J., 2007. The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. Oxford Review of Education, 33(1), pp. 1-17.

Norstedt, M., and Breimo, J., 2016. Institutional ethnography: A sociological approach to researching everyday life. Sociologisk Forskning, 53(4), pp. 429-437.

Smith, D.E., 2001. Texts and the ontology of organizations and institutions. Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies, 7(2), pp.159-198.

Smith, D.E., 2005. Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Stigler, G.J., 1971. The theory of economic regulation. The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science, 2(1), pp. 3-21.

10 MECHANISMS OF MISRECOGNITION

10.1 Chapter introduction

The transition from collegial to managerialist local policies to enhance teaching practices within the institution is discussed in this chapter. The transition that was brought about by the implementation of the SOIP and TOBM initiatives is discussed considering the preliminary findings detailed in the previous chapter. This shift, part of a broader strategic vision involving significant financial investment and structural changes, aimed to enhance financial viability and teaching excellence at the institution. The process, however, raised concerns about the methods used to template staff responses, including excluding open discussions, replacing academic staff with business managers, and commodifying the discourse of student engagement, which led to resistance and scepticism among academic staff regarding the authenticity of managerial initiatives to improve teaching quality.

10.2 How respondents were templated

A timeline of the development of the SOIP, and subsequently the TOBM, traced by analysing the minutes of the performance enhancement committee during the period of investigation reveals a sustained approach to replacing the existing collegial peer observation of teaching to improve it with managerial observations of teaching. This was implemented by implementing the SOIP and TOBM on the heels of a major restructuring of the institution. These initiatives were applied following a strategic vision requiring a massive financial investment in the physical restructuring and selloff of institutional buildings to ensure that the institution was financially viable.

Analysis of the discourse in the committee minutes and papers revealed some debatable methods of templating a staff response to realise these initiatives, namely:

- Excluding discussion at the meetings of the standards committee by introducing fait accompli items for noting, thereby reducing the committee to a rubber-stamping entity, and marking the minutes of the meetings as confidential and not for distribution.

- Replacing or re-training existing academic staff responsible for teaching excellence with business managers, for example. a Dean of Students Office, a Director of Engagement, combining the role of Dean and Registrar in a single post, and the creation of Design Engine Architects (sic), among others.

- Establishing control of VLE and systems technology to ensure compliance with SOIP initiatives.

- Privileging the student voice as a mechanism for policy enforcement.

- Commodifying student engagement by offering students monetary prizes (vouchers) and other privileges to ensure student compliance.

Towards the end of the period of this investigation, the textually driven restructuring of the institution using a discourse of student "engagement" was well underway, with the SOIP the main mechanism for accomplishing the intentions of the management for 'teaching excellence' and TOBM established as a significant the means of achieving compliance with SOIP. It should be noted that the SOIP and TOBM initiatives were discontinued after a change in management.

The actual dates of the meetings have been removed in the interests of anonymity. While the minutes were marked as confidential, they were freely available in the electronic archives of the institution.

10.2.1 The restructuring of the performance enhancement committee

At a significant meeting of the performance enhancement committee notice was given that institutional committees and academic management units which had hitherto governed daily life in the institution were to be rehoused and remodelled to increase revenue shortfalls under an umbrella of new policies known as the SOIP. Members were informed also that recent changes to the organisational structure of the institution would impact the membership and membership categories of institutional committees and the minutes of this and that future committee meetings were deemed confidential and not for distribution. Despite the confidentiality instruction, the minutes and papers of this committee were freely available from the electronic archives of the institution.

Members are reminded to note that the change in the ★ convention has been made to ensure that the [present name of the] Committee agenda is consistent with that of the Board of Governors and the Academic Board.

Agenda items marked with a ★ are included primarily for information. They will not normally be discussed at the meeting unless a member requests this in advance. All requests should be made to the Secretary and will be considered by the Chair of the Committee in advance of the meeting.

	2.	STARRED AGENDA ITEMS		
	2.1.	To confirm:	The highlighted (★) items as **not**the main items of business	

At this meeting, members were asked to note, but not to discuss, several items, most notably:

1. The chair of the academic board of the institution had confirmed a review of institutional committees in response to the governing body of the institution.

2. A comprehensive plan to bring the SOIP work streams together was due to be published in early May 2016 along with new workstreams for organisational restructuring, productivity, and reward.

3. Observational teaching by management guidelines would be following shortly.

4. Members were informed that changes to the name, membership and format of the committee were being made to ensure that the agenda was consistent with the governing and academic board decisions as the Vice Chancellor was "keen to sponsor the quick wins and was actively doing this with regard to work shadowing and deadlines". It was not possible to obtain minutes of the meetings of the governing body to verify how these decisions had been reached as these minutes were deemed as confidential and were unobtainable for this study.

10.3 From collegiality to managerialism

At the first of the meetings analysed, minutes of the performance enhancement committee presented the roll-out of the TOBM scheme under the SOIP as a fait accompli. According to the minutes, the scheme had been developed "by a group of over 30 senior academics from the across the university with external independent support and expertise…".

The TOBM was cited as an example of some of the intended restructuring projects to follow. The minutes note that the existing collegial peer observation scheme was already being delivered alongside management observation of teaching and that a student feedback scheme on teaching performance would now start operating. It is stated further that "all academic staff (i.e., full-time and fractional appointees along with hourly-paid lecturers teaching more than 90 hours a year) will be observed by a manager in their faculty this

calendar year and annually thereafter". The existing professional development framework (which had already increased the number of teaching qualified academics and HEA fellows within the institution beyond the national average under the collegial scheme) was now to include "formal training, accreditation support, peer and management observation and underpinned by our new online annual appraisal". Overall responsibility for these functions was to be given to the head of Human Resources and henceforth the head of the CDP unit was to act in a supporting capacity.

10.3.1 Replacement of academic managers

Key "organisational design principles" were laid out for the redesign of the institution to "enable the financial and reputational sustainability of institution" at the subsequent meeting. Without irony, given the intention to keep the minutes from general distribution, the minutes state that the principle of subsidiarity would be followed; namely that "decisions should be made at the lowest level consistent with expertise and accountability, delegated responsibility and individual empowerment" and that" processes should be transparent and minimise hand-offs between departments".

The minutes state that the organisational restructure would affect all members of staff but was to be done in phases starting with the completion of a management review that was already underway. A "major redesign" of management was to begin at the level of the Vice Chancellor's Office but would span the entire organisation. The reason given for this was that the management structure was overly complex, and "not justifiable within the new organisational structure". The aim was to have "more manageable spans of control, with fewer direct reports for managers".

As well as the restructuring, a new approach to management and leadership was to be instilled. As members of the senior and wider management, new post holders were to contribute to the strategic policymaking and being responsible for human and material resources and leadership of staff, were to be accountable for the professional development of staff. Managers affected by the changes to the management structure were to be encouraged to apply for new positions where possible. All job profiles for leadership were henceforth to include statements of objectives and behaviours which all senior and functional managers were to meet as mandatory minimum requirements. Furthermore, new managers were expected to replicate the intentions of the strategic plan across the institution by "role modelling, creating, and communicating a clear and compelling vision for change, transparency, accountability, effective decision making and resilience" and to obtain "collaboration in a cross-functional environment". No managers were to take on new roles or additional responsibilities until they were trained and ready to do so. The behavioural characteristics of these managers were then laid out in detail and included the need for a strong commitment to institutional values, mission, strategic plan, and the SOIP.

Analysis of the texts in this way led to an understanding of how extra-local, translocal and local governing texts functioned as ideological representations of teaching excellence (Hak, 1998) to establish and maintain managerial control and accountability, as well as new insights about the daily work of teaching excellence in the institution.

10.3.2 Continuing subversion of the collegial approach

The minutes of the next meeting of the performance enhancement committee instruct committee representatives that a review of institutional policy and regulations was

to be undertaken to ensure they were "up to date and relevant". A report at the subsequent

meeting informed members of the committee of revised quality arrangements that were to

be implemented because a new academic quality and development unit had replaced the

current quality unit. It was reported that the process had been detailed on the institutional

website under strategy planning and governance six months earlier.

10.3.3 The co-option of the CPD unit

Policy enforcers" standpoints on the lack of involvement of teaching development

expertise are encapsulated in this enforcer's response to the question of improving NSS

scores:

POLICY ENFORCER
Not all of our tutors like this, some of them are very uncomfortable about this, but we're only asking ...asking the tutors to do what the tutors ask students to do. It seems to me to be entirely fair. It's a bit challenging for some users who were trained many years ago not accustomed to being given feedback by the students having to respond [yeah, yeah] but, actually that is what tutors ask students to do, so there's no reason to be why students shouldn't give feedback to teachers and then expect teachers to respond, within reason, to that.

There is an inference in the excerpt above that managerial intervention was needed

because at the institution because of staff inability to respond to feedback. This was despite

the policy enforcer acknowledging earlier in the interview that 64% of the teaching staff at

the institution had already obtained HEA Fellowship status via the HEA fellowship

programme undertaken by the CDP. The positive response to development initiatives by the

CPD unit was a theme in policy enactor responses. Below are examples.

The CPD was seen as supportive and collegial by this enactor.

POLICY ENACTOR

> I mean I, I, I think that, I think that as a tu... having, having done this... when I first started the job, I was, I felt so out of... I didn't understand the role... fully. And it was exhausting because you're not given the support from the off and the only support that I felt was worth anything at all, and to this day, is still brilliant is coming to [THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT] and doing, doing the PG Cert. and doing the MA. For me that was the, probably the... it was the best experience I've had being in the university because it felt supportive, collegial... you could always talk to someone, you had, you felt there, there was... there was a real basis of friendship and understanding. Never achieved that sense anywhere else.

In another example, the enactor describes the inspirational impact of an experience involving one of the members of the CPD unit:

POLICY ENACTOR
So, a, there's a very specific context, I think, to my taking up being offered this opportunity, being so grateful for it, having to make my way on my own just... with this Master's [DEGREE] and I think I had a really large group of students, up to 30, and many of them, um, were really struggling with their literacy. They, they were struggling with the, um, concepts and, and I did ask, actually, I did go to my line manager and I was really concerned about the pass rate and, um, and he did introduce me to [ACADEMIC DEVELOPER] and she came in and did one or two sessions with them about... um... W... what was the centre called then? Has it changed its name, you know, the Centre for Excellence in Learning into your, your one?   Interviewer: Yes, it was [THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT] but before that, it was something else. I can't remember, I'm sorry.   So that... that was it. So, and she did process where she did some quite radical and imaginative things with these students about just, uh, pro... just... getting your thoughts down on paper without c.. c.. worrying too much. So, for me, um, people like that inspire me because they're thinking laterally outside the box.

10.3.4 Control of VLE and systems technology

Minutes show that systems and virtual learning technologies replaced much of the collegial interaction and decision-making on which the functions of the institution had previously depended during the time of investigation. The reason given for redesigning the organisational structure to be a "digital first technology-enabled organisation" was to better

serve the needs of the student population and to increase efficiency and services. While the minutes note technology was to be the means to "attain mission", a 'step-change in the functionality, of the Virtual Learning Environment" was going to be a challenge to implement. Notice was given that the standardising of core administrative activities would be instituted using off-the-shelf processes and systems "to remove waste and to leverage better practice".

That the University's website was to include sections dedicated to SOIP to facilitate further student engagement and a review of the quality of online provision was underway as part of the "Quality of Provision" workstream to develop an understanding of the use of the learning management system as a teaching aid or repository, as well as the use of social media and the VLE to supplement its use, had already been announced. The intention to "engage students in improving our teaching through the launch of a university-wide module feedback scheme which is led and administered by students" had also already been tabled. The 'student-first" institution-wide course evaluation questionnaire was now to be launched with the explanation that student feedback would be "online, anonymised and accessible via Smartphone" and that 'student feedback – and the response to it – [would] be formally incorporated in the quality assurance process..."

10.3.5 Assessment as a panopticon

The intention to implement managerial control of assessment was to improve students' understanding of how to use feedback to enhance teaching performance at an institutional level. Assessment was identified as a key aspect of effective practice in supporting students" development, progression and attainment in committee minutes and clear communication with students about when they could expect to receive feedback for

each assignment, and for management to monitor feedback turnaround times more actively was put forward. On the surface, good assessment practice and effective and useful feedback are at the heart of good teaching. As part of the existing canon of effective teaching literature, the maxim that working with students and understanding their educational needs is the heart of good teaching, and therefore feedback on how students are receiving teaching from them is sound educational practice stands. However, the encompassing regulation of assessment practice developed within the SOIP policy structure took little cognisance of the conceptual structures of a discipline or the progress of student learning through that discipline by different types of individual learners. The student charter was designed to address delays in receiving grades and feedback which did not consider the struggle of academics working with untenable workloads (already described in a previous chapter). The charter stated that henceforth students would receive written and/or recorded oral feedback within one week of the submission deadline and two weeks for subsequently assessed coursework thereafter.

Institution-wide redesign of assessment procedures to ensure feedback from students on teaching performance was announced "following confusion regarding the information provided in relation to "Assessment and Feedback". An assessment and feedback guide were reported as under development, which "was hoped that once embedded this would assist in improving students" perceptions of fairness in relation to assessment". A template of questions was to be "used to support students" reflection on their formative feedback" (thus templating student responses as well as lecturer behaviour) and a summative assignment which "builds on the formative and reflective feedback tasks" was to be undertaken. Engagement with this summative assignment was to be used as an indicator for "commitment to study" in identifying students at risk of non-completion.

Recommendations for staff action included entering grades as they were completed, "along with a confirmation that feedback has been given (this could be a simple tick-box)". These checks were to ensure that marking was completed on time and the marks fed into the systems for "learner analytics to provide targeted student support throughout the year" and "for academic coaching and peer mentoring to raise aspirations and improve attainment". In the next meeting, student assessment processes were specifically templated as a 'student-centred approach" by using proforma. Staff were to be instructed that assessment proforma were to be pre-populated to include the introduction of compulsory formative and summative tests "in accordance with the SOIP workstream (Preparation for Study: Commitment to Study"). [My italics]. Formative assessments were to take place "in every module at each level of each course" and formative assessment tasks were to be set in week 02 and submitted in week 04. Students were to receive feedback in week 05 and asked to complete a written reflective task and then to discuss this process in class during week 06.

In the next meeting, student engagement with SOIP initiatives was tabled in a report by the newly appointed Pro Vice Chancellor of Academic Outcomes. This "Attainment Project" report described a student-led module feedback project to allow module leaders to act on student concerns at the earliest possible opportunity". The feedback process was to be facilitated by the quality enhancement unit via a standard Course Evaluation Questionnaire, but it was "the responsibility of the School to provide an opportunity for students to engage with it and to ensure that response rates are maximised". Performance Enhancement Meetings (PEMs) designed to provide Schools with the opportunity to assess the "academic health" of modules and courses, monitor the performance of students and engage with Subject Standards Examiners regarding the fitness for purpose of, and ways of

enhancing the course or module" were also introduced. While these performance enhancement meetings were to be scheduled by the Registry, they were to operate under the aegis of the School to provide "operational guidance to External Examiners, PEM Chairs, Vice Chairs, Heads of School and others". The PEM meetings were to be "primarily concerned with the following: modules that do not meet threshold targets, as identified [in the minutes] and course level performance".

In another meeting, the manager of the "Assessment and Feedback" SOIP work-stream proposed the introduction of a "Developmental Assessment Approach" "early in every module to actively support students" understanding and learning from feedback". This approach was described as student- centred and building learning through feedback as part of a coherent assessment cycle and as tying in with "early publication of assessment information and timeliness of feedback". Module leaders were to provide "a clear and concise overview and timeline of the different assignments which assess the learning outcomes for a given module" including formative assessment in Week 04 with structured feedback in Week 05 (i.e., within one week); students were then to complete a written reflective task "which models how they can use feedback to enhance their future learning". Lecturers were then to read and respond to these reports in their teaching.

These excessive assessment requirements placed huge administrative reporting burdens on teaching staff, the majority of whom were already certified as HEA Fellows and therefore, competent to make these kinds of decisions about their own teaching. Lecturers faced the prospect of superficial grading and tick-box responses to meet the demands for timely feedback without the concomitant time or support required being provided to them. In addition, the need for frequent assessing impacted the time required for the presentation of, and student practice for, learning.

Since teaching workloads were now measured by time standing in front of students, staff were kept "relentlessly" busy, not only by increased teaching, marking, research and administrative loads but also by the timing of course validations by management - as this response by a policy balancer shows:

POLICY BALANCER
I think the problem is that I'm... all... most of the course revalidations have been now scheduled to run from, you know, middle of February to end of May and that coincides with, you know, second semester teaching and then that bulge of marking and exams that happens, you know, um, mid-May to, you know, end of May. So, for me the…. there's a bit of a contradiction here between the University trying to encourage thoughtful course review, redesign, um, promoting good practice on the one hand and a process that's putting huge pressure on staff, you know, to, to, to produce the documentation, go through the revalidation meetings at a time when they are very busy teaching and, and have got, you know, substantial marking loads coming in as well, bearing in mind that for the last... since last academic year, so for the last 18 months now all, the workload of all teaching staff has been, uh, significantly increased. Most staff are minimally expected now to be doing for 495 hours of teaching and in some cases even higher. INTERVIEWER: What does that translate to in, say, a weekly workload of teaching? How many hours of your thirty-five-hour week? I'm, I'm not sure. If I asked colleagues, they talk about it in terms of now teaching six or eight modules. They, they, they're talking about in those terms... Um... But the reality that I, that I witnessed is that staff are just... relentlessly busy now.

For lecturers already loaded with administrative burdens, and combined class sizes sometimes approaching a hundred students or more along with average working weeks of sixty hours a week or more (already evidenced in the literature in an earlier chapter) turnaround times such as these are impossible to attain in practice. This increase in workload, as seen in the literature review, bears out the University College Union's UCC Workload Survey of 2016 that higher education academics work an average of 50.9 hours a week, and that almost four in ten academics work more than 50 hours per week and 28.5%

of academic staff working an average of more than 55 hours per week. Unarguably, such "unreasonable, unsafe and excessive hours" would hurt the attainment of teaching excellence as well as the well-being of the lecturers themselves, so it is difficult to understand why the management thought this would enhance teaching at the institution.

10.3.6 Student engagement as a compliance mechanism

Wholesale conditioning of students for improved NSS and TEF scores continued through the period of investigation. The university-wide scheme for management observation of classroom teaching aimed at improving the quality of teaching which had been launched was followed by a student-led module feedback scheme developed by a SOIP working group and the Students Union. Feedback from this scheme was to be presented by institutionally recruited students during class time "through the online link to provide real-time feedback on a small set of questions based on key aspects of NSS". The "quick turnaround of results" was to be fed back to tutors who were required to complete and keep a live action plan identifying specific responses to issues raised. Tutors were then required to respond in person to the student group regarding implementation and follow-up was to be managed by institutional leads. In addition, an online survey, led by the quality enhancement unit and a newly created Office for Institutional Effectiveness, was to be administered with "[q]uestions closely (but not exactly) following structure and focus of NSS" was to be administered. The data was to be analysed and presented jointly by the quality unit and the Office for Institutional Effectiveness and issued back for course leaders to give immediate feedback to students.

The intention to engage students as policy enactors by the management (even at the level of student recreational sports) had been noted by the Chair of the committee in the

committee minutes of the first meeting analysed in this study. It was stated that "given that it appeared that participation in sport could contribute to student engagement, participation in university life, and student retention" sports activities 'should be validated with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness as being important information for the SU and the University". Papers submitted to the committee for consideration at another meeting indicate further privileging of student engagement in templating the institution for the achievement of an ideological vision of 'teaching excellence'. The minutes state specifically that students were to participate and shape the University within each of the SOIP workstreams. It was noted that the Students Union had been provided with the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of a submission paper on the progress of the SOIP and that students were able to participate and shape the University within each of the SOIP workstreams, "taking an active part in their education including developing, implementing and evaluating Year 2 SOIP initiatives, alongside student-led projects". Subsequently, the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP) scheme was reported as substantially complete with students taking "an active part in shaping their education and experience, including developing, implementing and evaluating year 2 SOIP initiatives".

The SOIP is reported as "a highly focused and coordinated approach to improving student outcomes by "pursuing an agenda of innovation with impact" and the prioritisation of student outcomes as the heart of the major organisational restructure providing "a clear line of sight from the Vice Chancellor through to academic subject areas, and the creation of one directorate bringing together all aspects of the Student Journey from admissions through to graduation". Course monitoring was reported as "a successful joint initiative between the Students Union, other student initiatives and teaching staff" and teaching

quality "acknowledged and celebrated through the Student Union's student-led teaching awards".

The mechanism of ensuring 'student engagement" in these plans was to be a" Key Performance Tracker", viz: "The Committee acknowledged the overarching Key Performance Indicator tracker which would be submitted for consideration by the Board of Governors. Updated versions of the document would be submitted to [the performance enhancement committee] for regular monitoring. "[G]aps between performance and expectation in areas which had been identified "through the University's own mechanisms for tracking and self-correction" were reported as being "tackled aggressively" through institutional-wide targeted action plans. A submission paper outlined how the institution was actively targeting "key performance indicators" by reinforcing successes and tackling shortcomings.

By the next meeting, "teaching excellence is celebrated through student-led teaching awards" and a 'student-led digital champions team providing peer-to-peer support to enhance technology-based skills and understanding" is in operation. By this time student course feedback mechanisms had been entirely redirected from the staff directly to management and students who were offered incentives for engagement in the process. Plans for video testimonials from students on module feedback materialised at a subsequent meeting. Furthermore, a 'student-led "nooks and crannies" project, involving the students working with the Estates team to refurbish small unused spaces" is also detailed. The first of the lunchtime 'student Partnership" engagement events with students was reported as having taken place and the institutional website was being developed to include sections dedicated to SOIP to facilitate further student engagement in the initiatives.

There is no mention of consultation with academic staff, apart from the reference to the course monitoring project as a joint initiative of students and staff. As the second analysis phase showed, the reactions of policy balancers and enactors to this managerialist understanding and use of student engagement through the SOIP were negative, the TOBM being seen as an exercise in managerialism under the guise of student engagement for ensuring compliance with the SOIP initiatives.

POLICY BALANCER
It cannot be experienced [as developmental], even though people said no, no, it's developmental and it's going to be good. It cannot be experienced in that way by staff, it can only be experienced as more managerialism. And now, this year, they're bringing in another twist, to approve this developmental model. They're going to put students in there. So, if we're going to be teaching, you're gonna have a manager and a little bevvy of students to tell you how shit you are [laughing].

A policy balancer refers directly to TOBM as a mechanism for suppressing staff input by the processes of co-option by "taking away the space, the voice and the power of their staff":

POLICY BALANCER
I suppose I get frustrated because I don't think, if you know, if I had to say how is teaching excellence being supported by the university, I would say it is not. In fact, everything that the management can do to get in the way of teaching excellence they are doing. And even though if you sat down and spoke with them… many of them who are engaged in these TOBM's individually are persons who are lovely… they themselves do not, they don't… do not see themselves being co-opted. I think that's the way this is being done[is] that a lot of thwarted people are seeing that they've got a space to have a voice and to actually enact things that they think would be good. They don't… honestly, don't see that the way they're enacting that is taking away the, the voice and the power of their staff. They honestly don't see that.

Juxtaposing the standpoints of the informants with the discourse of policy meeting minutes has led to an "inescapable sense that the data holds onto many more stories than one ever manages to bring forth into a written narrative" (Smart, 2010, p. 4).

10.4   Chapter conclusion

As seen in this study, the respondents were coordinated by an ideological representation of 'teaching excellence' through extra-local, translocal and local governing texts which functioned as ideological representations of teaching excellence (Hak, 1998). The application of the ruling relations at the institutional level led to misrecognition and lack of parity in participation which may explain why disjoints between standpoints on how to deliver teaching excellence between higher education policymakers and teaching academics may have led, and still be leading to intractable consequences. Using the methods of institutional ethnography illuminated what happened for the informants trying to achieve excellent teaching and how what happened was misrepresented or ignored in the institutional exercise of improving NSS and TEF scores.

Compliance with managerial intentions was achieved in part by the reorganisation of the performance enhancement committee and the discourse of "student engagement". This established and maintained managerial control and accountability in ways that can only be seen as unjust. Furthermore, "disjoints" in standpoint between representations of 'teaching excellence' revealed a managerialist coopting of an ideological student "engagement" discourse. On the one hand 'student engagement" was considered materially as involving students in their studies through mutual partnership and collaboration between teacher and learner; on the other hand, it was considered ideologically as a way of co-opting students to template compliance with the "boss" or "governing" texts (Smith, 2010) of the NSS and TEF. Thus, the educational needs of the student may have been commandeered by an institution forced to compete for status and finance within larger legitimising institutional circuits (Atkinson, 2016). The mechanisms to ensure compliance with a

particular ideological representation of teaching excellence for the intentions of

management to improve teaching excellence could be seen here as the displacement of one

expertise (teaching) by another (business management) through organisational

restructuring and the co-option of students.

10.5 Chapter references

Atkinson, P., 2016. For Ethnography. London: SAGE Publications.

Bisaillon, L., 2012. Censorship and collaboration in producing public health knowledge in the age of aids. Critical Public Health, 22(2), pp. 225-239.

Bisaillon, L., and Rankin, J.M., 2013. Navigating institutional ethnography: A sociological approach to institutional texts and the ruling relations of health. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 12(1), pp. 1-15.

Bourdieu, P., 1986. The Forms of Capital. In: J.G. Richardson, ed., Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 241-258.

Breen, L., 2007. The researcher 'in the middle': Negotiating the insider/outsider dichotomy. The Australian Community Psychologist, 19(1), pp. 163-174.

Campbell, M., 2015. Institutional ethnography and experience as data. Qualitative Sociology Review, 11(1), pp. 7-26.

DeVault, M.L., and McCoy, L., 2018. Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to investigate ruling relations. In: Gubrium, J.F., Holstein, J.A., Marvasti, A.B., and McKinney, K.D., eds., The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp. 381-396.

Flecknoe, S., Cho, E., and Saunders, D., 2017. Higher education policy: Institutional realities and practice. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 39(2), pp. 130-144.

Givens, D.B., 2008. The Nonverbal Dictionary of Gestures, Signs & Body Language Cues. Washington State University.

Greene, M., 2014. The dilemma of insider research in educational institutions. Educational Studies, 50(2), pp. 212-228.

Hak, T., 1998. Discursive practices in teaching excellence: Policy and practice. Sociology of Education, 71(3), pp. 157-178.

Hyatt, S.B., 2005. A critical reflexive stance in educational research: A dialogic exploration of textual encodings. Ethnography and Education, 1(1), pp. 517-530.

Mercer, J., 2007. The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword. Oxford Review of Education, 33(1), pp. 1-17.

Norstedt, M., and Breimo, J., 2016. Institutional ethnography: A critical sociological approach for researching healthcare and work life. Nordic Journal of Social Research, 7, pp. 54-68.

Smart, B., 2010. Uncovering hidden ruling relations: Institutional ethnography as a method. Sociological Inquiry, 80(1), pp. 1-22.

Smith, D.E., 2001. Texts, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling. New York: Routledge.

Smith, D.E., 2005. Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Smith, D.E., 2010. Textual Realities: The Political Economy of Institutional Life. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Stigler, G., 1971. The theory of economic regulation. The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science, 2(1), pp. 3-21.

11 CONCLUSION

11. 1 Chapter introduction

11.2 Is eudemonia possible?

11.3 Keepers of the Common Fire

11. 4 Chapter conclusion

11.1 Chapter introduction

The role of an academic is expressed by the respondents in this study as assisting in the development of informed, critical minds that can challenge and right such issues as separatism, patriarchalism and authoritarianism, as the following interview excerpts have shown:

Policy Enforcer:	*Essentially, it's about creating autonomous individuals who can think for themselves.*	*(See p. 170)*
Policy Balancer:	*My vision is, you know, my ideal vision is that the university should continue to be a service of a public good… civic function of be… being spaces that are able to explore and debate the key issues relevant to the society and to provide a critical space… a safe critical space on which that exploration can happen while at the same time, offering qualifications that do have practical purpose.*	*(See p. 179)*
Policy Enactor:	*It's not just about the job. There's, there's life skills beyond the job, that, that, that... I think that university gives them social skills. It gives them connect... you know, how to connect with people, how not to connect with people. You know, so... it's not all about the job. I don't think we're, we're just necessarily producing people for work... we're producing people ... as individuals to interact with society and culture and have conscious… and have, um, an understanding and a recognition of what's happening in the world*	*(See p. 180)*
Policy Enactor:	*I believe it's ... um ... an ethos and ... a culture ... and structures and processes, whereby… students of higher education, um ... are enabled and nurtured, to explore, profound concepts and ideas… within a particular field but which also, encourage the growth of the individual ... to expand... their, their understandings of the world in which they live ... of themselves as an individual. So, teaching excellence will, will both nurture and challenge, the individual students. It will allow the world to speak to them and for them to find within that, uh, teaching space, um, things that they're ... puzzled about, excited about, to find ways of interrogating the world…*	*(See p. 184)*

These excerpts collectively show the respondents' belief in higher education as a means to cultivate critical, autonomous individuals capable of challenging societal injustices and fostering democratic values. They generally emphasise that higher education should be transformative, fostering critical thinking, personal growth, and societal engagement, while balancing vocational preparation with civic responsibility.

In this study furthermore, teaching excellence was seen as a holistic process that inspires, nurtures, and challenges students to engage deeply with complex ideas and develop as independent, reflective individuals. However, tensions arose from managerial interventions, policy enforcers were often seen as undermining academic autonomy and prioritising compliance over genuine professional development. Moreover, the respondents advocated for collaborative, peer-led approaches that respect the expertise and judgment of teaching staff to enhance teaching quality.

This may be difficult to enact when policy becomes a templating mechanism to create ideological "participation architectures" in the sense expressed by Watters (2014). If the business of the Academy is analysing what counts as truth by challenging the "epistemological, institutional and technical conditions for the production and circulation of truths" (Rose, 1999, p. 30), any lack of humanity in English higher education institutions must therefore be challenged as detrimental to the purpose of the higher education. There is no higher purpose than to serve the excellent teachers who act with courage and knowledge in a spirit of "hopeful resistance" (Davis, 2021) every day in English higher education institutions. Universities may still be able to resist the templating of the Academy by practising teaching that is excellent enough to create conditions for the flowering of human potential.

It has been the aim of this research to trouble discourses of "teaching excellence", of "how things are", to resist a "teaching excellence" which constructs ideological rather than material versions of itself. The findings in this study speak to a troubling capacity for "the deep grammar of new social phenomena in terms of their potential to render human beings superfluous" (Fraser 2008, p. 139) even in the guise of the "teaching excellence" discourse in English higher education. Thus, this investigation aimed to understand how the policy constructions of "teaching excellence" impacted the working lives and identities of academics in an English higher education institution. Institutional ethnography was used as the primary methodological approach. The investigation focused on the tensions inherent in the discourse of "teaching excellence" and its relationship to the institution's governing policies and procedures. Ideological reconstructions of "teaching excellence" resulted in a "disconnect" between policy and the material working conditions experienced by the academics in the institution. The templating effects of governing texts emanating from the relations ruling "teaching excellence" appeared to create untenable policy demands and uncomfortable working relationships. Examining interview data in juxtaposition with institutional texts governing the institution's response to the National Survey of Students (NSS) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) revealed how institutional power dynamics, policy and governance shaped the responses of the study participants. Responses ranged from critique or resistance to acquiescence or demoralisation, with "balancers" voicing the strongest critique and "enactors" a more marked degree of acquiescence or demoralisation.

Analysing the governing texts and the institutional policies designed to improve TEF and NSS ratings of "teaching excellence" revealed how a managerialist construction of "teaching excellence" templated compliance with institutional policies. Institutional

policymaking and intervention from a markedly ideological interpretation of HE policies and Parliamentary Acts by the policy enforcers seemed to have led to a distortion of "teaching excellence" which conflicted with the material knowledge and standpoints of the balancers and enactors. This disjoint appeared to have been sustained by a systemic misrecognition of the practical expertise and input of by policy balancer and policy enactor by the enforcers exploiting an ideological "student engagement" discourse which exploited the "student voice" to justify managerialist ambitions.

The institutional ethnographic approach used in this study mitigated a concern that, historically, some categories and conceptual frameworks in sociological research do not consider the actual circumstances of day-to-day lives of research subjects as trustworthy empirical data and even more contemporary sociological research approaches tend to "distort" research by objectifying research respondents as data objects rather than as subjects who understand the circumstances of their own lives better than any researcher. Thus, respondents were treated as co-researchers and knowledge constructors, rather than having their words reduced to categorised data points to fit theory by using snippets of dialogue which, when categorised, lack sufficient context to make such contributions meaningful as a method of knowledge construction. Approaching the respondents as an institutional ethnographer helped to uncover authentic standpoints that revealed the distorting impact of "teaching excellence" policy and the relations ruling the lives and identities of teaching academics on the ground. Moreover, that such negative consequences arose leads to the question whether eudaimonia is possible in English higher education.

11.2 Is eudaimonia possible?

"Eudaimonia" is commonly translated as "happiness", but a more accurate translation would be "fittingness: how well your actions match your gifts, match who you are" (Jansen, n.d.). Jansen states: "… there's more to Eudaimonia than just who you are; Eudaimonia is also about fulfilling the gifts that we all share as human beings, in particular the gifts that enable us to reason, speak, form communities, learn, and pass on knowledge and traditions to others" (Jansen, n.d.). This study suggests that a focus on human flourishing is sadly lacking in educational policymaking and, in fact, templates the social relations between ideological and material understandings of teaching "excellence" in favour of a diminished unsupportive view of human flowering. According to Morwenna Griffiths, formal education is associated with both instrumental and inherent reasons to value education (Griffiths, 2012, p.6). But, as she states, accounts of justice in education rarely focus on the lived experience of education as an intrinsically joyful process. She argues that narrow views shut out "living educational experiences": that is, experiences where education may be valued and enjoyed for itself, "not only as a means of having educated rulers, or having an educated population" (Griffiths, 2012, p. 5) but which has as its purpose the attainment of a good life. Could higher education, then, have as its purpose the attainment of a good life in by the development of a "teaching excellence" policy based on the fairness of access and parity of recognition, and serve as a purpose for modern universities without a need to sacrifice efficiency and fiscal responsibility?

The policy re-orientation suggested in this study is not a matter of lofty ideals but the cornerstone for the creation of an educational landscape where eudaimonia is a tangible outcome. The joy of discovery, the expansion of one's horizons through education, and the

transformative impact of "an individual's hold on her or his own present" (Bauman, 2000, p. 134, quoting Bourdieu), things commonly expressed as the purpose of a university, are all manifestations of eudaimonia. The realisation of eudaimonia in English higher education hinges on the existence of social justice conditions within educational institutions that enable personal and academic mastery. The conditions such as ruling relations founded on recognition, collaboration, trust, and a collectively created vision, and suggested as lacking by the findings in this study, are instrumental in this endeavour. So, too, are these conditions necessary for "teaching excellence" policymaking for English higher education. This study has brought to light a silence around recognition and inclusivity in higher education which needs to be called out.

As Gill (2010, p.2) courageously highlights, and the findings of this study confirm, the contemporary English Academy is characterised by pervasive feelings of exhaustion, stress, overload, insomnia, anxiety, shame, aggression, hurt, guilt, a sense of alienation, impostor syndrome, and fear of exposure. Such affective, embodied experiences occupy a complex space between secrecy and silence and the attainment of recognitive social justice. While these intersectional aspects of an academic identity appear to be pervasive and part of everyday academic life, they remain largely unspoken in public academic forums. Instead, they find expression in informal settings- corridor chats, coffee breaks, and private conversations between friends -rather than in keynote addresses or academic publications. Thus, academic contributions to policy are significantly diminished within the "various manifestations of policy hierarchies" (Ball, 2016b, p. 165). Addressing this type of injustice requires research grounded in James's concept of 'available realms of meaning' (James, 2015) and such work should prioritise amplifying the voices of academics to challenge and

reframe dominant discourses, while drawing attention to marginalised and excluded narratives (Youdell, 2010).

11.3   Keepers of the Common Fire

Parks Daloz, et.al (1996) investigated the lives of individuals who have made significant commitments to public service and social justice, calling them "keepers of the common fire". Parks Daloz and his colleagues aimed to comprehend the motivations and challenges of such dedication. They identified key influences that shape a person's commitment to the public good, including the impact of personal experiences and the guidance of mentors who exemplified service to others. The sense of belonging to a community with shared aspirations and the nurturing role of educational settings that promote empathy and social awareness were highlighted as significant. They found, despite the fulfilment derived from this commitment, these individuals often encountered obstacles such as burnout, the need to balance personal and professional responsibilities, and complex moral decisions. Parks Daloz, et.al (1996) highlighted the importance of these factors in fostering a deep-seated commitment to public service and social justice, shedding light on the intricate tapestry of experiences and values that inspire and sustain those devoted to making a difference in the world.

As keepers of this "common fire", academics have a substantial role in how educated citizens conceive of, create and contribute to a socially just society, and in contributing to the actualisation of individual human potential for a fulfilled and meaningful life. Therefore the need to recognise academics in policy making, implementation and evaluation by way of the expertise they have gathered in their daily work is central to the claims made in this thesis. More importantly, the denigration of expertise in the name of efficiency and

excellence has deleterious consequences for a higher education which seeks the development of critical, independent and deep-thinking individuals; learners who themselves become keepers of a "common fire" (Parks Daloz, et al., 1996).

Therefore, policy for fostering teaching excellence should prioritise transparent employment practices that ensure fairness and respect, promote social justice for academics via due recognition, and provide robust support mechanisms for their professional development. By acknowledging and incorporating the expertise accrued by academics through their daily work, higher education policies in general can establish a solid foundation for cultivating a culture of teaching excellence. This recognition not only validates academic contributions but also serves as a catalyst for institutional growth and innovation Such recommendations encompass socially just requirements that foster learning excellence as well as the inclusion of all enactors, enforcers, balancers and enactors, students, managers, and administrators alike.

Furthermore, institutions should promote just and equitable employment practices, ensuring fairness in hiring, promotion, and remuneration. Safeguarding work-life balance is essential to promote individual agency and well-being among academic staff. Additionally, institutions should ensure that professional development opportunities are accessible to all academic staff, irrespective of employment status, thereby fostering career advancement and scholarly growth.

A socially just policy framework should integrate academic perspectives into decision-making processes to ensure alignment with best practice.

11.4   Recommendations

The findings of this study show a need for integration of recognitive social justice into higher education by

- revising assessment metrics

- embracing and adopting flexible teaching practice

- implementing eudaimonic approaches

- establishing collaborative governance

- investing in professional development

- aligning AI and teaching excellence, and

- committing to recognitive social justice.

11.4.1   Revising assessment metrics

A holistic alignment between student learning assessment and the recognition of teaching excellence may provide a more comprehensive model for both institutional accountability and pedagogical integrity. Traditional assessment methods in higher education, typically reliant on standardised testing and numerical grading systems, often fail to capture the full range of student potential or the complexity of pedagogical effectiveness. At the institutional level, where metrics such as graduate success and degree classifications on student outcomes such as graduate success and degree classification are paramount, a more nuanced, holistic approach is needed. Revising assessment metrics is essential to align evaluation practices with the principles of authentic assessment. Metrics should prioritise relevance by connecting assessments to real-world applications, future employment, disciplinary advancement, societal challenges, and individual aspirations. They must also

incorporate realism and context, ensuring tasks and tools reflect professional and societal expectations. Such metrics should value feedback and collaboration, fostering interaction and continuous improvement, while promoting inclusivity to accommodate diverse learner needs. Additionally, reflective practice must be assessed, recognising the importance of self-assessment and metacognition. By embedding these elements, revised metrics support deeper engagement, skill development, and readiness for future challenges, thus creating a more equitable and meaningful assessment framework.

An approach, blending both quantitative and qualitative data, can offer a richer, more detailed understanding of student achievement and, by extension, teaching excellence. Hayes and Garnett (2024) advocate for incorporating network analysis as a tool to better reflect the relational and contextual aspects of teaching, enabling institutions to frame and define teaching excellence in ways that are tailored to their unique settings, addressing the shortcomings of current uniform metrics. Moreover, by embedding culturally responsive teaching into assessment practices, institutions can begin to tackle systemic inequities. Recognising and rewarding inclusive practices not only motivates educators to adopt these methods but also sets a precedent for others, aligning institutional strategies with the diverse realities of today's educational environments. For the sake of clarity, this section addresses two distinct levels of assessment:

- institutional level, where the focus is on broader, outcome-based measures (like the metrics used in TEF) such as student success or employment rates; and
- pedagogical level, where approaches such as inclusive assessment can enhance student achievement and evidence teaching excellence in practice.

11.4.2 Embracing and adopting flexible teaching practice

Studies show that pedagogical strategies such as blended learning and culturally relevant teaching can significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension, especially in diverse classrooms (Kumar and Wallace, 2023). Flexible teaching involves crafting inclusive curricula and diverse assessment methods beyond traditional exams to accommodate different learning abilities and a more comprehensive evaluation of student progress. This means incorporating a more diverse range of instructional strategies such as blended and project-based learning to cater for various learning styles and preferences. Alternative assessments like reflective essays and portfolio evaluations promote deeper learning and critical thinking (Brown and Race, 2023), and contemporary methods such as blogs, vlogs critical incident accounts and e-portfolios posters, simulations and creative- or arts-based forms of assessment such as patchwork texts or photo-essays (see the excellent work of Sambell and Brown, 2023) require culturally responsive teaching which integrates students' aspirations, identities, lived experiences and cultural contexts into the curriculum.

Teaching excellence policy should incorporate flexibility and adaptability to serve the diverse institutional contexts, and demographic variabilities present in higher education. Additionally, continuous reflection and refinement of teaching strategies based on recognitive student feedback should be promoted to safeguard learning that is engaging, promotes inclusivity and ensures academic. Acknowledging and rewarding educators for flexible teaching redefines academic excellence a way that reflects the diverse needs of modern learners. Therefore, the adoption of flexible teaching practice, using adaptable teaching methods to cater for the diverse needs of **all** students within inclusive learning environments, should be emphasised in teaching excellence policy.

11.4.3 Implementing eudaimonic approaches

Introducing eudaimonic approaches in higher education would add to more holistic student and staff development, emphasising well-being and personal fulfilment alongside academic achievement. Institutions employing eudaimonic strategies report improved academic outcomes and increased well-being - see, for example, Harrison and O'Donnell (2023). While Harrison and O'Donnell's study addresses the well-being of primary and secondary school children, their findings are applicable to higher education students. The distinction in well-being approaches across educational contexts lies in how they are tailored to address the unique challenges specific to each stage. While primary and secondary students typically benefit from structured support and guidance, higher education students require strategies that promote autonomy, self-regulation, and resilience to manage the academic, financial, and emotional pressures of university life. In higher education, well-being initiatives often focus on mental health support to address stress, anxiety, and burnout, work-life balance for students juggling jobs, studies, and personal responsibilities, coping with career uncertainty and the pressures of academic and professional success, and fostering identity development and personal fulfilment as students transition into adulthood. While well-being is essential at all educational levels, the approach must be tailored to meet the specific developmental and contextual needs of learners.

Equally, educators and lecturers experience distinct pressures related to workload, performance expectations, and work-life balance. While schoolteachers might encounter issues like classroom management, student well-being, and administrative responsibilities,

in higher education lecturers may face additional challenges such as research demands, publication pressures, and career progression. Tailoring well-being strategies for academic staff can help address specific professional needs, promoting resilience, mental health, and job satisfaction, that is to say, eudaimonia. This approach requires the integration of social justice into the curriculum to cultivate students' critical consciousness and community engagement. Contemporary personal learning technologies may help to create learning experiences that address cognitive, emotional, and ethical growth to support the development of well-rounded individuals ready to contribute meaningfully to society.

11.4.4 Establishing collaborative governance

Implementing collaborative governance structures rooted in inclusivity is essential for real institutional change. Studies demonstrate that participatory governance models facilitate equitable policy development and enhance institutional responsiveness to diverse student needs (Nguyen & Patel, 2024). Genuine collaboration necessitates the substantial involvement of academic staff in governance processes, ensuring diverse perspectives are represented, particularly those from marginalised groups. Establishing participatory decision-making platforms for students is crucial for developing policies that are equitable and reflective of the student needs. Such an inclusive framework facilitates the potential for equity and representation and strengthens institutional resilience in the face of the rapid changes in the higher education landscape.

11.4.5 Investing in professional development

Investing in professional growth enables academics to discover pedagogical innovations and ensures teaching practices remain aligned with teaching excellence. Moreover,

continuing professional development is critical in developing effective and responsive

teaching strategies to promote anti-racist pedagogies, decolonial practice, and inclusive

classroom management. Thoughtfully prioritising the integration of digital technologies and

innovative teaching resources would further enrich the student learning experience.

11.4.6 Aligning AI and teaching excellence

The alignment of AI with human values also holds significant implications for higher

education. Contemporary AI policy discourses often prioritise general principles such as

transparency, fairness, accountability, safety, privacy, autonomy, and the alignment of AI

with human values. However, this focus frequently overlooks the need for direct

engagement with social justice, teaching excellence, or the specific challenges of higher

education, treating them instead as peripheral applications of these broader principles.

However, there are critical intersections between these general principles and the goals of

higher education and social justice. According to Ka Yuk Chan and Chen (2024) fairness and

accountability are essential in promoting social justice, as they help prevent discrimination

and ensure equitable outcomes across diverse demographic groups.

AI systems that are ethically grounded and learner-centred can enrich the educational

experience by fostering environments that emphasise well-being, inclusivity, and

educational progression. Transparency and explainability are similarly crucial to the pursuit

of teaching excellence. In settings where AI influences personalised learning, curriculum

design, or student evaluations, it is vital that both educators and students understand the

decision-making processes behind AI-driven systems. Explainable AI enables fair assessment

and feedback, ensuring educators can deliver high-quality teaching while students

meaningfully engage with their learning experiences. The capacity to critically evaluate AI-

driven decisions enhances trust in educational technologies and directly supports pedagogical quality.

Thus, AI policy should explicitly incorporate the values of ethical education and holistic learner development. In educational contexts, fairness is key to ensuring that AI systems do not perpetuate or introduce biases that disadvantage particular student populations. AI tools used for admissions, assessments, and resource allocation must, therefore, be designed and assessed with a firm commitment to equity, to avoid reinforcing existing educational inequalities.

11.4.7 Committing to recognitive social justice

The integration of a recognitive social justice framework within higher education necessitates a comprehensive, strategic approach that encompasses assessment, pedagogy, student development, governance, and professional growth. By reimagining assessment metrics to incorporate qualitative dimensions, enhancing pedagogical flexibility, prioritising holistic student development, empowering diverse voices in governance, and upholding a commitment to ongoing educator at local or translocal educational policy levels, policy makers and institutions can create educational environments in tandem that promote recognitive social justice. Such transformations would ensure that higher education remains a powerful force for societal change, empowering students to become agents of change as keepers of a common fire which recognises and acknowledges our responsibility for one another and the planet we live on.

11.5 Chapter conclusion

As this study suggests, academics may be the last keepers of the common fire in a managerialist neoliberal world. However, Nixon (2018) gives heart and purpose to a contemporary Academy struggling with mercantilist purposes at odds with traditional liberal ideals of higher education, and provides hope to the keepers of the "common fire" in higher education. As Nixon states:

> *Institutions are only as good as the practices they sustain. In the case of universities, those practices comprise – primarily – research, scholarship and teaching, each of which requires of its practitioners a particular value-orientation. An academic practitioner who had no regard for truthfulness, no respect of others, no sense of authenticity in respect of the truth, and no magnanimity in sharing ideas and knowledge would be a very poor practitioner. Indeed, to ascribe the term researcher, scholar or teacher to such a person would be a gross misnomer. The values of truthfulness, respect, authenticity and magnanimity are, I would argue, intrinsic to the practices we associate with the academic life. To lead such a life is to learn what truthfulness, respect, authenticity and magnanimity mean in practice.*

(Nixon, 2018, p. 4/5)

Alternative more socially just policy constructions of "teaching excellence" are called for. Creative resistance should be recognised and celebrated as sign of a vital learning and teaching experience. It seems, as Barnett (2004) believes, universities may be more needed than ever, if their purpose is, in fact, "… compounding our conceptual turmoil, enabling us internally (ontologically) to handle the uncertain state of being that results and assisting the world in living purposively amid that turmoil" (Barnett, 2004, p. 72). Barnett states further: "These are large purposes for the university that provide it with integrity and a new universal purpose. They also echo with ideas of critical thought, enlightenment and

emancipation and they even offer the prospect, therefore, of a higher education that is yet a liberal education" (Barnett, 2004, p. 72). As bell hooks has stated so eloquently: "Critical pedagogies of liberation respond to these concerns and necessarily embrace experience, confessions and testimony as relevant ways of knowing, as important, vital dimensions of any learning process" (hooks, 1994, pp. 88-89). It is hoped that this study may be a small part of a liberatory education as advocated by bell hooks.

In the final chapter, we advocate for a human-centred approach to "teaching excellence" by promoting eudaimonia - or human flourishing - through recognitive social justice, collaborative governance, and inclusive professional development, recommending that institutions and policy makers alike recognise and support academic expertise to achieve genuine teaching excellence.

11.6   Chapter references

Arnold, L. (2021). Authentic Assessment Top 'Reflective' Trumps!. Available at: https://lydiaarnold.com/2021/04/08/authentic-assessment-top-reflective-trumps-cards/ (Accessed: 14 November 2024).

Barnett, R., 2004. The purposes *of higher education and the changing face of the university.* London: Routledge.

Bauman, Z., 2000. *Liquid modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., 1984. *Distinction: A* social critique of the judgement of taste. London: Routledge.

Brown, S. and Race, P., 2023. Assessing learner performance: A guide for educational practitioners. London: Sage Publications.

Ka Yuk Chan, C., and Chen, S. W. (2023). Conceptualisation of teaching excellence: an analysis of teaching excellence schemes. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 49(4), 485–498. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2023.2271188

Davis, A., 2021. Hopeful resistance: Education and resilience in a neoliberal age. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fraser, N., 2008. Reframing justice in a globalizing world. In: K. Olson, ed. Adding Insult to Injury: Nancy Fraser Debates Her Critics. London: Verso, pp. 129-151.

Griffiths, M., 2012. Educational justice: In search of human flourishing. London: Routledge.

Harrison, T. and O'Donnell, A., 2023. Well-being in education: Approaches for teachers and schools. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hayes, C. & Garnett, A. (2024) Teaching excellence in higher education: a holistic approach to assessment and metrics. London: Routledge.

hooks, b., 1994. Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom. New York: Routledge.

Jansen, T., n.d. Eudaimonia and the purpose of education. Available at: [Accessed Date].

Kumar, V. and Wallace, M., 2023. Culturally relevant pedagogy in higher education: Bridging gaps and fostering inclusion. New York: Routledge.

Nguyen, P. and Patel, R., 2024. Collaborative governance in higher education: A participatory approach. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Nixon, J., 2018. Practising higher education: Truth, respect, authenticity and magnanimity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parks Daloz, L., et al., 1996. Common fire: Leading lives of commitment in a complex world. Boston: Beacon Press.

Race, P., 2001. The lecturer's toolkit: A practical guide to teaching, learning and assessment. London: Kogan Page.

Rose, N., 1999. Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sambell, K. and Brown, S. (2023) Choosing and Using Fit-for-Purpose Assessment Methods. [pdf] Heriot-Watt University. Available at: https://www.hw.ac.uk [Accessed 14 November 2024].

Watters, A., 2014. Participation architectures in education. Journal of Digital Education, 10(3), pp. 22-36.

12 APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 Interview consent form

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Interview and data processing consent for this interview

My name is Charlotte Fregona. I am a doctoral candidate carrying out research on the perspectives and views of higher education lecturers and professional support staff on the notion of teaching excellence. If you consent to being interviewed and to any data gathered being processed as outlined below, please print and sign your name, and date the form, below.

- This research is called: *Templating the Academy: Troubling the discourses of 'teaching excellence' in UK HE*. It is being carried out as part of my doctoral thesis.
- All data will be treated as personal under the 1998 Data Protection Act and will be stored securely.
- Interviews will be recorded by me and transcribed by me only to protect your confidentiality and identity from anyone but me.
- Copies of interview recordings and this consent form will be held securely and be available only to me to ensure that your comments cannot be identified as coming from you, except by me. Not even my supervisor can be informed of the origin of your responses.
- A copy of your interview transcript will be provided and my interpretation of your comments will be made available to you, if you would like these, before I hand in my thesis. I will contact you at that point to ask you if you would like to comment on my interpretation.
- You will have the right to withdraw your responses at any time.
- Data collected may be processed manually and with the aid of computer software. Data will be kept on an encrypted server and password protected.
- Your responses will be identified by a coded pseudonym and responses which can identify you or any other colleagues, will be altered to remove names or identifying references.
- I will be using this data in reports and publications arising from this research – again with all identifying indicators removed to protect the confidentiality of your responses and that of any colleagues.

If I may proceed with this interview according to these conditions, please sign and date below

Please print your name:..

appendices Signature:.. Date:.......................

CONFIDENTIAL CODE PSEUDONYM:

12.2 Appendix 2 Ethics approval

I CANNOT FIND THIS – PLEASE ASSIST

Appendix 3 Development of the problematic

12.3 Appendix 3 How a problematic is developed

Point of Entry into Data: The development of a problematic begins with a situated point of entry into the data - often a statement or observation from an interview or document that signals a tension between the authorized (institutional) knowledge and the experiential (lived) knowledge of participants. This starting point is chosen (data entry point) because it represents a noticeable gap or conflict in the way institutional processes are understood by different actors. For example, in the main study, a policy enforcer's statement about improving teaching excellence by raising National Student Survey (NSS) scores provided a point of entry. The enforcer attributed low scores to a lack of staff effort in responding to feedback, which sparked the identification of the problematic: why institutional policies aimed at improving teaching outcomes were not resonating with the actual teaching staff.

Mapping Ruling Relations: Institutional ethnographers then map the ruling relations, which are the translocal forces (such as policies, standards, and frameworks) that govern local practices. This is done by examining institutional texts (like policies, minutes, or reports) and juxtaposing them with the experiential data from interviews. In the study, the juxtaposition of university standards committee minutes with interview transcripts revealed how policies like the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and NSS scores were framed as

managerial tools, while academics experienced them as bureaucratic impositions

disconnected from their day-to-day teaching concerns.

Identifying Tensions or Disjoints: As the data is analysed, disjoints or bifurcations in

discourse are identified points where the experiential knowledge of participants (such as

policy balancers or enactors) conflicts with the expectations set by institutional policies. For

example, while senior leaders (policy enforcers) viewed NSS and TEF metrics as essential for

enhancing student outcomes, lecturers and other staff (policy enactors) saw these metrics

as performative, often disconnected from the real work of teaching and improving student

learning experiences. This disjuncture between policy intent and its lived experience is key

in developing the problematic.

Tracing Assemblies of Sequences: The next step is to trace the assemblies of sequences,

which involves following the series of actions, decisions, and communications that connect

different institutional actors and texts. This helps to map how specific policies and ruling

relations come into being and how they function in practice. For instance, the study

identified how the Student Outcomes Improvement Programme (SOIP), designed to

enhance teaching, failed to meaningfully engage staff and instead focused on improving

student metrics without adequate professional development for lecturers. This tracing

revealed the problematic of recognitive misrecognition—how staff's expertise and

pedagogical knowledge were sidelined in favour of managerial targets.

Articulating the Problematic: Once the tensions, disjoints, and sequences are mapped,

the problematic is articulated as the central issue that structures the investigation. In the

case of this study, the problematic focused on how institutional teaching excellence policies,

driven by performative metrics like NSS and TEF, were disconnected from the lived realities

of teaching staff. The ruling relations embedded in these policies were not aligned with the

reflective and relational aspects of teaching that staff valued, leading to misrecognition of their professional work.

Exploring Counter-Narratives: Finally, institutional ethnographers explore the counter-narratives that arise from the data, often voiced by those lower in the institutional hierarchy (policy enactors and balancers). These narratives offer insights into how staff resist or negotiate institutional policies and provide alternative understandings of what teaching excellence could look like. For example, policy enactors' critiques of initiatives like TOBM (Teaching Observation by Management) and SOIP revealed their frustrations with top-down, metric-driven policies and underscored the need for more collaborative, developmental approaches to improving teaching.

12.4 Appendix 4 Summary of pilot study

SUMMARY OF PILOT STUDY

Introduction and Purpose of the Pilot Study

I undertook a pilot study to explore the reactions of higher education lecturers in England to neoliberal education policies, particularly focusing on performative concepts of 'teaching excellence.' This pilot study was conducted as part of my preparation for a broader doctoral research project, and it had several key objectives. These included refining my research instruments, developing interview protocols, and identifying potential participants for the main study. Additionally, I sought to uncover any logistical or methodological issues that might arise during the main research.
The study focused on how teaching excellence is understood and how its performative nature influences teaching practices in UK higher education. My goal was to challenge the market-driven conception of excellence, which is frequently promoted by government policies and institutional frameworks like the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Instead, I aimed to open a discourse that could lead to more critical, reflective, and socially just interpretations of teaching excellence.

Rationale for Conducting the Pilot Study

I referenced Van Teijlingen and Hundley's (2002) guidelines for conducting pilot studies, which highlight the benefits of preliminary investigations. These include testing the adequacy of research instruments, assessing whether research protocols are realistic and workable, and identifying potential logistical challenges. I also drew on Frankland and

Bloor's (1999) assertion that pilot studies help novice researchers build confidence in qualitative methods.

A significant aim of the pilot was to recruit participants for the main study and to establish a method for categorising responses. I acknowledged the potential concern that a pilot study might "contaminate" data for the main study, but Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) argue that this issue is less of a problem in qualitative research, where data collection is often progressive. In fact, the insights gained from early interviews can improve subsequent data collection. This perspective reassured me, as the pilot study allowed for both the recruitment of participants and the clarification of research methods.

Research Design and Methodology

The pilot study employed a mixed-methods approach, with data being collected through an online survey distributed via SurveyMonkey. The survey included both open-ended and closed-response questions, which were designed to elicit a range of qualitative and quantitative data. I distributed the survey through social media platforms, inviting respondents to share their views on the purpose of higher education, the definition of teaching excellence, and the measures being taken at their universities to achieve this excellence.

The open-ended questions encouraged respondents to express their opinions freely, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and potential outlier responses. These qualitative responses were crucial for developing a nuanced understanding of how teaching excellence is perceived and enacted within higher education institutions. Participants were selected based on their involvement in teaching or learning support roles within English higher education. The survey targeted academics and learning support staff of varying genders, ages, and levels of experience, with a focus on those who were willing to forgo anonymity and participate in follow-up interviews or focus groups. This diversity was essential for capturing a broad spectrum of views on teaching excellence and its performative aspects.

Participant Selection and Categorisation

A total of 20 individuals responded to the survey, with nine agreeing to participate in follow-up interviews. These respondents included a mix of genders and roles:

- 6 female and 3 male participants

- Roles included 1 female associate professor, 1 male associate dean, 1 female academic leader, 2 male senior lecturers, 1 female senior lecturer, 1 female lecturer, 1 female professional and academic support staff, and 1 female hourly-paid lecturer.

Three participants were from universities outside of England, but their responses were included in the analysis to help generate coding categories. These external respondents were not intended for interviews in the main study.

I categorised the participants using Paul Trowler's (2012) adaptation of Reynolds and Saunders' (1987) policy implementation staircase model. According to this model, individuals were classified based on their roles within the higher education hierarchy. I divided participants into three categories:

- **Policy Interpreters and Makers:**
  Included institutional leaders such as associate deans and academic leaders. These

participants were seen as interpreters of national policy who also contributed to institutional policy-making.

- **Policy Balancers:**
  Consisted of departmental heads and academic support staff, who were responsible for balancing competing pressures within the institution. These individuals negotiated or reconstructed the discourses in which policies were encoded.

- **Policy Enactors:**
  Included lecturers, senior lecturers, and hourly-paid staff. These participants were the ones who enacted institutional policies in their day-to-day teaching and interactions with students.

This hierarchical categorisation helped me identify differences in how various groups interpreted and responded to policies related to teaching excellence. The analysis revealed that those higher up in the hierarchy, such as policy makers and balancers, tended to respond more favourably to institutional policies, while policy enactors (e.g., hourly-paid lecturers) expressed more resistance and dissatisfaction.

Key Findings from the Pilot Study

The pilot study generated a wealth of qualitative data, which I analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques. The responses were grouped into several themes based on the open-ended survey questions.

Purpose of Higher Education (Question 6)

Respondents provided a range of answers regarding the purpose of higher education. Five key themes emerged:

- **Personal Development (60% consensus):**
  The majority of respondents believed that higher education should focus on the personal development of students as human beings. This included fostering critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual growth.

- **Development of Citizenship (27% consensus):**
  Some respondents saw higher education as a means of developing responsible and engaged citizens who can contribute to society.

- **Creating a Learning Space (27% consensus):**
  Others highlighted the importance of higher education as a space for independent thinking and learning.

- **Enhancing Student Employability (27% consensus):**
  A smaller group of respondents focused on the role of higher education in preparing students for the workforce.

- **Promotion of Knowledge (27% consensus):**
  Some participants viewed higher education as a means of promoting and advancing knowledge for its own sake.

Definition of Teaching Excellence (Question 7)

When asked to define teaching excellence, participants offered a wide range of responses, which were categorised into three main themes:

- **Passion and Commitment (60% consensus):**
  Many respondents defined teaching excellence as a matter of passion, commitment, and engagement with students. This involved inspiring students, taking risks in teaching, and fostering a love for learning.

- **Engaging Delivery (43% consensus):**
  Others focused on the importance of engaging teaching delivery that stimulates student interest and encourages independent thinking.

- **Quality and Standards (21% consensus):**
  A smaller group of respondents linked teaching excellence to the maintenance of high-quality standards and adherence to institutional benchmarks.

Challenges in Achieving Teaching Excellence (Question 9)

Participants were also asked to reflect on the challenges they faced in achieving teaching excellence at their institutions. Three key challenges emerged:

- **Management Factors (64% consensus):**
  Many respondents cited management-related issues, such as a lack of financial resources, heavy workloads, and excessive administrative demands, as significant barriers to achieving teaching excellence.

- **Stress and Overwork (64% consensus):**
  A large number of participants reported that stress, overwork, and the pressures of time management made it difficult to focus on teaching excellence.

- **Student Factors (28% consensus):**
  Some respondents mentioned student-related challenges, such as low engagement or the pressure to cater to student satisfaction, as obstacles to achieving excellence in teaching.

Counter-Discourse and Outlier Responses

One of the most significant findings from the pilot study was the emergence of a counter-discourse to performative notions of teaching excellence. Many participants expressed resistance to the idea that teaching excellence should be defined by external metrics, such as student satisfaction scores or institutional rankings. Instead, they advocated for a more reflective and critical approach to teaching, one that prioritises the personal and intellectual development of students over bureaucratic benchmarks.

I identified outlier responses using a Key Word in Context (KWIC) analysis, which involved iteratively tagging responses that deviated from the dominant discourse. These outliers often expressed frustration, powerlessness, or resistance to the institutionalisation of teaching excellence. For example, one respondent criticised the use of student satisfaction surveys as a measure of teaching quality, arguing that such metrics fail to capture the true value of education.

I noted that the number of outlier responses, as a percentage of total responses, could be a valuable indicator of how academics were responding to the neoliberal discourse surrounding teaching excellence. The high percentage of outlier responses in certain questions, particularly those related to institutional efforts to achieve teaching excellence (Question 8), suggested a widespread resistance to performative metrics.

Refinement of Research Instruments and Interview Questions

A key objective of the pilot study was to refine the research instruments and develop effective interview questions for the main study. I used the responses from the pilot to refine my coding categories and develop more targeted questions for future interviews. The pilot also provided an opportunity to practice using CDA techniques to analyse discourse and identify patterns of power and resistance.

The iterative process of decoding the survey responses allowed me to identify gaps in the survey design and improve the phrasing of questions. For example, some respondents found the survey questions too vague or broad, leading to a revision of the wording to make them more specific and focused.
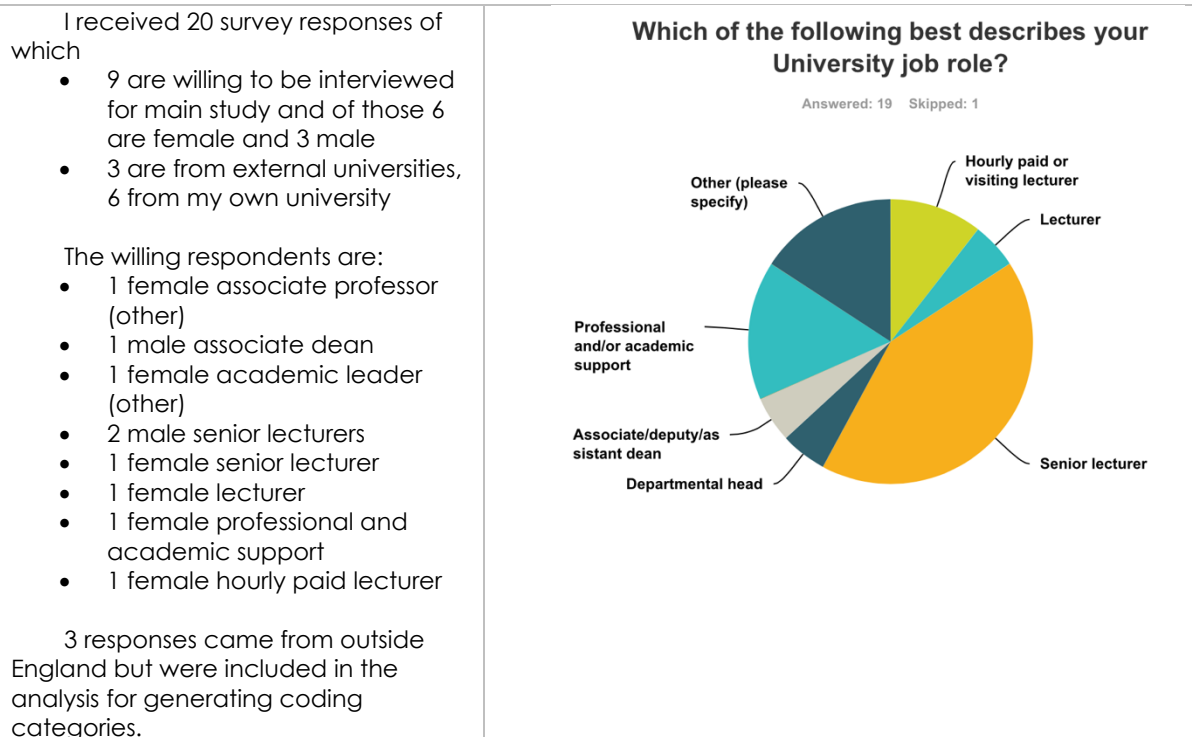
Ethical Considerations

I acknowledged the ethical challenges associated with conducting a pilot study using an online survey, particularly in terms of ensuring participant confidentiality and managing my influence as the researcher. Although the survey was anonymous, I recognised the "shadowy presence" I had as the person directing the questions and framing the responses. This is particularly important in critical discourse analysis (CDA), where the power dynamics between researcher and respondent can shape the data.

I took care to provide participants with a detailed letter of consent at the beginning of the survey, outlining the purpose of the study and the steps taken to protect their confidentiality. I also followed the ethical guidelines established by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011), ensuring that participants understood their participation was voluntary and that their data would be anonymised in any subsequent publications.

The ethical reflexivity required in Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) was central to my approach. FPDA emphasises the diversity and multiplicity of identities, and I remained aware of the ethical implications of interpreting the "hidden stories" revealed by the survey responses, taking care not to impose my own biases or assumptions onto the data.

12.5   Appendix 4 Modes of analysis

12.5.1 Pilot study illustrative examples of data analysis

PILOT STUDY: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES E

DETAILS OF WILLING PARTICIPANTS	

| I received 20 survey responses of which

• 9 are willing to be interviewed for main study and of those 6 are female and 3 male
• 3 are from external universities, 6 from my own university

The willing respondents are:
• 1 female associate professor (other)
• 1 male associate dean
• 1 female academic leader (other)
• 2 male senior lecturers
• 1 female senior lecturer
• 1 female lecturer
• 1 female professional and academic support
• 1 female hourly paid lecturer

3 responses came from outside England but were included in the analysis for generating coding categories. | |

Which of the following best describes your University job role?

Answered: 19   Skipped: 1

A subsequent round of iterative decoding of the outlier responses described above suggests a line of enquiry using Trowler's (2012) adaptation of Reynolds and Saunders' (1987) policy implementation staircase model. Trowler states that "the location of individuals and groups in the hierarchy of the policy process can shape their interests and perceptions about the nature and relevance of particular policies [and] [t]he situationally contingent nature of the processes they are engaged in also places boundaries upon how they conceive of their task" (Trowler, 2012: The Rational-Purposive Model of Policy: Paragraph 5). This seemed to be a useful way of trying to understand the responses to the questions I was asking about teaching excellence. I therefore classified my respondents by their role in the organisational hierarchy in accordance with Trowler's model of the policy implementation staircase as follows:

Classification of outlier responses in relation to organisational roles

POLICY LEVEL	(TROWLER, 2012: THE RATIONAL-PURPOSIVE MODEL OF POLICY: PARAGRAPH 5: FIG 1.)	ROLE OF RESPONDENTS
National Level	"Government makes formal HE policy and establishes funding regime (outside scope of pilot)."	*Outside the scope of the pilot study and will be dealt with in the main study
Institutional Level	"University top teams interpret and respond to policy as appropriate to their context."	Associate/Deputy Dean Academic Leader (Other)
Departments/School Level	"HoDs balance competing pressures, ignoring, adapting or applying policy as they can and consider best. They negotiate or reconstruct the discursive repertoires in which policy is encoded."	Departmental Head Professional and/or academic support – academic developer

Offices/Common Rooms	"Staff interpret policy in different ways and apply, ignore or adapt it as they think appropriate. In some cases, they are not aware of it."	Hourly Paid Lecturer Lecturer Senior Lecturer
Classrooms	"Students respond in unpredicted ways changing relationships and practices in learning and teaching situations. There are unintended consequences."	*Outside the scope of the pilot study and will be dealt with in the main study

On the strength of this analysis, using Trowler's model, I saw

- the Associate Dean and the Academic Leaders as **national policy *interpreters* but institutional policy *makers***,
- the departmental heads and academic and professional developers as **institutional policy *balancers*** and
- hourly paid lecturers, lecturers and senior lecturers as institutional **policy *enacters***.

Grouping outlier responses by the interpreter-maker/balancer/enacter categories revealed some areas of difference between and among respondents. Responses by hourly paid, senior or ordinary lecturing staff certainly bore out Trowler's notion that they would be likely to interpret policy in different ways and apply, ignore or adapt it as they thought appropriate, while the policy makers and balancers seemed more compliant and/or propitiating in their responses. The institutional policy makers gave very few counter-discourse responses indeed. (See Appendix Seven for details.)

To illustrate by example some of the differences in the discourses according to hierarchical role, a selection of responses is shown below:

Institutional policy enacters discourse – representative responses:
hourly paid lecturers, lecturers and senior lecturers

Regarding the purpose of higher education: *I am not sure I understand your question. Quite vag actually. Do you mean: "what is the purpose of higher education in UK, the most unequal society Europe?" or "What is the purpose of higher education in a democratic society?" Let's say you mea former. In this country, in this era, the purpose of Higher Education is to reproduce the inequalities in society. It creates indebted "useful idiots", devoid of critical thinking (Mainly). For more in-depth approach see Pierre Bourdieu, Noam Chomsky, etc. (Note that I don't believe that people are st believe they can even wake up and when they do so HE will be wiped out) H.E educates people fear inside/upon them. If you meant the later: I feel inspired by Socrates.*

Regarding the definition of teaching excellence: *It is achieving the above [teaching excellence] critical engagement with students, through critical reflection of their own teaching practices, advanc teaching scholarship. Teaching excellence is brave, it is leadership, it is going where many fear to tre pushing the conventional boundaries, it is a leap of faith.*

Regarding university effort to achieve teaching excellence: *We seem to be moving into an unhe bullying phase where government and management actions against our university are now bein airbrushed out of history - and somehow poor staff teaching is being blamed instead! This is flawe many levels I cannot comment further.*

Regarding challenges of achieving excellence by individuals: *… HPL are sub-human entities in HE the teaching staff is HPL in my university (and they cover nearly 20% of all the teaching.) First challeng*

---

can you even think of wanting to fight for your institution if you are seen as a slave (and you end-up seeing yourself as one). Second challenge: How can you seriously think that all you efforts will be for the good of Education, when the senior management is stilling with impunity? Your question is rhetorical as it is already giving an awful lot of consensual answers.

Additional comments about excellent teaching: *Managing all this fails to recognise any of the human dimensions of work - of learning - of what students want, need and value. Every management initiative that I have seen takes power and time away from staff - and gets in the way of their being with their students. Every initiative stifles joy and creativity - it puts in administrative and measurement tasks and kills the very seeds of experimentation, good relationships and trust.*

Contrast these responses with:

Institutional policy interpreter/makers discourse – representative responses:
associate Dean and academic leaders

Regarding the purpose of higher education: *To open doors to unknown areas of interest to gain remunerated employment to allow for growth of intellect beyond expectations To network globally T*

Regarding the definition of teaching excellence: *Teaching excellence takes place when both st and lecturers feel transported by learning. Feeling inspired and empowered to embrace a new journe would not have happened if teaching had been standard. It is also the ability to create opportunities collaborative approach where everyone feels included, valued and respected.*

Regarding university effort to achieve teaching excellence: *Annual teaching conference: great enough If you have ideas and are not worried about giving endless hours of your time, the freedo there to teach excellently, putting in place projects, implementing new teaching environments, closely with students. Recognition of teaching excellence can be achieved with teaching fellow schemes*

Regarding challenges of achieving excellence by individuals: *As a WP university maintaining a hi of motivation is hard. Attendance and engagement is low plus we face constant government cuts.*

Additional comments about excellent teaching: *There is excellent teaching at university. But exc teaching does not always have a voice. Publishing articles about 'your excellence' is not easy as may feel you are showing off. I would like to be inspired to share what I do far more often. Pedag cafes for example would be great: a mixture of social interaction with exchange and workshops. are millions of missed opportunities because there is little time to meet. When time is created, ver people come and the synergies, energy are not enough to keep going. Social media, hashtag w excellence in teaching should be used at university. You don't need so be many people to make something work, you need people who feel they take ownership of the situation and come toge using all methods of communication. We always try to be so creative for our students learning, w we do the same for staff? I would like to see the word 'outstanding' more often at university. If stu pay so much money to study, it is because they have the expectation to be inspired and transpo new horizons. Connected students need to meet connected staff*

12.5.2 Example of interview transcript

Interview 10 – Second Level
Balancer
Mon, 12/23 4:37AM • 39:05

SUMMARY KEYWORDS
people, students, teaching, staff, education, institution, degree, excellence, learning, university, teaching excellence, space, student, bit, implement, year, dialogic, supported, imposed, learner

---

INT10 00:00
Younger people going: What on earth is that?

Charl 00:03
So just to say it's Charl Fregona. I'm with my interviewee. Today's the 20, 20th of... February. It's about half past two in the afternoon. Half past one in the afternoon. Um... Yeah. So, X, again, just to reassure you, any references to names and that will be removed, so you don't have to worry too much about, you know, mentioning what you need to mention. So can we start that conversation? Can we talk about what is the purpose of higher education?

INT10 00:36
Well, I suppose I've always been quite old fashioned in my definitions of education, and I like the educare, to lead out... that it's not about imposing knowledge boundaries, and it's not facts - my dear, facts as Greg Grinder would say. It's about developing people... in a full sense. I don't think the current pre higher education education sector is now fit for purpose. [REDACTED]

Charl 05:16
So, so the purpose of higher education in a sentence is...

INT10 05:23
Yes, it will get people work, I hope, but mainly is to develop them as thinking hum, uh, huh, human beings, with connections with other thinking human beings, they are being with other creative diverse people.

Charl 05:40
Um, um, that's nice. Um, and, and, and teaching excellence. How do you how do you define Teaching Excellence?

INT10 05:47
 It's those people that are committed to enabling that sort of experience, especially for non-traditional students. Yeah, I have a chip on each shoulder.

Charl 06:05
So let's distinguish between teaching excellence and excellent teaching. So on the one hand, is excellent teaching that's required for students to be inspired and the roundness of things to happen in a teaching conversation. But how do you see? Do you see the difference between the terms teaching excellence and excellent teaching?

INT10 06:30
Well, I suppose I do in that I think good things have been co-opted to bad purposes. It's like if we go back to that harnessing technology document, they talk about the learner. They talk about learner centredness but what they really mean is training for business. This, so they've, yeah, so they co-opted the language of learner centred, student centred for quite wicked purposes really, it's to, to justify the delivery of something that is de-natured and less than good university course could be .

Charl 07:09
For evil purposes?

INT10 07:11
Because... it's be... because it masquerades as something good whilst actually being something less than... let me just scroll back a little bit if I may.
[REDACTED].

INT10 08:56
Yeah, and... It should be more than that. It could be more than that. It always was more than that. My degree was ostensibly a vocational degree, it was to teach me to be a teacher. At the same time, it had all the adult and liberal art stuff woven into it as my right as a human being doing a course. That's what's getting taken away. It's getting taken away by learner-centredness, by

discussions now of teaching excellence. Excellent teaching must enable that holistic teaching. [Yeah] it must say, excellence does not need to.

Charl 09:36
So what's your reaction to the words TEF for teaching excellence?

INT10 09:40
It makes me violently ill.
[REDACTED]
INT10 15:16
Each new year we have two or three all-consuming new initiatives in which the staff are not consulted, but which they must implement. There is never a justification. There's no evidence, there's no argumentation. There's no evidence-based practice rationale for any of the new changes. They're just imposed on staff. So, every year the staff come in, and it's a whole new bevy of new things that they must know, learn how to do, and they must do willy nilly, or they're transgressive. Each... each adjustment takes teaching time away. It takes space to think about your own teaching away. Quite a lot of them actually ... get in the way of the way our staff might have developed their teaching or assessment practices. It doesn't enable in this.

Charl 16:04
Do you find that happening to you?

INT10 16:07
I am. So...
[REDACTED]

12.5.3 The discourse code system used for interview analysis

Code System

1 Autocode - ANY: ridiculous	3
2 Autocode - ANY: morale	12
3 Autocode - ANY: tears	2
4 Autocode - ANY: ethical	13
5 How do you define an academic	3
6 Starred items	1
7 BLUE	1
8 YELLOW	2
9 Significant dates	1
10 Ask [Redacted]	1

11 MAGENTA	1
12 GREEN	5
13 RED	29
14 Q1 What do you see as the purpose of higher education? Purpose	4
14.1 Purpose of higher education	276
14.1.1 purpose	60
14.1.2 HE as career preparation	4
14.1.3 Transformational purpose	4
14.1.4 Neoliberal view	2
14.1.5 What is the purpose	0
14.1.6 To reach full potential	1
15 Q2How do you define teaching excellence?	3
15.1 Definition of teaching excellence	39
15.1.1 The nature of the work	2
15.1.2 Teacher vs teaching excellence	1
15.1.3 Passion for teaching	7
16 Q3 What is being done to achieve teaching excellence?	14
16.1 What is being done to achieve teaching excellence	23
16.1.1 Teaching awards	10
17 Q4 What challenges are there in achieving teaching excellence	3

17.1 Challenges in achieving teaching excellence	25
17.1.1 Academic freedom	15
17.1.2 Bifurcation /double reality	20
17.1.3 Distrust of management	1
17.1.4 Issues with management	10
17.1.5 Marketisation	13
17.1.6 Managerialism	8
17.1.7 Negative impact onwork interviewee	3
17.1.8 Organisational heirarchy disjoint	3
17.1.9 Plight of HPLs	2
17.1.10 Templating Examples	49
17.1.11 Tension	1
17.1.12 Tick box exercise	38
17.1.13 Workload	18
18 Q5 Is there anything else you would like to say about teaching	1
18.1 Anything else	27
18.1.1 Role of HEA	1
18.1.2 HEA Fellowship	2
18.1.3 Ethics	5
18.1.4 Researcher perspective	16
19 Local policy document	0
19.1 MOT	26

19.2 CPD framework	2
19.2.1 Learning & Teaching Conference	11
19.2.2 University Teaching Excellence Award	4
19.3 PISO	459
19.3.1 PISO - Don't know	1
19.3.2 PISO Enactor	1
19.3.3 PISO Enforcer	3
20 Translocal policy references	4
20.1 CATE	1
20.2 NSS	10
20.3 OECD	1
20.4 TEF	20

12.5.4 Interview data run

Results of one iterative coding run using computer analysis (MaxQDA)

1. **Ethical**
   - 13 occurrences under "Autocode - ANY: ethical"
   - 5 occurrences under "Ethics" in section 18.1.3.
2. **Morale**
   - 12 occurrences under "Autocode - ANY: morale."
3. **Purpose of Higher Education**
   - 276 occurrences in section 14.1 "Purpose of higher education."

        ○   60 occurrences under section 14.1.1 "purpose."

4. **Teaching Excellence**

        ○   39 occurrences in section 15.1 "Definition of teaching excellence."

        ○   23 occurrences in section 16.1 "What is being done to achieve teaching

            excellence."

These examples highlight key focus areas in the data analysis system, indicating recurring themes related to ethics, morale, purpose, and teaching excellence.

Results of a documents coding run

Document: LOCAL POLICY TEXTS\UGPG 21 - Papers - (final) 31 May 2016 (90: 2370 - 90: 2376)
Search string: purpose

1) The requirement for providing a copy of the evidence would be
replaced by adding another level of endorsement (Head of
School/Designated Authority) to the final faculty sign-off stage of the
statement of compliance. The purpose of the Head of
School/Designated Authority was to verify that necessary consultation
(student, External, etc.) had taken place, and that if /when audited,
they could provide evidence of consultation;

Document: LOCAL POLICY TEXTS\UGPG 21 - Papers - (final) 31 May 2016 (93: 248 - 93: 254)
Search string: Purpose

To consider
1. Summary and Purpose of Paper/Report
1.1. The Committee is asked to note the update on short courses to date for

Document: LOCAL POLICY TEXTS\UGPG 21 - Papers - (final) 31 May 2016 (93: 706 - 93: 712)
Search string: purpose

3. Background
3.1. The short course approval process is constantly under review to ensure that
continues to be fit for purpose.

Document: LOCAL POLICY TEXTS\UGPG 21 - Papers - (final) 31 May 2016 (94: 1234 - 94: 1240)
Search string: purpose

Forum. The purpose of this was not only to ensure an audit trail of
courses being approved, but to ensure that the student experience was not

compromised at the point of entry to the University or appropriate access to its facilities.