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*Part-time women teachers and their career progression: A life history approach*

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Part-time women teachers and their career progression:

A life history approach

Suzanne Brown

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of

Sheffield Hallam University

for the degree of Doctor in Education

July 2019

# Candidate Declaration

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I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
5. The word count of the thesis is 50,522

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## Abstract

The theoretical-methodological approach taken to this research was at the interface of ideas drawn from feminist research, life history, practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) and time. This approach enabled an understanding of the lives of an under-heard, and under-represented, group of women in the teaching profession to be developed and theorised in a new way, thereby resulting in an original contribution to knowledge.

This approach enabled the rigorous and transparent gathering of new and rich data from the women's perspectives of how and why a part-time pattern of working in secondary schools has limited their career progression. This type of data has, to my knowledge, not been previously gathered. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) was used as the interpretative framework. The three emergent themes: Practices, Perceptions and Tensions were subsequently analysed and theorised using a framework which was situated at the theoretical-methodological interface of ideas drawn from feminism, life history, practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) and time.

This newly gathered and theorised life history data means that an understanding of the lives of a group of women and their relationships with career progression is now available. This contribution is available to inform debate and challenge assumptions of part-time working in secondary schools and of those who enact it. Furthermore, this research makes a contribution to knowledge by helping to explain why so few senior positions in schools are occupied by those following this pattern of working.

Findings emerged of the ways the participants navigated the competing and 'greedy' (Edwards, 1993) demands on their time across and within different *timescapes* (Adam, 1990, 2004). Inflexible school-based practices which assumed a continuous availability to work, situated within a patriarchal and linear model of time (Adam, 1990, 2004) contributed to the difficulties encountered by the participants. They navigated these practices at their own cost in terms of not having enough time to themselves, and by managing their time in highly efficient ways. Stress, guilt and anxiety emerged from the data and shaped the participants' relationships with regard to their own career progression.

Glimpses of a disconnection emerged between school-based practices and wider socio-political policies and legislation which encourage equality of opportunity and the entitlement to request flexible working. A lack of transparency in procedure and policy in school contributed to this disconnection. The participants appeared to operate in the margins of the school system, in a liminal space where their professional contributions were not as valued as their full-time colleagues, their voices were not heard and their career progression was both unlikely and resisted.

These findings are significant with regard to wellbeing and the equality of opportunity for those occupying a flexible pattern of working in schools, particularly those who assume a role as a carer. The study also has wider implications for professional practice in schools around recruitment, the gender pay gap and phased retirement.

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, this research would not have been possible without the time and enthusiasm of the six participants who generously agreed to give their time to meet and tell me about their lives. I am very grateful for your support and I hope this research has enabled your voices to be heard.

Thank you to my Director of Studies, Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, and to my supervisors, Professor Carol Taylor and Dr Alison Hramiak, for your wise words and continued support. Thank you to my colleagues who have given me time and space to enable the thesis to come to fruition. I am very appreciative of the opportunity Sheffield Hallam University has given me to complete this work.

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Appendix 6 Original Codes and their descriptors from Phase two of Thematic Analysis

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the chapter**

This thesis begins with an introduction to the history of this research and my role within it. My reason for including this section is so that you, the reader, know me, the researcher, and so that you are aware of how my lived experiences pervade and underpin this piece of research from its inception to completion. The chapter will go on to discuss the aims and objectives and their relevance to the research questions for this study. The first chapter will conclude with how this doctoral research contributes to knowledge.

The initial interest for this area of research was situated within my own personal experience. When requesting flexible working, I was informed that if I wished to return to work on any fewer than four days per week, I would be expected to relinquish my Head of Faculty role. This position had taken 12 years and lots of hard work to achieve. Legislation relating to flexible working is discussed in Chapter Two. I was not given a detailed reason for this described expectation and there was no precedent for working in a Head of Faculty, or more senior role, on a part-time basis in the school at that time. I relinquished my promoted position and agreed to work three days per week. No discussions regarding alternative models of working practices were explored. My return to work at the school was an unhappy experience. I felt the skills base I had acquired over previous years was not used or valued within my demoted role. I felt less valued as a person within the school; my opinions were no longer sought or appreciated. After the

birth of my second child, I applied for alternative positions and was successful in obtaining a part-time position within higher education where I am fulfilled both professionally and personally. My skills are recognised, and my line manager recognises the value and benefits of exploring alternative working patterns. These experiences have shaped my career, my orientations toward research and the focus of my doctoral study.

I am a 'sandwich carer' to my children and father. This experience positions my work and research experiences firmly within these family responsibilities and shapes my own positionality with regard to the research. Measor and Sikes (1992, p.211) argue that 'a value base' underpins the ethical stand we take:

For researchers it means that the people in the research should be treated as 'persons, as autonomous beings' and therefore they need to find practices which 'honour the principle of' respect for persons.

My 'value base' for this research is around respect and value for the participants and their contributions. According to Jarantyne and Stewart (1995), the ways participants are treated, and the care with which their lived experiences are represented, are the central concerns of an inclusive feminist methodology. Hence, this was the chosen methodological approach taken to this research. The rationale and justification of this research decision are discussed in Chapter Three.

Whilst more recent discourses, for example the Children and Families Act (2014), refer to flexible working, this research focuses on part-time working in particular. The

reasons for this will now be explained. Flexible working legislation includes part-time working under the umbrella of flexible working options (see Chapter Two, section 2.2). Part-time working, rather than flexible working, was the focus of this research due to this being the pattern I was familiar with when the research began. References to flexible working are made throughout the thesis, particularly with regard to the more recent legislation and literature. The aims and objectives for the research will now be discussed.

## **1.2 Study aims and objectives**

An initial review of the literature took place at the start of the research and highlighted a lack of literature relating to women teachers working part-time in secondary schools. A lack of senior leadership being carried out on a part-time basis was also identified during this process of review, which resonated with my own experiences. These findings led to the development of the aim for this research. This was to gain greater knowledge and understanding of women secondary school teachers' day-to-day lived experiences of part-time working and their relationships with career progression.

I decided that listening to this under-represented and under-heard group of women was the best way to go about meeting this aim. This view was translated into the objectives for this research. These articulate with my values for the research described earlier in this section and are given below:

- To develop an understanding of why there are so few part-time senior leaders in secondary schools;
- To work with a theoretical-methodological framework intended to underpin the research with respect for this group of women;
- To produce and analyse rich narratives which will inform schools' future practices.

The next section will explain the relationship between these objectives and the development of the main research questions.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The questions were developed in order to meet the aim of the research and to enable it to be carried out in a way coherent with the research objectives. The findings from the pilot study (Chapter Three, section 3.4.2) helped in refining these questions. They were developed to gain insight into the likely complexity of the participants' lives. I considered this to be important if the women's voices were to be properly represented in making meaning from the data at a later stage. The three questions are given below:

- For part-time women teachers within secondary schools, what are the practices that they perceive influence their choices in relation to career progression?
- What choices, decisions, motivations and values do women secondary school teachers who work part-time perceive have influenced their career progression?

- How do the women navigate the tensions between their various roles, and how does this impact on their choices in relation to career progression?

How the gathering, analysing and theorising of life history data to answer these questions will contribute to knowledge is discussed in the next section.

#### **1.4 Contribution to knowledge**

This research is intended to contribute to knowledge by exploring the contemporary situation around women's part-time working in secondary schools during a time of massive school re-organisation due to the Academies Act (2010). This research began just prior to the introduction of the Children and Families Act (2014). It has, therefore, coincided with the discourse around flexible working becoming more prominent alongside those of gender pay gap reporting and teacher recruitment and retention. Very recent research (CooperGibson Research, 2019 p.11) warns of the need to be cautious when considering existing literature on part-time working. This, they argue, is because:

There is little empirical, independent research relating to schools enabling and experiencing flexible working practices, the benefits and challenges of doing so and its impact on school, staff and students, and which also draws from a representative sample of participants.

This research will contribute to knowledge by collecting rich narratives detailing women part-time teachers' lived experiences and how this shapes their career trajectories. To my knowledge, this has not been researched previously. In doing so, developing an understanding of why so few senior positions in secondary schools are occupied by those occupying this pattern of working is intended. The research thereby makes a timely contribution to knowledge.

This chapter has discussed the relationships between the aims, objectives and research questions for this study. How my position as the researcher was at the core of these research decisions was explained. The intended contribution to knowledge was also highlighted. The next chapter will review the body of literature which has informed and shaped this research. Chapter Three describes and explains the methodology and methods of the research and how the data were gathered and analysed. From here, Chapters Four, Five and Six provide an analysis and theorisation of the data before conclusions are drawn from the research in Chapter Seven.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter contextualises my research by reviewing the body of literature underpinning the study. An initial review of the literature took place and only a small amount of literature around part-time working in schools was found at that time, for example, Chessum (1989), Young (2002) and Young and Brooks (2004). This scarcity is a situation which, arguably, remains. Hence, my early understanding of the positioning of part-time and flexible working was situated within the wider workforce. As described in Chapter One, section 1.2, these early outcomes, along with my own experiences, helped to shape the development of the research aim and identified the importance of carrying out this research. This emergent body of literature has changed over time in response to how both the research itself, and the agenda around flexible working, have developed since the inception of the research.

Due to the part-time nature of my study and its associated longevity, the research straddles the introduction of the Children and Families Act in 2014. The introduction of this Act, with its intention to increase entitlement to flexible working meant that a significant body of policy literature emerged during the research period. The data gathering and analysis stages of my research were, therefore, conducted in a different landscape to when my doctoral study originated. The ongoing choice of literature informing this research reflects this change over time.

As the research area is firmly situated within political and employment landscapes, an up-to-date understanding of how policy and legislative literature might frame the research was also necessary. Consequently, an ongoing review of the literature has taken place throughout the research. A review of academic publications to inform the theorisation of the evolving arguments around part-time and flexible working has also taken place. Keeping up to date with this body of literature has helped in the framing and theorisation of the arguments developed in this research.

The first part of this literature review, section 2.2, discusses what is meant by part-time working and its positioning with the wider legislation around flexible working. This includes an exploration of the gender pay gap within the wider workforce, and the tensions between legislation and employment practices in relation to this pattern of working. From here, the gendered nature of part-time working, along with a discussion about work-life balance and the impact of motherhood on career progression will be considered.

Later in the chapter, section 2.3 will begin to explore these wider workforce parallels within the context of teaching being considered a feminised profession. Wylie (2003, p.3) considered a feminised profession to be:

The phenomenon of large scale entry into the teaching profession (by women) and the subsequent perceived loss of prestige suffered by the profession.

Wylie (2003, p.3) argues that the feminisation of the teaching workforce is responsible for the reduction in the status of teaching as a profession:

- Increases in feminisation may signal that the teaching profession has become less attractive to men because of greater potential status in other professions;
- Increases in feminisation to the extent that teaching becomes a female dominated occupation may mean that teaching loses status and there is a deterioration of salaries and conditions.

Section 2.3 concludes with a review of the statistical data in relation to career progression within teaching. This illustrates the limited opportunities for women teachers who occupy a part-time pattern of working to achieve positions of senior leadership in secondary schools. The review of the literature begins in the next section by exploring what is meant by part-time working and its relationships with the discourse around flexible working.

## **2.2 Flexible and part-time working in the wider workforce**

The Citizens Advice Bureau gives the following guidance to people about flexible working:

‘Flexible working is the name given to any type of working pattern which is different from your existing one.

Flexible working arrangements may include:

- changing from full-time to part-time work
- changing the part-time hours that you work, for example, from weekends to week days
- changing working hours to fit in with, for example, school hours, college hours or care arrangements
- compressed hours, that is, working your usual hours in fewer days

- flexitime, which allows you to fit your working hours around agreed core times
- home working for part or all of the time
- job sharing
- self-rostering. This is most often found in hospitals and care services. You put forward the times you would like to work. Once staff levels and skills are worked out, the shift pattern is drawn up matching your preferences as closely as possible
- shift working
- staggered hours, these allow you to start and finish your days at different times. This is often useful in the retail sector where it is important to have more staff over the lunchtime period but fewer at the start and end of the day
- time off in lieu
- teleworking
- annualised hours, this means that working time is organised around the number of hours to be worked over a year rather than over a week. Annualised hours work best when there is a rise and fall in workload during the year.’

[\(https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work/flexible-working/flexible-working-what-is-it/\)](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work/flexible-working/flexible-working-what-is-it/)

It can be seen, therefore, that part-time working is only one of many possible flexible working patterns. The rationale for focussing on part-time working in particular in this research is given in Chapter One, section 1.1. Flexible working sits within wider policy around equal opportunities. The history and development of this policy now follows.

The Work and Parents Taskforce (discussed in Pyper, 2018) published a report in 2001 which led to the right to request flexible working being added to the Employment Rights Act (1996). This was for those parents of children under six, or with disabled children under the age of 18. This legislation came into force in 2003. In 2011, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government gave a commitment to extend all

employees the right to request flexible working. This was taken forward and formed part of the Children and Families Act (2014). This Act extended the right to request flexible working to all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service.

Once a request to work flexibly has been submitted by the employee, the employer is dutybound to consider a written request to work flexibly within three months (ACAS, 2014). If the employer refuses the request, they must inform the employee of the reasons for their decision. Each case should, therefore, be considered on its own individual merits. Examples of appropriate reasons for a request to be refused include:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- detrimental impact on performance;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work;
- a planned structural change to the business.

(ACAS, 2014)

Employees no longer have a legal right to appeal if their request is denied, but the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS, 2014) advises employers to offer this measure as a demonstration that requests are being dealt with in a 'reasonable manner'. Employees can complain to a tribunal if they feel the request was not handled properly but cannot appeal against the decision to refuse the request, *per se* (ibid.).

The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices (Gov.uk, 2016b) recommends that as part of its statutory evaluation of the right to request flexible working due in 2019, consideration should be given to the furthering of genuine flexibility in the workplace. The Government acknowledged these recommendations (Gov.uk, 2016b) with an intention to launch a joint task force with industry on flexible working. A duty for employers to consider if a job could be carried out flexibly prior to it being advertised (Gov.uk, 2018) was also suggested. This is intended to help overcome the barriers faced by some employees in raising the issue of flexible working with their employer (Pyper, 2018). Having established the relationship between flexible and part-time working, the discussion will move on to what is meant by a part-time pattern of working.

In the United Kingdom, the definition of part-time working is vague. Mumford and Smith (2009) report it is regarded as working 30 hours or less per week. The Part-time Workers Rights website (Gov.uk, 2016a) affirms that there is no real definition of what is meant by working part-time. However, it states that working 35 hours or more would be regarded as working full-time. The Office for National Statistics highlights the lack of clear definition of what is meant by part-time working:

The people in employment can work on a full-time or part-time basis. There is no universal definition of what constitutes part-time employment. The International Labour Organization defines part-time employment as “regular employment in which working time is substantially less than normal”. The [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) states that the definition of part-time employment varies across OECD member countries. However, part-time employment can be classified according to workers’ perceptions of their employment situations. In addition, part-time workers can be defined as workers who work fewer than the usual full-time working hours per week. [A UK study on part-time workers’ rights](#) defines part-time workers as workers who work fewer hours than full-time workers’ 35 hours and above per

week. In the Labour Force Survey, the part-time and full-time classification is based on the respondents' perceptions of their employment situations

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/labourmarketeconomiccommentary/july2018>

\*The women in my research were recruited on the basis of their head teacher and themselves responding to an invitation for women who work part-time in secondary schools to take part in the research. In this sense, they have responded in light of their perceptions of their own employment situation. In actuality, they had fractional contracts and worked full or half days rather than adhering to other types of flexibility (described above) in their work pattern. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three in the vignettes of the women provided.

Having established that part-time working can mean different things and that a clear and consistent definition does not exist, the next section will move on to explore the relationship between this type of working and inequalities in pay.

### **2.2.1 Part-time working and the gender pay gap**

In 2017, the following legislation (Gov.uk, 2017c) was introduced in Great Britain:

From 6 April, 2017 employers in Great Britain with more than 250 staff will be required by law to publish the following four types of figures annually on their own website and on a government website:

- Gender pay gap (mean and median averages);
- Gender bonus gap (mean and median averages);
- Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses;
- Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organization's pay structure.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gender-pay-gap-reporting>

ACAS (2019) make the point that:

Gender pay reporting is different to equal pay:

Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman. The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce. If a workforce has a particularly high gender pay gap, this can indicate there may be a number of issues to deal with, and the individual calculations may help to identify what those issues are.

[http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5768&gclid=CjwKC\\_AiAhp\\_jBRAXEiwAXbniXfEVgUBPDckp4hyU4Y197eybR\\_05oOgXW99laYcZqcch5iiqaLOYGBoCgHgQAvD\\_BwE](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5768&gclid=CjwKC_AiAhp_jBRAXEiwAXbniXfEVgUBPDckp4hyU4Y197eybR_05oOgXW99laYcZqcch5iiqaLOYGBoCgHgQAvD_BwE)

According to Mumford and Smith (2009) the gender pay gap results from part-time workers being employed in feminised workplaces which yield lower earnings. They found that women who did not work full-time tended to have fewer degrees, were non-white and likely to have a young child. Moving to positions of part-time working was associated with jobs requiring a low level of skill. This finding appears situated within the context of these factors acting as multiple structural modes of subtle discrimination.

Bardasi and Gornick (2008) found a wage gap penalty associated with working part-time in all the countries they investigated, other than Sweden. Here, on average, workers were found to earn 1% more than full-time employees. Part-time employment was not always linked to low and unskilled work. Swedish women were found to be more likely to keep, and return to, their previous jobs once they returned to full-time employment. Since 1978, employees in Sweden have been entitled to reduce their number of working hours and be paid at a rate of pay which is pro-rata to their full-time



wage, until their children become eight years old. Bardasi and Gornick (2008) believe this to account for why Sweden bucks the trend in terms of gender pay gap for part-time work.

More recently, Matteazzi *et al* (2018) conclude from their European study that whilst an increase in part-time working has increased participation in the workforce, it has been at the expense of the gender pay gap, largely due to the poor quality of this type of work and a low hourly rate of pay. Amongst the highly qualified, Lauze and Strauß (2016) found that occupations which were situated within male-typical working arrangements were paid more because they supported hegemonic and masculine images within society. Within this highly qualified group of people, the devaluing of the type of work typically undertaken by women was not the main contributing factor to the gender pay gap but, instead, it was working patterns which had the greatest influence. In the wider workforce, where this data was gathered, the inability to benefit from paid overtime provided a strong explanation for the gender pay gap.

In relation to the teaching profession, Jeffreys (2018) makes the following point:

Yet 40 of the 100 companies with the biggest pay gap across England, Wales and Scotland-that have currently declared their figures-are primary or secondary schools, with 10 of those having a median pay gap of 50% or higher.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-43460998>

She goes on to explain that, in addition to men being paid more in senior positions, the gap can also be explained by a lack of women in such roles. My research is of

consequence because it will contribute to knowledge concerning this pay gap and to an understanding of why so few senior leadership roles are occupied by those working part-time - and who are most likely to be women (McGuinness, 2018).

The National Education Union (NEU) produced a report in 2018 of a gender pay gap, with figures combined for both full-time and part-time working teachers, and where it was shown that women were earning, on average, 18.4% less than men. Whilst this gap had reduced since 1997, it was still above the European Union average pay gap of 16.1%. They attributed this gap to the impact of career breaks, lower rates of promotion for women teachers and the introduction of career performance-related pay. They found that male teachers were more likely to secure a promotion to leadership in secondary schools. If women were promoted, a pay gap still existed and got bigger between men and women occupying this senior tier of leadership. Jeffreys (2018 online) reports that:

Teaching unions are concerned that some “male teachers are £900 better off, and men in leadership roles can be paid £4,000 more, than women doing similar work.”

She reports, further, that the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) has requested that the teachers' pay review body should look into teachers taking their salary with them when they move schools. They propose there is evidence to show that women are more likely to begin on a lower salary when they transfer schools and that this helps to partly explain why the gender pay gap exists.

The NEU (2018) found that among those teachers who had been absent for part of the school year 2016-17 for pregnancy or maternity-related reasons, one third had been refused pay progression. This refusal rate was almost twice that of female teachers refused progression overall, with over 61% reporting they had been specifically told their progression had been denied because of their absence. The NEU (2018) highlights that despite DfE guidance about this issue, unlawful discrimination is taking place. When considering this unfair practice, only 47% of teachers who worked part-time were in receipt of pay progression compared with 61% of their full-time counterparts (ibid). The NEU (2018) argue that these findings indicate that taking time off to look after children, and working part-time, are detrimental to pay progression. The chapter will now move on to explore further tensions concerning how practices and legislation around flexible working can be misaligned.

### **2.2.2 The tensions between flexible working legislation and working practices**

Legault and Chassario (2003) and Durbin and Tomlinson (2010) found a preference among employers for full-time working patterns within their organisations. Matteazzi *et al* (2018) report that in countries with a prevalence of part-time jobs, women who work full-time are preferred by employers in the labour market. Very recent research (Sharp *et al*, 2019, p.12) report that school leaders think that the pace of working in schools would be slowed due to the additional implications resulting from the enabling of part-time or flexible working. Furthermore, they report a perception that full-time staff would have to 'pick up the slack' for those working part-time and that this would cause resentment. To my knowledge, no research has been carried out into this perception. This view is aligned with the findings of Durbin and Tomlinson (2010) who argue that

managers in the wider workforce perceived senior jobs to be performed more effectively by full-time workers, as they believed there was a greater likelihood of unfinished tasks, a greater burden on full-time colleagues and delayed decision-making accompanying part-time working.

Within the National Health Service (NHS), McIntosh *et al* (2012) found a preference for employees who worked full-time, had an unbroken record of working and followed a linear model of career progression. Previously, Pringle (1998) had found that within the medical profession there was a view that part-time working interferes with the continuity of care.

Hakim (2006) argues that the masculine career model which involves continuous, long and full-time hours, along with commitment at the expense of family-life, has no real justification. She argues, however, that careers which require extensive travel, or being readily available at the workplace, can result in a lack of accumulation of relevant experience for those who work part-time, and which may be detrimental to their prospects of promotion. Hakim (2006) proposes that the women in her study did not consider senior positions because they considered them not to be family-friendly. This is because they perceived them to involve dealing with unexpected issues beyond fixed working hours.

Research conducted by Dick and Hyde (2006a) argues that line managers found it difficult to manage employees who work reduced hours within systems designed for full-time patterns of working. This supports the views of Gatrell (2005) who

acknowledges that whilst a reduction in working hours is beneficial to achieving a more desirable work-life balance, this balance is managed on gendered social norms. From their research into reduced hours working within the police force, Dick and Hyde (2006b) found that reduced-hours employees faced problems because the developmental experiences linked to certain types of police work, and required for career progression, were situated within highly gendered institutionalised patterns. This, they argue, was exacerbated by an increasing expectation that people should take responsibility for their own career development. When those in the police force were invited to training events, Dick and Hyde (2006b) found that priority was given to full-time employees. Those employees who worked reduced hours were seen by their managers to lack commitment and flexibility because they did not attend training events during their non-working hours.

The impact of tensions between family-friendly policies, working practices and career progression results in companies showing unwillingness to employ those people most likely to wish to benefit from family-friendly policies (Bardasi and Gornick, 2008). Durbin and Tomlinson (2010) found a lack of promotional prospects, career mobility and opportunities for networking experiences among part-time managers in the wider workplace. This was detrimental to their career progression. Durbin and Tomlinson (2010) comment that part-time managers in their study, which explored the financial, pharmaceutical and manufacturing sectors, were reluctant to look for equivalent or promoted posts with other employers. This was due to them having negotiated individual packages of reduced hours working and management status which they might not get within their new employment. This indicates a lack of clarity and transparency regarding employment practices around part-time working.

Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) found that the 6.5% of workers in the wider workforce who did occupy part-time managerial positions were seen as 'one-offs' or fortunate people with sufficiently strategic positions to negotiate themselves reduced hours of working. Moreau *et al* (2005) identify a sense of gratitude from teachers toward their employers for meeting their requests for flexible working. Furthermore, some teachers felt that despite being their legal entitlement, they were stigmatised for being beneficiaries of 'family-friendly' policies.

Having touched upon family life in this section, the next will explore this further by considering the relationship between gender, part-time working and the impact of motherhood on career progression in the wider workforce.

### **2.2.3 The gendered nature of part-time working and the implications of motherhood on career progression**

For many women, their role as carers, and particularly motherhood, appears to be a major factor in making the decision to not work full-time (Hughes, 2002; Smith, 2012). This is situated within the gendered and social expectations of women believing their prime responsibility is to their families (McCrae, 2003) and whereby stubborn and persistent social expectations of women assuming the role as the primary carer to their children exist (Coleman, 2002). Within the wider workforce, 42% of women in employment work on a part-time basis, compared with 13% of men (McGuinness, 2018).

The issues faced by working mothers are described very powerfully by Tamboukou (2000, p.470):

'Real' women can work in the adult education sector and have a nuclear family with a husband and children and everything. In almost a magical way, they can combine housework, childcare and a senior position in adult education. In the time and space of a workday, they continually move in and out of personal and public boundaries. Women have been described as 'time-poor' (Edwards, 1993, p.64). Everything seems to be a result of good organisation of time. The question of the expenditure of time is not simply quantitative; it is strictly structured by the time requirements of others' lives (Edwards, 1993, p.64). Sometimes women will even feel 'guilty', when they have managed not to be utterly exhausted. Women are reported to feel guilty about how they decide to allocate their time, about the responsibility of time combinations, 'of piecing together and coordinating the fragmented nature and strands of the demands of life' (Edwards, 1993, p.73), and above all, about having time to themselves.

This competing demand for women's time within 'greedy' institutions like schools (Edwards, 1993) alongside family responsibilities is discussed by Moreau *et al* (2005) who found that women who become headteachers are less likely to have children or vice versa. Of those women and men who had been promoted to this most senior position in schools, and were of a similar age, Wilson *et al* (2006, p.247) found that the women were less likely to have children:

Female teachers' personal and family lives have been disproportionately affected by their choice to pursue promotion and career development and may be more closely associated than those of male teachers.

Wilson *et al* (2006, p.247) report that 62% of female headteachers lived with their partners and children compared to 91% of men. Female headteachers were more likely to live on their own (32%) compared to 2% of comparable men. Smith (2012, p.85) makes the following point:

Whilst there have been significant changes with regard to legal and policy reform, what has remained constant is the expectation that women will take responsibility for childrearing. Powerful social discourses of motherhood continue to find expression in the restrictive parameters within which many women find their life and career decisions. This is not to deny women their agency (see Smith, 2011), but to recognise that they do so within a strikingly constant set of restraints. In attempting to account, therefore, for the continued under-representation of women in the most senior posts in education there is a need to take into consideration how women's private and domestic worlds intersect with their public and professional lives.

This research is intended to explore this intersection. McIntosh *et al* (2012) conclude that even in the feminised nursing workforce, motherhood had limited the career progression of women. They argue that motherhood masked a complex relationship between the variables they investigated. It was revealed that having younger children led to the greatest impact on career progression. Moreau *et al* (2005) found that women teachers' career patterns did not align with a linear model of progression due to career breaks, which meant that they were overlooked for promoted positions. These findings are pertinent for my own research into the life histories of women who work part-time in secondary schools and who, as such, might be perceived as taking a break from the linear and continuous model of full-time working. The significance of work-life balance and its relationship with part-time working follows in the next section.

#### **2.2.4 Work-life balance and women teachers working part-time**

This section begins by exploring what is meant by work-life balance. Eikhof *et al* (2007, p.325) argue that the wider debate relating to work-life balance is framed within the need for a 'good work-life balance'. This assumes there is too much work, rather than too little. In terms of workload, Bousted (2017) reports the findings of a DfE (2016)



survey into teacher workload which indicates that, on average, full-time teachers work 54.4 hours a week, an increase from the 45.9 hours reported in 2013. It is reported that school leaders work, on average, 60 hours per week. The survey found that almost one third of part-time teachers work 40% of their total hours in the evening, early morning and at weekends. Findings from the National Education Union (2018) show that whilst 60% of teachers worked reduced hours to meet their responsibilities as a carer, 43% worked part-time in order to try and manage their excessive workload, although there appears to be some overlap here in the statistics.

Eikhof et al (2007) argue that by enabling employees to have more flexibility over their working hours, rather than reducing them, employers appear to be 'family-friendly' whilst meeting their own business needs (ibid.). In terms of schools meeting their business needs, the issues around teacher recruitment and retention are highlighted by Sharp *et al*, 2019:

Ensuring there are enough high-quality teachers in England's schools is crucial for delivering a first-class education for young people. However as the number of secondary pupils is forecast to increase by 15% between 2018 and 2025, attracting and retaining enough secondary teachers is a key challenge facing school leaders today (Worth *et al*, 2018).

One of the ways of encouraging more teachers to remain in the profession for longer - and potentially to attract more to join the profession - is to ensure there are part-time or flexible working opportunities when teachers need them. Providing opportunities to keep teachers who would have left without being able to go part-time retains their expertise and reduces the risk of losing them from the profession permanently.

Despite the benefits to schools of providing opportunities to work flexibly, and which are argued above by Sharp *et al* (2019), the NASUWT (2016b) report a higher refusal rate of flexible working requests by schools in comparison with the wider workforce. Here, 80% of requests are approved compared with the 66% within teaching. Of those receiving Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) points with additional remuneration, or on the leadership pay spine, refusals were nearing 100%. Furthermore, Sharp *et al*, (2019) report that school leaders find it particularly difficult to accommodate flexible (as opposed to part-time) working. The reported reasons for this include beliefs that timetabling would be made more difficult, and that they preferred teachers to be on site during school hours.

These figures are of concern as they indicate an apparent greater unwillingness within the teaching profession to engage with flexible working, particularly at senior levels. This is seemingly out of alignment with arguments about encouraging a more satisfactory work-life balance. My research coincided with the Government White Paper ‘Educational Excellence Everywhere’ (DfE, 2016), encouraging more flexible working in schools. As a consequence, the data were gathered before this guidance and greater encouragement from the government to encourage flexible working as part of addressing teacher recruitment and retention. However three years on from this advice being sent to schools, Sharp *et al* (2019) imply that the situation has not changed much in schools around flexible working despite the encouragement from government.

These figures and discussion are aligned with the findings in the next section where the lack of part-time workers occupying senior management roles in schools is highlighted.

Due to the gendered nature of this pattern of working in schools (National Education Union, 2018); this situation seems likely to be more pertinent to women occupying this pattern of working and is of particular interest to this research.

### **2.3 The feminisation of the teaching profession and the statistical context**

The findings of Hughes (2002, p.115) indicate that women who worked part-time in schools, had reduced chances of achieving a senior position in comparison with their full-time colleagues, particularly men:

When men are employed in predominantly female sectors such as primary school teaching, nursing or social work they are also more likely to be occupying the senior positions in these sectors. In addition, Blackwell (2001) reports that women's part-time work is not only more gender-segregated than women's full-time work but also part-time jobs tend to be at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy.

Research from Moreau *et al* (2007) found that teachers working in the most feminised schools were not aware of the gender imbalance at management level within their schools. They thought things were fair in terms of equality because their schools employed a lot of women. Parity in terms of women achieving the most senior positions is not the case, as the following discussion explains. Statistics from the Department of Education, regarding the school work force in England (Gov.uk, 2013), and more latterly Gov.uk. (2017b), were analysed as part of this research and used to inform this discussion.

In 2017, the percentage of women in the teaching workforce in local authority secondary schools was 64%. This figure represented the total workforce, including school leadership. In the much larger teaching workforce of state funded academies the figure was 60.5%. At the most senior level, the percentage of women in the position of secondary school headteacher across all state maintained local authority secondary schools was 40%, and 37% in secondary academies. This shows that the proportion of women at senior leadership level is not representative of the proportion of women teaching in secondary schools. This finding indicates that whilst teaching is regarded as a feminised profession (Wylie, 2003), leadership is predominantly in the hands of men.

When analysing school workforce data (Gov.uk, 2017b), it was revealed that in all state funded secondary schools in 2017, 19.2% of the workforce worked part-time, an increase from 16.9% in 2012. The interim period included the Children and Families Act (2014) and the right to request flexible working being granted to all those with 26 weeks of continuous service.

Research by Sharp *et al* (2019) found that 36% of secondary school teachers and leaders would like to work part-time but cannot afford to do so. Alternatively, they had not requested this pattern of working because they perceived that their senior leaders would not support their application. They report, further, that the demand for part-time working is currently unmet. Worth *et al* (2018) found that an important factor contributing to some secondary teachers leaving, and others not returning, to the profession was a lack of part-time and flexible working opportunities.

The proportion of those occupying a position of senior leadership (headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher) in a part-time capacity had increased slightly from 3.7% in 2012 to 5.2% in 2017. This analysis indicated a large disparity between the proportions of part-time teachers in the workforce compared with those who occupy positions at a senior leadership level. This is matter of concern to this research as this pattern of working is largely occupied by women (Durbin and Tomlinson, 2014).

The data above do not differentiate between men and women who work part-time, nor do they it define what is meant by this pattern of working; nevertheless, the lack of opportunity to work part-time at a senior level is apparent. To put it bluntly, whilst one in five secondary school teachers work part-time, only one in twenty senior leaders will be employed on this basis. This is of significance to this research as it provides a context for the questions being asked about career progression and its relationship with part-time working for women secondary school teachers. In addition to gender, not working full-time appears to further diminish chances of achieving senior leadership. Hence the likelihood of a woman becoming a part-time senior leader appears slim.

The next stage of the analysis considered at what stage career progression begins stalling. My analysis of the teaching workforce data (Gov.uk, 2013) indicates that 78.7% of part-time teachers in local authority-maintained secondary schools did not receive any type of Teaching, Learning and Responsibility (TLR) point, compared with 57% of full-time teachers. These points are accompanied with additional paid remuneration for assuming extra responsibility for an area of leadership and management. These are graded according to the role. This shows that the disparity in career progression between

part-time and full-time teachers begins at the earliest stages of career trajectory and increases further as the career ladder is climbed. The reasons for this discrepancy will be explored in this research.

This chapter has provided a review of the key literature around part-time working in the wider workforce. Whilst some parallels with the teaching workforce have been drawn, this pattern of working in secondary schools is not well researched, limiting this process. My research is designed to provide a contribution to knowledge by addressing this gap in understanding. This chapter gave a review of the social policies around flexible working along with the gender pay gap and their relevance to this study. The next chapter will explain the methodological approach taken to this research with its intentions to address the identified gap in knowledge confirmed by this literature review.

## **Chapter 3**

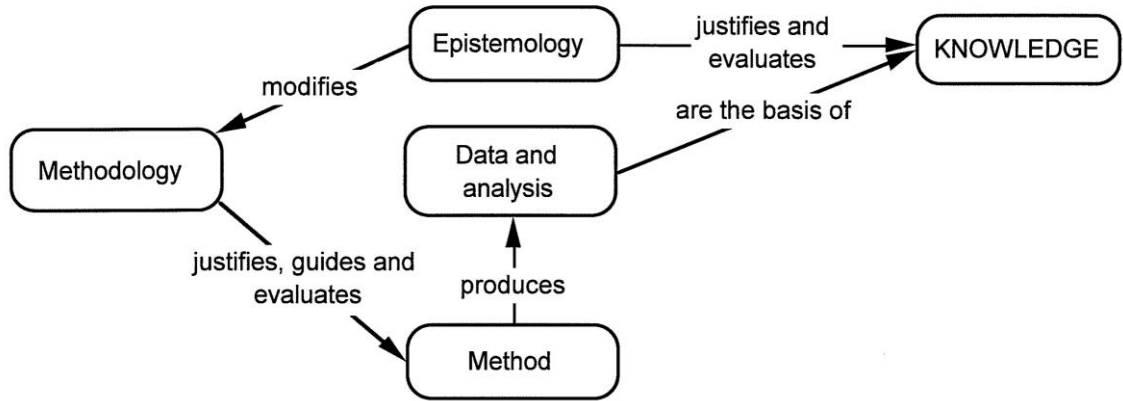
### **Methodology and methods**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the design of the study will be described. The epistemological and philosophical perspective which underpins the chosen theoretical-methodological approach to this qualitative research will be explained. The first section of the chapter addresses the epistemological foundations of the research. From here, the second section considers the methodological approach taken, including a discussion of how a life history approach articulates with feminist research principles. The third section considers methodological issues with regard to data collection, sampling, ethics, data analysis and rigour. An explanation for the adoption of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) and timescapes (Adam, 1990, 2004) within the theoretical framework for analysing the data, and how these articulate with the ideas drawn from feminist research and the method of life history, will be given in the last part of the chapter.

#### **3.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge and its concern with the philosophical perspectives of how knowledge is generated and justified (Carter and Little, 2007), is linked to research methodology and research methods. Carter and Little (2007) illustrate the relationships between these concepts in relation to research as follows:



**Figure 3.1 The simple relationship between epistemology, methodology and method**

**(Carter and Little, 2007, p.1317)**

It is important to justify the epistemological position taken in my research in order to ensure credibility and validity of the knowledge claims I am making. The research was designed with the intention of listening to an under-heard and under-represented group of women, to value their experiences and contributions and to carry out the research in a way that was respectful and mindful of any potential vulnerability.

In their discussion of epistemology from a feminist perspective, Stanley and Wise (2002) reject arguments for one truthful, and irrefutable social reality. This research will be shaped by this perspective. It will explore and respect the participants' differing and subjective truths or realities of working part-time in secondary schools. This will be done through the stories they tell and which are the products of the interaction between the participants and me as the researcher.



My intention was to move beyond the descriptive and, instead, to carry out the research within a theoretical-methodological framework, which not only provided a coherence with my epistemological stance and research objectives, but which enabled the findings to be theorised and critiqued alongside social theory. This framework was at the interface of ideas drawn from feminism, life history, practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) and time.

Story-telling is constrained by the narratives currently circulating, and whilst narratives are not readymade scripts into which stories are slotted, they are, instead, frameworks which help us to construct and shape our own partial narratives (Woodiwiss *et al*, 2017). This recognition, alongside the need for transparency in terms of how my own beliefs and positionality may have gone on to influence all stages of the research was important in terms of justifying the knowledge generated. The development of the rationale for the chosen theoretical-methodological framework, and how it was newly applied to the researching of this group of participants, will be explained in the methodology and methods sections which follow. This begins in the next section which explains the methodological approach taken to the research.

### **3.3 Methodology**

#### **3.3.1 Feminist approaches to research**

In Figure 3.1, above, it can be seen that Carter and Little (2007) consider research methodology to be modified by epistemology whilst shaping, guiding and evaluating research methods. Corbin and Strauss (2008) highlight that the research questions being

asked should underpin the choice of methodological approach. With this in mind, I was drawn to a methodological approach which was informed by feminist ideas about research, for the reasons which follow.

In the 1970s, feminist researchers began to engage with the intersections between feminist theory and methodologies to highlight ways in which they considered the methods of studying women's lives were flawed (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008). Positivist, patriarchal methodologies were of particular concern as these relied on the use of quantitative methods, and were inadequate to capture the complexities of women's lives (ibid.). Miller (2017) argues that positivist expectations of measurement and external validity are unhelpful because they do not recognise the messiness and complexities of the social world, nor are able to account for how lives are experienced from unequal individual positions. It is in recognition of this potential 'messiness and complexity' that my choices with regard to methodology and methods are situated, given my aim to explore the women's lives through the stories they were willing to tell.

Eichler (1997) argues that research which is informed by feminist theories has contributed to refining the ethical use of methods. Feminist contributions to debates about epistemology have led to the scrutiny of the ways research is carried out, the role of the researcher, and the notion of subjectivity (Miller, 2017). This seems particularly aligned with my epistemological position. When research involves private and personal aspects of lives these reflections are even more salient (ibid.). Based on my own lived experiences of part-time working in school (described in Chapter One, section 1.1), I was aware that the participants may also feel vulnerable and might need support. The

importance of recognising their contributions as well as showing gratitude for the giving of their time were also important aspects of my approach. This stance, whereby a feminist theory of knowledge constitution and generation has to be morally adequate in feminist terms (Stanley and Wise, 2002), was attractive in terms of carrying out my research.

A recent online dictionary definition of feminist methodology given by Griffin (2017) highlights that it is how the tools of research are used, and for what purpose, that defines whether a methodological approach is feminist in nature:

A research perspective which makes gender its central concern. Associated with methodological positions such as standpoint theory, situated knowledge, reflexivity on the part of the researcher, and the empowerment of those researched through a co-construction of knowledge approach. In the 1980s qualitative research methods such as meeting and oral histories were regarded as tools of feminist methodologies as they attempted to record in detail the experiences of those who reported them in their own words. This view has given way to an understanding that it is not the tools used (qualitative or quantitative ones) that decide whether a methodology is feminist, but the uses to which such tools are put and the perspectives that researchers bring to bear.

According to Eichler (1997), there is no recognised distinctive feminist method for doing research, and so my choices with regard to how to gather the data had to be considered carefully. However, if the research was to be coherent in its epistemological and methodological underpinnings these choices had to be in alignment with the feminist ideas about carrying out research explained above. Life history was the chosen way of gathering rich narratives about the participants' lives as it reflects Griffin's (2017) definition, above, by enabling women to give details in their own words of their

lives as lived. The reasons for choosing life history in terms of how it articulates with the ideas drawn from feminist research will now be explained.

### **3.3.2 Life history**

According to White *et al* (2010), the life history approach is an extremely rich qualitative methodology based on a tradition of oral history and storytelling about memories and experiences from across a person's lifespan. It is distinct from its parent, oral history in that it is concerned with events over a lifetime rather than being more concerned with a particular event or period of time.

Feminist social science begins with the recognition that all behaviour stems from personal, direct experience (Stanley and Wise, 2002). It was this that my research was trying to capture through a life history approach. Taking such an approach was aligned with my epistemological stance by intending to gather 'truths' from the perspective of each of the participants in the research. Goodson and Sikes (2001) propose that it seems very unlikely that life historians would not have this epistemological view.

The Personal Narratives Group (1989), an interdisciplinary research group affiliated with the University of Minnesota, proposes that women's narratives, which present and interpret women's life experiences, are important to feminist research. This is because feminist theory is grounded in women's lives and aims to analyse the role and meaning of gender in those lives and in society. White *et al* (2010, p.7) propose that life history is a method which:

Examines the ways in which people remember and interpret their values, practices, and preferences, and how these have developed over time and why, against the backdrop of other historical data; allowing us to understand how people have experienced and interpreted events, experiences, and changes across their lives within the context of broader societal developments. The methodology can therefore create a detailed view of the meeting, with much of the real-life complexity which often gets left out of quantitative approaches.

The Personal Narratives Group (1989, p.5) proposes that women's personal narratives are, through their presenting and interpretation of gender roles on women's lives, especially suitable for illuminating:

Gendered relations around the construction of gendered self-identity, the relationship between the individual and society in the perpetuation of gender norms, and the dynamics of power between men and women.

Hence, the life history method appeared aligned with gathering data which was intended to answer my research questions around the participants' experiences and relationships of part-time working and their career progression. It was the potential offered by a life history approach to consider the lives of a group of women previously overlooked in research and to hear their truths that was attractive from a methodological point of view. Geiger (1986) argues that feminism is understood as the theory of women's points of view and that feminist research aims to understand the meaning of women's social experiences through critical reconstitution. I committed to the life history method as a feminist method of research because it enabled a broader and deeper understanding of these experiences as lived by the participants, and as told in the way they chose to talk about them. The challenge of doing this would be to value the participants' voices whilst also asking why and how they told their stories as they did (Woodiwiss *et al*, 2017).

According to Sangster (1994) locating women's experiences remains a 'feminist utopian goal' in understanding and challenging inequality. She argues, further, that not having this understanding of women's lived experiences carries with it the risk of marginalising and trivialising women's voices and experiences. Stanley and Wise (2002) argue that without understanding how oppression of women occurs, it is not possible to understand why it occurs and, therefore, how to prevent it occurring in the future. This, they argue, is best understood through knowing in minute detail all facets of the oppression women endure, and that this is best done by exploring their 'everyday lives'.

Goodson (2008) proposes that a life history study of teachers' lives is situated within the recognition that a) a teacher's previous career and life experience influences their way of teaching and the way they go about it; b) life outside of school may impact on their work as a teacher; c) the concept of career enables the understanding of workplace dynamics and the movement and futures of people who work within them; and, d) a life history is situated within the history of that person's time. Therefore, taking a life history approach to explore the complexities involved in the lives of an under-heard and under-represented group of women teachers seems highly appropriate.

### **3.3.3 Subjectivity, bias and rigour**

According to Geiger (1986), critiques of the life history approach tend to address two issues: representativeness and subjectivity. She argues that feminist life history research challenges these critiques. It addresses the failure in other methods of social science to recognise that the generalisations and models of social life referenced in such representations are androcentric in nature (ibid.). Similarly, it is argued by Geiger (1986)

that the subjective nature of life histories is seen as a strength in feminist research. This is because objectivity is also rejected as an androcentric concept as the version of reality it presents does not represent the truth or reality for women. Portelli (1991) argues that subjectivity is refreshing as it enables consideration of why and how the story was constructed in a certain way. In this sense, what many may see as a weakness of the method of life history is regarded as a strength by feminist researchers. This is because it aims to understand why memory has been constructed and stories have been told in a particular way.

Within this discussion of subjectivity, the notion of bias is worthy of mention. According to Mehra (2002) positivist research has taught us that research has no personal significance. This, it is argued, is in contrast to qualitative research in which 'Interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher' (Denzin, 1989, p.12). In qualitative research, therefore, bias is addressed in terms of how the researcher influences the research decisions through their own beliefs, values and experiences (Mehra, 2002). This will be considered in terms of my adopting of a position as a reflexive researcher. This will be achieved through the constant evaluation of the research decisions to achieve rigour and transparency in the way the research was conducted. How this was achieved at appropriate stages within the research is described within the thesis at relevant points.

In Chapter One, section 1.1 of this thesis, I highlighted how my research interest originated in my own experience and how the need to delve beyond these experiences provided the motivation for the research. It could be argued, therefore, that in its most

raw sense this research is *for me* as a woman wanting to explore beyond her own naïve positivism in relation to working part-time and career progression. In Chapter One, section 1.1 described my unhappiness when returning to work in a reduced capacity and how this has influenced me as researcher. With this in mind, I was keen that my involvement with the participants in this research would be a positive experience for all of us. The voluntary participation of the participants in this research, through their time, enthusiasm and interest provided a powerful motivation to design morally adequate research (Stanley and Wise, 2002). It is important, however, to consider that feminism is not only for women. Instead, it is about trying to achieve equality and inclusion of broader perspectives in decision-making, leadership and knowledge production and which this research was designed to contribute toward.

My own previous unhappiness, referred to above, has shaped the problematizing of working part-time in secondary schools and, undoubtedly, has had a similar impact throughout this research. Stanley and Wise (2002) propose that we construct a view of things based on what we think things might be like for that person, and that this is made accessible to us through our own vulnerability. Acknowledging this in the role as the researcher makes the researcher's role more honest and apparent in their interpretations of other's lives (ibid.). Harding (1987) explains that the cultural beliefs and behaviours of feminist researchers shape the research process and its analyses to no lesser extent than do sexist and androcentric methods and researchers. Reflexivity was an inherent part of my research approach and began in this thesis by my introduction as the researcher, and the likely subjective influences I brought to the research. Portelli (1991, p.56) makes the following point:



It is the historian who selects the people who will be meeting; who contributes to the shaping of the testimony by asking the questions and reacting to the answers; and who gives the testimony its final published shape and context.

Hence, I recognise that my own positionality has had a huge bearing on the questions asked, and research decisions taken, that should not be ignored. I have acknowledged this by trying to be reflexive at all stages of the research.

### **3.3.4 Researcher-researched hierarchy**

Research decisions were shared with the participants at various stages of gathering the data. This was to raise their awareness of the underpinning rationale for the design of the research and as part of the process of co-constructing their life histories (Goodson, 2008). This decision also recognised that they were the experts about their own lives. This approach was intended to help address the feminist stance around power relations between the researcher and the researched (Oakley, 1981; Brayton, 1997). However, on a cautionary note, Sangster (1994) highlights that care is needed to avoid masking researcher privilege by acknowledging that feminist research cannot escape the realisation that the researcher has more control over the finished product of research. She argues, further, that whilst feminist ethical obligations encourage the sharing of material with the women participating in the research, it remains the researcher's privilege to interpret the women's stories. Enabling the participants' words to be heard throughout the research was the way this was addressed along with opportunities to co-construct the life histories. This stance does, however, recognise that making meaning from their stories was still largely within my domain.

This first part of the chapter has explained the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of this research. Specific consideration has been given to how ideas drawn from feminist ideas about research articulate with a life history approach. The next section will address how the data were collected using a life history approach.

## **3.4 Methods**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

This section begins with an evaluation of a small pilot study, the outcomes of which informed the final research. From here, recruitment, along with a discussion of ethical considerations and their alignment with ideas drawn from feminist approaches to research, are described. How the data were gathered in line with my epistemological and methodological approaches will conclude this section.

### **3.4.2 Pilot study**

The pilot aimed to trial, and evaluate the process of gathering a part-time teacher's life history in line with the objectives for my research. The pilot study involved meeting with an acquaintance, chosen because I knew she occupied this pattern of working and had previously expressed an interest in my research. The pilot study enabled me to trial getting the 'right' tone in the invitation to participate in the research. When asked, the participant considered the letter of introduction, consent form and debrief sheet (Appendices, 2, 3 and 4) to be informative and appropriate. She thought that the letter of introduction (Appendix 2) would encourage her to volunteer to participate. The letter of

introduction to headteachers would remain as shown in Appendix 1, as it has been previously reviewed by a friend who is a headteacher.

I also used the pilot study to evaluate the process of gathering data in relation to the research questions. At the time that the pilot study was conducted, my initial focus had been to ascertain which aspects of career progression the participants saw as being as a result of their own agency, and which they perceived as being due to more external or structural factors, and the relationships between them. To this effect, an evaluation of the intended questions and probes was carried out in the pilot study out to see if they enabled the participant to articulate her life in a way coherent with this approach.

The problems encountered when analysing the data from the pilot study led to the realisation that the structure and agency binary over-simplified the complexities of what the participant had said. This compromised the achievement of my research aim (Chapter One, section 1.2). This led to the original research questions being refined in order to capture the complexities in the participants' lives. It was apparent that the method of analysis required further consideration and development.

I became aware that my own positionality was having an impact on the way I was thinking about the data and that I was possibly too close to it emotionally. On occasions, I felt angry because the participant had been left feeling upset by decisions made in her school. This brought back memories of how I had felt when I was expected to relinquish my management position. As a result, I realised that my own positionality would need

to be recognised and acknowledged throughout the research process. The importance of giving more consideration to my choices of interpretative and theoretical framework became more apparent but still remained unclear at this stage of the research process.

In summary, the pilot study indicated that the intended approach to gathering life histories was consistent with the values and morally adequate (Stanley and Wise, 2002) stance I aspired to for my research. The life history approach showed potential in enabling rich and detailed data around the research topic to be gathered. However, it highlighted that the research questions needed to be refined. The nature and heavy emphasis on shared evaluation during the pilot study was productive in terms of informing the main study. I considered this to be a strength of the pilot study both in its own terms, and in its role of informing coherent future decisions and choices regarding the main body of research.

Drawing on ideas about feminist research, the pilot study also gave me opportunities for reflexivity, for example, by considering how my own experiences had influenced the gathering of the data and the need to make my own background and motivations for the research known to the participants. In the main research, I went on to explain this to the participants at the beginning of our meetings. I was mindful of trying not to lead these meetings as much as I had done in the pilot study. In the main research, I decided not to ask as many questions and to give the participants greater opportunity and more time to shape their own responses. Further questions regarding the approaches to data analysis also became apparent.

### **3.4.3 Ethics, consent and confidentiality**

#### **i) Gathering participants**

Gathering participants involved sending out a list of participant criteria to 57 state secondary schools in one English county and asking for volunteers to take part in the research. In essence, I asked each headteacher to act as a gatekeeper to the accessing of potential participants. Due to my own role as a teacher educator, and the professional necessity to establish and maintain positive partnership relationships with schools, I considered it courteous to seek the permission of the headteacher (Appendix 1) before contacting teachers within their school. Anonymity was supported by asking the headteacher to circulate the letter (Appendix 2) to all women teachers who worked part-time and so to avoid 'cherry picking' of likely respondents by the headteacher or myself. Any potential participant who wished to reply to Appendix 2 was asked to do so directly to me, rather than via the headteacher. The headteacher was not informed of any final participants from their school. Pseudonyms for both the participants and the schools were employed.

#### **ii) Benefits and possible negative consequences of taking part in the research**

All participants in the research were informed that they could request a summary copy of my research findings if they wished. The initial contact letter (Appendix 1) enabled the headteachers to request a summary copy of my research findings, which I framed as being potentially informative to their future employment practices.

In line with feminist approaches to research, avoiding researcher-researched hierarchy (Stanley and Wise, 2002) was something I wished to minimise (Oakley, 1981; Brayton, 1997) from the outset. We agreed to meet in cafes and public houses near to where the participants worked or lived and which were sufficiently quiet for an accurate recording of our meeting to be made. If a participant became upset during our meeting (Goodson and Sikes, 2001), I was aware that this needed to be handled with discretion and not within full public glare, although this was not necessary in the end. Each participant was given the opportunity to suggest where we should meet and sit, whilst being mindful of personal safety and ethical issues our choices may have presented. No ethical dilemmas arose from recording in public as we made sure our conversations could not be heard by others and that we were far enough away from anyone else not to pick up their conversations on the recording. I also explained to the proprietor at each meeting place what we were doing and asked them if they were comfortable with the recording taking place.

I offered a debriefing session to each participant after her life history had been collected to thank her, and to gauge how she felt about the process she had undertaken. The participants were advised that they could withdraw their involvement up to two weeks after the life history had been collected, which was prior to the process of transcription. The introductory letter (Appendix 2) made it clear that the participants would have access to their own transcripts to check for accuracy, to clarify points and to make changes if they wished. This was confirmed at the meetings. Measor and Sikes (1992) recommend this sort of 'respondent validation' as one of the best ethical safeguards and as part of the process of co-construction of life histories. Opportunities to withdraw

from the research at this stage and the means of future contact were discussed. The participants were given information regarding sources of personal and professional support, in case they had been negatively affected by talking about their lives. This included the Samaritans and trade unions. My own contact details, and those of my research supervisor, were also given to the participants in case they wished to make future contact. Details of the debriefing process are included as Appendix 4.

### iii) Gaining consent

To reduce the chance of tensions between my paid and researcher roles, I did not seek participation from schools with whom I work as a teacher educator. Those participants who responded to my letter of introduction (Appendix 2) were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 3) after the contents of Appendix 2 were re-iterated prior to their life histories being collected. Each participant was informed that she was expected to only tell those aspects of her life that she wished to discuss, and that she was under no obligation to provide any information that she was not comfortable in talking about. This applied to information that she offered and/or when asked a specific question. Six women finally agreed to be participants.

### iv) Confidentiality

Names were changed, and no details of any schools were given. All transcriptions and analyses were stored in full on an encrypted USB. Pseudonyms were used for participants throughout the gathering and analysis of the data. Six years after completing the doctorate, any research data will be securely disposed of. The method

for doing this will be ascertained at the appropriate time to ensure compliance with Sheffield Hallam University guidelines.

#### **3.4.4 Gathering the life history data**

##### **i) The meetings**

A digital recording of the meetings was made with the approval of each participant, to try and capture as much verbal information as possible. Goodson (2008), when discussing the gathering of life histories, advocates recording the meetings so that eye contact does not get broken as often as it might during the taking of handwritten and extensive notes. However, Diver (2012) makes the point that recorded data are only a partial representation of the events that take place in a meeting, and that additional handwritten notes of non-verbal interactions can be supportive of a more complete representation. Throughout and after the meetings, with the participants' permission, I made occasional and brief notes about my relationships with the participants, and other points that I wished to follow up at a later stage (Betts, 2012). In line with the objectives for my research, I tried to follow the guidelines of the Oral History Society, reported in White *et al* (2010), regarding showing each participant respect and courtesy and by treating each one as an individual telling her story rather than as an interviewee waiting to be questioned.

There was a period of six months between the first and second round of meetings with each participant. This was to enable transcription, a period of reflection, evaluation, and further consideration of how to approach the subsequent round(s) of meetings. During



this time, the participants were sent occasional emails informing them about the progress of the research and to maintain our relationship.

Learning from the pilot study, my questions in the main research were kept to a minimum to try and provide what Atkinson (1998, p.41) calls a 'green light and a listening ear':

The less structure a life story meeting has, the more effective it will be in achieving the person's story in a way, form and style the individual wants to tell it.

Whilst hoping to achieve this aim, this was not always successfully achieved. My research diary indicates that I found this quite frustrating on occasions:

I have been conscious of having to probe/ prompt / lead too much?  
Is there a tension between doing this and the life history methodology?

(Research Diary, 16th March 2016)

To address this emergent concern, I gave further thought to the issue of reciprocity. This was a difficult balance to try and achieve. To minimise the traditional researcher-researched hierarchy seen in other approaches to research, feminist approaches argue for reciprocity in terms of the researcher engaging in the research process (Oakley, 1981). I followed the advice of Measor and Sikes (1992, p.215) to share:

...those aspects of one's self and life that provide a bridge for building relationships with participants and the suppression of those which constitute a barrier.

I believed such 'reciprocity' (ibid.) to be an essential part of forming relationships, but did not share details which I felt were too personal or which I felt may have led the participants' responses in a particular direction. Whilst I was happy with my contribution to this reciprocal arrangement at the time, this was something I would reflect upon throughout the subsequent stages of data analysis. This would involve considering how I might have steered the direction of what was shared, and how, and hence the impact I had made on making meaning from the data.

#### ii) Following the meetings

After our meetings, I made notes in my research diary about how they had gone. This was so that my recollections were reliable, and as part of demonstrating my reflexivity as a researcher (Grbich, 1999). This helped me to identify my own position about the data, and its collection, in readiness for the analysis. I also considered if anything needed to be followed up in our next meeting. This process also helped to capture the emotion emerging from the meeting, both on behalf of the participants and myself, which I suspected might be lost if not recorded quickly.

Despite the potential benefits of personally transcribing the meeting recordings in terms of encouraging data immersion (Goodson, 2008), the decision was taken after the pilot study to employ a professional transcriber. This was due to the vast amount of time needed to transcribe the lengthy meetings. This decision was explained to the participants to reassure them. The files were sent by email to the professional transcriber via a secure file transfer system after the two-week cooling off period. Each participant

was sent a transcript of her meeting to a secure email address. This was to check for accuracy and to add or remove any sections that she wished. The participants were also encouraged to clarify or extend any points if they wished to do so. Goodson (2008) highlights that this process is often overlooked in the process of life history meetings. I considered this to be an important part of the co-construction (Goodson, 2008) of the life histories. It also gave the participants the opportunity to see how their words had been transcribed and to clarify that the written transcripts were representative of what they had wanted to say, and in the way they wished to say it. Having described and explained how the life histories were collected, the next section will explore how the data were interpreted.

### **3.5 Interpreting the data by thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) and its articulation with a life history approach**

As a novice researcher, and after the questions raised by the pilot study (described in Chapter Three, section 3.4.2), I felt uncertain and unclear about how the findings would emerge from the data. Attride-Stirling (2001) makes the point that qualitative researchers are often left stranded, due to a lack of tools for analysing qualitative data in a methodical way. The need for a framework for making meaning from life histories is highlighted by Goodson (2008), who also points out that the nature of this framework is for the researcher to decide. After further reading and consideration, thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) was chosen as the interpretative framework for the reasons which now follow.

Thematic analysis is regarded as a useful method for data analysis by identifying, analysing and reporting themes in a detailed way (Attard and Coulson, 2012). Braun and Clark (2006 p.37) describe the benefits of using thematic analysis as an interpretative framework as follows:

- Relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do;
- accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research;
- results are generally accessible to educated general public;
- useful method for working with participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators;
- can usefully summarise key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a ‘thick description’ of the data set;
- can highlight similarities and differences across the data set;
- can generate unanticipated insights;
- allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data;
- can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.

This clarity was attractive going forward as it helped to provide a structure to my interpretations of the life history data. The six steps involved in the interpretation of the life history data were aligned with those described by Braun and Clark, (2006. p.35):

**Table 3.1 Phases of thematic analysis**

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with the data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells: generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

It is important at this stage to emphasise that a themed approach was not about trying to find the one irrefutable truth nor to homogenise the data and experiences of the participants in this research. This would be misaligned with the epistemological position shaping this research. Instead, it was looking for relationships in the data provided by the participants, in a way that maintained their subjectivity and identity in terms of the realities they described, yet which enabled sufficient objectivity on my part to answer the research questions.

Being able to identify common themes, and yet still being able to do justice to each woman's individual story is impossible due to their complexities according to Smith (2012). She addressed this difficulty in her research by making the participants' words pivotal in her discussions and when making meaning from the data. This approach is one I have aligned myself with so that the participants' words are at the forefront of the analytical and theoretical points being made and so that their individual subjective truths are understood.

I was aware that the process of making meaning from the participants' words, like all stages of the research, would be influenced by my own positionality and beliefs. This is why allowing the participants' words to be heard throughout the analysis was important. Similarly, I was aware that circulating narrative frameworks would be drawn on by the participants when telling their stories. In order to make sense of events and experiences, I would need to be mindful of these when interpreting the data (Woodiwiss *et al*, 2017). White *et al* (2010) make the point that when interpreting life history data, the researcher should ensure that interpretations are arrived at through processes which are transparent. I believe the thematic analysis approach taken in this research was consistent with, and adhered to, this notion of transparency.

The importance of familiarisation and immersion in the data (phase 1 of thematic analysis - see Table 1, p.67) took place through repeated and active readings of the verbatim transcripts. Braun and Clark (2006) emphasise that if the data have been transcribed by someone else, as was the case in my research, there is a need to spend more time on this process of familiarisation, along with a checking of the transcripts

against the original audio recordings for accuracy. This was a useful way of regaining familiarity with what had been said, and how, at our meetings.

I discussed my interpretations of their story so far with each participant during our second meeting. These meetings felt more informal, and were about revisiting what had been said during our first meetings. This was part of the process of co-constructing their life history (Biott *et al*, 2001). The form of the meeting was, therefore, individualised in terms of how the threads of the first meeting were followed through. We co-constructed form and meaning together by exploring potentially critical incidences (Measor, 1985) in the stories, along with identified silences and pauses (Goodson, 2008) in the way they were told. This provided me as the researcher and the participants as the researched, to co-construct meaning together and in a way that was intended to minimise hierarchies.

The process of co-construction of the participants' life histories involved probing some of their initial responses more deeply. I listened again to the audio records and indicated long pauses and periods of silence on the relevant parts of the transcripts of the recordings from the first meetings (Goodson, 2008). This was to identify markers for further exploration at our second meetings. Goodson (2008, p.41) proposes that pauses indicate 'this is a difficult question'; 'something important is being asked here'; 'I have got something important to say, but I may not wish to say it'. Identifying and sharing these with the participants did result in the women revisiting and expanding some of the points that they made the first time we met.

According to Measor (1985), critical incidents are most likely to happen during times of change and when choices must be made. By identifying these after the first meetings, and exploring them in more depth at the second meetings, richer narratives were yielded. I felt more confident about meeting the participants and in gathering the data. Measor (1985) discussed that critical incidents involve priorities being re-assessed and enable an insight into how individuals build their identities at particular times of their lives. I became aware that how the participants perceived me shaped the data collection. I had, at various times, presented myself as a teacher, lecturer, researcher, student, wife, mother, carer and it seemed when looking back over the transcripts the participants had responded to my various identities at different times.

Woodiwiss *et al* (2017) make the point that whilst it is challenging to hear women telling their stories in a way that constructs them as being responsible for their own unhappiness, the researcher should also ask questions about how they are telling the story. From a reflexive position, if and when the participants revealed their apparent anxieties, self-doubts and vulnerabilities, this was not always easy listening. I was unsure of what to say and whether offering my support was appropriate or wished for. In the end, I decided not to interrupt or intervene as it seemed that these past experiences were being used by the participants to make a particular point of their choosing.

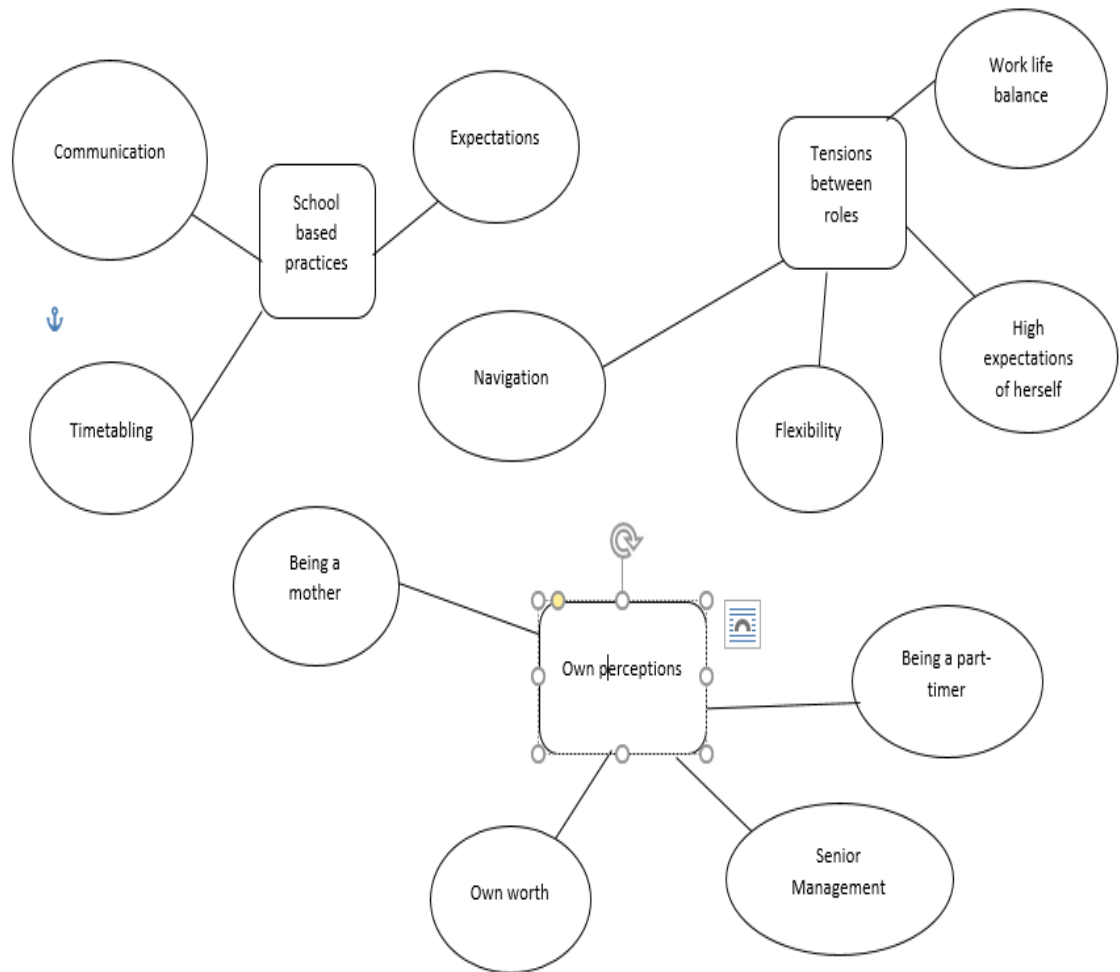
After familiarising myself with the life history data, the next phase involved coding it. Generating codes from the data constituted phase two of the thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) (see Table 1, p.67). A code is an abstract representation of an object or



phenomenon (Corbin and Strauss, 1998). An inductive approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) was used to code the data and identify themes, rather than using a pre-existing framework or my own pre-existing ideas. My approach was to start with a detailed coding analysis and work up to broader categories (Bazeley, 2007) rather than approaching it from the other way around. This was because I considered these *in vivo* rather than *a priori* codes (Corbin and Strauss, 1988) to be more aligned with my feminist methodological approach. In doing so, enabling the participants' words to be pivotal in the process of analysis and making meaning from the data was supported.

NVIVO, a computer package for analysing qualitative data, was chosen as the means of organising the extensive amount of data prior to further analysis. The facilities offered by NVIVO helped to organise the coded data in terms of the strategies of reading reflecting, coding, annotating, memo-ing, discussing and linking the data (Bazeley 2007).

From here, the codes were organised into emergent themes and sub-themes (phases three, four and five of the thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006), (see Table 1, p.67). These were then reviewed to make sure they were meaningful and coherent, yet clearly distinct from the other themes (ibid.). This resulted in the development of a thematic map which shows the relationship between the three main themes emerging from their data, along with their associated sub-themes. This map is included as Figure 3.2 which follows:



**Figure 3.2 Final main themes and subthemes**

The theme: 'School-based practices' can be summarised as 'the things that go on in school' around part-time working and is analysed in Chapter Four. The second theme, 'Own perceptions', had at its core the thoughts, feelings and views of the participants regarding their working part-time and will be discussed in Chapter Five. The theme of 'Tensions between roles' is discussed in Chapter Six. This theme refers to how the participants often juggled competing and multiple roles at work and at home. The tensions described are analysed and theorised in relation to time, particularly insufficient time. This phase of the thematic analysis concluded with the identification and representation of these three clear and distinct themes, which were re-named for

succinctness: 'Practices', 'Perceptions' and 'Tensions'. The analysis and theorisation of these themes, and the wider story they told about these participants' lives will take place in the next three chapters.

At the time that the thematic analysis began, I was still unsure about which theoretical approach to take in order to make meaning from the data. It became apparent during the development of the themes that what went on in the participants' schools, and what they thought about these 'goings on', warranted further analysis in a way that was situated in a more thorough understanding of practices. Further reading highlighted the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014). An explanation of this way of trying to understand site-specific practices along with the rationale for adopting this theoretical framework rationale for this decision now follows.

### **3.6 Theoretical approach to analysing the data**

#### **3.6.1 Practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014)**

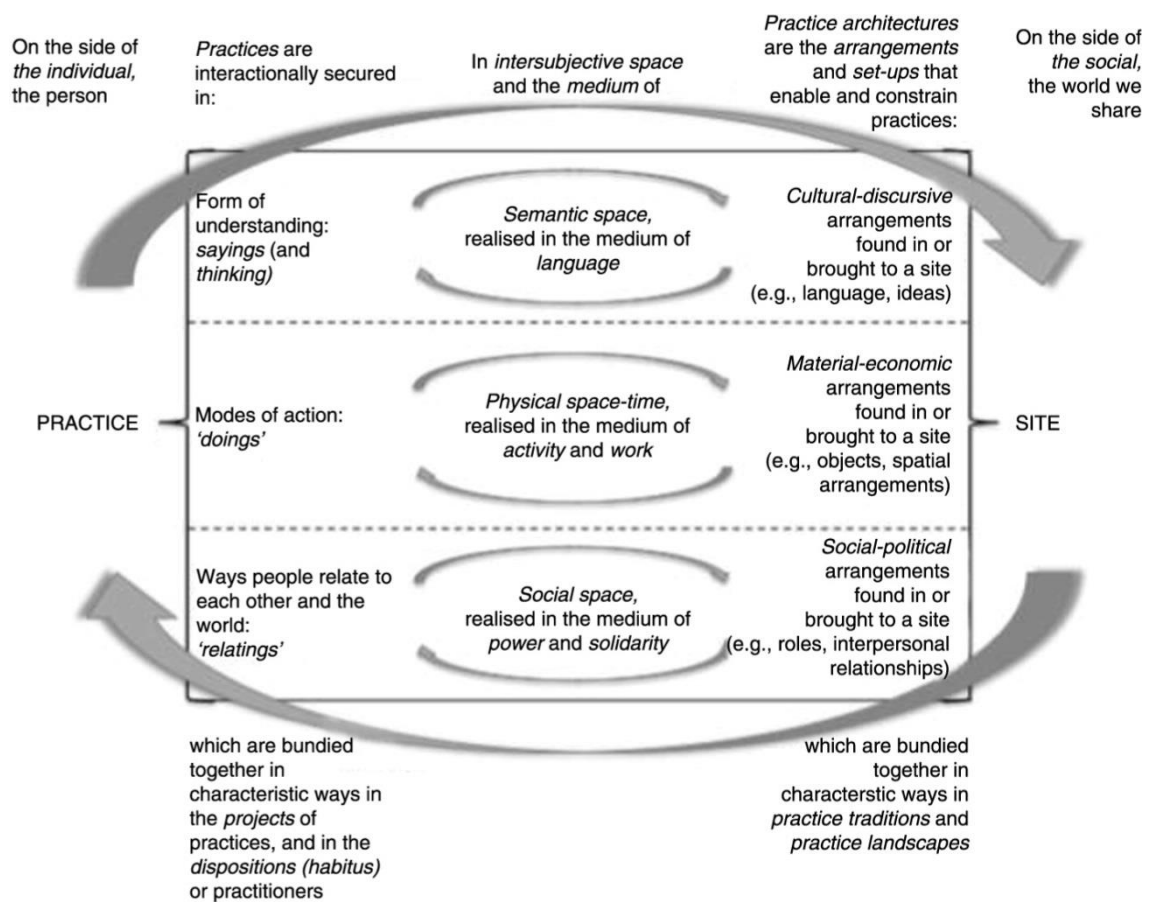
According to Ronnerman *et al* (2017) the term 'practice' is ubiquitous in education and is used to describe any particular activity (like reading or teaching or even schooling). Practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) provide a relatively new way of viewing practices, arguing that practices are enabled and constrained by particular kinds of arrangements which are present or brought to the site (Ronnerman and Kemmis, 2016). This theory adopts the notion of site ontologies (Shatzki, 2002) whereby practices are explained in terms of their enmeshing and unfolding with site-specific arrangements. Ronnerman and Kemmis (2016) explain that this ontological perspective aims to

identify and interpret how practices are shaped by these arrangements, thereby rejecting the view that practices are shaped by invisible ‘social structures’. Edwards-Groves *et al* (2016), make the point that this theory helps practices in particular places to be understood as part of social life.

For Kemmis *et al* (2014), practices are composed of the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' which hang together in projects like teaching children to read, for example. The ‘sayings’ are possible due to particular cultural-discursive arrangements specific to that site. Goodyear *et al* (2016), use the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) to help explain the practice of curriculum renewal and provide examples of how cultural-discursive arrangements can be understood to be the language or specialist discourse used to describe, interpret and justify the practice. Their examples include terms like ‘tighter-control’ and ‘students remain on task’ to describe curriculum renewal at the specific site investigated.

For Kemmis *et al* (2014), it is through the ‘doings’ that a practice engages people and objects in activities that go on at the site. These are possible due to the material-economic arrangements which are manifested in physical space through the resources of work and activity, and which enable and constrain what can be done in that place. Continuing the curriculum renewal example described above, Edwards-Groves *et al* (2016) indicate that the setting up of tables and chairs which all faced the front of the classroom shaped the way lessons were delivered in that particular school and illustrated how what goes on in the classroom was influenced by the material-economic arrangements specific to that site.

Finally, the 'relatings' are the ways people and things relate to one another in a way that is only possible due to the socio-political arrangements at that site. Here, the example provided by Edwards-Groves *et al* (2016) talked of the rules, roles and functions and the shared understandings of what to do in particular situations at that particular school. Kemmis (2012) argues that, together, these 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' hang together in projects, with the project of a practice being the answer people give when they are asked what they are doing. These relationships are summarised by the following diagram:



**Figure 3.3 The theory of practice architectures**

(adapted from Kemmis *et al.* (2014), Figures 2.4, p.38).

Theorising using practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) enables conceptualisation of everyday practices and their enabling and constraining conditions (Olin *et al*, 2016). In relation to education, Ronnerman *et al* (2017) highlight that the theory of practice architectures is useful for examining the site-base conditions that influence what happens when teachers and leaders come together to work with one another, and how particular 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' influence these happenings. Analysing the data from the 'Practices' main theme within the analytical framework of practice architectures was intended to show how the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' emerging from the themed data were enmeshed with practice arrangements to shape and constrain what goes on in the participants' specific schools. This was intended to provide a day-to-day context for the women's subjective realities and their relationships with career progression. This context also served to situate the analysis of the other two themes.

The participants' perceptions of these practices and arrangements and situated within the second main theme (Perceptions) were analysed using the same analytical framework. It was the opportunity to explore what is said, what is done, and the relationships experienced by women who teach part-time in secondary schools that made this analytical framework helpful to this research. How, and why, the theoretical approach taken to the analysis of the third theme (Tensions), was adapted to include the notion of timescapes (Adam, 1990, 2004) will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.6.2 Time and timescapes**

Conducting the thematic analysis led to the realisation that the theme relating to 'Tensions' was firmly situated within the participants' relationships with limited and

insufficient amounts of time. The difficulties in navigating school-based practices, whilst juggling family commitments, summarises what this third theme is about. The decision was taken to adapt the theoretical model of analysis beyond practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) to one which situated the theorisation of this theme within the concept of time and timescapes (Adam, 1990, 2004).

Timescapes, according to Adam (1990, 2004), are clusters of temporal features which support thinking about temporal relations. These temporal features include: time frames, temporality, tempo, timing, time point, time patterns, time sequence, time extensions, time past, present and future (*ibid.*). Whilst all involved with each other, these features are not always of equal importance. Adam (2004) explains that the notion of ‘scape’ is important because it indicates that time, space and matter are inseparable, and that context is important. Burke *et al* (2017) argue that using an analytical framework which draws on the concept of timescapes is useful for understanding the challenges faced by people with regard to institutional expectations about time across different contexts and which, therefore, seems highly appropriate for the nature of this research.

Timescapes help us to understand our lives in terms of complex time ‘maps’ which shape what we do, and how we do it. When discussing our individual relationships with time, Adam (1995) challenges the idea that we all live in a linear or ‘western’ time frame. She argues, instead, that our relationships with time are complex and involve the intermingling of different dimensions of time. Burke *et al* (2017) make the point that timescapes are shaped by social practices and expectations as well as power relationships. As a consequence, not everyone’s relationships with time are the same.

Due to their deeply contextual nature, timescapes are linked to the formations of ourselves and our differences (ibid.). Burke *et al* (2017) make the point that we ‘picture’ time in a similar way to the way we picture space. Hence within our ‘present’, we see, although we are mostly unaware of it, the past and future which thereby shape the ‘choices’ we make.

Our negotiations of the different timescapes (Adam, 1990, 2004) we occupy when living our lives can be precarious. Our experiences across different timescapes (ibid.) can lead to tension (Burke *et al*, 2017). This is of interest to this research which will explore in detail the lives of women who, in addition to working, are also likely to have family responsibilities at home. Edwards (1993) highlights that working in education and family-life are both “greedy institutions” that lead to women having to juggle these competing demands for their time. It is important to realise, however, that even though the women in this research all share the similarity of working in secondary schools, their relationships with time are likely to be subjective.

Burke *et al* (2017) found that even when students met within the same university space, the framing of their time was different for everyone, and that any assumption to the contrary is potentially problematic. The theoretical framework of timescapes provided the scope to explore and analyse the participants' subjective relationships with time and space and was used to theorise the data in the third theme. Before moving on to the three chapters of analysis, the next section gives vignettes of the six participants in the research. These are provided to give context and to inform the analyses which follow.



### **3.7 Vignettes of the participants in the study**

These vignettes are intended to bring the participants in this research to life as part of helping to contextualise analysis of the data. Whilst the data gathered involved the participants giving their wider and fuller life histories, these short vignettes focus on the aspects told regarding their employment histories and relationships with their family lives. Analysis of the data focused on the parts of the life history regarding their work and drew from other aspects of the life history to help contextualise what had been said.

#### **Alice**

Alice was a white woman in her thirties. She was married to her husband, who had assumed the role of headteacher between our first and second meetings. Alice had two young children, the eldest of whom had started school during this interval.

After completing her degree, she had, in her words, 'fell into a teaching role' which she loved. From here she was persuaded to complete a PGCE. She felt unsupported in her first teaching job, which was full-time because the school wanted her to teach another subject alongside her specialist subject. She did not feel trained to do this. She left the school for a full-time position at her second school where she taught her specialist subject only. After the birth of her first child she asked to work part-time, and was refused. This served as her motivation to leave and seek employment in her current school.

At our first meeting, Alice explained that her mother arrived to stay with the family on the evening prior to her working for two consecutive days and provided childcare for her children. Her mother was able therefore to deal with any emergency childcare issues whilst Alice worked. Alice appeared very happy with her working and childcare arrangements at our first meeting and felt supported at school. She considered that she did have a good work-life balance.

However, at our second meeting, six months later, Alice explained that the school had become an academy and policy and procedure had changed within the school. Her two working days were no longer consecutive and so her mother was no longer able to stay with the family. This situation, combined with her husband's new role and child starting school, had resulted in Alice feeling stressed and struggling to cope with the demands these changes had brought. She no longer felt supported by the school. She had made the decision to leave her job and was exploring positions outside of teaching.

**Amanda**

Amanda was a white woman in her early fifties, who was married to her husband who worked away from home during the week. She had three grown up children who had all left home. Amanda had a carer role for her elderly mother, although she did not live with Amanda. Amanda had a medical condition which made her feel very tired and left her in pain. Amanda explained that completing her paid work days exacerbated her pain and exhaustion. She went to bed early to help recover and prepare for the next day.

Amanda had left school at 16 and worked in shops until she got married and had her children. She volunteered in her children's playgroup and loved it, this served as the motivation to go to college to study. She followed this up with degree level study at university in her thirties which she loved. From here, she worked in the evenings at a college and then moved to working in secondary schools, where she was supported in achieving qualified teacher status. Amanda had no intention of leaving her current school and did not wish to pursue further career progression. She was considering when would be the appropriate time to retire.

At our first meeting Amanda was working three days a week in her role as the head of a small department. She had previously worked full-time, but was granted her request to work part-time due to her health and to look after her mother. Her management position was reduced with her agreement. However, at our second meeting Amanda explained that she had begun working four days a week because she felt she could not keep up with the demand of her job on fewer days. Amanda questioned, however, if this had been a good move.

**Barbara**

Barbara was a white woman in her forties who was married and had two teenage children. Prior to becoming a teacher Barbara worked in the construction industry which she enjoyed. After the birth of her first child she stopped working, other than to help her husband who had recently become self-employed. Barbara explained this period of time had been financially difficult.

Once her children started school, Barbara began working for a project which involved working with children in schools. This served as her motivation to train to become a teacher. She trained on a part-time basis and then began working on the same basis in her first and current position. She worked three consecutive days each week. Hence Barbara was relatively recently qualified compared to the other participants in the research.

Barbara did express an interest in furthering her career, but found the pathways for doing this to be vague and lacking transparency compared to the industry where she had worked previously. At the time of our meetings, Barbara felt pursuing career progression was not time-appropriate as she did not want to unsettle her family-life at an important time in her children's schooling.

**Jane**

Jane was a white woman in her early forties; she was married and had two children under the age of ten. After qualification, Jane worked flexibly in several maternity cover positions; this involved three jobs at one time. She did this because teaching positions in her subject area were difficult to obtain. From here, she acquired a full-time job at her current school and subsequently achieved a middle- management position.

After the birth of her first child, her request to work part-time on a 0.8 full-time equivalent contract was granted, which she completed over three full days and two half days each week. After a while, she asked to reduce the extent of her management responsibilities, but was then promoted again, a while later, to a different and more significant middle-management position.

Jane then had her second child and struggled upon her return to work to juggle the different demands on her time. She also remarked that systems and structures had changed in school during her absence and that this made her transition back to work stressful. She considered leaving her job to look after her children, but was glad she had persevered during these difficult times as this had helped to maintain her career

Jane's school had recently become an academy and she disagreed with the new policies and their implementation. These had been introduced between our first and second meetings. Jane had previously considered further career progression to a senior leadership position but felt the more strategic aspects of the role, alongside the additional demands for her time made this currently unattractive.

**Leah**

Leah was a white woman in her forties who was married to a deputy headteacher and had three sons under the age of 10. Prior to having her children, Leah had a middle-management position and spent long hours at work, explaining that her work was her life. She considered herself to be well-regarded at work and to have had a voice in decision-making within the school as part of this role. She also volunteered as a sports coach and spent a lot of hours doing this.

After the birth of her first child, she returned to work full-time but felt guilty that she was not spending time with her son and also that she was not able to devote herself to her job in the same way as she had done previously. She fell pregnant again quite quickly and this made her transition back to work difficult due to her having a difficult pregnancy. In recognition of her feelings of not being able to cope, she asked if her return to work after the birth of her second child could be on a part-time basis. This was granted but Leah was told she would have to relinquish her management position and return to being a main-scale teacher.

Her return to work coincided with the arrival of a new Head of Faculty, who did not know Leah and was not personally aware of her previous level of commitment. Leah felt she needed to prove herself. She also felt her opinions were no longer sought and that her voice had been reduced within the school. Leah's involvement in various community activities were also described by Leah as a response to feeling guilty because she did not work full-time and also because she had to prove herself. Leah's family were described as having achieved a lot professionally and in the community and Leah was aware of trying to do well for herself too.

Leah did mention aspiring to senior leadership sometime in the future but was not currently willing to work full-time, and which she felt would be a barrier to her promotion.

### **Louise**

Louise was a white woman in her late thirties. She was married and had three children aged less than 10. Louise's husband worked away on occasions and she recognised that care, and arranging for care of her children was primarily her responsibility.

Louise was not deterred from teaching despite her former teacher trying to discourage her, an attitude she found quite difficult to deal with as she had previously admired this teacher. Louise went into teaching straight from university. Louise had two full-time teaching jobs before moving to the current area and into her current position. Louise went part-time after the birth of her first child. Her headteacher initially refused her request to do so but after she involved her teaching union he agreed.

Louise worked three consecutive days each week and went to school early and left very late on these days. Her employment of a nanny for 12 hours on each of these days enabled her to do this and also made financial sense when considered against the cost of alternative childcare for three children.

Louise had thought about applying for promotion but this coincided with her first pregnancy and so she had not pursued this further as she felt her children were too young.

### **3.8 Methodological limitations of the research**

These limitations are included at this point in the thesis before the making of meaning is described in the next three chapters. This highlights that the analysis, theorisation and contribution to knowledge were made with awareness of, and were situated within, these emergent limitations.

The six vignettes indicate that all six of the participants in this research shared the similarities of being white, married to employed husbands, mothers and of a similar age, with the exception of Amanda who was slightly older. Hence, the life histories of

women of different parental status, ethnicities, colour, ages, and sexualities were not collected. Similarly, the women did not talk of any financial difficulties. These were the only women who agreed to participate in the research. This meant that the research did not explore the experiences and life histories of women from a wider range of cultural and socio-economic perspectives. Consequently, although the data were rich and gathered in a rigorous way, the findings are specific to this particular demographic group of participants. Nevertheless, these vignettes do reveal differences in terms of the participants' education, employment histories, management experience, their own age, age of their children and working patterns, thereby enabling subjective life histories to be told.

As the means of recruiting the participants in this research involved contacting headteachers, their choice of whether to participate or not might have skewed the research. I am mindful, however, that this approach potentially excluded a wider participation in the research. Firstly, the headteacher was, in effect, the gatekeeper to women participating in the research and, indeed, only 11 of the 57 contacted did agree to make the women in their school aware of the opportunity to participate in the research. This apparent lack of interest from the headteachers is quite disappointing.

The participants in this research agreed and were able to meet for a substantial period of time on two occasions. Again, the experiences of women who could not meet in this way were not captured. The life history approach to gathering the data meant that the participants were encouraged to tell the story of their lives. My research cohort of participants was likely, therefore, to have been skewed toward those who were

sufficiently comfortable in being able to engage with the research process, and/or who had a perspective they wanted to share.

When reflecting upon the methodological limitations of this research I am mindful of the feminist epistemological precepts which I set out as being integral to the research process, along with the awareness that a feminist theory of knowledge constitution and generation needs to be morally adequate in feminist terms (Stanley and Wise, 2002). I tried throughout the research process to align myself with this moral adequacy by the research decisions taken and in the enabling of the participants' stories to be gathered, and their voices heard, by a rigorous approach to research. I am aware that the audio recordings were transcribed by someone else and that, although checked against the original recordings, are a manifestation of another person's involvement in the process of making meaning.

Goodson and Sikes (2001) make the point that at each stage of gathering and representing life histories, the account is taken further away from the life as lived. They argue that mediation through language, and the use of interpretative frameworks by the researcher, means that problems can arise in terms of whose life history is being presented. As a result, acknowledging and reflecting on these issues is very important. Whilst the process of gathering the life histories involved a shared process of co-construction with the participant, I am aware that their involvement in the process of converting their life story into a life history stopped after they had approved the transcript of our second meeting and at this point respondent validation stopped.

To summarise this chapter, I have given details of the methods employed in this research including the collection, interpretation, analysis and theorisation of the life history data. I have explained how the research decisions were aligned with the epistemological and methodological foundations outlined for the research. I discussed the rationale for adopting practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) and timescapes (Adam, 1990, 2004) as the theoretical models for analysis. The analytical concept of timescapes, together with the practice architectures framework, provides a new theoretical-methodological approach in life history research and offers a contribution to knowledge around part-time working in secondary schools. The next three chapters offer an analysis of the data in relation to the three main themes: 'Practices', 'Perceptions' and 'Tensions', which emerged from the thematic analysis of these aspects of the participants' life history data.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analysis of the 'Practices' theme**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will analyse and theorise the data within the 'Practices' theme which emerged from the thematic analysis. This will contextualise and theorise the participants' day-to-day experiences of this pattern of working. The analytical framework will be practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014). The chapter will discuss and explain how the things that 'go on' in school, in terms of how the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (ibid.) around part-time working, are shaped and constrained by cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements (ibid.). This analysis answers the first of my three research questions:

- For part-time women teachers within secondary schools, what are the practices that they perceive influence their choices in relation to career progression?

This analysis of 'what goes on in school' around this pattern of working will be useful in contextualising the analyses of the other two themes in Chapters Five and Six. Practices around communication, expected workload and timetabling will be analysed in this chapter. The analysis begins in the next section with exploring practices around communication with particular focus on academisation, meetings and training opportunities.



## **4.2 Communication**

This section begins by exploring how changes in policies and practices stemming from schools re-organising to become academies had been perceived by and communicated to the participants. From here, practices relating to the communication of information will be discussed along with practices relating to training and career development.

### **4.2.1 Academisation**

This research took place during an intense period of school re-organisation following the Academies Act (2010). Insights emerged of frustrations resulting from the associated changes to school organisation and policies. Jane made the following point:

I mean actually something quite key has happened at work in that we're now in the full throes of being part of an academy group. I can't remember if we were last time (we met), but we're now joined with another few schools and the consequence is that a lot of the systems and processes have become unified and a bit more uniform over those five or six schools. Yeah, for example there are some things that have happened, for example the Leave of Absence Policy has changed and a couple of other sort of policies and ways of working have changed that make me feel it's a much more of an inflexible environment.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Jane talked of how changes to school policies had made her question her working at the new academy as a parent. She explained how staff were now expected to resolve any unexpected childcare issues within half a day, otherwise they would lose pay:

There's been one instance where I took the time and didn't receive any pay for it. Other times I've managed to negotiate with my husband or with other family members to be able to come and look after the children. So, I suppose now I've actually experienced that kind of inflexible strict policy and realise that

actually it's not just in writing now, it's actually something they're going to follow through and that actually, you know the powers that be, the senior management, they actually believe in it.

\* How does that make you feel?

So, I think it has somewhat changed my attitude. I think I am feeling now that it's less friendly. I don't want to use less supportive because I don't think that's true, because the immediate people that I work with are incredibly supportive, but as a structure, as a school structure, I feel like it's become more corporate. That's made me feel at times more under pressure and less autonomous I suppose. So, things aren't quite as much under my control as they perhaps used to be and there are now a lot more expectations of us.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

The practice described by Jane seems at odds with wider socio-political 'family-friendly' employment policies, and also with the dominant discourse relating to motherhood which informs the belief that commitment to family is the most important (McCrae, 2003). The stance taken by Jane's school appears situated within the notion that requiring such flexibility to be a responsible parent will be financially punished if alternative childcare cannot be found. Women who work part-time usually have a caring role (Smith, 2012) and, therefore, seem at greater risk of losing pay under this arrangement.

McMullen (1999) highlights that under the family rights section of the Employment Relationships Bill (1999) there is an entitlement to take a 'reasonable amount of time off to deal with a domestic incident'. Gatrell (2005) makes the point that due to the lack of a clear definition of what is meant by 'reasonable' it is likely to be left to the individual, most likely women, to negotiate this time and they are, therefore, most

likely to suffer discrimination. According to Gatrell (2005), a disconnect between policy and practice is not always obvious to employers who believe they are adopting family friendly policies but who are shocked to realise their actions are not coherent with this approach. Morley (1995) found, in higher education, that equal opportunities policies can be subject to micro-political interference which can lead to large discrepancies between policy text, implementation and outcome. The insight into this apparent disconnect is important in schools because not only is the workforce predominantly female (Gov.uk., 2017b) but the espoused values of schooling are situated within the value of caring for children.

Within higher education, Moreau and Robertson (2017) talk of carers being expected to fit into a care-free and masculinist environment which assumes care can be delegated to their partners (usually female). Gatrell (2005) reports that policy-makers often assume that parenting still consists of male and female partners. Within this arrangement, she argues that fathers are assumed to be sufficient economic providers to enable mothers to take long periods of time off work for maternity leave. The new policy described by Jane appears to show a degree of resonance with these assumptions. The consequences of the new policy at Jane's academy assumes that someone else is available to deal with the childcare crisis, or it results in pay being denied for the parent who assumes the role of primary carer and takes time off. Jane recognised this was not always possible or fair.

When Jane talked about her negotiations with family members to try and arrange emergency childcare, her language indicated that she had the primary responsibility for making such arrangements. Whilst the material-economic arrangements of budgeting

for staff absence presumably presented the school with financial challenges, this particular change in policy had left Jane feeling angry. The culture and discourse around parenthood had changed to one where her responsibilities to her children would come at a financial cost if she chose to exercise them over her paid responsibilities. This finding matters because not everyone has the means to find and/or pay for alternative childcare at short notice. As a result, this policy could lead to difficulties in terms of the prioritisation of family or work along with the financial implication that some families may struggle to resolve.

A change in practice shaped Alice's view of the new culture and discourses at work around flexible working and motherhood. She made the following point:

But there's a massive change in the school. Actually I know of one other lady that had always, like she's been there for years and years and she never was timetabled during the first lesson so she could take her children to school. Then last year that just went out the window and she was really upset about it. So we had a good old moan. Now she has to pay somebody to take her children to school and is looking for something else...

(Alice, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Alice now regarded her academy trust as being aggressive in its implementation of new policies regarding working conditions. This insight is suggestive of a misalignment with the advice from the Department for Education (DfE, 2016; 2017a), which encourages schools to support flexible working. It also lacks resonance with recent findings reported by CooperGibson research (2019) which focusses on flexible working arrangements in international schools. Their research shows that a sense of autonomy alongside a potential increase in recruitment and retention can result from enabling

teachers to be off-site if they do not need to be in the classroom. The Government's encouragement of such flexibility is situated within a socio-political context which is manifested within the Children and Families Act (2014). However, each school or academy is expected to manage the material-economic implications of implementing this policy. Alice then described her own frustration and shock when the working arrangements she had previously negotiated with the school, before it became an academy, were recently changed without her agreement:

When I was talking to the Head he said, 'We're sorry we changed your days, we know that's not what you wanted'. He said 'Trust policy is, we will only guarantee half days, so you're lucky to get the full days, but when we redo the timetable basically there's a high possibility, you're going to have four half days.'

(Alice, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Changing her working pattern was a major factor in Alice resigning from her position at the newly academised school, and her decision to explore a career away from teaching. Durbin and Tomlinson (2010) highlight the vulnerability associated with personally negotiated packages of support for flexible working in the wider workforce. This vulnerability discouraged the women in their research from applying for a new job in case they did not get the same package of support. The situations described by Alice resonate with this finding whilst providing new insight into how informal arrangements could no longer be relied upon after school re-organisation. These new arrangements had been communicated to Alice, in the 'sayings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) she had heard, the 'doings' (ibid.) in terms of these changes and the 'relatings' (ibid.) between her, the other woman and their senior leadership team.

This material-economic practice arrangement assumed that Alice was available and willing in the future to work over four days. The use of the word 'lucky' could be interpreted as implying that Alice should consider herself fortunate for not already doing so. It offers glimpses into a cultural-discursive arrangement whereby being allowed to work full days seems to be thought of by the headteacher as a privilege. Alice was not available to work her hours over four days and decided to leave. This consequence adds new insight into the concerns raised by school leaders around the perceived inflexibility of teachers who may want to work specific days (Sharp *et al*, 2019).

The examples described by Jane and Alice provide glimpses into ways the wider socio-political agendas around academisation and flexible working were disconnected in their schools. This had left the two participants feeling disgruntled with the new policies and practices within their newly academised schools. This left Alice and Jane with the 'message' that, since academisation, their roles as carers were not valued (Tronto, 1993). This finding is of consequence because it shows how changes to policy around availability to work can impact on working and family lives in a way that may result in stress. Difficult decisions around where priorities lie may result. In the feminised profession (Wylie, 2003) of teaching these impacts are more likely to affect women. The findings thereby add a new insight into how changes in school policies impacted on Alice and Jane and which were misaligned with their roles as the primary carers for their children.

### 4.2.2 Meetings

The 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) associated with meetings to share information, revealed different practices at play within the participants' individual schools or academies. All of the participants mentioned that meetings within their schools typically occurred at a variety of levels and included whole school briefings to share more immediate information. Team or departmental meetings also happened regularly. Members of the senior leadership team were also likely to be involved in additional strategic meetings, for example School Governors or Trustees meetings in the case of academies (Moorhead, 2016, Gov.uk, 2017a).

Attending senior leadership meetings out of school hours was something Jane was not prepared to engage with. Not attending such meetings at school was perceived by Jane as a barrier to her moving from middle to senior leadership. From Jane's vignette (Chapter Three, section 3.7) it can be seen that Jane worked 0.8 FTE and occupied a significant middle-management role. Jane proposed a more flexible approach to the organisation of meetings and one which was not situated within a model of continuous availability:

Well I'd probably be flexible with when those meetings are, they wouldn't always be after school from 5 o'clock onwards. You know it would be within the working day, within a reasonable working day so the meeting would be finished by 5.30. Or it wouldn't start before 8.30. There would be flexibility in terms of how you could actually attend that meeting. So, you could attend the meeting remotely, you know from home via, I like webinars and that sort of thing, so could that be an instance.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Jane provided a glimpse into how the material-economic arrangements of when senior leadership and governors' meetings took place enmeshed with the 'doings' of management to provide a perceived barrier to her current career progression. Moreau and Robertson (2017) found that being on site for extended hours and attending events at the weekends and in the evenings were associated with some senior management positions in higher education. These were deemed to be incompatible with caring responsibilities.

Jane recognised that she would not be able to attend meetings at these times and perceived that this meant she would not be able to fulfil the expectations of a role at this senior level. This finding provides insight into how the 'doings' of governance and leadership were at odds with how she managed her time. Goodyear *et al* (2016) argue that for new innovative practices and long-term changes to take place, new practice architectures need to be developed. A reconsideration of when and where meetings could be scheduled was Jane's suggested way of beginning this change. In doing so, her suggestions challenge the hegemony around being able to arrive early and work late.

#### **4.2.3 Training and career development**

Barbara talked positively about her experiences of training:

I have been in for inset (in-service training) days on a day off and I've got paid for it. I don't think I was ever forced to; I think that was more I wanted to. I can't think of, I don't know of somebody who's refused to go in and it's been a problem, for me it's been an optional thing and I've gone for it.

(Barbara, first meeting, 8th February 2016)



However, Jane gave an alternative view regarding the arrangements and expectations for training:

The school is not very financially solvent and so we're always clutching at every penny we can get. So that impacts, so when you get CPD (Continuing Professional Development), when you go for your training or you take students out or whatever. So, there's a couple of instances where it's occurring on my half day off, so there's a couple of trips that I'm taking, a couple of training events that I'm doing where I only work until 12.30 and there's no possibility of pay for those things. If you want payment probably you won't be able to go. You can have time in lieu, but the time in lieu has to be taken at a time that's convenient to the school"

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Barbara's and Jane's comments reveal differences in terms of policy around remunerating staff. Differences in the two schools in terms of financial investment to back up policy around flexible working seem to be in operation. This shows resonance with the findings of Finn (1993) who argued that employers are not always prepared to back up policy with investment. Jane also implied that her school was struggling financially. When listening back to the audio recordings of our meetings, and the tone in which the comments were made, Barbara appeared happy with the arrangement whereas Jane was unsurprisingly not impressed.

Jane's experience suggests a disconnection between socio-political policies around flexible working and equal opportunity in her school. Not being paid for training compared to her full-time colleagues put her at a disadvantage. Jane felt it would be detrimental to her role and prospects if she did not receive this career development and had, therefore, chosen to attend in her non-paid time. This practice of not paying

employees to attend work for training is highly unfair towards people, most likely women (NEU, 2018) who work part-time. This finding resonates with the findings of Dick and Hyde (2006b) in that the restrictions and institutional arrangements around training seem gendered. The practice Jane describes is financially detrimental to those whose pattern of working is not full-time. Jane recognised that she might not be as effective in the workplace as other colleagues if she had not attended this training and this caused her anxiety. She also recognised that she might be considered problematic for not complying with this practice and that she would be:

Cutting my nose off to spite my face.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This practice bore similarities to the expectation described earlier in this chapter regarding her academy's refusal to pay for time taken to cover emergency childcare arrangements. In her workplace, the consequences of deviation, from the normalised full-time pattern of working and from the expectation of continuous availability seems to be at the employees' own expense and which is, therefore, likely to be costlier to those who do not work full-time.

Carers may need to find alternative care provision whilst they attend training which may not be straightforward to arrange and which, also, may involve an additional financial cost. Hence, non-paid attendance at training events becomes a costly affair because, in effect, employees might pay a financial cost to be trained, rather than being paid themselves. The decision not to attend such training may also come at a cost in terms of a lack of skills accumulation (Hakim, 2006). This may be detrimental, particularly to

women, later on in terms of their consideration for career progression (Dick and Hyde, 2006b). It is important to recognise, therefore, that some barriers to progression may be situated within an inability to pay for, or arrange, alternative care provision.

Alice described a perceived lack of transparency around whether she was expected to undergo training on days when she was not scheduled to be in school:

Well I am part-time and I've missed out on two years' worth of CPD and that's through nobody's fault just the CPD ran on one of my non-working days. If I was more local, you know, I probably would have made more of an effort to come, but it's just not do-able. But nobody's pulled me up on it at any point, nobody's said, right you are missing these CPD sessions, we need to be helping you with this or you know you need to be more proactive with this.

I mean I have done my own CPD in my own time, I've joined various subject networks and gone to different schools in my own time just to keep my hand in, but I think at my current school, yeah, nobody's ever addressed it. Then all of a sudden on one of my recent lesson observations they started talking to me about a load of things that have been run in a CPD session that I tried to implement. I always read up and because I didn't get it spot on they were really, yeah, not very nice, not very nice about it and when I tried to say, okay, thank you for your feedback, I wasn't actually in that session but I take on board what you've said, all of a sudden it became a really big issue.

(Alice, second meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016)

Alice's discomfort during what she believed was going to be an informal meeting with the leadership team clearly left her with a mixture of feelings when this issue was raised. She recognised in hindsight that she had been expected to attend this training, but considered that her working arrangements and the processes of communication within school had not actively encouraged this activity. Hence, the training was not regarded by her as being accessible or necessary for all to attend. By not attending the training,

her commitment was questioned and the pupils were not taught using the intended outcomes from the teacher training session. Alice's unhappiness is apparent and also added to her reasons for handing I her notice:

They haven't been very nice, they really haven't been very nice and like I say I went for an informal meeting and coming out of the informal meeting, I was like, I should have really had my union in that meeting. It's just, yeah, I've got a line manager, my line manager has got a manager that's the Head, all these steps have been missed out and they haven't been very nice to me, so yeah.

(Alice, second meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016)

In light of their comments above, the practices around staff training in their two academies appeared not to be working well for Jane and Alice. These seem to be situated within cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political arrangements shaping and constraining practices of training which appear unfair. How payment was awarded for training appears situated within an assumption and normalisation of continuous full-time working and which had negative implications for Jane and Alice who did not occupy this pattern of working.

My findings are important because they show inconsistency and a lack of transparency in the approach of leaders around payment for working extra hours that result from adopting a flexible pattern of working. These findings add further insight, and some contradictions, to those of Sharp *et al* (2019) who report that school leaders do typically encourage part-time teachers to attend meetings, training and parents' evenings. Senior leaders acknowledged that they only needed to attend a proportionate amount of such

events. They found that some school leaders made arrangements to pay or give time off in lieu with respect to the extra hours of work.

My findings contradict government policy: People who work part-time should be treated no less favourably than people who work full-time. This applies to training and promotion unless justified reasons can be provided to the contrary (Gov.uk, 2016a). Jane's and Alice's descriptions of these practices shine a light on how the allocation of time, space and finance to support the accessing of training was not fair. Furthermore, if workers are not to be treated less favourably than their full-time counterparts (ibid), their opportunities for promotion, as well as to their training, need to be fair. Barbara made the following point:

The word on the grapevine, on the out, is that (promoted) positions aren't open for part-timers.

(Barbara, second meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Barbara talked about the rumours within the school that applications from part-time teachers for promoted positions would not be considered favourably. This lack of transparency highlights the lack of precedence in terms of part-time teachers occupying promoted positions in their schools (see Chapter Two, section 2.3) and a lack of communicated policy regarding promotion. Louise made a similar point:

I would like to think that I would if I really wanted to enough, but I do feel it would be quite a mountain to climb because of the precedents. I think that people have raised the idea before and haven't got anywhere... I am just thinking of a specific colleague who was a year head. She then left to have children, and came back part-time. I think that she specifically asked 'Could I get back in to that role?' and was told no. She was then given a kind of – well, a

role where she was sort of in charge of checking that they're not wearing make-up and that sort of thing, rather than a whole pastoral role. Having never specifically gone for that myself, or asked anyone in management specifically about that, I suppose I don't feel I know exactly what the situation is, but it's just a kind of feeling that there is amongst part-timers, I suppose, at the school, that this is a no-go area.

(Louise, first meeting, 23rd March 2016)

The leadership teams at their schools had not told Louise or Barbara that their applications for promotion would not be welcomed, but neither had the current 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (2014) done anything to challenge the hegemony around the apparent lack of opportunity for promotion. The practice architectures, enmeshing with practices influencing career progression in Louise and Barbara's schools, appear to have 'hung together' to apparently favour people who worked full-time. These findings add further insight into those of Moreau *et al* (2005) who propose that those teachers who were continuously available and on a linear model of career advancement were favoured in terms of career progression.

This lack of transparency did not encourage Louise and Barbara to believe these unfair practices would change any time soon. Hughes (2002) argues that women do not fit with the linearity of a masculine career model. Due to breaks to care for children and older people, they live *out of time* with the assumptions of full-time, continuous paid work (Evetts, 1994) underpinning this linear model. This misalignment is seen through the insights gathered from this research. For the participants in this research, their decision not to work full-time was situated within gendered, societal expectations around care and which disrupted their continuous availability.

The practice of part-time teachers not applying for jobs because of rumours and hearsay may help to explain their absence at a senior leadership level in their schools. Barbara's description portrays a picture at her school of people not applying for promoted positions if they worked part-time. This was due to the whispers and rumours, or 'sayings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) that they would not be taken seriously if they did not work full-time. This 'doing' (ibid.) of management and the lack of precedence of part-time colleagues at a senior level, or 'relatings' (ibid.), suggest that, within Barbara's school, practices relating to career progression were situated within a full-time model of working. Whilst legislation around equal opportunities (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006) entitles people to apply on equal terms for senior positions in school, the examples described in this chapter indicate how the participants perceived progressing their careers in the same way as their full-time colleagues was more difficult.

The practices described by Barbara and Louise seem contradictory to governmental advice sent to schools around the encouragement of flexible working at all levels of seniority within schools (DfE, 2017a). This finding matters because it helps to explain why so few leadership positions in schools are occupied by those who work part-time. The lack of transparency served to discourage Louise and Barbara applying for their first promoted post, thereby stifling progression at an early stage of their careers.

As Jane's vignette (Chapter Three, section 3.7) describes, she had achieved a promoted position to middle-management prior to her taking the decision to not work full-time. She did not wish to advance further to a position of senior management. Jane was paid

0.8 of a TLR point (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.) for her leadership role as well as her 0.8 FTE salary for her teaching role. Jane described that she carried out the leadership role as would someone doing the job full-time. Hence, feeling she was not being fully remunerated was a source of frustration:

I think the main bone of contention, the main problem that arises is not that the school have put any barriers in my way in terms of me being part-time and not having the opportunities that other people have, but I'm paid 0.8, but I'm expected to do a full-time job. That's where I think the equal opportunities issue comes up, because what you've got is a lot of mostly women doing these positions of responsibility for an unfair amount of pay.

(Jane, first meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

Jane commented that this disparity in pay appeared to be gendered and applied to other part-time colleagues who held any promoted role within her school. When she questioned the perceived unfairness of her remuneration, Jane felt the answer she was given by her employer lacked clarity and transparency. This left her feeling that she was being taken advantage of which she explained:

But I'm still expected to do all the schemes of work and all of the, you know, everything that a full-time member is supposed to do. And management don't have a response that's acceptable. They will say things, they will respond in ways that are idiosyncratic to my situation, rather than everybody's, so they'll say things like, 'Yes, but you've got a smaller year group to look after.' I say, 'But that's irrelevant, that's actually irrelevant, the nature of my job is irrelevant.' You need to have some sort of policy about, you know, all of the people who hold responsibility points but you're only paying a percentage of that, when you're still expecting them to do a full-time job. You need to have a policy that addresses that, rather than giving rubbish excuses to each person about why particularly they, their job isn't worth being paid the full amount.

So, that's an ongoing debate and that's an area of unfairness and a lack of equality. Women are the ones that tend to take off the time for the childcare, so there are men that are Head of Department that



are doing the same role as me, but because I'm only there 0.8 of the time, they're getting more money than I am.

(Jane, first meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

This example, along with the other examples described by Jane in this chapter regarding pay and payments, indicate how she perceived the layers of financial disadvantage were accumulating. This resonates with the concerns expressed by the DfE (2014) concerning the potential for negative impact on pay being expressed by part-time workers. Jane was frustrated by the way she thought she and those in a similar position were fobbed off with idiosyncratic reasons as to why they were not given the full TLR point.

This finding is of importance because it highlights a perceived unfairness which seems situated within the way teachers are paid. Jane was paid 0.8 of a middle leader's salary even though no-one else did the 'additional' role on 0.2 FTE. She perceived that this meant that she completed one day a week of her additional management role for no pay compared to her full-time colleagues who worked in similar roles full-time. Jane's occupation of a middle management role on a part-time basis resonates with the argument of Pringle (1998) who makes the point that the discrimination suffered by working mothers is not only due to their gender but is situated within their possible wish to change working practices which have usually, in the past, benefitted men. Jane recognised that her challenging of the school's policy and practices around pay was not well received by her senior leaders and that an outcome she perceived to be discriminatory and gendered had not changed.

Key findings from this section have indicated how practices around communication were not always aligned with the participants' pattern of working and how this has impacted on the lives of the participants, leading to disadvantage and inequality in some cases. On a final note in this section, none of the participants talked about any encouragement or practices being in place to actively support their career progression. Neither did they talk of the senior leaders in their schools recognising the challenges they faced as part-time women teachers, nor the impact of this on their career progression. This is not to say that these things had not been said but, importantly, the women did not talk of them when telling their stories.

The next section will further explore the assumption and expectation of continuous availability to work which appears to be underpinning the practices described so far in the analysis. The analysis will consider when and where the participants completed their paid work alongside their other commitments.

### **4.3 Working out of hours**

Whilst the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) such as Skype, email and mobile phones has provided opportunities to communicate via means other than face-to-face, Amanda provided a perspective which suggested ICT had led to greater workload and stress. Amanda explained how the problems of poor internet connection meant she needed to stay at work to complete these ICT-related tasks:

Well like I said to you earlier, my internet connection isn't good at home... I know you've got to do it (entering data) but you could perhaps do it at home or at work and then they've (colleagues) come in and said, "I've lost it all!" So, they've lost two or three

hours' work. So, to me I'd rather be in school and spend the time, stay at the end of the day, get in early, do whatever you need to do to do it on the school premises so that I'm not having to do it twice, so yeah.

(Amanda, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

It would seem that the necessity to complete these tasks shaped and constrained where and when she could complete her work. Here, the socio-politically-driven agenda to collect pupil data as part of showing pupil progress is linked to the material-economic arrangement of online working. This resulted in Amanda feeling she had to work at school rather than being at home.

Barbara talked about doing school-work tasks on Mondays which was her 'day off', so that she could spend time with her family at other times:

I do the washing and everything else as well, but I work fairly hard now on a Monday.

(Barbara, first meeting, 8th February 2016)

Barbara went on to mention that she made herself available to the school, specifically her line manager, by email contact during this day:

I think she probably quite values that, the fact that I'm not out of touch. As always, there's a bit of give and take isn't there? She knows I work hard. If she emails me on my Monday which is generally the day I work at home, I will pick things up and respond, I think probably it works quite well for her.

(Barbara, first meeting, 8th February 2016)

Leah made a similar point:

I'm always on the email on my days off, I'm always responding to things. It's probably me; it's probably more me putting pressure on myself to feel like I've got to prove myself because I'm only part-time.

(Leah, first meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

The expectations described by Leah, Barbara and Amanda resonate with the argument made by Gatrell (2005) whereby employees feel a pressure to be available at all times to their employer. Barbara had the perception that her line manager liked her to be available, even when she was not being paid. Barbara did not seem to mind that her line manager had access to her non-paid time in this way, although she was clearly very busy combining her domestic responsibilities with her marking and preparation for school.

Similarities appear to exist in terms of the origins and manifestations of the pressure placed upon Barbara, Amanda and Leah to be continuously available. The insights which emerged from the three women were situated within the availability of technology which both enabled and expected their physical and temporal availability to participate in digital communication. This appears to be underpinned by assumed continuous availability to partake in work-based discourse and activity. This notion appears linked to the notion of professionalism being synonymous with presenteeism (Dick and Hyde, 2006b). This is of importance because it suggests that the notion of women managing their time on a workday by moving in and out of personal and public boundaries (Tamboukou, 2000) extends into their 'days off' as well as their paid days. These boundaries appear more blurred, along with the notion of what is meant by a

'workday'. Moving across these temporal and spatial boundaries will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

When Louise talked of the additional amount of time she spent in school in order to fulfil her work-based responsibilities she made the following point:

I generally nowadays don't (work at home). That's just because of the fact that we now have a nanny. When we had our third child, we realised actually that financially it really makes no difference having a nanny come to us than to send out three, and it's obviously that much easier if they're coming to us. I thought gosh, that's a no-brainer really, so very glad that we did but it also means that we pay her to do three 12-hour days on the days that I work. This means that I can get just about everything done that I need to in those hours rather than have to do anything at weekends or on the other two days.

(Louise, first meeting, 23rd March 2016)

Moreau *et al* (2005) found many examples of women who worked as part-time teachers, like Louise, yet worked hours close to the legal definition of a full-time role due to their additional work in the evenings, weekends and during holidays. The detailed narratives in this research provide rich data which illustrates how the participants managed their heavy workload. In doing so, they offer new insights into their complex lives. Louise, whilst being paid 0.6 of a full-time equivalent position, had made the choice to pay a full-time nanny for 36 hours of childcare a week. This revealed the additional hours Louise worked to fulfil her paid working obligations, and for which she bore the financial cost. This childcare arrangement was possible, however, because Louise was timetabled to teach on three consecutive days at school.

Jane talked of trying to 'ring-fence' time early in the evening to be with her children, or to take them to their after-school activities. Jane, although working 0.8 of a full-time equivalent post, described her typical working week in school as being around 36 hours, and that she still had to take work home with her. She completed her school work after the children had gone to bed in order to meet the expectations of her roles as a teacher, wife and mother. Leah also bore this expectation of being the one to take her children to their after-school activities. She mentioned that, whilst she really enjoyed this, she frequently went to bed at 2 am, after she had spent a busy weekend with the children, as she then needed to get herself prepared for work.

Tamboukou (2000) talks of women being left exhausted due to their family and working lives competing for their time. She reports of women feeling guilty if they do not feel like this. Amanda gives new insight into how working as a part-time teacher was impacting upon her life and health (Warren, 2008):

I don't work evenings because I'm absolutely shattered to be quite honest. I get home some days and by the time, I don't know I might clean the bathroom, make tea, sit down and I've zonked. I've just gone, just fall asleep, and again I thought this is just ridiculous but that could be age as well, you know. So, I don't work evenings I'm adamant about that.... but Wednesdays and Fridays (her 'days off'), yes, I'll usually do something. Some weeks I try and maybe have a whole day where I dedicate to just catching up on marking or whatever, but I'm finding it's creeping back into the weekends again and I would love that to stop, but at the moment I can't see an end to it, I don't know how I'm going to get around that.

(Amanda, first meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

Amanda was juggling different aspects of her life, was 'time poor' and felt guilty (Tamboukou, 2000). She mentioned that she found herself working longer days at

school, not leaving until 6 pm. With her medical condition this was proving too much. At our second meeting, Amanda told me she had regretfully returned to working an additional day each week. She felt she was not able to meet the expectations from school when working only three days per week. Her line manager had made her displeasure known about Amanda not being in school when an additional support activity was to be carried out with the pupils. The implication conveyed to Amanda was that she would let her class down by not being there on this day. Due to guilt, Amanda had gone into school on her non-paid day to support her class. This, and the growing belief that she needed to spend more time in school to fulfil her role, were major factors in her subsequent decision to work more paid days to increase her availability to the staff and pupils.

Amanda's working long hours to fulfil the expectations she felt upon her aligns her ethic of care for her pupils with one which Wood (2019) argues characterises the teaching profession. He highlights a tension between teachers' care for their pupils and being burdened by excessive workload. My analyses indicate that this tension does not go away if a part-time pattern of working is adopted. This resonates with and adds new insight into the findings of Sharp *et al* (2019 p.iv) who make the following point:

The school leaders we interviewed said that although teachers may wish to reduce their hours to relieve workload pressures, part-time working was not an ideal solution because it could result in teachers devoting more of their own unpaid time, to the non-teaching aspects of the job.

Living within this temporal paradox may contribute to a large proportion of teachers reporting problems with physical and mental health problems (Wood, 2019). Amanda's

decision to work an extra day each week, alongside her report of pain and a medical condition and exacerbated by tiredness, offers a new glimpse into the argument Wood (2019) is making.

The findings above are important because they reveal how the participants regarded working beyond school hours as a necessary and normalised part of their paid role. This finding is important because it illustrates how little time the women had for themselves and the impact that combining work with family responsibilities had on their daily lives. Their inability to see where additional time would come from if they worked more paid hours was a barrier to them wanting full-time work. They acknowledged this shaped their career decisions and may serve to limit their career progression

Key findings from this section illustrate the participants' awareness of how working long hours impacted on their lives, and health in the case of Amanda. However, they had aligned themselves with this expectation and were mindful that working beyond the school teaching day was expected of all teachers and was something they were committed to fulfilling. Their expected commitment was, seemingly, shaped and constrained within cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political arrangements in their schools which were underpinned by the notion of continuous availability. How their experiences were misaligned with practices which were underpinned by this notion of continuous availability to work contributes to knowledge. This misalignment will be explored further in the next section when considering the practice of timetabling.



#### 4.4 Timetabling

Feelings of being of secondary importance compared to her full-time colleagues emerged from Leah's life history. In schools, the teaching timetable is typically completed by a member of the senior management team with an input from Heads of Department. This input usually includes the allocation of teachers to specific classes. In doing so, decisions around which teachers will be teaching exam classes or certain year groups may ensue. Which classes she had been allocated, and the rationale for her line manager's decision, was an issue for Leah:

I've had to fight to get one Key Stage 5 class on my timetable this year and it was a fight. I had to go in and say, look you know you're not giving me any exam classes, I need those if I want to progress, if I want to move on somewhere I'm quite capable, I'm more than capable of doing it. And it was always, well we can't timetable it in, but my impression is that it's been given to the full-time staff, unless there is a specialism there. Within the other two part-time staff one is a specialist A-Level teacher, always has been, you know, has had that opportunity right from the beginning and the other is the leader who's fantastic, so does the A-Level subject as well. So, I don't know, I don't know whether it's just the part-time thing or whether it's because she doesn't think I'm up to it, I don't know.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Leah felt that despite having taught exam classes when working full-time, she was not being given the opportunity to do so now by her Head of Department. She felt this to be detrimental to her career progression. It left her confused as to whether it was not working full-time that was the problem or whether she was not trusted to teach well for other reasons. The allocation of Key Stage 5 Advanced Level groups left Leah feeling concerned about whether her teaching was of the required standard, in a way that she had not thought about as a full-time teacher. She talked of having to prove herself because of her choice not to work full-time. Her comments indicate her awareness of

discourses which reduce part-time working, and those who enact it, to being of lesser value and significance than full-time working and her full-time colleagues. The way the timetable was constructed in her school was perceived by Leah to lack parity in opportunity for career progression and opportunity of experience.

The micro-politics around timetabling in her school left Leah unsure about the accuracy of her interpretations (Morley, 2006), regarding her suitability to teach these classes. She was uncertain whether she was reading too much into the situation or whether she was being side-lined because she was thought not to be good enough. This example, along with Alice's experience regarding the school changing her working days (described in Chapter Four, section 4.2.1), shows how decisions around timetabling resulted in significant, and negative, impacts upon the two women.

Leah continued to question the potential impact the timetabling decisions made by others might have on her future career progression. She clearly doubted her own professional standing within the school in light of not being given the exam groups to teach in the first instance. The data from Leah's life history gave insights into how she did not feel valued within her workplace, and that the transitioning to part-time working had not gone smoothly. This appeared to have left her feeling of lesser importance than when she worked full-time and which may have accounted, in part, for the persistent theme throughout her life history of having something to prove to herself or others.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, no longer being guaranteed full days of working, and being expected to work half days, was a step too far for Alice in terms of how she perceived the school valued her. It added to her self-doubt which had accumulated throughout her career and which originated at her first school. Alice considered that a school where she had been employed earlier in her career had "stamped on her career aspirations" by making her feel like "the worst teacher ever". When questioned further about this at our second meeting this is what she said:

Alice: The school that I'm at now is the third school that I've worked at. I don't know think I've ever really settled after my first one because I went to that school, didn't have a very, very, very good time and this one's been fine, it's been absolutely fine, but now-

Me: But you felt last time (we met) that they were quite supportive.

Alice: Yeah, but yeah things change and I'm starting to question myself and like right, is it me? Because I had a bad time last time, I don't think the school's been very supportive at all with my decision, what is it, what's going on?"

(Alice, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

The changing of her working days without negotiation and which resulted in her childcare arrangements falling apart appear to have been the last straw. This played a big part in her decision to leave the profession. Amongst part-time secondary school teachers, the rate of leaving the teaching profession is higher than that of part-time primary school teachers (Sharp *et al*, 2019). This, they argue, is because part-time secondary school teachers and/or their schools have more difficulty in making their part-time arrangements work. Furthermore, secondary school teachers find it more difficult to balance their part-time working alongside their other commitments.

Turnley and Feldman (2000) argue that breaches in psychological contract, which seems to have happened for Alice, can lead to people feeling less motivated and, possibly, leaving their employment. The psychological contract was described by Rousseau (1995, p.9) as being the ‘individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding the terms of an exchange agreement’. If, as Scandura and Lankau (1997) suggest, women's investment in a psychological contract is linked to their need to balance family-life with their responsibilities to their employer, it comes as no real surprise that Alice took this decision to alter her working days so badly.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The findings emerging from the analysis of the data in this theme have moved the understanding of part-time working beyond hearsay, rumour and tradition to the making of meaning from rigorously gathered data. Taking an approach of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) to the analysis and theorisation of the data has enabled everyday practices or 'what goes on' in the participants' schools around part-time working to be more visible and understood in a new way. By making the often unseen, and taken-for-granted, conditions which shape practices more apparent, discussions around practice architectures can make the hegemonic nature of such practices more visible and, thereby, open up the possibilities for change (Wilkinson *et al*, 2010). In achieving this new visibility, a theoretical contribution to knowledge has been made.

This making visible has been possible by exploring how the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings', as described by the participants, enmesh with cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political arrangements to shape and constrain these practices. It is

very apparent from the life history data that no positive practices were described which the participants perceived actively encouraged their career progression. This shows a degree of resonance with the recent findings of Sharp *et al* (2019) who report that whilst some leaders enable part-time working by sharing tasks, others did not believe that part-time work was compatible with school leadership. However, their research does not make it clear if those carrying out shared tasks were already in a part-time senior leadership post when they had been given the support or whether these were strategies to support part-time workers in gaining new access to school leadership. The findings from my research show how the implications of part-time working are gendered, and are suggestive of a disconnection between school-based practices and wider socio-political policies which encourage equality of opportunity and the entitlement to request to work flexibly.

Findings emerged of the participants trying to navigate practices which were not situated within their own pattern of working; for example, attending work on days they were not paid to attend training, or to provide additional support for students at a time convenient for a full-time colleague. These practices were situated within an assumption of continuous availability to work. This notion is at odds with the participants' pattern of working. This has caused problems which they have endeavoured to resolve, at the expense of their own time and financial cost. The insights gathered from the participants' life histories regarding what it is like to be a part-time teacher imply that the extensive workload helped to shape their reasons for not working full-time.

A lack of transparency and clear policy around timetabling, career progression, and expectations in relation to working flexibly in schools has emerged from the research. Instances have been revealed where this lack of clarity led to anxiety, confusion and marginalisation.

The analysis in the next chapter will build on the findings from this chapter and will explore what the participants said about what 'goes on' in their school and home in relation to their working, and how this has shaped their relationships with career progression.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Analysis of the 'Perceptions' theme**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the participants' perceptions of 'what went on' in school and at home relating to their working part-time, and how this shaped their career progression. How the theme of 'Perceptions', which emerged from the thematic analysis, is related to the other themes in this analysis is shown in Figure 3.2 (p.72). The analysis is situated within a theoretical-methodological approach at the interface of ideas drawn from feminism, practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) and life history. It builds on the findings from Chapter Four and answers the second of my research questions:

- What choices, decisions, motivations and values do women secondary school teachers who work part-time perceive have influenced their career progression?

The analysis begins with a discussion of how the participants perceived being a mother meshed with the practices in school and how this influenced their career progression. The first section, therefore, explores motherhood, namely commitment, marginalisation and skills brought to the role of a teacher. The second section explores the participants' perceptions of school senior leadership and how these shaped and constrained their thoughts regarding their own career progression.

#### **5.2 Motherhood**

This section about motherhood begins by exploring the notion of commitment through the words of the participants in this research and the stories they told.

### 5.2.1 Commitment

The discussion in this section begins with Louise describing how she felt when her commitment to her teaching role was challenged by a member of the senior leadership team (SLT):

But he brought up a couple of times that I'd be late in as well. I think he felt he had to address these, and I can remember it because, I remember the phrase that he used because it really obviously sort of hit me. He said, "Do you see teaching as a bit of a hobby?" It just made me realise that perhaps they do feel that I am less committed now. I mean the reasons for my being late those couple of times were that I was dealing with children at home, that's the only reason that ever causes me to be late into work when perhaps I wouldn't have been otherwise.

(Louise, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

The language used is indicative of the SLT member regarding Louise as lacking in commitment, and being problematic and unprofessional. In doing so it is suggestive of him regarding 'part-time and professional as being mutually exclusive categories' (Negrey, 1993, p.19). The term 'hobby' implies an activity done for fun and signifies a perceived lack of professional commitment. This 'saying' left Louise feeling angry and frustrated. Cockburn (2002) argues that many men in senior positions question the commitment of mothers, and that this is exacerbated if they also work part-time. Glimpses of this seem to be going on in this situation described by Louise.

Louise experienced this unpleasant response from a senior manager as a result of her prioritising her children's needs over being punctual during these difficult situations. She realised she had put herself at risk of such a reprimand. Whilst being late is not professionally advisable, Louise had been late several times in the past when childcare



arrangements failed. Her lateness was due to issues related to her children, the responsibility for which she had the biggest share, and which appeared to have caused her tensions in the morning on more than one occasion. Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) found that part-time working was perceived to be linked with unspecified poor working conditions and career prospects. As a result, it was seen to be a voluntary choice situated within a lack of commitment to full-time working. My findings show some alignment with this finding in terms of limited career prospects (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3), but poor working conditions are more open to interpretation. However, the way Louise was spoken to by the SLT member was not pleasant. I propose that, through his choice of language, the SLT member positioned Louise's choice to occupy this pattern of working as a voluntary one in the way that Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) describe.

Being questioned about her lateness in this way left Louise feeling marginalised and not well regarded for the contribution she did make in school. Louise's excerpt describes the difficult situation she was in: she had responsibilities to both her children and her employer. The alternative view of putting her work first, and over the responsibility to her children, was not one Louise felt she could do due to a lack of alternative childcare at that time. The powerful discourse around motherhood appears to have acted as a resistive parameter for her decision-making (Smith, 2016). This finding is of consequence because it offers a glimpse into how 'sayings' and choice of language around part-time working can impact negatively on the recipient.

In Louise's case, her running late in the morning enabled her husband to go to work early and arrive home late in order to meet the expectations of his job. This finding offers contemporary insight into the findings of Negrey (1993) who found that work scheduling not only has an impact on the family life of the person being scheduled, but also on the scheduling and family life of their spouse. For Louise, this impact meant that she ran the risk of being reprimanded for arriving late to work. Drawing on feminist analyses of care, women's contribution to care-giving is important economically because it contributes to, and helps maintain, the workforce (Hughes, 2002). Tronto (1993) argues that when women take care of their children, this type of care is considered of low value, yet is regarded as of being high value when men assume this responsibility.

For Louise, the interconnected and structuring effects of responsibility for care were seemingly compounded by the damaging of her professional reputation and the lack of regard in which she was held by her employer. When childcare arrangements failed, Louise explained that she picked up the childcare responsibilities so that her husband's job could be prioritised. Moreau *et al* (2007) found that women teachers often drew on the essentialist constructions of men and women, with women depicted as willing to be assigned the primary responsibilities for childcare and domestic responsibilities. They argue that this results in women having to choose between their families and their careers whilst men can have both. This is what seems to be going on for Louise.

Jane also dwelt on discussions around commitment:

I sometimes perceive part-time people as people who dip in and out and as perhaps not as committed. I think that's probably a perception that a lot of people have, that they just do the job for pin

money or whatever, to keep their hand in. I don't perceive myself like that. I perceive myself as committed as the full-timers, so I don't see any distinction between me and them."

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Jane seemed to resist a reconstruction of her own professional identity as a mother who worked part-time/part-time teacher who was a mother, rather than as the full-time teacher she had been previously. She stated that she saw no difference between herself and her full-time colleagues. When expanding further on her perception of part-time colleagues, she realised that she too considered them to be problematic even though she had rejected this as a perception of herself:

I think it depends on how part-time as well. So, there's some people, for example: if I think about a few people, there's people who only work two days and it's almost like they're a non-person, that sounds awful to say, but I don't expect very much. So, if I know somebody's in for two days, I don't expect them to know the students as well. I won't ask them the questions I'd perhaps go and find a full-time member of staff and ask them instead. That's awful isn't it? That's terrible. I'm the one with the problematic views about part-time, but I think I don't want to be perceived like that.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This excerpt indicated Jane's awareness of negative cultural-discursive arrangements and 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) around part-time working. She did not consider herself, nor wanted to be, positioned within this perception of those who did not work full-time. She made the point that people work full-time unless there is a reason, for example motherhood. It is apparent that Jane continued to perceive herself as a full-time worker and that full-time working was the normalised pattern as far as she was concerned.

Jane's awareness of the discourse around part-time teaching and teachers seems to have shaped the perception of herself. Importantly, whilst the negative 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) might apply to others, she did not wish this to be applied to her. She was aware her views about those who worked fewer days than herself were quite derogatory and was not proud of her views. The use of the term, 'non-person' indicated her marginalisation of her part-time teaching colleagues as of being of lesser value to her, as they were perceived to be not as committed to their teaching roles.

Whilst the stories told by Jane and Louise provided instances of where the commitment of those who did not work full-time was challenged, Jacobsen (2000) found that part-time professionals are more affectively committed to their work compared with those working on a full-time basis. The rich narratives gathered in this research provide details of the participants working hard and caring about being a good mother. All the participants in this study had worked full-time in the past, as is the tendency for part-time professional workers (Dick and Hyde, 2006b), although not necessarily in teaching. (see vignettes, Chapter 3, section 3.7 for more details). Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) explain that feminist scholars see the transition to part-time working not as a lack of commitment but, instead, as reflection of the complexity of their working lives at different life stages. The findings from this research provide glimpses into the process of transitioning in this way. Each of the participants managed this process in ways that were subjective and related to their own work and family circumstances at a given point in their lives.

Part-time work can be seen as a challenge to workplace norms as it visibly challenges discourses of professionalism which assume an ability and willingness to prioritise work (Dick, 2010). This can lead to a discursive construction of the part-time professional worker being thought of as less committed (ibid.). Moreau *et al* (2007) report that breaking free from the dominant, patriarchal and linear career pathway continues to be seen as abnormal or deficient, and is associated with a lack of commitment. Findings emerged of the participants in this research rejecting these constructions; instead they were keen to show themselves as being as committed to their paid work as their full-time counterparts.

A lack of commitment did not emerge from the narratives told. Instead the findings provided novel glimpses into the participants' complex relationships between their work and family lives. Gatrell (2005) argues that women are still committed to their work even though they love their children. The participants cared about their work and what people thought about them as the insights provided by Jane and Louise reveal. They were keen to avoid being aligned with arguments around deficiency or being less committed than their full-time colleagues. Instead, findings emerged of how they felt they had more to prove to their employers and colleagues because they did not work full-time. This matters in terms of the narrative espoused of part-time working, and those who enact it, with implications for the people who occupy this pattern of working now, and who may well do so in the future.

Insights emerged of the participants' awareness that the discourse around part-time working did not always cast those who enact it in a positive way. Furthermore, they

were keen to reject this perception in reference to themselves and considered themselves to be very committed to both their paid and non-paid roles. So far in this chapter, the participants' sense of marginalisation has emerged at various points; this will now be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **5.2.2 Marginalisation**

Leah described her sense of marginalisation as follows:

So, when I went back (part-time) after having my child we'd got a new Head of Faculty, we'd got a new Head, everything had changed, a new curriculum, new systems, the whole school was completely different. I'd lost my profile; nobody knew who I was anymore, so that was a really hard adjustment for about two years I would say, until I found myself again.

(Leah, first meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016)

Whilst the marginalisation felt by Leah might be because her working pattern was different to a normalised and full-time way of working, another explanation offered by Dick and Hyde (2006a) is that her marginalisation may be because part-time work is usually carried out by women who themselves are marginalised in the workforce, irrespective of their working patterns (Knights and Richards, 2003). In Leah's view, her marginalisation was situated not only in her new pattern of working but, also, in response to her having returned after a period of maternity leave, to find a new line manager and headteacher in post. Leah's view illustrated how her part-time working was a response to becoming a mother and wishing to remain in the teaching workforce, although this was not without its difficulties. This led to a sense of marginalisation which lasted for a long time. Leah's marginalisation was accompanied by her feeling that she had something to prove to her new line manager:

I think to begin with, because when I first went back, I had a new Head of Faculty who didn't really know me, so I really felt I needed to prove myself to her because she'd never seen me as I was before.

(Leah, first meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016)

Leah's vignette (Chapter Three, section 3.7) revealed her pattern of working before having her children. This involved working very long hours and dedicating her life to the school in a middle-management position:

I would get in at seven, half-seven in the morning and I wouldn't leave until the caretakers kicked me out at eight, half-eight at night, because that's what I loved doing, I was really passionate about it and helping the children.

(Leah, first meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016)

Leah talked of how the arrival of her children had resulted in changes, and this had influenced her choices, decisions and motivations regarding her work and home-life. Leah's view of her previous working pattern seemed nostalgic, but with recognition that she could no longer work these long hours. This had shaped her career decisions. Smith (2016) found that many women believe they will be able to combine a teaching career with motherhood yet go on to realise that their childcare responsibilities impact upon the decisions regarding their careers. A new insight into how these responsibilities, along with the impact that part-time working can have on career prospects, emerged from Leah's life history. According to Smith (2016) being a mother and working part-time appears to limit promotion prospects along with an accompanying loss of the leadership skills they may possess. Leah's sense of marginalisation provides a perspective from that of a previous leader returning to a more subordinate position, and with a skill set and levels of experience beyond this level of working.

Leah's perception of the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' at work appear to have given her the impression that part-time teachers are not as well regarded within the workplace as their full-time colleagues. Like Jane, (discussed earlier in this section) this was a perception Leah did not want to apply to her. Whilst Freely (1999) argues that many women feel they have to prove themselves at work, Leah was concerned that her new line manager had not known her very long and did not really know her professionally. She assumed that this person would not think highly of her because she did not work full-time. Leah did not want to lose the high regard she was held in prior to having her children, and when she could devote many hours to work and being at school. She recognised that her new line manager was not aware of the long hours she had worked in the past.

This insight reveals Leah's perceptions that presenteeism is linked with perceptions of professionalism (Dick and Hyde, 2006b). She was concerned that without her line manager having knowledge of how many hours she worked in the past, the high professional regard in which she had been held, now counted for very little. This finding is important because it indicates Leah's perceptions: that not working full-time had put her professional reputation at risk because she is not able/willing to work the very long hours she once did. Leah felt anxious that she had to work exceptionally hard to prove to her line manager that she was professional and good at her job.

Leah wanted to be a good mother to her children and play a part in the community. This shaped her views about her career. In addition, she recognised that she could not devote the same amount of time to her paid work that she once did. Together these views



helped to frame Leah's decision not to work full-time in the near future and which she realised limited her career prospects. Leah was seemingly coming to terms with what it meant to return to work whilst juggling the caring responsibilities as a mother of young children. Together, these factors appear to have heightened Leah's sense of marginalisation and a sense of needing to prove her personal worth.

Key findings from the discussion around the participants' sense of marginalisation resonate with those of Smith (2016) who challenges the commonly held perception that teaching is a good job for women who would like a family. This research has added a new dimension to this finding by exploring the views of participants whose intentions of being able to combine teaching with caring responsibilities was enacted through their choosing to work part-time. Findings emerged of how the participants still felt stressed, guilty and anxious on occasions regarding their paid work and family lives despite not working full-time. Alongside these affective responses, glimpses emerged of them feeling marginalised. These were suggestive of them occupying a liminal space within the school system which shaped and constrained their relationships with career progression.

This chapter has alluded on several occasions to the difficult 'choices' faced by the participants in juggling their family and working lives. The notion and nature of 'choice' will now be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### 5.2.3 Choices

Whilst all the participants talked about prioritising their family in their decision-making, the personal conflict of meeting the demands of motherhood alongside the demands of their teaching roles caused conflict, guilt and anxiety. Barbara talked about the privilege of having children. For her, there was no doubt that being at home with them whilst they were young was the right thing to do:

I guess I'd always wanted kids. Me and my husband didn't marry until early 30s, so we were blessed to be able to have kids, my sister not being able to have kids. I think there'd never been any doubt in my mind that I would want to be full-time with them, just feeling that it was a privilege and it would pass quickly.

(Barbara, first meeting, 8th February 2016)

Barbara appeared comfortable with this decision or choice to be a full-time mother at that period of her life. Finances were not mentioned as being a barrier in her decision-making. In contrast, Alice describes the tensions between her role and her paid work when her son started school:

We need to get the bedtime routine done, I need to work, and I need to get prepared for the next day. Because school had split my days, I was only there two days, but really I was in a working mind frame for at least four. I can't believe the amount of favours I've already had to call in when things have cropped up: could you take my son to school, could you be there to pick him up? This is ridiculous, it was meant to be easy, they're there, you pick them up, and they're there for the whole day. Yeah, massive, massive impact on me, massive impact on the family as a whole.

(Alice, second meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016)

The clear anguish felt by Alice was apparent, and implied that the relationship between motherhood and working was not simply about choice, but was complex and involved a meshing of gendered expectations regarding motherhood and professionalism. Smith (2016, p.95) makes the point that:

For a woman who is a mother, a professional career thus becomes an extra load, to be fitted in, around and on top of the maternal load.

Alice's perception of motherhood had left her feeling very torn: on one hand, policy and entitlement legislation encouraged her to work whilst, on the other, gendered expectations of motherhood meshed with the expectations associated with her paid role. For Alice, the 'extra load' of her job was too much and contributed to her decision to leave the profession; this limiting of her career appeared situated within her desire to be successful in her family-life (Longhurst, 2008). Smith (2016) argues that despite reforms to equality policy, the expectation that women will take the responsibility for their children remains. This resulted in stress and a strong sense of not being able to cope for Alice. The poignancy of this decision is stark when considered alongside the motivation she described for wanting to work part-time:

I think that from a childcare point of view, going back full-time was never an option. I didn't want to, or I didn't see the point in having children, to put them in full-time childcare. I wanted to spend time with them and also I wanted to come back to work. I didn't want to lose my skills and I thought it was good for the children, seeing me as a role model, a working mum, because you can't have it all but you can try, can't you. Work, be an adult and be a mum. So, yeah, that was the motivational thing for me, wanting the kids to see 'Yeah, mum is doing this, but looks after us as well'.

(Alice, second meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016)

Alice's view is situated within the neo-liberal notion of 'having it all'. Her working was intended to provide Alice with a rewarding career and happy family. Alice's narrative reveals that trying to achieve these notions was not without difficulties and impacted negatively on her well-being in terms of stress and guilt. From a feminist perspective, the notion of 'having it all' is a 'much reduced and distorted message of feminism'

(Campo, 2009 p.65). Whilst women have been successful in gaining access to the public sphere of paid work, the private sphere of housework and childcare have not been similarly embraced by men (ibid.). Campo (2009, p.11) argues that :

Perpetuating the narrative of 'having it all' feminism may make great copy in pages of newspapers that feed on controversy , but it does nothing for the millions of women who struggle daily in a society that still makes combining a career with family life heavy work.

Alice's story indicated that being a part-time teacher and a working mother was '*heavy work*'. Changing her working pattern had not achieved the outcomes she hoped it would. This pattern of working appears no longer as the means of 'having it all' for Alice, instead it was a source of stress and guilt as she tried to manage the competing demands of work and family life.

Louise told how gendered childcare arrangements and responsibilities were implicit in her choices and motivations regarding her career progression:

I would like to get into a role (pastoral position of responsibility) like that but, I mean, it's partly my current situation in that my husband has a very busy work situation, I'm always sort of the one that has to make sure I'm back.

(Louise, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Leah talked similarly of how she and her husband had prioritised his career:

I'm working to my maximum capacity as a part-time worker and a full-time mum and that's the balance and the compromise that I have come to. That means my husband can be full-time, very successful in his job and he can give as many hours as needed for his job and I can then pick up the gaps and make sure that my children get what they need.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Louise's and Leah's comments raised interesting questions about the 'choices' they had made about their careers and whether they were ones they were 'free' to make in the way argued by Hakim (2000). Coleman (2002) argues that possibilities for women are constrained by a stubborn and constant expectation that they will assume the primary responsibility for childcare despite changes in law and policy. For Leah and Louise, such expectations included being able to respond to unexpected circumstances. When Leah talked of her husband not being able to take time off to respond to such circumstances, implicit assumptions that she could, and should, assume this responsibility were apparent:

I worry about my husband's reputation at school, you know, I don't want him to be seen as the person that's having to shoot off for the kids all the time. I guess I think that that's frowned upon because that's something that I've seen at my school."

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

When taking a feminist perspective to analysing care, Hughes (2002) proposes that taking care of an aspect of public life, such as being a headteacher of a school, affords prestige to that type of care. In contrast, taking care of something in the private realm, such as looking after family, is regarded as being relatively trivial. The insights gathered from Leah's life history are aligned with this conception of care and gendered expectations of women assuming the primary role for childcare. Due to dominant discourses around domestic roles (Lazar, 2000) it is more culturally legitimate for a woman to prioritise her family over work in a way that is more difficult for her husband as a man (Dick and Hyde, 2006b). This seems to be what is going on with Leah. She and her husband spent their time providing care for children, albeit in their differing roles as a senior leadership team member and part-time teacher/working mother.

However, his role had been given priority by the family and was seemingly not to be subjected to disruption.

The maintenance of Leah's husband's career within a pattern of continuous availability resonates with the findings of Moreau *et al* (2005). They argue this pattern of availability is aligned with greater opportunity for career advancement. Leah talked about supporting her husband in being very successful, and made it clear his career took priority over hers. She filled in any gaps in childcare and domestic responsibilities, despite her own busy life. In contrast, by deciding not to work full-time in order to prioritise her family, Leah's career appeared to have stalled for now. Her discontinuous availability within a part-time pattern of working had enabled his continuous availability to work and supported a linear approach to his successful career progression.

Leah supported the lack of availability on the part of her husband, stepping into the breach herself whenever possible. Making herself available for her children was an important factor in her not applying for promoted positions as she did not want her husband to be considered problematic in the way she had experienced herself. Leah felt that promoted positions involved having to spend more time at school, along with less flexibility to respond to unexpected childcare issues. This had influenced her unwillingness to consider such positions. By assuming the responsibility for leaving school unexpectedly if necessary, Leah may have put herself in a greater position than her husband of being considered problematic.

Leah and Alice's were not free choices (Hakim, 2000) but were, instead, shaped and constrained by their own subjective views and influences around career, motherhood and family life. When accounting for the under-representation of women in senior leadership posts, Smith (2016, p.112) makes the following point:

There is a need to move towards discourses of androgyny in the construction of parenting, teaching and school leadership, if we are to maximise the involvement of men and women in raising and teaching our children and leading our schools. An emphasis on parenting rather than mothering, in tandem with a notion of professional care as part of the teacher and leader ethic, rather than as a typical of one sex or the other, may provide the foundation for more equal sharing of child-rearing, teaching and school leadership work and bring about real change to the strikingly constant set of constraints.

The model of care shared by Leah and her husband did not appear to be aligned with this proposal. This was also apparent in the conversation with Alice whose husband, she said, had told her 'Your priority is the kids' when she was considering her decision to leave the profession. This occurred at a similar time to him securing a well-paid position of headteacher, and which may have provided the financial scope for Alice to leave her employment due to her unhappiness. The insights from Leah and Alice's life histories show continued patterns of women being willing to sacrifice their own career progression to support their husbands' careers, albeit from an assumed position of financial security.

Whilst the 'choices' made by Leah and Alice, seemingly, prioritise family over their professional lives, it would be too simplistic to assume this meant they were not committed to their paid work or their husbands were not committed to family-life. On the contrary, they appeared to have aligned their professional lives with those of

motherhood, and their choices should be regarded as having taken place within these social constraints (Dick and Hyde, 2006b). Both women were married to senior school leaders who were very likely to be earning more than them. This seems to have played a part in their decision-making and prioritising of their husband's careers:

Because we've prioritised his job basically. We as a family, as a couple have said, your job is more important because you're earning more money. If he has to come out of school, he will do. He has responded if the children have had an accident at school, you know he has been the first person they've managed to get hold of sometimes, which I don't know why because I've tried to set it up so it's not, so it's me. But I think we just decided that he was in the more advanced position in his career, so he should carry on going up that career ladder.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This provides a new insight into the role of partners in decision-making. Smith (2016), when researching the effect of motherhood on women's teaching careers, found that whilst husbands and partners were mentioned in the women's narratives, little reference was made to them in terms of their career decisions. In this research, Alice and Leah's narratives did reference their husbands as being important in their career decisions. Whilst the research of Smith (2016) did not specifically focus on part-time working, Alice's and Leah's husbands had been involved in discussions around the financial and childcare implications of their wives no longer working full-time.

Leah and Alice were the only women married to teachers. They were the only two who talked of prioritising their husband's career to this extent. It is not clear from my data if, or how, these points are linked nor the significance of their husband's higher salary. However, Leah and Alice did have an idea of what their husband's job involved, and were aware that as a senior leader they would be expected to be continuously available



to work. The implications of this were also clear to these two participants: they would also have to be available to pick up the slack in terms of childcare. This awareness acted to discourage Leah and Alice from wanting to work at senior leadership level at the current time. Importantly, this contributes to knowledge around the relationships between part-time working and career progression.

Hakim (2006) proposes that once they have children, women do not have as strong a commitment to their employment and that women make the choice to prioritise their children. This assertion seems to overlook the financial necessity to work and, hence, such a choice will not be possible for all women. Dick and Hyde (2006b) make the point that discourses which reproduce women's subordination in organisational hierarchies may be reproduced if the part-time professional's apparent consent to their position is seen only in terms of the prioritisation of their domestic lives. The data gathered in this research have revealed that the reductionist assertions and assumptions of choices being 'free' are over-simplistic to apply to the participants in this research. Instead, the participants in this research continuously and affectively had to make decisions about how to spend their time.

Having discussed the relationships between motherhood and the nature of choice and its implications in relation to career progression, the next section considers the skills the participants brought to their professional lives as a result of their wider experiences and as mothers. How they felt the school did not always recognise the contributions they made to school life will now be explored.

#### 5.2.4 Skills brought to the role

Amanda talked of the patience and wisdom she felt she brought to her teaching role. She explained how being a mother helped to develop better relationships with challenging pupils in a way that she considered her younger and more inexperienced senior leaders did not achieve:

And I think there's that lack of understanding of how children develop and how their minds work. I think that partly comes with experience. Yes, I am a mum, I've had three kids, I've been through the whole process and I've had nightmares with that as well. I know how kids tick to a certain extent. I just feel you have perhaps more patience even, but I'm not driven by the procedures that they (senior leadership team) want. They think if you follow procedure you've cracked it and I think you have to dig deeper and I think we have to look at them (pupils) a little bit more as individuals. So, I think it's experience if anything.

(Amanda, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This sentiment was echoed by Barbara who felt she did not get as 'wound up' by things that went on in school compared with her younger colleagues. Both Amanda and Barbara had occupied different careers prior to teaching and felt this was of value in seeing the bigger picture and not getting bogged down in the minutiae of school politics. Leah provided an insight into how motherhood, and her wider community role, had developed skills which she considered advantageous to her professional role. She felt these were unappreciated by those likely to be evaluating her substantive professional contribution:

I don't think it's appreciated the strengths you can bring as a part-time worker and the fact that you do other things and have other aspects in your life that you can pull on to help you be a good teacher. I don't think that is fully appreciated. I don't think people even really want to know what you do out of school. I do loads of stuff outside of school, you know coaching, I'm a governor, referee for the football team, and you know all those things that could actually be useful in school.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

On a similar theme, glimpses emerged of Jane's apparent underlying resentment that her employers did not recognise the competing demands for her time. She felt they could not empathise with her. Jane explains this as follows:

I do think it's the children bit that gives you that understanding of what people's limits are, because really if you don't have children your life is obviously different, but you don't have two small people 100% dependent on you. You do have that flexibility to arrive home late, to attend a meeting last minute, to do this, to do that, to take on that workload, or to take on that project. Whereas if you've got two people completely dependent on you 100% of the time... So, being part-time and being a part-time mum, there are subtleties between those two as well, yeah.

(Jane, first meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

Jane's comment provided insight into how she thought those senior leaders without children were unlikely to be empathetic to her situation. She recognised that her own parenting role had given her an insight into how other teacher-parents might navigate working practices at school and in a way that people without children would find difficult to appreciate. Jane considered that parenthood had made her aware of her own, and others', difficulties in fulfilling school-based expectations. This had led to her changing aspects of her own approach to management. She felt that senior managers, who did not have children, were not aware of the difficulties experienced by colleagues, an insight which she perceived could only be gained by first-hand experience of parenthood.

Dick (2010) argues that when people make the decision not to work full-time, they expect their chosen reduction in temporal contribution to be recognised and for the employer to acknowledge the existence of a clearer boundary in terms of their working and home lives. Leah's comment provides insight into her frustration:

So, thinking about my leaders, the ones that haven't got children, would probably think that I'm not giving as much because I've got a family. Because I think, sadly, there's a culture in education that it is a vocation and you give your life to it, there's kind of no end to it. It's just relentless and if you haven't got other distractions then that can be how it is. I know leaders that haven't got families they do other things, but it's easier to plan that in I think, but the culture of education, the culture at my school, you know it's not said, but it's kind of, how could I put it? People will say to you, oh you shouldn't be working at the weekends, oh you shouldn't be working on your day off, but it never feels meant, it always feels as if, what's the word, like a platitude, is that the correct word to use?

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This excerpt shows how Leah's responsibilities to her family meshed with the 'greedy' expectations of her paid role (Edwards, 1993), both competing for her time. Leah recognised how valuable and limited her time was, yet did not feel the encouragement she got from school not to work in the evenings and weekends was genuine. This was because her workload was not reduced in order to support this assertion.

Key insights from this section show that whilst being a mother influenced the participants' career progression in the ways described by Smith (2016), working part-time seemingly exacerbated the negative impacts upon the participants' career progression. Glimpses of anxiety, stress and guilt and which influenced their choices, decisions and motivations regarding their career progression emerged from the data. The participants' choices were not 'free'; instead, they appear to be shaped and constrained by gendered societal expectations around motherhood, along with school-based practices relating to their occupying a part-time pattern of working.

When reflecting on the stories told, and how they were told by the participants, it is important to recognise that an important feature of a storied life is to be able to produce

accounts of events which are culturally recognisable and acceptable (Miller, 2017). None of the participants talked about not working hard, or wanting to spend time away from their children. Presenting themselves in ways that were not aligned with dominant societal discourses seems risky, particularly given the 'moral minefield' of motherhood and the 'gendered moral rationalities' that shape mothering and paid work (ibid.). However, the data gathered from the life histories do include many examples where the participants made personal sacrifices in order to continue their careers. Gatrell (2005) highlights that the commitment of mothers to their paid work is probably greater than before they became mothers when it is considered how they sacrifice their own time and juggle different responsibilities in order to continue working.

This section has focused on the perceptions the participants told around motherhood and its relationship with their working part-time and career progression. In doing so, 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' around senior leadership and senior leaders have also emerged and which have been mentioned as being influential. Because of this, the participants' perceptions of their senior leaders and senior leadership will now be given more consideration in the next section.

### **5.3 Senior management**

Amanda's perception of the senior leaders within her school was quite a negative one. It revealed 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' which Amanda felt indicated a lack of respect for someone of her age and position. This had shaped her decisions around career progression; she made the following point:

I'm not saying I know it all, of course I don't, there's always loads to learn. But I'm just saying the time that I spent with them (SLT) they were ticking boxes. I like the Head but he's actually an older Head as in he's in his 50s, but as I say the majority of his leadership team I think they're just, they like their position, but what they actually offer I don't know. As you can tell, I don't really have a lot of respect for many of them and I should. I feel that I should, but they don't really give you positive direction, they're very good at telling you where you're going wrong and what you should be doing, but it's always based on statistics...

...I just look at them and think, well I'm actually I'm not that far off being old enough to be your mother for some of them really and you're talking down to me. I know they do courses, don't they, to get to that level, but I don't think those courses involve how to deal with different members of staff and appreciate their experience and what they can offer.

(Amanda, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

The reference to 'box ticking', accountability and statistics are aligned with the findings of Smith (2012) who found that, amongst the reasons given for rejecting this level of career progression, women perceived senior leadership roles to involve less contact with the pupils and classroom teaching, and to be more aligned with statistics and performativity. Some women teachers talk of finding the idea of becoming a headteacher, due to a perceived over-emphasis on performativity within a political-educational culture, abhorrent (Smith, 2010). Amanda's rejection of leadership appeared to be more personal and appeared directed against the younger people who were enacting senior leadership roles. She seemed slighted that she, as a more mature woman, should be spoken to with so little respect by members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This appears to have resulted in her not responding well to what they might have to say. No differentiation in terms of individual SLT members was forthcoming, other than for the headteacher who was similar in age to herself. Amanda said that she 'did not wish to be like them'. This view was rooted in her view that the senior leadership

team patronised older, more experienced staff and were more like untrained business people.

In light of this finding about her rejection of career progression due to her age and Amanda's negative references to the age of people occupying SLT positions, I revisited the school workforce data (Gov.uk, 2017b) to explore the statistical relationships between age and career progression. The school workforce data (ibid.) gives the raw numbers of men and women, by age, occupying different posts. I analysed these figures to compare the proportion of men and women in different age categories occupying positions of headship and deputy/assistant headteacher positions. These data are given in Table 5.1. The table shows the percentage (men or women) of the total number (men and women) occupying each position of secondary school senior leadership at each age group (rounded to one significant figure).

**Table 5.1 Comparison by percentage of men and women occupying senior leadership positions by age group**

Age	<39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+
<b>Headteacher</b>						
Men Total: 59.4%	5.4	13.5	16.2	13.5	8.1	2.7
Women Total: 40.5%	2.7	5.4	10.8	10.8	8.1	2.7
Men and women Total 100% (corrected for rounding)	8.1	18.9	27	24.3	16.2	5.4
<b>Deputy/Assistant headteacher</b>						
Men Total: 48%	18.4	10.5	9.4	5.2	3.1	0.5
Women Total: 52%	18.9	11.5	10	6.3	4.2	1
Men and women Total 100% (corrected for rounding)	38	22	19	11.5	7.3	1.6
<b>Proportion of women headteachers compared with men</b>	2.7 : 5.4 1 : 2	5.4: 13.5 1 : 2.5	10.8:16.2 1 : 1.5	10.8:13.5 1 : 2.5	8.1:8.1 1 : 1	2.7 :2.7 1 : 1
<b>Proportion of women deputy/assistant headteachers compared with men</b>	18.9:18.4 1 : 0.97	11.5:10.5 1 : 0.9	10 : 9.4 1 : 0.9	6.3 : 5.2 1 : 0.83	4.2: 3.1 1 :0.73	1 : 0.5 1 :0.5



These figures from my analysis make interesting reading and support Amanda's perceptions that SLT members, particularly at deputy/assistant headteacher levels are composed of both men and women who are relatively young. This mattered to Amanda because she felt that she would not fit into senior leadership because she was too old and too different.

The data show that within any of the given age bands, the highest proportion (38%) of SLT occupying deputy/assistant headteacher roles is younger than age 39. The proportion of SLT (men and women) younger than age 45 was 60%; this indicates that Amanda's comments about the SLT being young have some grounding. The DfE report, *School Leadership in England 2016, Characteristics and Trends* (DfE, 2018), highlights that the median age of senior leaders across both primary and secondary sectors has gone down since 2010, the average age of a headteacher now being 48 compared to 51 in 2010.

The DfE (*ibid.*) reports that, since 2010, it is teachers in their thirties and forties who have replaced those in leadership roles and who have left due to retirement. This corresponds to the time when women are most likely to decrease their paid workload or to take on responsibility for childcare (Worth *et al*, 2018). According to Sharp *et al* (2019), part-time working is most prevalent amongst women of this age. Together, these findings help to explain the outcomes from the statistical analysis in Chapter Two, section 2.3, whereby only 5% of leadership positions were found to be occupied by those working part-time. This suggests that if more women are to achieve senior leadership, more has to be done to enable them to achieve it during their thirties and

forties. Supporting them to do this, part-time, seems an important way forward of achieving this.

Dissent toward senior leadership, those who enacted it and the way it was carried out, was also mentioned by Leah:

I think since the creation of the national qualifications for school leadership and these NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) qualifications a lot of Heads have been given a, I'm trying to think of the word, a, like a bible for leadership: 'These are the steps you take.' and it's very robotic. I feel like our new Head is very much like that and that 'I am the Executive Head and I'm strategic and I don't get my hands dirty.' My old Head was the complete opposite and I had so much more respect for that style of leadership.

(Leah, first meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This is particularly interesting given that her husband was a deputy headteacher. She seemed to tell her story in a way whereby he was distanced from her negativity toward senior leadership.

Glimpses emerged of Leah and Amanda respecting age and experience as being important to being a good leader and a lack of respect for those who did not measure up to their expectations of leadership. The findings emerging so far in this section show a resistance not only to senior leadership but a rejection of the enactment and style of leadership to which they were exposed. This included the dominant discourses and values, or 'sayings' of school leadership, the 'doings', and the socio-political 'relatings' of the role. Dick (2010) argues that women reject the dominate discourses of professionalism, for example presenteeism, competition, performativity and so on, when

reconstructing their identity as a mother who works part-time and this seems to be going on for Leah and Amanda.

Jane recognised the tension that moving up to a more senior position might bring her:

As a teacher it's difficult to say really because a lot of the time I understand educationally why they're (SLT) doing it. So, sometimes I disagree and sometimes I agree if I've got my teacher hat on. As a colleague and as a mum and as a human being, yeah, I don't want to be part of that kind of philosophy, that management philosophy. So, that would always stop me from going to the next thing, but it's nothing that they ever say, it's the culture that they've created.

(Jane, first meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

This insight showed how Jane appreciated why some of the decisions had been made in her school by the SLT but that she did not wish to be part of the 'culture' which she perceived accompanied senior leadership.

Guihen (2017, p.71) found some women deputy headteachers reject becoming a headteacher. This is because of the socio-political practice arrangements of educational policy and school inspection procedures. They regarded them as 'aggressively threatening values-based and empathetic educational practice.' The insights gathered from my research indicate this resistance may begin further back on the career ladder. It appears linked to a rejection by the participants in this research of the senior leadership style or culture. They perceived this as being at odds with their own values and with their own ways of doing things.

For Leah and Alice, their rejection of school leadership as a career option was also situated within their experience of being married to husbands who occupied senior leadership positions in school and being aware of the long hours they worked. Those in school leadership positions regularly work in excess of 48 hours a week (Fuller, *et al.*, 2015). Alice made the following point:

He does work very, very long hours, which you know we knew, we knew. When he first started (as a headteacher) it was a bit of a novelty, we all sort of took it on as a family. The school's only up the road, it's absolutely beautiful, it's a gorgeous building, we used to go up at the weekend and play football because we could, close the gates and we just let the kids run around and we really, really took it on as a family. But that novelty's sort of worn off now as it does, and he does work some incredibly long hours.

(Alice, second meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016)

Whilst presented by both participants as a decision they had made together with their respective husbands, they clearly felt the gendered expectation was upon them to assume the main carer role, so that they could support the long working hours of their husbands. These examples not only provided further details of them prioritising their husband's career over their own (described in section 5.2.3), but were of concern in terms of the practices and practice architectures (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) associated with these more senior roles, and which were resisted by the participants in this research.

Barbara questioned the lack of precedence of part-time colleagues in senior leadership positions in her school. She felt this was an opportunity to widen the diversity of the group, bringing with it the potential to change practices within school:

If there was a part-time SLT you'd have to shape the role a bit wouldn't you to make it work amongst it. So, I mean again that would be fantastic I think if there was a part-timer that would sort of set the ground a bit more wouldn't it? It feels like our school is a

little bit behind the times and it feels a bit male hierarchical dominated.

(Barbara, second meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Barbara's comments are reflected in the findings of the analysis of School Workforce data (Gov.uk, 2017b) described in Chapter Two, section 2.3, and revealed her frustration at the patriarchal nature of management in her school.

Louise and Amanda also recognised the lack of precedence in their schools of anyone working part-time in any management role. This influenced their relationships with their career progression. Both women remarked that the middle-managers in their school were all full-time workers. Jane commented that the woman in her school who did work on the senior leadership team seemed to be in school full-time, despite this not being her pattern of working.

Key findings from this section show alignment with those of Morley (2014) who highlights that in higher education, despite white early and mid-career women berating the absence of women at senior leadership, many did not desire such positions. Additional insight into this resistance to senior leadership emerges from my research: both the practices involved in senior leadership, and the style and culture in which it was carried out. The enactment of the perceived 'sayings, 'doings' and 'relatings' of senior leadership was not something the participants aspired to achieve as it was not aligned with their own values and perceptions of what good leadership entailed.

#### 5.4 Summary

This chapter has explored how motherhood has influenced the participants' choices in relation to their career progression. It has shown that their choices were not 'free' in the way advocated by Hakim, (2000). Instead the women made affective choices that appear situated within dominant discourses around motherhood. This did not mean they lacked commitment. Instead, strong indications emerged of the participants feeling they had 'more to prove' because they did not work full-time and due to a sense of their own marginalisation. The 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' revealed an awareness by the participants of how part-time colleagues were regarded in their schools, and how they themselves had been treated. This shaped their perceptions of a narrative around this pattern of working, and those who enact it, which was not always positive. The participants did not wish to align themselves with being thought about in this way despite them perceiving they were at risk of being so.

The analysis of the rich life history data, within the framework of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014), has been helpful in examining what happens when part-time women teachers 'come together' (Ronnerman *et al*, 2017) to work with their senior leaders. The participants' perceptions of the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) around their working pattern, and how this influences their relationships with career progression, have enabled the conceptualisation of these everyday practices. This helps to understand and explain the subjective realities of life for these participants at the interface of part-time working and family life. In doing so, a new contribution to knowledge has emerged which adds to the development of an understanding of why so few school leadership roles are occupied by those working on a part-time basis.

The data suggested negative perceptions by the participants of senior leadership, and those who enacted it within their schools. Views were discussed which indicated they did not wish to align themselves with these perceptions and which, therefore, discouraged their aspirations to leadership positions. The data were suggestive of how, rather than simply being resigned to and accepting of their current limited opportunities for leadership, aspiration to such positions of senior leadership was also resisted by the participants. This resistance appeared situated at the interface of not wishing to return to full-time working, the re-alignment of their professional identities with that of being working mothers/carers, and a rejection of the dominant discourses and culture relating to professionalism and leadership (Dick, 2010).

Having highlighted the participants' affective responses in terms of guilt, stress and anxiety, along with having insufficient time to do everything they felt they needed to do, the next chapter builds on these findings to explore how the participants navigated the juggling and competing demands for their insufficient amounts of time. In doing so, the tensions described by the participants will be explored in more detail.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Analysis of the 'Tensions' theme**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This final chapter of analysis will explore how having limited and insufficient time created tensions for the participants and how these influenced their career progression.

This is based on the third theme (Tensions) emerging from the thematic analysis. The analysis will answer the last of my research questions:

- How do the women navigate the tensions between their various roles, and how does this impact on their choices in relation to career progression?

Findings emerged from the analysis in Chapter Four of how a large workload left the participants in this research with insufficient time to balance their working and home responsibilities. Hence, the data are theorised in this chapter in relation to time. The rationale for this decision was discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.6. This chapter will analyse and theorise the data in relation to the ages of the participants' children, the compartmentalisation of time and, finally, by considering flexibility and time. The discussion begins by outlining the ways in which the ages of their children impacted on the participants' means of managing their time.

#### **6.2 Relationships between the age of their children and managing time**

Time as a commodity (Adam, 2004) was in short supply for Amanda. As the eldest of the participants she had taken the decision not to work full-time due to her own health, and to provide care for her elderly mother. She made the following point:



Well I think because I'm older, time for me is more about quality of life now. I can totally take on board if you've got a young family, of course you need to be with your children, but for me it's about, I want a work/life balance. I want to get to the weekends and if the sun's shining outside and want to go walking for the day. I want to be able to grab my walking boots and off I go, instead of thinking, yeah but I've got that stuff to mark and I need to get those reports done, I need to do this and I need to do that. I want to work; I want to fit all the things I have to do into my working time so that when it is my time, I'm free to do what I want to do. I'm also going to be a grandmother at the end of the year-

\* Oh lovely.

I'm so excited about that I can't describe, but again you know this panic in the back of my mind just thinking how I am going to have time to be a fun grandmother and spend time with my grandchild. I've got so much to do, that's awful. Why am I thinking like that at my age, you know, I really should be thinking, that's fantastic, right I've got the weekends I'll be able to, you know, take them out and whatever.

(Amanda, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This suggests that time is a commodity in short supply, and not just for those with small children. Amanda felt that she did not have enough time to do her job, to be the carer and grandmother she wanted to be, and to have time for herself. Instead, her work-life, family responsibilities and opportunities to enhance her own personal wellbeing jostled and competed for the limited time available to her. Amanda's lack of time had an affective dimension which was revealed through her references to 'panic' and 'awful'. Her guilt about potentially not being able to spend time with her grandchild was apparent and heartfelt.

The participants engaged in strategies to 'borrow' time or 'swap' time from one scarce source to another. Amanda's guilt was situated in the extension of her mothering role to that of becoming a grandmother and which meant that she would need to find more time

to enjoy this role. Where she was going to borrow or swap this time from was causing her concern. Amanda was clearly under strain and was concerned about the impact that her recent decision to begin working four days, rather than three, each week was going to have on her family-life and health. This decision had been taken to try and resolve the stress she felt under, and because she could not fit her paid work into three days.

Amanda's comments provide an insight into how her working part-time rather than full-time still presented her with difficult decisions about how to spend her insufficient amount(s) of time. Not working full-time still did not enable Amanda to spend time as she would have liked, neither in terms of meeting the demands of her paid work nor in her family life. Amanda's comments resonate with those of Smith (2016) regarding the guilt described by teachers because they are not able to devote themselves fully to their family or professional roles. Furthermore, the findings show that part-time, rather than full-time, working was still not the answer to her problems. Amanda implied, with sadness, that the demands of her job would come first over her going for a walk in the sunshine, but she was clearly more conflicted when talking about missing out on time with her family. Gatrell (2005 p, 175) makes the following point:

Mothers were prepared to give up a great deal and to work to the point of exhaustion both in the workplace and at home, so as not to let any of their roles suffer. Without exception, the women did not sacrifice time spent on paid work to accommodate their children, but relinquished the time that had previously spent on themselves.

Amanda's insights show that 'time for herself', which could be manifested in putting on her walking boots, was still not easily attainable even though her own children no longer lived with her. This provides a glimpse into the tensions involved in juggling

family life with part-time working in middle-age. This provides insight into how her mothering role continued to shape her decisions and indicates that her choices were still shaped by gendered expectations of motherhood.

The tensions felt by Amanda appeared situated within a relationship with time which was linear and related to her own ageing. However, this linearity was intertwined with feminised and cyclical conceptions of time (Davies, 1990). She was soon to resume a more prominent caring role within the gendered expectations of motherhood, but which now related to her becoming a grandmother. Amanda's comments gave an insight into how she was positioning herself into older age, and how this was being shaped by the expectations she felt upon her as a woman to remain a carer to both her own mother, children and, soon to be, grandchild. Her joy at becoming a grandmother was tempered with not having time for herself, and she felt guilty for thinking like this. These thoughts reflect the paraphrasing of Marx by the Personal Narratives groups (1989, p.5):

Women make their own lives and life histories, but they do so under conditions not of their choosing.

The sense of balance and personal autonomy that this pattern of working was intended to give Amanda was not happening for her. Instead, it was creating obstacles to her wellbeing (Negrey, 1993). She was clearly beginning to regret working an additional day each week. Negrey (1993) argues that time for family and other interests is crucial to those whose identities are distributed across both the workplace and other activities. She argues further that greedy jobs which limit the opportunities for self-expression offered by these off-the-job activities can lead to resentment. Amanda's affective relationships with time offered glimpses into this how this was burgeoning.

Louise's reference to the past, present and future revealed how temporality was an important aspect of the decision-making regarding her career. This indicated that her choice-making was complex and situated within and constrained by time (Burke *et al*, 2017). Louise provides a view from her perspective as the mother of the most, and youngest children:

In my opinion, I feel that, at the moment, with three reasonably young children, well one of them is still young – at three, right now I wouldn't want to be getting in to more school stuff. I am at the point where, if anything, I would be thinking more of stepping away from school stuff but there have been times in the recent past when I have been thinking it would be nice to be doing a bit more in that direction and potentially in the future I might consider.

(Louise first meeting, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016)

This excerpt offers an insight into the complexity and conflict regarding Louise's present and future representation(s) of herself, or *possible selves* (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.954):

Possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation. Possible selves are the cognitive components of hopes, fear, goals, and threats, and they give the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organisation and direction to these dynamics.

Stevenson and Clegg (2013) argue that possible selves can serve to influence motivation in ways that are both cognitive and affective. For Louise, the affective influences implicit with her mothering role to three young children, and her understanding of the inflexible and dominant discourses around paid workload, had resulted in her working

twelve-hour days. Louise's seemingly reticent expectations of her future career, and possible self, appeared situated within managing the here and now.

Louise's view of her possible future self did not seem to involve a long-term projection in terms of her career. Current constraints made such imaginings difficult. Instead, her perceptions of herself in the future appeared constrained to the shorter term as she grappled with the demands within her work and home-life timescapes. As a consequence, her now self was shaped by societal reality constraints (Markus and Nurius (1986) around her role as a mother as well as the expectations and demands of paid work. Glimpses of the tension between her desired and 'ought to' possible selves emerged. Louise seemed resigned to how her current role as the primary carer for her children currently limited her career aspirations, yet she was mindful of what opportunities might be possible in the future.

Louise wished to be well regarded at work and a good mother at home, and so took action to facilitate this possible self (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Louise had previously experienced a negative response from a senior leader (discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.2.1) due to her lateness which left her feeling marginalised and upset. This incident resonates with the arguments of Burke *et al* (2017) who propose that social location/space/position all shape people's relationships with time and, hence, their resources to be on time are not the same. Being badly thought of, and being subjected to further reprimand, was part of a possible self she wished to avoid. She therefore acted to navigate her paid workload alongside the responsibilities at home by employing a nanny for more hours than she herself was paid. She explained her decision as follows:

But it means then that I can get everything, just about everything done for work that I need to do in those three days. So I don't often have to bring work home, which is hugely advantageous, because as soon as I'm at home you know I'm hit with, Mummy can do you this, that and the other. Also just from the point of view, if I had to do things with the children and then start doing work after they'd gone to bed, I'd just be feeling so tired. So, I find it much easier to get everything done at school, leave later than quite a few people at school because I'm getting it all done there, but yeah it does mean it's contained within the three days that I work.

(Louise, first meeting, 23rd March 2016)

Louise's working with her children's nanny to meet the different demands for her time revealed Louise to have more time and more flexibility than the other participants. Negrey (1993) argues that in order to avoid the impossibilities of being in more than one place at once, flexible scheduling and workers' control over scheduling enhances the opportunities to participate in various activities. Whilst Louise had no control over her scheduling at work, she was able to achieve flexibility and control at home by temporarily handing over her domestic and caring responsibilities for relatively long periods of time.

The large number of paid hours of care, domestic responsibility and time borrowed from the nanny to 'replace' Louise in the home is clear. Louise's decision to employ a nanny on the days she worked at school replaced one female carer, her as the mother, with that of another during the hours the children were likely to need most care and attention. This meant she could remain in the teaching workforce. The decision to employ a nanny was financial in respect of the cost of nursery fees for three children but also provided a consistent approach to the family's childcare provision. Burke *et al* (2017) argue that the emotional labour involved in women's nurturing of relationships is

often excluded from discourse around time management due to it being made invisible or undervalued. However, Louise's story makes the financial, emotional and time-related cost of enabling a parent to remain in the teaching workforce (Hughes, 2002) more visible.

Glimpses emerged of Louise occupying a timescape (Adam, 1990, 2004) which showed her relationships with time and space to be different to the experiences described by the other participants. Louise had 'bought' more time at school by 'borrowing' time from her nanny in order to respond to the heavy demands of her paid workload. Louise did not need to worry about unexpected childcare issues when she was at school. As a result, Louise was able to separate both her working time and space from her home-life and caring responsibilities in a way not experienced by the other participants. This 'buying' of time and care from by subcontracting feminine cyclical time (Adam, 2004) to the nanny meant she had enabled large blocks of uninterrupted patriarchal and linear time (ibid.) at school:

I suppose for me I find it quite helpful being three consecutive days. It means that Wednesday morning I arrive at school, suddenly I switch into teacher mode and I don't really get out of that until Friday evening. It really is as if there's a switch that's going on in my brain, which can make it difficult actually to deal with home stuff in those three work days and vice versa, school work in the home days, if I do have to do one or the other. So compartmentalising is, I find useful, but at the same time you know when these little interruptions, no not really interruptions, it's just things that happen, you know when I have to make the switch it can sort of be more difficult.

(Louise, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

During the time and space of her day, Louise's movements in and out of public and personal boundaries (Tamboukou, 2000) were not as frenetic as those described by the other participants. It is no surprise, perhaps, that Louise did not appear or talk about being stressed to the extent experienced by some of the other participants. However, not all working women would be in a financial position to employ a nanny and are left to struggle, navigating paid work with domestic responsibilities.

During her three days of paid work, Louise appears to have assumed a more patriarchal and linear (Adam, 1995) relationship with time. She followed the rhythm of the timetabled school day and then came home after she had completed her work. This offered glimpses of Louise managing her time in a way that was less emotionally costly. The societal and gendered responsibilities of motherhood were lifted for the time when the nanny was working and this enabled her to focus on her teaching role and to complete her work without bringing it home. She did not talk of worrying about her home timescape responsibilities when she was at work, or vice versa.

The necessity to transition and straddle across work and home timescapes was minimalised in the way Louise managed her time and may well have contributed to her appearing to be less stressed and guilty than the other participants, particularly those with younger children. Louise seemed better able to cope with the inflexibility and lack of control over scheduling at work and was, therefore, able to take part in non-work activities in the way she wished. When she was not at school, Louise felt she was able to devote herself to the needs of her children and family life. For Louise, this



arrangement seemed to work well and enabled her to achieve the work-life balance she hoped for.

Leah's narrative provides insight from a perspective of having older school-age children:

My children are getting a lot from seeing me go to work and they know that I work hard and they see me marking and they're part of that more now. I think that gives them a lot of lessons in life and it's not so stereotyped. They see that I think that my job is very valuable and important and they respect that. And if you speak to them, they wouldn't want me to work more time, they really, really value my Thursdays and Fridays when I take them to school, when I pick them up from school, because twice I've been offered extra days recently, and I've spoken to them about it and they've said, please don't do it Mum.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

A tension seemed to exist between her present self, and a possible future self (Markus and Nurius, 1986) in which her management skills would be used again. Whilst being agentic in wishing to be a positive role-model for her children as a hard-working mum, Leah was concerned about taking on more days of paid work. She felt constrained by the views of her children and the inflexibility of school practices in terms of when she began and finished her working day. Leah was mindful that resuming full-time working would be the first step to the re-booting of her career. To make the leap back to full-time employment was clearly not an easy decision for her. Markus and Nurius (1986) make the following point:

The selves of the past that remain and that are carried within the self-concept as possible selves are representative of the individual's enduring concerns and the actions that gave rise to these concerns.

Leah talked of the guilt she felt about not spending enough time with her first child when he was a baby (she returned to work full-time before making the decision to not work full-time after the birth of her second child):

I had to put my child into nursery, felt guilty all the time, very long days for him. Thankfully on a Friday my mum had him for a day so I did feel that was, at least I was giving him a little bit. I just felt incredibly guilty because the pastoral roles are very emotionally challenging. You're taking on board lots of other people's problems and trying to solve them for them. I felt that by that stage I hadn't got as much room for those other people's problems because I'd now got my own child and I needed more headspace for him.

(Leah, first meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016)

The notion of headspace referred to in the excerpt of conversation appears situated within Leah's affective relationship with time: the panic and anxiety associated with having to think about and juggle too many things at once, within and across different timescapes became impossible. This fuelled further panic, anxiety and feelings of inadequacy. When working full-time after the birth of her first child, Leah felt guilty that her temporal contribution within home and work-life timescapes was inadequate to achieve the standards she had set for herself. Her decision to not work full-time was agentic in terms of her trying to do things to a better standard, as well as finding more time for her son:

I think when I was just working without my children my whole world was my work, so that was my focus all the time. After I'd had my eldest I thought that my memory was going. But actually I was talking to other parents and talking to my mum, I realised that you're just trying to remember so much and trying to keep on top of so much and I didn't want to be forgetting things for my own child. For example, at school, I wanted to be there and present for him and you know able to support him emotionally and not having all the work stuff just taking over my life, which it could at a certain time it could do that. I just felt like I couldn't divide myself between the two anymore and I had to prioritise and I had to give that

space, that thinking time, that emotional time I suppose for my own children and that was more important really.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Leah's 'choices' seem influenced by, and situated within, her past self, and the avoidance of a future self which might involve her feeling as guilty and over-whelmed as she had done in her past self. The insights revealed guilt to be a powerful influence and motivation in Leah's representation of herself. Burke *et al* (2017, p.17) make the point that we move through life making decisions about what we do, and how we do it, due to personal complex 'maps' of time of which we are largely unaware. They argue that:

These 'choices' are enabled through our relation to the world around us; our 'possible geographies' are constructed through specific exposure to different kinds of experiences and opportunities (or not).

Leah's representation of herself in the past and in the future seem intimately connected to her representation of self in the now self or current self (Markus and Nurius, 1986). For now, this seemed to shape her decision not to resume full-time working. Whilst the insights provided by Leah resonate with Burke *et al* (2017) in terms of her past experiences influencing her choice or not to work full-time in the near future, Leah was aware of her own time 'map' in making this decision and the implications for this in terms of the 'possible geography' of her career progression.

Leah had set very high personal standards for herself at work, at home and in the wider community. Leah talked on several occasions about having something to prove

(discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.2.2). She was not clear about who she was trying to prove herself to, but clearly felt a pressure to keep up with her husband's family:

You know, achieving and being a successful mum and being a success in work as well. And I have to say my mother-in-law is chair of governors, my sister-in-law and his eldest sister is a chair of governors and my brother-in-law was on the governing body as well and that actually made me think I could be a governor. They're all a little bit older than me you see, so I think seeing them be successful has helped to push me on a bit. In some ways I've always been very competitive, so I think maybe there's a little bit of that competitive side in me that thinks, no, I can do that, and I can do that, and I can achieve that, and I've got to prove myself that I'm not just a part-time worker.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Leah's use of the word 'just' in her last sentence seems to suggest her awareness of the negative 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' she had experienced in relation to part-time working. She appeared keen to 'prove something' (discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.2.2) in order to show she was better than the narrative she perceived around this pattern of working. Her current or now self also seemed motivated by Leah's previous experience as a middle leader in school. This role had given her a voice in the past, and a sense of being valued for the contribution she made. Leah clearly missed these aspects of her work as they did not seem to be happening for her in her current role.

Leah's feelings of having something to prove seemed situated within the tension of knowing her skills and experiences were currently under-utilised at work and the constraints she perceived in resuming her career at this higher level. This resonates with the point made by Rogers (1951): self-regard depends on discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self. Leah appeared to be taking advantage of the opportunities

available within her community to share her considerable skills and to gain some personal measure of success through her own agency.

As a result, the community and the school where she was a governor were benefitting from these skills rather than the school which employed her. Leah's school had an experienced and skilled middle-manager on their staff team. She was highly dedicated to her work but was not able to contribute all her valuable skills due to their rigidity in practice of employing middle-managers only on a full-time basis. This resonates with the findings of Sharp *et al* (2019 p.23) who make the following point:

The belief that leadership is incompatible with part-time and flexible working is damaging to individuals and the profession as a whole. Restricting leadership to those willing and able to work full-time also limits the pool of talent and means that teachers have to choose between leadership and part-time/flexible working.

This is of concern because women are missing from the school system at positions of senior management (Chapter Two, section 2.3 and Chapter Five, section 5.4). This has a moral dimension in terms of equality of opportunity and enabling women to fulfil their potential without having to choose between work and family. It also seems likely to maintain hegemony, thereby limiting the potential for future change. Sharp *et al* (2019 p. 23) go on to make the following point which suggests how such hegemony might be challenged:

Part-time and flexible working patterns for middle or senior leaders can encourage a more distributed model of leadership and help to provide effective succession planning. They also provide role models for other staff.

Findings from this section show there is still a long way to go in achieving this proposal in the participants' schools. It seems sensible to suggest, based on what has emerged from the data collected in this research, that any resistance to senior leadership (discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.3) would also need to be addressed before this can happen, largely through changing the style and culture of how leadership is enacted.

The ages of both the participants and their children provided different tensions in terms of how they managed their limited and insufficient amounts of time. This involved fluidity and a flexible set of strategies to respond to the changing needs of their families. The participants described different difficulties and ways of trying to manage their time that were situated within their own family circumstances and which were partly explained by the particular age-related needs of their children. It is argued, therefore, that consideration needs to be given to the changing needs of teachers over time in terms of trying to accommodate their pattern of flexible working.

Insights emerged of the participants' possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986) being constrained and shaped by inflexible practices and patriarchal models of time at work. These were situated within the patriarchal assumption of being continuously available to work. This was at odds with the cyclical nature of feminised time at home. Despite this, insights emerged which provided glimpses of the participants wishing to be powerful and independent in their own lives.

This section has alluded to the notions of headspace and ring-fencing of time in the participants' relationships with time and space. This 'compartmentalising' will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **6.3 Compartmentalising time**

When Jane underwent transition in time and space across the timescapes of her paid and non-paid roles this was a source of tension and anxiety:

The transition times are difficult, so when I'm leaving the house to go to work and when I'm on the way home or trying to leave work and on the way home, those transition times are quite tricky. There's tensions and pulls from all directions. And on a Wednesday and Friday when I leave at 12.30, or I'm supposed to leave at 12.30, there's a lot of tension and pulls. For example, today I haven't finished, I haven't done what I need to do, but I'm better now at saying, well I'm afraid that's your time.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Jane went on to mention that she disagreed with the behaviour of another part-time colleague who, instead of leaving at 12.30 pm like her, stayed in school to catch up with her work. Whilst Jane tried to manage her own time within the apparent constraints of rigid and inflexible practices and policies at school, there appeared to be a clearer demarcation about when she left the school premises. Jane's comment implied further negativity and resentment toward her employer and an attempt to maintain a degree of control over when she left school. This may have been linked to the accumulating layers of financial disadvantage and inequality she alluded to, and which were discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.2.

According to Burke *et al* (2017, p.9), due to the interconnected nature of our different timescapes, our experiences across them are not always smooth. They are often in tension due to the different expectations shaping each timescape. They make the following point:

We experience and live timescapes through our moving across and between the different rhythms, being and doing, which are always produced in time and space.

Jane seemed to be trying to control where and how she spent her time, by wanting to separate her work and home timescapes. However, and as her comments allude to, this was not without its difficulties at the points of transition. Jane seemed to recognise the movement described above by Burke *et al* (2017) in terms of the 'tensions and pulls' as she moved across and within timescapes. She acknowledged how difficult it was for her to leave on time, although she was clearly keen to do so. Maintaining an element of control over this transition was clearly important to her:

As soon as I've left work, I feel a bit of tension when I'm leaving work, oh should I just make that phone call, oh should I just go and do that, but once I've left work, no. I find that quite easy to think, right no I'm not going to look at emails, I'm not going to do any work, I'm not going to do anything until the kids have gone to bed, because the Wednesday and Friday is a time where they can have their friends back for tea or we can have time together. So that's particular examples of how I've ring-fenced time.

(Jane, second meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

This excerpt shows that the transition across Jane's working and home-life timescapes could be bumpy in nature. Leaving at lunchtime when the normalised working day ended later in the afternoon contributed to her difficulties in leaving on time. This illustrates how her working pattern, not following the dominant and institutionally



structured model of time, resulted in stress. Jane's movement across timescapes seemed to involve more than physically transitioning between work and home. It also appears to have involved the cognitive juggling of time and space in order to meet the different demands associated across and within these different timescapes. The normalisation of the practice of doing school work beyond her working day, meant that she could not compartmentalise her time and space in the way she wanted to achieve. Earlier in our second meeting, Jane alluded to the notion of headspace:

It's not necessarily about the time that you're there is it, it's about how much headspace you've got available for it when you've got a small child at home.

(Jane, first meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

Jane seemed to have found juggling the expectations and temporal demands of different timescapes difficult at times. She explained that when her children were younger, she struggled to think about all the aspects of her paid role alongside the needs of a small child. This was a source of anxiety and stress to her when at work. Jane did in the past, consider leaving paid work to devote her time to her daughter, to whom she felt she was not giving her full attention when at home. In this sense, whilst the demands and expectations of work had not changed with the arrival of her daughter, her home-life suddenly demanded more of her time and commitment. This was clearly difficult to manage both in the home and at work. Jane was pleased she had decided to continue with her paid role even though she looked back on that time with stress, guilt and anxiety. She recognised that this had helped to maintain her career. In doing so, she had maintained the more continuous and linear pattern to her career and which Moreau *et al* (2005) argue is advantageous to progression in the teaching profession.

Jane considered the caring responsibilities of a very young child to be a major factor in the difficulties she experienced at that time. This offers a glimpse into how trying to make career decisions at such a time might be very stressful and may lead to decisions that are regretted later. I argue therefore, that at the time when women are making decisions about their careers, they may be in a vulnerable state either physically, emotionally or both due to the possible life changes they have undergone by having a baby. In this sense, decisions relating to working patterns may be discussed and made when women might not be at their strongest in terms of physical and emotional health and when, therefore, they may well need additional support.

Leah provided an additional insight into how she tried to manage her time. She tried to compartmentalise where and when she completed different tasks. This was one of the strategies she used to manage the insufficient time she had available:

I think perhaps working part-time has helped me to do that to be fair, it's given me the skills to do that and I've relaxed into that more and I thought, when I'm at work, I'm working, it's intense, I'm working hard, but actually when I'm at home I have the right to switch off. That's not that I don't answer my emails still, on a Thursday and a Friday. I'm still checking work emails but it's a quick thing, fired back so that on a Monday I'm not, or on a Sunday night I've not got a massive list, but I do switch off better I think, so I deal with that quickly and then I'm back on, right this is my priority today."

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Leah was aware that she 'borrowed' time from her home timescape (Adam, 1990, 2004), to quickly respond to emails when she was not at work. The implications of not keeping up to date with emails appeared to be a source of stress and, on balance, borrowing time was a compromise she seemed prepared to make to avoid these negative feelings.

Leah's rich narrative revealed her complex and intermingling relationships with time, space and gendered social expectations. This resulted in difficult checks and balances being made regarding how to juggle the competing demands for her time. This resonates with the findings of Edwards (1993) who argues that the multiplicity of tasks women undertake mean that conceptions of time which are clock-time or task-defined do not truly capture the allocation of mental time or forms of consciousness required to juggle their responsibilities.

In addition, this finding resonates with the findings of Burke *et al* (2017) who point out that institutions impose structures, regulations and rhythms around time without considering the multiple and various demands people are subject to across their different timescapes. It is, they argue, left to individuals to use their competencies and skills to manage their time. Leah was evidently skilled at managing her time within these constraints, but this was not without an emotional cost. The insights emerging from the participants' life histories showed that juggling their paid work, alongside their caring responsibilities, required them to be thinking about their families when they were working and vice versa with multiple stressful cognitive transitions across their work and home timescapes.

Their frequent physical and cognitive traversing of school and home timescapes was one invisible and skilled way that Leah and Jane appeared to adopt to help manage their time. This state of flux was the way they managed their time. However, the apparent necessity to always be thinking about the next thing they had to do, and which this model of time management seemed to be underpinned by, was a source of stress and

anxiety. This supports the notion that each participant's way of navigating their relationships with time and space was situated within timescapes personal to her.

The ways they each juggled their responsibilities within their own relationships with time and space were highly subjective. The participants in this research managed their time within and across different spaces, frequently flitting backwards and forwards within and between them. Burke *et al* (2017) argue that due to their deeply contextual nature timescapes are linked to personhood and difference. They propose that this means time is not neutral or linear, nor is it something that is possessed or managed in a straightforward way. Hence, if, as Adam (1995) proposes, time and space are inseparable, their part-time working is, I propose, situated within a timescape (Adam, 1990, 2004) unique to them and their relationships with time.

### **6.3.1 Domestic responsibilities**

One way that Leah tried to reduce her workload in the home, and to 'buy' time with her family, was by employing or 'borrowing' time from a cleaner. Maushart (2002) argues that whilst women rejected 'wife-work' on an intellectual basis a long time ago, on an emotional and behavioural basis they are still to be found within this patriarchal paradigm. Leah's life history revealed the assumption that cleaning the house was her responsibility on top of her paid work and primary care role for her children. In making and overseeing these arrangements it might be argued that she was not fully rejecting the societal and gendered expectations argued by Maushart (2002) and was thereby not exposing herself to risk of being considered selfish (*ibid.*). Employing the cleaner was

an arrangement she was desperate to maintain despite her husband's concern relating to the financial cost:

I mean, I've always said to my husband, please let me keep our cleaner. It's just marvellous otherwise I'd spend the whole day Sunday not spending quality time with the children cleaning and then probably up all night doing my marking and things.

(Leah, second meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016)

Leah's experience appears aligned with the arguments of Negrey (1993) who proposes that reduced working does not challenge gender relations but, instead, tends to reinforce them. Not only does part-time working have a negative gender impact on equality in the workplace, it also has a negative impact on the division of care and domestic responsibilities at home with such a division becoming even more unequal (Moreau, 2018). The excerpt, above, provides an example of Leah's relationships with gendered and societal expectations regarding domestic responsibilities and the management of time. Banyard (2010, p.83) argues that 'women still shoulder the bulk of caring and housework at home'. Leah's comment implied that this 'bulk' remained her responsibility even though this was 'subcontracted' work to the paid cleaner, most likely a woman. It appears, however, that her being able to keep the cleaner was precarious in nature and was largely situated within her husband's decision-making, gendered expectations of domestic roles and financial circumstances.

Leah was aware that this quality time with her family might be in jeopardy should her husband decide that paying for a cleaner was no longer viable, and this too was a cause of anxiety to her. It is important to recognise, however, that not all women are likely to

be able to afford for someone to clean their house, and the navigation of this domestic job alongside their paid employment seems likely to remain a struggle.

Banyard (2010) made the point that it is difficult to compete for career progression with people who do not have the responsibilities and combined pressures for picking children up from school, making dinner and which result in limiting career progression. This research provided further insight into this finding: Leah's life history revealed how the workload from school, along with her other activities such as governorship and being a football referee, described previously, added additional pressure to an already busy family-life. The buying of quality time, by not doing the cleaning herself, was situated within a prioritisation of being with and available to her family and in carrying on with her community-based activities.

The bumpiness associated with difficult crossings and movement between timescapes was described by Alice. The affective response she felt when this did not go well is apparent:

But there's been too many times where I've walked in from work, he's (husband) walked in from work and we just argue over, right who's going to bath the kids, one of us needs to bath the kids. You know this is ridiculous and I know so many people do it, so many people make it work, but it's more often than not, I'm like I think one of us needs to be grounded at the moment and it's easier for me.

(Alice, second meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016)

This shows that her transitioning between the two roles and across timescapes did not always go smoothly, and left Alice feeling dissatisfied. The excerpt from Alice's life history showed how being tired after a day's work did not relieve her from assuming her

role as a mother as soon as she walked through the door at home. At this time her work-life-balance was not as she wished it to be and provided another reason for her decision to leave her teaching role.

Being 'grounded' in the sense described by Alice meant 'being there' (Ribbens, 1994) for her family. This comment from Alice provided insight into the harsh self-critic she was. The conflict she described between herself and her husband, for who should take the role of carer when bathing their children was one that she felt the responsibility to resolve. By not 'being there' (ibid.) as the main carer for her children, Alice had seemingly stepped out of her role, albeit temporarily, as the main carer for her children, with consequences she did not like and which she, seemingly, took responsibility for. Hughes (2002) talks of women who put their own interests first, over that of the family, being exposed to the risk of being considered selfish by both themselves and others. This, she argues, is due to conflict with the notion of motherhood requiring mothers to put their children first. Inflexibility in the workplace, and from her husband in this instance, stopped Alice being the working mother self that she wanted to be.

Key findings from this section have highlighted the sophisticated skills of time management employed by the women. This involved them traversing timescapes in which the conceptualisations of time were different. The notion of clock-time seems particularly relevant within the school setting where calendars, timetables and teaching periods are all planned to patriarchal and linear time (Hughes, 2002). However, their roles as carers showed the participants having to respond to the needs and time demands of others within a model which was aligned with feminine time. This research has

produced findings which indicate that being situated within one model of time consciousness, or timescape (Adam, 1990, 2004), at any given time, oversimplified how the participants in this research lived their lives and how traversing these timescapes was stressful. Due to the difficulties in separating time and space that their part-time working both shaped and was shaped by, it is proposed that they occupied their own subjective timescapes as women who work part-time in secondary schools.

The next section will explore the importance to the women of having flexibility in the ways they managed their time.

#### **6.4 Flexibility and time**

In this section having flexibility in terms of how and where the participants' time could be managed is considered through the notion of being able to respond to unexpected events, such as the illness of a child.

Not having the scope or flexibility to respond to the unexpected needs of their children, because they were at work, emerged as a source of anxiety for those participants with younger children. For Alice, her back-up plan expected her own mother to step in and look after the children at short notice if required:

My mum is amazing and she'll do anything for me, but I just feel like I was putting on her more and more and more and more, I haven't had children to do this.

(Alice, second meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016)



When practices relating to timetabling meant that her mother was no longer able to look after the children on these days, this impacted negatively on Alice's ability to remain working.

For Jane, the need for flexibility to respond to unexpected family situations emerged as being misaligned with the pursuit of career progression:

So, there's a very inflexible attitude (at work) to pressures that might come from home. I mean that does stop me, whether that's a barrier then in terms of, and shapes my attitude to progress, yes, I suppose it does. Because as you get higher up and the responsibility is greater, the flexibility maybe well be even less won't it? Because the expectations are greater and there are certain things that you'll need to be doing, so there'll be even more inflexibility and I don't want to be part of a system that makes people work like that and in those conditions.

(Jane, first meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

Jane's perception that a senior management position would involve less flexibility appears again to be linked to a narrative of professionalism linked with presenteeism (Dick and Hyde, 2006b). It could be argued, however, that a senior position, which brings with it more managerial duties and less timetabled time in the classroom, might enable more flexibility to respond to unexpected childcare difficulties and enable the sudden expectation to borrow or squeeze time. Furthermore, Moreau and Robertson (2017) found that those in senior positions felt secure and knowledgeable enough about the rules of the field and their caring role to speak out about needing flexibility in their time management compared to their junior colleagues.

Jane pointed out how she used her own agency, and experience as a parent, in her middle-management position. She managed deadlines for herself and her team, albeit within the apparent constraints of inflexible practices situated within patriarchal models of time. She did this by using her role to timetable, as far as possible, her departmental team in a way that suited their preferences and commitments. Burke *et al* (2017) argue that feminised and cyclical perceptions of time that give importance to reproduction and domestic life are marginalised, yet this was something Jane seemed mindful of and was trying to address.

Jane and Alice were trying to achieve more flexibility with regard to managing their time and family responsibilities. Full-time working was perceived to reduce such flexibility. In turn, this rejection of full-time working was seen by the participants as a barrier to further career progression, although this was a 'price' they seemed to be currently willing to pay.

## **6.5 Summary**

Full-time work as a secondary school teacher seems to fit with a gendered model of time that fits with men's lives, whilst women's lives, it is argued by Kristeva (1982), follow a more feminine and cyclical model of time consciousness. The lived experiences of part-time working for these women were situated within both models. This involved them having to navigate and frequently traverse these different timescapes in a way specific to their own subjectivities and across their paid work and home lives. This was not always without its difficulties.

The participants employed different strategies for where and when their paid work was completed to try and free up time to be with their families. Having time to 'be there' (Ribbens, 1994) for their families was of importance to all of the participants. They were skilled managers of time, albeit the stressful implications were apparent. The need for personal flexibility in terms of their management of time appeared to be an essential skill, yet this was in stark contrast to the inflexible and rigid practices within which they worked.

The participants' choices not to work full-time were situated in trying to manage their time in response to juggling the various demands they felt upon them. However, it is apparent from the life history data that their choice to work part-time had not provided the solutions the participants hoped it would. Consequently, they were perpetually finding ways to manage their time. This was to try and meet the high expectations and workload of their paid employment alongside the societal and gendered demands of being a mother/carer. The participants navigated the competing and greedy (Edwards, 1993) demands on their time across and within different timescapes. This contributed to knowledge by proposing that each participant occupied her own unique timescape (ibid.), that of a woman who worked part-time as a teacher.

Glimpses emerged of the difficulties experienced by the participants due to the traversing between the different models of patriarchal linear and feminised cyclical time. When they were not able to manage their time, and their own high self expectations were not met, there were affective consequences. Inflexible practices and the assumption of a continuous availability to work made the management of time difficult

and were out of alignment with the ways the participants in this research managed their time, again leading to sources of stress, guilt and anxiety.

These findings add new insight into the challenging of teaching as a 'family friendly' role by Moreau (2018). She argues this notion is underpinned by heteronormative and maternal views of women and does not consider this 'friendliness' in terms of women's careers. The point is made that the spatio-temporal regimes of schools are not always propice with work-life balance. Findings emerged from my research of women who had recognised these difficulties and for whom working part-time was intended to address and minimise them. It is clear, however, that this pattern of working had still not delivered the outcomes they hoped it would in terms of the work-life balance they desired.

Whilst part-time working as a teacher might be regarded as 'having it all' in terms of a career and family-life (discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.2) both their paid work, and their roles within the home, were still too big for the amount of time they had to complete them, despite taking the decision to work part-time. This resonates with the findings of Edwards (1993) that not only are family and work 'greedy' institutions in terms of the time they demand, they are structured by the time requirements of others. Whilst working long hours and having to juggle paid work with family-life is not something I am suggesting to be unique to these participants, it is the described messiness and frequency of traversing home and work timescapes that supports the argument around their unique relationships with time and space and which shaped and constrained the relationships with their career progression.

This chapter concludes the analysis of the three themes emerging from the thematic analysis. The final chapter will draw together the findings from the research when presenting the conclusions.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusions**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This final chapter of the thesis revisits the aims and objectives for the research, and highlights the contribution to knowledge the thesis has made along with recommendations for practice. It ends with a discussion of the potential areas for future research and how the findings will be shared.

#### **7.2 Revisiting the aims and objectives for the study**

The aim of the study was to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of women teachers' day-to-day, lived experiences of working part-time in secondary schools and their relationships with career progression. Enabling the voices of this under-heard and under-represented group of women was the chosen way to try and achieve this aim. In doing so, it was hoped to develop an understanding of why so few senior leadership positions in secondary schools are occupied by those who work on a part-time basis. A theoretical-methodological approach which drew on ideas from feminist research, life history, practice architectures and time was developed during the research. This was with the intention of yielding the rich data necessary to understand the participants' subjective 'truths' and realities of occupying this pattern of working. The research objectives were translated into the following research questions:

- For part-time women teachers within secondary schools, what are the practices that they perceive influence their choices in relation to career progression?
- What choices, decisions, motivations and values do women secondary school teachers who work part-time perceive have influenced their career progression?

- How do the women navigate the tensions between their various roles, and how does this impact on their choices in relation to career progression?

The impetus for this research was my own experience as a previous middle-leader who was keen to achieve career progression to more senior positions, but who found the opportunities to do this on a part-time basis incredibly limited. An identified gap in the literature around this pattern of working in schools confirmed the importance of carrying out this research. The contribution to knowledge made by my research will be explained in the next section.

### **7.3 Contribution of the thesis**

This section begins by outlining the methodological contribution to knowledge made by this research. From here the theoretical contribution to knowledge is explained. Lastly, the contribution to knowledge around practices and leadership is highlighted, with particular reference to why so few senior leadership jobs are occupied on a part-time basis.

#### **7.3.1 Methodological contribution to knowledge**

What this research has done is to allow the subjective truths rather than the assumed experiences of part-time teachers, who are also mothers, to be made visible. Anderson *et al* (1987, p.106) argue that women's perspectives have been absent in making knowledge; they clarify that this is not due to an oversight but results from suppression through being 'trivialised, ignored or reduced to the status of gossip and folk wisdom'.

During my working life, and also when doing my research, I have encountered this 'gossip and folk wisdom' with both men and women professing an understanding of women's lived experiences of occupying this pattern of working. This research has gone beyond these professed understandings to gain a detailed and rich understanding which is new and which helps to explain their absence at a senior level of leadership. In doing so, a contribution to knowledge has been made.

The ethics drawn from feminist research provided an underpinning of respect and value for the participants and the contributions they made, whilst shaping the research decisions throughout the study. This supported an epistemological and methodological coherence throughout the research process. This led to a richness of life history data which was gathered with rigour and transparency and which enabled the complexities and the participants' realities of working part-time to be told through their own words. White *et al* (2010) argue that a more unique application of life history approaches is to do with the empowerment of the contributors to the research and those who read it. This, they argue, is rooted in the giving of a voice to those whose story is not usually heard, along with an increased sense of worth because someone wants to hear their story. In carrying out this life history research the voices of this group of women have been heard.

I was keen that my working with the participants should be a positive experience for all of us. The methodological approach of drawing on ideas from feminism reflected and supported this intention. It enabled the voices of the participants to be heard whilst minimising hierarchical relationships. I am proud of what the research has achieved.



This research makes a contribution to knowledge in its own terms and could support future development of knowledge. Woodiwiss *et al* (2017) argue that it is through asking questions about women's stories that we get to look beyond the hegemonic stories and circulating narratives. In doing so, we are enabled to not only explore the context and complexities of those stories but also to open up new opportunities and challenges for research on women's lives (bid.). This research has provided a means of looking beyond the hegemony and has identified new challenges around school leadership.

The theoretical contribution made through the theorisation of this rich life history data follows in the next section.

### **7.3.2 Theoretical contribution to knowledge**

The theoretical-methodological approach taken to this research was at the interface of ideas drawn from feminist research, life history, practice architectures (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) and time and developed during the research process. This new approach has enabled an understanding of the lives of this group of women to be developed and theorised in a new way, thereby resulting in an original theoretical contribution to knowledge.

It is at the interface of the three chapters of analysis that the subjective reality of working part-time in a secondary school for the participants in this research is realised.

It is here where what went on, what the participants thought about it, and how they managed it, that their realities of occupying this pattern of working and their relationships with career progression can be understood. Developing an understanding of life at this interface was a strength in terms of the new theoretical-methodological approach taken in this research.

The analytical framework of practice architectures enabled the complexities of how cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political practice arrangements (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) meshed with the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (ibid.) in the women's workplaces to be realised. This enabled a conceptualisation of site-specific everyday practices and their enabling and constraining conditions (Olin *et al*, 2016). This analytical approach enabled this group of women's experiences to be pivotal in understanding 'what went on' in their schools and 'what they thought about it'. This understanding provided the context necessary to understand and theorise their decisions around career progression. This led to a theorised knowledge and understanding of their day-to-day lived experiences of part-time working and how this was related to their career progression.

A new understanding regarding the stresses, anxiety and guilt experienced by this group of participants emerged from the research as a result of having insufficient time to balance work with home. Theorising the rich life history data using the notion of time and timescapes (Adam, 1990, 2004) developed a new understanding of working part-time as a teacher. The findings were suggestive of each participant occupying her own unique timescape: that of a woman who worked part-time as a teacher. This emerged

from the apparent difficulties described by the participants in separating time and space between their work and home lives.

How the research contributes to knowledge around school leadership will now be explained.

### **7.3.3 Contribution to knowledge around the practices of school leadership**

The findings from this research make a new contribution to the understanding of why so few senior leadership positions in secondary schools are occupied on a part-time basis. I propose these contributions to knowledge are informative to wider debates, supportive to the encouragement of flexible working in schools, helpful in addressing the recruitment and retention crisis and, resultantly, in closing the gender pay gap in schools.

Insights emerging from the research are suggestive of a disconnection between school-based practices and wider socio-political policies relating to equality of opportunity and the entitlement to request to work flexibly. These practices are intertwined with cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements which, together, appeared to normalise full-time working, and which presented ongoing difficulties for the participants in this research. A misalignment of the practices of communication of information, workload, timetabling and paid training with a part-time working pattern is

also suggested by the data. These practices acted as layers of disadvantage which accumulated to discourage and limit the career progression of this group of women.

This apparent disconnection seemed to discourage the participants from resuming full-time working despite the recognition that this was linked to greater opportunities for career progression. Insights emerged of how a lack of policy and transparency around working part-time at a leadership level added to discourage the women from seeking such opportunities. Instances also emerged of rigid practices which expected people to relinquish their leadership role if they worked flexibly. Again, these served to reinforce to the women that leadership was about full-time working.

Opportunities to challenge the apparent disconnection between policy and practice were seemingly limited due to their lack of voice in meetings and at a level of senior management. No positive practices at their schools or interactions with senior managers were described by any of the participants which might have actively encouraged their career progression.

A possible disconnection between the espoused values of schooling around equality and fulfilling potential, and how the participants perceived they were valued by their employers, also emerged from the research. Novel insights into how the participants perceived their contributions at school were not as valued as much as their full-time colleagues were glimpsed. How their roles as carers were not always appreciated by

their employers emerged from the narratives. These perceptions appeared to have shaped the participants' relationships with career progression.

The participants' perceptions of senior school leadership, and school leaders, emerged as a factor in their resistance to aspiring to positions of senior leadership. This provided new insight into the findings of Guihen (2017) by indicating that perceptions and aspirations to school leadership began low down the career ladder for these participants. The women's resistance to further career progression at the current time is at odds with an aspect of the findings of Gatrell (2005) who argues:

There is no doubt, that once they become mothers, women wanted to spend time with their children, which may have led to changes in their working practices. However it did not appear to reduce their commitment or ambitions in relation to paid work.

The findings from my research indicate that whilst the participants were committed to their paid work, they did not talk of being overly ambitious about their careers at the current time. Instead, their resistance to leadership appeared to be situated at the interface of rejecting full-time working, the re-alignment of their professional identities with those of being working mothers and a rejection of senior leadership and its enactment. It is at the interface of these complexities that the participants' subjective relationships with their career progression in this research can be understood.

The findings of this research have contributed to knowledge by confirming a long lineage of feminist knowledge of societal and gendered expectations of women. These were layered to disadvantage the participants' opportunities, as well as shaping their

current resistance to career progression. Whilst some of the findings were specifically pertinent to part-time working, for example not being able to attend meetings or training, other issues like working long hours and juggling work and family commitments seemed unlikely to be specific to those who follow this pattern of working. However, the findings from this research have shown that despite taking the decision to work part-time in order to try and balance the various needs for their time, this decision has not necessarily provided the solution the participants were hoping for.

The theoretical-methodological approach taken to this research has enabled a contribution to knowledge by providing a new understanding of how layers of inequality, and their enmeshing with a resistance to career progression, provide a novel insight into why so few senior leaders occupy a part-time pattern of working. This contribution to knowledge is of consequence because it contributes to the debate around imbalances in equality in the workplace and wider society. If, in schools, pupils see that men who work full-time comprise the majority of senior positions, and that those who do not match this description are rarely seen in these positions, it offers them a view of society in which being a woman and/or flexible worker is unsupportive of career advancement and thereby reproduces gendered divisions (Hutchings, 2002). The contributions to knowledge described in this section have led to the recommendations for future practice which now follow.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for practice**

For the findings of this research to be change practice, I argue there has to be a genuine and values-led desire from within schools to want to change the current situation, and to

encourage flexible working in the way that equal opportunities legislation expects and encourages (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE, 2019). In light of the findings of this research, I propose that for changes in practice to occur, they have to be situated within a different narrative which welcomes and values the contributions of those who occupy this pattern of working.

This research has revealed the skills, experiences and valuable contributions that this group of participants could bring to the classroom and wider school site. Celebrating the contributions that women like these could bring to the teaching workforce seems really important. Schools sharing good practice of flexible working would help in this process. Recognising that flexible working does not mean uncommitted working and that a pool of talent is potentially enabled to stay in the workforce seems a long term means of addressing teacher recruitment and retention. Reviewing arrangements on both sides, and discussing flexible working patterns together, emerged as being important in recognising that circumstances change over time. Building in time for these discussions would be helpful in avoiding people feeling unimportant and not valued even if all their preferences might not be possible.

I recommend that thoughtful and inclusive professional discourse around part-time and flexible working needs to take place, to seek ideas within and between schools about how it could be a successful aspect of school-based practice. I hope this research will shape and inform such discourses, along with its presentation at conferences and to relevant audiences. Changing narratives and perceptions is not likely to be quick or

easy, but one which I propose is a moral obligation in order to provide equality in opportunity.

Within schools, I propose that embracing flexible working should begin with a school-based audit of attitudes and practices around flexible working. Taking a 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' (Kemmis *et al*, 2014) approach may provide a structure for doing this. This should include data collection and analysis of flexible working practices at all levels of working in schools. This should include opportunities and support for career progression. Good practice around flexible working should be shared and celebrated, and areas of oversight and/or poor practice should be challenged.

Greater transparency and clearer policy around the opportunities and support for the career progression of those who work flexibly is recommended. Those who enact flexible working need to be key stakeholders, along with senior leadership, in these discourses in order that first-hand experience is combined with this authority to bring about change. Leadership should involve a consideration and encouragement of flexible working at the stages of recruitment, career progression, timetabling and information sharing. This would be a move toward addressing the hegemony in school leadership (Moreau *et al*, 2007). In doing so, it challenges the findings of Gronn and Lacey (2006) who highlight that gender bias has been theorised in terms of dominant groups 'cloning' themselves through the appointment of people who are like them.



If the gender gap is to be narrowed within schools (Jeffreys, 2018), supporting women to achieve senior positions seems a logical step forward. Discourse around why senior leadership cannot be enacted on a flexible basis should be robustly challenged. Political participation by those working flexibly at a senior level in schools may help to shed light from their first-hand perspective on practices which shape and constrain career progression and help to develop future and fairer practice. In summary, for things to change, there has to be a desire for change and one which recognises the valuable support and contribution these women make at work, at home and in our wider society.

### **7.5 Potential areas for future research**

Whilst the findings from this research were situated within the lives of women, feminism is rooted in equality for all. I hope this, and my future research, helps to further an understanding of this pattern of working in schools and why so few senior leadership positions are occupied on a part-time basis by both men and women. As the findings from the research emerged from listening to women's voices, it would not be methodologically appropriate to say they apply to men. However, undertaking wider research and seeking an understanding of how part-time teaching has a wider resonance for men and people of different ages is an attractive idea. This seems particularly pertinent because recent figures suggest that around one third of women teachers in their fifties work part-time and around one in five men now work part-time as they approach retirement (Sharp *et al*, 2019).

In addition, since 2015, teachers are now able to apply for phased retirement as part of the reform of teachers pensions (Teachers Pension Scheme, 2018). This means they can

apply to reduce their working hours after the age of 55, which is offset by them being able to claim part of their teachers' pension. This means older people are being encouraged to adopt patterns of working which are not full-time rather than leaving the workforce directly. This shift in policy seems likely to lead to flexible working requests becoming more common amongst older men and women, with the likelihood of further implications for practices around flexible working in schools. This adds another possible dimension to the opportunities for research.

The recent media attention around the gender pay gap has highlighted that the gap in pay is unlikely to be due to differences in pay for doing the same job, as that would be illegal under the Equal Pay Act (1970). However, one explanation may be due to the difference in the number of men and women occupying the most senior and best paid jobs (Jeffreys, 2018). My findings help to explain this difference by highlighting how the participants in this research felt positions of senior leadership were something they did not aspire to, and for which their opportunities for career progression seemed limited. I recognise, however, that this was only one project, involving six people and that this opens up the opportunities for future research. It would be interesting, in light of the now greater scrutiny of the gender pay gap (Gov. 2017c), to continue to explore the apparent disconnection between policy and practice, highlighted in this research. Considering the pay gap in relation to age would add another dimension to this aspect of future research.

Another area of potential future research is to gather the perspectives of senior leaders with regard to the practices which go on in school around flexible working, and how

they consider this impacts on women's relationships with career progression. Consideration from this alternative perspective would enable the issues to be considered from the position of key stakeholders enacting the policies of equality of opportunity and flexible working.

Exploring the views of women already occupying SLT positions whilst occupying a flexible pattern of working would be of future research interest. This would be to explore how they have navigated their own routes to this level of career progression. Whilst the initial invitation to take part in this research was open to women who taught part-time in secondary schools, including those on the SLT, no women occupying this level of management contacted me. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the rarity of women in this position, I was disappointed nobody in this role came forward to participate in this research. Hence, trying to elicit their participation in my future research remains of interest.

## **7.6 Sharing the findings of this research**

After the completion of the doctoral process, a first step will be to send a summary of the findings to the headteachers and participants who requested one at the outset of the research. Honouring this agreement is important in terms of respecting and valuing their contributions to the research.

Following an invitation to a summit convened by Justine Greening (Secretary of State for Education 2016-18) to explore ways of encouraging flexible working in schools, I

have pledged to share the findings of this research with the Department for Education to help inform their future work into this area. I was invited to share the findings of the research with the Pro-Vice Chancellor at Sheffield Hallam University in response to his plans to address the gender pay gap within the University, particularly with regard to why fewer women occupy more senior positions. In response to our meeting, I have also participated in a parent network meeting at the University, to discuss with members of the Human Resources team how flexible working practices can be more aligned with a socio-political policy of equality and flexible working. I am also working with the flexible working steering group at the University.

I plan to work with the ‘South Yorkshire Futures’ social mobility project which encourages wider participation into education, to use the expertise gained through this research to support the wider participation of women into education and the teaching workforce. In the long term, I intend to use the skills and understanding gained through this research to further my research interests around flexible working, and the equality of women in the workplace.

This chapter has concluded the thesis by revisiting the aims and objectives for the research. How the research has made a methodological and theoretical contribution to knowledge was explained. In addition, a contribution to knowledge around practices of senior leadership in schools was highlighted. Recommendation for future practice and possible areas for future research were explored. Lastly, details of how the findings will be shared and recommendations for practice were given.

This research began in my own curiosity about whether my own experiences had sector-wide resonances. The findings from this research have caused me to reflect on numerous occasions how my own experiences compare with the stories told by the participants. Thinking back to the time the research began, I believe I did not have the resistance to achieving senior leadership in the ways that the participants in the research did. I was ambitious and frustrated that my career appeared to have stalled, and this was not how the women told their stories. However, during this research I can see that my reasons for not actually applying for promotion since being in Higher Education resonate with the findings of the research and have been firmly situated within my role as a carer. In many ways I think the women were a lot more self-aware than I was at the beginning of the research. Carrying out this research has helped to develop my self-awareness in relation to my own decision-making around my own career progression. I often wonder what has happened in the lives of the participants since I last met them and, whilst not being able to ascertain if the research led to them feeling more empowered, I hope they know that their stories are important.

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## Appendices



### Appendix 1 Introductory letter to headteachers

Part-time women teachers and their career progression: A life history approach

Date:

Dear (Name of Headteacher)

Address

My name is Suzanne Brown. I am a Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University and I am also studying for a Doctorate in Education (EdD).

As part of my doctoral studies, my area of research is an exploration of the relationships between the choices, decisions, motivations and values of women teachers in secondary schools who work part-time and the relationships with their career progression.

I wish to carry out this research by collecting the life histories of women secondary school teachers, who are employed on a contract of less than 1.0 FTE, in order to explore the above issues in depth. It is hoped that the research will add to a currently limited body of research in this area. Hopefully it may influence employment decisions by women and employers in the future.

I am writing to ask for your support and participation within my research by giving your kind permission for me to contact women teachers who work on a part-time basis within (Name of the school.) Due to my own location, I am keen to involve all secondary schools in Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham. If you are in agreement with this request, I would like in the future to circulate an enveloped copy of the enclosed letter to all women who work on a part-time basis (less than 1.0 FTE) within (Name of school). I will supply the letters to the school if you are in agreement. The letter gives details of the nature of my research, the extent of the participants' involvement and asks for their voluntary participation.

Any participation within the research would be confidential for both the schools and any women who choose to volunteer. Any names would be anonymised within my doctoral research thesis and any subsequent research publications that may result by the use of pseudonyms. Women are asked to indicate their willingness to volunteer by contacting me directly using the details included below, and on the letter, in order to guarantee their anonymity from all parties other than myself. Any transcriptions and analyses will be stored on an encrypted USB. Six years after completing the Doctorate, any research data will be securely disposed of.

Participating women teachers who take part in my research will be given a summary copy of my research findings if they request one. In addition, headteachers are welcome to request a summary copy of my research findings which will hopefully be informative to their future employment decisions. After submission, the final thesis will be kept in the Sheffield Hallam University library, with a future possibility of publication of findings in research journals.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about my research and can be contacted on 0114 225 4871 or via email: [Suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk). In addition, my Research Supervisor, Dr Carol Taylor, can be contacted on 0114 225 6269 or via email: [c.a.taylor@shu.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.taylor@shu.ac.uk)

Thank you taking the time to read my letter. I would be most grateful if you would return the reply slip to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope included. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Brown  
Senior Lecturer in Secondary Science ITE  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Owen 949  
City Campus  
Howard Street  
Sheffield  
S1 1WB  
tel 0114 225 4871 email: [suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk](mailto:suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk)

Reply slip

Part-time women teachers and their career progression: A life history approach

Please tick the box if you would like to receive a summary of my research findings

I have read the information contained in the letter about the above-titled study. I agree to circulate to all women who work part-time at (name of school), enveloped copies of the letter provided by Suzanne Brown, giving details of the research and asking for volunteers to participate in her research.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher at (I will insert name of school)

Alternatively, if you do not agree to circulate the letter, please can you indicate below.

I do not wish for my school to take part in the research

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher at (I will insert the name of the school)

Please return in the stamped addressed envelope. Thank you for your time

## **Appendix 2 Introductory letter to the women in this research**

### Part-time women teachers and their career progression: A life history approach

Dear colleague

My name is Suzanne Brown. I am a Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University and I am also studying for a part-time Doctorate in Education (EdD). I was previously a teacher in secondary schools for 18 years.

As part of my doctoral studies my area of research is an exploration of the relationships between the choices, decisions, motivations and values of women teachers in secondary schools who work part-time and the relationships with their career progression. I am writing to ask for your support and participation within my research. Due to my own location, I am keen to involve all secondary schools in Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham.

I wish to carry out this research by collecting the life histories of women secondary school teachers who are employed on a contract of less than 1.0 FTE in order to explore the above issues in depth. It is hoped that the research will add to a currently limited body of research in this area. Hopefully it may influence employment decisions by women and employers in the future.

If you participate in the research, your permission will be sought for our discussions to be recorded as an audio record. You will be allowed access to the transcript, once it has been professionally transcribed, in order to check for accuracy and to clarify any meaning. Collecting a life history can involve quite a lengthy process (a few hours), that may involve us meeting on more than one occasion. We will meet in a mutually agreeable location, where we both feel comfortable to talk and listen without interruptions. I would ask that you be mindful of these commitments prior to giving your permission. If you do agree to participate you are able to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to transcription of the life history two weeks after the life history being recorded).

You will be given chance to discuss your participation in the research both after the life history has been collected and after clarifying any issues following transcription.

Any participation within the research will be confidential. Any names will be anonymised, by the use of pseudonyms, both within the doctoral research thesis and any subsequent research publications that may result.

If you wish to volunteer to be part of this research, please contact me directly using the details below. Your involvement in the research will not be shared with anyone else, including your school. The transcriptions and analyses of any life histories collected will be stored on an encrypted USB. Six years after completing the Doctorate, any research data will be securely disposed of.

Participants in the research will be given an anonymised summary copy of my research findings if they request one. In addition, headteachers are welcome to request an anonymised summary copy of my research findings which will hopefully be informative to their future employment decisions. After submission, the final thesis will be kept in the Sheffield Hallam University library, with a future possibility of publication of findings in research journals.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about the research and can be contacted on 0114 225 4871 or via email: [Suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk). In addition, my Research Supervisor, Dr Carol Taylor, can be contacted on 0114 225 6269 or via email: [c.a.taylor@shu.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.taylor@shu.ac.uk)

Thank you taking the time to read my letter. If you are a woman and work as a teacher in a secondary school on a part-time basis, and would like to take part in the research, please contact me via the email address below.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Brown  
Senior Lecturer in Secondary Science ITE  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Owen 949  
City Campus  
Howard Street  
Sheffield  
S1 1WB  
tel 0114 225 4871  
email: [suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk](mailto:suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk)

**Appendix 3 Consent Form**

Part-time women teachers and their career progression: A life history approach

*Please answer the following questions by circling your responses*

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? YES /NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES/ NO

Have you received enough information about this study? YES /NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?

• At any time prior to professional transcription (two weeks after the life history is collected) YES /NO

• Without giving a reason for your withdrawal? YES/ NO

Do you understand that collecting a life history may take a few hours and that we may need to meet up more than once to clarify points that are made? YES/NO

Do you understand that your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed?YES/NO

How would you like me to respond if you get upset during the sharing of your life history?

Do you agree to take part in this study? YES/ NO



Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:..... Date:.....

Name (block letters):.....

Signature of investigator:..... Date:.....

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

Suzanne Brown

Senior Lecturer in Secondary Science ITE

Sheffield Hallam University

Owen 949, City Campus, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WB

tel 0114 225 4871 email: [suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk](mailto:suzanne.brown@shu.ac.uk)

**Appendix 4 Debriefing sheet**

Part-time women teachers and their career progression: A life history approach

Many thanks for agreeing to take part in the research and for sharing your story with me.

Do you have any questions about the research now that you have shared your life history?

Would you like any additional information about the research?

Were you able to say what you wanted to say?

How do you feel about the process now you have shared your life history? Would you be happy to meet again before the Summer?

Do you feel that you would like additional support from other agencies as a result of sharing your life history?

Teacher Support Network: Telephone: 08000 562 561

Samaritans: Telephone :116 123

National union of Teachers: Telephone 020 3006 6266 or email  
nutadviceline@nut.org.uk

NASUWT: Telephone: 0115 976 7180

rc-eastmids@mail.nasuwat.org.uk

ATL: Telephone: 020 7930 6441

## **Appendix 5 Email contact to agree meetings**

Contact email after initial reply to try and arrange the first meeting

HelloXXXXXX

Happy New year to you. Thank you for kindly offering to take part in my research. I now have a small gap in my day job commitments and hence can focus on my Doctorate, hence my delay in contacting you earlier - many apologies. If you are still interested in taking part, please could I ask for a few brief details about you to help me frame my questions? For example, how long you have been teaching/how long you have been teaching part-time, current role(s), brief reason for working part-time for example family/carer/want to explore other opportunities away from teaching, etcetera? The life history approach that the research will take involves meeting face to face for around an hour for several times over a few months in order to clarify, further discuss earlier points raised, etcetera, and I think it is really important to make you aware of this before you commit any further to participating.

If you are still keen, we would need to meet somewhere we both feel comfortable (for ethical reasons our own homes are not allowed) and where it is sufficiently quiet for us to talk and for an audio copy to be made (are you ok with the meeting being recorded?). I live in Nottinghamshire and am willing to travel to meet you. I wondered if you would be able to meet up during w/b 8<sup>th</sup> Feb at all please. If this is not possible, please could you indicate the best days of the week and time of day for you so that we can try and find a mutually agreeable date?

If you are happy with all this, please let me know and I will get back I touch with further details regarding the nature of the meeting, etcetera. If you no longer wish to participate, please could you also let me know so that I do not bother you again?

Many thanks for your interest so far, I look forward to hopefully meeting you

Best wishes

Sue

**Appendix 6 Original Codes and their descriptors from Phase two of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006)**

Name of code	Description of the code	Examples of transcript text coded at each code
Academisation	<p>Implications of becoming an academy are described.</p> <p>Introduction of certain personnel and policies due to becoming an academy.</p> <p>Changes in practice / policy due to becoming an academy</p>	<p>1. And when I was talking to the Head he said, we're sorry we changed your working days, we know that's not what you wanted. He said Trust policy is, we will only guarantee you half days, so you're lucky to get the full days, but when we redo the timetable basically there's a high possibility you're going to have four half days and living where I do it's a no-no. So, he didn't say that will happen, but reading between the lines.</p> <p>2. I mean actually something quite key has happened at work in that we're now in the full throes of being part of an academy group. I can't remember if we were last time, but we're now joined with another few schools and the consequence is, is that a lot of the systems and processes have become unified and a bit more uniform over those five or six schools and yeah, for example there are some things that have happened, for example the Leave of Absence Policy has changed and a couple of other sort of policies and ways of working have changed that make me feel it's a much kind of inflexible environment.</p>

<p>Being the best</p>	<p>Talks about being the best parent /mother/colleague/teacher, etcetera, that she can be.</p> <p>Feels an expectation that she has to be better due to working part-time.</p> <p>Talks of having something to prove to herself/ somebody else.</p> <p>Perfectionist</p>	<p>1. And I think that's just the drive because I feel I've got to prove myself because I'm part-time. Isn't it funny.</p> <p>2. I think that's, but it sounds awful and I love it and I really enjoy it, but part of me thinking 'that will look good on my CV.' because I feel this need to prove myself as a part-timer.</p> <p>3. A perfectionist, yes, I'm a perfectionist and if I'm going to take on a job I want to do it to the best of my ability and at work it's important that people see me in that way and see me as somebody that if they give me a job to do I'll do it, I'll see it through and it's successful.</p>
<p>Own children as the priority</p>	<p>Describes examples of when her children take priority.</p> <p>Talks of the pressure associated with feeling this should be the case.</p> <p>Talks of how she tries to fulfil this/ does not achieve this.</p>	<p>1. But that, it's been a massive, massive turning point and I don't resent him at all, you know the fact that he's got his career and he's done very, very well at his career and mine's kind of gone ... my career's the kids at the moment while they're little and they need me.</p> <p>2. Partly I'd done it and partly to have a satisfying role part-time where the kids were my main focus.</p>
<p>Age of own children</p>	<p>Mentions events, emotions, feelings associated with the</p>	<p>1. I mean my son was very, very ready for school so he's been absolutely fine, but he's a very, very</p>

	<p>particular age of her children.</p> <p>Discusses the implications of having children of a particular age.</p>	<p>active little boy and so he goes to school, he sits down all day and he behaves and when he comes out of school he is like a coiled spring and you know it's fine, he's a little boy, but trying to manage that and everything that I need to do-</p> <p>2. You know things are fine at the minute, you know GCSEs next year for my daughter and stuff like that, and so I'm not going to take anything else on.</p>
Compartmentalisation	<p>Gives examples of how she separates/negotiates the different aspects of her lives.</p> <p>Discusses whether this is necessary or not.</p> <p>Discusses the implications of being able to compartmentalise or not.</p> <p>May not use the word compartmentalisation but refers to this concept.</p>	<p>1. I think a lot of the part-timers are quite clear you know and they know what they're doing in the sense of, you know when they're at school they're going to give their best, but when they're not at school they're not thinking about school and I mean I know that's unfair to say that full-timers necessarily are, but I don't know, it's just a thought.</p> <p>2. I am now. I can now because the kids are 11 and nearly eight, so I can now, not perfectly, but I can switch off the times. The transition times are difficult, so when I'm leaving the house to go to work and when I'm on the way home or trying to leave work and on the way home, those transition times are quite tricky because there's tensions and pulls from all directions.</p>
Conflict with the	Describes examples of where she	1. I think it's hard for people without

<p>perceived values/ attitudes of the Senior Management team(SMT)</p>	<p>does not agree with the attitudes, values and consequent actions of the SMT.</p> <p>Gives example of where actions of SMT are perceived negatively.</p> <p>Lack of respect for SMT.</p> <p>Don't want to be like the SMT.</p> <p>Perceive a lack of empathy by SMT with respect to her own life circumstances.</p>	<p>children to understand. So, thinking about my leaders, the ones that haven't got children, would probably think that I'm not giving as much because I've got a family. Because I think sadly there's a culture in education is that it is a vocation and you give your life to it, there's kind of no end to it, it's just relentless and if you haven't got other distractions then that can be how it is and I know leaders that haven't got families they do other things, if, what's the word, like a platitude, is that the correct word to use?</p> <p>2. Like I think our SLT would be greatly benefited by having a part-timer on the ... because we have more opportunity to live lives outside school to do other stuff and you know it would refresh them massively because they're a bit stuck in the mud and you know, but it's a ... new point of you isn't it?</p>
<p>Different opportunities for part-time compared with full-time teachers</p>	<p>Describe examples of differences in opportunities or practices for part-time compared with full-time teachers.</p> <p>Give examples of what people have said regarding part-time compared with full-time teachers.</p> <p>Gives her own perceptions of differences in opportunities/ practices for part-time teachers</p>	<p>1. I've had to fight to get one Key Stage 5 class on my timetable this year and it was a fight and I had to go in and say, look you know you're not giving me any exam classes, I need those if I want to progress, if I want to move on somewhere I'm quite capable, I'm more than capable of doing it. And it was always, well we can't timetable it in, but my impression is that it's been given to the full-time staff,</p>

	<p>compared with full-time teachers.</p>	<p>unless there is a specialism there, because within the other two part-time staff one is a specialist A-Level teacher, always has been, you know has had that opportunity right from the beginning and the other is the leader who's fantastic, so does the A-Level subject as well. So, I don't know, I don't know whether it's just the part-time thing or whether it's because she doesn't think I'm up to it, I don't know.</p>
Flexibility	<p>Describes examples of when / how the school expects her to work a different pattern.</p> <p>Describes how she responded to this expectation.</p> <p>Describes examples of when the school's response has not been considered to be flexible.</p>	<p>1. I've been fairly flexible and I do sometimes come in on my days off you know for whatever reason, so the minibus test is on a Monday, I'll just go on and do it, you know what I mean I won't kick up about it and the secretary said, 'Make sure you put in your cover form for it.' So, I mean if it was an issue, if they said, 'Oh what are you going to do, there's a meeting on Monday or Tuesday?'</p>
Own perceptions of part-time working	<p>Describes what it is like to be part-time teacher.</p> <p>Gives own perceptions of others who work part-time.</p> <p>Discusses the perception of herself as a part-time woman teacher.</p>	<p>1. Not having thought about it, I sort of feel that I wouldn't be any different if I was a full-time teacher, maybe that's naïve.</p> <p>2. I sometimes perceive part-time people as not as, as people who dip in and out and is perhaps not as committed and I think that's probably a perception that a lot of people have, that they just do the job for pin money or whatever, to keep their hand in and I don't perceive myself like that. I perceive myself as committed as the full-timers, so I don't see any distinction between me or them and sometimes I do, sometimes when I'm on my</p>



		<p>way out and the students see me leaving I sometimes wonder, where do they think I'm going, do they think I go home now and do they think that I care less because I'm going home now and I'm not here all day every day. So, I worry sometimes about the student perception of me being part-time and whether they think I care less and whether I'm investing less in them because I'm part-time.</p>
Effective communication	<p>Describes examples of where communication by the school in relation to working part-time is effective.</p> <p>Describes how she supports effective communication processes by the school.</p> <p>Describes feelings in response to effective communication processes by the school</p> <p>Describes the impact of effective school communication in her lives.</p>	<p>1. So, the Head of Department feels very supportive that she wouldn't demand anything of us that was not appropriate. So, there are some things that obviously you do miss out on because they happen on a day you're not there. I think like most schools there is a significant part-time element so therefore they try to have systems in place like if there's a staff briefing that you miss, that that information is available in another form, so on the website or you know in paper so that people who do regularly miss that day can do it.</p>
Ineffective/lack of communication	<p>Describes examples of where communication by the school in relation to working part-time is ineffective/lacking.</p> <p>Describe how she navigates ineffective/lack of communication processes by the school.</p> <p>Describes feelings in response to ineffective/lack of communication processes by the school.</p> <p>Describes the impact of ineffective/lack of school communication in her life.</p>	<p>1. No, exactly. I mean I think probably if you check the website every day, what an effort, you know what I mean and the way ours works is, it wouldn't be removed, it would be just further down the list wouldn't it, but you're right, how many of us would make sure we never miss a single point on the thing. So yeah, I think some people would say at the school, we don't always know what's going on. I think the information's always there, but you've just got to look for it on the staff calendar on the website, but to have those conversations is probably quite helpful. With the other part-time we</p>

		<p>like keep an eye open for each other, ‘Do you know it’s this tomorrow?’ ‘Oh, I missed that,’ you know what I mean, just those types of chats because probably when there’s more than one part-timer you’re a bit more aware aren’t you that you can miss out on things.</p> <p>2. I see other teachers coming back now from either a long period of illness or pregnancy and I think, I know exactly what you’re going through now and there’s nothing, no, and you can see them floundering and yes, I think there should be all kinds of support for people who return from whatever back into school, yeah.</p>
Guilt	<p>Describes examples of where/how/when she feels guilty in relation to some aspect of her life.</p> <p>Describe when she has been made to feel guilty.</p> <p>My interpretations of her actions as guilt.</p>	<p>1. So I’d be relying on other people a lot more, I’d be relying on family and friends a lot more than to pick up what I would be doing, yeah, so that would impact on other people. Emotionally that doesn’t do very good for me, emotionally that would be a problem because I feel more guilt because I wouldn’t be able to spend time with the kids or pick them up from school or be involved as much as I am now. So yeah.</p>
Having a child led to change	<p>Gives examples of where having a child led to change: career, relationships, attitudes, consequences, navigations, negotiations.</p>	<p>1. I think really for me it kicked off when I had the kids. I’ve got three children, so I started to volunteer in the local playgroups as they were and of course things moved on a lot, they became pre-schools with a curriculum and so on. Found I really enjoyed it, in fact if I’m honest it’s what I wanted to do when I was at school, but when I was at school, as it still is today, I was basically told, well if you’re above academic average ability then you should be looking at doing other things, you shouldn’t be looking at childcare.</p>

Headspace	<p>Gives a definition/explanation of what this means.</p> <p>Talks about the importance of headspace.</p>	<p>1. I think when I was just working without my children my whole world was my work, so that was my focus all the time and I think after I'd had my eldest, I thought that my memory was going. But actually, I was talking to other parents and talking to my mum, realised that you're just trying to remember so much and trying to keep on top of so much and I didn't want to be forgetting things for my own child. For example, at school I wanted to be there and present for him and you know able to support him emotionally and not having all the work stuff just taking over my life, which it could at a certain time it could do that, but I just felt like I couldn't divide myself between the two anymore and I had to prioritise and I had to give that space, that thinking time, that emotional time I suppose for my own children and that was more important really. So I always feel like I want to do a good job, so the part-time option was meaning I could still do a good job in the days that I was there, but still had time and that headspace that, it's thinking time and it's that emotional time and it's feeling that you're doing the best, because otherwise your brain just feels so cluttered you can't think straight, that's kind of how I see it.</p>
Husband's role	<p>Mentions her husband specifically when talking of choices/decisions made.</p> <p>Discusses the implications of her</p>	<p>1. Talking to my husband, because I have had a rough time with it all and oh I don't know what to do and I do feel quite guilty, my husband has been really, really supportive and he said for a while when we had kids</p>

	<p>husband being involved in these choices/decisions/motivations.</p> <p>Mentions how her husband's life/career have impacted on her own/choices/decisions/ motivations.</p> <p>Husband's influence.</p>	<p>we made the decision that you would work part-time, if at all, because your priority is the kids.</p>
Illness	<p>Mentions illness.</p> <p>Describes the impact of illness.</p>	<p>1. That's it and I'm going to bed at nine o'clock I'm so shattered, my eyes are stinging, I just can't do anymore, but then I get up the next morning and I think, oh I didn't finish that, didn't manage to get that done, so it's a vicious circle at the moment isn't it? I think teaching is just changing.</p> <p>2. Well hence I have now gone back to four days instead of three. Whether that was the right decision or whether I've completely gone crazy I'm not sure because I'm already regretting it. I went part-time partly due to my physical health and now that they're piling yet more on us every day.</p>
Lack of transparency	<p>Gives examples of a lack of clarity/ practices regarding the position of part-time teachers in relation to promoted positions.</p> <p>Discusses her feelings in relation to the above.</p> <p>Discusses her perceptions of the legal position in relation to part-time working.</p>	<p>1. So I don't know if it's written down within our school, I've heard that it isn't, but there's a feeling that it should be, but I don't know, but there's some roles you can do and some roles you can't. So, the person who went four days from our department who was second in command, she's Head of Key Stage 5, so that's okay on four days, but being second in command wasn't okay.</p>
Navigation	<p>Describe examples of how she navigates school-based practices.</p> <p>Describe her own strategies for making her job possible within her own life.</p> <p>Discuss alternative work-based</p>	<p>1. Some of it yes, some of the work I wouldn't do at home, simply, well like I said to you earlier my internet connection isn't good at home and I have it, well other colleagues have come in and said I spent the weekend entering data and some of the stuff that just takes up your time,</p>

	<p>practices which might be easier to navigate.</p> <p>Discuss her tactics in relation to work-based practices.</p>	<p>you know you've got to do it but you could perhaps do it at home or at work and then they've come in and said, I've lost it all, so they've lost two or three hours work. So, to me I'd rather be in school and spend the time, stay at the end of the day, get in early, do whatever you need to do to do it on the school premises so that I'm not having to do it twice, so yeah.</p>
<p>Motivations other than money</p>	<p>Describe why she does what she does.</p>	<p>1. Because for me I want to enjoy it, or there's no point in doing it. I didn't choose to be a maths teacher just to earn money, I chose it because I wanted to do it, and so if I'm not enjoying it, I'd stop it, so that's quite high</p> <p>2. And if you speak to them they wouldn't want me to work more time, they really, really value my Thursdays and Fridays when I take them to school, when I pick them up from school, because twice I've been offered extra days recently, and I've spoken to them about it and they've said, 'please don't do it mum', you know even though it's the offer of more money so we might be able to go on a better holiday or anything, they really value that time.</p>
<p>Money as a motivator</p>	<p>Explain her decisions, choices, motivations in relation to money.</p>	<p>1. To be honest with you my main drive for getting a better job if you like from leaving the pre-school sector and the voluntary sector, as much as that was fun and I loved it, and it was an important role, it was money I'm afraid, because my son was getting older and wanted to go to uni and I wanted to help him as much as I could financially because of these horror stories of the debts that you know children leave uni with and I guess it's that old thing</p>

		<p>of you want the best for your children, the things that you may never have had yourself and then it became apparent that all three of my children, well they've all been to uni, so I wanted to help them as much as I could. So, I guess they were my drive almost you know, so it's probably, yeah, probably done a lot of it for them really. Whether they appreciate it is another matter altogether, but you know.</p> <p>2. I suppose I wanted the kids to have a good working ethos, not to, their mum goes to work and she does, because I've always said right mummy and daddy to go work to get the pennies so we can take you on holiday and you know we can take you to the zoo and we can buy you your new bike and what have you and I wanted them to appreciate that, you know my mummy needs to go to work and they did for, and I suppose they still do because they say, 'Oh are you going to work tomorrow mummy?' 'Yeah.' 'And we're going to get some pennies for the holiday?' 'Yes, yes, that's what I'm doing,' and it's nice to hear that coming from the kids and I was actually quite proud actually.</p>
Own age	<p>Refers to her own age with respect to an aspect of her life.</p> <p>Describes the significance of her age in relation to decisions, choices, motivations.</p>	<p>1. Well I think because I'm older, time for me is more about quality of life now. I can totally take on board if you've got a young family, of course you need to be with your children, but for me it's about, I want a work/life balance and I want to get to the weekends and if the sun's shining outside and want to go walking for the day, I want to be able to grab my walking boots and off I go, instead of thinking, yeah but I've got that stuff to mark and I need to get those reports done, I need to do this and I need to do that.</p>

		I want to work; I want to fit all the things I have to do into my working time so that when it is my time, I'm free to do what I want to do. I'm also going to be a grandmother at the end of the year.
Own choices	Refers to 'I' when referring to choices, decisions, and motivations. Also, when shown a passive approach to decision making.	<p>1. On reflection I'm glad I didn't, I think the feelings that I felt that I had to give up one of those jobs, it didn't come from the school at all, it just came from my own feelings about, was I capable, could I manage.</p> <p>2. I'll go to school and I'll just teach and not have any management responsibilities, so I can, in theory, come home and not have to stay at school, because in the pastoral role you do, you've got to be there, if parents come in or you've got to make those phone calls. So that was the decision I made and I was very, very happy with it when I first went back, I thought 'Yes, I've done the right thing, I can just concentrate --' because I'd got two sons by that stage and I knew that I wanted to have another child, I wanted to have two more actually but my husband stopped me after three. So, at first, I was content that I'd made the right decision and what I was pleased with was that I could really focus on my teaching, because I think because I progressed so rapidly through that pastoral system my teaching had been neglected so...</p>
Part-time and flexibility	<p>Describes examples of how working part-time enables her to respond flexibly to situations.</p> <p>Describes how part-time working often requires her to be flexible.</p>	1. I think she probably quite values that, the fact that I'm not out of touch, so possibly as always there's a bit of give and take isn't there, that because I, she knows I work hard and it's not that I, you know that if she emails me on my Monday which is generally the day I work at

		home, I will pick things up and respond, I think probably it works quite well for her.
Own worth	<p>Describes her skills, contributions and realises the positive contribution she makes.</p> <p>As above but negatively (has a negative perception of her own worth).</p> <p>Done a good job.</p> <p>Talks about herself positively by comparing herself to someone who she feels is not as competent.</p> <p>Describes examples of where her own worth has been made apparent to her.</p>	<p>1. And I think there's that lack of understanding of how children develop and how their minds work and I think that partly comes with experience, yes I am a mum, I've had three kids, I've been through the whole process and I've had nightmares with that as well, you know I know how kids tick to a certain extent. I just feel you have perhaps more patience even, but I'm not driven by the procedures that they think, if you follow procedure you've cracked it and I think you have to dig deeper and I think we have to look at them a little bit more as individuals. So, I think its experience if anything.</p> <p>2. Okay. I will just say at my last appraisal I've finally been recognised as an outstanding teacher.</p>
Role of the mother	<p>How she describes herself as a mother.</p> <p>Gives situations involving her role as a mother.</p> <p>Her own perceptions of motherhood.</p> <p>The role she has assumed to be hers as the mother.</p> <p>Reference to a responsibility being that of the mother.</p>	<p>1. Okay, I'll try. I guess I'd always wanted kids. Me and my husband didn't marry until early 30s, so we were blessed to be able to have kids, my sister not being able to have kids and I think there'd never been any doubt in my mind that I would want to be full-time with them, just feeling that it was a privilege and it would pass quickly.</p> <p>2. The impact on mums particularly is, if your child is ill you don't get paid for a full day off work, you get paid for half a day, because the expectation is that you will get somebody else to look after the child for the rest of the day and you should be able to come into work.</p>



<p>Perception of the Senior Management role</p>	<p>How she sees the SMT member role.</p> <p>Comments about SMT members/ role.</p> <p>Comments about what the SMT role involves/ should involve.</p>	<p>1. I don't think leadership even really have time to teach, I think they all have their own specialist area, whatever it is, whether it's staff training or it is running data through, whatever it is, I think they have business roles more than teaching roles. They do all teach obviously, even the Head and I understand that that is prorated as well, I don't know how many lessons he teaches, I could look it up, I've never bothered, it's never concerned me. I do understand that they teach less than we do, but their role isn't really about being a teacher, their role is, they are businessmen and women now, but they're not trained businessmen and women and I feel they forget the people element. And maybe coming back to it again, that's what I'm saying is I care more about the people that I work with, staff and the students. I think we've lost that personal element, was personal the right word, but even empathising with people, you know and understanding that we do all have lives outside of education, but when we're there we give 110%.</p>
<p>How she thinks she is perceived as a part-time teacher</p>	<p>Gives specific examples of things said/actions relating to what she thinks others think about her/ part-time teachers.</p> <p>Perceptions of a lack of empathy towards her/part-time colleagues.</p>	<p>1. So it doesn't feel to me like I'm less committed in terms of what, the sort of amount of commitment that I can put in, but at the same time it could be perceived by the school that I'm less committed. And I have actually felt at times that, well there was a specific time, that was it, we have to have a meeting with one of the assistant managers if we've been absent or you know to chase up what's the reasons and things and it must have been one of those that I was in, but he brought up a couple of times that I'd be late in as well and, because obviously I think he felt he had to address these and I</p>

		<p>can remember it because, I remember the phrase that he used because it really obviously sort of hit me. He said, do you see teaching as a bit of a hobby and it just made me realise that perhaps they do feel that I am less committed now because, I mean the reasons for my being late those couple of times were that I was dealing with children at home.</p> <p>2. I do feel that I'm a bit of a burden because creating timetables with part-time staff is difficult. So, from my Head of Faculty's point of view when she's having to create the timetable, the fact that I can't have a class, I can't have many classes just for me we've got to share them up, is a pain, so I feel that that's putting extra pressure on other people.</p>
Person(s) of influence	<p>Talks of people who have influenced her choice, decision, motivations.</p> <p>Talks of people who have/have had an influence on her career/life</p> <p>Talks of people who make decisions that have had an impact on her career/life.</p>	<p>1. Oddly the HR woman who is very central to this culture of inflexibility is part-time.</p> <p>2. I don't think it's been a nice time for anybody, full-time, part-time, but perhaps it's been a harder battle as a part-timer, but finally feel that I'm getting that recognition. But yeah, as I say my appraiser's probably taken a key role in that, which has been good, just encouraging and supporting and saying you are doing a good job, which I think was lost for a good few years for me, or maybe they didn't think I was doing a good job, I don't know, but I did definitely feel lost when I first went back part-time after having...</p>
Precedence of part-time SMT members	<p>Gives examples of SMT members who work part-time.</p> <p>Mentions SMT members who have relinquished their role to</p>	<p>1. And similarly someone was second in command, went down to part-time and she had to step out of that role.</p> <p>2. So I mean again that would be</p>

	<p>work part-time.</p> <p>Talks of the significance/importance of precedence.</p>	<p>fantastic I think if there was a part-timer that would sort of set the ground a bit more wouldn't it?</p> <p>It feels I think our school is a little bit behind the times and it feels a bit male hierarchical dominated.</p> <p>I don't think it's ever had a woman Head, but you know there are women on the SLT.</p> <p>So yeah, they could do more in terms of you know make it clear what's in, what's not in, make it, and it would be great if there was a part-time SLT because that would be leading by example.</p>
<p>Questions the composition of the SMT</p>	<p>Gives examples of the nature of the SMT team: age, married, family, gender, career history, etcetera.</p> <p>Discusses if the nature of the SMT team is the best one.</p>	<p>1. Yeah, yeah, it is. I mean you sort of think, even for the SLT, why can't someone be part-time and on the SLT because especially if they're, yeah, I mean they know they run the school but if they're meant to be coming up with fresh ideas and bouncing stuff off them, a part-timer could be better at that than a full-timer because we've got a bit more opportunity haven't we to actually step out and stuff like that. So yeah, you can see in some ways you know you question it, but as I say I haven't been in that position yet so I would question it if I got there and if you weren't happy with the outcome you've got two choices haven't you, stay quiet and stay, or find something else and go.</p> <p>2. So if I look at our senior leadership team, it's very male heavy of course and then the women that are on there are neither married nor have children, there's one that's part-time that I told you about, she's the only one who's married and has children. So that speaks volumes to me as well.</p>
<p>Previous career</p>	<p>Describes/refers to previous</p>	<p>1. Yeah. So, I guess I went into civil engineering from having a science</p>

	<p>career.</p> <p>Talks of how her previous career has influenced her choices, decisions and motivations.</p> <p>Talks of how her previous career has led to her current skills.</p>	<p>and maths interest and going to a girl's school where career was quite highly pushed.</p> <p>2. Came out of university – didn't really know what to do and sort of fell in to a teaching assistant job. Did that for two years and absolutely loved it, really liked being in the school environment and it was a friend that said why you don't contemplate teaching.</p>
Not coping	<p>Mentions feeling of not coping.</p> <p>Talks of situations which she feels she wouldn't cope.</p> <p>Reluctance to apply for promotion as she feels she wouldn't cope.</p>	<p>1. And I remember sitting there in a couple of staff training sessions and thinking, 'I can't manage with this really, I can't deal with this.</p> <p>2. Yeah, yeah, I can't bear letting people down, I really can't bear letting people down, that's what drives me I think a lot of the time is that, I can't bear anybody to think that I've not done something that I said I was going to do. So that would be my worry that perhaps I would have too, much to do and something would have to go and then people would think that I wasn't doing my job well, so yeah, but definitely.</p>
Significance of which days are worked	<p>Mentions specific days worked.</p> <p>Describes the implications of these specific days to her and others.</p> <p>Explains some days work better than others for her / school.</p>	<p>1. Well I used to work on a Tuesday and Wednesday, so what that meant was my mum would come to my house on a Monday night, be there on the Tuesday, be there Tuesday night and go home when I got home on the Wednesday. So that middle day, like Tuesday night I just stayed at work and did absolutely everything and that was fine because my mum had to be there, and she was happy to do that. But now my mum comes to my house a Sunday night, has my youngest on the Monday, takes my son to school and what have you, goes home on the Monday night, comes back to</p>

		my house on the Tuesday afternoon does the school run and what have you on the Wednesday and then goes home on the Wednesday night.
Meetings	<p>Discuss the impact of meetings on the work and home lives.</p> <p>Discusses how meetings are navigated.</p> <p>Discusses how promoted roles are perceived as involving more meetings and this puts her off applying for a promoted position.</p>	<p>1. I've got very good staff and they keep me up-to-date, they'll email me and that kind of thing, but you miss out on crucial instances and things that happen. Sometimes you miss out on training that they're doing that day and there's never a catch-up session and they seem to be, for example staff meetings are always a Thursday, now I try and make sure I always work a Thursday so I don't miss those, but then they've done some twilight sessions that were always on a Wednesday, so they're training sessions and I don't work Wednesdays, so they don't even swap and change to try and fit it in to try and catch you another time. So, you are relying on other members of staff and with the best will in the world, and I work with some lovely people, they can't remember everything because their brains are as scrambled as mine is so.</p>
Tension/conflict between roles	<p>Describes examples of situations where she has had conflicting/ competing pressures from home and work.</p> <p>Describes the impact/ implications of the above</p>	<p>1. I do think it's the children bit that gives you that understanding of what people's limits are, because really if you don't have children your life is obviously different, but you don't have two small people 100% dependent on you and you do have that flexibility to arrive home late, to attend a meeting last minute, to do this, to do that, to take on that workload, or to take on that project, whereas if you've got two people completely dependent on you 100% of the time. So being part-time and being a part-time mum, there are subtleties between those two as</p>

		well, yeah.
Time needed at school	<p>Describes examples of when being at school is necessary.</p> <p>Discusses the impact of having to be at school.</p> <p>Discusses this in terms of discouraging her from applying for promotion.</p>	<p>1. Some of it yes, some of the work I wouldn't do at home, simply, well like I said to you earlier my internet connection isn't good at home and I have it, well other colleagues have come in and said I spent the weekend entering data and some of the stuff that just takes up your time, you know you've got to do it but you could perhaps do it at home or at work and then they've come in and said, I've lost it all, so they've lost two or three hours work. So, to me I'd rather be in school and spend the time, stay at the end of the day, get in early, do whatever you need to do to do it on the school premises so that I'm not having to do it twice, so yeah.</p>
Time not right for promotion	Explains why she is not applying for promoted positions at the current time.	<p>1. I can see myself doing it eventually, when I feel that the boys are independent enough for them not to need me as much and I don't know when that will be. We've had the discussion about going back full-time and my husband says he's not pushing for me to do it until the children are at secondary school probably, so it's another five years. Whereas I was actually thinking that I might up a day perhaps in a year or two's time, but I might have to drop off some of these other things that I'm doing.</p>
Time	<p>Mentions not having enough time.</p> <p>Discusses the impact on her life of not having enough time.</p>	<p>1. That doesn't happen at all because nobody's got time, it isn't that they haven't got the inclination, it's that they haven't got the time.</p> <p>2. Yeah, but not on a Thursday and a Friday we get a bit of a lie on those three days, so yeah you do feel like you're running on empty. Just feel like every single little</p>

		<p>moment of time, so I'm really trying now to eke out a little bit of time for me because I've realised that I need that reflection time, I need that time to take a breath and say, right okay where am I at, what have we got to do, what's the priorities, etcetera, etcetera. Which I think after going back after having my third child I felt like I had to just do everything you know, but I think as time goes on you realise, and my mum's been telling me for ages and my husband's been telling me for ages, you're doing too much, but you want to do it, you want to be seen to be helping people, yeah.</p>
Work-based practices	<p>Discusses the impact/feelings toward the things that go on in school.</p>	<p>1. I have been in for inset days on a day off and I've got paid for it. I don't think I was ever forced to; I think that was more I wanted to.</p> <p>2. I can't think of, I don't know of somebody who's refused to go in and it's been a problem, for me it's been an optional thing and I've gone for it. There are parents' evenings on your days off and funnily enough I've never actually claimed pay, but someone said the other day I should be doing, I don't know it must be a misunderstanding, so I'll do that from now on because it's the right thing to do when you're going in on your day off to claim.</p>
Work life balance	<p>Uses the phrase work-life balance.</p> <p>Explains why this is important.</p> <p>Gives examples of how/where she is trying to achieve this.</p> <p>Gives examples of where she is not achieving this and her feelings/implications of this on</p>	<p>1. Would it put me off? It would only put me off in the sense of work/life balance that in any promotion you know there's going to be more work don't you and therefore do I want to be working more. So, it would just be that decision really as to whether, you know the extra satisfaction or challenge in the new role was going to be worth it to try to estimate how many more hours that I'd have to put in and did I want to spend more hours working or not.</p>

	<p>her life.</p>	<p>2. Which are the choices that they've made and the balance. I mean I've always said to my husband, please let me keep our cleaner, it's just marvellous, otherwise I'd spend the whole day Sunday not spending quality time with the children, cleaning and then probably up all night doing my marking and things. So, it's just finding the best balance for you and I think what you can live with your conscience to feel that you've done the best you possibly can.</p>
<p>Working out of hours</p>	<p>Gives examples of where/ why she works beyond the school day/ working days.</p> <p>Discusses the reasons for this.</p> <p>Discusses the significance of this in relation to not applying for promotion.</p>	<p>1. Even now the age they are, I still want to spend hours with them and so my sort of priority is that I do work on my days off, with the aim that then I can be with them more in the evenings and I don't do any work at the weekends, so by working part-time, I'm available for them when they're not at school.</p> <p>2. So I was trying to work out on the way here how many hours I actually do in school and I probably do about 37 hours, 36/37 hours in school, that's not without any marking at home.</p>