

Life histories and career decisions of women teachers

Joan Margaret Smith

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of PhD

The University of Leeds,
School of Education

May 2007

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the forty women who gave generously of their time to participate in this study, to Audrey Osler for good-humoured supervision throughout, to Tehmina Basit for advice and encouragement in the early stages, to my friends for help, support and encouragement, especially Pam Carter, Lincoln Phipps, Bill Watson, John Horrocks, Joe Ainslie and Charles Everhart, to my parents, Kathleen and Frank Smith, for kind consideration and encouragement, and to my partner John, for believing in me and working so hard to support me, in every way.

Abstract

This thesis reports on a life history study of forty women secondary school teachers in England. The aim of the study was to seek women's perceptions of the factors affecting their career decisions, and, as a part of this, to gain insights into the factors affecting the likelihood of women aspiring to, applying for, and achieving headship posts.

Interviews were conducted with ten newly qualified teachers, twenty experienced teachers and ten headteachers. Life history was chosen for the scope it offers for allowing participants to define the factors of significance for them, in the context of their lives, rather than responding to a researcher-led agenda.

Three spheres of influence on women's career decisions were discernible in the narratives: societal factors, institutional factors and individual factors. These form the basis for the literature review and analysis sections of the thesis.

At societal level, key influences included women's maternal and relational roles. The impact of motherhood on career was a particularly strong theme.

At institutional level, evidence emerged of endemic sexism and discrimination in the educational workplace.

At the individual level, factors influencing career decisions included the women's values and motivation, aspirations and perceptions of school leadership, and personal agency. Relational values and an ethic of care underpinned the women's motivation and influenced their career decisions. Most women teachers derived satisfaction from pupils' achievements and positive relationships with pupils and colleagues. For many, this translated into a preference for classroom teaching rather than school leadership careers. Most teachers would not consider headship as a career and harboured a set of negative perceptions of the post, which contrasted starkly with the very positive view of it painted by the headteachers themselves. Headteachers perceived themselves as agents of change, ideally placed to promote pupil-centred values and ensure school effectiveness through positive relationships.

Two types of narrative were identifiable. Some women saw their careers as defined largely by factors external to themselves, whilst others positioned themselves as agent in the narrative, seeing their careers as self-defined and self-powered. Again, headteachers differed from other teachers in having politicised identities, which drove career decisions. I argue that women's awareness of their own potential for agency, and the degree to which they exert it in their approach to career, within the constraints and limitations of their lives, emerge as key factors influencing both career decisions and personal satisfaction.

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
List of tables	i
Glossary of terms and abbreviations	ii
Chapter 1.	
Introduction	1
Autobiographical context for the study	1
Overview of the thesis	5
Twentieth century changes in women's rights, roles and status: a legacy of choice?	7
Politico-educational context: Thatcher's legacy	13
Chapter 2.	
Literature review part one: societal factors affecting women teachers' career decisions	17
Introduction	17
Gendered processes of socialisation	17
The motherhood ideal	26
Summary	36
Chapter 3.	
Literature review part two: institutional factors affecting women teachers' career decisions	39
Introduction	39
The gendered educational institution	39
Direct discrimination	41
Endemic, covert discrimination	47
Summary	61

Chapter 4.	
Literature review part three: individual factors affecting women teachers' career decisions	63
Introduction	63
Values and motivation	63
Personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership	68
Personal agency and career decisions	79
Summary	93
Chapter 5.	
Research design	96
Introduction	96
Aims of the study and research questions	96
Rationale and theoretical foundation for using life history interviews	98
From theory to thesis: research design and critique	105
Summary	136
Chapter 6.	
Analysis of findings part one: societal factors affecting women teachers' career decisions	139
Introduction	139
Gendered processes of socialisation	140
Relational and maternal roles in adulthood	151
Summary	177
Chapter 7.	
Analysis of findings part two: institutional factors affecting women teachers' career decisions	180
Introduction	180
Direct discrimination	182
The gendered institution and endemic, covert discrimination	184
Summary	196

Chapter 8.	
Analysis of findings part three: individual factors affecting women teachers' career decisions	199
Introduction	199
Values and motivation	199
Personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership	210
Summary	220
Chapter 9.	
Analysis of findings part four: individual factors affecting women headteachers' career decisions	222
Introduction	222
Values and motivation	222
Women headteachers as agents of change: an alternative paradigm of school leadership	232
Summary	253
Chapter 10.	
Analysis of findings part five: personal agency and approach to career	255
Introduction	255
Beyond the barriers: personal agency and career approach	255
Personal agency and women teachers' career decisions: a typology of career approaches	256
Summary	298
Chapter 11.	
Conclusions and recommendations	299
Introduction	299
Summary of key findings	301
Recommendations	306

Appendix 1. Key changes altering the rights and status of women	313
Appendix 2. Percentage representation of women in senior posts	314
Appendix 3. Average annual salary of headteachers and deputy headteachers	315
Appendix 4. Models of motivation	316
Appendix 5. Gray's feminine and masculine paradigms	317
Appendix 6. Details of local education authorities	318
Appendix 7. The pilot study	320
Appendix 8. Sandra's story	322
Appendix 9. Summary of participants and career approach types	328
Bibliography and references	331

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Key changes altering the rights and status of women	313
Table 2: Average percentage representation of women at senior levels	314
Table 3: Percentage of secondary headships held by women	314
Table 4: Average annual salary of headteachers in the maintained schools sector in England and Wales by sex and phase, March 2005	315
Table 5: Average annual salary of deputy headteachers in the maintained schools sector in England and Wales by sex and phase, March 2005	315
Table 6: Maslow's hierarchy of needs	316
Table 7: Doherty and Horne's three types of needs	316
Table 8: Gray's feminine and masculine paradigms	317
Table 9: Sample population	108
Table 10: Details of NQTs	108
Table 11: Details of mid-career teachers	109
Table 12: Details of late-career teachers	110
Table 13: Details of headteachers	111
Table 14: Sample line from completed grid showing factors leading NQTs to choose teaching as a career	119
Table 15: Hierarchy of women teachers' relational needs and motivation	231
Table 16: Key features of women headteachers' school leadership	233
Table 17: A typology of women teachers' approaches to career, category one (career path perceived as self-defined)	258
Table 18: A typology of women teachers' approaches to career, category two (career path perceived as externally defined)	259
Table 19: NQTs' career approach types	328
Table 20: Mid-career teachers' career approach types	328
Table 21: Late-career teachers' career approach types	329
Table 22: Headteachers' career approach types	329
Table 23: Summary: participants and close match types	330

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Comprehensive school: secondary school for children from the full ability spectrum

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

EBD: educational (or emotional) and behavioural difficulties

Eleven-plus examination: examination formerly taken by children aged ten or eleven that determined the type of secondary education they would receive, the most able gaining a grammar school place, the others going to a secondary modern school

EOC: Equal Opportunities Commission

Grammar school: selective school taking most able pupils (as defined by the eleven plus examination)

First wave feminism: actions of women in the early twentieth century, especially those fighting for women's right to vote (suffragettes)

LEA: local education authority

LMS: local management of schools, that is, schools becoming responsible for managing their own budget, as a result of the Education Acts of 1987 and 1988

NQT: newly qualified teacher

Mfl: modern foreign languages

MBA: Master of Business Administration

Non-selective school: see secondary modern school (see also appendix one, Southshire)

NUT: National Union of Teachers

Partnership school: school working with higher education institution to provide school-based component of Initial Teacher Education courses

OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education

PGCE: Post Graduate Certificate of Education

Professional mentors: person in partnership school responsible for oversight of student teachers

PRU: Pupil Referral Unit

Secondary modern school: school offering education to those deemed unsuitable for grammar school (see also appendix one, Southshire)

Second wave feminism: activities of women involved in WLM of 1960s and 1970s

SMT: senior management team

Subject mentor: experienced teacher offering subject-based support to a student teacher

WLM: Women's Liberation Movement

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This thesis reports on a life history study of forty women secondary school teachers in England: ten newly qualified teachers (NQTs), twenty experienced teachers and ten headteachers (for details of participants, see pp. 108-111). It focuses on the women's perceptions of the factors affecting their career decisions. As a part of this, the study seeks to provide insights into why, although 58% of secondary teachers are female (DfES, 2006), almost two thirds of secondary headteachers are male: in 2005, just 35% of secondary headships in England and Wales were occupied by women (*ibid.*). Consideration is therefore given to the factors affecting the likelihood of women aspiring to, applying for and achieving headship, and, where appropriate, to the emergent differences between the perceptions of the headteachers and the other teachers in the study.

Autobiographical context for the study

The focus of the study and the feminist lens through which I view the findings are grounded in my own life history and identities as a woman, a teacher, a feminist and a socialist. My initial interest in the topic of this thesis grew out of my own experiences and observations during my time teaching in urban comprehensive schools in the Midlands (1983 – 2001). Many able women I knew typically progressed to middle leadership positions but no further; or would progress quickly in the first part of their careers, and come to a halt after starting a family. By comparison, men seemed to progress unhindered, should they so choose. Most of my teaching years were spent

working in a school with a male head and three male deputies – four able, competent men – but I often wondered what skills were being lost to the school (and others) by the absence of women in the higher echelons of the management structure.

Whilst the focus for the thesis grew out of my experiences as a secondary school teacher, the PhD process has been a personal journey for me in ways I could not have anticipated. As well as developing as a student and a researcher, by studying other women's lives and careers I have come to gain new insights into my own. For example, drawing on the narratives of the forty participants in the study, I posit, as a key part of this thesis, a typology of women teachers' approaches to career (see chapter ten). The different types of career approach are differentiated by the degree of personal agency exerted, ranging from women who take full control and plan career moves consciously and carefully, to those who abdicate responsibility and wait passively for others to direct their career decisions for them. In retrospect, I am aware that during my secondary school teaching career I wavered between the two extremes. Whilst I exerted my agency in actively seeking out developmental experience and applying for promoted posts, at the same time I lacked self-belief and sought reassurance, advice and encouragement from senior colleagues. Fundamentally, at the time, I probably did not see myself as capable of achieving senior positions.

Nonetheless, my career progression was steady (but I was unencumbered by family responsibilities). I gained my first promotion after three years, became a head of department in a different school a year later and was then upgraded twice as my responsibilities increased and my department grew. I spent my final year in that school in a senior teacher post, as a member of the senior management team, with

responsibility for student welfare and discipline. Around that time I applied for a few deputy headships, but was never appointed. On a number of occasions I was awarded what my former headteacher used to call 'silver medal', that is, during post interview debriefs I was told that I had been the selectors' second choice! In some cases, men were appointed to the posts, but this was not always so – it was not a simple matter of men being given preferential treatment. Looking back now, I recall that my professional self-esteem and confidence at the time depended largely on others' opinions of me, and the view of senior colleagues held particularly great sway. My lack of *self*-belief doubtlessly communicated itself at interview, so that I was less convincing a candidate in person than on paper. With a greater sense of belief in my own abilities and my own potential as a leader, and less time spent prevaricating and awaiting the support and approval of (usually senior, male) colleagues, the outcome could have been quite different. This realisation has come to me only relatively recently, and is connected to the enhanced understanding of the importance of personal agency I have gained through undertaking this thesis.

As for most people, serendipity also played a part in my life and career course. A crucial factor was that in 1999, six schools, including the one in which I had worked for twelve years, were closed under a local education authority (LEA) review of secondary education. The closure of a school I loved, and my re-appointment through a demoralising process of re-assimilation to a 'new' college (housed in buildings formerly occupied by three of the newly-closed schools, including mine), was one of the lowest points of my career, and indeed, my life. The old heads, now considered 'old school' and 'old hat', were ousted, and replaced by a market- and media-oriented executive head. Many of the parents in the traditional catchment areas of the three former schools

were very much opposed to the newly-formed college, and a number organised a sustained and vociferous protest, refusing to send their children to the school. As teachers in the very challenging context of the new college we were frequently urged by senior managers, keen to promote a positive image, to ‘talk it up’ (sic). This did little to raise the spirits of a demoralised staff, dealing daily with the problems of a now triple-split site school, warring populations of pupils from three council estates traditionally at loggerheads with each other, and rapidly declining standards of behaviour. By October of my first term in what was known locally as the ‘superschool’, I crumbled. I resigned, completed my MBA, found a job as a PGCE tutor and, realising that higher education offered me scope to develop my research skills and take my career in a new direction, registered for a PhD. Though devastating at the time, the closure of my school ultimately had had the effect of galvanising me into action.

In retrospect I see now that the school closure was a crisis point in my life and career that provoked in me a reaction of strength and resolve. From that point on, I took control of my career with renewed determination, relying henceforth largely on my own resources rather than soliciting the encouragement and advice of senior colleagues, as I had in the past. I should also add that, in common, interestingly, with many of the headteachers in this study (see chapter nine), an important factor for me has also been that I have been fortunate in having a very supportive partner, from whom I have drawn strength throughout.

My understandings of my own career approach in retrospect result largely from a process of reflection in which I have been engaged throughout the PhD programme, as I made sense of the approaches to career adopted by other women teachers. When I

started this study, I had expected to find evidence of the ‘glass ceiling’ - multiple barriers to women’s career progression. However, as I undertook the fieldwork and the analysis, and began the process of writing and re-drafting, I came to realise that the picture was far more complex, and that by assuming a ‘barriers to progression’ position, I was missing a key point – that I and other women do actually make decisions for ourselves. We exert our personal agency in shaping our own lives and careers. I became aware that looking only at the limitations on our lives offered little hope for improving conditions for women and reinforced the image of us as passive dupes and victims, unable to take control of our lives. This realisation meant that the study took an entirely new direction. Instead of looking for evidence of barriers, I turned instead to the question of the interrelationship of the individual woman with her social context. Instead of assuming women’s passivity as a given, I sought indications of their agency. This did not mean pretending there were no constraints on the women’s lives. On the contrary, I looked at how women exerted their personal agency *within* the constraints of their lives. Acknowledgement of the existence of those limitations on women’s lives and career decisions remains an important part of the project. Recognition of women’s potential to act, however, is fundamental to the feminist project, and prerequisite to effecting changes and improvements in conditions for women.

Overview of the thesis

In the rest of this chapter, I set out the broader context for the study. Consideration is given to the changes in women’s rights, roles and status that took place during the twentieth century, and to the legacy of these for twenty-first century women. The current distribution of women in positions of power in education and other sectors in

British society is considered, against the politico-educational backdrop of post-Thatcherite Britain.

Chapters two, three and four form the literature review of the thesis. In chapter five I discuss the life history interview methodology used for the study. The findings of the study are presented and analysed in chapters six to ten, and in chapter eleven, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

As I discuss in chapter five, the research method, life history interviews, was chosen for its open-ended nature, so that the women themselves could define what the important factors influencing their career decisions were, or had been. The literature review and analysis chapters of the thesis therefore reflect the main themes emanating from the life history narratives, organised thematically under three generic headings: societal factors, institutional factors, and individual factors. In chapter two, the first of three literature review chapters, I consider societal factors, and review literature pertaining to the impact of gendered, lifelong processes of socialisation, and the social construction of femininity and motherhood on women's lives and career decisions. In chapter three, I consider institutional factors, and consider how women are disadvantaged by discrimination endemic in the gendered educational institution. In chapter four, I discuss the individual factors affecting women teachers' careers, by which I mean factors particular to the individual woman, including motivation and values, personal aspirations, perceptions of school leadership, and personal agency.

In chapter six, the first of five chapters in which the findings are presented and analysed, I consider evidence of the impact of socialisation, the social construction of

femininity and women's relational and mothering roles on the women's career decisions. Chapter seven focuses on evidence of sexism and discrimination in the educational workplace and its impact on women's career development. In chapters eight, nine and ten, I explore the individual factors influencing the women's career decisions. Chapter eight focuses on the thirty teachers, and chapter nine on the ten headteachers. In chapter ten, I draw on all forty narratives to consider the links between personal agency and career approach.

I conclude the thesis in chapter eleven by summarising the key findings of the study. Recommendations are made for action at national and institutional levels, with consideration given to the implications for schools of the Gender Equality Duty, which comes into force in April 2007. Finally, at the individual level, I re-emphasise the importance for women of exerting their personal agency, within the constraints and possibilities of their life contexts, and taking control of their career decisions.

Twentieth century changes in women's rights, roles and status: a legacy of choice?

The twentieth century saw significant changes in women's roles, rights and status, and shifts in emphasis with regard to the roles they were expected to play. I discuss here the impact of the two world wars on women's roles, and the renewed pressure on women to return to the domestic, maternal role when peace was restored. I then summarise the key legal and social changes and the rights gained by women during the course of the twentieth century, and consider whether, as a result of these, twenty-first century women now have genuinely free choices with regard to their decisions about home and work. I argue that whilst women now have more rights and freedoms than women of previous generations, and more choices in deciding their life courses and career paths,

they still have to make these within sets of constraints that act as limitations on their freedom. In order to understand women's life and career decisions, therefore, we need to acknowledge that there are constraints on women's lives, whilst allowing for the possibility of women taking control of their own lives and careers.

The impact of the two world wars on women's roles

The two world wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) prompted changes in the role of many women. Crum Ewing (1998 p.126), for example, recounts the experiences of her mother, who had joined the Bank of England as a clerk just prior to the outbreak of the first world war:

In the absence of so many men who had joined up she was promoted rapidly, reaching a position that had never previously been held by a woman, and managing to retain this even after the end of the war until she left the bank in 1920 to marry.

Many women contributed to the war effort during both world wars, working, for example, in the munitions industry and on the land, undertaking vital work to replace the men being called up to fight:

Women...took on the tasks that only men were believed capable of carrying out. Heavy, factory work, driving huge vehicles, arduous agricultural duties – there was nothing by the end of that war that women couldn't do to keep a country running smoothly (Murray, 2001 p.2).

The absence of men of working age meant that women again had access to new freedoms and opportunities during the second world war years. Stacey (1998, pp.84-85) recalls:

There were things I wanted to do and other things I felt women, including me, should be able to do if we wanted to but were prevented from doing because they were reserved for men. The shake-up of the war, when once again women were doing 'men's jobs' as they had in my parents' war, led me to a false sense that we women had arrived, that the barriers were down, the doors open. All we needed was the courage and determination to walk through.

After both wars, however, women were ‘summarily sent back to the kitchen sink’ (Murray, 2001 p.2), in order that the men returning from the war might resume their jobs. Social pressure was brought to bear on women to return to their domestic and child-rearing duties, and to ‘keep the home fires burning’ (*ibid.*).

The second world war ended in 1945, but the renewed emphasis on women’s domestic role was to exert its influence for a sustained period. Murray (*ibid.*) recalls ‘a few glitches in the fifties and sixties when the national mood demanded a return to the domestic status quo’. This is the background to the era in which some of the older women in this study grew up, a time when women’s maternal, caring roles were being re-emphasised. Although the lives of women growing up at that time differed from those of their forebears in terms of the opportunities open to them, this was not to say that there had been a ‘one-way march of progression’ (David, 2003 p.11). Rather it was a time when ‘social expectations of women marrying and having a family, returning to work possibly after a career break, were still dominant’ (*ibid.*, p. 31).

The enduring re-emphasis after the two wars on women’s role as mothers, re-situating them in the private rather than the public domain, mirrored and renewed the doctrine of full-time motherhood that Jackson (1994 p.79) traces back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when it evolved to support, she argues, ‘the sexual and political economy (patriarchal and capitalist) of the newly industrialised West’. Jackson (*ibid.*, pp.79-80) holds that the industrial revolution and the growth of capitalism led to a change in the role of mothers from producers, many in home-based cottage industry, to consumers: ‘No longer an equally active part of the work force, they became secondary and passive, reliant on men to provide for them and their children’. Production outside

the home had become men's domain, whilst 'reproduction (inside the home) was the main preoccupation of women' (*ibid.*). Women thus began to be identified by their position within the family, and men outside it: 'Woman's primary social identity was now her role within the family – *as mother*' (*ibid.*, original emphasis). This new ideology of motherhood was, Jackson (*ibid.*) argues, strengthened as nineteenth century industrial capitalism became more firmly established. It was accompanied by growing and lasting prejudice against working mothers as the needs of the child and the responsibility of the mother for all aspects of the child's welfare and behaviour were increasingly reinforced, with lasting effect:

Because of this ideology of maternity...women are never freed from motherhood in the way that men are exonerated from fatherhood...[Its effect] was to be far-reaching, spreading across Western society throughout the nineteenth century and surviving now as one of the dominant tenets in twentieth-century thought about the mother, part of a not-so-subtle anti-feminism intended to hold women in (private) child care rather than more (public) professional or creative roles (*ibid.*, p.83).

Whilst, as Jackson (*ibid.*) maintains, the impact of this ideology of maternity is still effective today, the legacy of women who undertook 'men's jobs' during the second world war could not be completely erased, and had implications for future generations of women:

A significant number [of women] had tasted the freedom of the new ways. One old friend told me her first wage as a war worker acted on her like a drug, she couldn't give up her financial independence...In the family, wives and mothers wanted a renegotiation of the old order. They argued for a form of democracy in the home where rights and responsibilities would be equally shared...The lives of my mother and grandmother remained unchanged – they continued to be devoted to their domestic responsibilities, but when my turn came they pushed and cajoled me through an education and into a job market to which they believed I had every right (Murray, 2001 p.2).

Women's growing involvement in the labour market in the years that followed the second world war brought lasting changes to their lives and their private and public roles, and impacted upon education and social life (David, 2003). By the 1960s, the

Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) had come to the fore, 'a part and parcel of these developments and changes, influencing our understandings, interpretations, actions and experiences' (*ibid.*, p.18). During the late 1960s women began to organise and to 'demand political and social changes in their personal lives' (*ibid.*, p.42). Whereas first wave feminists had fought for women's rights, in particular the right to vote, the second wave of feminism was to be 'the more complex struggle for women's liberation from diverse forms of oppression' (*ibid.*, p.1).

The collective actions of first and second wave feminists during the course of the twentieth century led to legal and social changes offering the potential to transform women's lives. I summarise below the legal changes and improvements in women's rights gained during the twentieth century.

Legal and social changes

During the twentieth century women won the right to vote, the right to financial independence, and, with the advent of freely available contraception, control over their own fertility. Discrimination at work was outlawed, and women gained the right to the same pay as men. The legacy of this for twenty-first century women is that, legally, women enjoy the same freedoms as men, and have choices. (A summary of some of the key changes affecting women's rights and status over the last century can be found in appendix one).

Hakim (2000) argues that the changes that took place in the late twentieth century, of which the most significant were the contraceptive and equal opportunities revolutions, have produced a different scenario of options and opportunities for women in the

twenty-first century. In her 'Preference Theory', she argues that twenty-first century women have free and genuine choices with regard to work and family life, and that they can, and do, make choices in accordance with their preferences. Hakim (*ibid.*, p.6) argues that women are heterogeneous in their preferences, and therefore in their choices, and she identifies three preference groups: 'home-centred', 'work-centred' and 'adaptive' women. 'Home-centred' women 'choose lives centred on full-time homemaking, and hope never to be obliged to do paid work' (*ibid.*, p.84). 'Work-centred' women 'effectively adopt the male lifestyle centred on competitive achievement in the public sphere' (*ibid.*), and many of them treat child-bearing as 'an optional extra, or hobby, certainly not the essence of adult life' (*ibid.*). 'Adaptive' women, the largest and most diverse group, account for up to about 80% of all women. These are women who want to combine employment and family without prioritising either (*ibid.*). Hakim (*ibid.*, p.277) predicts that women will remain a minority in the most powerful positions in society, 'because only a minority of women are work-centred in the way that most men are'. The implication of this for understanding the under-representation of women in school leadership posts is that women teachers are not being prevented from accessing senior positions but are *opting out*, in accordance with their other priorities and preferences.

In claiming that the option for women of 'family work' or 'market work' is 'a genuine choice in affluent modern societies' (*ibid.*, p.1), Hakim makes no acknowledgement of, for instance, the impact of social class on women's freedom of choice, nor of the pressure on women to prioritise family responsibilities. Her theory assumes women are now free from all forms of oppression. Even if career progression appears to be centrally important for only a minority of women, there is little evidence, as McCrae

(2003) points out, to suggest that *preferences* distinguish the minority from the majority. In asserting that women are making free ‘choices’ in accordance with their ‘preferences’, Hakim (*op. cit.*) fails to take account of the constraints within which women make their life and career decisions, their differing capacities for overcoming constraints, and the extent to which their roles are socially constructed (McRae, 2003). Further consideration is given to the constraints on women’s lives and career decisions in the literature review and analysis sections of this thesis.

I turn below to the politico-educational backdrop to the study. I consider women’s under-representation in senior posts in the light of changes that took place during the 1980s, which have impacted significantly on education and school leadership during the course of the last two decades.

Politico-educational context: Thatcher’s legacy

More than thirty years on from the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), which outlawed sex discrimination, women are still generally under-represented in positions of power in all professions, as reflected in a recent Equal Opportunities Commission publication (EOC, 2007a) (see appendix two).

In education, women are more likely to be found in senior positions in schools for younger pupils, and less likely higher up the age range. In 2005, 66% of nursery and primary school headteacher posts in England and Wales were occupied by women (DfES, 2006). At the upper end of the age range, 28% of the total number of further education college principals in 2005 were female (Sedgmore, 2007). Women are also under-represented in the most senior posts in British universities (Wilson, 2005;

Morley, 2000; David & Woodward, 1998; Acker, 1994), particularly in the old universities, where 'a form of modified patriarchy, as benign paternalism' prevails (David, 2003 p.109). The percentage of secondary headships held by women has increased steadily in recent years, from 26% in 1997 to 35% in 2005 (see table three, appendix two). The secondary headship figures compare favourably with the EOC figures (table two, appendix two) showing the broader distribution of women in positions of power in British society. However, given that women form 58% of the secondary teaching workforce (DfES, 2006), they are still proportionally under-represented at school leadership level.

It is important to consider the under-representation of women in secondary school leadership positions against a backdrop in which one in five schools is reported to be unable to recruit a headteacher (Blair, in *The Times*, 11 January 2006), with 2.3% of secondary headship posts filled by acting, temporary headteachers (DfES, 2006). Lawlor (1999) argues that the growing pressures on headteachers over a number of years have increasingly made it a less attractive position to many potential aspirants, as would appear to be borne out in the declining numbers of applications for headship evidenced in the newspaper and statistical reports cited above. This might mean that more opportunities are open to women who do wish to become headteachers. However, even in this near-crisis situation, it seems women are not progressing to headship in great numbers. This suggests that women either face too many obstacles to progression, or that, as Lawlor (*ibid.*) implies, like many men, they are quite simply choosing not to pursue school leadership positions. These questions are explored in greater detail as a part of this study. For example, evidence of potential impediments to women's career progression, such as discriminatory attitudes, is considered (see chapters three and

seven), and women's perceptions of the culture of contemporary school leadership are explored (see chapters four, eight and nine).

This discussion needs to be contextualised within the specific climate of education that has evolved in Britain over the last twenty years. By the late 1980s, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was entering her third term of office. Conservative ideas were becoming deeply embedded in British society, with particular emphasis placed on a shift away from a welfare state towards a market economy and privatisation of public and social services (David, 2003 p.105). The Conservative government's Education Reform Act (1988), which introduced a centrally prescribed National Curriculum and applied the principles of the free market into state education, marked a major turning point in British education, and was a defining moment for the direction state education would take over the two subsequent decades. At the time, Ted Wragg published a pamphlet for the National Union of Teachers (reprinted in Wragg, 2005) in which he warned of 'far-reaching and potentially damaging changes' (*ibid.*, p.203) that would result from an Education Act based on this ideology and 'the associated notions of competition, privatisation and efficiency' (*ibid.*). The Act sought to introduce parental choice and the principle of marketing schools, as well as school league tables based on measurable outcomes such as examination results, placing schools in competition with each other to attract pupils in order to secure funding. Wragg (*ibid.*, p.212) predicted the consequences that would result from the reforms, including: too much testing, with less able pupils increasingly 'seen as cripples, people whose low performance brings down the overall batting average'; imagination and initiative stifled, as '*Statethink*' becomes the norm and the creativity of teachers whose curriculum development skills, central to their professional competence, are 'in danger of withering away, as happened

in the Chinese Cultural Revolution' (*ibid.*, p.213); and 'money and the language of accountancy' (*ibid.*) becoming dominant in educational discussions. Wragg (*ibid.*) warned that:

Appointing Committees for headships will quiz applicants about their ability to raise money. Bank managers and accountants will be recruited willy-nilly onto governing bodies. Time normally spent on teaching will be sucked away into fund-raising, with an adverse effect on pupils' learning. It will introduce a note of dreary materialism, and, in poorer areas, futility, to what used to be a source of some excitement and enthusiasm.

The view that headship is too pressured (Lawlor, 1999), and that the culture of education is inappropriately focussed on finance and measurable outcomes rather than creativity and care (Wragg, 2005), mirrors the perceptions of school leadership expressed by many of the women in this study, who would not consider headship as a career option. This is discussed in more detail in chapters four, eight and nine, in which I suggest that how women perceive the role of the school leader in the current educational culture is a key factor determining the likelihood of their pursuing senior posts.

In chapters two, three and four, I consider theory and research of relevance in understanding the societal, institutional and individual factors influencing women teachers' lives and career decisions.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review part one: societal factors affecting women teachers' career decisions

Introduction

The next three chapters form the literature review of this thesis. They reflect three spheres of influence on women teachers' career decisions: societal factors, institutional factors and individual factors.

In chapter one, I argued that Hakim's (2000) 'Preference Theory' fails to take account of a range of constraints on women's lives and career options. The theme of constraints is taken up in this literature review. In this chapter I examine societal constraints on women's lives and careers. I discuss feminist writings on the gendered processes of socialisation and the social construction of femininity, including the motherhood ideal and women's relational roles, and consider how these might act as constraints within which women make their life and career decisions. The discussion is organised under the headings 'gendered processes of socialisation' and 'the motherhood ideal'.

Gendered processes of socialisation

Stanley and Wise (1993 p.93) define socialisation as 'that process by which children are transformed into social beings who have taken on particular norms and values, and know what kinds of behaviours are expected of them'. Drawing on the work of feminist writers, I discuss below theories relating to how the early processes of socialisation work to constrain girls' and women's life and work choices, by inducting them into

feminine, 'relational' roles and sex-appropriate behaviours, which are then reinforced throughout life through pervasive, socially constructed images of femininity. I also discuss the shortcomings of theories of socialisation, arguing that they do not allow sufficiently for the possibility that women can exert their personal agency and reject or resist aspects of socialisation. However, I argue that the motherhood ideal is a particularly powerful image of femininity that continues to be a defining factor in limiting the options available to many women, and framing their life and career decisions.

Home-based socialisation and the development of the 'relational' role

A number of feminist writers have theorised how socialisation contributes to the continued repression of women, and some of the main arguments posited are presented in this section. Sex role socialisation, the process through which 'children come to be not only social beings but either 'feminine' or 'masculine' ones' (*ibid.*, p. 94), ensures social expectations are handed down from one generation to the next, and is, Millett (1969 p.31) maintains, a crucial factor in the self-perpetuation of patriarchy:

Implicit in all the gender identity development which takes place through childhood is the sum total of the parents', the peers' and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression. Every moment of the child's life is a clue to how he or she must think and behave to attain or satisfy the demands which gender places upon one.

The child assimilates particular sets of attributes and behaviours, via a process of social conditioning that takes place initially within the family unit. These enable her to function in her social world (*ibid.*). Sharpe (1976) posits that children imitate the behaviours of the people with whom they identify, and the importance of the mother-daughter relationship in the socialisation of girls is therefore underlined. Through this

relationship girls begin to learn and internalise the feminine 'relational' (*ibid.*, p.77) role, which guides and informs their choices and priorities in adult life. Through their interactions with parents, children learn 'the intricacies of acceptable and appropriate behaviour' (*ibid.*, p.73), including sex-specific behaviour. Parents both consciously and unconsciously focus their children's attention on 'appropriate' objects and activities, including different types of toys and games: whereas boys' toys are 'not only more technical and scientific but also involve the formation of plans, plots and strategies' (*ibid.*, p.78), girls 'are often given toys which help them to practise playing 'mother', or they have dolls and animals with which playing takes the form of developing relationships' (*ibid.*, pp.78-79). This is reinforced through the sort of activities children are required to become involved in at home, which rehearse future adult roles: 'girls are expected to help with household domestic work, and look after young children' (*ibid.*, p.79). Gradually, girls are socialised to be concerned with nurturance, responsibility, and involvement with others (*ibid.*). Sharpe (*ibid.*, p.80) also notes a tendency for girls to receive 'more affection' and 'more protectiveness' from parents than their male siblings. This has the effect of perpetuating their vulnerability, inhibiting their self-confidence and stifling their autonomy and independence (*ibid.*, p.310). At the same time a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of pleasing others rather than pursuing individualistic desires and ambitions:

Girls...become dependent on their image in the eyes of others; learning how to please and be pleasing, how to avoid being openly argumentative, and how not to hold too many opinions. Other people's approval becomes essential to a sense of identity and a feeling of well-being (*ibid.*, p.155).

The emphasis placed during early socialisation on the feminine relational role and the need to please others is then reinforced during adolescence, setting priorities for adulthood that will be likely to shape life and work decisions.

Adolescence, education and career decisions

A woman's path through life, argues Pfister (1998 p.39), is 'already marked out in childhood and youth'. During adolescence, gender stereotypes are reinforced through the influence of 'peers, schools, media, and other learning sources, formal and informal' (Millett, 1969 p.35). Teenage magazines and films or television programmes drive home the message that being in love and finding a boyfriend are priorities. This places girls in a contradictory position with regard to their schooling, as 'the increased awareness of feminine role stereotypes, particularly those promoted by the media, fosters the belief that it is not desirable that girls should be as clever as boys' (Sharpe, 1976 p.136). The implication is that 'over-achievement' (*ibid.*) means loss of femininity:

a girl's role demands that she...must modify her success in relation to that of the boys...with whom she wishes to be popular. She should ideally confine her 'success' to acceptable 'feminine' pursuits which don't involve male competition...Girls may therefore experience a 'fear of success' which hinders their performance (*ibid.*).

The implication of this for women's later career approach is likely to be that women 'hold themselves back because they have learned to do so' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.21). Even where women are 'successful' in male career terms, they are unlikely to take credit for their achievements, attributing their success to luck or hard work, which reflects women's stereotypical image of 'being non-aggressive and waiting to be chosen' (*ibid.*).

The importance of girls' and women's relational role is consistently re-emphasised during adolescence through the wider social culture, through the media, through the girls' relationships with other women, and through rehearsal of the nurturing role,

experiences that impact on the formation of adult personality and self-esteem, and so on important life choices:

Girls...concentrate on 'relational' activities... This means that unless she consciously counters this, a woman's individual sense of herself remains embedded within her relationships to others. She cannot clearly differentiate herself from the rest of her world, and this hinders the development of self-esteem and self-confidence which would help her to change her position and status (Sharpe, 1976 p.77).

The sustained reinforcement of women's relational role throughout adolescent socialisation, and girls' early awareness of their future role as mothers, shapes and limits their aspirations and attitude to school-work (*ibid.*). Consequently, socialisation also 'shapes individual work expectations' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.16). During adolescence 'a different orientation to work develops between the sexes which ... has an effect on the choice of occupation, women for example attaching less importance than men to opportunities for promotion or higher income' (Pfister, 1998 p.39). The differing interests, attitudes and future plans of male and female adolescents, as well as their differing levels of self-confidence (*ibid.*), steer them to choose careers within sex-appropriate areas (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994), and influence their approach to career in adult life. The prioritising of 'relational' activities means that as a girl grows up, she is likely to opt for people-centred work, chosen from within a limited range of possibilities that reflect traditional stereotyping, such as teaching and nursing. Furthermore, Lahtinen and Wilson (*ibid.*) argue that the passivity girls learn during socialisation stays with them in adult life, acting as a barrier to their career progress. Girls lack strong expectations, and fail to understand fully their own capabilities and potential in career terms. They undervalue and underestimate their own professional abilities, which could have the impact of discouraging them from actively pursuing positions of power and responsibility, and they are ill-prepared for the manoeuvrings involved in gaining power in organizations. Socialisation 'may have a consequence for women's failure to notice

the informal power network, take part in struggles and create alliances' (*ibid.*, pp.16-17).

However, some women do progress to positions of power and influence in their work, suggesting that not all women are formed and restricted by socialisation in the same way. This highlights some of the shortcomings of socialisation theories, which I discuss in the next sub-section.

Critique: assessing the usefulness of socialisation theories

Whilst theories of socialisation offer some insights into how sex stereotypes are perpetuated, Stanley and Wise (1993) highlight two weaknesses. Firstly, they are over-generalised, claiming that socialisation affects all individuals in the same way, and failing to account satisfactorily for differences and exceptions. Secondly, they are 'overly deterministic' (*ibid.*, p.101), seeing people as passively moulded by social structures and implicitly denying the possibility of agency and change. Each of these weaknesses is discussed below.

Theories of socialisation are over-generalised

Stanley and Wise (*ibid.*) criticise theories of socialisation as over-simplified, over-generalised, and inadequate in accounting for exceptions to the socialisation rule. Such theories emphasise the 'common processes of socialisation' (*ibid.*, p.97), and are based on the assumption that we are all similarly shaped by socialisation. There is little attempt to account for exceptions. 'Complexities' (*ibid.*) such as the 'enormous variety of behaviours and attitudes [that] exist in the real world, even in relation to gender-associated phenomena' (*ibid.*) are 'left behind as of no great importance' (*ibid.*). The

implication is that variations and differences are 'theoretically unimportant' (*ibid.*). People who are 'not stereotypically socialised' (*ibid.*, p.104), and do not resemble the stereotype for their sex, are explained away as 'failed products of socialisation' (*ibid.*), the result of 'deviance' and 'mal-socialisation' (*ibid.*, p.102). These 'failed products' would include feminists, lesbians, effeminate men, men who oppose sexism, career women and gay men - all 'mistakes' (*ibid.*, p.103). Stanley and Wise (*ibid.*) argue that this reveals a contradiction in socialisation theories: the claim that the processes of socialisation are common and universal is negated by the acknowledgement of the existence of deviants: the theory both claims universality and recognises that 'universality doesn't exist' (*ibid.*, p.102).

In many respects socialisation theories are therefore antithetical to the aims of feminism. The inadequacy of the theories to recognise and account for the existence of those (including feminists) who do not fit the stereotype, other than as deviants, does nothing to question the existing power balance, meaning that the oppression of these groups remains unchallenged:

What feminists who adopt the socialisation model seem unwilling to confront is that this model embodies the values and power divisions of sexist society. Conform and you're acceptable; dare to be different and you must be a freak of some kind, are the ideas this model enshrines and perpetuates (*ibid.*).

Simply adding women into existing functionalist models of socialisation and their masculinist world views does not make for 'feminist' theory; rather it misrepresents women's experience, denying them a voice and doing nothing to address the inequitable premises on which such models are based (*ibid.*). This 'non-reflexive' (*ibid.*, p.103) model of socialisation takes little account of cultural, social and other individual life contexts. It is a one-size-fits-all theory, that actually fits no-one in particular. The

socialisation processes described are those which ‘normally, typically happen in normal, typical families’ (*ibid.*, p.104). These ‘generalized abstractions’ (*ibid.*) do not reflect lived experience and are based on limited research on white middle class families. For children growing up in single parent households, different cultural, socio-cultural and ethnic contexts, foster homes, same-sex couple households, care institutions and numerous other possibilities, life experiences may differ considerably. Even those raised in middle class white families are not a homogeneous group: their experiences of and responses to socialisation will also vary.

The over-generalised nature of theories of socialisation means that the importance of individual experience is overlooked. As Stanley and Wise (*ibid.*, p.118) argue,

feminism...demands that we take personal experience much more seriously...we must get back into a detailed examination and analysis of ‘the personal’ if we are to understand more clearly ‘oppression’ and ‘liberation’.

Only by seeking to understand the individual’s experiences in the context of her life is it possible to gain insights into the complex range of factors involved in framing her life options and career decisions. This theme is examined further in chapter five.

Theories of socialisation are overly deterministic

Stanley and Wise (*ibid.*) also criticise models of socialisation as overly deterministic, objecting to the way in which people are presented as passive and their lives, roles and choices determined by the society in which they are socialised. The implication of such theories is that “‘the social system’ somehow ‘demands’ that certain things should occur’ (*ibid.*, p.102). Within this system the family unit is seen as the initial means of ensuring that these demands are fulfilled. Such accounts start from the assumption that neither parents nor children are able to understand, adapt or reject the messages implicit

in traditional modes of socialisation: 'Parents are seen as a kind of funnel through which stereotyped behaviours of all kinds are presented to children who then obligingly internalise them' (*ibid.*, p.96). The implication is that 'social systems [exist] over, above, and beyond the collection of individuals and artefacts that compose them' (*ibid.*, p.102), that social structures are fixed, and that human beings are trapped within them. Human action is seen as being "shaped" or determined by 'social forces' (*ibid.*, p.111) which are the product of structures that exist outside of the people they 'shape'. Insisting on 'the political importance of the personal', Stanley and Wise (*ibid.*, p.112) object to these 'feminist' structural approaches on the grounds that they deny the possibility of personal agency, constructing people as malleable, moulded by social structures which are conceptualised as 'self-perpetuating and so outside of ordinary human agency' (*ibid.*).

An approach is needed which both takes account of the possible constraints on women's lives that can result from gendered socialisation and the social construction of femininity, whilst also allowing for the possibility of women's agency. An interesting example of such an analysis is offered by Aveling (2002), in her account of the life and career choices made by a group of academically able young women. Whilst taking account of the socially constructed discourses of femininity, maternity and domesticity, Aveling's (*ibid.*, p.267) analysis also positions the woman as agent, able to 'make choices and effect change'. The women in her study 'felt that they were active agents in constructing their own futures and that their gender did not control their destinies' (*ibid.*, p.277), yet when they chose their careers this was not a simple matter of options and choices:

childhood experiences and parental expectations, family relationships, peers, schools, religion, social class, ethnicity and even chance events,

all combined to produce discursive fields within which they continually constructed and reconstructed their subjectivities (*ibid.*).

Aveling's (*ibid.*, p.267) analysis takes account of 'the plurality and diversity of women's lives' and recognises that 'subjectivities are complex and multiple'. It posits 'a sense of agency' (*ibid.*) yet acknowledges that 'as historically and socially constructed subjects our choices are never wholly free' (*ibid.*). Crucially, it conceptualises, 'a speaking subject who is not simply 'acted upon' but who is also a socially situated agent able to make choices and effect change' (*ibid.*). In doing so, this approach combines both a consideration of the impact of social structures and the potential of personal agency, a question I revisit in chapters four and ten of this thesis.

A key defining factor framing the life and career decisions of many of the young women in Aveling's (*ibid.*) study was motherhood. In the section below, I give consideration to the impact of motherhood on women's lives and careers and argue that whilst it may be possible to eschew some of the effects of gender-based socialisation, the motherhood ideal remains one of the most powerful influences on women's lives, and thus on their career decisions.

The motherhood ideal

I considered in the previous section feminist theories relating to socialisation and the social construction of femininity, and their impact on girls' and women's lives and career choices. In this section, I consider the impact of the motherhood ideal, and the pressure on women to prioritise motherhood and childcare. I argue that the motherhood ideal, with its implicit messages about women's role and expected behaviours, is particularly powerful and influential in shaping many women's perceptions of their own role as mothers, and, consequently, their life and career decisions. I consider how

women's perceptions of their role are shaped by the predominant discourses surrounding motherhood. I then discuss evidence of the difficulties engendered for women who try to combine career and motherhood, and argue that these are likely to constitute significant barriers to career progression for many women.

Attitudes to marriage and divorce have undergone significant changes over the last few decades. Single parents, stepparents and absent fathers are now commonplace and socially accepted (David, 2003). Civil partnerships are legal, and same-sex couples can adopt children. In a world in which attitudes change rapidly in regard to other areas of life, David (*ibid.*, p.103) observes that 'women's subordinate position in family and work remains relatively unchanged in relation to men'. Socially constructed norms and expectations of mothers, regarding what constitutes acceptable and appropriate behaviour, have remained strikingly stable: they are expected to stay with their children and take care of them for life (Jackson, 1994). The expectation for mothers to take on the long-term, primary responsibility for child-care is endemic in contemporary western culture, and its message is so powerful that women have little real option but to conform, or risk ostracism, social exclusion and disapproval (*ibid.*).

In the first place, there is implicit pressure on women to *become* mothers, and highly influential social expectations that they should be ready to sacrifice their lives to mothering (Mann, 1995). Girls are socialised to expect to do so. David and Woodward (1998 p.212), for example, comment that most of the high achieving women whose stories are recounted in their book had 'assumed that the accepted paths of marriage and motherhood would follow on smoothly from childhood and young womanhood'. Women who do not wish to have children find themselves under pressure to do so

(Mann, 1995), and are made to feel they must account for themselves. Aveling (2002 p.272), in her study of the career development of academically able young women, found that the few women in her study who envisaged futures without children 'frequently felt the need to justify their position, either by citing 'the future of the planet' or their lack of 'maternal instinct'', while those whose futures included marriage and children 'more often than not cited the 'naturalness' of their choices'. She reports:

Any discussion of these young women's career development became, of necessity, a discussion of children, relationships and marriage because for the majority, being female meant many things, but above all it meant wanting to become mothers...while the women did not necessarily define their identities in terms of being mothers, the majority nevertheless felt that becoming a mother was part of being female (*ibid.*, pp.271-2).

A woman who does have children is rewarded and encouraged by strong social approval which acts like a 'bribe' for her to 'reconcile herself to the burdens of maternity' (Mann, 1995 p.146). The 'powerful...aura of moral rectitude...that continues to surround motherhood' (*ibid.*) both exerts pressure on women to conform to the maternal ideal and effectively acts as a barrier to the redistribution of parental responsibilities. Fathers remain largely unencumbered by family responsibilities in comparison with their female partners (Jackson, 1994).

Jackson (*ibid.*, p.17) refers to a 'specific ideology of motherhood' that has evolved in the west over the last two centuries, and identifies a range of ways in which images of motherhood and associated values are manufactured, including through literature, the media, popular entertainment and culture. The 'iconography of good and bad mothers' (*ibid.*, p.18) is, Jackson argues, not simply a passive reflection of social reality, but 'an actively determining force, constantly renaming and reinforcing certain assumptions and definitions as to what properly constitutes maternity' (*ibid.*). She notes, for instance,

how harshly women who leave their children are judged, compared to men who do the same:

Mothering is for life. To have broken that rule, whatever the circumstances, puts a woman in the category of the deviant and the unnatural... Why is it that a woman who leaves children is still as damned, or at least as doomed, as she ever was, when a man who leaves can do so with relative impunity?... The way we think about 'good' or 'bad' mothers is not something innate – it comes from a particular code of thought as to what constitutes real mothering (*ibid.*, p.17, original emphasis).

The negative, disapproving social reactions to women who do leave their children, and the double standards applied to men and women, reflect society's deeply held views with regard to women's proper place. This message is reinforced through popular culture, which is characterised by a 'tradition of hostility' (*ibid.*, p.18) towards absent mothers:

the absent mother is actively maligned, punished, trivialised or marginalized out of existence. No matter what the rationale for her leaving, there is still a block when it comes to a rational appraisal of her actions (*ibid.*, p.19).

Films, for instance, which feature mothers who leave their children for career or other reasons, see the women come to a sticky end, as Hollywood's implicit judgement of them ensures they get their just desserts. Jackson (*ibid.*, p.70) cites the case of '*Kramer vs Kramer*' (amongst others), for example, in which the character Joanna Kramer, daring to put her own life and career first, leaves her husband and child and enters into a custody battle. Although she wins the legal battle, she is forced to acknowledge that she is unfit to care for the child, and allows her husband to keep him. Jackson (*ibid.*) comments:

the woman is shown as unable to claim job *and* child. [Joanna] renounces Billy because she believes [her husband] is the worthier parent, and because if the film is to retain sympathy for the mother, it has to show her finally letting go: female heroism means self-denial. Thus *Kramer* recants the threat of castration that the independent woman represents.

Representative of Hollywood's response to the women's movement, films like *Kramer vs Kramer*, Jackson (*ibid.*, p.73) argues, serve to intensify fear of feminism, by making it 'synonymous with erosion of the family'. In terms of sexual politics, Hollywood cannot, Jackson (*ibid.*, p.70) argues, go so far as to allow Joanna Kramer success in both profession and parenthood: 'A mother who leaves her child *and* gets him back? A woman who succeeds on male as *well* as female terms?... The moral is that... she cannot have a career *and* mothering'.

That maternity defines career for many professional women is clearly demonstrated in Aveling's (2002) longitudinal study of able young women. In the early stages of the research, many of the women in fact said that gender had *not* been an issue for them and that their choice of career was *not* influenced by future prospects of children and marriage:

At the time of the first interview, motherhood was not something that concerned many of them. Yet when I asked them to predict 10 years into the future and speculate about what they might like to have achieved, the majority confidently spoke about having children and a husband, as well as a challenging and rewarding career. Most of these young women tended to view a combination of motherhood and career quite unproblematically: somehow they would cope, despite a reluctance to use childcare facilities and limited expectations of help from their future partners. Only a small minority of women in this study felt that they needed to choose between career and children, that it was not possible to combine the two (*ibid.*, p.277).

However, by the second stage of the study their employment patterns reflected 'not their education or their commitment to work, but their maternal status' (*ibid.*, p.274). The women with children either worked part-time, or stayed at home to take care of their children:

In 1998 [the second stage of the study], the most striking differences that existed among the women, and the most useful way of making sense of their stories, was the biological fact that some of them had borne children and some of them had not. This was reflected in their labour

market participation and was borne out during my final interview (*ibid.*, p.277).

Following the initial interviews with the women, Aveling (*ibid.*) had identified two broad 'patterns of meaning-making'. The dominant pattern (81%) was those women who wanted to 'have it all', marriage, children and careers; and the counter-pattern (19%), those who felt that 'career and children were incompatible'. The difference in the experience of the women with children by the second stage of the study is a clear indication of the barriers to career that result from motherhood, refuting Hakim's (2000) notion that women's career decisions simply reflect their preferences.

Thus as McCrae (2003 p.330) argues in her critique of Hakim's (*op. cit.*) 'Preference Theory', an explanation of women's employment choices after motherhood based on preferences alone, with no consideration given to constraints, is 'simply incomplete'. A woman's career choices are not only constrained by structural factors such as job availability and the cost and (non-) availability of childcare, but also by her 'inner voices' (McCrae, 2003 p.329), and her beliefs, 'about being a mother, about being an employed mother, and about the implications of the latter [which] can curtail the choices that she considers are open to her' (*ibid.*). These beliefs are formulated through powerful social discourses that define women's role as mothers, and in relation to which their self-perceptions and self-expectations are formed. The assumption that women will not only bear children but will subsequently take on primary responsibility for childcare seems to be a fundamental defining factor in the organisation of western industrial society, social institutions and the daily lives of a major section of the adult population.

Motherhood and women teachers' careers

I consider firstly, in this sub-section, the difficulties implicit in combining motherhood and a teaching career, and the impact of these on women teachers' career progression. To illustrate this, I then consider how the lives of twenty-first century women teachers compare with those of women teachers of a hundred years ago. I argue that, given the pressure on women to take on the primary childcaring role, and the dearth of support systems available to them relative to their early twentieth century counterparts, the career paths and options open to teaching mothers of the twenty-first century are likely to remain, for many women, restricted by motherhood.

Difficulties in combining motherhood and career: past and present

Hakim (2000 p.1) maintains that in modern society women of all social classes have a genuine choice between 'family work and market work', and that some women choose to adopt the 'male lifestyle centred on competitive achievement in the public sphere' (*ibid.*, p.84). These women, she claims, treat childbearing as an 'optional extra' or a 'hobby' rather than the essence of their adult life (*ibid.*).

That some women do not choose full-time motherhood as their only life interest is undisputed: as with the mothers in this study, many women choose to combine family and career, some in school leadership positions. However, the notion of motherhood as a 'hobby' denies the reality of women's experience as primary childcarers (Aveling, 2002; Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Limerick and Anderson, 1999; Limerick and Heywood, 1994). I refute here the assumption underpinning 'Preference Theory' (Hakim, 2000), that women who combine work and motherhood are free of conflict, guilt and practical difficulties in undertaking the two roles.

Despite discourses of equality, women still bear the primary responsibility for child rearing and household duties (Aveling, 2002; Kim & Ling, 2001; Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Limerick & Heywood, 1994). Combining career and motherhood places women under particular pressures (Burke, 1997), which include practical pressures, as women try to cope with the 'double shift' of professional work and childcare, guilt for not being able to commit 100% to either role, and conflicting and unreasonable demands on their time, energy and emotions (Kim & Ling, 2001). These pressures combine to create substantial and enduring barriers to women's career progression, which can be slowed down or halted as women navigate their way around the conflicting requirements of home and work (Brown & Irby, 1998; Grogan, 1996; Biklen, 1995; Acker, 1994; Limerick & Heywood, 1994; Bittman, 1991; Baxter & Gibson, 1990). As Mackinnon (1997 p.2) comments:

The choice between love and freedom still causes heartache for many a professional woman...[who] knows that commitment to husband and children will produce enormous conflicts when career decisions have to be made.

Women teachers with children of their own take their family's needs into account when planning their careers (Limerick & Anderson, 1999), altering their aspirations and ambitions accordingly (Acker, 1994). They can be discouraged from applying for posts of responsibility where they see the extra work that would be involved as incompatible with the demands of family (*ibid.*). Where potential promotion and the demands of motherhood clash, many resolve the dilemma by choosing 'accommodated' careers (Limerick & Lingard, 1995; Acker, 1989), continually renegotiating the relationship between careers and home lives, for example, by putting their careers 'on hold' (Aveling, 2002 p.272), and not applying for promotion whilst their children are very young, by prioritising and following their husbands' or partners' careers, and by taking

time out of teaching to raise children, which then acts as a career disadvantage on their return to teaching (Acker, 1994).

Although the participation of women with children in the labour force has increased over the last thirty years, social policy developments have made little significant impact on reducing the ‘burdens of women’s continuing responsibilities for caring for families’ (David, 2003 p.192). The lack of support systems such as organised childcare, and the decline of informal support from extended family add conflict and pressure to women’s dual roles. This is likely to impact on career decisions. Prior to the current nuclear family model, extended families, offering much more communal forms of child care, were the norm, meaning that being a mother then was in some ways less restrictive than in our modern culture:

The massive social mobility and deracination in our society has killed many of the extended family structures that previously helped relieve pressures on one woman’s parenting. Instead of more collective, communal or shared forms of child care, we have the tiny enclosure of the nuclear family – and with the father’s role being defined as outside the home, this means mother and child alone, imprisoned within it. This intense isolation of the mother-child unit is one of the worst effects of the modern institution of mothering (Jackson, 1994 p.86).

It is interesting to contrast this view of the modern world with the picture that emerges from Nelson’s (1992) study of the day-to-day working lives of women who taught in rural areas of Vermont during the first half of last century. She found that many of the women ‘spontaneously drew a comparison between family life and school life’ (*ibid.*, p.28) and that their lives were characterised by ‘multiple intersections of home and work’ (*ibid.*, p.27): family responsibilities were seen as compatible with teaching, and support structures were in place that enabled women to combine the two. For the women of early twentieth century Vermont this intersection of the worlds of home and work offered practical solutions for the women in coping with what Nelson (*ibid.*, p.26)

terms the 'double burden' or the 'double day'. What was highly significant for the women of this period was that there was an overlap between their two worlds in terms of personnel and support systems:

First...the community allowed these women to bring their small children to school with them, thus simply resolving the ongoing problem of what to do with children during working hours. Second, friends and relatives brought in during absences created through illness or maternity, assured those women that their jobs would still be available if and when they chose to return to work: a mother would give way to a daughter, a friend to a friend. Thus these intersections not only provided the solution for the immediate problem of 'who can be trusted to take over my school?' but for the longer term problem of 'will my job still be there when I get back?' Third, the intersections at a temporal level provide us with ample evidence that women of the past could move in and out of their careers in response to domestic needs (*ibid.*, p.36).

What Nelson terms this 'intermingling' of home and school thus offered solutions to these rural schoolteachers, solutions which 'appear unavailable to women today' (*ibid.*). In the case of the women in Nelson's study, the support of husbands or partners who were prepared to share the domestic burden was also an important factor in enabling them to function professionally.

Seen in this light it raises questions about whether twenty-first century women teachers are any more 'equal' to their male partners and colleagues than were their early twentieth century counterparts, or whether the double demands that continue to be placed on them, and the relative dearth of support systems at societal and institutional level (and for some at domestic level as well) mean that their lives are in some ways more difficult than they would have been a hundred years ago in Vermont. Even with the right to maternity leave, the flexibility to 'move in and out of' (*ibid.*) careers, as and when needed, is not available to twenty-first century women in Britain, meaning that the choice to raise a family can also be a choice to take a downward step professionally or to slow down or halt career progression as well.

It might also be argued that there is now more pressure on women than ever before to be professionally successful as well as maternally caring. Many professional women no longer think in terms of a choice between family and career but expect themselves to cope with both (Aveling, 2002; Doyle Walton, 1998; Acker, 1994). The combination of increased expectations - including self-expectations - and reduced support, does not add up to equality or liberation. Despite the contraceptive revolution, and the other changes Hakim (2000) identifies as making up the 'new scenario', it seems that women's career options and potential career progression today are still likely to be constrained by motherhood.

Summary

This chapter was the first of three forming the literature review of this thesis, in which consideration is given to theory and research on the societal, institutional and individual factors likely to affect women teachers' career decisions. The focus of this chapter was on the societal factors that act as constraints on women's life and career options. Feminist theories on the impact of the gendered processes of socialisation and the social construction of feminine roles were considered, with particular attention given to the motherhood ideal and the impact of motherhood on women's options and choices. The key points raised are summarised below.

Feminist socialisation theorists posit that, through the gendered processes of socialisation, girls learn a relational role and a range of sex-appropriate behaviours that shape their approach to life and work decisions in later life. As a result, many choose sex-appropriate and people-centred careers, including teaching, and are reluctant and ill-prepared to pursue power.

Whilst theories of socialisation can offer some insights into how stereotypical sex-roles are passed down from one generation to the next, there are a number of shortcomings. The theories are over-generalised, suggesting that socialisation affects all individuals in the same way. They are also over-simplified, in their inability to account for complexity and variation, such as the existence of people who clearly do not fit the stereotypes. Little attention is paid to individual experiences and the importance of the particular life context in understanding a person's actions and decisions. The theories are overly deterministic, presenting people as passive beings moulded by social forces, and implicitly denying the possibility of personal agency. An approach is needed which both takes account of the possible constraints on women's lives that can result from gendered socialisation and the social construction of femininity, and also allows for the possibility of women's agency exerted within the particular constraints of individuals' lives.

One of the most powerful and enduring socially constructed images of femininity is that of the motherhood ideal, which exerts pressure on women to prioritise motherhood and childcare. The motherhood ideal, with its implicit messages about women's role and expected behaviours, is particularly powerful and influential in shaping many women's perceptions of their own role as mothers, and, consequently, their life and career decisions. The expectation for women to take primary responsibility for childcare has remained constant and is likely to be a determining factor in shaping career decisions for many women. A woman's self-perceptions and beliefs about how she should behave as a mother are formulated through powerful social discourses that define women's maternal role, and also act to constrain the options she believes to be open to her.

Women teachers who combine a teaching career and motherhood are therefore likely to encounter conflicts and difficulties, which impact on career decisions. These difficulties include the practical pressures involved in coping with both roles, and feelings of guilt for not being able to commit fully to either one. Their career aspirations are likely to be modified to fit around family needs and possibly partners' careers as well. The decline of informal sources of support for women with children has not been replaced by formal, organised childcare. This dearth of support places women at a disadvantage compared to male colleagues, and in some senses compares unfavourably to the support systems available to some women teachers in previous centuries.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature review part two: institutional factors affecting women teachers' career decisions

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the institutional factors affecting women teachers' career decisions, and continues to explore the theme of constraints on women's career choices. In it, I consider evidence of the institutional barriers to women teachers' career progression. I discuss the concept of the gendered educational institution, in which discrimination against women is endemic. I consider evidence of direct and more subtle and covert forms of discrimination that have continued to flourish despite equal opportunities legislation, and argue that educational institutions systematically disadvantage women and perpetuate the white male dominance of school leadership.

The gendered educational institution

In order to understand why relatively few women teachers attain senior leadership positions, Sandra Acker (1994 p.87) argues that there is a need to move away from deficit models that blame women themselves for their lack of career progression, and look instead at how educational institutions disadvantage women. Deficit model explanations are unhelpful to feminist research in that they involve 'making invidious comparisons between advantaged and disadvantaged groups so that the superiority of the advantaged group's characteristics is never questioned' (*ibid.*, pp.131-2). Instead of looking at what women are doing wrong, there is a need to consider how the power structures and practices of institutions perpetuate gender inequality:

There has been considerable interest in recent years in the effects of teacher expectations on pupil behaviour. Why not also ask what effect the expectations of colleagues and head teachers have on the behaviour of (women) teachers? What kind of humour, what traditions, what beliefs about women teachers, married women, and women in general surround the woman teacher daily?...Where is the research that will show what gender relations are truly like in schools and how they influence women teachers' 'choices'? (*ibid.*, p. 87).

Joan Acker (1992 p.565) discusses the concept of 'gendered institutions', in which gender is theorised as 'a basic principle of social structure and cultural interpretation...the patterning of difference and domination through distinctions between women and men that is integral to many societal processes'. In this conceptualisation, gender is a *process*. The notion of 'gendered institutions' acknowledges that 'gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life' (*ibid.*, p.567), and that 'institutional structures ...are organized along lines of gender' (*ibid.*). Institutions such as 'law, politics, religion, the academy, the state, and the economy' (*ibid.*) are 'historically developed by men, currently dominated by men, and symbolically interpreted from the standpoint of men in leading positions, both in the present and historically' (*ibid.*). They have been 'defined by the absence of women' (*ibid.*), and although legal and social changes have brought women into them, the central institutions remain male-dominated.

Extending Joan Acker's (*ibid.*) concept of the gendered institution to schools offers fresh perspectives on the interplay of factors involved in shaping the career options open to women (and men) teachers. Focussing on the organisation rather than the individual as the unit of analysis allows women teachers' career development to be viewed through a different lens (Newman, 1994). Instead of looking for ways existing structures can be manipulated, barriers circumvented, or individuals' practices changed,

questions can be asked about whether some types of *organisation* are more or less conducive than others to women's career development. Central to this question is the 'intensely political project' (Morley, 2000 p.232) of identifying gendered power relations in the organisation, endemic not only in the formal structures of the institution but also in the informal and micropolitical relations at the core of its day-to-day operations.

I consider here evidence of the gendered nature of educational institutions, and identify a range of subtle and covert, as well as more direct, ways in which gender inequity is perpetuated and the patriarchal power balance maintained. I argue that discrimination is for the most part not overt, but 'embedded in [the] everyday life' (Acker, 1994 p.125) and the 'daily practices and processes' (Morley, 2000 p.229) of institutions, systematically disadvantaging women and favouring men. I begin by briefly tracing the history of directly discriminatory practices over the last hundred years, then consider how contemporary educational institutions are characterised by endemic discrimination that takes more subtle and covert forms.

Direct discrimination

Inequality characterised the education system for most of the twentieth century. Although the 1944 Education Act established free education for all, girls still did not enjoy equal access to education. For example, Murray (2001) notes that because high numbers of girls had been passing the examination that gave them access to a grammar school education, education authorities were allowed to introduce quotas for grammar school entrants, in order to limit the number of girls. Without the quotas, roughly two thirds of all classes in mixed grammar schools would have been occupied by girls

(*ibid.*). The quotas were not ruled discriminatory until the late eighties, and persisted until then in certain areas.

Women teachers' lives were also hampered by discrimination. The Burnham Committee never seriously considered the question of equal pay during the inter-war years (finally implemented in 1956) and until 1944 there was a marriage bar for women teachers (Fawcett Society, 2007; Oram, 1989). Discrimination was no less a feature of the teaching unions (*ibid.*). From 1905 women formed the majority of the membership of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), but this was not reflected in the union hierarchy: there were five women NUT presidents in a forty year period. Between 1911 and 1918 resolutions on equal pay and suffrage were blocked, shouted down and defeated at conferences. The NUT refused to push for equal pay in the Burnham negotiations, finally joining the campaign after the war, following sustained campaigning by the internal pressure group, the National Federation of Women Teachers (*ibid.*).

Discrimination against women has been illegal in Britain since the early 1970s. The Equal Pay Act of 1970, which was concerned with contractual terms and conditions of employment, established women's (and men's) right to equal treatment in terms of, for example, pay, hours and holidays (Cole, 1986). However, the response of many employers was to segregate men and women into different jobs, making comparison difficult (Fairbairns, 2002). The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 was concerned with the context of the employment. It outlawed both direct discrimination, that is, 'where an employer treats a person less favourably than others on the grounds of sex [or] marital status' (Cole, 1986 p.478), and indirect discrimination, that is, 'where the effect

of a condition of employment is discriminatory, even though on the surface it appears to apply equally to all employees' (*ibid.*). Thus the Sex Discrimination Act meant, effectively, that the Equal Pay Act (1970) could be enforced (Fairbairns, 2002). Further improvements to the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts were incorporated as a result of the Equal Pay Act 1970 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations (Women and Equality Unit, 2003).

Despite the rhetoric of equal opportunities, and the legislative changes of the mid-seventies, there are clear indications that discrimination against women in education has continued to flourish during the last thirty years. Shakeshaft (1989) cites dozens of studies spanning the 1970s and early 1980s in which widespread overt discrimination in education is documented. These include a number of examples of discriminatory practice in the recruitment process, including women being asked about parental status and how it would affect their job performance, questions on application forms about women's marital status, and women being treated as less serious candidates than men. Women teachers in Acker's (1994) study likewise perceived that they had to work harder than men for equivalent rewards, and where promotions were restricted and candidates of equal merit, preference tended to be given to males. Similar findings are reported by Wilson (2005) in her study of female academics in British universities: preference was given to men for permanent contracts; there was greater trust and nurturing of men; information about possible promotions was passed on to men but not women; men in power opted to appoint other men; and women were expected to take on a heavier teaching load and more pastoral work, whilst male colleagues concentrated on research, essential to career progression in universities.

In a recent survey commissioned by the NUT on sexism in schools (Neill, 2007), teachers reported regularly hearing sexist language from pupils, and younger, female teachers were particularly targeted. Respondents expressed concern about sexist prejudices about the attributes of women and men teachers, and many felt that sexism was tolerated by their schools (*ibid.*). Similarly, Moreau *et al.* (2005), in their study on the impact of equal opportunities policies on women teachers' careers, found that the women's experiences of discrimination were linked with institutional culture. They cite examples:

In one particular secondary school, two interviewees spoke of 'misogyny' and 'chauvinism' to describe the school and both felt that heads of department had less respect for women. In another secondary school, several teachers felt bullied by male colleagues and described experiences of harassment from boys. In the same school, participants in a focus group agreed that the school was more committed to keeping men than women [and] overpaying men compared with women (*ibid.*, p.65).

Examples of discrimination against married women teachers in particular are provided by Ayyash-Abdo (2000), Acker (1994) and Oram (1989), and there are clear indications that motherhood continues to be used in a number of ways as an excuse to discriminate systematically against women. Firstly, Lahtinen and Wilson (1994 p.17) refer to 'a myth of pregnancy in the minds of employers', that is, the 'belief that women will leave to have babies and that wastage due to the pregnancy is greater than any other reason'.

This belief is used as grounds for discriminating against young women:

questions arise of how, when these women have children they will manage the 'dual role' of primary care giver and employee. This creates a situation whereby women become differentiated into 'women' and 'mothers' whereas men remain regarded as a homogeneous group (Colgan & Tomlinson, 2006 p.62).

Secondly, assumptions about women's domestic commitments taking precedence lead to prejudice against them and damage their promotion prospects. Wilson (2005 p.242) observes that 'the majority of managers are men and judgements about effective

management tend to be based on an adherence to a masculine gender stereotype'. There is evidence that interviewers' and school governors' assumptions about women's domestic and childcaring roles act as a significant barrier to women being appointed to promoted posts (Acker 1994; Evetts 1994; Grant 1989). Acker (*op. cit.*, p.114) for example, comments:

Teachers thought that appointing committees, especially the parents and school governors on them, were working from stereotyped ideas such as women inevitably leaving to have children or not having the strength or strictness to keep the school in order. Some teachers had been to look at schools, or attended job interviews where 'it was quite clear they wanted a man'. They, or their friends, were asked questions such as how they would manage when their own children were ill.

Thirdly, assumptions are made about the (lack of) career interests and (lack of) commitment of women who are mothers (Pfister, 1998; Acker, 1994). Wilson (2005) found that female academics were seen by institutional managers as less reliable employees than men because they were expected to take time out with family:

Mothers are not less committed to their work and careers than fathers...The myth of lack of commitment may have come about because men do not want to accept women into management posts (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.17).

Fourthly, in terms of appraisal and evaluation, women are measured against the male career norm. There is no recognition of the need to take time out to have children, nor of the disadvantages of this when women have to compete for promoted posts against male colleagues with continuous, unbroken service: 'all women are evaluated as if they did not have time out for children' (Wilson, 2005 p.242). In this male-as-norm culture, motherhood is seen both as inevitable and as a lack of commitment to teaching. Women who combine motherhood and senior positions 'have to make a long-term commitment in which family responsibilities are subordinated' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.17).

Inequitable treatment of women applying for headship is reported by Coleman (2002). A large proportion (two thirds) of the women headteachers in her extensive study had experienced sexism or direct discrimination when applying for jobs: there were 325 examples in total. The largest single group of comments again related to the assumption that the women would take major responsibility for childcare, and that their husbands' jobs would take precedence over their own, meaning that they would be less able than a man to do the job well. Other examples from Coleman's study include direct reference in headteacher selection interviews to the need for a woman to be better than a man in order to succeed, the perception that women were not in any case as able as men to lead a school, personal comments on the appearance of women candidates, and cases of women who had worked in girls' schools being viewed by potential employers as having 'limited' experience, whereas this judgement was seemingly not applied to men who worked in boys' schools (*ibid.*, p.37).

Finally, it is worth noting that, despite equal pay legislation dating back to 1970, recent official figures (DfES, 2006) indicate that female headteachers in all types of schools in the maintained sector earn less than their male counterparts (see table four, appendix three). The same is true of deputy headteachers, although at secondary level there is less of a discrepancy (see table five, appendix three).

Examples of discrimination are not always overt or clear-cut, and there is a wealth of literature documenting instances of more subtle, covert and indirect types of discrimination. I discuss some of these in the next section of the chapter, arguing that these hidden forms of discrimination are endemic in the gendered institution.

Endemic, covert discrimination

Coleman (2002 p.12) observes that the enduring inequitable distribution of power between men and women in educational institutions indicates ‘a more deep-seated and profound discrimination’ endemic in those institutions. I consider in this section theory and research on more covert forms of discrimination endemic in the gendered educational institution. These include the self-perpetuation of white male domination of school leadership, the male-as-norm model of career, sexual division of labour and the undervaluing of women’s work, inequities in the provision of formal and informal opportunities for development, and negative attitudes towards female leaders.

Cloning male leaders: the self-perpetuation of white male domination in school leadership

There are still more men than women in senior positions in education (EOC, 2007a; DfES, 2006; Wilson *et al.*, 2006). Although most teaching is undertaken by women (DfES, 2006), ‘most theorising about schools and classrooms and teaching and learning has been done by men’ (Miller, 1996 p.269), and similarly educational leadership is ‘defined by men’ (Ozga, 1993 p.2). Acker (1994) emphasises the need to understand and confront ‘biases that reflect male dominance in our stock of accepted professional knowledge and practice’, as the implication of this is that women’s experience is regarded as a less valid, less convincing, less scientific basis for understanding, and women’s skills are less valued. Stereotypes of good teachers are seen to equate with white male teachers (Wilson *et al.*, 2006), and notions of leadership, superiority and academic excellence are characterised as masculine and described in masculine terms (Morley, 2000). Women are ‘seen as other in a number of different ways’ (Wilson 2005, p.243), which in itself has inherent obstacles to the promotion of women (McClay

& Brown, 2000; Hall, 1996). Whilst women have ‘a right to be different’ (Wilson, 2005 p.244), the difference they bring is not valued (*ibid.*). As they do not fit the white male leader mould they are likely to be ‘gradually excluded, resulting in a preconscious form of discrimination’ (Newman, 1994 p.281). The standards are set, and thus the power retained, by men: ‘inequity has come about due to women being seen as having different and inferior qualities’ (Wilson, 2005 p.246). Recognition of this would depend on an institutional willingness to acknowledge that ‘equal opportunities policies have failed in the past to change perceptions and practices’ (*ibid.*).

Teachers arrive at perceptions about careers through their daily experiences in the workplace and elsewhere, experiences that reflect gender divisions in society (Acker, 1994). Women are therefore frequently discouraged from envisioning themselves in positions of authority by powerful, gender-based social discourses (McMaster & Randall, 1995), and their self-perceptions are influenced by the institutional enactment of rules shaped and perpetuated by men:

the “rules” of organizations militate against women... These rules reflect the social worth of women in ways that reproduce and maintain those values. Organisations segment opportunity structures and job markets in ways which enable men to achieve positions of power and prestige more easily than women. These rules, the way they are structured and maintained, have a profound impact on the way we come to view ourselves, our identity and our sense of self (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.18).

Women teachers constantly receive strong messages from managers and colleagues which are deterrents to pursuing promotion, fostering doubt about the appropriateness of school leadership as a career option for women (Al Khalifa, 1992). Black teachers face particular obstacles to career progression, including for example the tendency to be marginalized and channelled into equal opportunities-type posts which are career traps (Osler, 1997; Andrew, 1996), or to become ghettoised in schools with an ethnic mix of

pupils, and excluded from mainly white schools (Wilson *et al.*, 2006; Osler, 1997). Young white men, on the other hand, are able to rise up the hierarchy through what Newman (1994 p.281) terms the 'cloning effect' in organisations, the process by which individuals become integrated: white male domination of educational leadership is able to self-perpetuate in the 'man-centred' (David & Woodward, 1998 p.4) institution, as more young white men are brought into its ranks, 'absorbed into the organisation by a kind of gradual social osmosis' (Newman, 1994 p.281). Having reached positions of power, successful white men are much less likely to recognise inherent institutional inequities and try to address them: 'for them the system did not confer advantage, it merely recognized their personal abilities' (Wilson *et al.*, 2006 p.249), and the system that benefits them is enabled to continue, a system in which 'sameness' is privileged and difference denigrated (Wilson, 2005 p.244).

Intricate and well-established informal systems that fend off challenges to the status quo operate at all levels to protect male privilege. Morley (2000 p.232) argues that 'the workplace has become a major site of gender politics', and offers a micropolitical perspective which affords insights into 'how patriarchal power is exercised in organisations, rather than simply possessed' (*ibid.*). Analysing the micropolitical processes that come into play when appointments are made and promotions granted, she argues that institutional discourses of masculinised management effectively silence the voices of oppressed groups who might seek to question management decisions:

gendered processes of power are complicated by the autonomy that accrues as a result of expert power. It can mean that those beyond the boundary of knowledge cannot question a professional judgement. This characteristic is particularly pertinent in cases of academic appointments, promotions, and assessments in which judgements of worth remain both nebulous and frequently in the hands of the dominant group (*ibid.*, p.233).

Even in ways that are not directly linked to ensuring the 'right man' gets the promotion, informal mechanisms work against women to stifle potential resistance. Ridicule, Acker (1994) notes, can act as social control, and she cites examples from her study of jokes aimed at women in senior posts, and sexual banter focused on young women teachers' dress and appearance. One of the women teachers in Acker's (*ibid.*, p.114) study pointed out that 'a woman in a mixed-sex staffroom finds it difficult to protest about sexist banter without being labelled aggressive and becoming disliked', thus women's protests can effectively be silenced. Another covert way in which women are excluded is through subtle verbal cues. Acker (*ibid.*) cites examples of ways in which women's contributions to conversations in meetings are restricted and ignored. These include men completing women's sentences, interrupting women, giving minimal responses to women's comments or ignoring them completely, so that the woman 'might begin to wonder if she is in fact invisible' (*ibid.*, p.128).

Male-as-norm model of career

Despite the rhetoric of 'equality', the concept of 'career' in teaching is based on the 'male-as-norm' model (*ibid.*, p.131). The image is of the 'teacher as rational career planner...busily plotting career maps and climbing ladders' (*ibid.*, p.105). This is an implicitly male model, at odds with many women's career experiences. It does not accommodate domestic responsibilities, or value part-time, non-linear or non-continuous career patterns (Wilson, 2005; Acker, 1994). The skills and experience gained during periods of unpaid child-rearing or caring for elderly relatives are not valued by employers, even though 'the breadth of experience gained by women in these sorts of ways can enhance and enrich their performance as managers' (Crum Ewing, 1998 p.131). Instead, the dominant work values of educational institutions reinforce the

male model of work – ‘long hours, no recognition of life outside work, and individualistic, competitive and confrontational modes of organising work’ (Wilson, 2005 p.236). Whether or not women take a career break, combining this with family responsibilities is doubly challenging, as noted in chapters two and six.

Women who take career breaks to raise children often re-enter the profession at a demoted level afterwards (Coleman, 1996). Employers take little account of late-entry or career breaks resulting from family responsibilities (Crum Ewing, 1998). Furthermore, as promotion is ‘tied to age-related norms’ (Grant, 1989 p.44), career advancement after a break for childrearing is much more difficult. Women who have raised children are more likely than men to be older when they reach certain career points, which can also work against them where appointing panels make decisions in accordance with assumptions about age requirements for particular posts. As Crum Ewing (*op. cit.*, p.131) comments, ‘Ageism is a particular handicap for women, many of whom have interrupted careers’. Appraisers take little or no account of the impact of career breaks on women’s careers, although as Wilson (2005 p.235) points out, ‘Treating men and women the same in appraisal and...ignoring career breaks, is discriminatory behaviour’. In addition, women ‘returners’ are at a further disadvantage on their return to work as knowledge proceeds rapidly in education and there is ‘little provision for catching up’ (Acker, 1994 p.140).

A related issue is that part-time workers are more likely to be female (Acker, 1994; Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994), again often because they are caring for young children or elderly relatives. Part-time jobs are seen as “women’s jobs” (*op. cit.*, p.16), though as Lahtinen and Wilson (*op. cit.*) point out, women do not necessarily prefer part-time

working, but have little option, owing to the circumstances in which they find themselves. As part-time workers they have less security and are much less likely to be in positions that lead to promotions.

Seen in this light it becomes apparent that the assumption of 'equality of opportunity' in the educational workplace is misplaced. It would seem that 'equal' is interpreted by institutions as meaning 'same', but as Wilson (2005 p.245) points out, 'If individuals or groups were identical or the same, there would be no need to ask for equality'. Equality depends on 'an acknowledgement of the existence of difference' (*ibid.*) instead of the 'man is the standard' approach (*ibid.*) in which women are defined as 'deviant and disadvantaged against a male standard' (*ibid.*, p.235), and in which 'power is constructed on the ground of difference' (*ibid.*, p.246). 'Equal opportunities' approaches that ignore difference fail to provide a basis for change (*ibid.*).

Sexual division of labour and the under-valuing of women's work

Lahtinen and Wilson (1994 p.16) note 'clear distinctions between men's and women's work, and Acker (1994 p.76) a 'sexual division of labour' and 'different chances for rewards within the system' in educational institutions. This includes both vertical segregation, in that the higher echelons of management are occupied by a majority of men, and horizontal segregation, in that the types of work men and women undertake tend to differ (Pfister, 1998; Acker, 1994). Men and women 'typically teach different subjects to different groups of children' (*ibid.*, p.76). Women are more likely to teach younger children and girls, whilst men are more likely to teach older students and boys (*ibid.*). Women are more likely to be found in domestic subjects and humanities (*ibid.*). As they are concentrated in relatively fewer subject areas, this has the additional

disadvantage that if promotions are shared amongst subject departments women are forced to compete against each other (*ibid.*).

There is a tradition in which 'education' is implicitly a male specialism, defined as 'specialised precisely in opposition to the maternal relation' (Miller, 1996 p.246). In contrast with this 'specialised' (and masculinised) image of the educator is women's work in schools, which is 'often deemed inferior because women do it' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.16). An indication of this is the attitude of schools towards pastoral care, for example:

In principle, most schools present this as an important area of their provision. In practice, it will be performed by women to an overwhelming extent, it will be thought to require nothing more than a little common sense, rather than intelligence or experience or training, and it will sit low within the school's range of preoccupations (Miller, 1996 p.263).

The tendency for women teachers to take on caring and pastoral types of work in schools is underpinned by a set of unspoken assumptions. There is a common expectation, linked with the maternal ideal, that women rather than men will nurture. Even women who are not mothers are expected to behave in motherly ways and 'evoke a gender of caring in their work' (Wilson, 2005 p.236). This may not be consciously imposed upon women by school leaders as it seems "natural", reflecting implicit assumptions about women's motivation to teach, which is assumed to differ from that of men:

Both the image of the woman teacher and the conditions under which women work in schools have suffered from the peculiarly diffuse manipulation of this idea that women who work with children do so out of 'natural' inclinations and needs, of a kind men are unlikely to share. These 'natural' inclinations will include the biological, but also the inculcated capacity to serve others (Miller, 1996 p.99).

However central to the effective functioning of a school it may be, women's caring work is not generally valued or rewarded by the institution:

While qualities like empathy, listening, nurturing and coaching might be explicitly associated with women...these qualities are not reflected in rewards and promotions. Some women do the unpopular, less rewarded but essential tasks that men choose not to do (Wilson, 2005 p. 236).

Horizontal and vertical segregation are therefore linked, in that the type of work one undertakes to some extent determines one's likelihood of progressing to promoted posts. As supportive and pastoral roles, for example, are less helpful as stepping-stones to leadership posts (Wilson, 2005; Morley, 2000; Miller, 1996; Acker, 1994; Newman, 1994), the result of this for women in career terms is that they are caught in a double bind: 'On the one hand, they are expected, as mothers, to nurture; as professionals they are expected to compete' (Wilson, 2005 p. 244). As nurturing work is neither valued nor rewarded, the expectation for women to take on a maternal role effectively excludes them from the male-as-norm career path. A woman teacher with pastoral responsibility thus finds herself in a position in which 'impossibly conflicting demands' (Miller, 1996 p.265) are made on her, as she is 'simultaneously bound by 'professional' codes and 'mothering' ones. Whatever her experience or proclivities, she risks criticism if she cannot perform her pastoral duties adequately' (*ibid.*). Young male teachers on the other hand, 'may safely reveal that they are incompetent, callous and perfunctory form tutors or pastoral agents without in any way spoiling their chances of rapid promotion' (*ibid.*).

This inherent bias and negative perception of women's work creates subconscious barriers and impacts on women's self-confidence in career terms. The conflict between the expectation that they will 'mother', and the messages about the necessary attributes for a successful (male) career path, place women in an impossible and contradictory

situation that undermines their professional self-belief. Miller (*ibid.*, p.246), for example, notes the ambiguities women teachers express about their role in schools, 'their uneasiness as educational theorists; their backing into pastoral positions in schools; and their frequent reluctance to name and stand by their authority, knowledge and expertise as teachers'. Lahtinen and Wilson (1994 p.21) comment that 'undervaluation of feminine qualities causes negative consequences not just for women but for whole organisations', and they question the helpfulness of, for example, assertiveness training if the assertive female manager is 'judged less favourably than the equally assertive male manager' (*ibid.*). In order for there to be change and greater equality, 'what is valued will need to change' (Wilson, 2005 p.244). The implication of this is that there should be a shift in focus: rather than looking at how women need to change in order to progress in the gendered institution, there is justification for considering the changes that might be made at institutional level.

Inequities in the provision of formal and informal opportunities for development

There is evidence of a range of ways in which professional development opportunities work for men and against women. Different types of career-shaping opportunities are offered to male and female employees on the basis of commonly held assumptions about women's (and men's) supposed strengths, interests and professional development needs (Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Edwards & Lyons, 1994; Ozga, 1993; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Thompson, 1992). Moreover, there is evidence to show that women are denied important developmental experience in dealing with negative comment or criticism (Shakeshaft, 1993; 1989). They receive criticism less openly and less often than men at work, which means they are denied feedback on their work and thereby the opportunity to improve. Consequently they are less able to cope with negative comments, with the

result that when they do receive criticism they take it 'as an assessment of their very essence' (Acker, 1994 p.55), which impairs their self-esteem and confidence. Men are more likely to be given developmental responsibilities which allow them to demonstrate the qualities perceived as necessary for further responsibility (Weightman, 1989). There is a tendency for women's abilities to be under-assessed by managers, and unfounded assumptions made about their lack of interest in career advancement (Thompson, 1992). Furthermore, the discrepancy between men and women in terms of promotions and success actually increases over time: women gather an 'accumulation of disadvantage' (Toren, 2005 p.352), that works to undermine their potential for career advancement. The net result of this is that women continue to be under-represented in senior leadership and on institutional decision-making bodies.

In situations where women's professional worth is under scrutiny, for example through appraisal, they are 'more likely to be at a disadvantage where the appraiser is male, with masculine values and frames of reference' (Wilson, 2005 p.243). The appraisal process is not gender neutral; it helps to define women as 'different and unequal' (*ibid.*), by measuring them unfavourably against male norms. Wilson (*ibid.*) comments, 'Ability and talent are not politically neutral terms but conceal value judgements... The ability and talent that women possess is seen as different from that of men'. The 'different capabilities' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.18) that women are seen to have reinforce stereotypical expectations of women and are evaluated less favourably than those of men, which works to women's disadvantage:

In general women are seen as being warm, kind, emotional, gentle, understanding, aware of others' feelings and helpful to others where men are aggressive, forceful, strong, rational, self-confident, competitive and independent... The female traits are less valued so women are denied the developmental tasks which could have helped in their promotion (*ibid.*).

Thus, although appraisal is supposedly central to planning for professional development needs, it is a process in which ‘men set the standards to which women comply’ (Wilson, 2005 p.243). As men are the gatekeepers to promotions and recommendations for promotion, women are in a less powerful position than male colleagues, and their career progression can be hindered through their involvement in the gendered process of appraisal. Wilson (*ibid.*) therefore holds that as a discriminatory process, appraisal ‘cannot easily be separated out from the context in which mainly men choose who is recruited, set standards, recruit others in their own image, and give different treatment to men and women’. Not only women but also other non-dominant groups are disadvantaged by the same process, ‘othered by race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, disability or age’ (*ibid.*).

Women’s progression into educational management is further hindered by the unsuitability for women of the styles of some training courses, as noted by Mclay and Brown (2000). They cite the work of Cubillo (1998 p.1) who found ‘a discernible gender difference’ in candidates’ performance during National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) assessments. Cubillo (*ibid.*, p.10) argues that the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) needs to re-examine the criteria used to measure effective leadership and to look at its training strategies, as these “appear only to serve to promote and strengthen the existing structure and culture of the organisation”. Mclay and Brown (*op. cit.*) also cite the work of Gold (1996 p.424), who criticises leadership development courses that stress that there is only one (masculinised) ‘right way’ of leading, and which are antipathetic to women. Gold (*ibid.*, p.424) argues that the ‘pedagogy of management development programmes should be planned to ‘fit’ all participants and not vice versa’.

Informal institutional relationships also work to ensure patriarchal power structures are maintained. Members of a school-based focus group in Moreau *et al.*'s (2005 p.65) study on women teachers' careers spoke of a 'male culture' in the school, and Coleman (1994 p.185) refers to an 'institutional preference for males' that underpins day-to-day interactions in schools. School managers interact more with male than female teachers, and young male teachers seen as leadership potential receive more encouragement than their female colleagues (Schmuck, 1986). This informal, institutional grooming of male teachers disadvantages women and impedes their potential career progression. Acker (1994), for example, notes that there is a whole sequence of experiences and events that put someone in a position to apply for headteacher posts. Women are systematically excluded from many of these. They command less 'social capital' (Toren, 2005 p.349) than men, that is social ties, information, access to mentoring, sponsoring, support and so on. They 'have less access to informal and formal opportunities for developing mentoring relationships' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.20). As they are excluded from 'men's clubs' and sporting and other social activities amongst male members of the institution, they are not a part of the informal, same-sex mentoring networks through which men are groomed for promotion (Acker, 1994). Moreau *et al* (2005 p.65) cite a comment from their focus group: 'If you go drinking with the boss, if you play golf with him...you get to know him. When jobs become available he wants someone that he can socialise with'. Elaine Thomas (1998 p.155) describes similarly male networking in universities:

While women can obviously cultivate male allies, the male networking which takes place outside of meetings is very dominant and often impenetrable. Predominantly male clubs, societies and organisations sustain the network, underpinned by the old school tie which knots and bonds together. Male bonding is also effected through spectator sports such as football and rugby, participative sports such as golf, and overtly aggressive and competitive activities such as squash. Socially-based male networking can also exclude women as it is often bound up in a

'couples' framework, wherein 'wives' provide food and entertainment for senior male colleagues, and reciprocity is understood. It is difficult for single female senior colleagues to fit comfortably into these arrangements, and alternative strategies are ... not easily found.

The hidden and informal networking and bonding opportunities are closed to women, and participation in 'cross-sex mentoring' risks producing jealousy and gossip (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.20). Women are therefore placed at a disadvantage as they miss out on 'informal training and development', and 'their opportunities, visibility and skill levels' are reduced (Davidson & Cooper, 1992 p.98). Thus whilst men are able to accumulate 'social capital' resources over time, 'women are generally discriminated in these respects' (Toren, 2005 p.350). Because men have more social power, women have become the "outgroup": 'ingroup members favour ingroups (men) over outgroups (women)' (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994 p.20).

Using the existing structures of the institution to try to bring about change can be fruitless: Alison Thomas (2005 p.1) in her study of the implementation of sexual harassment policies in British and Canadian universities, raises the question, to what extent is it realistic to expect a policy to produce change in individual attitudes and behaviour within the context of 'such a well-established, historically patriarchal culture as that of the academic 'ivory tower'?'. Toren (2005 p.352) argues that educational institutions are 'conservative social systems'. Unless something forces them to change their traditions they 'usually continue doing what they have been doing before. We have to remember that they have been "manned" and managed by men for many years...and people usually do not give up their historical privileges willingly' (*ibid.*). Women can however *challenge* the patriarchal structures of educational institutions. Elaine Thomas (1998), for example, advocates that by becoming aware of male

networking and working to develop alternative networks and allegiances women can become more empowered.

Negative attitudes towards female leaders

Women who progress to leadership positions are still in a minority, so they are highly visible, and can face particular difficulties (Acker, 1994), including open hostility and ‘subtle negative attitudes’ (Brockbank & Traves, 1996 p.90). Indeed, some argue that it still cannot be assumed that the right of women to be in leadership positions at all has been accepted by those in positions of power in education (McClay & Brown, 2000; Sherman, 2000; Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Edwards & Lyons, 1994; Shakeshaft, 1989). In some areas male conservatism about women leaders is particularly strong (Edwards & Lyons, 1994), and can work against women being appointed to senior posts. Coleman (1996) suggests that the input of local education authority (LEA) officers on headteacher selection panels can have a beneficial effect for women candidates. However, given that the power of school governors has increased and that of LEAs declined (Fidler & Atton, 2004), the stumbling block of governors’ prejudices in such areas is likely to disadvantage women further in accessing promotions to senior posts (McClay & Brown, 2000).

Maddock (1999 p.193) explores the effect of male gender cultures on women in senior leadership positions, noting that women in such posts are forced to find ways around the gendered culture of the institutions in which they work:

women had to seek out allies and supportive environments if they were to be able to be innovative. Although formal status provided senior women with some added authority, this was offset by the informal gender cultures which worked against their credibility ... once in senior posts they found themselves subject to levels of hostility which most had not previously experienced.

This description resonates with the personal experiences of Stacey (1998 p.99), reflecting here on becoming the first professor at Warwick University in 1974:

senior professors' wives...gave me the hardest time: I could see why. They were mostly women who had good academic or similar qualifications and had given up all to serve husband and children. Their jealousy and anger was palpable. They did soften a bit when I was driven to reveal that I had not eschewed the marriage and children path and had reared five children. Some men expressed personal hostility to me...I was a sacrilegious anomaly. There was of course sexual harassment: one man referred to me as 'Warwick's top woman', emphasising the second word in reference to my figure.

The hostility senior women face can take many forms: women leaders find themselves criticised for being too emotional and intense, have their heterosexuality questioned, or are stereotyped as sex-starved spinsters (Acker, 1994). In Maddock's (1999) study, the women who were forceful in their desire to effect changes seemed to be the most threatening to their colleagues. 'Passion' in women is seen as 'particularly threatening' and innovative, outspoken women, and 'radicals from ethnic or working class backgrounds', can be 'demonised as strange creatures' (*ibid.*, p.193).

Whilst consideration should be given to the ways in which institutions need to change in order that women are not systematically disadvantaged, it should also be acknowledged, as argued in the previous chapter, that women are not helpless victims whose careers are shaped entirely by forces external to themselves, institutional or other. In chapter four, I turn to the personal factors that affect individuals' career progression, and consider how the individual agent shapes her life and career decisions.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was on the institutional barriers to women teachers' career progression. The key points raised are summarised overleaf.

Inequality and discrimination against women teachers have characterised the education system for the last hundred years and continue to flourish despite equal opportunities legislation. Rather than blaming women for their lack of career progression I argued in this chapter that there is a need to consider how women teachers are disadvantaged by discrimination endemic in the gendered institution. I identified a range of ways in which this is manifested, including the self-perpetuating nature of white, male-dominated educational leadership, the male-as-norm concept of career, the vertical and horizontal sexual division of labour in schools, inequities in the provision of formal and informal opportunities for development, and the hostility and negative attitudes encountered by women who do progress to senior leadership positions.

CHAPTER FOUR

Individual factors affecting women teachers' career decisions

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss theory and research relating to the individual factors affecting women's career decisions. By 'individual' factors, I mean those particular to the individual woman. These include her values and motivation, personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership, and the ways in which she exerts her personal agency in her life and career decisions.

Values and motivation

In order to understand women teachers' career decisions, there is a need to consider the factors that motivate them and the sources from which they derive satisfaction in their daily lives. In this section, I discuss theories relating to women's values and motivation, arguing that the ethic of care and the importance accorded to relationships are key factors to be considered in understanding women's career decisions.

Early theories of motivation posited by psychologists and management theorists are classified by Handy (1976 pp.24-25) under three headings: 'satisfaction theories', such as Herzberg's two-factor theory, 'incentive theories', which are consistent with the theories postulated by behaviourists such as Skinner (1974), and 'intrinsic theories', which assume that 'man is not an animal' (Handy, 1976 p.25), and that people work best 'if given a worth-while job and allowed to get on with it' (*ibid.*), deriving

satisfaction from the work itself. This would seem, of the three categories Handy (*ibid.*) identifies, the most pertinent to a study of the lives and careers of teachers. Rather than looking just at extrinsic motivators and rewards such as pay and promotion, there is a need to consider the role of intrinsic motivation, which Doherty and Horne (2002 p.218) define as ‘an innate psychological need for competence and self-determination’.

Maslow (1943) puts forward a model of motivation in the form of a hierarchy of higher and lower-order needs (see table six, appendix four), arguing that people progress upwards from lower-order needs (such as the need for food, shelter, love and affection) to higher-order needs, of which self-actualisation is the pinnacle. Doherty and Horne (*op. cit.*, p.220) however question this notion of linear progression, arguing that ‘people may attribute different values to their needs, for example, they may prefer the security of a predictable bureaucratic job to a better paid, more challenging job, which is less secure’. In the context of understanding people’s work-oriented decisions, moreover, Doherty and Horne (*ibid.*) argue that there is a need to take account of the possibility that people’s needs can be met through relationships and activities *outside* work, as well as through work. They identify three types of needs (see table seven, appendix four): ‘warmth needs’, such as the need for affection, ‘applause needs’, such as the need for recognition, and ‘possession needs’, including for example the need for a desk and a parking space (*ibid.*, p. 221). The extent to which the individual’s needs are met through her different work and non-work activities and relationships will vary from person to person, and is likely to impact on the individual’s career decisions.

By recognising that needs can be met other than through work, it is also potentially possible to account for fluctuations and inconsistencies in an individual’s work-oriented

motivation, which ‘can change over time, or quite dramatically following a major life crisis’ (*ibid.*, p.222). The implication is that theories of work-oriented motivation need therefore to take into consideration people’s lives outside work as well as behaviour in the workplace, and the impact on work decisions of crisis points or major life changes, such as marriage, childbirth, marriage or relationship breakdown, serious illness and bereavement. Whilst Doherty and Horne (*ibid.*) do not mention women specifically, it is consistent with the aims of feminist life history research to consider all aspects of women’s lives in understanding their motivation at work and their career decisions, an issue discussed in chapter five.

The centrality of relationships to women’s lives and motivation is underlined by Burr (2006), Hanley and Abell (2002), and Gilligan (1982). In their critique of Maslow’s (1943) model, Hanley and Abell (*op. cit.*) argue that the implication of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is that self-actualising individuals move *beyond* being motivated by the need for love and a sense of belonging and seek solitude in the process of their self-actualisation: relationships are seen only as ‘purposeful’ (Hanley & Abell, 2002 p.38) in meeting social needs rather than ‘purposes in and of themselves’ (*ibid.*). A model that fails to take account of the centrality of relationships is likely to be of limited use in accounting for and understanding many women’s values, priorities, life and career decisions. As Burr (2006 p.31) comments: ‘It is almost a truism to say that personal relationships occupy a place of central importance in women’s lives that is not so for men’. Gilligan (1982 p.156) notes that women seem to have a different conception of interpersonal relationships to men, and their actions are seemingly based on a different set of values:

male and female voices typically speak of the importance of different truths, the former of the role of separation as it defines and empowers

the self, the latter of the ongoing process of attachment that creates and sustains the human community.

Gilligan (*ibid.*, p.2) identifies ‘two modes of thought’ that have arisen ‘in a social context where factors of social status and power combine with reproductive biology to shape the experiences of males and females and the differences between the sexes’. Although she discusses ‘male and female voices’ (*ibid.*), she is clear in pointing out that the associations of men and women with the two modes of thought are not absolute, and are not intended to represent a generalisation about either sex, but to highlight the distinction between the two. Without making claims of universality, or theorising about the origins of the different modes of thought, she draws on empirical research on men and women to note that men and women appear to experience attachment and separation in different ways: ‘each sex perceives a danger which the other does not see – men in connection, women in separation’ (*ibid.*, p.42). Whereas, it seems, men fear intimacy, women fear isolation: ‘a fear that in standing out or being set apart by success, they will be left alone’ (*ibid.*). The implication of this for understanding women’s career decisions is that women may be discouraged from seeking senior leadership posts if these are seen to entail isolation and the loss of valued relationships with colleagues and pupils, an issue discussed further in the next part of this chapter.

For most women, Gilligan (*ibid.*, p.164) argues, ‘relationships of intimacy and care’ are an integral part of their lives and identities. The women interviewed by Gilligan (*ibid.*, p.159), for example, defined themselves and assessed their own self-worth in terms of their relationships to others:

In response to the request to describe themselves, all of the women describe a relationship, depicting their identity *in* the connection of future mother, present wife, adopted child, or past lover. Similarly, the standard of moral judgement that informs their assessment of self is a standard of relationship, an ethic of nurturance, responsibility and care.

Measuring their strength in the activity of attachment...these highly successful and achieving women do not mention their academic and professional distinction in the context of describing themselves. If anything they regard their professional activities as jeopardizing their own sense of themselves, and the conflict they encounter between achievement and care leaves them either divided in judgement or feeling betrayed.

The masculinised view of the world implicit, for example, in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs (see table six appendix four) therefore contrasts with what Gilligan (*op. cit.*, p.30) presents as women's perception of the world, 'a world of relationships and psychological truths where an awareness of the connection between people gives rise to a recognition of responsibility for one another, a perception of the need for response'. Relationships are for women an end in themselves, not a means towards achieving other ends. Attachment is 'supported by an ethic of care' (*ibid.*, p.164). Women's sense of morality and responsibility to others is fused with maternal morality, and goodness is equated with caring for others: 'the conventional feminine voice ...[defines] the self and [proclaims] its worth on the basis of the ability to care for and protect others' (*ibid.*, p.79).

This 'ethic of care' infuses women's values and underpins their actions and decisions: 'the expression of care is seen as the fulfilment of personal responsibility' (*ibid.*, p.73). Gilligan (*ibid.*) notes a tendency for women to base moral judgements on their sense of responsibility to others rather than their own needs or desires. There is thus a tension between the concept of women's rights and the ethic of care, which is conflated with self-sacrifice. This can act as a constraint on women's perceived options:

The notion that virtue for women lies in self-sacrifice has complicated the course of women's development by pitting the moral idea of goodness against the adult questions of responsibility and choice...the ethic of self-sacrifice is directly in conflict with the concept of rights that has, in this past century, supported women's claims to a fair share of social justice (*ibid.*, p.132).

I discuss below how the view of headship as based on values that conflict with the ethic of care may lead some women to opt for a classroom based career rather than a school leadership position, whereas a view of headship as leader of the nurturing institution is likely to have greater appeal.

Personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership

In this section, I consider how women's perceptions of school leadership might differ, and how this might impact on aspirations. I present two images of contemporary headship reflected in the literature since the early 1990s. The first presents a view of school leadership as masculinised, business-oriented and contrary to the values of many women teachers who typically prioritise caring and nurturing, and thus prefer classroom teaching. The second is based on the premise that in order for schools to be effective they need to be caring, nurturing institutions. Implicit in this is the need for feminised leadership qualities, as well as for some traditionally 'masculine' characteristics. I suggest that these two views of headship represented in the literature on management are synonymous with the different ways in which women teachers might conceptualise headship. I argue that women who perceive school leadership as masculinised and business-oriented are less likely to aspire to headship. Those, on the other hand, who see headship as an opportunity to work in accordance with their values to lead nurturing, pupil-centred institutions, and as a position offering the scope and freedom to use their skills and work in their preferred ways, are more likely to aspire to and apply for headship posts.

The post-1988 headteacher

I discuss in this section the changes in the role of headteacher that have come about as a result of legislation introduced during the 1980s and 1990s. I consider the possible impact of this on some women teachers' perceptions of school leadership, and, consequently, their career choices.

In addition to the introduction of a national curriculum, the Education Acts of 1987 and 1988 led to local management of schools (LMS) and introduced the notion of increased parental choice of schools (David, 2003). These changes altered the basis of relations between schools and local education authorities (LEAs), as well as between schools and parents, and transformed the nature of the role of the headteacher and governors. Whereas previously LEAs had managed the bulk of budgetary decisions, financial devolution through LMS has meant that headteachers have to ensure budgets are competently and efficiently managed, a task which Fidler and Atton (2004 p.97) describe as 'one of the most important aspects of the contemporary head's role'. Funding of schools has furthermore become increasingly complex in recent years as, in addition to a centrally allocated budget, a range of stakeholders can potentially make contributions, and headteachers are required to make bids to gain specialist status for schools in order to attract additional resources. It is no longer enough that the headteacher is a people manager with a sound knowledge of teaching and learning. It is imperative that she takes control of the school funding and finances if the school is to function and survive (*ibid.*). Moreover, as a result of increased parental choice, schools are forced into a position of having to compete to attract pupils (and therefore funding), as reflected in the new 'marketing' discourses that began to enter the educational arena during the 1990s (see, for example, Davies & Ellison, 1991). Thus, in addition to the

increased workload resulting from LMS (Evetts, 1994), headteachers have to market the school and manage the institutional image.

Evetts (*ibid.*) found that although governors and headteachers are in theory jointly responsible for financial management, in practice most governing bodies recognise headteachers' expertise and support their decisions. Potentially, however, governors have the power and the right to withdraw that support, so the headteacher's relationship with the governors of her school is very important. The role governors play in financial management can be 'either for good or bad in terms of the head's success' (Fidler & Atton, 2004 p.99). The headteacher is thus placed in the position of having to manage relations with governors, as well as to advise them on budgetary matters and deployment of the school's resources. In so doing, there are some situations in which headteachers need to be 'tough, even aggressive in negotiations with governing bodies' (Evetts, 1994 p.121).

Increased emphasis on financial management and marketing has been accompanied by a shift in the focus of the 'work culture of headship' (*ibid.*, p.119). The role of headteacher post-1988 includes elements of 'corporate managerialism' (*ibid.*, p.120), in which the emphasis is on cost-effectiveness and efficiency:

Heads have to be *measurably* efficient and effective managers of their individual schools. Emphasis is placed on their directional skills and their ability to motivate staff to achieve national curriculum objectives and pupil assessment targets (*ibid.*, p.121).

Fidler and Atton (2004) note that there are now relatively few headteachers currently in post who were appointed pre-LMS. The perception that the headteacher role is primarily concerned with financial management and competitive marketing is therefore likely to be a widely held view amongst many current serving teachers, who base their

judgement on their experiences of the headteachers with whom they have worked, or in the case of older teachers, compare the role current headteachers play to that undertaken by those they knew pre-LMS. Contemporary headteachers can experience feeling isolated and cut off from the rest of their staff, as their changed roles mean that they are inevitably more 'office-bound' (Evetts, 1994 p.119), thus it is likely that teachers will perceive headteachers as remote from the everyday, teaching, learning and caring activities of the school. Evetts (*ibid.*) notes furthermore that the imperative to compete with other schools means that headteachers can be cut off from other headteachers as well. If, as Gilligan (1982 p.57) suggests, women value relationships and fear isolation and 'a feeling of disconnection from others', it is likely that many women would be discouraged from taking on such a role.

The changed nature and culture of headship is manifest in 'new styles' (Evetts, 1994 p.120) of management in which 'the need for competition, personal assertiveness, firm leadership and strong control' (*ibid.*, p.120) are emphasised. As the pressures on them increase, so does the need for 'more directive and autocratic' (*ibid.*) styles of management. Qualities such as 'caring, nurturing, loyalty and co-operation' are 'difficult to measure', 'difficult to reward' (*ibid.*, p.121) and thus seemingly inappropriate in the new culture. Teachers who might otherwise have aspired to headship are further discouraged by the ways in which these abhorrent values translate into leadership styles antithetical to their preferred ways of working:

If the new headteacher is required to be competitive, efficient and accountable, developing assertive and task-centred leadership styles, then such changes to the headteacher role might prove to be unattractive to many women (as well as to many men) teachers (*ibid.*, p.48).

Women who do become senior leaders might also experience conflicts. If women's values with regard to caring and nurturing underpin the sources from which women

teachers derive satisfaction, and through which they define their identities, the business-oriented values implicit in contemporary educational leadership may be perceived as in conflict with them. A move into school leadership therefore might be seen to imply having to espouse contradictory values:

Women who enter the world of career and promotion into management are taking part in social relationships determined by masculine values. Career, promotion and management as presently constituted are areas where the values of scientific rationality, bureaucratic objectivity and hierarchical authority can be at odds with the caring, subjective, relational values which are supposedly important to women (*ibid.*, pp.85-86).

These 'masculine' values clash with those Gilligan (1982) identifies as forming a part of (most) women's sense of morality. If women teachers conceptualise headship as described here, it would seem likely that many will be discouraged from applying.

Headteacher as leader of the nurturing institution

Implicit in the 'corporate managerialism' (Evetts, 1994 p.120) depicted in the above description of the post-1988 headteacher is a view of school effectiveness as quantifiable: a successful school attracts more pupils than its competitors, achieves national curriculum objectives and pupil assessment targets, ranks highly in examination league tables, and attracts funding from numerous sources. However, from an alternative viewpoint, effective schools might be defined as caring, nurturing institutions, offering the potential to meet individual pupils' needs and so transform their lives. I discuss here the need for, and value of, traditionally 'feminine' characteristics in the leader of the nurturing institution, consider evidence from research on effective school leaders indicating that their leadership styles are characterised by a mixture of feminine and masculine attributes, and argue that women who perceive

headship as a post offering some potential to work in caring, nurturing, pupil-centred and empowering ways are more likely to aspire to school leadership positions.

From this perspective, in order to be effective, schools need leaders with traditionally feminine, nurturing characteristics. Gray (1987 p.299) argues that if schools as organisations 'are perceived as needing to be caring, nurturing, maintaining, supporting [and] understanding', they require a form of leadership that incorporates 'intuition, calculated risk taking, aesthetic considerations, dependence on colleagues, messiness and incompleteness', a form that is 'essentially a stereotype of femininity'. In contrast to the picture of the target-driven headteacher described in the last sub-section (see 'The post-1988 headteacher', p.69), the headteacher of the nurturing institution is likely to see herself as possessing feminine, nurturing characteristics, and to perceive the value of these in leading her school, and the potential headship offers for leading in this way. The women in Sherman's (2000) study, for example, emphasised the importance of nurturing and effecting change through caring relationships.

The terms 'feminine' and 'masculine' are used here to refer to types of leadership behaviour. 'Leadership style' has been defined as 'a particular way of realising and enacting the authority of headship' (Ball, 1987 p.83). Gray (1993 p.111) identifies qualities associated with masculine and feminine 'ideal types' of leadership styles, using a pair of gender paradigms to represent 'the traditional dichotomy of gender characteristics'. These ideal types are the 'nurturing' paradigm and the 'defensive/aggressive' paradigm, which are summarised in table eight, appendix five. 'Gender' in this sense is not defined by sex: it might be more usefully defined as 'a description of social roles' (*ibid.*, p.113). The masculine stereotype is associated with a

behaviour repertoire that includes 'aggressiveness, ambition, assertiveness, competitiveness, domination, forcefulness, being good at sports, self-confidence, ability at making decisions and independence' (Gray, 1989 pp.38-39). The corresponding traditional stereotypical masculine picture of the leader is one in which the emphasis is on the need for a goal-focused, analytical, assertive and strong leader, who possesses stereotypically male characteristics, such as unemotional, analytical objectivity (Schein, 1994; Gray, 1993), toughness and physical strength (Hall, 1996; Schein, 1994; Al Khalifa, 1989; Morgan *et al.*, 1983). This view of the male manager is strongly reflected in the picture of the individualistic corporate manager described in the earlier sub-section of this chapter on the post-1988 headteacher.

The feminine stereotype on the other hand is associated with someone who is affectionate, emotional, gentle, fond of children, tender, warm and understanding (Archer & Lloyd, 1982). Feminine styles of leadership are typically characterised by a tendency to accord more importance to differences between individual students (Shakeshaft, 1995; 1989), and to the social and emotional development of the students (Shakeshaft *et al.*, 1991). Whilst masculine styles are more typically 'strongly conformist and peer related' (Gray, 1989 p.43), feminine styles tend to be more accepting of differences and 'more tolerant of deviance' (*ibid.*). Whilst historically, educational leadership has been associated with the masculine stereotype (Blackmore, 1993; Blackmore & Kenway, 1993; Schein, 1989), there is a trend towards recognising that the qualities associated with the feminine stereotype, such as openness, commitment to serve one another and willingness to be vulnerable (Senge, 1993), empathy, warmth and genuineness (Murgatroyd & Gray, 1984), humanity, co-operation, humanistic management and social sensitivity (Al-Khalifa, 1992; De Lyon, 1989;

Anon., 1989) are desirable leadership attributes. Feminine leadership styles also emerge as more successful in motivating and helping teachers (Hall, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1995; Southworth, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). Good communication skills, an informal style and a commitment to getting relationships right in order to manage effectively are identified as important strengths of this style of leadership (Shakeshaft, 1995; Mortimore *et al.*, 1993; Weightman, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1989).

As studies focus increasingly on women leaders (Coleman, 2002; Sherman, 2000; Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Coleman, 1996; Hall, 1996; Evetts, 1994; Adler *et al.*, 1993; Ouston, 1993; Ozga, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1989), attention has been drawn to the benefits of women leaders' ways of working. Whilst as Gray (1993) makes clear, no-one fits either the masculine or the feminine paradigm exactly (nor would this be desirable), it is nonetheless apparent that there are fundamental differences in the ways that women and men conceptualise leadership, and that women do differ from men 'in terms of manner of execution of tasks and style of leadership' (Evetts, 1994 p.3). Insights into women's concepts and enactment of leadership challenge traditional, masculinised constructions of educational leadership, in which, as described earlier, the focus is on hierarchy, control, power, individualism and formal authority (Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Ozga & Walker, 1995; Blackmore, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1989). Limerick and Anderson (*op. cit.*, p.404) for example, comment that the women leaders in their study had 'a very different approach to the formal authority relations based on power differentials and motivated by control perspectives that historically have been seen as important if one was to be a successful administrator'.

Gilligan (1982 p.2) distinguishes two 'modes of thought' and two 'modes of action' (*ibid.*, p. 62) associated with men and women. Fundamental to these differing modes of thought and action are men's and women's constructions of relationships, which Gilligan (*ibid.*) describes in terms of 'images of hierarchy and web'. Women conceptualise relationships in a 'non-hierarchical vision of human connection' (*ibid.*), as a 'web' (*ibid.*). This is apparent in the less hierarchical styles of leadership adopted by women leaders (Shakeshaft, 1989; Neville, 1988). They are more likely to adopt 'power with', collaborative and people-oriented styles of leadership (Coleman, 2002; Sherman, 2000; Hall, 1996; Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996; Adler, 1994; Ferrario, 1994; Blackmore, 1989). Furthermore, their leadership styles are characterised by features associated with effective organisational leadership: democratic approaches, which imply the sharing of power, goals and responsibilities (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1990; Handy, 1976); collegial approaches, which involve reaching decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus (Shakeshaft, 1995; Wallace, 1988; Campbell, 1985) and which 'encourage the participation of teachers in decision-making, leading to a sense of ownership and an enhanced prospect of successful innovation' (Bush, 1994 p.39); and co-operative, empowering ways of working, particularly through team-work and group-work (Hall, 1996; Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996; Adler, 1994; Ferrario, 1994; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; West-Burnham, 1992; Riches & Morgan, 1989). What constitutes effective, appropriate and successful leadership style and behaviour varies, however, according to the situational context (Fiedler, 1967), thus skilful *flexibility* of leadership approach is in itself a crucial factor in effectiveness. As Evetts (1994 p.89) comments, 'the most important criterion of good management is that it should relate to the organisational needs of the institution'. She suggests therefore

that it is more helpful to consider the link between style and effectiveness rather than style and gender:

the objective in demonstrating differences is not to enable us to claim that either women or men make the best headteachers. However, where differences are demonstrated we are then in a better position to ask which, in that time and at that place, is the best style of management and leadership in the organization that is the school (*ibid.*).

As discussed earlier, the contemporary headteacher in Britain has no option but to take responsibility for the financial management of the school, which is crucial to its survival. It is simply not enough, therefore for the headteacher to be a 'people person' or an expert on teaching and learning: 'She might have the most charismatic personality with a vision for the school that all are eager to fulfil but nothing can happen without the funds to pay for it' (Fidler & Atton, 2004 p.97). The imperative to take responsibility for funding, resourcing, marketing the school and financial management does not preclude the possibility that the school can also be caring and pupil-centred. It does however have implications for the attributes and skills needed by the effective, nurturing headteacher, who has to be able to fulfil all aspects of the leadership role implicit in the current culture, without compromising her commitment to pupil-centredness and leadership through empowerment. The effective contemporary leader therefore needs to be able to draw on both masculine and feminine qualities (Beare *et al.*, 1993; Gray, 1989), and to adapt her leadership style to suit the situation and the institutional context (Beare *et al.*, 1993), for example, using careful judgement to decide whether the situation warrants a more supportive or a more directive approach.

The flexibility to adopt a range of approaches spanning the masculine and feminine paradigms is borne out in research on school leaders, including female headteachers. Hall (1996 p.3) notes that the effective leader uses a range of behaviours 'that are the

exclusive property of neither men nor women', and some of the women in Sherman's (2000 p.138) study, whilst emphasising the importance of caring and nurturing, also communicated that they felt they needed to be able to 'exhibit traits more often associated with men, such as aggressiveness and maintenance of control'. In Evetts' (1994 p.88) study of men and women headteachers, 'some of the male heads emphasised collegial relations and participatory forms of management in schools while some of the female heads were inclined towards hierarchy and authority in management'. The women headteachers in Coleman's (2002) study identified with most of the 'feminine' qualities in Gray's (1993) paradigm, but also, albeit less strongly, identified with a number of the 'masculine' qualities. Six of the 'feminine' characteristics (aware of individual differences, caring, intuitive, tolerant, creative, informal) were identified by 59% or more of the headteachers. There were however four adjectives in the masculine paradigm (evaluative, disciplined, competitive, objective) which were identified by over half of the headteachers as applicable to them. Although the characteristics identified most often were from the feminine paradigm, those chosen by more than 50% ranged across both paradigms, showing that the women headteachers did not fit the description of a purely 'feminine' style of management. They reported a repertoire of behaviour which drew on both the masculine and the feminine paradigms. Gray (1989 p.39) describes this type of leadership behaviour as 'androgynous', and associates it with emotional stability and maturity: 'the better adjusted we are emotionally the easier it is for us to accept this 'fully androgynous' duality – we see it simply as a full description of a mature person, whether male or female being of little relevance'.

These findings are of importance in seeking to understand women teachers' career decisions for two main reasons. Firstly, it seems reasonable to assume that women who conceptualise school leadership as offering some scope to work in caring, nurturing ways are more likely to consider headship as a career, whereas those who see it as the masculinised role described earlier in this chapter are likely to be discouraged. Secondly, their ability to function in the post as it now is will depend on their flexibility of approach and ability and willingness to shift leadership style as needed, which may have implications for the sort of opportunities to which women teachers need to have access in order to prepare them for leadership.

In the final part of this chapter, I consider how theories of personal agency might relate to women teachers' approaches to career.

Personal agency and career decisions

Women teachers' career decisions are affected by multifarious factors, including, as discussed in previous chapters for example, motherhood, institutionalised discrimination and access to developmental opportunities. However, within the particular sets of constraints and opportunities that make up their individual life contexts, women are able to make decisions and take control of aspects of their lives and careers, albeit to varying degrees, at different life stages, and in accordance with shifting priorities. They are not passive victims of circumstance, but have agency, the capacity to take control of their own lives. I draw in this section on theories of agency, and consider how these might inform an analysis of women teachers' life and career decisions. I argue that it is necessary to view their choices holistically, in the particular

contexts of their lives, where the significance of their choices as indications of agency and in some cases, acts of resistance, can be more fully understood.

Definitions: agency and structure

Below, I discuss theories of agency and structure. For the purposes of this study, agency is defined as the capacity to take control of an aspect or aspects of one's own life. Implicit in this is the potential to resist constraining factors and so re-shape one's social world, or aspects of it. 'Structures' might be defined as social conventions, norms and expectations embedded in society and, in the case of this study, endemic in educational institutions as well.

Theories of agency and structure

The review of theory and research in chapters two and three highlights some of the structural barriers and social limitations that can act to restrict women's choices and impede their career progression. However, whilst there are constraints on women's lives and careers, women are not passive, powerless dupes whose lives are shaped by restrictive structures alone. As Nelson-Kuna and Riger (1995 pp.175-6) comment, 'while social influences may constrain and shape women's agency, they do not remove the ability to act'. To assume women's life decisions are formed only by structural constraints is to assume that women are powerless within an oppressive culture, a position counterpoised to the aims of 'agentic feminism' (Hekman, 1995 p.202), and one which affords little hope for effecting change. There is a need to recognise that, within the constraints of their individual lives, women exercise their agency in making decisions and choices, and take action that shapes their lives and careers. The construction of women, as 'actors not victims' (Ernst, 2005 p.124), implicitly

acknowledges women's agency, which is fundamental to a feminist analysis. As Bracke (2003 p.337) comments, 'while one's impulse wants to account for the structural constraints that shape women's lives, another impulse affirms women as agents...thus radically refusing these subjects to be constituted by oppression alone'. Agency, Meyers (1998 p.373) argues, is 'necessary for women's emancipation'. It has therefore become a priority for consideration by feminists from a broad range of backgrounds (Bracke, 2003; Meyers, 2002; Anderson, 2000; McNay, 2000; Meyers, 1998; Gardiner, 1995), reflecting an apparent consensus that 'any theory that denies women "agency" retards the changes in patriarchal social structures for which feminism strives, because it denies the existence of an entity to attack those structures' (*ibid.*, p.9). There is therefore a need to move beyond a narrowly 'barriers'- based account of the structural factors shaping women teachers' lives and careers, to incorporate a view of how agency and structure intermesh to frame women's decisions, a view that emphasises 'the reciprocal, interactive relationship between the person and the social environment' (Nelson-Kuna & Riger, 1995 p.173).

Evetts (1994) offers such a view in her analysis of the career strategies of the headteachers in her study. Whilst conceding that many careers are 'unstrategic' (*ibid.*, p.10), in the sense that they are characterised by a lack of single-minded, long-term planning with a specific career goal in mind, she argues that the advantage of an analysis that seeks to identify the strategies individuals adopt in negotiating their careers is that 'such an interpretation of action avoids portraying actors as passive, and evades the necessity of regarding social institutions and structures as the ultimate determinants of all outcomes' (*ibid.*, p.51). By positioning the individual as agent, this approach

enables researchers to explore the inter-relationship between structure and action by recognising both the presence of structural constraints and

the active responses of social actors to these. Career actions are no longer seen as completely determined by social forces, there *are* constraints, but responses to them vary (*ibid.*, p.11).

Evetts (*ibid.*, p.10) sees headteachers' career decisions and strategies as linked to 'an internal development of identity which involves reacting and responding to external changes'. Career is viewed as a continual process of negotiation within the particular set of constraints and opportunities in which the individual finds herself: 'for the large majority of individuals ... career decisions are ... not so much part of a strategy as a way of life' (*ibid.*). In the 'continually changing process' (*ibid.*, p.11) of career, women define and re-define work-related goals in response to the ebb and flow of opportunities available, and as specific constraints in their lives come and go: 'careers represent the working out of much shorter-term decisions, the taking up of opportunities presented and the negotiation of perceived constraints' (*ibid.*, p.10).

An interesting analysis of the 'inter-relationship between structure and action' to which Evetts (*ibid.*, p.11) alludes is offered in the work of Giddens (1991; 1984; 1979; 1976). In his theory of structuration, agency and structure are seen as mutually influential, an inter-relationship Giddens (1991 p.175) believes to be central to 'the nature of human empowerment'. According to this theory, social structures are *maintained* through the actions of human agents:

Structure is primarily expressed in the things that people do in a regularized and institutionalised way. Much of what we do in everyday life is governed by what I call practical consciousness – 'going on' with the rules and conventions of social life (Giddens & Pierson, 1998 pp.77-78).

Equally, structures can be *changed* through the actions of human agents: 'the possibility of change is there in every moment of social life' (*ibid.*, p.89). Thus, according to Giddens' (1984 p.171) theory, human agents 'reproduce or transform' society, social

structures both shape and are shaped by people's activities, and society both constrains and enables individual agents within it. Thus as women continue to take primary responsibility for childcare, for example, so the expectation that they will do so remains a part of the fabric of our society. As men begin to do so, or women make a conscious choice not to do so, expectations and conventions around childcare reconfigure. The notion that structures are not fixed, but can be changed through the actions of human agents, is an important feature of Giddens' theory. The ideas that individuals have about themselves, their futures and the social world do not relate simply to a static and 'given' world, but 'constantly enter the world which they describe' (Giddens & Pierson, 1998 p.218) and so 'change the world – sometimes quite dramatically' (*ibid.*).

At the centre of Giddens' theory is the notion of reflexive agency. He sees people as rational, and as 'conscious, intentional beings' (*ibid.*, p.78), not just as passive conduits of social forces:

We begin from the premise that to be a human being is to know, virtually all of the time...both what one is doing and why one is doing it...agents are normally able, if asked, to provide discursive interpretations of the nature of, and the reasons for, the behaviour in which they engage (Giddens, 1991 p.35).

He argues that human agents do not 'passively accept external conditions of action' (*ibid.*, p.175), but reflect upon them constantly. People are, in Giddens' view, always to at least some degree *knowledgeable* about what they are doing (even if they are not entirely free to choose their own actions). The implication of this for this study is that the woman teacher is a rational agent, able, to at least some extent, to reflect on and negotiate her social and professional worlds and decide on a course of action, albeit within the particular set of constraints of her life. Whilst this does not deny the existence of barriers and impediments to women's career progression, it also allows for

the possibility of women becoming conscious of the limitations on their freedom and taking control of aspects of their lives and careers. Structures exist, but are not fixed, and can be negotiated and even transformed.

Neither is identity fixed. What Giddens (*ibid.*, p.9) terms 'the reflexive project of the self' is an integral part of his notion of the reflexive human agent. He argues that in post-traditional (modern) society, self-identity is not inherited or static, but is continuously worked and reflected on. In many areas of social life we now have to make our own decisions in situations where previously the appropriate course of action would just have been 'given' (*ibid.*, p.219). Whereas in traditional cultures the choices available to individuals were predetermined, now, our lives are 'determined less and less by the fixities of tradition and nature' (Giddens & Pierson, 1998 pp.218-219), so modern society is, of necessity, characterised by increasing reflexivity. Our choices are more open and we are less constrained by the precedents set by previous generations than was the case for our forebears (*ibid.*). As our identities are no longer predetermined for us in the same way, we are increasingly free – and in fact, increasingly obliged - to determine them for ourselves:

What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity – and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour (Giddens, 1991 p.70).

Hakim (2000 p.12) adds to this that in post-traditional society, the lack of 'universal certainties or collectively agreed conventions' has meant that individualisation has become 'the driving force for change', freeing people from 'the influence of social class, nation and family' (*ibid.*). Thus in such a context, she argues, 'agency becomes more important than the social structure as a determinant of behaviour' (*ibid.*). Whilst she concedes that 'preferences do not express themselves in a vacuum, but within the

context of local social and cultural institutions' (*ibid.*, p.168), she quickly dismisses the significance of these, arguing that 'social structural and cultural influences are no more than that: influence, not coercive powers' (*ibid.*, p.170). The implication is that in late modernity, choices are made freely, unencumbered by socially and culturally constructed constraints. Hakim (*ibid.*) argues that women now have free and equal choices in major life and work decisions, implying that the decision whether to act conventionally or 'otherwise' is a genuine choice.

Although Hakim (*ibid.*, p.13) claims that preference theory is 'consonant with' Giddens' theories, she does not explore the interrelationship of agency and structures, and fails to take account of the complexity and contradiction that characterise the contexts within which women make their decisions. Interestingly, Giddens (1991 p.106), however, comments that for women, the apparent choices available to them in post-traditional society mask contradictions, and greater challenges than for men:

Women today have the nominal opportunity to follow a whole variety of possibilities and chances: yet, in a masculinist culture, many of these avenues remain effectively foreclosed. Moreover, to embrace those which do exist, women have to abandon their older, "fixed" identities in a more thorough-going way than do men. In other words, they experience the openness of modernity in a fuller, yet more contradictory, way.

Whilst Giddens does not specifically address the issue of women's empowerment in any sustained way, it is useful to reflect on the applicability of his theory to a feminist analysis of how patriarchal structures - both social and institutional - are maintained, and how, potentially, changes might be effected. If, for example, the dominant social concepts of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are constituted and reproduced in everyday life through 'recurrent social practices' (Giddens & Pierson, 1998 p.76), it would seem to follow that the individual agent (or agents collectively) can break the chain of

reconstitution by exercising her (or their) agency, or her (or their) ability to act 'otherwise' (*ibid.*, p. 78). Applied to women teachers' careers, acting 'otherwise' might include a conscious decision to extend one's skills and knowledge beyond the roles to which women have been traditionally expected to limit themselves at work – caring, supporting and pastoral roles, for example – via developmental opportunities that enable one to become skilled in aspects of school leadership that act as stepping stones to senior posts: curriculum development, financial decision-making and working with governors, for example. This works not only to enable the individual woman to take on posts of greater responsibility but also to change the institutional and social culture so that other women are enabled and encouraged to pursue similar paths, and the notion of females taking on leadership work becomes normalised.

The ability to act 'otherwise' is thus linked to the process of identity development, or 'the reflexive project of the self' (Giddens, 1991 p.9), which forms the link between agency and structure. Bradley (1996 p.25) differentiates three levels of social identity: 'passive', 'active' and 'politicised'. Passive identities are those of which individuals are not particularly conscious. They 'derive from the sets of lived relationships (class, gender, ethnicity and so forth) in which the individuals are engaged, but they are not acted on' (*ibid.*). Active identities are those of which individuals *are* conscious - positive elements in an individual's self-identification, which 'provide a base for their actions' (*ibid.*). Individuals are not, however, constantly aware of any single identity. Rather, 'active identification often occurs as a defence against the actions of others or when an individual is conscious of being defined in a negative way' (*ibid.*, p.25), such as when subject to discriminatory treatment or attitudes. Politicised identities 'provide a more constant base for action' (*ibid.*, p.26), as individuals constantly think of

themselves in terms of an identity that has been formed through political action. Hudson (2005 p.121) relates these three levels of identity to ‘an individual’s growing sense of agency’, which she conceptualises as a continuum from passive to political: ‘As a person develops from a passive to a politicised identity, so that individual’s sense of agency also develops’ (*ibid.*).

However, as discussed in previous chapters, women work within particular constraints, and agency will be enacted within those contexts. There are thus limits to what can be achieved through the exerting of personal agency. Despite Hakim’s (2000) claim that agency is more important than structure, in a patriarchal society not all women are free to choose a course of action that suits them. For example, as discussed in chapters two and six, a woman who becomes a mother is under immense social pressure to put her children before herself, and risks social exclusion should she choose not to do so. Jackson’s (1994) study of mothers who leave their children explores some of the contradictions facing such mothers. A woman who decides to leave her children does so against a powerful tide of disapproval based on assumptions about women’s proper role. Whilst men can leave their children with relative impunity, cultural constructions of motherhood and mainstream ideology are unswerving in their reinforcement of social values pertaining to maternity:

images of mothering do not merely *mirror*, so much as *reproduce* or manufacture, a specific set of values and rules about the role of women. The whole iconography of good and bad mothers is not simply a passive reflection of social reality, but an actively determining force, constantly renaming and reinforcing certain assumptions and definitions as to what properly constitutes maternity (*ibid.*, p.18).

The processes that enable this social construction of motherhood to continue to predominate are very effective in promoting women’s compliance and so maintaining patriarchal structures. As Giddens (1998) argues, constancy is strikingly more apparent

than change, and dominant structures are very effectively maintained through recursive action and the unspoken assumptions that underpin the ongoing 'flow' of our collective actions.

This does not, though, preclude the possibility of individual women exerting their agency in resistance to dominant structures and discourses. The way a woman exerts her personal agency is framed by the social context in which she lives (Nelson-Kuna & Riger, 1995). Acts of resistance, for example, take diverse forms, and in order to be recognised *as* acts of resistance need to be viewed within the particular life context of the individual woman (Munro, 1998), a point to which I return in chapter five. It would be easy, for example, to misconstrue a woman teacher's decision to opt for a classroom-based rather than a school leadership career as proof of the limiting impact of the gendered processes of socialisation. However, a more detailed investigation of her motivations in the context of her life might offer insights into her values, and indicate that this was a positive choice, made in resistance to what she perceived to be the masculinised values endemic in contemporary school leadership. As Nelson-Kuna and Riger (*op. cit.*, p.176) comment:

women respond to [the] limits [on their lives] in a variety of ways. Theories that incorporate a consideration of specific contexts and that recognize the multiplicity of ways of coping with those contexts will most accurately portray women's experience of agency.

In order to understand the meaning and significance of women's actions and decisions it is necessary therefore to view them within the particular context of the women's lives. Furthermore, the meaning of a woman's decisions to *her* in the context of her life will also depend on the extent to which she is conscious of the factors affecting her freedom - awareness of the factors limiting one's freedom is prerequisite to resisting them, and to determining one's own life and career direction. Feminist proponents of the theory of

'relational autonomy' (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000) use the term 'autonomy' to refer to a person's capacity for self-determination. Self-determination means acting in accordance with one's own, self-defined or 'authentic' desires, as opposed to in accordance with socially-defined norms and expectations, such as those internalised through the processes of socialisation. The individual's ability to differentiate between the two implies a certain level of self-awareness. It means that she is able to reflect critically on her social context, her relationship with it, and her own behaviour and motivations. For this to be possible, the individual agent needs to become aware of how social forces have influenced her thinking, to 'reflect on and critically assess the various processes (socialisation, and parental or peer influence, etc) by means of which she came to acquire her desires, beliefs, values and emotional attitudes' (*ibid.*, p.16). This demands a certain level of self-knowledge, including an understanding of how external factors such as her culture and family have influenced the development of her identity, aims, aspirations, decisions, expectations and values (Meyers, 1989). To be truly autonomous, she must be free of self-deceptions about the formation of her desires and preferences, and she must have 'subjected her motivation to the appropriate kind of critical reflection' (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000 pp.13-14). Further, she needs to be able not just to *reflect* on her motivations, but to *change* them in response to that reflection (Meyers, 1989).

Central to relational autonomy theory is the notion of the authentic self, that is, the conscious self, that is able to make the distinction between authentic (self-defined) and non-authentic (socially-determined) desires. Relational autonomy theorists maintain that the authentic self, and thus the capacity for self-determination, can only be developed within a social context (Barclay, 2000; Meyers, 1989). There is no notion of a 'free will

that somehow escapes the operations of power' (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000 p.10), or of a 'true self, there to be discovered through introspective reflection' (*ibid.*). Essentially, women are seen as 'socially embedded' (*ibid.*, p.4), and the capacity for self-determination develops as the woman reflects critically on the interrelationship of her self and her social context. The autonomous agent is not a 'passive receptacle' (Barclay, 2000 p.55) of social forces. Rather, she 'reflectively engages with them to participate in shaping a life for herself' (*ibid.*). In so doing she does not ignore or escape social influence, but exerts her agency in fashioning a response to it (*ibid.*).

An individual's capacity for self-determination or autonomous agency depends on the development of particular skills and competencies, in particular the skills of self-discovery, self-direction and self-definition, all of which include the capacity for reflection (Meyers 2000; 1998; 1989; 1987). It also implies a certain level of self-trust and self-esteem. The individual agent is motivated to act autonomously if 'she thinks who she is matters' (Mackenzie, 2000 p.140), and if she sees herself as *accountable* for her own actions (Benson, 2000). To be autonomous, the agent needs to be able and willing to *take responsibility* for her feelings, perceptions, desires, beliefs and actions (Benson, 2000; 1994). In the context of a woman's career decisions this would mean, for example, that the woman is able to recognise how her own actions or inactions have affected or could potentially affect her career development. A woman with a high level of self-esteem and a willingness to take responsibility for her own career progression by seeking out opportunities for development, is arguably exerting a greater degree of autonomy, or self-determination, than her colleague who waits passively for the headteacher to encourage her before she will apply for promotion.

The individual's *potential* for autonomy or self-determination depends on the development of the capacities for self-trust, self-worth and self-esteem (McCleod & Sherwin, 2000), and thus develops via the particular set of social contexts she encounters in the personal and professional domains of her life (Meyers, 1989). It is

shaped throughout life as behaviours are repressed, rewarded, learned, and transformed in the practice of organisations and institutions from the family to the state, from the university to the feminist consciousness-raising group (Gardiner, 1995 p.13).

Certain social contexts can undermine and block the individual's capacity for self-determination, and deprive her of the opportunities she needs to develop her self-determination skills (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000), leading her to internalise a sense of social worthlessness, and to lack self-trust (McCleod & Sherwin, 2000). Self-determination can be thwarted not just by overt restrictions on the individual's freedom, but also by social norms, institutions, practices, and relationships that effectively limit the range of significant options actually available to her (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). If the individual agent's authentic or self-defined aims, priorities and values are at odds with those implicit in social conventionality, for instance, her potential for self-determination can be stifled. Mackenzie (2000 p.144) for example, comments on the impact of social recognition on women's identities (and thus on their choices), arguing that there is a stronger incentive for people to identify with the 'cultural representations of their identities that seem to afford greater social recognition' and to 'incorporate these representations into their self-conceptions'. An illustration of this is provided in Mann's (1995 p.146) reference to the 'aura of moral rectitude' that surrounds motherhood. This exerts pressure on women to conform to the maternal ideal, which then affords them social recognition, as 'a mantle of unqualified goodness descends upon a woman who produces a child' (*ibid.*). Thus social pressure, social expectations and conventions can be more powerful influences than the individual's authentic desires

on her life decisions. This could affect a woman's decisions about a range of career-related matters such as, whether to have children, whether to take a career break to raise them, whether to move areas for promotion or stay put so the children's schooling is uninterrupted, whether to pursue senior positions, whether to work full-time or part-time, and so forth.

Barclay (2000) comments that we will never completely shed the impact of the most pervasive influences in our lives, such as family and culture, which form a part of our identity. It is possible, however, to be *partially* autonomous, or to be autonomous in certain aspects of one's life but not others (Meyers, 1989; 1987). The implication of this is that, in exercising our autonomy, we may submit an aspect or aspects of our lives and our selves to scrutiny, whilst others remain intact. We might deal with one issue at a time. Thus a woman teacher might decide to comply with family expectations to stay in one geographical area whilst simultaneously pursuing developmental opportunities that will enable her to achieve deputy headship in a few years' time. As priorities shift, so will the areas of her life she subjects to scrutiny, in a dynamic process of reflection and action.

Autonomy competency, or the capacity for self-determination is, therefore, a matter of degree. It comprises a set of skills that may be more or less developed, in a range of combinations, in individual women. If women's capacities for agency develop from the particular set of opportunities that their life courses present, manifestations of agency and resistance will be as diverse as the experiences of individual women. To gain any understanding of how the individual woman is exercising agency and autonomy, and the meaning of her career decisions, it is important that these are viewed within her life

context. For example, it has been noted that typically, women do not plan their careers (David & Woodward, 1998; Coleman, 1994; Davidson & Cooper, 1992). However, this is not necessarily an indication that women do not exert personal agency and take control of their career development. Rather there is a need to consider how women's decisions relate to all areas of their lives, and are framed by personal and professional constraints as well as opportunities on offer, and to recognise that career is interwoven with other parts of women's lives. An example of this is provided in Ainsworth's (1998 p.135) reflections on her own career course:

I decided in my late thirties to go for promotion... [The post] left me free every day after 4pm, every weekend and all the student holidays. Not a bad deal. I had plenty of time to concentrate on my house, husband and two small children. Now I have just retired at 65 from a senior management job in a new university... But how much of my career has been determined by free choice? Let's say that I reacted to circumstance and tried to steer a course in roughly the direction that I wanted to take. This mode of travel seems to reflect the common experience.

The career-related strategies women adopt and the career decisions they make are formed in accordance with the full set of home and work-life considerations (Evetts, 1994). Personal agency is implicit in those strategies and decisions, exerted within the particular set of 'opportunities and obstacles' (David & Woodward, 1998 p.216) that make up the women's life contexts. This holistic view of career is implicit in the rationale for using life history methodology for this study, as discussed in chapter five.

Summary

This chapter focussed on individual factors affecting women teachers' career decisions, that is, those factors particular to the individual woman: values, motivation and sources of satisfaction; personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership; personal agency and career decisions. The key points are summarised below.

In seeking to understand women's career decisions there is a need to take account of their lives outside work as well as within the professional domain. The value attached to various needs, and the extent to which those needs are met through work and non-work activities and relationships will vary from person to person and impact on the individual's career decisions. Women's values with regard to the importance of relationships and the ethic of care are key considerations in understanding women teachers' motivation and sources of satisfaction.

Two views of the role of headteacher are discernible in the literature, which are likely to be synonymous with the ways in which headship is perceived by teachers. The first is a view of headship as largely concerned with financial management and competitive marketing. This view of the headteacher role is associated with toughness, and directive, autocratic styles of leadership, and seen to entail a tendency for the headteacher to become office-bound and isolated from teachers, children and even other headteachers. This perception of school leadership is likely to discourage many women from aspiring to headship, and may cause conflict for women who do become senior leaders. The second view constructs the headteacher as leader of the nurturing institution, whose leadership style is characterised by 'androgyny', that is, flexibility of approach and a mixture of traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine characteristics. Women who conceptualise leadership in this way are more likely to aspire to headship, perceiving it as a post that offers scope for working in accordance with their values and in their preferred ways.

Whilst acknowledging the constraints on women's lives and options, and the reality of barriers to women teachers' career progression, it is important to recognise that women

are not passive but have agency. They can and do make decisions and take control of aspects of their lives, within the particular set of constraints and opportunities of their lives. Recognition of women's agency is crucial to a feminist analysis. An approach is needed that incorporates a view of how structure and agency intermesh to frame women's career decisions, and in which the individual woman teacher is positioned as agent, negotiating career decisions within the constraints and opportunities afforded her in the context of her life. Understanding the meaning of individual women's decisions therefore requires that these be viewed within the context of her life, a point I take up in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

Research design

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research design for the study. I begin by reviewing the aims of the study, and identifying the research questions. I define 'feminist' research, and identify some methodological considerations arising from this. I then discuss the rationale and theoretical foundation for using life history interviews in this study, exploring the strengths offered by this approach for feminist research on women teachers' lives and career decisions. I critique the method used, examining the strengths, limitations and inherent challenges and difficulties that arose in using life history to research women's lives and careers.

Aims of the study and research questions

The aim of the study is to investigate women secondary school teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting their career decisions, and thereby to gain insights into the meanings of individual women's career decisions *for them*, in the particular context of their lives. As a part of this, the study aims to gain insights into the factors that influence the likelihood of women aspiring to, applying for and achieving headship.

The work has an explicit feminist agenda, which, for the purposes of this study, I define as meaning that it is based on certain assumptions. The first assumption is that we live in a patriarchal society, that is, one in which male power and dominance are endemic.

The second is that the institutions within which women teachers work reflect patriarchal society in microcosm. The third is that what passes as 'objective' knowledge is actually the subjective construction of a largely white, male, middle class body of academics. Within this body of 'knowledge', women's voices, perspectives and experiences have been largely excluded or ignored. There is therefore a need to redress the balance by introducing those perspectives.

This means that the study has certain implicit aims as a piece of feminist research. It aims to focus on the experiences of women, with a view to improving conditions for women. It aims to give voice to women and represent their experiences to balance the white male bias in the construction of knowledge. It aims as well to involve participants in a research process that is emancipatory and empowering.

The study required therefore a research method that would allow insights to be gained into individual women's lives, experiences and perspectives. In order to be empowering, the chosen method needed to be as free as possible from preconceived expectations or hypotheses, allowing participants in the research to define for themselves what the significant factors affecting their career decisions were or had been. There was therefore no hypothesis to be tested. Two key research questions guided the research:

1. What are the main factors affecting women secondary school teachers' career decisions?
2. What factors influence the likelihood of women aspiring to, applying for and achieving headship?

The evidence emerging from the narratives then shaped and informed the conceptual framework for the study. In order to offer emancipatory potential, the research approach needed to allow for the exploration of consciousness, enabling participants to reflect upon, become more aware of, and articulate the conditions limiting their freedom, which is prerequisite to taking action to resist those limitations. This meant that the approach should be sufficiently open and flexible to offer scope for reflection, and designed to focus on the unique experiences and perceptions of the individual participant. The life history interview, which is more open-ended than other types of researcher-controlled interviews, such as semi-structured interviews, focuses on the particular experiences of the narrator, allowing rich, in-depth, subjective data to be gathered. It therefore offers a number of strengths for feminist research on women's lives and career decisions, as discussed below.

Rationale and theoretical foundation for using life history interviews

The rationale for using life history interviews for the study was based on three key factors. First, this approach offers scope for representing women's voices in the construction of 'knowledge'. Second, it empowers narrators, enabling them to define what is significant rather than responding to a researcher-led agenda. Third, it has emancipatory potential, allowing for the exploration of consciousness by researcher and researched. Drawing on the work of feminist writers, I explore below the strengths of life history for research on women's lives.

Making 'herstory': representing women's voices in the construction of knowledge

Challenging traditional beliefs in the nature of knowledge as objective (Munro, 1998), feminist scholars highlight the need to incorporate women's perspectives into social

theory (Anderson *et al.*, 1990). The 'presumed neutrality of science' (Gilligan, 1982 p.6) is thrown into question. Theories considered to be 'sexually neutral' (*ibid.*) are seen to reflect 'a consistent observational and evaluative bias' (*ibid.*). Knowledge assumed to be objective is recognised as the subjective construction of a group of mainly white, male, middle class academics. We begin to notice 'how accustomed we have become to seeing life through men's eyes' (*ibid.*).

Feminist scholars began to embrace life history methodology from the 1980s onwards, recognising the scope it offered for representing the voices of women in the construction of knowledge (Gluck & Patai, 1991). Life history developed from storytelling in ancient times, and the African American oral tradition, and grew in popularity amongst social researchers from the 1960s onwards (Brown, 1997). By the 1970s it had become an important and influential ethnographic method in researching the lives of 'ordinary' people, in contrast to its previous use, principally as a tool for researching the lives of more high profile individuals, such as politicians (Hannam, 1997).

Life history as used by feminist researchers differs radically from traditional, positivist research methods. Positivist approaches assume that there is a 'real and irrefutable' (Stanley & Wise, 1993 p.113) objective social reality, in the same way that there is 'a real, kickable, irrefutable, physical reality' (*ibid.*). Within the positivist paradigm, research is therefore seen as 'a process of objective truth-gathering and truth-uncovering' (*ibid.*, p.112). In contrast with this, the strength of life history research is seen to be the potential it offers for exploring the *subjective* reality of the individual (Munro, 1998). By focussing on individuals' subjective realities, it offers scope to

reduce the 'invisibility' (Hannam, 1997; Spender, 1982) of women's experiences, by reconstructing and representing their perspectives and filling the 'large gaps in knowledge' (Anderson *et al.*, 1990 p.96). It makes people *visible* by encouraging them to represent their own life experiences (Meyerhoff, 1982), 'shedding light' on the ways in which individuals' lives are affected by the social world (White, 1997 p.100). It helps to break down stereotypes by allowing individual women's meanings and beliefs to be explored, providing insights into women's experiences of themselves in their worlds that have previously been obscured (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Smith, 1987). Oral evidence has been valuable, for instance, in generating insights into the lives of women whose experiences would otherwise have been highly unlikely to have been reflected in written records, including, amongst others, lesbians, working-class women and black women (Osler, 1997; Hall Carpenter Archives/Lesbian History Group, 1989; Braybon & Summerfield, 1987; Roberts, 1984). Life history has therefore become an important vehicle for research about women which seeks to redress the imbalance in established 'knowledge':

Finding out about women's actual lives deepens the critique of existing knowledge by documenting the inadequacy of past assumptions. Often, women's life stories highlight the ways in which concepts and methods that claim the status of science in our respective fields are partial and subjective and make women's experience difficult to observe or take seriously (Anderson *et al.*, 1990 pp.105-6).

Furthermore, whilst allowing for rich, qualitative data to be gathered from individual participants, life history also affords scope for the ordering of findings where commonality and identifiable themes emerge. This is apparent in the work of Munro (1998), Osler (1997), Hall (1996) and Casey (1993), and is the basis for the presentation and analysis of findings in this study (see chapters six to ten).

Feminist life history marks a radical departure from traditional approaches in that it allows the participant to define her own story, a point I explore in more depth below. In the words of Christ (1986 p.23), 'the simple act of telling a woman's story from a woman's point of view is a revolutionary act'.

Empowerment: narrators set the agenda

In positivist approaches, the researcher is assumed to be objective and scientific, whereas participants in the research are seen to be partial and emotional, and their judgement viewed as clouded and unreliable (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Research 'findings' are thus strongly researcher-led:

If the researcher's and the participants' accounts differ, then the researcher's is to be preferred...And almost invariably, we find that, within positivism, 'the truth' that is discovered is exactly what the researcher thought it might be at the beginning (*ibid.*, pp.112-113.)

Whereas positivist approaches set out to test or prove researcher-defined hypotheses, feminist researchers, such as Casey (1993), have made use of the potential offered by life history for the *empowerment of participants* in the research. By 'empowerment', I mean that participants take the lead in defining what is significant, rather than the researcher looking for evidence to confirm any preconceived expectations. This is clearly demonstrated in Casey's (*ibid.*) work on the life histories of radical women teachers, as she simply asked participants to tell the story of their lives, eliciting a set of detailed, autobiographical narratives. This simple request gave the narrators considerable freedom to tell the story in their own terms and identify for themselves what was significant, rather than responding to a preconceived agenda set by the researcher. Implicit in this approach is the belief that it is the participants who are the experts on their own behaviour (Anderson *et al.*, 1990), and, importantly, an acceptance that there are 'many (often competing) versions of truth' (Stanley & Wise, 1993 p.113).

This contrasts with approaches in which there is a view that there is 'one true social reality 'out there' to be discovered' (*ibid.*). Stanley and Wise (*ibid.*, p.116) emphasise that 'different and competing explanations, understandings and interpretations of social reality exist', and that 'frequently there are conflicts between different realities'. A problem for researchers is 'what to *do* with these conflicts, these disagreements about 'reality'' (*ibid.*). To evaluate them as right or wrong, rational or irrational serves no purpose (*ibid.*). What is preferable is 'an approach which is concerned with exploring in great detail why and how people construct realities in the way that they do' (*ibid.*, pp.116-7). The open-ended nature of approaches such as that adopted by Casey (1993) offers freedom and flexibility for researcher and researched (Anderson & Jack, 1991), and makes it possible to go beyond the 'pre-constructed discourses and "surface assertions" collected through survey research' (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991 p.89), so that the reasons behind the ways in which people construct their realities can be explored.

Feminist life history research is thus based on an acceptance of the validity of other people's experiences and truths. The implications of this for the research process are that feminist researchers 'reject positivism's interpretation of the 'researcher/subject' dichotomy' (*ibid.*, pp.113-4) and engage in an equal, collaborative researcher-participant relationship through which the narrator is able to 'bring [her] own perspectives to the analysis' (Osler, 1997 p.57). Narrative research enables the researcher to 'know an experience in the same way that the subject knows it' (Peterson, 1997 p.157). Instead of looking for evidence to confirm a hypothesis, the life history researcher's role is thus to listen and to try to understand as the narrator takes the lead in identifying what is or has been of significance to her: 'Unlike survey research, in which the subject responds only to the questions the researcher thinks are important, the

subject in narrative research shares the details he or she thinks are important' (*ibid.*). Importantly, life history research allows for the exploration of consciousness by researcher and researched, thus offering scope for emancipatory research, which I discuss below.

Life history, exploration of consciousness and emancipatory research

Women's lives within patriarchal society are characterised by conflict and contradiction. For instance, as discussed in chapter two, women who combine motherhood and profession can feel guilty about being unable to commit 100% to either role (Kim & Ling, 2001), an impossible, inherently conflicting aspiration to fulfil, as each role can act as a constraint on the other. The way a woman feels about her inability to be both a perfect mother and a consummate professional is affected by societal and institutional influences, and her ability to value her own thought and experience may be 'hindered by self-doubt and hesitation when private experiences seem at odds with cultural myths and values concerning how a woman is "supposed" to think and feel' (Jack, in Anderson *et al.*, 1990 p.102). It cannot therefore be assumed that women's observable actions reflect their thoughts: 'What they think may not always be reflected in what they do and how they act ' (Anderson *et al.*, 1990 p.97). Women negotiate life and career decisions within the limitations on their lives, both conforming to and opposing the constraints on their freedom, and the ways in which they conform or resist will vary according to the particular context of their lives (Munro, 1998). In order to understand what lies behind a woman's decisions and actions, these therefore need to be viewed within the context of her life: 'one must go behind the veil of outwardly conforming activity to understand what particular behaviour means to her' (Anderson *et al.*, 1990 p.97).

Life history research is sufficiently open-ended that it can provide the researcher and the participant with a means of exploring together what is 'behind the veil of outwardly conforming activity' (*ibid.*). For example, through Casey's (1993) 'simple request' (Apple, 1993 p.xiv) to participants to tell the story of their lives, both researcher and researched were enabled to enter into the realms of consciousness and to search for meanings amongst complexity and contradiction:

A simple request is given: "Tell me the story of your life." In [Casey's] compelling narratives, this becomes something of more social significance. For the women teachers transform it into a response to the question "What is the meaning of your life?" (*ibid.*).

Life history lends itself to an exploration of the narrator's consciousness, providing insights into the meanings she accords to her life and experiences in ways which observation or more structured forms of interviewing could not. It offers scope for harnessing complexity, shedding light on apparent contradictions through the subjective exploration of the lives of individual women, highlighting

the complexity, the ambiguities, and even the contradictions of the relations between the subject and the world, the past, and the social and ideological image of woman – i.e., how women live, internalise, and more or less consciously interpret their status (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991 p.89).

As the narrator makes sense of her experiences, set within the context of her world and her life, the life history narration process offers the potential for her to engage in a process more akin to consciousness-raising than description or recollection, as she reflects on 'the multiple and sometimes contradictory influences which combine to shape [her life]' (Osler, 1997 p.58). This has benefits for both the researcher and the participant. It provides the researcher with 'a picture of how a woman understands herself within her world, where and how she places value, and what particular meanings she attaches to her actions and locations in the world' (Jack, in Anderson *et al.*, 1990 p.102). For the participant, the process of life history narration has the potential to be

emancipatory: as the 'author' (Casey, 1993) of her own story, the narrator can gain an enhanced understanding of the complicated and often contradictory relationship between herself and the context and culture within which she exists (Munro, 1998). Through 'autobiographical thinking' (Giddens, 1991 p.72) she can reflect on her past and present, which may enable her to take control of her future:

developing a coherent sense of one's life history is a prime means of escaping the thrall of the past and opening oneself out to the future ...Reconstruction of the past goes along with anticipation of the likely life trajectory of the future (*ibid.*).

The narration process affords opportunities to grapple with one's own motivations, the restrictions on one's life and the apparent contradictions between social expectations and personal aspirations and values. It facilitates reflection on the interrelationship of self and social context in the ways relational autonomy theorists, discussed in chapter four, describe as conducive to the development of the authentic self, and prerequisite to self-determination (Barclay, 2000; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000; Meyers, 1989). Thus an important strength of life history for research of this kind is the scope it offers to harness the multi-layered and multi-faceted complexity of women's experiences, enabling them to articulate and make sense of conflicts and contradictions through the exploration of consciousness, which is central to emancipation at individual and collective levels.

From theory to thesis: research design and critique

In this section, I discuss the research design and the process of using life history to undertake the research for this study. I describe the context for the study, the composition and selection of the sample, and the process of gathering, organising, coding and analysing the data. In the light of the stated rationale and theoretical foundation for using life history for the study, I critique the method used, examining the

strengths, limitations and inherent challenges and difficulties I found to be associated with using this approach to research women's lives and careers.

Context for the study

I outlined in chapter one the broader politico-educational context within which this study was conducted, remarking that since 1988 the culture of education and school leadership had undergone a number of changes, notably the shift in emphasis towards a culture of competition, accountability and measurable outcomes. I also made the point that whilst women continued to be under-represented in the leadership of secondary schools, this needed to be viewed in a context in which applications for headship have generally declined.

In terms of the specific geographical locations for the study, the women interviewed worked in one of five local education authorities (LEAs). In order to help protect participants' anonymity, both the women themselves and the LEAs in which they worked have been accorded pseudonyms. Three of the LEAs were shire counties, which I have called Southshire, Midshire and Woldshire, and two were cities, which I have called Weston and Middleton. Brief details of each education authority can be found in appendix six. Most of the women I interviewed worked in Southshire, Midshire or Middleton. Two were in Woldshire and one in Weston.

In most areas, comprehensive schools were the norm. Southshire however is unusual in that it is one of the few areas of the country still operating a selective system at secondary level. Approximately 25% of children in that area are selected for grammar schools on the basis of their performance in a Southshire LEA version of the eleven-

plus examination (see glossary, p.ii). The remaining 75% attend what are known locally as ‘comprehensive schools’, although this is something of a misnomer as their intake does not incorporate the full ability spectrum. I refer in this thesis to such schools as ‘non-selective schools’, in order to differentiate them from real comprehensive schools in other areas. The reason I do so is that, in most cases, by virtue of their disproportionately low-ability and often socially deprived intake, these non-selective schools are particularly challenging places in which to teach, and this is an important factor in the narratives of some of the women working in these schools. In addition, there is an unusually high proportion of single-sex schools in Southshire, including non-selective as well as grammar schools.

Sample population

Given the time and resources, a life history study of factors affecting women teachers’ careers might have taken the form of a longitudinal study, with interviews conducted at intervals to compare how aspirations, priorities and other factors affecting career decisions changed over the life cycle. Working within the confines of a PhD programme, I chose instead to interview women at different stages of their secondary school teaching careers, providing a series of snapshots of women’s teaching careers. Initially, I had intended to conduct thirty interviews, to include ten NQTs, ten mid-career teachers and ten headteachers. However, as I was interested in why some women progressed to headship whilst others did not, I thought it important to interview the peers of headteachers. I therefore added a fourth group, women with more than twenty years’ teaching experience, who were not headteachers or deputy headteachers. The majority of the women interviewed were serving teachers, working in a variety of different types of schools, including some private schools. The composition of my final

sample of forty women is summarised in table nine, below, and details of the participants in the four groups are then summarised in tables ten to thirteen.

Table nine: sample population

Number interviewed/group	Teaching experience
10 NQTs	New teachers, in their first term of teaching or just about to start it
10 mid-career teachers	10-15 years' teaching experience
10 late-career teachers (not headteachers or deputy headteachers)	20 or more years' teaching experience,
10 headteachers	2-15 years' experience in headship posts

Table ten: details of NQTs

Seven of the NQTs were in their first term of teaching, and the other three had just finished their PGCE year at the time of the interview.

Name	Age	Personal details	Post, type of school and education authority
Cindy	39	Married, 3 children	Just finished PGCE (mfl) course, post secured in Southshire
Yvonne	23	Living with partner	Art teacher, non-selective, boys' school, Southshire
Wendy	29	Single	Humanities teacher, non-selective, mixed school, Southshire
Mandy	24	Single	Mfl teacher, boys' grammar school, Southshire
Mary	23	In relationship, few months, living alone	Mfl teacher, non-selective, mixed school, Southshire
Rebecca	23	Living with partner	English teacher, non-selective, mixed school, Southshire
Daphne	28	In relationship, 1 year, living alone	English teacher, non-selective mixed school, Southshire
Susan	28	Living with partner	Just finished PGCE (mfl) course, post secured in London
Pauline	33	Living with partner	Just finished PGCE (history) course, post secured in Woldshire
Danielle	23	Living with partner	Mfl teacher, non-selective, mixed school, Southshire

Table eleven: details of mid-career teachers

Mid-career teachers had between 10 and 15 years' teaching experience. The broad age range represented here is a result of a number of women entering the teaching profession relatively late, after having children in most cases. All of the women in this group were full-time teachers except for Sarah and Carol, who worked for four days per week. There were no headteachers or deputy headteachers in the group, but Stella, as examinations officer, was a member of the senior management team in her school.

Name	Age	Personal details	Teaching experience	Post, type of school and education authority
Gloria	50	Separated, 1 daughter (20)	13 years	Mfl teacher, mixed, non-selective school, Southshire
Sarah	38	Married, two young children	15 years	Head of faculty (mfl) (0.8), mixed comprehensive school, Weston
Carol	40	Married, pregnant	12 years	English teacher / advanced skills teacher (0.8), mixed, non-selective school, Southshire
Win	48	Divorced, 1 daughter (19)	14 years	SENCO, head of Economics, boys' grammar school, Southshire
Stella	43	Married, 2 teenage sons	10 years	English teacher and examinations officer, mixed, non-selective school, Southshire
Rachel	39	Married	15 years	Design and Technology teacher, mixed, non-selective school, Southshire
Wanda	34	Divorced	12 years	Teacher of English, Psychology and RE, mixed, non-selective school, Southshire
Diana	34	Divorced, living with partner, 2 young children	11 years	Head of department (mfl), non-selective boys' school, Southshire
Rhona	43	Married, two teenage sons, two grown-up stepchildren	10 years	Supply teacher, mixed comprehensive school, Woldshire
Linda	54	Divorced, two children (23 and 26), two grandchildren	13 years	Head of department, boys' grammar school, Southshire

Table twelve: details of late-career teachers

The late-career teachers had between 20 and 32 years' teaching experience. Most were full-time, permanent teachers at the time of the interview, except for Olwen and Freda, who had just retired, Coral, who was working on a supply basis, and Sandra, who had just resigned from her last post. There were no headteachers or deputy headteachers in this group, but Caroline had previously spent a year as acting principal and now held whole-school pastoral responsibilities as assistant principal, and Chris, as Science College Co-ordinator, was a member of the leadership team in her school.

Name	Age	Personal details	Teaching experience	Post, type of school and education authority
Coral	52	Married, 2 daughters	27 years	Supply teacher, mixed high-school, Midshire
Ann	49	Divorced, living with partner	28 years	Head of year and teacher of Art, mixed 11-18 comprehensive, Middleton
Marjory	52	Married, 4 children	30 years	Teacher of mfl, mixed 14-19 school, Midshire
Caroline	43	Living with partner	20 years	Assistant principal, mixed 11-18 comprehensive, Middleton
Olivia	53	Married, 4 children	31 years	Head of mfl, boys' grammar school, Southshire
Lisa	45	Single, ex-foster parent	23 years	Special school teacher, mixed special school, Middleton
Olwen	60	Married, 2 sons	32 years	Just retired, was head of department and professional mentor, mixed non-selective school, Southshire
Sandra	48	Married, 3 children	28 years	Just resigned from previous post, was deputy director of continuing education, mixed 11-18 comprehensive school, Middleton
Freda	51	Married, teenage children	29 years	Just retired, was teacher of Food and Life Skills, mixed 11-18 comprehensive school, Middleton
Christine	48	Married, 2 children	25 years	Head of Science and Science College Co-ordinator, mixed Roman Catholic Comprehensive school, Midshire

Table thirteen: details of headteachers

Name	Age	Personal details	Length of time teaching	Current school / LEA	Yrs in current post	Previous headships
Sally	52	Divorced, partner	31 yrs	Non-selective girls' school, Southshire	3 yrs	None
Minnie	59	Married, 4 children	30 yrs	Selective girls' grammar, Southshire	15 yrs	None
Beatrice	48	Married	26 yrs	Selective girls' grammar, Southshire	2 months	Mixed non-selective school, Southshire; girls' grammar, Southshire; boys' grammar, Southshire
Gladys	57	Married, 1 daughter	30 yrs	Selective girls' grammar, Southshire, and recently appointed executive head of local confederation of schools	12 yrs	None
Harriet	51	Married	26 yrs	Independent girls' school, Southshire	4 yrs	Girls' school, Middle East
Claudette	58	Married	31 yrs	Non-selective, mixed, Southshire	4 yrs	Boys' school, London; mixed non-selective school, Southshire
Brenda	51	Married	29 yrs	Independent girls' school, Middleton	2 yrs	None
Fiona	45	Separated, 2 daughters	18 yrs	EBD boys' school, Middleton	7 yrs	None
Wilma	50	With partner, 3 sons	27 yrs	Mixed comprehensive, Midshire	10 yrs	None
Renee	52	Married, 3 children	29 yrs	Mixed comprehensive, Midshire	7 yrs	Mixed comprehensive, Middleton

The sample of headteachers, as shown above, includes six girls' school headteachers, three mixed school headteachers and one boys' school headteacher. Headteachers of selective girls' schools are somewhat over-represented in the sample, partly because a lot of the research was conducted in Southshire, where there is an unusually high number both of single sex schools and grammar schools. This means that the likelihood of finding female headteachers in this area is higher than in areas where more schools are mixed.

Apart from NQT Daphne, who was of mixed heritage, this was an exclusively white sample. There are a number of reasons why this happened. Firstly, a lot of the research was undertaken in Southshire, an overwhelmingly white area. A good proportion of my contacts for the initial participants, especially NQTs, came from women I had known through my role as a PGCE tutor in a university in that area. This was a Church of England institution with hardly any students from non-Christian backgrounds, and very few African–Caribbean students. During my three years as a PGCE tutor in modern foreign languages there I taught just one black student per year, and no students of Asian origin. As I used my ex-students as my initial contacts, the sample included an unusually high number of European women, but no black or Asian women, except for Daphne. Secondly, a good proportion of the interviews with more experienced teachers involved my ex-colleagues from a city comprehensive school in the city of Middleton, in which I taught for twelve years. The school was closed down in 1999, so at the time of the interviews my former colleagues were working in different schools and education authorities. Our former school had been in an overwhelmingly white, socially deprived and racist area, a district targeted by the extreme-right British National Party during their election campaigns. About 10% of pupils in the school were from Asian or

African-Caribbean backgrounds. During my twelve years in post I can only recall four Asian and two African-Caribbean teachers, and there had been an exclusively white staff for quite a few years. Thirdly, amongst the headteachers I tracked down and contacted there was just one non-white woman, an Asian woman. She telephoned me to explain that she was declining to be interviewed. Although supportive of the project, she explained that the very fact that she was so rare meant that she had been somewhat over-researched. It is acknowledged that the experiences of white women cannot necessarily be taken as representative of all women, and that this is a shortcoming of the study.

In terms of sexuality, most women indicated heterosexuality by mentioning male partners or husbands. No-one indicated that partners were female, but some women referred to partners without specifying their gender. Heterosexuality has not been assumed in these cases, but the analysis is based only on what the women chose to tell me. Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act (which outlawed open discussion of homosexuality in schools), was repealed in 2003. However it is important to recognise that the culture of education is still affected by its legacy. Homophobia and intolerance are still an issue for many gay and lesbian teachers (Watkins, 2007), and reticence to discuss sexuality is understandable in a context in which heterosexuality is assumed and highly valued in professional discourses and school culture (Gibbons, 2005). As a heterosexual researcher, my impact on the research process may have been such that lesbian participants were reticent to disclose personal details, which is another limitation of this study, depending as it did on one interviewer.

Most of the women interviewed were gathered via 'snowball sampling' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000 p.104). In order to make contact with NQTs, I used initially my own contacts with former PGCE students and school-based professional mentors, who in turn put me in touch with other NQTs willing to be interviewed. I made further use of my ex-students, former colleagues, friends and professional contacts to make initial contact with experienced, mid- and late-career teachers, who then put me in touch with other women willing take part. This meant that I interviewed a mixture of women I knew well, women I had known professionally but not personally, and women I had never met before. In the case of the latter, I felt it important to make some sort of communication with the women before fixing up interviews with them. I sent an initial e-mail or letter to the person who had been recommended, or telephoned them where that was preferred. The letter explained the purpose of the research, described my background as a former teacher and PGCE tutor, and asked them to contact me should they wish to take part. I then exerted no further pressure and merely waited for women to respond. I chose this less direct approach as I did not want potential participants to feel obliged to take part. For the same reason, I preferred to use my existing contacts to lead me to others, rather than asking headteachers, for example, to ask female members of their staff to participate, which could result in women being put under pressure to take part. I felt strongly that individual women should have the choice of whether or not to participate and that this should be a very private matter. Not all of the new contacts did wish to take part. Those who did, however, were very positive and seemed very interested in, and supportive of, the project.

I had expected it to be difficult to find ten female headteachers who were willing to participate, and who could afford to give up the time to do so. I had been given a good

number of leads from my previous participants and other contacts, however. As before, I wrote directly to these headteachers, explaining the project and a few details about myself, and again, asking them to contact me should they wish to take part. I also wrote to other female headteachers I had found by looking at school websites on the internet. The result was very positive and my initial concerns proved to be unfounded.

At various stages of the research, a number of other women also approached me and expressed an interest in participating. Some were former colleagues and friends; some were women who worked with other participants. Across all groups I received more offers of interviews than I had the time or resources to take up, and was in fact quite taken aback by the level of interest shown in the project and the willingness of very busy women to give up their time to take part: this is clearly an area of importance to women teachers.

Gathering, organising and analysing the data

Gathering the data

The life history interview was piloted with three NQTs and three mid-career teachers (see appendix seven), using a less open-ended approach than that of Casey (1993), who simply asked participants to tell the story of their lives. Data from the pilot study were incorporated into the thesis. Following the pilot study I conducted the rest of the interviews in blocks: seven more NQTs, seven more mid-career teachers, ten late-career teachers, and ten headteachers. The NQTs (see table ten, p.108) were all in their first term of teaching, apart from the three in the pilot study, who had just finished the PGCE course. Mid-career teachers had between ten and fifteen years' teaching experience (see table eleven, p.109). Late-career teachers had been teaching for twenty or more years,

and were not headteachers or deputies (see table twelve, p.110). Headteachers ranged in age from 45 to 59, and had been in their current post for between two and fifteen years. Some had been headteachers of more than one school (see table thirteen, p.111).

Participants were asked open questions. I asked experienced teachers and headteachers to tell me about their careers to date, and to talk about what they felt had been the major factors affecting their career decisions. I asked NQTs what had led them to choose teaching as a career, and what had been the most satisfying parts of the PGCE year. Prompting and probing questions were used as needed (see also discussion of pilot study, appendix seven).

The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and three hours. NQT interviews were in general shorter than those of more experienced teachers. Typically, interviews with experienced teachers and headteachers lasted around an hour to an hour and a half, not least because women fairly often fitted the interview into a non-teaching slot on their timetable. Some interviews were conducted in the women's homes or my home, and some of these were the longer interviews. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and then validated by the participants. Some participants made small amendments to the transcripts, usually clarifying a point or removing references in order to protect their own or others' anonymity. The first thirty interviews were recorded on cassette, using a Dictaphone. For the headteachers I used a digital voice recorder, which enabled me to transcribe more quickly as the sound quality was much better. It also enabled me to store the recordings on my computer, and it would be possible to use sections of the recordings as a part of powerpoint presentations. I therefore sought and gained headteachers' permission to use extracts in this way.

With each group, I conducted all ten interviews before attempting any analysis. I did this in order to minimise the possibility of 'theme spotting' having the effect of limiting my line of questioning in subsequent interviews. I was guided in this by the experiences of Munro (1998, p.130), who reflects on the difficulties implicit in trying to draw out themes and commonality without limiting the freedom of the participants to shape their own narratives:

after the first interviews I tentatively identified three major themes. In the interviews that followed I felt my questions were guided by my need to gain a clearer understanding of these themes rather than allowing the participants to talk in a more open-ended manner.

In conducting, listening to and transcribing the interviews I started, like Munro, to think about what seemed to be emerging themes. Whilst this was useful as a reminder of the areas I might wish to pursue via probing questions in subsequent interviews, I also made a conscious effort to keep questions as open as possible and not to let the themes lead the interviews.

Organising the data

Having transcribed the interviews, I then manually colour-coded sections of the transcripts to identify frequently recurring themes. Very, very few short sections of the transcripts were left un-coded and unused, and these were instances in which narrators had strayed into irrelevancies. More themes emerged as subsequent groups were interviewed. After the NQT interviews the themes I identified were: relationship between personal and professional life; gender and career decisions; factors leading women to choose teaching as a career; sources of satisfaction and ingredients for a happy working life; aspirations and perceptions of school leadership. After the mid-career interviews I added to these: other factors affecting career decisions; effects of unsuccessful applications for promotion; de-motivating factors/sources of stress and

frustration in teaching; and ideals/philosophy of teaching. No new themes needed to be added for the late-career teachers although certain existing categories were expanded, for example, I incorporated experiences of sexism and discrimination into 'gender and career decisions'. The same themes were relevant in organising the data from headteachers as well, but I also added: importance of personal and professional support networks, self-perception as headteacher/perceived leadership style; influence of/relationship with school governors; and advice for aspiring women.

Within these categories I then looked for similarities and differences in the different women's perceptions. I compiled lists of the different factors cited within each theme. For example, within the theme, 'factors leading women to choose teaching as a career', factors cited by NQTs included: positive experiences of school; good teachers; role-models; love of subject; interest in children; supportive parents; education valued by family; teaching seen by parents as a valued profession; wanting to do something fulfilling; maternal 'instincts'; teaching perceived as a 'feminine' profession; and experience of helping siblings. I drew up a grid for each group on which I recorded which women had cited which factors, in order to ascertain which were the most frequently cited influential factors. By studying the relevant colour-coded sections of each woman's transcript I was then able to accord a value to each factor for each woman, as follows:

- 2 strong evidence of this factor
- 1 some evidence of this factor
- 0 no evidence of this factor/no mention of it

I then added up the 'score' for each factor by adding up the total of the values across all ten women in the group. Table fourteen (below) provides an example of a completed line from the grid.

Table fourteen: sample line from completed grid showing factors leading NQTs to choose teaching as a career

Names→ Factors ↓	Cindy	Susan	Pauline	Yvonne	Wendy	Mandy	Mary	Rebecca	Daphne	Danielle	Total score
Love of subject specialism	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	17

This was admittedly a very crude tool. Whilst it indicated how frequently a factor was mentioned, and gave some sense of the commonality of each factor identified, it gave relatively little indication of how important the particular factor had been or how long the women had spent thinking about it and discussing it, which is a less measurable but more important indicator of the significance of each factor identified by each narrator. For example, although, as indicated above, many NQTs mentioned their love of their subject specialism as a factor, this was usually only very briefly. On the other hand, whilst fewer women mentioned, for instance, their own positive experiences of school or the influence of particular individuals, where these were mentioned they were discussed in much greater detail and therefore it was apparent that far greater importance was attached to them by the narrators. I realised therefore that a simple rank-ordering of factors based on 'scores' as worked out above could actually be quite misleading, and would therefore need to be used with caution.

This highlights both a limitation of this approach and one of its strengths. As the approach was open-ended the narratives generated were all rich and unique. I was

initially reluctant to treat each narrative other than as a whole, feeling that to do so would be counterpoised to the aim of 'giving voice' to narrators. It was not, though, within the scope of this study to include detailed accounts of all forty narrators' stories. This meant that there was a need to identify the most important factors identified by narrators within each of the themes. As researcher, I needed to make decisions about what constituted a more or less important factor, which in a sense would seem contrary to the idea of allowing participants to define what was significant to them. On the other hand, the fact that the interview was open-ended and yet particular themes and influential factors were re-iterated by several participants, without being specifically addressed in my questions, indicates that there were certain important commonalities. It was therefore appropriate to highlight these.

Analysing the data: narrative, agency and new insights

Whilst the categorisation by theme helped in the initial stages in terms of ordering large amounts of qualitative data, its usefulness was limited. It was by listening to and reading the narratives many times, and becoming very familiar with the data, that I was able to develop a sense of what the most important issues and influences had been for individual women. Only then did the matrices have any real meaning. The matrices enabled me to draw up sub-headings for the initial drafts of the data presentation chapters, which I did group by group in the first instance. Ultimately, though, it was my familiarity with the data, and understanding how and why particular factors had been important to individual women, that shaped the analysis. The first drafts of the reported findings summarised the main themes and reflected what the women had *said*. It was only by taking a step back from the data and looking again at the narratives, that I was

able to see that not only *what* the women told me, but also *how* they told their stories, was significant.

Taking this road then led me into another unexpected area. I realised that two types of narrative were beginning to emerge. In the first type, the women seemed to perceive their career decisions as defined by themselves: they positioned themselves as agent in the narrative. Others seemed to see that their career decisions had been the result of factors external to themselves. This was an important turning point in the process of writing the thesis. At this stage, I realised that a key factor in a woman's approach to career decisions was how she perceived herself, the extent to which she was aware of her own potential for agency, and the ways in which she chose to exert that agency in her life and career decisions. At this point the thesis turned from a focus on barriers to progression, to a focus on the interaction of agent and structure, of the woman and her social context. From this point onwards I sought insights informed by theories of agency, and realised this was a crucial factor in feminist research.

A part of the intention in using life history methodology was to allow participants to define significant factors, and to investigate their perceptions of the key factors for them. In this respect, the research had similarities with grounded theory, in which 'the theory derives from the data – it is grounded in the data and emerges from it' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000 p.150). Whilst I had started the thesis expecting to focus mainly on barriers to progression, by analysing the narratives I was able to identify three spheres of influence on women's career decisions, at societal, institutional and individual levels. The latter emerged as of major importance. In particular, the need to understand the relationship between personal agency and approach to career decisions was a highly significant

consideration. Positioning women as helpless victims within structures upon which they exert no influence was, I came to realise, neither helpful nor groundbreaking. Barriers formed only a part of the story – the rest was about the actions of the individual woman. This is discussed more fully in chapter ten, in which I present a typology of women's approaches to career, in which degree of agency is a key factor.

Critique of the life history methodology

In this evaluation of the research methodology used for this study, I begin by revisiting the aims implicit in the rationale for using life history interviews to research women teachers' career decisions, and assess the extent to which the use of this method fulfilled those aims in the context of this study. I then discuss some of the issues that emerged in terms of the role of the researcher in life history research, and how I sought to 'manage' myself in this regard.

Revisiting the rationale for using life history: evaluation of the method used

My rationale for using life history interviews for this study was based on key factors discussed earlier in this chapter: the scope it offered for representing women's voices in the construction of 'knowledge', and its potential for research that is both empowering and emancipatory. I consider each of these aims below in the light of my experiences in undertaking this study.

Representing women's voices?

I chose to use the life history interview for this study partly because it is a potentially powerful tool for the purpose of gathering and representing individual women's perspectives on their life and career experiences, and for exploring the subjective and

the complex, generating a richness of data that would be difficult to achieve through other methods. It offers a means whereby women's everyday domestic and working lives can be investigated and insights gained into the relationship between the woman and her social world, the female teacher and the gendered institution, the personal and the professional. It offers a means of ensuring against conclusions being erroneously drawn on the basis of limited information. For example, most women in this study said that they did not want to be headteachers. This could easily be misconstrued as 'proof' that women prefer the classroom to leadership positions, or misinterpreted as evidence to validate the hypotheses that women are biologically suited to working with children, lack ambition and motivation, or are socialised to be subservient. However, the open-ended nature of the life history interview means that the complex, multi-layered and often contradictory reasons for such career decisions can be explored in depth.

In planning and carrying out the research I took steps to ensure the validity of the findings. Firstly, the themes arising from the narratives formed the basis for a review of literature, so that it was possible to compare findings with other research on women, including women teachers, as well as to theorise how the women approached their careers, drawing on feminist and other theories from a range of disciplines, including sociology and philosophy as well as work undertaken in the field of education. It was thus possible to make comparisons and look for similarities and differences between previous research and the findings of this study, and to consider the findings in the light of existing theory. Secondly, triangulation was addressed via the use of multiple respondents. Forty life history interviews were conducted in total, covering a broad age range and women at different career stages, from the least experienced NQT to the most experienced headteacher, and the main themes that emerged from them formed the basis

for discussion and analysis. In this sense, the women's perspectives informed the structure, content and conceptual framework for the study. Thirdly, the questions asked in the interviews were open-ended and focussed on individual experiences and perceptions, yet it became apparent in analysing the data that it was possible to identify a certain amount of commonality across the sample, or across groups or generations within the sample. That this commonality should emerge, even though the questioning had not expressly sought it out, suggested there were some aspects of women's shared experiences that could have relevance for at least some other women, for example, women teachers who were also mothers.

The main strength of life history research is the potential richness of this approach. There is therefore a need to ensure that the search for themes does not take over so that this richness is lost. The tendency to try to draw out themes too early can have the effect of making the researcher a selective listener, as a result of which valuable data are missed and the strength of the life history method weakened. By searching single-mindedly for themes the researcher risks stifling or failing to listen to the voice of the narrator. Self-awareness in the researcher is thus a very important factor in determining the successfulness of the approach. It is in its ability to penetrate and represent the narrator's 'subjective reality' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000 p.133; Munro, 1998 p.9) that the strength and validity of life history lies, and this consideration needs to remain at the forefront of the researcher's mind, informing her thoughts and actions, so that the richness of the data is not sacrificed to over-simplification and over-thematisation.

The challenge then becomes to organise the emergent data to recognise commonality where it exists, without stifling significant subjective data relating to individual

women's lives. As well as presenting common themes, therefore, the life history researcher should be able to represent the perceptions and insights of individual women. In practice this presented me with a problem. Within the scope of this thesis, I realised it would be impossible to both identify common themes and do justice to each individual woman's story. In short, there were too many individual stories to tell. It was possible, though, to present the common themes along with extracts and examples of some individual stories, as illustrations of how one woman's story can be quite idiosyncratic, yet still offer important insights into factors influencing women teachers' careers (see, for example, Sandra's story, appendix eight).

Empowerment of participants

Relative to Casey's (1993) study, in which narrators had considerable control over what they talked about in response to her simple request to tell the story of their lives, the participants in this study were clearly expected to respond to an agenda set by me, by focussing on factors affecting their career decisions. Even though I asked open questions, I also asked probing and prompting questions, had a number of areas in mind I wanted to cover and held the control of the interview largely in my hands. I was, though, very aware that I needed to make a conscious effort not to lead answers. If I were to gain new insights rather than just confirm my own expectations, I knew it was important to make every effort give narrators free rein to express what was important and significant *to them*. In this sense, the participants were empowered, and free to explore the key factors in their own lives and experiences, and as discussed earlier their 'voices' informed the structure and main areas of focus of the thesis. Even so, the 'empowerment' of my participants was only possible within certain parameters, but for the purposes of this study, any looser a structure for the interview would have resulted

in time wasted both for the participants and for me, and could have generated an inordinate amount of irrelevant data. The ways in which I sought to manage my own involvement in the research process are discussed later in this chapter (see, 'researcher bias and lack of objectivity', p.130).

Exploration of consciousness and emancipatory potential

I am cautious in making claims about the extent to which the research interview was an emancipatory experience for participants. There were indications that aspects of the interview process had an emancipatory influence for some women some of the time. Some exploration of consciousness seemed to be in evidence. It was not unusual for women to articulate a perception they then reported as being something they had never thought about before, or to surprise themselves by their own reaction to something they had discussed, be this tears, anger or even laughter. Some instances were small and relatively undramatic, for example, amongst the NQTs, one woman told me she had found the interview 'thought provoking', and another that she had never considered aspiring to school leadership, but that she now would. A third talked about a relationship in which, she reflected, she had been placed under immense pressure by her partner to enter into a business partnership with him in the catering trade, in another country, and a long way from all of her support networks. She had agreed to do this, although it was not what she wanted to do. She was unhappy, isolated and unfulfilled. Eventually she found the strength to leave her partner and train as a teacher. In retrospect, she saw that this had been a repressive relationship that could have resulted in her never taking up the career of her choice. Discussing this now in conjunction with reflecting on her future career development, she expressed a clear determination that she would not give in to pressure from future partners, and that she would henceforth plan

and make her own career decisions. In this sense the research process could be said to have been emancipatory: through it she was able to articulate the conditions that had limited her freedom, and to resolve to take control of her own career in future. I would not claim that the interview alone achieved all of this. It was the lived experience that had led her to the decisions she had made; articulating it, however, could have added to her resolve and clarified her understanding of her situation. Other examples included more experienced teachers who, looking back over their past career decisions, were able to question the basis of their own motivation, and talk about how they would do things differently now, which I discuss in chapter ten (see 'Protesters', p.292).

Managing myself: issues for the researcher in life history research

Using life history as a feminist research tool in the ways described above has implications for the researcher in terms of her role in the research, her relationship with the participants and the need to acknowledge, manage and take account of her own biases and lack of objectivity. With reference to my experiences in undertaking this study, I explore these issues in this sub-section.

Role of researcher in life history research

The crux of the dilemma I faced in seeking to work in ways that would 'empower' participants was in defining the extent to which my role was to *represent* the voices of the women as opposed to *interpret* what I heard. A turning point in the process for me was my realisation, through discussion with my supervisor, that my role was not that of journalist, merely to report women's perceptions, but that of researcher – I needed to step back from the data in which I had been immersed in order to be able to analyse and interpret it, and I had to dare to be critical. I became aware that, as Scott (1992) argues,

it was not enough simply to transcribe and represent the experiences described by participants. To do so would de-contextualise the reported experiences (*ibid.*), whereas in order to understand their meaning they needed to be viewed holistically, in the context of the individual woman's life, to be seen as stories about events rather than evidence of events, both 'an interpretation and in need of an interpretation' (*ibid.*, p.37).

The narratives I gathered were often contradictory (the participants themselves frequently commented on this on reading their own transcripts), complex, and difficult to code into neat categories. To 'interpret' them I would have to impose my own codes, sense of priorities and understanding onto the raw data. In so doing, I pondered whether I would be moving away from representing the participants' 'voices'. Fine (1994 p.21) implies that to rely on 'unadulterated voices' is a patronising stance to adopt in what purports to be an egalitarian researcher-participant relationship in feminist research:

While researchers, particularly White feminists, need to worry about the imperialistic history of qualitative research that we have inherited and to contain the liberal impulse to "translate for" rather than "with" women across chasms of class, race, sexualities, politics, living arrangements, etc...the refusal to theorize reflects either a form of theoretical condescension or hyper-protocol reserved only for Others with whom serious intellectual work and struggle are considered somehow inappropriate.

This links with assumptions about the basis of the researcher-participant relationship, to which I now turn, below.

Researcher-participant relationship

Ideally the feminist research relationship is equal and collaborative, and the term 'participants' is used in preference to the term 'subjects', in recognition of the greater part they play in shaping the research. This contrasts with positivist approaches in which social science researchers are viewed as 'scientists', people who 'set goals,

devise rational means of achieving these, investigate social reality by using scientific techniques and modes of thought, in order to uncover the truth' (Stanley & Wise, 1993 p.114) and 'subjects' are 'defined as irrational, incapable of scientific thought or the use of scientific techniques, and instead have 'commonsense understanding' (read 'misunderstanding')' (*ibid.*).

In practice it is not easy to claim equality or collaboration in the research relationship, in which I was in a position of power, an observation echoed by Munro (1998). Although some of the participants in this study showed considerable interest in it in a variety of ways, ultimately, I, as the researcher, 'own' the study. As author of the thesis, I took control of the data once participants had amended their transcribed narratives, and made the decisions about their use. As a PhD student, I had a far greater personal interest than any participants in the thesis being completed, however interested in the topic they may have been! These factors, compounded by class and status differentials of the interviewer and interviewee, make for an unequal relationship in which it is at least questionable whether equal 'collaboration' can really be said to have featured. I was also very aware of how my power relationship varied with different interviewees and groups of interviewees. NQTs who had known me as a PGCE tutor would be likely to relate to me in different ways to those who had not; my relationship with the experienced teachers with whom I had worked closely for many years contrasted with that I established with women I was meeting for the first time; headteachers, several years my senior in some cases, were rather differently placed in the power relationship to younger teachers, and so on. Despite my efforts to treat everyone similarly and put participants at their ease, some inconsistency in terms of the power balance and therefore the researcher-participant relationship remained. Munro (1998 pp.15-16)

stresses the importance of acknowledging and taking account of the existence of such power relations. Reflecting on her own experience of conducting life history research with women teachers, she states:

My original assumptions regarding the collaborative and egalitarian nature of the life history process are re-examined in the light of my actual experiences. Most importantly, it seemed that 'getting it right' had less to do with adhering to life history method and everything to do with acknowledging the relational and political dimensions of the research process.

Rather than assuming one's own lack of influence on the findings, it is important, as researcher, to acknowledge partiality and power in the research, and to manage one's involvement in and influence on the research process. I discuss the issues of researcher bias and lack of objectivity in the next sub-section.

Researcher bias and lack of objectivity

Concern with bias has been a long-standing criticism of qualitative research in general (Denzin, 1992; Huber, 1973). All researchers have a personal perspective that is likely to affect their data at every stage (Osler, 1997), and it is impossible to be truly objective in the choice of a research topic, performance of the research, or interpretation of the results (Unger, 1983): as discussed in the preface to this thesis, the focus for this study came out of my own experiences as a woman teacher and an erstwhile aspirant to school leadership.

Not only does the researcher impact upon the research process and influence the participants in it, but she can be affected by them as well:

the *presence*, complete with likes, dislikes and other subjective feelings, of the researcher within all research is a rarely discussed phenomenon. This is the mythology of 'hygienic research' in which the researcher can be 'there' without having any greater involvement than simple presence. Part of this mythology... is that research can be carried out in such a way

that 'the researcher' is unaffected and unchanged by the people she does work 'on'. That the researcher might affect the researched is a constant source of worry – this after all is what constitutes 'bias' – but that *they* might affect *her* is unthinkable (Stanley & Wise, 1993 pp.114-5).

As a woman and a teacher, any claim to remain detached from the narratives of the participants, whose sometimes very poignant stories closely matched my own experiences, would be futile and untrue. My experiences during the pilot study (see appendix seven) meant that it was no surprise to feel a very strong sense of personal involvement when I went on to interview other women, in particular late-career teachers and headteachers. Of these two groups, some were my friends and ex-colleagues, and many were of a similar age and background to me. I frequently found that I identified so closely with the participant that sharing my own experiences felt like the natural thing to do, although I made a conscious effort to curb this. I tried to listen rather than talk, but still aimed to communicate a sense of rapport with the participant, even if only through body language at times. As I conducted more interviews I became more adept at asking open questions and listening without interrupting. I also became more skilled in remembering women's answers and returning to issues they had raised in order to explore them further, or assimilating what they had told me and re-stating it to them from time to time. This improved the sense of empathy and connectedness without my venturing too many of my own opinions and experiences.

It can be very difficult to step back from work in which one feels a strong sense of personal involvement, as illustrated in Peterson's (1997 p.160) comments:

One of the real difficulties in doing this type of research is that, often, as an African American woman myself, I felt drawn into these women's lives. So much of their history seemed to parallel my own. I had to be very careful to report what the women said, as opposed to how I felt about what they said or about my own interpretation of a similar experience.

Like Peterson, I became aware that my lack of objectivity or being too close to the work could influence not only the interview responses but also the analysis of the narratives. It was thus important to find a systematic way of analysing the narratives that was based not on my expectations but on what the participants were *actually saying*. Just as I had to learn to make a conscious effort not to lead participants' answers, so I had to ensure I did not 'lead' the findings. I needed to find a way to step outside of our shared experiences and perceptions if I were to make sense of them, to 'make the familiar strange' (Munro, 1998 p.10). I described earlier the two-stage process I adopted to do this, first tabulating and 'scoring' the factors women had identified as important and then looking at *how* the women had described their approach to career, and whether they had perceived themselves to be agentic in making career decisions. It was important to be systematic in ordering the data, and crucial to be very familiar with it in order to do so effectively. Deciding, for example, on the degree of agency evident in a narrative involved, for instance, lengthy periods of time spent considering the sort of language used, the nature of the explanations of and reasons given for particular decisions, and even evidence of the narrator's ability to recognise when she had actually taken a decision.

As I tried to find ways to minimise my own impact on the research process and the findings of it, I came to realise that it might be more useful to focus not on whether the work was objective, but on *how it was subjective*, and the ways in which this subjectivity might be detrimental or beneficial. Recognition that the research was subjective and that I as researcher had particular biases meant I needed to develop a different framework within which to conduct the research.

Firstly, I needed to consider what exactly my role as researcher/author of the life history study really was. My aim of working collaboratively with participants meant that I should not assume they were subjects of the research from whom I would discover 'facts'. Acknowledging my own lack of detachment from the research meant accepting that my role entailed my involvement in the creation of the data, and in the analysis of it. As Tierney (1994 p.98) comments,

the creation of the text exists in a dialectical relationship between author and "subject" to such an extent that we must forego analyses that assume the researcher-cum-author is capable of objectively describing any given reality.

Secondly, therefore, there was a need to *acknowledge* my own predispositions and my influence on and involvement in the research. Fine (1994 p.16) argues that 'all researchers are agents...who choose, wittingly or not, from among a controversial and constraining set of political stances and epistemologies', and is highly critical of researchers who work as though their own detachment is a given:

Many deny these choices within veils of "neutrality", describing behaviours, attitudes, and preferences of Others, as if these descriptions were static and immutable, "out there," and unconnected to "Self" or political context... [Their] texts refuse to ask why one research question or interpretation has prevailed over others, or why this researcher selected this set of questions over others. Such texts render oblique the ways in which we, as researchers, construct our analyses and narratives. Indeed, these texts are written as if researchers were simply vehicles for transmission, with no voices of their own. Such researchers position themselves in dis-stances, as ventriloquists... The author tells Truth, has no gender, race, class or stance (*ibid.*, pp.16-17).

Thirdly, I needed to consider how and whether the process of using life history to research women's lives and careers might actually benefit from my personal involvement in it. I discussed earlier in this chapter the need for a relationship of trust between researcher and narrator in life history research. In this context, personal

involvement is not just an unfortunate inevitability but a crucial part of the research relationship. As Tierney (1994 pp.104-5) comments,

The heart of life history research is not merely the verbatim transcription of what an individual says. The basis of our work is in the involvement with the individual ... As researchers, one facet of our research capability must be to exhibit a sense of care and concern to understand the "other's possibility"...our research endeavours need to be reformulated so that they include a capacity for empathy.

Seen in this way personal involvement is, as Oakley (1981 p.58) has argued, 'more than dangerous bias'; it is 'the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives '. Similarly, Osler (1997 p.69) suggests that instead of adopting 'an artificial distance', experiences and perceptions shared by researcher and participants should be 'acknowledged as an asset' (*ibid.*), and can work to strengthen the research relationship.

Finally, I realised I also needed to avoid blithely adopting what Patai (1994 p.62) terms a 'head-in-the-sand attitude', as she cautions feminists against retreating into 'a defense of bias...as if this were a worthy aim in itself' (*ibid.*). It would be over-simplistic to pretend that a glib acceptance of one's personal involvement in the research was unproblematic. Cohen and Manion (1989) argue that researchers may not be *able* to identify their own prejudices. Other writers have underlined the importance of identifying sources of bias and applying techniques to reduce them in order to ensure reliability has been underlined (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Plummer, 1983). It would be highly ironical if, as a feminist who has criticised the male, white, middle class bias in 'knowledge', I were to adopt a different set of biases. Patai (1994 p.64) argues that simply taking account of one's own position is not enough, as this alone does not change the reality:

taking account of our own positions and circumstances is an important thing to do... [but]... [a]t present... we are spending much too much time wading in the morass of our own positionings... The fact is that those of us whose medium is words do occupy privileged positions, and we hardly give up these positions when we engage in endless self-scrutiny and anxious self-identification... academics have reached new heights in their pretence that the world's ills are set right by mere acknowledgement of one's own position.

Whilst researcher bias may be an inevitable part of this sort of research, its effect does not have to be detrimental. Rather than just acknowledging it, there is a need for the researcher to 'manage' her own personal involvement to the benefit rather than the detriment of the study, and to ensure that the voices of narrators are not obscured or misrepresented as a result of her own biases and personal agenda. With sufficient self-awareness the researcher can take steps to avoid the potentially damaging aspects of researcher bias. To achieve this requires that the researcher is conscious of her own values (Kingman, 1997), her influence on the research process (Oleson, 1998; Osler, 1997) and her expectations. The reflective researcher can then work to use these in ways that can enhance her work, evoking them as 'resources to guide data gathering or creating and for understanding her own interpretations and behaviour in the research (Oleson, 1998 p.314).

Furthermore, life history does have the advantage of lending itself to allowing participants to have a major input into defining what is significant, and the work of Munro (1998), Osler (1997) and Casey (1993) exemplifies how it is possible to seek to overcome potential researcher bias by conducting the interviews in a relatively unstructured way, giving 'the subject of the research as much control over the content of the interview as possible (Osler, 1997 p.56)'. The challenge becomes to organise the research so that this control is not usurped by the researcher.

Summary

This chapter focussed on the research methodology used for this study, life history interviews. A summary of the key points follows.

The purpose of the study is to investigate women secondary school teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting their career decisions. The sample was gathered mainly by snowballing, and comprised forty women, at four different career stages: NQTs, mid-career, late-career and headteachers.

Life history was chosen for its open-ended nature, and the scope it offers for giving voice to women and working in emancipatory and empowering ways. The emancipatory potential of life history research was to an extent apparent, in that there were indications of some exploration of consciousness in certain narratives. I am more cautious in making claims about the empowerment of participants in the research process. The open-ended nature of the interview questions meant that women were able to identify for themselves what the significant factors had been. I was conscious however that I held the power over the research process and the data analysis. Narrators were thus empowered only within the parameters of the interview, which were set by me, although the basis of the literature review and analysis sections of the thesis was drawn from the themes emerging from the narratives.

The key factors identified by narrators were organised thematically. Three spheres of influence on women's career decisions were discernible: societal factors, institutional factors and individual factors. These form the basis for the organisation of the literature review (chapters two, three and four) and analysis sections (chapters six to ten) of the

thesis. Steps were taken to help ensure the validity of the findings, including comparison with existing theory and research, triangulation through the use of multiple respondents, and open-ended questions that allowed participants to define the important factors.

By considering not just what the women said but *how* they told their stories, it was possible to identify two types of narrative, those of the women who perceived their career decisions as self-defined, and those who saw them as defined by factors external to themselves. This raised questions about the importance of personal agency in career decisions, and marked a turning point in the study from a focus uniquely on barriers to progression to a focus on the relationship between agency and structure.

It is acknowledged that a shortcoming of the research is that it is based on an overwhelmingly white sample, which cannot be assumed to be representative of all women. In addition, insights into the influence of partners and relationships on women's career decisions are limited in that, whilst most women indicated their heterosexuality via reference to male partners, others made no reference to their sexuality, which may have been the result of my impact as a heterosexual researcher, and is another shortcoming of the study.

Self-awareness, and the ability to acknowledge and manage one's own impact on the research process are key factors for the life history researcher. I had to make a conscious effort to minimise my input into and influence on the interviews, and to be systematic in organising data so that I did not stifle women's voices. However, I could not remain entirely detached from the narratives, with which I felt a strong sense of

personal involvement, and acknowledge that I was involved in both the creation and analysis of the data. Personal involvement is however an important part of a research relationship built on trust and empathy.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis of findings part one: societal factors affecting women teachers' career decisions

Introduction

In the next five chapters, the findings of the study are presented and analysed.

Forty individual life history interviews yielded forty unique stories and a diversity of experiences, to which, as discussed in chapter five, it is not possible to do justice within the confines of this thesis. It is possible, however, to represent the commonality that emerged with regard to the main factors most women identified as influential in shaping and informing their career decisions. Three spheres of influence on women teachers' career decisions were apparent in the narratives: societal factors, institutional factors and individual factors. This chapter explores societal factors and chapter seven, institutional factors. Individual factors, that is those particular to the individual woman, form the biggest part of the analysis and are discussed in chapters eight, nine and ten.

I interviewed ten newly qualified teachers (NQTs), ten mid-career teachers, ten late-career teachers and ten headteachers. The greatest commonality was between the perceptions of the mid- and the late-career teachers. Therefore, I refer to 'experienced teachers' to cover both of these groups, except where there were clear differences between the two.

In this chapter, I examine evidence of societal influences on the forty women's career decisions. By 'societal influences' I mean those resulting from socially and culturally defined constructions of women's roles. Drawing on narrators' references to their upbringing and education, I consider the impact of socialisation and the social construction of femininity on their career decisions, looking particularly at their decision to enter the teaching profession. I then consider evidence in the narratives of the interrelatedness of the women's private and professional lives to examine how women's relational and mothering roles in the private sphere had impacted on their priorities and affected their career decisions.

Gendered processes of socialisation

Socialisation theorists (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994; Sharpe, 1976; Millett, 1969) hold that girls are socialised into relational, nurturing roles, which influence their priorities, behaviour and choices, including career choices, in adult life. This was to an extent borne out in the narratives of the women in this study. Most of the narrators were conscious of their gender having played at least some part during socialisation in shaping their career choices, educational achievements and opportunities, and there were clear indications that, in many cases, their interest in teaching had grown from seeds planted during home- and school-based socialisation. Consideration is given below firstly to the influence of home and family, and then to the women's experiences of socialisation during adolescence, of which the most frequently discussed related to their own education, the impact of teachers, and career options and guidance at school or university.

Home-based socialisation

Positive parental support for the women's own education emerged as a strong theme for the majority of participants in their accounts of how they had come to choose teaching as a career. In most cases this was not because their parents had specifically wanted or expected them to become teachers. Rather it was the high regard their parents had for education, the priority they accorded to it, the esteem in which they held teachers, and their hopes for their daughters to get good jobs, that conveyed the implicit messages that influenced their decision to teach. Reflecting on her own and her siblings' upbringing, NQT Mary, for example, commented:

We've all been brought up thinking that education was really important...if it weren't for my mum I don't think I would be [teaching] really, to be honest...[My parents] always gave us the chance to do whatever we wanted to do, always encouraged us to do it, not to let anyone or anything bring us down...I'm very grateful for that, they've been really helpful (Mary, NQT).

The majority of the women were aware that their parents had communicated a sense of raised aspirations, that stayed with them throughout their schooling, and was influential in leading them into the teaching profession. For some women, especially those who identified themselves as working class, this had been underpinned by an awareness from an early age that education was the key to improving their lives. For instance:

My dad's always regretted not having a career. He's just gone through factory jobs. And one of the things he said, when I was younger, was that the best way to get out of this rut is to do well at school and education. So I had that in my head, that I was not to be one of the...girls with a pram at the age of sixteen, I've got to work at school...From seven onwards I had that in my head. At seven, at primary school, I said I was going to do a degree, so since then I've been working towards a degree (Yvonne, NQT).

In this sense, parental support for the women's own education was seen as a positive influence and a key factor in raising the women's aspirations, broadening their options rather than limiting them. In this there were some parallels with the experiences of the

high-achieving women whose stories are recounted in David and Woodward (1998). Whilst this to an extent supports the view of the socialisation theorists cited that there is a link between socialisation and aspiration, it does not necessarily point to the inevitability that girls' socialisation leads them to have *low* aspirations. As Stanley and Wise (1993) argue, such theories tend to be based on the assumption that socialisation affects everyone in the same way, and offer limited potential for recognising and understanding variation and complexity. Most importantly, the theories implicitly deny the possibility of personal agency, and are therefore inadequate in accounting for individual experiences. In the examples of the young women cited above, for instance, there are indications that their career choices were formed as a result not of their complete and unquestioning acceptance of a socially and culturally defined feminine role, but as a result of the *interaction* of personal agency and external influences, which encompassed both the prevalent social constructions of femininity that encourage girls into caring professions and the positive support of their parents during socialisation and education. Mary, for example, was grateful that her parents created the conditions in which she could 'do whatever she wanted to do', and from the age of seven Yvonne resolved to take her father's advice and gain the degree that would be the ticket to 'getting out of this rut'. In both cases, which were quite typical examples, parents were seen to enable, not to obstruct, the young women's range of options, and to be supportive of their choices rather than to try to impose pre-ordained futures on their daughters. Furthermore, in Yvonne's case, as for several other women, her aspirations were also framed by her acute awareness of the impact of social class on life options, which is not accounted for in a narrowly gender-based analysis of socialisation. This awareness was communicated to her by her father, who also did not fit the socialisation theory profile of a parent, consciously raising his daughter to have high aspirations

rather than to fit the mould of young, working class mother. These examples illustrate the applicability of Stanley and Wise's (1993 p.102) criticism that socialisation theories are over-deterministic: neither Yvonne nor her father emerged as wholly accepting of or shaped by 'demands' made of them by 'the social system'. Both were active in ensuring her ability to avoid the trammels of teenage motherhood, and from an early age she exerted her personal agency in pursuit of the academic credentials she needed to escape what would be the destiny of many of her classmates.

The sense of parental support and high aspirations was common across all of the generations involved in the study. However, the perceived inevitability of becoming a *teacher* was a much stronger theme for the older (50+) women in the group, some of whom specifically mentioned that they had been aware that their parents viewed teaching as a respectable job for a woman. This would suggest that, for the women who grew up during the 1960s and 1970s, the nurturing, relational role implicit in teaching was viewed as compatible with femininity, supporting the arguments put forward by theorists of that era such as Sharpe (1976) and Millett (1969). Late-career teacher Marjory's recollection was typical of her generation: 'I think it's quite simply that [teaching] was a really high aspiration for a girl at that time. To train to be a teacher was the best thing one could imagine'. This sense of inevitability of teaching as the only real career option for a bright girl was a much weaker theme in the narratives of the mid-career teachers, and not a feature at all of the interviews with NQTs, suggesting that younger women have a sense of a broader range of options being open to them than was the case for previous generations.

It is interesting to note, however, that a strong theme emerging from the NQT interviews was that their liking for children was an important motivating factor leading them to choose teaching. There were indications that this may have been rooted in gendered socialisation. For example, some of the NQTs linked their interest in children and teaching to their earlier experiences of playing a nurturing or caring role with siblings. Rebecca, for instance, had had to act as ‘interpreter’ for her deaf brother, and Yvonne had played a supportive role for many years in the care of her younger brothers and sisters. In describing this experience, she linked her entry into teaching to her ‘maternal instincts’, and yet, as discussed above, the aspirations she had developed as a result of her upbringing and her father’s influence led her to indulge those ‘instincts’ in teaching rather than in motherhood. Even where the NQTs’ liking for children was not linked to experiences of caring for siblings, their interest in raising and developing children seemed to be a much stronger theme than, for instance, love of the academic subject taught (although this was often also mentioned, usually briefly).

Whilst this liking for children did not emerge as a key factor leading other generations into the profession, there were to an extent hints of it in their narratives, in the sense that for the majority, the main source of satisfaction in their daily roles was derived from relationships with pupils and seeing pupils develop, and comparisons were drawn by many of the women between teaching and the nurturing role of mothers, as in the example of Yvonne. This raises a number of considerations. Firstly, despite the age differences between the different generations of women in the sample (almost forty years difference between the oldest and the youngest woman interviewed), evidence of the prioritising of caring, nurturing and relational roles is apparent in all groups, including the NQTs. This suggests that the emphasis on the relational, nurturing role of

women, with its self-evident links to the maternal ideal, continues to be a key influence on women's aspirations and values, and may to an extent be rooted in the gendered processes of socialisation. The impact of the motherhood ideal, and the reality of motherhood, are discussed further later in the chapter. Below, I consider the women's experiences of socialisation during adolescence and education.

Adolescence, education and career decisions

Recollecting experiences during adolescence and early adulthood that had influenced their career decisions, narrators typically referred to their own schooling, university or college, the influence of individual teachers, including in some cases members of their extended families, and the careers guidance they received. Again there were some similarities in emphasis to many of the career accounts of senior women in the academic world included in David and Woodward (1998).

Further evidence emerged of the gendered processes of socialisation as, in discussing their upbringing and schooldays, the experienced teachers made numerous references to the differences between themselves and their male siblings and classmates. Quite commonly the women recounted how they had been studious and well-behaved during their schooldays, whilst male siblings and peers were less so. Mid-career teacher Diana, for instance recalled how her two brothers 'got away with' more than she did, and Wanda reflected:

I was a lot quieter and a bit more studious [than my siblings] really... My brother absolutely hated school... [He] did start a college/work based thing but he didn't stick with it. He didn't get on at all at school... I had a female group of friends and we were all in 6th form together and we all applied to university together and we all did that kind of girl thing. If we had been male we would've been out clowning around and causing trouble, probably! (Wanda, mid-career teacher).

Similarly, Linda, recalled:

My brother...had a number of difficulties with the state school system and...benefited from a lot of patience and encouragement from our parents. He was in some ways expected to take longer to make up his mind about possible career choices, having had a stormy adolescence. He rebelled more openly than I did...I was ... expected...to understand that I would be responsible for my own actions past the age of fourteen-ish. With [my brother], it took a lot longer (Linda, mid-career teacher).

A picture emerges of young women who as schoolgirls were compliant students, and who, as young adults, chose to enter a 'respectable' profession. Their male peers emerge as more rebellious and more oriented towards the wider world of work. These differences offer support for arguments posited by Sharpe (1976) and Millett (1969), who maintain that girls (and boys) internalise socially constructed sex-specific behaviours during socialisation. Lahtinen and Wilson (1994) suggest that the passivity girls learn during socialisation stays with them in adult life, acting as a barrier to their career progression. Whereas, as in the examples above, rebellion in boys is more readily tolerated, girls are not encouraged to assert themselves or get involved in power struggles, with the result that they emerge, as adults, ill-prepared to negotiate power networks in the professional domain, which could hamper their career progress. Whilst the narrators themselves did not make this link, it is possible that their experiences of gendered socialisation may have had some impact on their personal approach to career, which is discussed in more detail in chapter ten.

The influence of inspiring teachers was frequently mentioned as an important factor leading women to choose teaching as a career. Many, but not all, of these sources of inspiration had been female teachers, who were perceived to have been important influences for a range of reasons, including, in some cases, as role models. Daphne, for example, reflected:

There are certain teachers that I'm always going to remember and that have impacted on me in one way or another, whether it's the way I behave toward other people or passions for things, and to think you'd be able to impart that to even one other person was what's always driven me [to teach] (Daphne, NQT).

In some cases, the women had been positively influenced by members of their own family who were teachers. These were typically female relatives, who again served as important role models. Caroline's case provides a good example of someone who was influenced both by a female relative and one of her own teachers:

I think my aunt was definitely [a role model for me]. She was a primary school teacher... Whenever we used to go and visit the family, we'd sit and talk a lot about teaching, and she'd tell me about the things she was doing and some of the wonderful things the children were coming out with, and I thought, yes, I'd love to do that... [And] I had a great, great schooling... I loved it, I actually loved it... I looked at some teachers there and one in particular who... I would've walked on hot coals for. She was just so fair, really involved, incredibly enthusiastic, really involved in everything, but was just so caring, and really brought everything out of you, you know? (Caroline, late-career teacher).

Sharpe (1976 p.77) argues that girls internalise the feminine 'relational' role initially through their relationship with their mothers but also via their relationships with other women, imitating the behaviour of those women with whom they identify. Whilst there were clear indications that many women had been influenced in their decision to become teachers by their admiration for female teacher role models, there is little to indicate these were instrumental in encouraging them to develop *relational* roles as such, although this is perhaps implicit in Caroline's comments, above. Rather it was their own positive experiences of school that combined with their respect and admiration for certain teachers to fire the women's enthusiasm for teaching. Most of the NQTs, for instance, spoke of their own enjoyment of school as influential in leading them into teaching. Pauline was typical:

I really enjoyed the personal challenge of learning and improving...I was fortunate in being in a school which had some very good teachers, very encouraging... so I really enjoyed the school process... I look back on it with a tremendous amount of satisfaction and contentment, and that must have had a strong influence as to why I like being in a school environment (Pauline, NQT).

Whilst late-career teacher Caroline, whom I cited earlier, related similar, positive experiences to the majority of the NQTs, she was not, in fact, typical of her contemporaries in her happy recollections of school. For the majority of the older women in the sample, school had, as Millett (1969) argues, served to reinforce sex stereotyping, and was instrumental in channelling the women into teaching. Several of them were clear that their schooling had impeded their academic and career options. Two headteachers, for example, saw that their potential for scientific and technical subjects had been stifled and discouraged during their school days. By being directed towards non-technical types of study, they had ultimately moved towards teaching, which would not necessarily have been the case had they been able to develop their other abilities. Half of the late-career teachers spoke, some in strong terms, of the inadequate and sexist career advice – or complete lack of it in some cases – which had impacted on their choices by blinkering them to the alternatives to teaching that they might otherwise have considered. Coral's experiences were fairly typical of the older women in the sample. She was channelled through girls' grammar school into teaching, as though there were no real alternatives:

There wasn't a lot of career guidance and you ended up just going to university or teachers' training college. And then if you went to university you ended up doing a PGCE. It was a girls' grammar [school]... [and] basically, those who could, went into teaching... Even at university we didn't get an awful lot of career guidance. It was very much, yes, well, you can go into teaching. What else can you do with your degree really? (Coral, late-career teacher).

Sandra had similarly followed unquestioningly the expected path into teaching, despite her having other skills which she now saw she could have developed to take a different career direction:

The decision to teach had never been challenged... I do wonder now why it wasn't suggested to me that I should consider other careers... When I look back on that now it does surprise me that we held beliefs that we were at the forefront of feminism, whereas in reality... I was never encouraged to question a decision to go into a very traditional female occupation. I think there may be a case for stating that my particular disposition and range of skills arguably should have driven a very different kind of decision about career (Sandra, late-career teacher).

Frequently the older women commented that at the time they grew up, during the 1960s and 1970s, teaching was one of the few real options open to women and was seen as a woman's job. Some women of this generation spoke of how they went into teaching because they were put off by the male dominated nature of other possible careers they could have considered, and by the knowledge that these other possibilities were widely viewed as men's jobs. This awareness of widely-held social and cultural views about the sex-appropriateness of certain types of jobs concurs, at least for that generation of women, with the view of Lahtinen and Wilson (1994) that women's aspirations are shaped by the sustained reinforcement of sex-specific roles throughout socialisation. An illustration of this is provided in the experiences of late-career teacher Freda, who, like several of her peers, was clear that gravitating towards a feminine profession despite her other interests was a function of the era in which she was brought up:

I enjoyed geography...But [to do] geography I realised I would have to have a degree...I was interested in...geology...and in those days, because this was back in the seventies, gender-wise you were fighting...you had to have a good degree and it was a man's job to be a geologist...so I thought, no, I'll stick with teaching. So I went into food teaching (Freda, late-career teacher).

Similarly, Chris, who studied chemistry at university, explained why she became a teacher rather than a chemist:

You see *now*, with chemistry, you could pick any job...because people are crying out for chemists and the skills that doing chemistry teaches you. But then, that wasn't the case...I didn't like lab work... [which] it mainly was then... [nor] computers...And ... there was no people element to chemistry...So I didn't pick [teaching] because I had been enthused and inspired at school...I literally picked it because it was, as far as I could tell, the only option that was open to me at the time...whereas now...you could do all sorts of things. That was not true then...One of the reasons I didn't like chemistry was because it was a very male-dominated subject. We were constantly told that it was a male world and that people did want chemists to be men. I think that's probably still true, to an extent, I'd say, but it's much less obvious now (Chris, late-career teacher).

The NQTs differed from the three other groups in that they did not make reference to any such clearly gendered experiences in their schooling or careers orientation. This would suggest that some of the 'barriers' experienced by the older women in the study have been overcome. However, as discussed above, the impact of home on steering them towards nurturing, caring and relational roles was a stronger theme than with the other groups, suggesting that although young women may now have a broader range of career choices open to them, there are still sufficiently strong influences that work to guide girls towards nurturing, relational roles and the caring professions. This indicates that the arguments posited by writers such as Lahtinen and Wilson (1994) still have some relevance in accounting for the career decisions made by women of all generations.

Whilst there were some generational differences and shifts of emphasis in the narratives, as discussed above, it was apparent that the women's career decisions were neither completely free nor completely forced. An analysis is therefore needed that allows for the complexity of, and the layered and multiple influences on, women's lives, values, priorities and career decisions; one in which account is taken of the constraints on women's lives that can result from gendered socialisation processes and predominant

social constructions of femininity, whilst recognising the potential for human beings to exert their personal agency. The women teachers' narratives in this study show, as Aveling (2002 p.277) found in her study of able women, that the narrators felt that at least some of the time they were 'active agents in constructing their own futures'. At the same time their career decisions were made within the particular set of constraints and opportunities that characterised their life contexts and through which they formed and re-formed their identities: 'childhood experiences...personal experiences, family relationships, peers, schools, religion, social class, ethnicity and even chance events' (*ibid.*), so that their choices were 'never wholly free' (*ibid.*, p.267). Neither, though, were they wholly 'shaped': the women emerge as 'not simply 'acted upon' but as 'socially situated' agents who were 'able to make choices and effect change' (*ibid.*).

A powerful influence on many women's lives was that of the image and reality of women's nurturing, relational and maternal roles. In the next section, I turn to the relationship between women's private and professional lives, looking particularly at evidence of how women's relational and mothering roles in adulthood affected their career decisions.

Relational and maternal roles in adulthood

The interwoven nature of women's personal and professional lives was very apparent in the narratives. Narrators frequently interspersed their narratives with details of personal relationships, family responsibilities and home life, and explained many of their career decisions in connection with these. In this section therefore I consider how women's relational and maternal roles influenced their career decisions. The impact of motherhood on career was one of the strongest themes to emerge from the study, and is

therefore the basis of much of the discussion here. However, issues associated with personal relationships and life-work balance are also considered, as these are connected with women's relational roles.

Of the forty participants in the study, twenty were mothers. These included one NQT (Cindy), seven mid-career teachers, seven late-career teachers and five headteachers. In addition, mid-career teacher Carol was pregnant for the first time at the time of the interview, and late-career teacher Lisa had been a foster parent in the past, but had no children living with her at the time of the interview. As most of the mothers in the study were concentrated in the mid- and late-career teacher categories, the data discussed in this section emanate mainly from these women. References are made to NQTs and headteachers where there was commonality between them and the experienced teachers. Other findings peculiar to the NQTs and headteachers are summarised after the discussion on the experienced teachers.

Experienced teachers

Evidence of the impact of motherhood and relational roles on the women's career decisions is presented here in five sub-sections. In the first, I explain that classroom teaching was perceived by many women as a career that can be fitted in with motherhood and family responsibilities. In the second, I present evidence of the difficulties implicit in combining teaching and mothering roles. In the third part, I show how women's career decisions and career paths were made to fit around family life. In the fourth, I consider how the importance of life-work balance influenced women's career decisions, and in the final sub-section I discuss the support needs of women who combine teaching and motherhood.

Classroom teaching – a career that fits in with family?

It was clearly apparent that for many women in this study, as for those in the work of Aveling (2002), motherhood had, to a greater or lesser extent, defined career. Many women had chosen to enter the teaching profession in the first place at least in part because it was seen to be compatible with raising a family, or had stayed in it for the same reasons. Some of the women in the study had worked in other careers previously, and entered into teaching relatively late, perceiving it as a profession that offered greater potential for combining home and work responsibilities. Some had left teaching earlier but returned to it on marrying or starting a family, for example:

I worked for the immigrants' advisory service...I was on call 7 days a week and 24 hours a day, and my husband got very upset about that. So that's when I did actually go back to teaching...I went back ...because it is a very good career, I think, for women who are going to have a family (Olwen, late-career teacher).

A range of reasons were given for the view that teaching and family life were particularly compatible. A major advantage that was frequently cited was that teaching offered the flexibility to take care of the family during school holidays. Rhona's view was typical:

One of the reasons I chose teaching was to fit in with the family, because of the school holidays...I know that's an old-fashioned idea now, but I think that it's really important to have your parents around...as a teacher I have always been there for the children, with the exception of the odd meeting after school or the slight difference in finishing times. I'm there when they are and that was important for me, so that fitted in very well (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

The financial security offered by teaching, and the importance of this for supporting a family, were also alluded to by several of the women with children. Teaching salaries were seen to compare favourably with other jobs the women might have been able to consider. Teaching was seen to allow them to provide a reasonable standard of living for their families, and to be there for them when they needed to be.

Whilst teaching seemed to be perceived to be a career that fits in well with family, it also emerged that combining the two entailed considerable practical and emotional difficulties for women, which in turn affected career decisions. I present evidence of these below.

Difficulties implicit in combining family responsibilities and teaching career

Despite the commonly cited perception that teaching was compatible with family responsibilities, there was considerable evidence of a range of practical and emotional difficulties facing women who combined professional and mothering roles, resonating with the findings of, for example, Burke (1997) and Kim and Ling (2001). Narrators commonly identified ways in which family life had at very least worked to limit their ability to focus on their career, or had been a factor impeding their career progression in some way. Several women recounted how they had initially embarked upon their teaching career expecting, as Acker (1994) found, that they would not have to choose between profession and motherhood, but would be able to cope with both. Although they had not intended to reduce their focus on career, this had become for many the reality of mixing motherhood and profession. In this respect, the women's experiences and careers reflected those of the able women in Aveling's (2002) longitudinal study, whose longer-term employment patterns were defined primarily by their maternal status, despite their earlier aspirations and intentions. The responsibilities associated with motherhood have clear implications for placing constraints on women's working lives and potential career progression. As McCrae (2003 p.330) argues in her critique of Hakim's (2000) 'Preference Theory', an explanation of women's employment choices after motherhood based on preferences alone, with no consideration given to constraints, is 'simply incomplete'.

The narratives of most of the mothers in the mid- and late-career groups were characterised by descriptions of home-work conflicts in their daily lives. This is consistent with the findings of other research on the lives of professional women who are mothers (for example, Aveling, 2002; Kim & Ling, 2001; Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Burke, 1997; Acker, 1994; Limerick & Heywood, 1994). In some cases the examples given related to practical, organisational considerations in the day-to-day running of the family, and descriptions of coping strategies adopted for managing the double role. Freda, for example, recalled:

There used to be home-work conflicts when the children were little. If I had any work to do I would never start doing it until they'd gone to bed, and so it was very hard...I look back and I think, how did I manage? I must've been Superwoman! I also used to do night classes as well, for extra money. I did a lot of things, but yes, there was a conflict (Freda, late-career teacher).

Other women spoke of feelings of being pulled in two directions when professional commitments clashed with family needs, for example, feeling unable to take time off work to take care of sick children, or having to choose whether to attend parents' evening at one's child's school or one's place of work. Feelings of frustration, guilt and inner conflict emanating from attempts to combine teaching and mothering roles were commonly reported, casting doubt on Hakim's (2000) assertion that women are now able to make life and work choices in accordance with their preferences, a claim which takes little account of the conflicting discourses of maternity and professionalism.

Powerful social pressures on women to prioritise and take primary responsibility for family are noted by Mann (1995) and Jackson (1994). This is borne out in this study as in others (Aveling, 2002; Kim & Ling, 2001; Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Limerick & Heywood, 1994), as it was clearly apparent that the mothers who participated were assuming primary responsibility for child rearing. The

unspoken expectation still seems to be that mothers will do this. No one participating in this study mentioned the possibility that husbands or partners could have taken on the main childcare responsibility – the assumption that mothers would do so was such a given that, seemingly, it did not need to be articulated. This assumed understanding that mothers will prioritise the care of their children resonates with Jackson's (1994 p.17) notion of a 'specific ideology of motherhood', through which pervasive discourses of motherhood and associated images and values are manufactured and sustained, exerting pressure on women to conform to the maternal ideal, and effectively acting as a barrier to the redistribution of parental responsibilities (Mann, 1995). As Jackson (1994) notes, the indications are that fathers remain largely unencumbered by family responsibilities in comparison with their female partners. Indeed, there were relatively few references to husbands and partners in the narratives of the experienced teachers, despite there being frequent discussion of children and home. NQT Cindy, for example, mentioned that she was married, but made no other reference to her husband, although her children featured throughout the narrative as career-shaping considerations.

On the other hand, to assume that women unquestioningly take on primary responsibility for childcare in accordance with socially and culturally defined discourses of motherhood is probably an over-simplification. It assumes women who become mothers uniformly respond to predominant discourses in the same passive, compliant way, a position which again implicitly denies the potential for women's personal agency. As Nelson-Kuna and Riger (1995 pp.175-6) argue, 'social influences may constrain and shape women's agency', but 'they do not remove the ability to act'. Relational autonomy theorists such as Mackenzie and Stoljar (2000 p.16) argue that a woman's capacity for reflexive self-determination, which includes the ability to 'reflect

on and critically assess the various processes (socialisation, parental or peer influence etc.) by means of which she came to acquire her desires, beliefs, values and emotional attitude', develops from the inter-relationship of the self and the social world. Thus women who prioritise the 'relationships of intimacy and care' (Gilligan, 1982 p.164) that form an integral part of their lives and identities may have made a *conscious decision to do so*, and may perceive personal relationships and care of children not as restrictions but as opportunities for personal growth: as Hanley and Abell (2002 p.40) argue, 'attachment in and of itself is not in conflict with self-actualisation'. However, as none of the women in this study discussed how they had come to the decision that they, rather than partners or husbands, would be the primary childcarers, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which they had reflected on their 'aims, aspirations and motivations' (Barclay, 2000 p.53) and *chosen* their 'ends and purposes through such a reflective process' (*ibid.*). Evidence of critical engagement with the social context in which they were expected to take on the main child-caring role was not readily apparent.

Jackson (1994 p.83) argues that there has been increasing pressure on women to take sole and primary responsibility for childcare as 'part of a not-so-subtle anti-feminism' that has evolved over the last two hundred years in western society. It has been manifested in the breakdown of extended family support networks and the growth of the nuclear family, of which the intention is 'to hold women in (private) child care rather than more (public) professional or creative roles' (*ibid.*). There is a certain amount of support for this claim in this study, in that all of the mothers were aware that the expectation that they would take primary responsibility for childcare in the private domain had, at least to some degree, impacted upon their career decisions in the

professional domain. Pressure on the women from a range of sources had had the impact of blocking or impeding potential career progression, at very least temporarily. For many it exacerbated the emotional turmoil of combining professional and private roles, adding to their dilemmas and influencing their decisions. Freda's case provides a noteworthy example, as considerable pressure had been brought to bear on her by members of her wider family and social circle to give up her job in order to bring up her children:

When I went back into teaching [after having children], my brother would hardly talk to me... my dad was of a generation [when it was expected that] you had to take time off, you stayed at home with your children... [and] I have friends who found it strange I went back to work (Freda, late-career teacher).

Whilst Freda enacted her resistance to this pressure by returning to work full-time, the guilt she felt for doing so was clear in the emotive language she used, describing herself as 'a terrible parent'. This tendency for harsh self-judgement was not unusual in the narratives, and there were numerous manifestations of what McCrae (2003 p.329) refers to as women's 'inner voices', providing evidence that women's expectations of themselves reflect those of the dominant discourses surrounding motherhood. Although Freda made the decision to return to work, it was not without a sense of guilt: her 'inner voices' (*ibid.*) reminded her that she *ought* to put her own children first.

There were further indications that women's own beliefs about their mothering roles were at the root of dilemmas and inner conflicts regarding their double role. The sense of guilt to which Freda alluded was also apparent in women who had not experienced pressure of this sort from others in their social and family circles, and even where husbands or partners were fulfilling a caring role perfectly well. Olivia, for example, commented:

I feel guilty that I don't spend enough time with the youngsters, helping them with their homework, my own children. But then they seem to prefer to go to their dad for help anyway. Now whether that's because I haven't been there to help them in the past I'm not sure... I think perhaps the fact that I'm a teacher... holds them back as well (Olivia, late-career teacher).

Thus, as well as the constraints imposed on women by structural factors, a woman's career decisions are also constrained, as McCrae (*ibid.*) argues, by her own beliefs 'about being a mother, about being an employed mother, and about the implications of the latter [which] can curtail the choices that she considers are open to her'. Even where others are not consciously putting pressure on women to take on the main responsibility for children, the women themselves feel that they *ought* to be doing so. It is interesting to note, for instance, that some women discussed how, although the feelings of guilt and inner conflict had been intense for *them*, their grown-up children in retrospect usually had no recollection of this. Olwen, for example, talked about this in the context of her earlier decision not to apply for deputy headship:

I didn't feel it was appropriate at that point, with the boys... I felt they needed me still... [It created conflicts for me], not with the family, but within myself... I did work very hard [but] I often used to get very guilt-ridden that I wasn't doing either job [at home and at school] as well as I could have done. The boys laugh at me when I say that now. They weren't aware of any lack... I think mothers can't win. If you don't go out to work and produce the extra money so that the kids can do things, you feel guilty, and if you do, you feel guilty because you're not giving them the time. So I think mothers are perpetual Catholics in search of absolution! (Olwen, late-career teacher).

For single parents, the pressures and sense of guilt and conflict could be immense at times. An example is that of Win, who described how on occasions she had been unable to arrange for babysitters, and had had to take her young daughter to parents' evenings with her, or had had to take her into school with her when she was ill, commenting apologetically, 'That sounds really heartless doesn't it?' The fact that Win seemed almost ashamed of what she had had to do as a result of the combined demands

of her job and motherhood is indicative of the double bind in which women in her position inevitably find themselves. Whatever decision mothers make in such situations is likely to engender a sense of guilt and even shame.

At the same time, as teachers and professionals, the women seemed typically to feel that they also ought to be dedicating themselves to their school and teaching role, which again gave rise to feelings of guilt for being unable to commit 100% to either the teaching or the mothering role. Carol, who was pregnant for the first time at the time of the interview, was already experiencing acute pangs of guilt. She had started her current job only six months earlier. Her pregnancy had not been planned, and she felt very strongly that she was letting down her pupils and her school:

I'm already thinking...my year 11 group this year, I'm going to go off on maternity leave before they've finished. Now that could have a big effect on their results...I found it very, very difficult to tell them at school I was pregnant...because...when I [started]...I mentioned that I'd just got married, and I said I wasn't planning to have kids...We were really clear that we weren't going to have children!...So now it's really difficult...it does make holes in provision...I do really feel guilty (Carol, mid-career teacher).

The strong sense of guilt Carol expressed reflected a personal commitment and dedication to the job that appeared to be at least as important to her as her private and home life. Her dilemma was thus almost intolerable as she found herself forced to prioritise one over the other. Indeed, she reported that she had even considered a termination initially.

There were some cases of women who, having prioritised career and work matters, had found that the effect on their personal lives had been devastating. Linda's case is just one example:

Whatever happens...in a family, it's not easy. It's not easy to apportion...the influence it has on career, but obviously my ex-husband saying one day 'I'm really sorry darling but I don't want to live with you any more'...nearly destroyed me, it nearly destroyed [my son] and it had a very severe impact on...[my daughter]. ...[There are home-work conflicts] of course, because work does take up so much of one's time and energy... There are two ways of looking at teaching: you either think of it as half past eight until quarter to four, and you do some of your marking in your lessons and you don't interact very much, or it becomes a very consuming passion. It probably cost me my marriage. It certainly was a contributory factor, and it's had a negative effect some of the time on my relationship with [my daughter and son] where they felt that my loyalties were perhaps more to the job... occasionally they said 'Come on, it's only a job', and I disagree (Linda, mid-career teacher).

Hakim's (2000) 'Preference Theory' is again brought into question by the real-life examples cited above: stories of inner conflicts, guilt and personal devastation do not lend weight to the claim that women are making choices in accordance with their preferences. Professional women who combine teaching and mothering roles juggle not just their lives, but their identities as teachers and mothers, navigating their way through conflicting sets of expectations, including self-expectations. McCrae's (2003 p.329) notion of women's 'inner voices' and beliefs about 'being a mother' are aptly demonstrated in the examples cited above. Olwen, for example, felt guilty that she was not 'doing either job' as well as she felt she ought to, even though her sons' recollections were that they were not in any way neglected by her. Examples such as these illustrate how external, socially defined influences can be internalised and shape identity, thus creating inner barriers or constraints on women's lives and choices. The simplicity of Hakim's (*op. cit.*) view of choices based on 'preferences' does not reflect the experiences of the women in this study.

In the next sub-section, I consider the impact on women teachers' career progression of accommodating family life and profession.

Career paths and accommodation of family life

I discussed above how the evidence from the mothers in this as in other studies indicates that women are still taking primary responsibility for childcare. For a woman who is a mother, a professional career becomes an extra load, to be fitted in around and on top of the maternal role. As late-career teacher Coral commented, 'If I wanted my job I had to also make sure that I was available to sort out the other things *as well*. You end up by taking on a dual role'. In this section, I present the evidence emerging from the women's narratives of how this 'dual role' is accommodated, and the impact this has on women teachers' career paths and aspirations.

It has been argued that where potential promotion and the demands of motherhood clash, many women resolve the dilemma by choosing 'accommodated' careers (Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Limerick, 1995; Acker, 1994; 1989), continually renegotiating the relationship between careers and home lives, for example, by putting their careers 'on hold' (Aveling, 2002 p.272), and not applying for promotion whilst their children are very young, and by prioritising and following their husbands' or partners' careers. There was considerable evidence that the women teachers in this study had fitted their career around their other responsibilities and home lives, which I summarise below.

Three of the older women said that they had modified their career plans after getting married, even before having children. Coral, for instance, had started teaching in 1975, and met her husband, who was teaching in the same school. She soon gained her first promotion, and realised that she could, if she wanted to, become a head of department

fairly quickly. However, she decided against this, as she felt that it would have damaged her relationship with her husband. She explained:

I think if Charles had got a head of department's job first, then I could have gone on and done it, but he very much felt that he wanted to be the main breadwinner, and in a way he had old-fashioned values really, that he should be earning more than a female. I thought it was important to leave that as it was (Coral, late-career teacher).

Whilst marriage itself had impacted on the career decisions of a small number of the older women in the study, motherhood was cited as a career-shaping factor by every one of the women with children of their own, although the extent and nature of its impact varied from one individual to another. As Limerick and Anderson (1999) found, women had taken their families' needs into account when planning their careers. Almost all explained that they were, or had been at some point, limited to one particular geographical area for reasons relating to home, family and relationships. The majority of the experienced teachers (including those without children) had to at least some extent made career decisions that fitted around husbands' or partners' careers, which often involved moving areas to follow partners, and, as in Acker's (1994) study, all of the mothers in this study spoke of shaping or modifying aspirations to a greater or lesser extent and/or shedding professional responsibilities, and therefore pay and status, in order to meet the needs of their families. Late-career teacher Marjory, a mother of four, for example, told me, 'the way my career's gone has been directly linked to having the children...I have not sought further development simply because I have not got the time to do it properly'.

Consistent with the findings of other studies (Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Brown & Irby, 1998; Grogan, 1996; Biklen, 1995; Acker, 1994; Limerick & Heywood, 1994; Bittman, 1991; Baxter & Gibson, 1990), it seemed the pressures on women teachers

with their own children had resulted in substantial and enduring barriers to the women's career progression, which had been slowed down or halted as they navigated their way around the conflicting requirements of home and work.

As with the women in Aveling's (2002) study, what happened in career terms after having children was frequently at odds with what the women had originally intended – it was not, in Hakim's (2000) terms, in accordance with their earlier lifestyle or career 'preferences'. Sandra, for instance, recalled:

By the end of...1992, I had three children under three...I had no intention of returning to [school] for 92-93, because my husband was then working in [another town] and we could not sustain both me going back to work and him travelling those long distances whilst having three children under three – that would have been impossible. So I knew I wouldn't return, and I tagged along after my highly promoted husband to live further north with no status except that of mother, which I wasn't ever too keen on. Certainly it was a million miles from my intentions when I went there ten years prior as a twenty-seven year old woman who didn't want children! I didn't completely capitulate – the U-turn wasn't sufficient to get me to actually like small children or maternity leaves. Indeed I threw my arms into the air in celebration each time they were over and I could go back to work! (Sandra, late-career teacher).

In most cases, as in Sandra's, women who had adjusted their career aspirations after having children had done so because they were taking responsibility for childcare, whilst their partners concentrated on career. Mid-career teacher Sarah, who was married to a vicar, had followed him geographically according to his parish. Having had two children she still aspired to deputy headship, but now expected this to take longer than if she had remained childless. She saw deputy headship as the limit: headship, with all its demands, she felt, would not be 'fair on the family'. Still ambitious, Sarah was also devoted to her family and had modified her career goals to fit around the demands of home. Stella and Rhona had followed their husbands for financial reasons and because of having children:

I have followed [my husband] around the country with his job. His earning power has always been a lot greater than mine...He now earns three times what I earn – why on earth would he follow me?...If it was a woman that earned more then you'd follow the woman, but when does that actually happen in reality? (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

My career path was following his. He was earning more than me and he was always going to be, because we intended to have children, he was always going to be the one that we relied on for the income...everything, until I got into the [job] I'm doing now, has been geared around having children and following my husband (Stella, mid-career teacher).

If the route to progression in education relies on geographical flexibility and a willingness to move schools and areas, these restrictions can act as barriers to women's potential career progression, exacerbated by the increased likelihood of downscaled career aspirations when women become mothers.

Family responsibilities, including caring for extended family, had limited many women's ability to focus exclusively on career, in ways that male teachers would be unlikely to experience, as noted by Win:

If I'd been a man my career path would have been different, because inevitably women tend to take the main responsibility for childcare...[and] for caring now for granny and older relatives as well, whereas a man, stereotypically, tends to be just more focussed on their career...so I think...some men, have that advantage...[Being male] could have made a big difference (Win, mid-career teacher).

Win's reflections on how life might have been different as a man convey a sense of both frustration and resignation – further evidence to refute Hakim's (2000) claim that women make work choices that reflect their preferences. Implicit in this, and in similar comments from women with children, is a sense of inevitability as regards the limitations on career that result from maternal and caring responsibilities.

A small number of the older women had taken complete career breaks for child-rearing rather than just statutory maternity leave. This had meant loss of status and an eventual

return to the profession at a lower level in the career (and pay) hierarchy. Olwen, for example, had had no option but to take a career break, as she had had her children before the introduction of legislation giving women the right to maternity leave. As with other 'returners', she had given up a promoted post when she left the profession, re-entering initially as a supply teacher. As Acker (1994) notes, taking time out of teaching to raise children then acts as a career disadvantage when women return to teaching.

Most of the mothers in the mid- and late-career teacher groups, like Cindy in the NQT group, had only entered the teaching profession after their own children were at least at school, thus the problem of leaving and re-entering the profession was not in their experience. On the other hand, as women who entered teaching relatively late, several of the mothers in this study were also disadvantaged as they were likely to hit their ceiling in terms of promotion prospects more quickly. Awareness of the decreased likelihood of promotion as years went on had caused four of the women to lower their career expectations and aspirations. The four women ranged in age from 43 to 54 – still some way from retirement age. It appears that mothers are the least likely women to achieve promotion, and that their potential leadership skills are often the most likely to be lost to education.

Life-work balance

The importance of a life-work balance and a happy, stable home life were mentioned by the majority of women as key factors determining both their ability to function at work and to feel happy in their jobs. Having the time to function properly in all roles, the time to spend with and take good care of family (including extended family), and the

flexibility to fit in all aspects of their professional and domestic lives, were major considerations for most women. Good health and quality of life were mentioned by most of the experienced women teachers as of greater importance than power or status.

More than half of the experienced teachers and NQTs were discouraged from applying for deputy headship and/or headship by the increased workload and pressure perceived to be associated with it, and what they saw to be the likely negative impact on their lives outside school. Headship in particular was seen as highly likely to be detrimental, leaving less time for family and home life (this is explored in greater depth in chapter eight). As Acker (1994) reports, women can be put off applying for posts of responsibility where they see the extra work that would be involved as incompatible with the demands of family, a factor that was mentioned numerous times as a reason not to take on leadership posts, for example:

I think [I am discouraged from applying for senior management by] the balance...I mean being a head of department now, I've realised that I've had less time to spend on the family...People say you *can* do it, and our deputy head did it with young children, at our school. Perhaps it's a different generation that thinks you *can* do it, but I'm a bit of a perfectionist and I try to do everything well, and you have to let things go anyway if you're working and you have children (Olivia, late-career teacher).

Most of the late-career teachers, and some of the mid-career teachers, had to some extent modified their career aspirations and/or shed or decreased their professional responsibilities due to workload and stress. This suggests that the longer a woman stays in the profession the more likely she is to adjust and lower her aspirations in terms of hierarchical career progression. The majority of the late-career teachers commented that the job was more pressured than it used to be, and this had affected how they felt about it in terms of their now decreased willingness to take on responsibility.

Although as mentioned earlier the teaching salary was seen as a crucial factor in enabling women to have the standard of living they desired and to provide for their families, the pay differential between their current salary and school leadership pay was not seen by most women as sufficient reason to aspire to senior posts. The extra pay was not seen to merit the increased pressure:

You look at how much money you're actually going to get extra, if you're perhaps already a head of faculty or a head of year...and you think, is it worth it? And it's not...when it comes to your sanity (Freda, late-career teacher).

The need for support systems

Support in various forms and from a range of sources was, unsurprisingly, discussed by many of the women as important in enabling them to fulfil their double role. Sources of support included relatives, senior leaders, teaching colleagues, their own children and in some cases, partners, though references to the latter were rather less prevalent amongst late-career teachers. More typically the older women had had to rely on extended family members to take care of children, as Coral, for instance, commented:

If I hadn't had very helpful grandparents, I would have found it a lot more difficult when the children were young. I don't think I've had very much time off school at all actually, because of my own children, but I would've done had I not had grandparents I could run them round to...they've been very helpful (Coral, late-career teacher).

For women younger than Coral, this assistance from extended family seemed to be less readily available. However, some women also spoke appreciatively of the support that they had received in school. Headteachers who were understanding and tolerant were particularly appreciated by women who at times struggled to combine their professional and domestic roles:

The head...has been supportive of me...if I've not been able to make a parents' evening because I've not had a babysitter or something like that he's been really good about that sort of thing, so that's helped (Diana, mid-career teacher).

When I first came here my daughter was quite small and I actually brought her to a parents' evening one evening. I just couldn't get a babysitter at the last minute... she was only five, she just played quietly next to me, and the head didn't even say a word. When she was off sick I used to bring her in...and no-one used to mind. There was a lot of tolerance...it was good, from that point of view (Win, mid-career teacher).

What becomes clear however is that institutional sources of support are ad hoc and dependent on the goodwill of individual headteachers, rather than as part of any systematic, organised support for women teachers. The lack of support systems such as organised childcare at institutional, local or national levels, coupled with the decline of informal support from extended family members, adds further conflict and pressure to women's dual roles and is likely to impact on career decisions. As Jackson (1994) notes, prior to the current nuclear family model, extended families, offering much more communal forms of child care, were the norm, meaning that being a mother then was in some ways less restrictive than in our modern culture. Similarly, it is interesting to contrast the experiences of the women in this study who combined teaching and motherhood with the picture that emerges from Nelson's (1992) study of the day-to-day working lives of women who taught in rural areas of Vermont during the first half of the last century. Whereas the Vermont women's family and school lives were characterised by 'multiple intersections of home and work' (*ibid.*, p.27), enabling them to combine the two roles, the women in this study are effectively juggling two roles with minimal scope for overlap, yet as Acker (1994) and Aveling (2002) also show, they expect themselves to cope with both, resulting in increased pressure and conflict, which impact on their career decisions.

I turn below to the experiences of NQTs and then headteachers with regard to the links between career decisions and home life.

Newly Qualified Teachers

NQTs' thoughts about the future also indicated a tendency to see personal and professional lives as intertwined. Their reflections are examined here under the headings 'Career paths, personal relationships and re-location' and 'Children, motherhood and life-work balance'.

Career paths, personal relationships and re-location

As with the able young women in the early stages of Aveling's (2002) longitudinal study, the NQT narratives were typically characterised by optimism about the range of options open to them in the future, both professionally and personally. There was no significant evidence that they were expecting to disrupt their own careers by moving from area to area in accordance with partners' choices, or prioritising partners' careers over their own, in the ways described by Acker (1989) or Limerick (1995), for example. Danielle, for instance, anticipated that her professional choices might conceivably be affected by her partner's wish to move school/area at some point, but this was by no means a *fait accompli*. Rebecca explained that in her relationship the decision about who was to follow whom 'could be either way'. Susan considered it less likely that she would move to follow her partner, and thought it quite possible that he would follow her:

I'm quite fortunate because my boyfriend is a teacher as well, so in many ways we're both quite flexible, in that geographically we could probably move around. I think we'd both be willing to make sacrifices for each other if necessary. I'm probably more ambitious than him in terms of hoping to go up to Head of Department and so on. He's quite happy being a teacher, without looking for management...I would be looking to go up the scale in terms of management, so I think in a way he'll be more likely to follow me (Susan, NQT).

Wendy had earlier been in a fairly restrictive and repressive relationship, which had effectively defined her career decisions. She was now feeling much stronger as a result

of her experiences and had made a conscious decision not to allow her personal relationships to stand in the way of her career decisions in future. She explained:

I drifted into working in pubs... My partner at the time... was also in that trade... His big ambition was to run his own business... He really pressured me into... setting up our own business. And I didn't really want to do it. We had big issues about it for quite a long time and in the end I sort of said, well yes, OK, I don't know what else I can do... And so we did that, and I was so unhappy, and it was driving me insane. I ... wasn't using my brain, and it was very, very hard work, and not the kind of work I wanted to do ... I was pushed into doing something that I didn't really want, with a partner who was quite forthright, and also being in a place that I didn't really want to be in – I was living in [a different country], away from all my support networks – really got my fingers burnt there. I think I would be very reluctant to let my personal life affect my career now. I came close to not having a career, because I put the relationship first... but now I'm 100% career-minded and I'm never going to put that aside for a relationship... If I were to start a relationship with someone now, it would be 'no, these are my terms; this is where I'm going; let's see if we can work something out around that!' (Wendy, NQT).

These examples illustrate how the NQTs in this sample seemed not to be expecting to follow partners, and were equally likely to expect partners to fit in with their career moves. Their perception of their personal relationships seemed to be of equal partnerships, with either partner being willing to move for the other. Mandy was the only NQT who linked the possibility of having children with that of following a future partner and prioritising his career over hers. Although other women saw motherhood as likely, and expressed an awareness that children would impact on their career, no one but Mandy mentioned that partners' careers might take precedence once they had started a family. The NQTs' perceptions of how motherhood might shape their future careers is the focus of the next sub-section.

Children, motherhood and life-work balance

Just one of the NQTs, Cindy, was already a mother of three. At 39, Cindy was older than the other NQTs. The interwoven nature of her family life and her career was

clearly evident throughout her narrative. I commented earlier on her experiences, as they overlapped with those of many of the experienced teachers who were also mothers.

With most of the other NQTs, discussion about the inter-relatedness of their personal and professional lives centred on their future plans rather than their current situation. The only question I asked about children was at the start of the interview, when I inquired as to whether they had a partner or any children at present. Other than that, I did not return to the question of children. Any discussion about this therefore came from the narrators themselves, and occurred spontaneously at various stages of the narratives as seemed relevant to the narrator. As with the women in Aveling's (2002) study, any discussion about the future for many young women incorporated thoughts about motherhood.

Six NQTs made reference to the impact of having children on their professional lives. Cindy, already a mother, was one. The other five included Yvonne, who did not think she wanted children but realised she might change her mind, Mandy, who mentioned it as a possibility, and Mary, Daphne and Pauline, who were very definite about their desire to have children, and to some extent aware of the impact that could have on their careers. Pauline commented: 'I'm going to have children, so that of course is going to impact strongly on the direction I go'. Thinking ahead to the prospect of having their own children, and the reality of combining this with a full-time teaching position, prompted the women to reflect on and articulate the dilemmas this would cause them.

Daphne, for example, reflected:

You really do take a lot of the pressures and the stresses...home with you. I think it would be very easy to lose perspective...[I] want to have kids [and] I would obviously want my kids to be of primary importance...Right now, my job takes over everything...I would never

want to put my students on the back burner, but I'd need to make sure that I did keep everything in perspective, that I wasn't ignoring what was going on at home...because right now I go home and I'm so tired, and there's so much to do. Talking to other people in the profession – one lady that works at another school, her kids were 11 and 12 - and she realised she'd been too exhausted to raise them...I'd never want that... [I would] take time off, or put things on hold...I'd definitely want to [go] to parents' evenings and be there when [my children were] little... [I would take a career break], which at the same time makes you think that maybe you don't want to progress and push forward in your career, and get a lot of responsibility before that was to happen...I guess your priorities really do change... Ideally I would like to be a full-time mother for the initial years, but I wouldn't want to give up my career entirely because it is very important to me, and I have so much invested into developing it so far...Everything is constantly changing in education. You miss a couple of days and it's hard to get back into ...So, I think it would be very detrimental to my career to take time off (Daphne, NQT).

Daphne's comments were illustrative of the sort of concerns voiced by other NQTs in this regard. Comments in general related to the practicalities of combining both roles and the possible impact on career of taking time out for child-rearing. As with the experienced teachers discussed above, there was an implicit assumption that it would be the women's own responsibility to take charge of childcare. There was no mention of the possibility of fathers taking responsibility for childcare, nor of predicted feelings of guilt and inner conflict in combining teaching and mothering roles. The need for, or possible sources of, support of various kinds in combining the roles were not raised as issues by the NQTs. There were no real indications that this younger generation of women was either conscious of, or intending to resist, pressures on them to prioritise childcare. It may be that the NQTs, like the young women in Aveling's (2002) study, had not anticipated at this stage how motherhood might come to define their lives and careers.

Headteachers

Headteachers' reflections on the links between their personal and professional lives are discussed here under the headings 'Partners and home life' and 'Motherhood and headship'.

Partners and home life

There were certain overlaps between the experiences of some of the headteachers and the other teachers with regard to how their personal and professional lives intermeshed. For instance, half of the headteachers talked about how they had at some point in their lives followed their partners' careers and fitted their own around them.

However, there was a noticeable difference with regard to how the headteachers spoke about their partners. Nine of the ten headteachers were in a relationship and living with a husband or partner. Whereas in the other teachers' narratives references to partners were usually fleeting, if they were mentioned at all (unlike references to children, which were much more frequent), all ten of the headteachers, including Fiona, who had recently separated from her husband, spoke of the influence and importance of having a supportive partner both in progressing up the career hierarchy and in functioning in their role as headteacher. Having a comfortable, well-ordered home life was mentioned by many as an important factor in being able to enjoy a happy working life.

On the other hand, for some headteachers as for some of the other teachers, their professional success had had a personal cost at times, causing problems in their personal relationships. Sally, for example, recounted how conflict had occurred in her previous marriage because her husband was resentful that she was more successful in her career

than he was. She described him as unsupportive, negative and critical. Following her divorce, Sally found not just that her new single status meant that she could move areas for promotion, but also that she learned to manage her own career progression and not be dependent on her partner's (or anyone else's) support. This illustrates an important point that emerged in different ways from a number of the headteacher narratives. Consciously taking control of one's life and career emerges for some women as a significant factor affecting their career progression:

I've managed [my career] myself...I was completely single when I got this job, and I was single for the last three years of being a deputy, and I just got my head together and thought, no, you could be on your own for the rest of your life, you might as well do what you want to do, get this together, get it sorted out, and so I was very self-sufficient, I think (Sally, headteacher).

Although Sally was now with a different, supportive partner, she appreciated but did not *depend* on that support, a point echoed by other headteachers. This is discussed in more detail in chapter ten.

Motherhood and headship

Five of the headteachers were mothers - fewer than in the mid- and late-career groups. The five who were *not* mothers felt that being childfree had been an important factor in enabling them to progress through their careers and take on and function in the headship role, which would be consistent with the findings summarised above relating to the ways in which motherhood restricts women's career options.

For the five headteachers who were mothers, there were some indications that career paths had been limited geographically as a result of home and family commitments of various sorts. This was not, however, so strong a theme as for the mid- and late-career teachers. Their attitude to working full-time differentiated the headteacher mothers

from the mothers in the other groups. Whereas typically teachers in the other groups talked about the guilt and conflict as well as the practical difficulties they experienced in combining teaching and mothering, the headteachers were for the most part much clearer about the appropriateness of the decision they had made. Four of the five mothers talked about making a very positive choice to work rather than staying at home with children, and there was a clear sense in which the women had engaged reflectively with social influences and taken action to shape their own lives and careers, demonstrating their capacity for self-determination in the way that Barclay (2000) describes. Wilma, for instance, was aware of other women's dilemmas about combining profession and motherhood, but had been able to identify clearly for herself what *she* wanted rather than being over-influenced by socially-determined expectations.

She commented:

I've never really felt torn between motherhood and the job, because I knew in my own mind when I had [my first child] in 1980 that I wanted to go back to work...I never had the tugs that I see women experiencing here now...I didn't have any difficulty making the choice, and having made the choice I never regretted it (Wilma, headteacher).

It was also striking that relatively little time was spent during the headteacher interviews discussing family issues. This was in contrast to the experienced teachers' interviews, when considerable attention was paid by narrators to explaining how their professional and family lives intertwined, and how this affected their career decisions. This was not to say that family did not matter to the headteachers. On the contrary, two of the five mothers in this group strongly emphasised that whilst they were committed to their jobs they would prioritise family when and if it became necessary. Gladys, for instance, commented:

It's family first. Whatever else happens, my family comes first...they know that, even though sometimes the job comes first...If my daughter 'phoned me and said, 'I need you now', I would go. Nothing would stop me...What matters to me is that I can prioritise home or school

according to how I see the priorities, and I feel very free to do that
(Gladys, headteacher).

There were indications that the headteachers perceived that their position afforded them greater control over their lives, as reflected in Gladys' comments, above. This contrasts with the experiences of the non-headteacher mothers in the study, for whom struggling to balance responsibilities and emotional conflicts emerged as a much greater preoccupation.

Summary

This chapter was the first of five in which the findings of the study are presented and analysed. The focus of this chapter was on the societal influences on the women's career decisions. Evidence of the impact on women's career decisions of the gendered processes of socialisation, the social construction of femininity and women's relational and maternal roles was examined. The key findings are summarised below.

Most women were conscious that gender had played at least some part during socialisation in shaping their career decisions. The perceived inevitability of becoming a teacher was a strong theme amongst the older women in the sample, which was consistent with feminist theories of socialisation that posit that gendered socialisation processes channel girls into sex-appropriate areas. Whilst the younger women were not conscious of this, many linked their entry into the teaching profession to their liking for children, which some linked to playing a nurturing role with siblings during socialisation. The majority of the women identified parental support with their own education as influential in leading them to choose teaching as a career. In many cases parents were seen to have been influential in raising the women's aspirations and broadening rather than restricting their options.

Links were made by women of all generations between their own schooling and their choice of teaching as a career, and some cited female role models, often teachers, as influential. The younger women in the study had had, in general, positive experiences of school, to which they linked their decision to teach. The older women more typically expressed an awareness that gender had defined their experiences of school and their choice of career, and in several cases were clear that school had acted to stifle their potential and limit their career options. This was associated with the era in which they grew up, when there was a greater sense of gender-specific professions.

The interwoven nature of women's personal and professional lives was very evident in the majority of the narratives. The impact of motherhood on career was one of the strongest themes to emerge from the study. Relational roles, personal relationships and life-work balance also emerged as important considerations for many women. Teaching was widely perceived to be a career that was compatible with motherhood, and yet combining the two entailed practical and emotional conflicts and difficulties that impacted on career decisions. It was apparent that women still expect to assume primary responsibility for childcare, and as a result career aspirations were frequently modified to fit around families and partners. The younger women in the study who were not yet mothers did not anticipate prioritising partners' careers over their own, and many made reference to equal partnerships. Those anticipating motherhood assumed they would take primary responsibility for childcare and showed some awareness that this would have an impact on their career development.

Support for women in fulfilling the dual role was seen as important. Sources of support typically included relatives, friends, colleagues and some headteachers. Support at

institutional level emerged as ad hoc, arbitrary and inconsistent. The lack of systematic, organised support for women teachers with children, combined with the decline of the extended family, meant that in some ways women faced greater constraints than in previous centuries.

The headteachers who were not mothers felt that being childfree had been an important factor enabling their career progression and allowing them to concentrate on their work. The headteachers who were mothers differed from those in other groups, making far fewer references to guilt or conflict in combining their roles, and very few indications that family life had shaped career. In some cases there were indications that they had exerted their personal agency in making conscious decisions to concentrate on career issues, and evidence that they felt a greater sense of control than other women over their lives, as their position allowed them to prioritise home or school as needed. The importance of supportive partners or husbands was a strong theme in the headteachers' accounts of how they had managed to progress in their careers and function effectively in the headteacher role. This was in contrast to the narratives of the other women in the study, in which partners were relatively infrequently discussed. On the other hand, whilst the headteachers appreciated the support of partners, they did not emerge as dependent on it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Analysis of findings part two: institutional factors affecting women teachers' career decisions

Introduction

In this chapter, I turn to the schools in which the women in the study worked, and consider narrators' perceptions of institutional factors affecting their career decisions. As they were just starting their teaching careers, the NQTs did not discuss institutional influences, tending to discuss instead their lives up until they had become teachers, and their hopes for the future. I draw in this chapter therefore on the narratives of the experienced teachers and the headteachers. I present evidence of sexism and discrimination at work, arguing that these are endemic in the gendered educational institution. The extent to which the women in these categories viewed sexism and discrimination as impacting on their career possibilities and choices varied considerably, but a number of themes were repeatedly apparent in the narratives, and the most frequently recurring of these are examined here.

Several experienced teachers, particularly in the late-career category, raised the issue of sexism and discrimination. Where the narrators did not raise it themselves, however, I did, asking specifically whether they had experienced sexism or discrimination during their teaching careers, and whether they had ever felt that their male colleagues were being treated differently to them. There was a marked difference in the initial response of women in the mid- and late-career groups, in that many of the mid-career teachers

were quick to assert that in their schools, men and women were treated equally, whereas the late-career teachers were much clearer in stating that they had received unequal treatment, and much less willing to defend or excuse their employers for this.

Eight of the ten late-career teachers related experiences of sexism and/or sex discrimination during their teaching careers. This was however, matched by eight of the ten mid-career women who, despite their readiness to defend their employers and schools, nonetheless also went on, without further prompting from me, to relate examples of overt or more subtle forms of sexism or discrimination from their experience. Their initial reluctance to complain suggests that there is a tendency to accept and even expect discriminatory attitudes and practices at work as a part of normal life. The examples given from the two groups ranged from fairly minor to quite serious incidences and were comparable to some of the examples given in the work of Acker (1994) and Shakeshaft (1989). Many instances of sexism and discrimination from pupils, colleagues and managers could have been quite unconsciously perpetrated. Many instances were relatively trivial and were not felt to be career-shaping by the narrators. They did, however, reflect how deeply sexist stereotyping, assumptions, expectations and practices are embedded in the culture of the educational institutions and the attitudes of the people within them.

The headteachers in general did not feel that sexism or discrimination had impinged on their careers particularly, yet, as with the other women, several gave examples of it. A number of them explained that they had not encountered it until they either became headteachers or started applying for headships.

I consider here evidence of the women's experiences of direct discrimination in the educational workplace, and then look at instances of more covert forms of discrimination and sexist attitudes, which I argue are indicative of the endemic discrimination inherent in the gendered institution, and work in subtle ways, to dissuade and prevent many women from aspiring to or achieving senior leadership positions.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is defined in law as 'where an employer treats a person less favourably than others on the grounds of sex [or] marital status' (Cole, 1986 p.478).

The most commonly cited examples from this study related to differential attitudes to and treatment of women with children, who were denied opportunities on the basis of assumptions school leaders had made about the women's domestic and maternal roles.

Mid-career teacher Rhona, for example, commented on managers 'automatically assuming you're going to be the one looking after your children, and saying things like 'it might be difficult for her because she's got kids'' as a justification for not offering particular opportunities to women. Another example was provided by late-career teacher Coral, who recalled others' reactions to her when she returned to work after having her first child, and how she had had to work hard to convince colleagues and managers that she was still interested in developing her career:

At that time, they didn't really approve of mothers going back into school... It was very much a new thing, and I had to work twice as hard to prove I was half as good... I was told by the deputy head that I should be at home looking after my baby! That was when I was trying to make a career for myself... and prove that... I was worthy of being employed and I wasn't just somebody who was there for pin money... It wasn't because I was doing a bad job. He just felt that I should be at home with my children... It was just sheer prejudice... his personal opinion... He felt free to say that!... I just took it and thought, well I will have to prove myself... It made me stronger... I felt as well that the person I was working alongside also wondered why I worked, and whilst he

appreciated me professionally, I think he did feel that... maybe I should be at home, looking after my children (Coral, late-career teacher).

Although it might be argued that the attitudes Coral encountered were a feature of the time (mid- to late-eighties), her experiences resonate with those from studies conducted since then, in which women's experiences of discrimination against young women, married women and mothers are documented (for example, Colgan & Tomlinson, 2006; Wilson, 2005; Coleman, 2002; Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Acker, 1994; Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994; Oram, 1989).

Other examples of direct discrimination included mid-career teacher Linda's experiences during her previous post in a boys' school:

In my first year at [the school] the head of [department]... was not happy about me being there, because he didn't want females in his department, and he made that very clear... He engineered... a campaign of harassment (Linda, mid-career teacher).

Women who had worked in boys' schools had faced particular difficulties emanating from the particular institutional culture, some of which are described in the next section of this chapter.

Echoing the findings of Coleman (2002), more than half of the headteachers had encountered sexism or discrimination in the interview process. Beatrice, for example, was asked by a school governor in one interview whether she had a family and whether she was planning to start one. In addition, more than half of the women had experienced being unsuccessful in interviews for headship, to which posts men had been appointed instead. Following unsuccessful interviews, candidates were normally invited to receive feedback from selectors on their application and performance in the interview. These post-interview debriefs in three cases indicated that the women were

viewed by interviewers as not strong enough or tough enough to deal with discipline, especially boys' discipline, despite the fact that the women's previous experience pointed to their ability to do so. Typical examples included these:

They said...at the de-brief, they gave it to a man because they weren't sure that I would be strong enough on the discipline of the boys... which was crazy really because, you know, the school I was at before, although it was a girls' school...the boys' school was on the same site. I taught across both sites...It was silly to say I couldn't manage boys. The previous deputy headship I'd had had been in a mixed comprehensive school which was very rough, you know, I was used to dealing with difficult lads, but no, they were conservative, with a large and a small 'c'...and they went for a man (Sally, headteacher).

I'd applied for previous headships and I hadn't been successful, and the de-brief [was] 'wear dark colours and heavier make-up, because the chairman of governors thought you were too frail and delicate to do the job'...I think very often it's the female governors who believe they need a man to do the job, that a woman doesn't have the skills to run a business, basically...I think there is a certain prejudice amongst female governors about female headteachers in secondary schools (Minnie, headteacher).

Less overt examples of sexism and discrimination against women are examined in the next section, in which I argue that discrimination is endemic in the culture of the gendered educational institution.

The gendered institution and endemic, covert discrimination

Morley's (2000 p.232) view of the workplace as 'a major site of gender politics' in which 'patriarchal power is exercised' via informal systems that protect male privilege, resonates with the examples given by many of the women in this study, which I discuss below, under the headings 'sexist attitudes and the culture of the gendered institution', 'inequity in the provision of formal and informal opportunities for development', 'negative attitudes towards female leaders' and 'women's experiences of sexism whilst in role of headteacher'.

Sexist attitudes and the culture of the gendered institution

Narrators' experiences of discrimination seemed to depend on the particular institutional culture, as in Moreau *et al.*'s (2005) study. Some of the examples of sexism and discrimination were relatively minor, including, typically, instances such as 'banter from staff' (Ann, late-career teacher), and 'tiny, tiny little throwaway remarks by the head occasionally' (Marjory, late-career teacher), which were perceived as irritating rather than career-shaping. Rhona, for instance, recounted what she called the 'little things' that annoyed her:

There have been occasions when you're all sat around at the meeting and they'll say to the women, 'Ooh, could you put the kettle on for the coffees? Are you going to sort the lunches out?' And then they come in and eat and leave, you know?! It's just little things like that really...you just want to kick someone...things where you think, if I was a man they would never have said that! (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

Although they brushed them aside as relatively unimportant, a number of the headteachers recalled experiences of sexism at work, for example:

When I was at [previous school] there was a very sexist bunch of blokes there... Some quite unpleasant things happened... like a few of us used to organise girls' days ...they'd add 'changing nappies' to the [activities list]... [Then] the first week I was here [current school] a friend rang me up to say the deputy was going to have a strippagram for his fortieth birthday or something... She was supposed to be coming into the staffroom, but... I and a few others got together and we made it happen in some little office out of sight (Wilma, headteacher).

Such examples are similar to those cited by Acker (1994) of jokes, ridicule and sexual banter that act, Acker argues, as a form of social control.

Some women had become aware of the need to prove themselves in order to be accepted as a result of encountering colleagues' sexist attitudes. One example was that of Rachel, who was a teacher of Design and Technology, a traditionally masculine subject:

There was quite a lot of sexism when I first started...In my first school, the chap whose workshop I took over was a traditional metalwork teacher...He was mortified that a woman was coming into his room! Absolutely devastated! And it took me quite a long time with a couple of the other chaps who were Technical Drawing teachers to bring them round to the fact that I wasn't lightweight in relation to the skills...I suspected that I would have to prove myself, and one or two of the things that were said made it quite clear that it would be a good idea for me to, if I was going to work with them... [They were] nice chaps, but it was that this was a woman that was going to come in and do woodwork and metalwork and technical drawing, as they perceived it... When I left the school [the woodwork teacher said to me], 'You were alright for a woman!'...It was actually meant as a compliment!... [As a woman] you've got to show the same level of skill as, or better than, the people you're working with. There were some very traditionally minded gentlemen in the Design Technology area, that [I] had to win round (Rachel, mid-career teacher).

Women working in all boys' schools had met particular challenges in terms of being accepted and taken seriously amid the 'macho' culture of the male institution, commenting that male colleagues tended to be listened to more, and taken more seriously than women, by both pupils and senior leaders, causing a sense of frustration in the women, who felt undervalued by their institutions. This lends support to the argument put forward by McMaster and Randall (1995) that women's self confidence can be undermined and self-perceptions affected by the day-to-day institutional enactment of male-defined rules, and powerful, gender-based social discourses that infuse institutional culture. Olivia, for example, had felt undermined by macho approaches to pupil behaviour and discipline:

Male teachers seem to be able to shout and... tend to think they're better teachers... particularly in a boys' school, with discipline. The way I and other women teachers control the boys is different... I wouldn't want to call male teachers bullies, but some use a different approach, and there's a subtle sense of 'We're better than you because our classes are always quiet!...I've not come across that in mixed schools (Olivia, late-career teacher).

This was echoed by Rhona, who had worked in a Roman Catholic independent boys' school, and had also faced problems with pupils' unwillingness to accept her authority in school, and even her right to be there at all:

Some of the kids think that if you're a mummy you should be at home...and...with regard to behaviour, [pupils] are more likely to respond to pressure put on them from male teachers than female teachers (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

Various manifestations of sexism from pupils were cited by women in mixed and all-boys schools. Half of the mid-career teachers had encountered directly sexist attitudes from their students, which resonates with the findings of a recent NUT survey (Neill, 2007). These included, typically, sexist stereotyping, for example, mid-career teacher Carol commented, 'some of the kids will say to me, 'Ooh, you're a dyke!' because I've got short hair and I'm not dripping with foundation, jangling tons of jewellery and stuff!'

Whilst these were not cited as career-shaping considerations as such, they were indicative of the institutional culture within which the women had to work each day, and which could, as McMaster and Randall (1995) argue, erode their self-confidence and make them less likely to perceive themselves as suitable to lead. As Acker (1994) argues, the women's daily experiences in the workplace reflected and reinforced gender divisions not just within but also outside of the institution. Indeed, the perception that the inherently gendered nature of the institution was natural and normal was apparent in some women's descriptions of it, suggesting that their experiences in school mirrored those outside, and indicating an implicit acceptance of the inevitability of sexism. Linda, for instance, who had worked in a number of boys' schools, talked in a matter-of-fact way about how she had learned to manage boys and men and to stand up for herself

in fighting sexist attitudes, which she now seemed to see as an inevitable and normal part of her job:

At [current boys' school] there is also obviously some sexism. If you work in a boys' school you have to be prepared for certain things...and deal with them in as positive a manner as possible...I think, eventually, most males respect you if you do stay true to what you believe, if you give them support when they need support, if you don't make them feel inferior. The male ego is still very, very fragile! (Linda, mid-career teacher).

Some instances of discrimination took very subtle forms and seemed to be endemic in the policy and practice of educational institutions. I include in appendix eight the story of late-career teacher Sandra, because it exemplifies a range of barriers to her career progression resulting from institutionalised (if indirect and unintentional) forms of sexism and discrimination. Whilst the particular combination of Sandra's experiences is unique to her, every example could conceivably affect other women teachers.

I turn below to inequities in the provision of developmental opportunities for male and female teachers.

Inequity in the provision of formal and informal opportunities for development

Some of the experienced teachers in the study perceived that their career opportunities and decisions had been shaped by an institutionalised favouring of men in appointments to promoted posts, and in the provision of developmental opportunities. For example, mid-career teacher Sarah explained how she had found herself being excluded from opportunities when pregnant. A few months before she was to go on maternity leave she expressed an interest in joining a newly formed working party on teaching, learning and school improvement. However, her involvement was discouraged. She explained, 'I was told, well, you're going on maternity leave, so...'. Studies by Wilson (2005),

Coleman (2002), Acker (1994), Evetts (1994), Lahtinen and Wilson (1994), and Grant (1989) show that assumptions about women's maternal roles underpin discrimination against them in terms of appointments to promoted posts. Evidence of the same set of assumptions was implicit in the attitude of Sarah's managers in their refusal to include her in the working party.

Other studies have shown how differential career-shaping opportunities are offered to men and women on the basis of a set of assumptions about men's and women's supposed interests and needs in terms of professional development (Ayyash-Abdo, 2000; Edwards & Lyons, 1994; Ozga, 1993; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Thompson, 1992), concurring with examples in the narratives of the women in this study. Carol, for instance, related how a senior manager had given preferential treatment to a less experienced male teacher, hinting that this had come about partly through informal socialising between male colleagues:

I had a deputy head at my last school to whom very early on I said that I wanted to work with student teachers, and that should the mentor post in our department come up I would like to do it...A few years into my career...the existing mentor did say she wanted to stand down. There was a young man who'd joined the department...He'd only been there a year...He'd just qualified as an NQT, and this deputy head said that he should do it even though ... it had been on my appraisals...for ages...I was really upset about that...I think he just had this idea that this bloke should do it, because they played cricket together (Carol, mid-career teacher).

As in the example given by Carol, evidence emerged from a number of experienced teachers' narratives pointing to the existence of informal male sporting and socialising networks that exclude women and act to favour and groom some men, resonating with the issues raised in other studies (Moreau *et al.*, 2005; Toren, 2005; Acker, 1994; Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Schmuck, 1986). For example:

Some males do get treated differently... Where I am now, there's a 'let's go down the pub' thing that goes on, between some of the males. And I think that some people's careers are being defined through that actually... There's a guy that's an assistant head teacher now that's been... nurtured... He definitely is being nurtured... and I think it may happen that he gets nurtured higher up in the school, because his face does fit so well... He gets to do things that other people might have liked to have done, but weren't given the chance (Chris, late-career teacher).

However, Chris hints that these perceptions are difficult to prove, qualifying her comments by adding, 'but he is really good, and he would've got there anyway, so it's a hard one to use as an example because I actually rate him very highly'.

In a similar vein, some women perceived that preferential treatment had been given to male candidates in interviews for jobs. To claim unreservedly that this was discriminatory was, however, problematical in most cases in that, although the women felt they had been subject to sex discrimination, it would again have been very difficult to prove. Olivia, for example, explained:

I think I did experience sex discrimination at my [previous school] but can't prove it. I'd been there for a long time when ...the head of department stepped down... There was another lady who'd been there the same sort of time as myself... It was made clear to us not to apply, and a gentleman was appointed (Olivia, late-career teacher).

As Chris and Olivia indicate, sex discrimination is particularly difficult to prove where competent men are being appointed. It is worth noting, though, that a number of both mid- and late-career women related similar experiences. A picture begins to emerge of informal 'grooming' of certain men through male socialising, unequal access to developmental opportunities for some women and preference given to male candidates for posts.

Negative attitudes towards female leaders

In addition to their own experiences of sexism and discrimination in various forms, it emerged that quite a powerful influence in guiding some women's aspirations away from senior leadership was their vicarious experience of the difficulties encountered by female leaders. For the women who mentioned this, the impact of this insight seemed to have been quite a powerful influence on their aspirations. Carol reflected that the fear of being unpopular would put her off school leadership. Wanda was discouraged from trying to get into the leadership team and change the culture from within by seeing others who had tried and failed. Rhona had over a period of some years noted how negatively female leaders were perceived:

[As] a woman deputy headteacher or headteacher...you are seen as a complete bitch. Men are seen as being strong, women are seen as complete bitches...At [two of my previous] schools, the head was a woman...and in both cases male members of staff just looked on the women as a bit of a joke. They would make inferences about, you know, 'I wonder who she slept with to get the job?' and all the standard things that men come out with about women. And then, if they were tough, then the women wouldn't like them either, because then they were bitches! So I don't think they won...either way. If you're a bloke it's... 'Oh yeah, he's really tough! He gets things done!' but if it's a woman, 'Oh, she's such a bitch! Why is she always moaning?!' Women 'moan', men 'put forward ideas', somehow! You know... Women 'harp on' about things; men ensure that they 'get things done'. It irritates me, and a part of me doesn't want to be thought of in that light (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

In chapter eight I discuss further the impact on women teachers' career decisions of their negative perceptions of senior leadership. Below, evidence of the sexism and discrimination encountered by female headteachers is considered.

Women's experiences of sexism whilst in role of headteacher

Several of the headteachers were clear that they had not experienced sexism or discrimination against them until they became headteachers, or until they started to

apply for headships. Having achieved headship, the women's experiences of sexism were much more common, and the women themselves much more conscious of them: nine of the ten women had experienced sexist attitudes at work in some form since becoming a headteacher. The main sources of the sexism were school governors and parents of pupils (especially fathers), although there were instances of sexist attitudes from LEA officers, male teachers and support staff, pupils and other headteachers. These findings about the challenges faced by women in positions of power resonate with those of a range of other studies (for example, McClay & Brown, 2000; Sherman, 2000; Limerick & Anderson, 1999; Maddock, 1999; Brockbank & Traves, 1996; Acker, 1994; Edwards & Lyons, 1994; Shakeshaft, 1989). Some examples are included below.

Beatrice had encountered (but not been put off by) sexism from male pupils during her time as headteacher of a boys' grammar school, and like mid-career teacher Linda, whom I cited earlier, seemed to see overcoming sexist attitudes as a part of her job:

Academic boys, actually, are generally quite stereotypical in their views and their views of roles, and so women are girlfriends or mothers, and now suddenly the headmaster's office was occupied by neither a girlfriend nor a mother, and that was just a little bit difficult for some of them to accept... There was a hard core, quite a large core of the year 11... There was no way of winning that hard core over... That was possibly 45 or 50 boys... a large number of boys. But the rest, they got over [it]... it was actually quite good because they didn't know what to make of me... But they soon got used to it (Beatrice, headteacher).

Some female heads had encountered sexism from male support staff. Claudette, for example commented, 'My bursar actually is a bit of a chauvinist... He's very patronising'.

As head of a non-selective girls' school in a socially deprived area, Sally had had to develop strategies to deal with difficult and abusive fathers:

There are certain fathers and stepfathers of girls in the school who I know would not speak to a man in the way they speak to me... With a small number I've had on occasion to refer them to the chair of governors. If he is in the meeting... oh, their attitude is totally different! The bullying and the hectoring stops. I deal with it better now, because you get used to it. And the 'phone calls - now, I will not take an abusive phone call... Some of our fathers... are really very, very difficult to deal with, and if they start shouting and swearing I will say, 'I'm sorry, I'm putting the 'phone down, I'm not here for you to abuse me, until you're calm I won't speak to you again'... If I know that there are people like that I will have the chair of governors sitting with me... He will always support me. (Sally, headteacher).

Dealings with LEA officers had also been fraught with difficulties for some women, who had found them to harbour similarly sexist and outmoded attitudes. This seemed to be a particular difficulty characteristic of one area, that of Southshire (details of education authorities can be found in appendix six). Sally for instance, commented:

I think you come across [sexism] all the time in [Southshire LEA], to a greater or lesser extent. You do get the officers who've been around a long time who have that 'there, there, don't bother your pretty little head about it'-type attitude... There have been occasions when, if things aren't going the way I really believe they should, I can get quite stubborn and certain officers would say that I was aggressive. I don't think I am. I think I'm assertive... but you get the feeling that they're thinking, 'Oh, must be her time of the month'... that sort of feeling (Sally, headteacher).

The sexism even extended in some cases to the unfair distribution of resources, to the disadvantage of schools with female heads. For example:

Nearly all of the [Southshire LEA] officers are male, and in my view very chauvinist. So all the time, it's almost fourteen years now, that I've been in [Southshire], I've never had officers offer to give me money to upgrade my buildings... whereas they've given millions to male headteachers... I've had difficulty getting repairs and maintenance undertaken... In [Southshire] other women heads have found that too, because most of the repairs and maintenance programmes are controlled by a very few males... In this area, there are three secondary modern schools. One has been given six million to improve its buildings, the other has been given four million. They haven't given me anything... I was in my last school for eight years and during that time I was given £50,000 to improve the buildings... When I left they gave the next headteacher - male - one and a half million pounds to improve the buildings... There seems to be a pattern that women headteachers have real problems getting money from the offices of the authority, who are not the educationalists, they're the buildings and maintenance people,

who come from rather a different background, like building construction (Claudette, headteacher).

However, the most frequently cited sources of sexist and discriminatory behaviour and attitudes were school governors. Once in post as headteacher of a girls' grammar school, Minnie, for example, found 'there were some very, very difficult moments to get through'. These related to the attitude of certain governors and her credibility as a female head. She explained:

It came back to one or two governors in the early days. I was a qualified cost engineer. Maths was my subject. I pride myself on my financial management... One particular governor at that time who was the finance director of a firm, made it quite clear he didn't think I was capable of managing the finances, but the school has never actually gone into deficit, and [when I retired] I left it with a very healthy balance (Minnie, headteacher).

Similarly, Gladys had never felt she had encountered sexism or discrimination in her career until she became a head and began dealing with governors. She recounts:

Until I became a headteacher in education I had never, ever met any issues to do with the fact that I was female. I was a teacher. It never occurred to me that I was actually a female in any sense of the word. When I became a headteacher of this school in '93, I suddenly met a different world when I was dealing with governors... The minute you walk into the realm of governors, you move into a completely different environment, and I had a male chair of governors who dealt with me in a way that I found unacceptable e.g., [saying to] me 'there's a good girl!' He and I parted company, with the support of the local authority, after about three years. His intentions were right, but he couldn't get over that attitude (Gladys, headteacher).

As with Sally and the abusive fathers, Gladys had had to learn how to deal with such attitudes in governors:

In dealing with one or two other governors... I've become very alert to this, because if that's an issue for them, I need to deal with it with them. So I will make the point with new governors, for example, that my role is very commensurate with any role in industry, and if necessary I will give them [evidence] that actually headteachers are more skilled than most leaders in industry, because we are so multi-skilled. And gently I will talk them through that (Gladys, headteacher).

Although she was now happy with the governors at her own school, she had recently become executive headteacher of a federation of schools, comprising her own school and the adjacent non-selective school. This meant that she now had to work with a second board of governors, those of the neighbouring school for which she was newly responsible in her new role. The problems she had met earlier had now resurfaced with the second board of governors. This time however, she had been able to draw on a repertoire of strategies to deal with this:

The minute I then start working with a second governing body, all that has come back again, so I recognise it, having been through it once... And you must deal with it... It's still true that we have to be twice as good as any man. And I feel that, again... I must be assertive in meetings. I, for example, still have to show to them that actually, I understand finance – finance is one of my key specialisms – and that I can understand and work a very sharp budget... and all I can do is prove myself over time, but I recognise that, in the sense that I've been there before. So it's nothing they say, because if people actually behave in a sexist manner, they often don't know. And I don't think those governors know (Gladys, headteacher).

When she was appointed to a headship by an all-male panel, Gladys then found they expected her to accept a lower salary because she was female. She raised this as an area of systematic, covert discrimination against female headteachers:

Salaries is the one area that I think women heads seriously miss out on, and it concerns me enormously... The number [of pupils] in the school [sets] a pay range, and the pay range is... huge. And then the governors have to pick seven points in there that will be your range. Now... every head keeps their salary secret – because you don't tell other colleagues what you earn, it's the cultural thing... [so] most women heads that I know have real trouble negotiating their salary, because the governors' view is – and this was said to me once by this chair of governors 'But you only earn pin money, your husband's got a proper job'... I think too that if the school is in budgetary difficulties, many women are more willing to say, 'Oh, well, I won't take a pay rise', whereas, don't ever go there with me! (Gladys, headteacher).

This in itself is a topic worthy of research, especially in the light of figures I cite in appendix three showing the discrepancy between male and female headteachers' and deputy headteachers' salaries (DfES, 2006). It may be that in some instances women

headteachers are being appointed because they are considered to be cheaper to ‘buy’, and as other headteachers’ salaries are shrouded in secrecy it is difficult to ascertain what one can expect to be paid. Gladys took control herself of the issue over her own pay eventually:

I do think a lot of women are not assertive enough in dealing with their governors...and I had a real to-do, and until I got a female chair of governors it was an area that I found more difficult, but now I am paid the salary that I expect to be paid, but first of all I went and found out what other executive heads around the country are being paid (Gladys, headteacher).

The experiences of the women headteachers in this study indicate that some school governors operate on the basis of deeply held sexist assumptions that effectively allow them to by-pass equal opportunities legislation. As Fidler and Atton (2004) note, school governors now hold increased powers, and their scope for maintaining the gendered power balance in schools is thereby greatly enhanced. Neither is it reassuring to reflect that school governors may be, as Gladys suggested above, simply *unaware* of how their behaviour and decisions contribute to maintaining the status quo.

Summary

This chapter was the second of five in which the findings of the study are presented and analysed. The focus of this chapter was on the institutional factors affecting women’s career decisions. Evidence of overt and covert forms of discrimination in the gendered educational institution was examined. The key findings are summarised below.

The majority of the experienced teachers had encountered sexism or discrimination in some form during their teaching careers, although the extent to which this was seen as a career-shaping factor varied. The examples given ranged from trivial to serious. I argued here however that all examples were indicative of the gendered culture of

educational institutions in which sexism and discrimination are endemic. The most commonly cited instances of direct discrimination related to differential attitudes to women with children based on assumptions about their domestic and maternal roles. More covert forms of discrimination were linked to the particular culture of the institution in which the women worked, but included sexist 'jokes', sexist attitudes from male colleagues and pupils, and feeling undermined by the macho culture of boys' schools in particular. Whilst these instances were not seen as particularly career-shaping in themselves, I argued that they are a part of an institutional culture that erodes women's professional self-confidence and makes them less likely to envisage themselves in leadership positions.

There were indications of an institutionalised favouring of men in terms of developmental opportunities and promoted posts. Decisions about the developmental opportunities to be offered to male and female teachers seemed in some instances to have been based on assumptions about women's and men's interests and needs. There were indications that preference is given to young men, who are groomed through informal male social networks. Discrimination was, however, seen to be difficult to prove, especially where competent men were being developed and promoted.

Some women were discouraged from aspiring towards senior leadership by their awareness of the difficulties faced by female leaders. Some of these perceptions were borne out in the headteachers' accounts of the challenges they faced in their roles. Most of the headteachers had experienced increased levels of sexism and discrimination towards them since becoming headteachers, or since beginning to apply for headships.

This came from a number of sources, of which the most frequently cited were governors and parents of pupils, but also included LEA officers, colleagues and pupils.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Analysis of findings part three: individual factors affecting women teachers' career decisions

Introduction

This chapter, and chapters nine and ten, focus on the individual factors affecting the women's career decisions. By individual factors I mean those particular to the individual woman. In this chapter, which relates to the thirty teachers, I discuss the women's motivation and implicit values, and their aspirations and perceptions of school leadership. Chapter nine then focuses on the ten headteachers, and chapter ten draws on all forty narratives to explore the link between personal agency and career approach.

Values and motivation

Indications of the most important motivating factors influencing the women teachers' career decisions were implicit in the NQTs' accounts of why they had chosen teaching as a career, and in the experienced teachers' descriptions of their principal sources of satisfaction at work. I examine the main themes to emerge from the narratives under the headings 'motivation, the ethic of care and classroom teaching', 'motivation and working relationships' and 'motivation, challenge and fulfilment'.

Motivation, the ethic of care and classroom teaching

Consistent with the arguments put forward by Gilligan (1982) and Hanley and Abell (2002), there was clear evidence that relational values and an ethic of care underpinned

the women teachers' motivation and influenced their career decisions. Amongst the strongest themes to emerge from the study were the satisfaction participants derived from seeing pupils achieve and develop, and the importance of positive relationships.

NQTs' liking for and interest in children had been a major factor leading them into teaching, and the most important source of satisfaction for them in the job was their relationship with pupils. The best thing about the job, NQT Rebecca told me, was 'that relationship - when you feel you've got something'. Their commitment to children underpinned their dedication to teaching and learning, another major source of satisfaction, as exemplified in Danielle's comment:

You get to this point when you have a good rapport with the pupils, you can start doing things in the classroom... When some of them that never talk, put their hands up - that's a very satisfying moment (Danielle, NQT).

The enjoyment of classroom teaching, and seeing pupils' progress, enthusiasm and interest were cited by about half of the NQTs as very important motivating factors, and the main driving force encouraging them to persevere during the very demanding PGCE year. As Yvonne explained: 'It was the fact that I enjoyed the teaching that got me through it'.

Similarly, discussions with the experienced teachers about their personal philosophy of education invariably related to pupils and classroom teaching. Late-career teacher Chris, for example explained that the reason she went to work each day was in order to 'help kids open their minds up to the life that they could have, and make them be able to think wide, not narrow'. Another late-career teacher, Caroline, similarly commented: 'every young person that you come across and work with should be able to succeed and work at their own level, with the help and support of adults'. The prioritising of

relationships with pupils translated into a love of classroom teaching that acted as a key factor in shaping many women's aspirations. Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of pupil achievement, equal valuing of all pupils, the provision of a pleasant learning environment, and firm boundaries within which to operate in terms of discipline and expectations. Happy, motivated, well-behaved children, with a willingness to learn, were important to most participants, and many, as demonstrated in the examples cited from Chris and Caroline, spoke of a desire to care for and bring out the best in their pupils. Other related themes that were frequently apparent included love of the subject taught, enjoyment of preparing lessons and teaching materials, teaching successful lessons and receiving positive feedback from pupils about them.

Many experienced teachers saw classroom teaching as more important and more interesting than school leadership work, and aspired to being better and better classroom practitioners, rather than headteachers. There were repeated indications that the women saw success in terms of pupils' achievements rather than in their own progression up the career hierarchy. Late-career teacher Olwen, reflecting on what had been the main sources of satisfaction and motivation for her during her teaching career, commented, for example:

I did enjoy the relationship with the children...I sometimes got tremendous pleasure in feeling that I had done something for the child that nobody else could do...It might have been in a pastoral nature. It might have been teaching, you know, the child had got a particular grade that I felt they wouldn't have got with anybody else...I also got quite a lot of buzz...planning lessons and actually the intellectual side of producing a lesson plan and delivering it (Olwen, mid-career teacher).

This is consonant with Gilligan's (1982 p.73) argument that for women 'the expression of care is seen as the fulfilment of personal responsibility'. The professionalism of many women teachers was expressed as professional *care*, through their careful and

caring nurturing of pupils. Their satisfaction was derived from pupils' achievements, and their motivation – to be a more and more effective teacher rather than a school leader – was strengthened via the positive achievements of successive cohorts of pupils. Personal success, by and large, did not seem to be measured in terms of progression up the hierarchy towards senior posts. Mid-career teacher Carol, for example, commented, 'The thing that I really aspire to is creating a fabulous classroom environment ... I don't like the whole culture of management really'. This contrasts with the model of motivation posited by Maslow (1943), in which self-actualisation is solitary and independent of others. In Maslow's (*op. cit.*) model, as successive needs are met, the individual moves away from the need to relate to others towards self-actualisation. The women in this study however moved *towards* putting others' needs before their own career interests in material terms, and derived job satisfaction from seeing pupils' achievements. There may be links between women's mothering roles and their approach to teaching as caring, nurturing work, of which the focus is on developing others.

The majority of the experienced teachers felt that the satisfaction they derived from positive contact with pupils had been an influential factor in shaping their career aspirations and decisions, encouraging them to stay in classroom teaching posts rather than to opt for careers in school leadership. It is interesting to note also that the careers of half of the women in the late-career group had been shaped by a strong interest in pastoral work, which would seem to have self-evident links with the ethic of care and the prioritising of working with pupils.

Conversely, half of the late-career teachers talked about the de-motivating and stressful effect of the problems they had faced at work. These insights into what de-motivated the women were useful indicators of the women's values and of what they saw to be important, and in some cases explained their apparent disengagement from the promotion process. Their concerns typically included increasingly challenging pupil behaviour, and in four cases, the particularly stressful nature of working in a school in very difficult circumstances. Some had experienced feeling personally upset when pupils displayed a negative attitude towards their subject, which seemed to have lasting, de-motivating effects. Ann, for example, had become de-motivated by working in a school in crisis conditions, where student behaviour had rapidly declined and where there had been a high turnover rate in headteachers for the past few years. The combined effect of declining standards of pupil behaviour and the non-availability of support for staff, due to instability in the school leadership team, had been demoralisation. Ann now looked forward to the possibility of early retirement and had lost all interest in any career moves within teaching, saying that she felt 'absolutely negative' about teaching now:

I don't like the way the job is now... You rarely teach. It's all to do with occupying children that just don't want to be there anyway... and... not much gets achieved. I suppose my ideal would be for children to be children again and for more power to be back in the hands of the adults... The adults need to have the boundaries... within which the children operate. At the moment it's all the other way around, and unfortunately then nobody achieves anything. As adults you feel totally demoralised and de-valued, and no matter what you organise for students ... or how much time you put in, or how interesting it is... it's all 'boring', it's all unwanted. And the small number of children that do want to learn, they must feel as bad as we do. They're not being catered for either (Ann, late-career teacher).

Ann's frustration and demoralisation were evident in her comments. It is clear nonetheless that her values related to enabling children to achieve, and her frustration resulted from being in a system in which this was prevented. Ultimately, her concern

was still that there should be boundaries in place that would enable teachers to teach and children to learn.

In summary, relationships with pupils, underpinned by an 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 1982 p.73), emerged as of high importance in motivating most of the women teachers in this study. There was a strong emphasis, particularly in the experienced teachers' narratives, on caring for and valuing all pupils equally, and bringing out the best in all pupils. Personal success seemed to be viewed by the women in terms of their pupils' achievements rather than their own. The enjoyment and satisfaction derived from relationships with pupils and from seeing pupils' achievements motivated most women to stay in classroom-based careers rather than to pursue school leadership posts.

Another important factor in the daily lives of the women teachers in the study was the quality of working relationships, to which I turn below.

Motivation and working relationships

Experienced and inexperienced teachers alike emphasised the importance of positive working relationships with other staff at school in keeping them motivated at work. Unsurprisingly, NQTs talked in terms of their own support needs as well as the motivating nature of good working relationships. Experienced teachers also prized good, supportive relationships with colleagues, and many of the more experienced teachers enjoyed supporting others. Some examples are included below.

Of the NQTs, Danielle appreciated the excellent working relationship she had with her head of department, and Mary the 'fantastic' relationships she enjoyed with the staff in

her school, commenting 'It's just wonderful. All really, really nice, all very supportive'. Several NQTs particularly emphasised the need for support in dealing with discipline problems. Describing what she needed to stay motivated, and why, Daphne's comments were typical:

Support...more than anything, because you can't really control the kids that you're going to get. You can set your standards and your expectations for them, but you can't control where they're coming from, what they're going back to. So a really, really strong ... department... [is important, so that]... you know that you're going to be supported by your peers, and especially your head of department, and you know that if there is a situation in the classroom that you feel is unmanageable, that you have people backing you... [including] a strong senior management team... And feeling valued is important, because sometimes it does feel... pretty thankless... Unfortunately the way I am... you can have six brilliant lessons and one thing, it can be one kid that you have a bad experience with, and that's what you take home. It's hard to keep it in perspective sometimes... So I think [it's important to have] a supportive working environment where you don't feel like you're a failure if you have to send a kid out, or if you're struggling with a class... Even having someone you can chat to... a supportive environment is... really, really important (Daphne, NQT).

Developmental feedback from colleagues and managers was also appreciated by NQTs in particular, half of whom discussed their need for praise and constructive criticism, as well as a sense of needing, like Daphne, to feel valued. Danielle, for example, commented that during her PGCE year her motivation had been maintained throughout a difficult and demanding year by receiving regular and constructive feedback. Now in her first term of teaching, she was experiencing some loss of professional self-esteem, partly brought about through receiving some rather negative criticism. She felt in need of reassurance, support and constructive criticism that would help her to make improvements:

It's nice to have someone telling you it's good, but also that it's not that good...that you need to improve or change things...I really need feedback...or just praise, even just positive criticism...because you won't get it from pupils ... [other than] from time to time... but ...the head telling you 'You've been a star this half-term', that's very nice!...because you're trying hard, and you want to achieve things, you

want to prove yourself, and when someone realises that you're proving yourself, it's nice (Danielle, NQT).

The need to feel valued was a strong theme in the narratives of both new and experienced teachers. The women discussed how they needed to feel, in NQT Rebecca's words, 'valued in a way that is professional...not just emotionally but professionally, so we're valued as teachers'. Linked to this was the need to feel a sense of belonging, to feel a part of the team and the school community. Understandably, this was a greater concern for NQTs than for any other group, as most were in their first term in their schools at the time of the interviews. Rebecca, for example, reflected:

I was always really worried when I was a student [teacher] here. I felt like I was kind of an outside party. I felt like I didn't belong, which was difficult when you're trying to fit in. But now I'm feeling...the longer I've been here...the more I'm a part of it...It's nice to walk down the corridor and say 'Hi' and smile at other members of staff... [and when] the kids...say 'Hello Miss!' you know that you're a part of the school...I think, support and feeling that you belong are...the main things...It's nice to feel that you're a part of something, we can do this together (Rebecca, NQT).

Experienced teachers tended to emphasise the importance of a positive working environment, which seemed to encompass school ethos, the physical environment, approach of school leaders and standards of professionalism amongst colleagues, as well as good resources, although again personal relationships emerged as rather more important than material resources, pleasant environments or other working conditions. For several of the more experienced women in the study, the need for support was expressed in terms of *giving and receiving* support as part of a supportive working ethos. The majority of interviewees at all stages of their careers derived satisfaction from teamwork, and co-operative working.

Considerable importance was attached to an 'open' climate based on mutual respect, good communication and approachable school leaders, and again the need for support

was often referred to. This seemed to be a consistent message from women of all generations working in a diverse range of schools, although it was most strongly expressed by those working in particularly challenging schools. Ann, for example, stressed:

I think the staff have got to be valued by the people that are in the senior management team. I think if your staff aren't valued then they don't *feel* valued, and it has a knock-on effect...At some point, you've got to invest some time or emotion into your staff. You can't keep on taking and taking and taking from staff, and not ever putting anything back in...especially if they're not getting a lot back from the teaching ...They're not getting a lot back from the students - then where do they get anything back from? You know at one time they got stuff back from each other, but the way the job is now, there is very little time to talk, to chat...so where else can you get anything back except from senior management? (Ann, late-career teacher).

Ann's case provided a good example of a late-career teacher whose de-motivation and disengagement from career matters had been exacerbated by what she felt had been a dearth of support from school leaders in a school in the most difficult circumstances.

The importance of being able to laugh with colleagues was frequently cited by women at all career stages, for example:

I couldn't do the job if it weren't for the company of other adults...just the interaction with my colleagues, at breaktime and lunchtime, just being able to share a chat and a laugh. Because it's a lonely job otherwise (Stella, mid-career teacher).

Stella's view was frequently echoed by other women, although a number of the older teachers in the study felt that opportunities to socialise were now somewhat reduced compared to when they had started teaching. Coral, for example, remarked:

Education has changed...Teaching is no longer fun. It used to be fun. We used to have a laugh, and now it's not like that. We just don't mix any more. We have no time for each other, so therefore it's just hard graft really, without any of the pleasure of it (Coral, late-career teacher).

As Coral's and Ann's comments indicate, for some women, the enjoyment and satisfaction they derived from their work had decreased over the years. Extra pressure in the job left them less time to socialise with other staff, and there was no time for the fun that used to be a part of teaching. Poor staff relationships in some cases had impacted negatively on women's attitude to and enjoyment of work. These factors acted to de-motivate women, as one of the major sources of satisfaction in the job was being denied them. Furthermore, although they sought greater personal satisfaction, there was no indication that they saw leadership responsibilities as the way to achieve this, a perception I discuss in more detail later in this chapter (see 'Personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership', p.210). Rather they regretted the loss of some of the most satisfying parts of what had been a job they enjoyed earlier in their careers.

Motivation, challenge and fulfilment

In addition to the sources of satisfaction and motivation discussed in the last two subsections, many women talked about needing to feel challenged and fulfilled at work. I discuss below how the nature of the challenge and fulfilment they sought seemed to vary at different career stages.

In discussing why they had chosen to enter the teaching profession, several NQTs explained that the need for challenge and fulfilment had driven them to seek a career that was meaningful and satisfying. Pauline, for example commented 'I've always been strongly motivated towards doing something I felt was right and was going to really interest me'. Similarly, Mandy felt that she needed to be 'personally involved' with her work, and Wendy that 'you have to be doing something that you believe in'. Daphne had initially embarked upon a career in finance before becoming a teacher, and had

made the move into teaching because there was no real sense of satisfaction in her first job. Her personal and emotional involvement in teaching were implicit in her explanation of why she had left her previous career:

It wasn't very fulfilling...I didn't really care about what I was doing...it wasn't something I was passionate about in any way. I was good at my job but I didn't go home and plan lessons in my head and think about the kids, or worry about them or get angry about them – it was just something that I did...[In] teaching ...you don't walk out of the classroom and leave it behind (Daphne, NQT).

Several NQTs also talked about their need for challenge and a sense of personal achievement. For example, a number spoke about the satisfaction of having completed the PGCE course. For Wendy, the satisfaction derived from the academic challenge.

Pauline had been motivated by what she saw as the 'personal challenge':

I like to set myself a challenge...knowing that I've got through it...knowing that I can see my own improvements...I know that I've hit certain goals and I've been able to do what I set out to do. I know I've got an awful lot of improving to do, but...it's that personal satisfaction of achieving what I set out to do...and knowing that I'm getting there...that's a real personal satisfaction (Pauline, NQT).

Further into their careers, experienced teachers had in many cases found other forms of challenge to motivate them. A substantial number particularly enjoyed the challenge of working to meet individual pupils' needs, or relished the satisfaction derived from working with particularly challenging or socially deprived children. Caroline, reflecting here on her previous post, was a good example:

There was a great deal of satisfaction in working with young people who were from disadvantaged backgrounds, and who had great difficulty in forming relationships [and] keeping relationships, [difficulty in] accessing the curriculum [and] great literacy difficulties. It was very, very rewarding at the end of it to see them actually leaving school with some form of qualification and actually turning into quite rounded adults, and still seeing them, actually, since I've left...the fact that they're working, they've got families and they still remember the days when I taught them (Caroline, late-career teacher).

Another example was that of late-career teacher Lisa, who had left mainstream education to work in a special school, and had never felt so fulfilled. She commented: 'I've now landed in the place that...I want to be. I'm doing practical stuff, meeting the needs of individual kids. I don't need anything more'. Like the NQTs, many experienced teachers reported feeling a need to know they were achieving something, 'making a difference' or 'feeling needed', and so gaining a sense of fulfilment.

By comparing women at different career stages it was possible to discern a progression from a focus on their own achievements and their own need for support and recognition in the early career stages, towards a focus on enabling others to progress, and drawing satisfaction from their achievements. I return to this discussion in chapter nine.

I turn below to the women teachers' aspirations and perceptions of school leadership.

Personal aspirations and perceptions of school leadership

In this section, I discuss the women teachers' career aspirations in conjunction with their perceptions of school leadership. These contrast starkly with the view of school leadership conveyed in the headteachers' narratives, which is discussed in chapter nine.

The teachers' reflections on their aspirations, and their perceptions of school leadership, were characterised by contradictions. For example, a number of women expressed opposition to 'the system', implying that they did not want to be a part of it, but at the same time voiced discontent at their sense of frustration and disempowerment by not being involved in key decisions at whole-school level, for example:

I've actually stopped, now, looking for...any promotion...because I'm so fed up with the system, the way it's run...I think it happened when I was at [boys' private school], and I was the second in department and head of lower school. I got fed up with the idea that [managers]

expected me to do what they wanted me to do, but no-one was interested in my own ideas somehow (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

Contradictory messages emerged from the narratives of many women who, whilst insisting they had no interest in school leadership, then talked enthusiastically about the sort of senior post that *would* attract them, how they would approach the role, and what their priorities would be in post. It would be an over-simplification to claim that the women were uninterested in school leadership, and yet, one of the most striking features of the study was the women's professed lack of interest in headship. Of the thirty non-headteachers interviewed, twenty-eight were adamant that they would not consider headship. Just two women considered it as a possibility. One was NQT Danielle, who said it was something she might consider later in her career. The other was Olwen, who had recently retired. Looking back over her life and career she reflected that, had she not been a wife and mother, she could have become a headteacher. Of the others, some women would consider applying for deputy headship, but not headship. The majority, though, would consider neither role. The reasons the women gave for this revealed a set of negative perceptions and preconceptions of school leadership, of which the most frequently expressed were that headteachers' work and values are not pupil-centred; that headteachers are tough, lonely and have no life outside school, and that their work is dull and boring. I discuss these preconceptions below.

Headteachers' work and values are not pupil-centred

Most of the NQTs and experienced teachers in the study emphasised the importance to them of classroom teaching and good relationships with pupils. The majority felt that enjoyment of the job was a greater priority than promotion, that hierarchical progression was unimportant, and that they would not want a job that took them out of the classroom. Most of the women perceived that moving into school leadership would

entail moving further away from the classroom, and becoming remote from children, which is to an extent borne out in Evetts' (1994) study of secondary headteachers. They therefore opted for a classroom-based rather than a managerial career. Their preference for classroom teaching and their unwillingness to give this up for a leadership role were strong themes of the study, and seemed to support Gilligan's (1982) view that women fear isolation and disconnection, valuing relationships more highly.

In explaining why they were discouraged from school leadership work, narrators made numerous references to aspects of current politico-educational culture that were abhorrent to them. As noted by Evetts (*op. cit.*), typically, too much emphasis was seen to be placed on, for example, image management, measurable outcomes, competition, accountability and the blame culture, rather than on what most women considered to be more important matters, such as behaviour management and the development of the whole child. Typical comments included late-career teacher Lisa's observation that there is 'far too much importance...placed on 'facts and figures' that don't really add up, rather than on teaching a whole child how to succeed in society', and mid-career teacher Rhona's view that:

Something's gone wrong. It's like football clubs - it's not about the sport, it's about the business. And [in] schools, it's about the business, it's about looking good... You're doing it for the figures... We need the numbers. We need the statistics... We've got to protect our place in the league tables (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

School leadership was perceived as synonymous with this broader educational culture, and based on the same values. As such it was seen as different and separate from 'teaching', and the values that underpin a child-centred philosophy such as that implicit in Lisa's observation, above. The implication was that becoming a school leader meant embracing the values inherent in the broader culture. As such, school leadership was

not actually viewed as a teacher's job at all, with its focus on paperwork, finance and image management, rather than on classroom-related issues. Women who prioritised pupils and teaching therefore felt alienated from school leadership, and had no wish to take on values and responsibilities that were so far askew of their priorities and interests. It seemed the women's values clashed with those masculinised values seen to be inherent in contemporary school leadership culture. They perceived school leadership as described in the sub-section of chapter four 'the post-1988 headteacher' (p.69), that is, concerned primarily with finance and marketing, an image reflected in literature on school leadership (Fidler & Atton, 2004; Davies & Ellison, 1991). Freda's comments were typical:

By the time I got to thinking I might want to be a deputy head I was put off because...I thought senior managers never had enough contact with the children and I didn't want to be a part of the business culture...I don't think they need teachers these days, to run a school, if they're going to run them as they do...and that's the sad thing...To run a school these days, you don't need anybody to do with teaching. You need an accountant, you probably need someone who...can work a computer...but they don't have to have contact with the kids (Freda, late-career teacher).

It was seen as inevitable that school leaders would have to espouse the values of the current wider educational culture, which were at odds with the women's own pupil-oriented values. Taking on these values was also seen to entail the risk of losing the respect and support of colleagues the women valued. Most teachers expressed an unwillingness to compromise their integrity in this way, for example:

One reason I haven't gone into senior management is that I'm not willing to be something I'm not...I think senior managers have to...agree to do things they maybe don't like doing...They also alienate the...staff because they're doing that, and I'd hate to be in a position like that (Coral, late-career teacher).

Related to this was an unwillingness amongst some of the women to 'play the promotion game', which was also seen to require renouncing or compromising one's beliefs and principles in order to progress. The following are examples:

My career hasn't developed as enormously as I would have liked it to, but...I don't want to play political games. I'm not interested. I'm still a bit of an idealist...People have to take me as I am. I haven't pretended at any point to be someone else or...espoused other views about education in order to get promotion...I'm still trying to be true to what I believe in (Linda, mid-career teacher).

I think I'm put off by going through all the hoops to get [to headship]...Because of the sort of person I am, I can't pretend to go along with something that I really don't agree with (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

By refusing to renounce their principles in the quest for promotion, and opting instead for classroom teaching, the women felt able to keep the focus on the needs of the child. Seen in this light, a decision not to apply for senior posts could be seen as an act of resistance to a culture and set of values the women chose to reject.

Headteachers are lonely, tough, and have no life

Becoming a headteacher was widely seen to carry the risk of unpopularity and loneliness. Even Caroline, who had had a very positive experience as an acting headteacher, would not consider it on a permanent basis, although she would consider applying for deputy headship. She had worked closely with a female headteacher who had encouraged her to aspire to headship, but ironically it was partly because she saw this headteacher's isolation that she was discouraged from it:

I had this conversation with the principal who was at the last school...We used to talk a lot about this sort of thing. She always maintained that if I wanted to be a deputy head, then I would want to be a head. And I would say to her, no! Because I can imagine it is a very, very lonely job. She agreed, and she did say that there were times when it was incredibly lonely. She felt that there were times when she wanted to talk to people and there was nobody there, and all she could refer to really were governors, who, with the best will in the world, were

sometimes a little bit too far removed. Although they were great governors, she just felt that she couldn't open up to them. And it's that sort of thing that I wouldn't want (Caroline, late-career teacher).

School leadership was commonly perceived by the women to afford reduced opportunities for teamwork and co-operative working, which would seem to be a reasonable assumption, given the points raised by Fidler and Atton (2004) and Evetts (1994) about the type of work headteachers are now obliged to do, and the isolation of being office-bound. Some of the experienced teachers felt that excessive numbers of new initiatives in recent years had increased the pressure on teachers and headteachers, decreased the amount of time and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues, and increased the extent of top-down, non-consultative forms of leadership, a perception borne out in Evetts' (*ibid.*) work on secondary headteachers. As Evetts (*ibid.*) notes, this was counterpoised to most women's preference for more collaborative ways of working.

Linked to this was another common perception, which was that headteachers needed to be tough and coercive. Again, this was anathema to most of the women teachers. Some talked specifically about being uncomfortable with the idea of hierarchy and directive styles of managing, which were perceived to be inevitable parts of school leadership, for example:

It's like some colonel somewhere saying... we'll go to war. [Everybody is] going to do it, because they have to follow orders... even if they're not happy about it... It's that... feeling of hierarchy that doesn't do it for me (Rebecca, NQT).

This discomfort with being forced to work in hierarchical ways lent support to Gilligan's (1982 p.62) notion that women perceive relationships as a 'web' as opposed to the more typically male construction of them as hierarchical. The perception that school leadership inevitably meant having to work hierarchically, and thus to renounce

their more equitable working relationships, discouraged many teachers from considering headship. As discussed earlier, the women attached great importance to positive working relationships and were unwilling to risk losing these for the sake of promotion. This view also seemed to be accompanied by a self-perception as incapable of hierarchical, authoritarian, behaviour. The women commonly expressed doubts about their own suitability for school leadership, for example:

You've got to be intimidating, you've got to be scary, because the headteacher is the final line for the kids...and people need someone to complain about...someone to hate, and it's always the person at the top...I don't know if I could do that (Rebecca, NQT).

I would find it difficult in situations where I had to deal with a problem and treat it very seriously, and perhaps have to upset somebody else with what I had to say. I don't think I could do that very well...I think I would [find it hard to discipline people or be unpopular]...I wouldn't like to be criticised very much...Really I need to be doing stuff where people are saying to me, 'Oh that's good!' (Marjory, late-career teacher).

Such fears, and the need for approval and encouragement from others, again resonate with Gilligan's (*ibid.*) contention that (some) women tend to fear isolation. They harbour 'a fear that in standing out or being set apart by success, they will be left alone' (*ibid.*, p.42). In the examples cited above, which are typical of many women in the sample, the women were unwilling to risk losing their highly-valued relationships with colleagues and children for the sake of a senior position. They were fearful of school leadership work for the unpopularity they saw it to entail, and unwilling to sacrifice their positive relationships at work, through which they sought self-validation. Their fears emerged as to an extent justified, in that, as discussed in chapter four, headteachers can experience feeling isolated, and obliged to take on aggressive approaches in certain situations, such as in dealing with governors (Evetts, 1994).

Underpinning the unwillingness of many of the teachers to consider headship were three major assumptions. The first assumption was that to be a headteacher required an ability to be tough. The second was that being tough was not a good thing for a woman. The third was that being tough therefore meant being unpopular. The women's unwillingness to risk exclusion and others' disapproval would seem to an extent consistent with theories of feminine socialisation such as that posited by Lahtinen and Wilson (1994) and Sharpe (1976), who argue that women are very effectively socialised into a feminine relational role, with the effect that in later life they are discouraged from pursuing positions of responsibility: their main priority remains their relations with others and their sense of connectedness.

In addition, there was a common perception amongst the teachers that headship was stressful and time-consuming, with a greater workload than classroom teaching and less time for home, family and personal life. As discussed in chapters two and six, this is an important consideration for many women, especially those who are mothers. Even childless NQTs all referred to the importance of maintaining an appropriate work-life balance and a happy personal life, and several perceived that family life and leadership posts would not marry. Daphne, for instance, commented, 'I would like to be able to have dinner with my kids or my partner and not be [at school] until 7 o'clock in the evening'. Experienced teachers were in most cases similarly discouraged, and Freda's perceptions were fairly typical:

It's meetings after meetings and they have them all in the evenings...Some of our senior management, on probably two or three days a week, won't leave until 7, 7.30...We did have...an Assistant Principal, and she was very good at her job...She's just left...She said she was sick of meetings. She'd just been...married for about three or four years...and she said 'We never see each other, and I don't want that...I don't want the hassle'...I think that's one of the reasons...you

look at it and you think, do I want the hassle?... And if you're honest, you don't (Freda, late-career teacher).

Generally, headship was seen not as a route to greater job satisfaction, but to an increased workload, isolation and the loss of one's private life.

Headteachers do dull, boring tasks

Most of the women teachers derived satisfaction from classroom teaching and relationships with pupils and colleagues. Conversely, the tasks they saw as integral to school leadership work held little or no interest for them. Some of the discouraging factors frequently mentioned reflected the image of the post-1988 headteacher described in chapter four, and included having to deal with finance, bureaucracy and difficult people, spending a lot of time in meetings, and too much stress and pressure. Typical comments included these:

I was looking at the deputy head today and thinking, I wouldn't have your job for the world...I think there's too much pressure...on them...It's the nature of the work as well...It seems to me that the three main things you do in senior management are, talk to difficult children, talk to difficult parents and deal with numbers and money. And all three of those are things that I don't particularly want to do (Wendy, NQT).

I am far happier in the classroom than I would be up there in the office doing paperwork (Mary, NQT).

You end up [as deputy head] doing huge numbers of hours working after school, chasing up all the problems that have happened during the day and the week...The [former] deputy...did horrible jobs like...the buses...oversight of the catering, oversight of things like assemblies and shows...She did run the Key Stage 3 strategy but I bet she would've put that quite low down in the list of things that she was doing...And if I look at the rest of the SMT, what would I like there? Well, I wouldn't like any of it...I'm not really interested [in data]. I like to know the numbers once somebody's sorted them out, but I'd have no desire to sort them out. There's timetabling... there's 'head of charities'!...I've never seen a job where it's an interesting profile really (Chris, late-career teacher).

When probed, many of the women, said they *would* consider applying for leadership posts if the culture were more in harmony with their values and preferred ways of working. This provided useful insights into the sorts of work the women valued and saw as important, and why school leadership as they currently perceived it did not attract them. Most NQTs had an interest in people-orientated roles including staff management and pastoral management: Wendy, with her potential interest in ‘welfare and staff development – not money’, was fairly typical of the group. Other interests included Yvonne’s desire to ensure the role still included classroom teaching, and Rebecca’s preference for managing in a small school, where the potential to remain in touch with staff and pupils would be greater. Experienced teachers often had clear views about what their priorities would be in a leadership position, invariably emphasising teaching and learning, positive relationships and the development of the child, reflecting a view of the school as an essentially ‘nurturing’ (Gray, 1987 p.299) institution. Issues such as behaviour management were often raised and seen as fundamental for the effective management of a school, and the emphasis was placed on fostering achievement at all levels. Examples included:

I’d like to run a school the way I think a school should be run...I would love a post in which I was actually concentrating on teaching the kids...and...making it so you’ve got all your systems so that staff can come in, teach a lesson and leave and feel unstressed, happy that they’re doing a good job and knowing in your own heart that you’ve done the best you can for your kids, regardless of figures (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

I would apply for senior management if I felt that there was potential for what I really think education is about to be recognised, to be developed and to be *real*, and not just words in a mission statement...The real aspiration is to make a difference...to the whole development of the child...From the beginning...I wanted to have some...part in shaping what was to happen...in the curriculum and with a group of people – because I like *people* and I like developing *people*...I know that I do have some organisational skills which could be developed a lot further. I know that I understand systems and I know I can think laterally...and that’s quite frustrating because it’s blocked...because you *can* push for

change, you can be radical and you can also help other people develop. ... Whether you're a senior manager or not your primary duty is a duty of care and development to those pupils...that really does matter to me (Linda, mid-career teacher).

Whilst the women rejected much of the culture they saw to be a part of school leadership, they nonetheless had an interest in how schools should be run, and a clear sense of values and priorities. They were not, it seems, uninterested in school leadership per se, but had developed in many cases a negative set of perceptions of it from their experience. Their view of what the priorities for school leaders should be were consonant with the idea of the 'nurturing' (Gray, 1987 p.299) institution, in which there is scope for caring and people-centred ways of working, and it would seem, as I argued in chapter four, that such an image of school leadership would be more likely to attract female candidates for headship. Their perceptions of how school leadership actually *was* matched the image I describe in the sub-section of chapter four on the post-1988 headteacher (p.69): office-bound, target-driven and concerned with finance and competition, rather than people and nurturing.

Summary

This chapter focussed on the thirty women teachers in the study, exploring their motivation and values, and their aspirations and perceptions of school leadership. The key findings are summarised below.

There was clear evidence that relational values and an ethic of care underpinned the women teachers' motivation and influenced their career decisions. Most teachers derived the greatest satisfaction from seeing pupils achieve and develop, and from their positive relationships with pupils and colleagues. This was linked with a preference for a classroom-based rather than a school leadership career.

The majority of teachers in the study were clear that they would not consider headship. A number of negative perceptions of headship emerged, in particular that headteachers had no option but to espouse values that were not pupil-centred, that they had to be tough, were lonely, with no time for a life outside school, and that their work was dull. This negative view contrasted starkly with the view of school leadership implicit in the headteachers' own accounts, which is the focus of chapter nine.

CHAPTER NINE

Analysis of findings part four: individual factors affecting women headteachers'

career decisions

Introduction

In this chapter, I turn to the headteachers. First, insights into the headteachers' motivation and values are explored. In the light of these and the discussion in chapter eight, a model of women teachers' relational needs and motivation is posited. Secondly, I draw on the headteachers' perceptions of themselves in their roles to propose an alternative paradigm of school leadership.

Values and motivation

Factors motivating the headteachers became apparent in their reflections on how and why they had become headteachers, and their priorities and concerns in post. These are discussed under the headings 'motivation, the ethic of care and politicised identities', and 'motivation and women teachers' working relationships'.

Motivation, the ethic of care and politicised identities

I discussed in chapter eight the relational values and ethic of care that seemed to underpin the women teachers' motivation and influence their career decisions. Evidence emerging from the headteachers' narratives indicated that there was commonality between the teachers and the headteachers in terms of their fundamental values. There were also, however, some striking differences of emphasis in the narratives of the teachers and the headteachers.

The majority of the headteachers undertook little or no regular classroom teaching, although most commented that they missed it, and regretted that their current responsibilities afforded them insufficient time to do this. Given the lack of time they had for classroom teaching, it is unsurprising that the headteachers made far fewer direct references to their own individual relationships with pupils than did the other teachers. There was, however, considerable commonality between the values and ideals they expressed and those of the teachers, relating very clearly to the best interests of pupils. All ten headteachers for instance prioritised the provision of a secure, happy, learning environment in which pupils were both encouraged and academically challenged. For example:

My real aim, as a head, is to provide the best possible education for the [pupils] that are here, to make sure that we provide a place where they're happy, where they're secure, they feel safe, but at the same time academically they're challenged and encouraged to do their best. That's what it's all about (Sally, headteacher).

The headteachers saw it as their role, therefore, to ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and the provision of a strong, broad, relevant curriculum. Similarly, more than half of the headteachers emphasised strongly the importance of offering maximum opportunities for personal development to all young people and equipping them well for adult life. Wilma, for instance, commented:

My personal philosophy of education is that education should provide opportunities for people that enable them to continue growing and developing throughout their life. It's a lifelong learning philosophy (Wilma, headteacher).

Five of the six girls' school heads spoke specifically about the need to enable young women to be independent in adult life. Examples included:

It's really important that young women are capable and able to take care of themselves. I think that women must be able to earn their own living and not be dependent on anyone, and I think that to do that you need a particular sort of education. I think you need to give young people the

best possible advice that you can, but you can't make their decisions for them. But when the girls leave here they have choices, and I think that is such a precious thing (Harriet, headteacher).

It's that passion that drives me...women must have high level careers. They must be seen to be able to manage their own lives (Gladys, headteacher).

Whilst the headteachers and the other teachers shared a commitment to pupil-centred values, there were differences between the two groups in the way they discussed these. Most noticeably, there was a much greater tendency for the headteachers to contextualise their values within a broader politico-educational framework. Whilst the NQTs and experienced teachers in most cases focussed on the world of the classroom – teaching, learning and positive relationships with their pupils, headteachers tended to link the values implicit in their everyday work in school to their wider educational philosophy and political beliefs, and in turn linked these to their own life experiences. This resonated with Bradley's (1996 p.26) notion of 'politicised identity'. Interestingly, for the headteachers in this study, politicised and professional identities fused. A number described, for instance, how their political values had influenced their career decisions on their way to headship, as well as their priorities in post. Some examples follow:

Earlier in her career, Wilma had applied for a senior teacher post, which proved to be a turning point in her career as it represented her breakthrough into school leadership. She had been attracted to the job because it involved working on issues of great personal and political importance to her:

During the eighties I was very, very involved in the feminist movement, and so I was passionate about equal opportunities and quite politically left-wing...I was lucky that the head then was, I think, creative enough to want the school to reflect those kinds of issues...He created a senior teacher post for equal opportunities ...He genuinely was committed to equal opportunities in the curriculum as well as in employment...and he

was very keen to ensure that it wasn't a racist school... So that's what the breakthrough was...because I went from a head of year to a senior teacher...I don't think I'd've gone for senior manager 'assessment' or senior manager... 'buildings' or something...It was issues-led (Wilma, headteacher).

Like Wilma, Claudette's politico-educational views were important in guiding her earlier career choices:

I chose to work in comprehensive schools, because my first political activity was around getting rid of the grammar schools...and introducing the comprehensives into [city]...I was [there] training from '69 to '73, and that was the time that a lot of the...grammar schools were closed, and I played an active part in that (Claudette, headteacher).

In general, as in Claudette's example, the headteachers' politico-educational commitments tended to relate very closely to the type of school they worked in, and indeed, the majority explained that they needed to (and did) feel very positive about the school of which they were headteacher, usually explaining that they had been attracted to it, as they had been to schools in which they had previously worked, by its ethos and the sort of place it was. Certain individuals stated a preference for particular types of schools: examples included selective, academic environments, multi-ethnic schools and comprehensive schools. Whilst their preferred school types differed, the headteachers had in common an issues-led agenda informing their choice of school. Girls' school headteachers spoke of the imperative to facilitate equity for girls. The headteacher of an EBD boys' school spoke about her 'no excuses' philosophy and the need to improve the life chances of her pupils, who had had 'terrible lives'. All of the comprehensive school and non-selective school heads expressed in strong terms their commitment to the comprehensive ideal, and were clear in stating that they considered education to be the key to improving the lives of children from deprived backgrounds. The headteachers' educational and political philosophy, and corresponding preference for a particular type of school, seemed in many cases to be linked to the women's own life histories, a

connection they made themselves in their narratives. Comparisons were quite often made with the headteachers' own earlier experiences, and for some women their social class awareness had been a key factor guiding their career choices, and defining their political beliefs, values and educational philosophy. For instance, in several cases the women talked about how they themselves had originated from fairly deprived working class backgrounds. This is one example:

[I was] born into a very working class family. My dad was a builder... [I was the] middle child [of] seven children... My mum stayed home and looked after us all of her life and I felt, you know, that was the right way for mums to be. That was my image of them. And I was very grateful, because my mum gave me quality time a couple of times a day, you know, just five minutes with her, peeling potatoes or something, and we'd chat, and... I was very convinced that children need good parenting of one kind or another, and I was lucky enough to get that. Although there wasn't very much money there was some very good parenting there... I was very good in school, and went to grammar school... and because I was so working class, although I did very well in school and always won prizes and things, I was not in the top stream. I was in the 'C' stream... and I'd become aware that largely, that was because of my accent, because I came from such a working class family and dropped my aitches, because everybody in my family did... I became aware that social class was important, it influenced people's perceptions of you and ultimately, perhaps your career choices (Claudette, headteacher).

Education had proved to be the key to Claudette and others' ability to improve their own lives. Headship was seen to offer the scope to bring this opportunity to others. Claudette's comments cited above illustrate very clearly how she progressed through the three levels of identity posited by Bradley (1996), to develop a politicised identity. Claudette recalled how she 'became aware' during her schooling of her working class identity, signalling, in Bradley's (*ibid.*) terms, a move from a passive to an active identity, which developed into a politicised identity in adulthood. As she became established in the teaching profession, politicised and professional identities fused, informing her career choices and her approach to her role. She commented, for example, 'I always wanted to be a head because I thought the only real way you could

influence what happened in school was to be a headteacher'. Her story exemplifies how, as headteachers, the women viewed themselves as agents of change and social justice. It became apparent that several of the headteachers were motivated not simply by relationships with pupils but by values that formed a part of their politicised identities, rooted in their personal experience and life histories. Gladys, for example, commented:

I want to see children do well. Whatever we do...it must deliver better teaching and learning in the classroom. I had a good education at a girls' school. Had I not had that I couldn't have gone...to [college]...I come from a very working class home. Nobody had been to university. Nobody had even stayed on to the sixth form, so me staying on at school two years was unusual (Gladys, headteacher).

Thus whilst the same 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 1982 p.73) underpinned the headteachers' motivations as those of the other teachers in the study, in that all prioritised pupil welfare and achievement, an emergent difference was that for the headteachers this was underpinned by a politicised identity. The headteachers seemed to perceive themselves as potentially able to maximise the scope of their influence, and so impact on the lives of large numbers of young people, not simply those assigned to their own classroom. Whilst commitment to the 'ethic of care' (*ibid.*) for some women teachers meant that there was 'virtue...in self-sacrifice' (*ibid.*, p.132), as they prioritised pupils' achievements over their own potential career progression, for the headteachers there was virtue in pursuing posts then enabled them to enact the ethic of care to maximum effect. The headteachers' motivation, it seemed, stemmed not from self-actualisation through self-aggrandisement, but from the opportunity they perceived to maximise the impact of their values-driven commitment to the education of young people. Implicit in this is their own recognition of their own potential for personal agency, not just in terms of taking control of their own career, but also in terms of

taking control of institutions to the benefit of the pupils in them. I discuss the link between personal agency and career approach in more detail in chapter ten.

In some cases, certain of the headteachers were conscious of having had to compromise their politico-educational ideals by working in schools and systems based on principles contrary to their own. Sally, for instance, was head of a non-selective girls' school in Southshire, an area in which secondary education was organised on a selective basis, with those eleven year olds identified as the most able going to selective grammar schools and the rest to non-selective schools (see appendix six for details of LEAs). Sally found this system abhorrent, commenting, 'the fact that a child can be labelled a failure at age eleven seems to me totally wrong, and the self-esteem they lose at that point of their lives, I think that's criminal'. The dissonance between Sally's principles and those underpinning the Southshire system impacted on her approach to her role as head of the non-selective girls' school, in that she consciously refused to take on the values she saw as implicit in selection. Guided by her politico-educational beliefs (which she linked to her own life history), she enacted her resistance to the principles of selection through her approach to leading her school, as shown in the following extract from her narrative:

I came down with the attitude of a comprehensive teacher, and I try to treat this as a comprehensive school. I refuse to think of us as second-class citizens, and so I have high aspirations for all the girls. I try desperately to...broaden their horizons. [This area] is not a place of wide horizons...because they're from quite deprived backgrounds, a lot of them, both financially and emotionally deprived, and I feel that education is the key. It's the way out. It was for me, and it is for them. I'm still convinced that's true (Sally, headteacher).

Like Sally, Claudette was also opposed to the selective system in which they both now worked. Like Sally, she had actively resisted the implicit messages of selection, and working in a selective system had increased her determination to ensure pupils were

given the best deal possible and that school improved their lives. As with most of the headteachers in the study, the women's politico-educational values translated into a sense of mission and purpose, which drove them both in their pursuit of headship and in their definition of their priorities in running their schools.

The headteachers' personal and political values translated into a sense of mission to be executed at whole school level, thus personal fulfilment and school achievement were closely linked, as evident here:

Whatever I do, my whole passion is to look at the destinations of our school leavers every year, to see that they are going to the careers, jobs and universities or whatever is *their choice*... then I know I've done a good job (Gladys, headteacher).

Their personal sense of fulfilment was conflated with success at the level of the school, measured in terms of the achievements of the pupils who were at the core of their concern.

In summary, although the headteachers had less classroom contact with pupils, the fundamental values that underpinned their work-oriented motivation mirrored those of the other teachers, in that they related clearly to the best interests of pupils. In the case of the headteachers, however, this was overlaid by a politicised identity, and they tended to contextualise their pupil-centred values within a broader politico-educational framework. The headteachers perceived themselves as agents of change and social justice, potentially able to impact positively on the lives of large numbers of young people, which they sought to do by running schools that offered pupils maximum opportunities to develop. Personal success is judged in terms of pupils' achievements rather than personal gain, and personal fulfilment conflated with the success of the school.

Motivation and women's working relationships

I discussed in chapter eight the importance for the women teachers of positive relationships with pupils and colleagues in keeping them motivated at work. Headteachers also valued positive relationships, but saw them primarily as necessary to the functioning of the school rather than to meet their own emotional need for popularity. Headteachers saw their role as principally people-oriented, and derived the greatest satisfaction from the parts of their job that involved working with others. They emphasised the importance of positive relationships, teamwork, trust, development and equality in the staff in general, but in the leadership team in particular. Four of the ten headteachers specifically mentioned that they derived particular satisfaction from being able to work with senior leadership colleagues who shared their vision of the future of the school. Good relationships with governors also emerged as of particular importance in terms of headteachers' job satisfaction. As Fidler and Atton (2004) note, the role of headteacher necessarily involves women in working with school governors in ways that no other teaching posts do, and this therefore emerged as an important part of their day-to-day lives.

By comparing the narratives of NQTs, mid- and late-career teachers and headteachers, it was possible to discern different relational needs and different sources of satisfaction that typified women at different stages of their careers, and thus to identify a hierarchy of motivating factors (see table fifteen, overleaf) which is almost the inverse of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs (see appendix four). At the pinnacle is the 'need' to foster *others'* achievement. Individual women teachers progress from a preoccupation with their own achievements and support needs, to deriving satisfaction

from enabling others to progress. Importantly, the emphasis on the need for relationships is evident throughout.

Table fifteen: hierarchy of women teachers' relational needs and motivation

Stage 4	<p>Priority placed on maximising scope of influence Emphasis on fostering school-wide achievement Personal success conflated with school success Positive working relationships seen as necessary to effective functioning of school, and important source of professional satisfaction Need for personal popularity at work reduced; own emotional needs low priority</p>
Stage 3	<p>Positive relationships important source of satisfaction Enjoyment derived from being part of a supportive environment, giving support to others Secure in professional relationships</p>
Stage 2	<p>Priority placed on positive personal relationships with pupils and colleagues; personal popularity important Emphasis on classroom teaching, pupil welfare and achievement</p>
Stage 1	<p>Priority placed on sense of fulfilment and personal challenge (passing PGCE; completing teaching practice/QTS year successfully) Emphasis on classroom teaching: own achievements, e.g., establishing discipline Strong need for support from colleagues; professional credibility, sense of being accepted and part of community important to self-esteem</p>

Typically, NQTs begin at the lowest level of the hierarchy progressing upwards gradually with years of experience. Headteachers typically reach the highest level, in which their own need for popularity and support is replaced by the motivation they draw from enabling large numbers of pupils to achieve. Through the career stages from NQT to headteacher, the teacher moves from a focus on her own needs and achievements (stage 1), to a stage in which the focus is on positive relationships and the achievements of her pupils (stage 2), then to a stage in which she is more secure in her own relationships and draws satisfaction from supporting others (stage 3), to headship,

in which the focus becomes the success of the whole school and the pupils in it (stage 4), of which positive school-wide relationships are a vital part. At this stage one's own popularity ceases to be of major importance as the needs of the school and the pupils in it become the main concern, a point I discuss further in chapter ten. In this model, at the pinnacle is a largely selfless, altruistic motivation and satisfaction drawn from the achievements and enablement of others. Relationships are still of critical importance, but are seen as a necessary part of the effective school rather than a source of emotional support for the headteacher herself.

Whilst the four stages in the model are associated with the four groups interviewed for this study (NQTs, mid-career teachers, late-career teachers, headteachers), there are overlaps between the stages. The hierarchical representation of women teachers' and headteachers' sources of motivation is intended to show the different relational needs and sources of motivation associated with different career stages. It is not intended to imply that headteachers are 'more' fulfilled or motivated than teachers. Rather, as discussed earlier, the woman headteacher's altruistic motivation is a function of her politicised identity, which incorporates a self-perception as an agent of change. I explore in the next section below the women headteachers' perceptions of themselves in their roles.

Women headteachers as agents of change: an alternative paradigm of school leadership

In chapter eight I discussed the negative perceptions of school leadership harboured by the women teachers in the study, who viewed headship as a job that would control and restrict them, isolating them from others and forcing them to work in abhorrent ways. A

strikingly different view of it was provided in the narratives of the headteachers, who spoke positively of themselves in their roles, positioning themselves as agents of change. A new paradigm of leadership emerged, of which the key features are listed in table sixteen:

Table sixteen: key features of women headteachers' school leadership

Pupils-first philosophy
Fusion of toughness and caring
Leadership style adaptable to context
Positive relationships and emotional rationality
Personal and professional support networks
Enjoyment of challenge and change
Work-life balance strategies

I examine each of these features in this section of the chapter.

Pupils-first philosophy

It is interesting to note that the strongest theme to emerge was that all ten headteachers derived the greatest satisfaction from working with young people and seeing them develop. Contrary to the perception that being a school leader means taking on values that do not relate to pupils, most headteachers were keen to point out that their main concern was to promote a 'pupils-first' philosophy in their school, which is consistent with the view Gray (1987) describes of the effective school as a nurturing institution. For the headteachers in this study, this meant constantly working to remind the whole school community that pupils are the reason that schools exist, and to keep the school focus on teaching and learning. This was expressed in a variety of ways, but an interesting example comes from Fiona, who as head of a school for boys with educational and behavioural difficulties (EBD), made it very clear that for her, the *only*

point to her work was to ensure pupils achieved. She explained why she felt it was crucial to be forthright in promoting what she termed a 'no excuses' philosophy:

It is crucial, because so many EBD schools are awful, because excuses are made for the children: "They can't achieve because they have such terrible lives"....whereas I'm saying, they *have* had terrible lives, but that's no barrier, and in fact the way out of their terrible life is to have something good. So it's a 'no excuses' [philosophy], strong curriculum, consistency, and self-esteem for the kids. That's the biggest thing - and they will get that, if there's a good curriculum. In an EBD school, that's half your battle in terms of behaviour. If the kids are bored and can't see the relevance, you've got problems. You've got problems anyway with these kids. If you then layer it on with 'And we can't be bothered to teach you anything much because you're not worth it', it's worse (Fiona, headteacher).

The headteachers' personal aims were conflated with the aims they had for the school, and typically these were described in terms of equipping pupils with the confidence and skills to develop throughout life and to achieve what they wanted to achieve to the best of their ability. This implied offering pupils, in Minnie's words, 'the maximum opportunity to develop, not just academically, but in every way possible'.

There was a common emphasis from headteachers of all types of schools on nurturing and effecting change through caring relationships, resonating with the findings of Sherman (2000). The importance of caring, pastoral work and the development of the whole child rather than just academic performance were underlined, although academic achievement was also emphasised. There were also frequent references to the women's strong commitment to the philosophy of lifelong learning and to the provision of equal opportunities for pupils. In most cases the headteachers had a clear sense of mission in their work, and this mission related to pupils. Most explained, for instance, that they had chosen to work in a school that offered them the right sort of challenge: one in which they felt needed, where they felt that they could make a difference and change lives. Pupils were clearly central to their motivation and aspirations. Sally, for example, said

that she knew immediately that the school to which she was appointed headteacher was the right school for her:

As soon as I walked through the door I knew this was the one I wanted...I thought, 'This is it. I can do things here!'...The ethos of the school was just lovely, and academically it was struggling, so it gave me a challenge, and I just thought, 'Yes, that's it'. (Sally, headteacher).

The majority of the headteachers described how they sought to influence the sort of experience pupils had on a day-to-day basis, and saw it as their role to provide an environment in which pupils (and staff) were happy, and felt safe and secure. How this translated into their day-to-day actions varied according to differing circumstances and contexts. However differently headteachers in their various school contexts interpreted and tackled the role, a constant was the focus on pupils. Most of the headteachers spoke of their own love of classroom teaching. A small number explained that they deliberately taught at least one class in order to stay in touch with the day-to-day life of the school and the issues for teachers at the chalk face. Most, though, did not see classroom teaching as a necessary part of their own role, although as discussed earlier, many talked about how much they missed it. In most cases, the headteachers had found that the demands upon their time meant that they were unable to commit to timetabled teaching, and saw that it was actually unfair to pupils to commit to classes for which they could not always guarantee their availability. Most felt however that they still had a 'hands-on' involvement with students, and saw this as a high priority. Typically this took the form of doing duties around the school at lunchtimes, dealing with difficult, demanding or disaffected students, and making themselves available to congratulate students who were doing well. Claudette, for example, explained how and why she prioritised spending time with young people:

I take on a...mentoring role...with children, because that's part of the programme we have in this particular school, and I do some special needs work...I spent...about half of the week, when I first came here,

working with a group of very disaffected youngsters, about fifteen of them, and teaching them...I still do [have quite a lot of involvement with children]...I try to spend [at least] half of my time each day...with children...I do my paperwork mostly in the evenings, and that's how I can spend so much time with youngsters...I do it largely because I want to...I choose to do it because I actually enjoy being with youngsters...Teaching makes you keep in touch with the curriculum...and in touch with what's happening in your school. It's very easy as a headteacher to sit in this...little ivory tower and say, 'Well, yes, you're having a problem with this child or that group because you haven't got the right approach'...I try never to do that. I go in and I take those classes or that youngster myself, and it reminds me very sharply of what the real issues often are...I think it makes me much more sympathetic to other teachers (Claudette, headteacher).

Other headteachers were also involved in work that related directly to pupils, as suited the particular type of school in which they worked. Beatrice, for example, made a point of personally congratulating high achieving girls in her selective grammar school. Renee had managed to persuade in some cases reluctant staff to learn exciting new teaching methods using modern technology, and so improve pupils' learning and motivation. Several headteachers saw it as a part of their role to take responsibility for site management and care of the school buildings, resources and environment for the benefit of the pupils: Sally, for instance, had fought hard to gain funding for a much needed new building for her badly run down non-selective girls' school which, she felt, had been long neglected by Southshire LEA.

In contrast to the views conveyed in the narratives of most of the non-headteachers, the headteachers' values, work and sense of mission related very closely to pupils, and meeting individual pupils' needs, reinforcing the findings of Shakeshaft (1995; 1989) and Shakeshaft *et al.* (1991). Whereas becoming a headteacher seemed to be seen by many teachers to entail renouncing pupil-oriented values, headteachers saw their position as a means to ensure pupils' needs were central to the work of the school. Whilst the teachers' and the headteachers' fundamental, pupil-centred values were very

much in harmony, their perceptions of how best to enact these values differed. Whilst most of the teachers viewed school leadership work as based on values contrary to their own, headteachers viewed the role very much as leader of what Gray (1987 p.299) describes as the 'nurturing' institution, as discussed in chapter four. They therefore viewed the post of headteacher as ideally placed to exert a positive influence school-wide on pupils' experiences, and positioned themselves as agents of change and improvement.

Fusion of toughness and caring

A common perception amongst the teachers in the study was that headteachers had to be tough and work in coercive ways that were unacceptable to the women teachers, discouraging them from considering headship. I turn now to an examination of the headteachers' own perceptions.

A mixture of caring and toughness seemed to characterise the headteachers' self-image and their professional personas, resonating with the arguments posited by, for example, Coleman (2002), Sherman (2000), Hall (1996), Evetts (1994) and Gray (1993). Most were clear in saying that they thought they were tough individuals. For example, Fiona commented, 'I'm not a pushover in any sort of set-up... [people] know that I'd stand up for myself', and Gladys similarly remarked:

Anyone who knows me well enough wouldn't dream of thinking that I can't deal with discipline, because of the way I try to deal with my staff...there is this underlying agenda that if that is what I want done, then that's the way it will be done. And that percolates right through the school (Gladys, headteacher).

Toughness in this sense was clearly seen as a positive attribute, in contrast to the implicit view of many of the teachers who perceived toughness as something with

which they would not want to be associated. For the headteachers, like Fiona, toughness meant they were able to stand up for themselves, and by extension, their schools, and about half added, like Gladys, that they saw themselves as authoritative with students, which was again perceived as a strength. At the same time, many of the headteachers were proud of the culture of caring in their schools, and some used words like 'approachable' and 'human' to describe themselves. There were frequent references to 'looking after' pupils and staff, and some headteachers described the satisfaction they derived from helping people to deal with problems. It was apparent from the headteachers' narratives that they did consider that their roles required an ability to take a tough approach at times, but also that it required an ability to be gentle, caring, consultative and collaborative. Interestingly, the two were not necessarily seen to be mutually exclusive.

Examples of toughness and caring were interwoven in a number of narratives, and frequently associations were made between gender and leadership approach. Gladys, for example, commented: 'My leadership style, I am sure, is coloured by the fact that I am female'. Being female was seen by about a half of the women as a positive advantage in their headteacher role. The ability to empathise with other female staff and understand the difficulties they faced was often mentioned. In addition, though, being a woman headteacher was seen as an advantage in dealing with potentially difficult and threatening situations and people, and as well as describing how they were capable of being tough, many women also described the gentleness with which they dealt with members of their schools. Fiona, for instance, as head of an EBD boys' school, dealt daily with potentially very challenging boys, and as well as having to be tough, seemed to take on a caring, nurturing, mother substitute role:

I think it's much easier being a woman doing it, because I'm not a threat...some of [the students] are 18 stone and 6 foot...If they want to deck me they will, but...they don't...I think there are definite advantages [to being a woman head]...I can cuddle them, I can put my arm around them and let them cry on my shoulder because...a lot of their issues are to do with their mums. It's all to do with stuff that's happened in their lives. They can't do it with their mums...I think it's much easier being a woman...because they don't have to challenge me on a macho, aggressive [level]...I will get kids shouting at me and stuff, but I never once have really thought, I'm going to be hit here, in my present situation, in my school...I think [being a woman] is an advantage...because I can do nurturing with the firm, consistent boundaries which they need, that every kid needs (Fiona, headteacher).

Similarly, Wilma's comments conveyed a sense in which as a woman, she saw herself as ideally placed to defuse difficult and potentially intimidating situations:

With some of the difficulties with boys of this [14-19] age group, and the potential for aggressive behaviour...I think I and the other senior women are much more effective in handling situations...It doesn't up the ante and [the boys] don't get all stroppy with us, because [the] dynamic is different...Occasionally...we [also] have... some interesting visitors...and I'm very confident and comfortable with going out and calming down the situation or asking them to do whatever, and never thinking somebody's going to bop me one...I guess if you're a bloke in that situation you might feel a bit more threatened. And for that I think [being a woman head has] been an advantage (Wilma, headteacher).

As in these examples, in which toughness and gentleness combine, it was clear, as Gray (1993) describes, that the women's day-to-day approach to leading did not fit neatly into any one category, a point I discuss further below.

Leadership style adaptable to context

All of the headteachers were conscious of having a repertoire of leadership styles on which to draw, and of changing their leadership style according to the situation and context being managed, an essential feature of effective leadership behaviour (Evetts, 1994; Fiedler, 1967). Beatrice, who described herself as a 'benign dictator', commented on her own leadership style, for instance:

I am a mixture. I am dictatorial when I passionately know I'm right...but I believe in consultation...It shifts according to the situation. There are certain things where there would be no consultation whatsoever, and that's usually a staffing issue that needs dealing with there and then...If I can I like to bounce ideas off others...to use people as a sounding board...some of that is good and people will give me ideas, so it does change according to the situation (Beatrice, headteacher).

All ten headteachers also explained that they used a mixture of direction and consultation to effect longer-term change and improvement as well, consciously adapting their style according to the context being managed. A good example of this is provided by Minnie, who was head of the same school for fifteen years. In her early days in the headship post she took steps to 'bring the school into the 20th century' by introducing technology, to which there was initially opposition. She had to work to overcome this, and recalled that she did so by using 'a mixture of consultation...[and] direction'. Experience taught her that there was no one 'right style'. To illustrate this point, she gave two more contrasting examples from her experience: one lengthy attempt to consult on curriculum change, with disappointing results, and later a short and fast directive to staff, which proved very effective in the circumstances:

We did a major, huge consultation on the curriculum. It was a time when we really needed to change what we were doing. We needed to think about what we were going to fit in. There were extra subjects that we wanted to put in to the timetable. We couldn't do it, and so we needed to go to consultation. And we spent months, literally, consulting. We'd put out various models because I found the staff couldn't handle being asked just 'What do you think?' We had to give them various scenarios, Aunt Sallies that they could knock down. So, we went into lots of different groups, lots of different layers, consulted on several models, and no one model was favoured by everybody, as you would imagine. And at senior management level we discussed it at length and said, 'Well actually, there are good points from each of these. Let's draw the best of each and, we really think this now is excellent'. We put that out, and there was uproar! 'This has not been consultation!' 'You had this up your sleeve all the time!' So I learnt quite a hard lesson there. Then, amazingly, when we had to do a change quite a number of years later - because we had a link with the boys' school, and the boys suddenly decided to go a year early on a particular curriculum change - I had to go to the staff and say 'Look, these are the reasons. We're going

to have to make this move because if we don't we'll lose this link, and it's too valuable', and I gave them all the background. Not a murmur! It was just accepted. Now that was total imposition ... We had to say... 'This is it, this is what's going to happen, we haven't got time [to consult]' (Minnie, headteacher).

Although the preference of most of the headteachers was for stereotypically feminine, gentler, persuasive, consultative and collegial approaches to managing their schools, of the sort described in the work of, for example, Hall (1996), Shakeshaft, (1995; 1989) and Southworth (1995), they were also fully prepared to take on a tougher, more coercive approach as needed, thus were to an extent 'androgynous' (Gray, 1989 p.39) in their leadership behaviour. All were keen to emphasise that they did not shy away from taking a directive approach when they felt it was justified. Examples were provided by the interviewees of issues and contexts in which they had taken a strong lead and a deliberately directive approach. These typically included managing crisis situations, changes that needed to be rapidly effected for the survival of the school (as in the case described by Minnie, above) and cases where headteachers had felt particularly strongly that something should happen, which included, in some cases, taking calculated risks with the development of the school. Again Minnie's words resonate with those of the other headteachers in the study: 'If you try and work in consultative mode all the time, you'll never move. You have to have the courage as head to say 'No, I think this is right. This is what the school's going to do, and this is the way we're going'. Although all of the headteachers pointed out their willingness to take on directive styles as needed, the extent to which they claimed to be *comfortable* with doing so varied, and none were fully happy with coercive approaches as a standard way of managing. Sally, for instance, commented:

My aim has always been to take people with me rather than drag them, but... on occasion, I have to be directive. It's not a style I find easy, and I can find myself worrying about it the night before... if I've got to have someone in and say 'Look, this is simply not doing what I've asked you

to do...now I'm going to have to insist', I'm not comfortable with that
(Sally, headteacher).

Sally's and other headteachers' anxiety about having to take a coercive approach and risk upsetting or alienating someone may be rooted in what Gilligan (1982 p.42) terms their 'fear' of 'isolation'. This 'fear' was not sufficiently strong however to prevent Sally or other headteachers from adopting this style of leadership when they felt it was necessary, that is, when they saw that such coercion was crucial to achieving their aims for the school, which remained their priority. Their own popularity was not their primary concern, although it is arguably implicit in their discomfort with coercion. Rather they were driven by their values and sense of mission for the school. The headteachers' styles of leadership typically combined caring, relational approaches for most of the time (as exemplified for instance in Fiona's description of managing challenging boys, cited earlier), with tougher, coercive approaches as and when needed, as in Minnie's example, above. Their narratives showed how they drew on a repertoire of behaviours spanning traditional masculine and feminine paradigms as described by Gray (1993), and, to use Gilligan's (*op. cit.*, p.42) terminology, feared neither 'intimacy' nor 'isolation' sufficiently to be impeded by either, thus fitting neither the 'mode of thought' Gilligan (*ibid.*, p.2) associates with women, nor that she associates with men. Rather a third 'mode of thought' (*ibid.*) emerges, that might be described as 'androgynous' in the way that (Gray, 1989 p.39) uses the term, that is, fitting neither masculine nor feminine stereotypical behaviour but drawing on attributes of both genders. On the other hand, the balance of attributes, and the women's preferred ways of working, were more skewed towards the feminine than the masculine paradigm. The headteachers were both caring and tough. They built positive relationships within and for the sake of their institutions, but did not rely on them for their own self-esteem or self-validation. They worked collaboratively and through consultation, but were also

able to make unilateral decisions or take the lead in initiatives that, even if they were not always popular with everyone, were made with the best interests of the school in mind. Gray (*ibid.*) associates what he terms ‘this ‘fully androgynous’ duality’ with emotional stability and maturity, and others (for example, Evetts, 1994; Beare *et al.*, 1993; Caldwell & Millikan, 1993; Oliveres, 1991) have similarly identified a balance of masculine and feminine attributes as important in the effective school leader. Whereas, for most of the teachers interviewed, positive relationships with pupils and colleagues were most important, for headteachers, school effectiveness was the main priority. The fostering of positive relationships within school was generally viewed as a part of achieving this main aim rather than as an end in itself. Linked to this was a strong emphasis on people-centred approaches to school leadership, which I explore below.

Positive relationships and emotional rationality

Contact with people was for most headteachers cited as the main focus of the job, and a major source of satisfaction. Most emphasised the need to be people-oriented, which implied working through people, as consistent with the findings of Coleman (2002; 2000), Sherman (2000), Hall (1996), Jirasinghe and Lyons (1996), Adler (1994), Ferrario (1994) and Blackmore (1989). This people-oriented style of leadership implied ensuring structures were in place so that people’s voices could be heard, and on a personal level it meant being involved with people, including students, parents, support staff, teachers, governors, LEAs and so on. Claudette, for example, described the headteacher role thus:

It’s about managing the people, whether it be teachers or learning support assistants or kitchen staff or the cleaners, as well as the youngsters, in such a way that everybody gets the optimum... feeling of success... out of the situation, so the youngsters do as well as they can academically, but also socially, and the teachers, hopefully, get a very warm feeling that they’re valued and that their work’s appreciated, and

that they're achieving something in society that's worthwhile. And I think that's also true with cleaners. I spend quite a bit of time with my cleaners here, encouraging them, because the school is tidy, it is clean, it sparkles now. I think that's important (Claudette, headteacher).

Several headteachers talked about the importance of playing a key role in the recruitment and retention of good staff, seeing this as vital to the success of the school. There were also frequent references to the satisfaction headteachers derived from working with and developing academic and support staff, and seeing their individual and joint achievements. In their role as managers of people they, like Claudette, stressed the importance of ensuring academic and support staff felt valued, and of rewarding and challenging them as needed.

Throughout the narratives, positive relationships were consistently referred to as an important part of an effective school, rather than as emotional sustenance for the headteachers themselves – a key difference between headteachers and most of the other teachers, as discussed earlier. References to their own popularity were rarely mentioned by headteachers, although one interesting exception was that of Claudette. Hers is a useful case to consider as, although she did refer to her own unpopularity in a previous headship, this was in a part of her narrative in which she reflected on her changing leadership approach in the three different headship posts she had held. The extract I include below demonstrates an adaptability of leadership style to suit the context being managed, as discussed earlier in the chapter. It also demonstrates her emotional self-protection skills, and shows an ability to manage relationships to the benefit of the school rather than to satisfy a selfish need for popularity.

Now in her third headship post, Claudette was, she felt, much more consultative than she had been in her first headship. However, the context she had been managing in her

first school was particularly problematical and had required a directive approach, as a result of which she had been unpopular with staff. It is apparent in the extract below that she was able to view her former unpopularity with detachment. This insight was then used to inform and shape her subsequent approach to leading her next two schools to better effect, rather than to boost her own popularity, although there are hints that this was also a benefit. The extract from Claudette's narrative exemplifies an important distinguishing feature in the narratives of the headteachers. It provides an example of the headteachers' ability to de-personalise their experiences and see them as a function of the dynamics of institutional leadership rather than as personal deficiencies, to rationalise rather than to internalise them. She reflected:

[My leadership style] has evolved... My first headship... was a very steep learning curve... I'd inherited a teaching staff who'd had a lot of outside intervention, in that there'd been a team, before I arrived, of nine inspectors, one of whom was actually acting headteacher for two terms. They'd gone into the school and basically at the end of it they all pulled out because they thought the school really should be closed... I really had to take quite strong action against some of the staff there. Some of them were heavily involved in the drug scene and others were not going into lessons if they didn't feel like it... My style then was not collaborative, it was very dictatorial... It was a very difficult school to manage... What I discovered then, in that two-year period that I was still at the school, was that most staff there, because I'd not worked with them, I'd made them work... didn't like me... When I left the school and got promotion to a bigger school, I made a decision then that I would work in a much more collaborative way. And I was able to, because I was then going into a school that was quite stable – well-established staff, very competent staff, doing OK, but not brilliantly. And I began working *with* them... and we did have a much better relationship, and I've translated that into my third headship... Although this school was in serious weaknesses when I came, it did have a staff who wanted to work collaboratively (Claudette, headteacher).

Claudette's comments show that it was clear to her that the three schools of which she had been headteacher were three quite different contexts, requiring different approaches. Her first school was a school in crisis, and in her view she was unpopular there as a result of how she had managed the situation. However, there is also a clear sense in

which Claudette was able to look rationally at the different situations and assess how possible it would have been to work collaboratively – to recognise that it is not just the personality of the leader that determines leadership style but the interaction of leader and context. This is implicit in the phrases she used to describe the extent to which each of the three schools lent itself to being collaboratively managed. The first one ‘was a very difficult school to manage’; it required ‘strong action’. The second school ‘was quite stable’ with a ‘well-established’ and ‘very competent’ staff, so lent itself to ‘a much more collaborative way’ of working. The third was even more conducive to her preferred way of working, as it had ‘a staff who *wanted* to work collaboratively’. It is telling that in analysing her own leadership approaches in this way, Claudette looked not just at herself but at the school community being managed, recognising that the interaction between the two shaped her style of leading. Her ability to analyse her own leadership behaviour was characterised by an emotional rationality that allowed her to look beyond her own popularity to the context being managed and the complex range of factors at play.

This signifies an important difference between the way school leadership was viewed by headteachers and most of the other teachers. In explaining why they were discouraged from considering headship, most of the teachers focussed on themselves and why they were unsuitable for what they perceived to be the leadership role, commenting for example that they would not be able to accept being disliked and disapproved of, and that they needed others to encourage them. Many of the teachers appeared to seek self-validation through their relationships at work. In chapter eight I cited, for example, late-career teacher Marjory, who commented that she needed others to tell her when she was doing something good. The headteachers, on the other hand, took a less

personalised view, and typically took *institutional indicators* such as examination results or subscription levels as evidence of their success rather than seeking validation and reinforcement through personal relationships, although the indicators they valued related directly to pupils and their achievements. One typical example was that of headteacher Gladys, who used her analysis of the destinations of school leavers each year as her yardstick. This was her 'passion'; it was her way of knowing that she (that is, her school) was doing a good job.

The headteachers also appeared to have developed self-protection skills in terms of learning to manage their own feelings and level of emotional involvement in the job. There was a perceived need expressed by several headteachers to learn not to take things too personally, and not to allow themselves to become too emotional in their leadership behaviour. Four women specifically discussed the need to maintain a certain professional detachment at work. The women's coping strategies varied, but this extract from Sally's narrative provides a flavour of the sort of strategies women adopted, in learning to cope with unpopularity. Sally discussed how she had come to realise that staff reluctance and resistance to change were not necessarily rooted in their personal dislike of her:

You can, if you're not careful...take too many things too personally and be too emotional about your leadership...it becomes all heart and no head...I think when I first started, if somebody didn't do something I wanted done, I took it personally, and thought, why are they doing this to me? Well of course they're not doing it to *me* at all, are they? (Sally, headteacher).

This is an interesting insight when viewed in conjunction with the experiences of other headteachers. Sally was one of the most recently appointed of the headteachers interviewed, and was starting to develop her own strategies for coping with a range of challenges in the job. It is useful to compare her comments with those of more

experienced headteachers such as Claudette, whom I cite earlier. Just as Claudette had learned to manage professional relationships without focussing in a self-destructive way on what she saw to be the fact of her own unpopularity in her first school, Sally was in the process of realising that she needed to de-personalise and rationalise her analysis of staff unwillingness to co-operate with her. She was becoming aware that there were dangers involved for her in a high level of emotional involvement in institutional issues, and was consciously engaged in a process of separating out the personal and the professional, in order to protect herself and to function effectively. Whilst she did not fear ‘intimacy’ in the way that Gilligan (1982 p.42) observes that (some) men do, she saw certain dangers arising from her own emotional involvement in the workplace and so was taking steps to manage her own emotional rationality.

Personal and professional support networks

Whilst headteachers worked to build relationships with and between staff in school that would enhance school effectiveness, most built their own networks of support *outside* the institution, drawing on these both for friendship and professional advice. It was interesting to note that support from others emerged for most of the women as more important actually in the post of headship than on the way up to it. Networks typically included a range of former colleagues, family members, and friends, usually including certain key friends who were, or had been, headteachers themselves. The support of headteachers, especially but not exclusively other women, was a particular source of strength. Sally, for instance, commented:

[It helps to have] made contact with other women heads. We’ve got a heads’ conference coming up... this week, and I know that a group of us are going to meet up and we’ll have a good old chat... [One of them] had her OFSTED [inspection] last week, so we’re going to have a get together in the bar and a chat and... chew things over. So [it helps to have] colleagues that you can pick up the ‘phone and say, ‘What would

you do with this?'... 'Have you got a good policy for so-and-so?'... That kind of support [helps]...and we share things. Although I have to say, in [this area] most of my colleagues are male and they're equally supportive. You can ring them up...if you're stuck for something, and...they will ring you up. There's good contact in [this district] between the secondary heads, there's a good support network there. I think really it's the local support, and the support you make for yourself that helps you through (Sally, headteacher).

Sally's personal agency in being proactive in building her support networks is implicit in the phrase she uses 'the support you make for yourself'. Aware that there was a need for support in her role she took steps to ensure this was in place, which for her as for other headteachers emerged as an important factor in ensuring the women did not feel alone in their roles and were able to function. Again, Sally's example typifies most of the other headteachers.

The support of husbands and partners was also referred to by all of the headteachers as an important factor in helping them to progress up the career ladder, but also in coping with the many and various demands of headship. One, albeit unusual, example of the support of a partner in coping with some of the very demanding tasks of headship comes from Wilma's narrative, as she described one particularly stressful and emotionally demanding occasion:

There was a kid murdered here earlier in the year...It was dreadful ...like your worst nightmare...Someone came in and told me, and I shut the door, and I'm thinking, right, OK, what now? And I had to 'phone [my partner] and just tell him and have a little cry. And all he said was, 'My God!...that sounds dreadful. Now you've obviously got to do something now, 'phone me later'...But I think it is...knowing that there is somebody...The senior team...could fulfil that function, but he just does it brilliantly...having a supportive partner is important (Wilma, headteacher).

Given that the headteachers in this study drew mainly (or even exclusively) on sources of personal and professional support from outside their own schools, it is in a sense understandable that a common perception amongst experienced teachers and NQTs was

that theirs was a lonely life. This perception is also reinforced in research focussing on headteachers, for example in Evetts' (1994) study. Professional detachment at work and the need to adopt a coercive stance as required lend credence to the image of headteachers as isolated and vulnerable to unpopularity. However, it is apparent from the headteachers' narratives that they draw support from others through their external links: isolation and loneliness were never referred to by the headteachers in this study.

Enjoyment of challenge and change

I discussed in chapter eight the perception of many of the women teachers that headteachers' work was tedious and dull. In contrast with this negative view of school leadership were the headteachers' own positive, enthusiastic perceptions of their roles, which they saw as exciting, satisfying and stimulating. Half of the headteachers expressed in strong terms their need for, and enjoyment of, challenge. Many had been attracted by the notion of being able to manage a whole organisation and the people within it. Teamwork, being in a position to contribute new ideas and initiatives, having the power to do good and being in control were cited by over a half of the women as major sources of satisfaction. The job was seen to require a range of skills and to involve a diverse range of activities, offering freedom and variety. A number gave examples of specific projects they had overseen, for example, building projects, and explained that they derived considerable satisfaction from seeing change and improvement over time, as well as from the greater project of managing the whole school. Renee for example commented:

I certainly did feel attracted to the notion of managing an organisation and a team of people. And that's the real buzz about headship really – you can see change over a period of time, and you can be involved in not only young people's development but in staff development, and in managing a building, changing the building and managing projects... and you can see the thing come together... It's great to appoint people and

then see them add value to your team, and there's a real buzz about that. It's great to change the building and bring in extra resources and hear people say, 'Hey, that was a really good decision!' ... [The] real buzz [is], about being able to just do lots of things and to pull the thing together and see it change (Renee, headteacher).

The need for effective strategic management to bring about change and improvement was frequently referred to. A common perception of the role of headteacher was that she should know and understand the dynamics of the school and its socio-political environment, provide a clear vision for future development, and lead the school community in fulfilling it. Renee, for instance, commented that the role of a headteacher was 'to...see what the potential for an educational organisation is, and to be able to promote that sense of 'This is where we're going'', adding that 'you have to be good at analysis of where the organisation is and where you want it to be'.

Change management was seen to require highly developed skills of communication, in particular, the ability to take an overview and act as a link between the various members of the school community, and the persuasive skills necessary to convince others both of the need to bring about change and of the validity of the changes suggested. This was commonly seen by the headteachers to require an ability to challenge existing ideas and methods, and encourage a constant questioning of what was going on in school. Some commented that they particularly enjoyed working to 'get people on side'. Linked to this, the majority of the headteachers saw their role as to set the tone, and to lead by example. Their perception of the school as a dynamic institution, set within a dynamic politico-social context, seemed to be linked to their self-perceptions as agents of change, which I discussed earlier. Whereas, as discussed in chapter eight, the teachers who were uninterested in headship seemed to view it as taking on work and values imposed from outside, the headteachers saw it as their role to interpret external influences and

use their knowledge and understanding of the broader context to steer institutional development in such a way that the focus on pupils' needs was not obscured.

Work-life balance strategies

I noted in chapter eight the widely held perception amongst the women teachers that headship left no time for family or personal life. Having an appropriate work-life balance was however also a priority for the headteachers, and seen by most of them as crucial for a happy working life. Most had experienced home-work conflicts at some point, but more than half reported that they were happy with their current work-life balance, which was somewhat at odds with the perception voiced by women in the other groups that headship necessarily implies missing out on home life and leisure time. Many headteachers had developed, or were developing, coping strategies to ensure some balance, and to take positive steps to ensure that work did not impinge on home life.

There was considerable variation in the headteachers' ways of managing their workload and work-life balance, but some common strategies included: identifying clear no-work times in the week; working in school when the school was closed in order to have calm, uninterrupted working time, and working through the senior leadership team rather than trying to be a one-woman show. More than half talked about working very long hours during term time in order to be able to keep on top of the work, but balancing that by taking time out and spending time with partners and family during at least some school holidays. Sally was one of the newer headteachers in the study, and although she had found the pressure intense, she was now, at the beginning of her fourth year in post, starting to find ways to manage the workload and improve her work-life balance:

When it comes to work-life balance, I don't think for a head there is one...I accept it, but I accept it grudgingly...It's the expectation that you will always be available...but I don't do school on a Sunday, and...last half-term...I went away for the week. That is the first holiday I've had since I've been a head...I will do more of that, because the effect was great, to get away for a whole week and not think about school...I'm quite often in school at weekends, on a Saturday, for half a day, catching up on paperwork, just having some quiet time...coming in when the school is empty, you can actually get a lot done (Sally, headteacher).

Whilst the headteachers did not deny that the workload was heavy and the pressure intense at times, they also indicated that it was possible to find ways to make the workload manageable and to take steps to ensure some work-life balance. Some even viewed headship as offering greater flexibility and therefore greater scope for taking control of all aspects of one's life.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was on the individual factors affecting women headteachers' career decisions, including motivation and values, and the women's perceptions as agents of change in the leadership role. The key findings are summarised below.

Whilst headteachers shared the pupil-centred values of the teachers, there was a greater tendency for them to contextualise these within a politico-educational framework, which was often rooted in their own life history. Career decisions had in many cases been driven by values that formed a part of headteachers' politicised identities. Their satisfaction was derived from the success of their schools and the pupils in them. Positive relationships were seen to be a part of the successful school. A model of women teachers' relational needs and motivation was posited, reflecting an emphasis on positive relationships and fostering others' achievements.

The women headteachers' perceptions of themselves in their roles contrasted starkly with the negative perceptions of school leadership harboured by most of the women teachers. Drawing on the headteachers' narratives, an alternative paradigm of school leadership was posited. The women put pupils first and saw it as their role to promote a pupils-first philosophy in their schools. A fusion of toughness and caring characterised their approach to leadership, and they were conscious of adapting their leadership style to suit the context being managed. Positive relationships were valued as an important part of the effective school rather than to foster personal popularity, and the women had developed skills of emotional rationality and self-protection in their leadership behaviour. They were proactive in building networks of personal and professional support outside school. The enjoyment of challenge, and the self-perception as an agent of change were key features. All had developed or were developing strategies for ensuring an appropriate work-life balance.

CHAPTER TEN

Analysis of findings part five: personal agency and approach to career

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the link between personal agency and career decisions. Drawing on all forty narratives, I present a typology of women teachers' approaches to career in which the degree of personal agency is a key factor. Clear differences between headteachers and most other teachers are again apparent.

Beyond the barriers: personal agency and career approach

I defined 'agency' in chapter four as the capacity to *take control* of an aspect or aspects of one's own life. I consider here participants' awareness of their own potential for agency, and the ways in which they exerted it in their approach to career, arguing that this is a key factor affecting women's career decisions. This adds a new dimension to the debate about career-shaping factors, moving beyond the 'barriers to progression' approach.

Whilst there was evidence in the women's narratives that they had encountered the barriers and constraints identified earlier, it was also clear that women are not passive dupes whose lives are totally shaped by, for instance, the forces of socialisation, socially constructed images of femininity, or workplace discrimination. Theories that over-emphasise the importance of barriers to progression in accounting for women's career paths are based on the assumption that women are passive receptacles of their conditioning, compliant with the constraints placed upon them, a position that implicitly

denies the possibility of women's agency, and is antithetical to the aims of feminist theory and research (Ernst, 2005; Bracke, 2003; Meyers, 1998; Munro, 1998; Gardiner, 1995; Hekman, 1995; Stanley & Wise, 1993). Whilst barriers-oriented theories can offer some insights into how women's decisions and choices are framed within the particular contexts of their lives, it is important to recognise that women do exercise personal agency, make choices (albeit within certain constraints), and resist the factors limiting their freedom, in different ways at different life and career stages. Social influences, as Nelson-Kuna and Riger (1995 pp.175-6) argue, can constrain and shape women's agency. They do not, however, 'remove the ability to act' (*ibid.*).

Through the life history narratives it was possible to gain insights into the ways in which agency and structure intermesh to frame women's decisions, as implied in Giddens' (1991; 1984; 1976) theory of structuration. Analysis of the narratives indicated, as in Evetts' (1994 p.51) study, that social institutions and structures were not 'the ultimate determinants of all outcomes' and that participants were not passive but *responded* in various ways to the constraints on their lives.

Personal agency and women teachers' career decisions: a typology of career approaches

Narrators seemed to perceive and describe their career path in one of two ways. Some saw it as *self-defined* and self-powered, describing how their career moves had been planned and initiated by them, and their career choices informed by their own, self-defined, values and aspirations. Others saw their career paths as defined by factors largely *external to themselves*. They perceived that certain identifiable factors had limited or defined the range of career options open to them, and described how they had

made their choices within these constraints. The particular contexts and circumstances of their lives and jobs (opportunities available, limitations, level of support from others, fate, chance events, family responsibilities, partner's attitude and so on) were seen to have framed their decisions, and in some cases, stymied their potential progression. Within each of these categories a number of types of approach to career were discernible. These I organised into a typology (see tables seventeen and eighteen, overleaf).

Whilst the typology was developed out of the evidence emerging from the forty participants' narratives, it should be stressed that these are ideal types, not perfect matches for individual women. Whilst some women matched one type closely, others had characteristics of more than one type, or had changed from one type to another at different stages of their careers (for a summary of how individual women matched the identified types, see appendix nine).

Table seventeen: a typology of women teachers' approaches to career, category one (career path perceived as self-defined)

Type	Self-perceptions / indicators of degree of personal agency in career decisions	Approach to career
Planners...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are self-driven and self-motivated; • are able to envisage themselves as leaders; • are motivated by a desire to effect change at whole-school level; • are willing to continue applying for promotions after unsuccessful job applications; • have high self-expectations and high levels of self-belief and self-esteem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see career as a very important part of their lives; • take a strategic approach to career progression – e.g., have clear, staged ambitions, and set out to gain specific types of responsibility, training and experience that will enable them to achieve career goals; • have a high level of motivation; • have a positive attitude to their job.
Pedagogues...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • derive a sense of self and satisfaction from pupil achievement, and positive relationships with pupils and colleagues; • see their primary role as that of nurturer; • contrast themselves and their values with perceived school leadership values/behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make career decisions in accordance with values relating to pupil welfare and achievement and positive working relationships; • opt for a classroom-based career; • display a strong sense of dedication and commitment to classroom teaching.
Politicised leaders...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a strong sense of values; • have a high level of motivation; • have a sense of mission and purpose; • have high aspirations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make career decisions in accordance with their politico-educational values/ philosophy of education; • see a need to attain senior positions in order to effect positive changes school-wide; • aim for positions of influence.

Table eighteen: a typology of women teachers' approaches to career, category two (career path perceived as externally-defined)

Type	Self-perceptions/indicators of degree of personal agency in career decisions	Approach to career
Pushed prevaricators...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under-value their own ability and potential, and lack confidence; • need encouragement and feedback from others to boost professional self-esteem and confidence; • are reluctant to apply for promotions unless actively encouraged to do so by a respected mentor / manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depend on professional sources for support with career development / professional self-esteem; • avoid making conscious career decisions or planning career moves alone; • are much more likely to apply for / achieve promotions as a result of suggestions/ encouragement / mentoring from professional colleagues (especially senior colleagues).
Pragmatists...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fit career around other priorities or responsibilities, e.g., family, health issues, partner's career etc; • experience a sense of guilt/role conflict in combining job and other responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are willing to take on additional professional responsibilities if these do not detract from other important areas of life, e.g., family; • are more likely to respond to opportunities that arise 'in situ', rather than actively seeking out /planning career moves/promotions elsewhere; • are less ambitious than earlier in their careers; • are concerned with balancing school and family/personal life appropriately.
Protesters...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse and identify factors external to themselves limiting their career progression /options; • are also critical of their own actions in retrospect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience anger, indignation and frustration resulting from awareness of factors blocking their career development, e.g., discrimination, others' negative attitudes, lack of support, limited choices available, family, specific problems associated with particular working context; • develop a sense of self-determination.

An important factor distinguishing the types was the extent to which women seemed to be aware of their own potential for agency, and the ways in which they chose to exert that agency in their approach to career. There is a considerable difference, in terms of personal agency, between, for example, the 'planners' and the 'pushed prevaricators'. Whilst the 'planner' has a high level of self-confidence and self-motivation, the 'pushed prevaricator' lacks confidence and depends on others to raise her self-esteem and direct her career moves. The 'planner' will continue to make applications for promotion even after unsuccessful attempts, whereas the 'pushed prevaricator' will lose confidence and may disengage, unless support and reassurance are supplied by respected mentors or (usually senior) managers, on whom she relies for a sense of professional self-worth. The 'planner' has clear, staged ambitions and sets out to gain specific types of responsibility, training or experience that will act as stepping stones towards her career goals, whereas the 'pushed prevaricator' feels relatively powerless in the process of her own career development. She abdicates responsibility for it, relying instead on others to prompt her to apply for posts and re-confirm their belief in her abilities. Whereas the 'planner' believes in herself and takes control of her career, the 'pushed prevaricator' seeks validation through others and waits for them to make decisions on her behalf rather than taking unprompted action herself. These are just two examples from the typology, but the levels of agency evident in the different types vary considerably.

Overleaf, I discuss each of the types and relate it to participants in the study, considering how agency and career approach are linked.

Category one: those perceiving their careers as self-defined (planners, pedagogues and politicised leaders)

The three types in this category saw their career decisions as primarily self-defined. This implies that the women exerted a relatively high degree of personal agency in making life and work choices. Below I discuss each of the three types – planners, pedagogues and politicised leaders. I begin each sub-section with a brief description of the key characteristics of the type. I then illustrate this with an example of a woman who matched the type closely, though not necessarily exactly, and then discuss how the type related to the broader sample.

Planners

The key characteristics of planners are that they attach a great deal of importance to career, and that they take a strategic approach to their career progression. They have clear aspirations from an early stage of their careers and a clear view of the steps they need to take in order to achieve their career goals. They take responsibility themselves for their own career development. They are highly motivated, and have a very positive attitude to their job. Their approach is characterised by a high level of personal agency, manifested in a tendency to be self-driven and self-motivated, and in their belief in themselves as capable leaders, able to exert influence and effect change. Their self-expectations are high, as is their self-esteem, and they are not discouraged from continuing to seek promotion after making unsuccessful applications. A good example of this type was Gladys, who was headteacher of a girls' grammar school in Southshire (see table thirteen, p.111).

The planner: Gladys, headteacher

Gladys was 57. She had been teaching for thirty years and was in her twelfth year as headteacher of a girls' grammar school in Southshire. She had been married for twenty-four years, and had a daughter who was thirty-five. She was a good example of a 'planner', but also had some characteristics of the politicised leader type, which I discuss in the next sub-section. I include here extracts from her narrative which demonstrate her planned approach to career and the high levels of personal agency that characterised the personal responsibility she took for her own career development.

I left school at eighteen...[and] went to work...[firstly] in insurance... [and then] in social services. I didn't like either of those particularly, because I couldn't see anywhere I would go, and now I look back, I see that was my own personal self-driver inside me. I didn't recognise it then, but I felt that those [positions] were not somewhere I could progress... So I went to [teacher training college]...

My career is very much structured and follows a loose plan...I have always taught in [Southshire] girls' grammar schools...Because maths was my subject, my preference was to teach in a selective [school], because I wanted to teach 'A' level maths...In [Southshire] mainly the schools are single-sexed, so therefore, the first one I went for was a girls' grammar school...I have stayed in that, because I have actually enjoyed that environment...and consequently, when I was looking for [a headteacher post] I was looking for posts in a girls' grammar school. And this was the first one that came up. I applied for it and got it, to my surprise!...

I planned [my career], in that I knew after I'd taught for a couple of years that I wanted to be a head of department. And then as I moved up, I felt, yes, I could do the next stage. So, as I took on one level of responsibility it was always with an eye to the next level...Each time I have moved on, I've thought seriously, in three or four years I will be looking at the next post...

Though my career progression was very fast...I in fact [at one stage] had allowed myself...to get into the wrong situation by staying [too long] in one school...My CV then didn't look very good, because if you didn't look at the string of titles I'd had [second in maths, head of maths, senior teacher, deputy head], you just looked at the fact that I'd been in two schools. I was thinking, I can't go from deputy head to headship from here...So I then...decided that I had to move sideways. So in '91 I became the deputy at [another] girls' grammar school, working for my former colleague...I'd only been there about five days and she said to

me, 'You're probably the best deputy I've ever come across!' And my sense of self lifted and then...I applied for this job eighteen months later and...got it. I wouldn't have done that without the sideways move...

[I have been] very self-motivated. I'm a strongly individual person. I have had some people along the career path who've been extremely helpful, and when I've thought, 'Hmm, I'm not sure I can do that', they've said 'Yes!' But my own career structure has been in my head... most of it is self-motivated...The person who demands most of *me*, is me. I am the person that I have to live with, which isn't always comfortable, because I am a perfectionist (Gladys, headteacher).

As noted by David and Woodward (1998), Coleman (1994) and Davidson and Cooper (1992), it would seem that typically, women do not plan their careers. Relatively few women in the study - a total of six - emerged as clear 'planners'. These included two NQTs (Danielle and Susan), one mid-career teacher (Sarah) and three headteachers (Gladys, Claudette and Brenda). Whilst all six had clear characteristics of the planner type, there were important differences as a function of their differing life and career stages. Mid-career teacher Sarah, as a mother of young children, still planned to progress towards deputy headship, but had modified her earlier aspirations in accordance with the needs of her family and her husband's job. The career planning of the three headteachers was apparent in their retrospective descriptions of how they had achieved their ambitions, whilst the NQTs' career 'planning' took the form of as yet unrealised hopes, ambitions and aspirations for the future. Nonetheless, some form of planning characterised all six women's approach to career.

Many of the experienced teachers perceived that their career development and decisions had occurred in a haphazard way, as a result of the influence of other people, or chance events and developments. This was often true of their initial decision to teach. For example, Diana did a PGCE because she 'couldn't think of anything else that she wanted to do'; Gloria 'drifted into teaching', prompted by an appeal by her LEA for

new teachers with her subject specialism to come forward, and subsequently found her first job through a social contact. Ann described her entry into teaching as 'pure fluke', and something that happened because she had not had the confidence to apply to art college. Others had been encouraged by friends and colleagues to consider teaching, after 'discovering' their abilities via other experiences. Once in the profession, the careers of most of the experienced teachers had been characterised by a lack of coherent career planning, and a reluctance to take conscious control.

On the other hand, all of the NQTs were, in a sense, starting to plan their careers, in the sense that all had, to differing extents, formulated at least some notion of their medium term aspirations. Some envisaged taking up pastoral positions, some head of department, and others thought they would move into different branches of education. In most cases, their aspirations at this stage were understandably vague. Danielle and Susan stood out, however. Both already had a staged career plan in mind: they aspired to leadership positions, and already had a clear view of the steps they would need to take in order to achieve their career goals. Susan thought she might become a deputy headteacher, and Danielle would consider headship. Danielle's plan was particularly clear, including specific roles she would like to take on, from a post of responsibility within her current department, to head of department, eventually deputy headteacher and eventually, possibly, headship. She already envisaged taking responsibility for and control of her career path, thinking through the stages she would follow and formulating a strategic plan to enable her to reach a senior leadership position. She anticipated that her first promotion would be to develop the use of new technologies in her department, and was already working on this in her own teaching and in tandem with her head of

department. She was clear that she would progress up the career ladder, and clear in how she needed to manage her own self-perceptions to stay buoyant:

I think that I need to move on, within the job, set myself challenges... I always need to be doing something else, and I really need to set myself challenges within teaching itself... That keeps me going... [so that I don't] lose my self-esteem or patience, or come to hate the job... I think I'll need to move on and do other things on top, take on responsibilities (Danielle, NQT).

In the headteacher group as in the experienced teacher group, very few of the women said that they had had an early aspiration to teach. Again, many had entered teaching by 'accident', default, through chance events, or come into it as a result of working in another field. Often the motivation to teach had come about through positive experiences of working with young people in a different line of work. For example, Renee, who described herself as a 'reluctant teacher', had come into teaching after working with adolescents in a psychiatric hospital, and Fiona had come into it through her involvement initially as a care worker with EBD children.

The difference between the headteachers and the other teachers was that, once in the teaching profession, the headteachers had taken control of their careers. Most of the headteachers were, in retrospect, aware of having planned their careers, at least in part, which suggests that the ability to take responsibility for, and control of, one's own career development, is an important factor in the likelihood of becoming a headteacher. Some had set out, like NQT Danielle was already starting to do, to gain specific types of experience they knew they would need in order to progress from one level to the next, or, like Gladys, to gain experience in different types of schools, which was also seen as a useful career development strategy. Four said they were conscious of being self-powered, driven people, and linked their career progression to this.

Three headteachers (Gladys, Claudette and Brenda) matched the planner type closely. Gladys, as illustrated in the extract from her narrative, had planned step-by-step rather than aspiring to headship from the start. Claudette, though, had known from the start that she wanted to be a headteacher, and so had planned her career moves accordingly:

I'm pretty sure I did [plan my career]. I remember doing that ... And as soon as I thought about headship, I thought, well, I have to know how you get there, so I asked lots of questions from a very early stage, really (Claudette, headteacher).

Brenda's interest in whole school leadership developed mid-career, and she took a strategic approach from there:

In the end you have to say, right, this is up to me now, I'm going to go on this course, I'm going to develop my skills...It's about playing to your strengths...I went on a course run by SHA, the secondary heads' association...I thought to myself, well, I can do that...I think you just have to throw your hat into the ring really...It would have been the easiest thing in the world to stay [in my head of department post], and then I looked around at some of the people who had stayed there beyond their sell-by date really...and I thought, I don't want to become like that...while I've still got life and vitality...then I started to think about and make efforts towards getting a deputy headship, and got one, four years ago... [then] I came here (Brenda, headteacher).

Planners are characterised by a high degree of personal agency. As demonstrated in the above examples and in Gladys' narrative, they take control of and responsibility for their own career development rather than waiting for opportunities to happen to them, or for someone else to prompt them to apply for posts or think about moving on. As Brenda commented, she realised it was 'up to her' to take control of her own career development. This agentic career approach was an interesting contrast with that of some of the experienced teachers, who emerged as rather more dependent on the support and encouragement of others to apply for and gain promotions (this is discussed further in the sections on the other types, later in this chapter). Unlike the women fitting for example the 'pushed prevaricator' type, who perceived themselves as needing others to prompt and encourage them, most of the headteachers were very clear that

support from others had not generally been forthcoming, and that their career progression had been the result of their own efforts. Two were quite explicit in saying that they had *never* received support, advice or encouragement with career development from anyone in a professional capacity. Some, like Gladys, had been supported and encouraged from time to time, by particular individuals at different points of their career, but this had largely been ad hoc, and seen as a bonus rather than a driving force. They had appreciated that support when it came, but had never depended on it. Fairly common examples of this included support and encouragement during their earlier careers from headteachers or other more experienced colleagues, who encouraged them to apply or continue applying for promotions. It is evident in Gladys' narrative that even though the support of her former colleagues was highly valued by her, she was not absolutely dependent on it, but had a great deal of self-motivation.

Another important feature of this type was the women's ability to accept, rationalise and recover from the outcome of unsuccessful applications for posts, rather than internalise them as personal failure. Planners were able to make sense of their unsuccessful applications in such a way that their motivation to continue to apply was unchanged. They were able to accept selectors' decisions without adverse negative reactions. Brenda, for example, had been able to accept the unsuccessful outcome of previous headship applications as confirmation that she and the school were not a good match:

Sometimes you go and you just think, I know this isn't the job for me... I went to [an] interview where I didn't get the job...but I honestly don't think I was the right person...and the woman who got it...was absolutely right for them...So I think ... you have to be ...grown up about it really (Brenda, headteacher).

This ability to rationalise and de-personalise the experience was a key factor in the women's approach, underpinned by high levels of self-belief. This contrasted with, for

example, the pushed prevaricators, whom I discuss later, who perceived unsuccessful applications as personal failures. Their sense of rejection therefore had a debilitating effect on their self-esteem and confidence, and made them less likely to continue to apply for promotions. Planners were more likely to see 'failure' in the application process as a signpost, indicating how they needed to adapt their approach and learn, rather than as indications that they had no hope of success. Earlier in her career, headteacher Wilma, for example, had applied for a job as a head of department and at the time was disappointed not to get it, but, 'it ... made me reflect and realise that being a head of [department] was not my thing. That just wasn't my strength'. Looking back Wilma now reflected that, 'the failures weren't too bad, and they were probably important, because you do need a bit of failure, don't you, in your life?' Rather than reacting in destructively self-critical ways, the women realised they merely needed to make what were in some cases relatively minor changes to their approach. Claudette, for instance, simply needed to improve her written applications:

The stage I had the most problems with was when I was a senior teacher and applying for deputy headships, and believe it or not I was applying without doing a CV, and eventually somebody said, why don't you do CVs? I'd done about fifteen applications for deputy headship by then. I did five more, got short-listed for three out of the five applications, and got one of the three. So, once I'd learned the techniques of applying for jobs, it got very much easier...I think sometimes it's as simple as not knowing what people are looking for, and it certainly was for me at that stage (Claudette, headteacher).

In addition to the proactive and self-directed approach to career management that characterised the planners, another important factor affecting their career decisions was their *awareness* of their own potential for agency, which was apparent in the reasons behind their aspirations to lead. Both of the aspirant NQTs relished the prospect of being in a position where they could take decisions and make improvements school wide, and wanted to be able to manage and motivate others. In both cases, the

women's observations of the practice of leadership teams they had thus far encountered had prompted them to reflect critically on how this could be improved, and therefore on how they themselves might tackle a senior role. Danielle for example commented:

You see so many examples of bad practice at senior management level that you would like to change things... Sometimes senior management are not working with us but against us... You see how it is... and you think, well, it's not that good really – it could be better! And it's not impossible. There are things you could do... that aren't being done (Danielle, NQT).

Danielle and Susan were already developing an interest in and understanding of whole school effectiveness, and this translated into a sense of mission and purpose in terms of their career outlook, as they looked forwards and outwards from classroom teaching towards the wider project of running a school. In this, they were comparable to the headteachers in the study, several of whom had developed this interest in whole school management from early on in their careers. Headteacher Claudette, for example, recalled:

I loved training as a teacher, and I loved being a teacher. I was always the last one out of school... when we made visits to schools. I always had so many questions to ask, and I really wanted to see how schools worked, and how you change things. I loved going into good schools and seeing really good teachers, and that's what I wanted to be... And I always wanted to be a head, because I thought the only real way you could influence what happened in school was to be a headteacher (Claudette, headteacher).

An important factor in the aspiration to lead was the nature of the women's self-perceptions. The example I cited above from Danielle's narrative is indicative of the self-perceptions that underpinned the perspective of both of the high-aspiring NQTs. The significant factor is that they *saw themselves as capable* of changing and improving what was unsatisfactory in the management of schools. They positioned themselves as agents, able to take control and effect change and improvements. This mirrored headteacher Claudette's retrospective view of herself as a young teacher who realised

that if she wanted to have any influence she needed to become a headteacher. Again Claudette's sense of her potential personal agency is implicit – she did not question her own ability to effect necessary change; she needed only to achieve the position.

This self-belief contrasted with the self-perceptions implicit in the view expressed by the majority of the other women teachers. Both experienced and inexperienced teachers typically expressed their dissatisfaction with the 'system', or their abhorrence of the culture and preoccupations of school leadership, and talked about how they would like schools to be run. They did not, though, seem to perceive themselves as able to make those changes happen. Rather, their implicit view was that becoming a headteacher entailed being shaped and controlled by a culture over which one had little control. The perspectives of NQTs Danielle and Susan, like the young Claudette, differed in that they were founded on an assumption that in a senior position, the control would be in *their* hands. They did not seem to anticipate being controlled or restricted by the social, cultural and political structures surrounding school leadership. Whilst it might be argued that this view was founded on a lack of experience and a certain naivety about the constraints and pressures affecting the work of headteachers, it is worth noting that these two women's narratives resonated with several of the headteachers' retrospective descriptions of their earlier approach to career.

Considering the headteachers' experiences, it seems reasonable to assume that the younger teachers who were already emerging as planners should be more likely to rise to senior levels, although indications from the experiences of many women in the study who became mothers point to the likelihood of career plans being shelved, modified, postponed or abandoned as a result of taking on responsibility for children, as with the

women in Aveling's (2002) study. Coral, for instance, whom I cite as an example of the 'protester' type later, had started her career with a plan in mind, intending to become a deputy head, but changed tack, modifying her aspirations as marriage and motherhood altered her priorities. Even Sarah, who was the only experienced teacher to manifest a number of the characteristics of the planner type, had modified her aspirations and career expectations in accordance with her family needs. Although she still aspired to become a deputy headteacher, she expected the rate of her career progression to be slower as a result of being a mother, and she was limited geographically to the area in which her husband, a vicar, had his parish. Sarah also explained that headship was out of the question as it would be unfair on her family to pursue a post that made so many demands on her. Motherhood, as discussed in chapters two and six, emerged as one of the strongest factors affecting even the most proactive of planners' career progression. It became apparent that whilst it may be possible to plan, exert agency and make decisions, the realities of the constraints of one's life place limitations on what can be achieved at the individual level.

Pedagogues

The key characteristics of pedagogues are that they hold clear personal values relating to pupil welfare and achievement, and attach a great deal of importance to positive relationships. Career decisions are made in accordance with their pupil-centred and relational values. Typically, they opt positively for classroom teaching in preference to a career in school leadership. Pedagogues see their primary role as that of nurturer and derive a sense of self and job satisfaction from pupil achievement and the positive relationships they enjoy with pupils and colleagues. They are conscious of espousing values at odds with those they perceive to be endemic in school leadership, and see that

by opting to stay in the classroom they are making a positive, self-defined choice, implying a high degree of personal agency in their career decisions.

The pedagogue: Carol, mid-career teacher

Carol (see chapter table eleven, p.109) was forty years old and had been teaching for twelve years. She was an English teacher and Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) in a mixed, non-selective school in Southshire, a post she had held for nine months. She had always chosen to work part-time, and was working for four days per week.

I particularly [chose to work in my current school]...I knew the area because I grew up here...It's a really nice school, and the kids are tough...The intake is low-ability, low self-esteem, predominantly housing estate...it has had really bad press. It was in special measures two years ago...

[My philosophy of education] is about equality of opportunity really, and it's about equality of opportunity for children who are pretty anti-learning. I've always preferred working with kids who are much more challenging...because I feel that they're entitled to something that they don't realise they could have, and that if you can just get them to see that they can have it, bizarrely enough they can have it, because they can all get the qualifications. And I just think that children can achieve so much if you tell them that they can...

When I started work in a secondary school...I found the kids very funny and [I liked] working with other people who were...on a par...I love working in the sort of team environment that teaching generates, so I like being in education because people tend to work together. There's a feeling of being in it together, somehow...And I just loved being in front of a class. I couldn't believe how much fun it was...It's brilliant...I just took off, really...

When I went into teaching, I said I would not under any circumstances climb up the ladder, that I would...become a teacher and I would stay there. I also made quite a radical decision that I would only work part-time, and I've stuck to it all along...I realised that one thing that was making me a really good teacher was the fact that I was only doing it four days a week...I realised early on that it was just magic...It is a choice [that has enabled me to stay positive about teaching], because I was always on top of the work. I was never one of those desperate struggling people with piles of marking up to the ceiling...My aspirations haven't changed since I started teaching. The thing that I still aspire to is creating a fabulous classroom environment really.

That's what I think is the winning formula. I've [also] got much more involved in training other teachers, and that again was something that I'd always envisaged being involved in. I really, really enjoy that side of it. In a sense that aspiration was always there. I've always had this idea right from the outset that what would be great would be to be involved in training other people, and to be involved in being a great English teacher, and I suppose AST kind of brings together those ideas... I was in my last school for eleven years. I liked it so I stayed. People told me I should move on... It seems to me that we've developed a really strange culture around career now. 'Career' has to mean changing schools all the time, but actually there's so much benefit in staying in one school. There's benefit for the client group, certainly, the kids. There's benefit for you. There's benefit for senior management teams. In fact, it benefits everybody if there are people who are willing to stay put. But we're given this myth all the time that the grass must be greener somewhere else...

I have no interest in senior management. I don't like the whole culture of management really. It seems to involve camps and... I'm not sure that it isn't all a bit sneaky and a bit backhanded, and people... do things in quite an unpleasant way. I don't think the culture is about being honest and truthful and straightforward with people. I think it's very often about manipulating and politicking ... such a waste of time and energy really, and for me what the classroom offers is a really straightforward environment... it's me, the kids. I've got to work hard and get results and see them enjoy English, you know, there's all these nice straightforward concepts... [whereas, in the management culture] there is this expectation that you've got to perform, you've got to deliver, you've got to achieve... The culture of management is to beat people about the head if they don't achieve, and I don't want that either... I think the whole blame-punishment thing is a very male thing originally, and quite a lot of women have ended up buying into it. And of course it's a very school-based thing... it's almost like, if you don't deliver, you get the cane! I don't like that allocating blame, I suppose, I find it very odd...

[The greatest satisfaction for me comes from] the kids surprising themselves by what they can do. I had one girl on the GCSE course who had been entered for Foundation Tier and she desperately wanted to get a B, because she wanted to do English at 'A' level, and I took a huge risk and changed her entry to Higher Tier amid much frowning and people saying 'No, no!' - and she got an A! And she was just over the moon, it was the most wonderful moment. Or producing something, a worksheet or something, so that a kid finally gets it: 'Oh, I get it now!' And you just think 'Oh, yes! Yes! Fantastic' - so you know, I love that! I mean really for every teacher that's got to be it...

[Staying positive in the classroom] is about, actually, keeping motivated, because I think that is the most difficult key to find ... What is it that can make somebody be motivated consistently? And it's something about - to me - something about striving for excellence, and making that

striving fun, so that when you get knocked back [you can think], oh no, that lesson was bad! But what's going to make my next lesson brilliant? And what would have made this really good lesson even better? What would have meant that every single kid was involved rather than 90% of them? What would have made it a little bit funnier?...So it's that kind of self-evaluation all the time that can actually be really good fun. I think then you can get this ongoing motivation, because it almost becomes a fun little competition you are having with yourself...very exciting ...

[The other important element is] colleagues, definitely...The people in my department are such lovely people. It's lovely, absolutely lovely, and that just makes a huge difference to every day...and the senior management team are important...It's really important to have an approachable senior management team (Carol, mid-career teacher).

Twenty of the thirty teachers matched the 'pedagogues' type closely or quite closely, including seven NQTs, seven mid-career teachers and six late-career teachers. In addition, three other women (one NQT and two late-career teachers) shared some of the characteristics of this type. Two more saw that they had been strongly values-led earlier in their careers, including Sandra, who commented, 'from the outset I was not looking for promotion. I was looking to land myself with in a school context where the ethos was consistent with my strongly held ideology about what was best educationally'.

As is clear in the extract from Carol's narrative, above, the values that drove the pedagogues' career decisions were expressed in terms of the importance of pupil welfare and achievement, and the principles of equal opportunity and inclusion. Late-career teacher Caroline, for example, reflecting on what made her happy at work, talked about enabling young people to achieve at their own level, and knowing that as a result of work she had done, she had 'saved young people from being excluded and actually tried to put them in the right direction'. The pedagogues typically drew satisfaction from teaching and the relationships they enjoyed with pupils and colleagues, and made career decisions accordingly. Late-career teacher Olwen, for instance, explained why

she had not taken up an opportunity that arose earlier in her career to do a Master's degree in Educational Psychology, a change of career that actually held some considerable interest for her:

What stopped me was because I felt I would miss...building up relationships [with children], because I very much taught [and] disciplined my classes through the relationships [I] built up...I did enjoy the relationship with the children...I sometimes got tremendous pleasure in feeling that I had done something for this child that no-one else could do (Olwen, late-career teacher).

The emphasis Olwen placed on the needs of pupils and the benefits of positive relationships with them was typical of the pedagogues.

As with Carol, a common perception was that the pupil-centred values the pedagogues espoused were at odds with those endemic in the culture and practice of contemporary school leadership, an issue I discussed earlier in this chapter, and in chapter four. Rather than lack of ambition or an unwillingness to exert their personal agency and take control of their careers, pedagogues were characterised by a strong will to resist what they perceived to be inherent in the dominant structures and discourses of school leadership. As Munro (1998) and Nelson-Kuna and Riger (1995) argue, acts of resistance take many forms and may only be understandable *as* acts of resistance when seen within the life context of the individual woman. The life history narratives allowed acts of resistance to be contextualised and seen as indications of a high degree of personal agency. Taken out of context it would have been easy to misconstrue the women's decisions to stay in the classroom as indications of a lack of confidence or ambition. The women's positive choice to opt for classroom teaching rather than school leadership therefore implicitly represented their resistance to the values they did not wish to espouse, as in this example:

The head is a manager. He manages the school. He has no input with children... Senior managers... are running around trying to get money for this and money for that... bidding for specialist statuses... They go through hoops trying to put these packages together [to bid for specialist status] and then presenting them and going to meetings about it and being assessed for it, and all that time and effort could actually be put into teaching children! (Rhona, mid-career teacher).

The women in this category perceived that they had made positive choices, preferring the classroom to the leadership alternative for reasons grounded in their values and commitments. As in Carol's narrative, this was usually discussed alongside an expression of their antithesis to the values they perceived to be implicit in the culture of school leadership.

Whilst the pedagogues' self-perceptions seemed to indicate that they had exerted their agency in making choices in accordance with their values, and in resistance to those they abhorred, their adopted course of action had the effect of limiting their scope of influence largely to the classroom. There was not, in general, a sense in which they saw a need or even a possibility of exerting their influence school-wide without compromising their values. The perception seemed to be that the area in which they could make a difference was limited to the classroom, and did not extend beyond that. This was a key difference between pedagogues and politicised leaders, whom I discuss below.

Politicised leaders

The key characteristics of 'politicised leaders' are that they have a strong sense of politico-educational values in accordance with which they make their career decisions, and they are highly motivated individuals, with a strong sense of mission and purpose, reflected in their high aspirations. Their fundamental values relate to pupil welfare and

achievement, which they relate to a broader, political context. This is typically rooted in their own life experiences and life history. They have a politicised identity (as discussed in chapter nine), and perceive a need to attain senior positions in order to effect positive changes school-wide. They therefore aim for positions of maximum influence. Again, a high level of self-belief and a high degree of personal agency are implicit in their approach to career.

The politicised leader: Claudette, headteacher

Claudette (see table thirteen, p.111) was 58. She had been headteacher of a mixed non-selective school in Southshire for four years. This was her third headship. Her first had been in an all boys' school in an inner-city area, and her second in another mixed non-selective school in Southshire. Whilst Claudette had, arguably, a more politicised identity than many (though not all) of the other headteachers, in that she had been actively involved in party politics and political campaigning earlier in her career, many of her stated motivations for becoming a headteacher, and for her priorities in post, resonated with those of other headteachers. Her principles related to equality and achievement. She saw the school as the most productive domain in which to work in terms of having optimal influence, and she was conscious of how her politicised self-identity, rooted in her life history, informed her work and her career approach (see also chapter nine). A high level of personal agency was implicit throughout her narrative, as she described how she took actions and made plans and decisions that were true to her own principles and values, resonating with the notion of relational autonomy posited by theorists such as Mackenzie and Stoljar (2000). She matched closely both the planner and the politicised leader types. The extracts included here are selected on the basis that they illustrate the latter rather than the former:

I was born into a very working class family...I went to grammar school...and I joined the debating society when I was twelve. I think that was very influential, that I liked debating. I liked looking around. I liked seeing how things worked, and I became aware that social class was important. It influenced people's perceptions of you and ultimately, perhaps your career choices...

Over the four years I was in [teacher training] college, I really decided I wanted to be a headteacher, because I was on a governing body anyway, and I could really feel the frustration of not being able to change things very much as a governor...I thought the only real way you could influence what happened in school was to be a headteacher...

[I became head of] a boys' school in [an inner city]...and it was all Bangladeshi...It is hard to explain [why I chose that sort of school]...I'd done an MA in Equal Opportunities and I'd worked in [a previous area] for four years as a deputy. I was horrified at the fact that they didn't have an Equal Opportunities policy. I was determined to make my mark in some way. I spent three years trying to get them to actually include equal opportunities as a part of their policies...and at the end...somebody quite high up in the hierarchy there said that the term equal opportunities was to be deleted from all of their documents...I saw myself going on to a much greater challenge, having failed in that one (but having made quite a good attempt)...I just liked the idea of a challenge really...I could have applied to other, less problematic, less challenging, areas, but I wanted a challenge at the time...something that would stretch me...

I chose to work in comprehensive schools because my first political activity was around getting rid of the grammar schools...and introducing comprehensives into [city]...I played an active part in that. When I was president of the [student] union [at teacher training college] I was also very active in schools action union...[which] was the attempt by some of us to politicise and organise school students, which didn't go down very well. There was an awful lot of political activity at that time. When you look at the way politics is now in this country and America...you just can't believe how much more political young people were...I enjoyed the political activity. I thrived on politics. Part of the reason I'm head is because you have to use lots of political-type tactics...when you're dealing with certain situations...I don't believe in the so-called non-selective school in [Southshire]. I don't believe in selection. I never have. I hate it...I do believe in the comprehensive system. I used to be a member of Caroline Benn's group. We used to talk to the press about why comprehensive schools were better than selective schools, and I really regret that in this area this isn't the case...My philosophy as I am – I'm in [Southshire] – is to work to make the very best system that I can within the selective system, because, having become quite active politically, I've come to accept that there is no will on the part of the Labour Party, never mind about any other party, to change the system in [Southshire], and for as long as you worked you wouldn't change

it...it's not the right time. So I'd rather use my energies more constructively to make the schools that I've worked in the best that I can, and I think that that's a much more productive use of my time...I've always chosen to fight battles that I thought were at least somewhat capable of being won, rather than absolute no-hopers...

I think the most important thing in my life, really, since I was about twenty-three and started training as a teacher, is to be around young people and to be helping them...What makes me happy...[is] being a useful member of society, basically. I've always had that feeling that I've got to make some contribution...to do something socially useful. It's partly my political philosophy as well...I think the pursuit of wealth and power generally are not for me. I'm not really interested. It doesn't make me happy...I've always liked feeling that I've made a difference...I like to be helpful to people...to do something that's vaguely worthwhile...[and] to do things I'm fairly competent in... I've always liked feeling that I've made a difference, hopefully a positive one, to lives. So I don't mind taking children on that are being very difficult to manage and telling them off and seeing their parents. I've never had a problem with that, as long as I feel that I'm making a positive difference to their lives (Claudette, headteacher).

Eight of the ten headteachers closely matched the 'politicised leader' type, and another one had some characteristics of it. As demonstrated in Claudette's narrative, the women had in common a strong focus on young people's welfare and achievement. In this, the politicised leaders shared the same values as those of the pedagogues, as these quotes from headteachers of different types of school demonstrate:

[Education is about] developing the whole child... The girls here do very well academically, but I hope we're not an exam factory. I would always want to promote as broad a range of experience for them as possible...[Education is] also about developing all those intangible things, like being a good team player or having integrity and honesty and those sorts of things, which are more difficult to define or quantify, but this school very much promotes that sort of attitude... We are respectful of others...45% of our pupils are from ethnic minorities, so that is an enriching aspect of the school...It also means that you have to be aware of other people's cultures and...respectful of their religious or social traditions (Brenda, headteacher of independent girls' school).

Every student is valuable. Every student has the right to achieve...[her] full potential... what matters first is that the student develops as a person, so that they have all the skills they need to enter the world of work, and in their personal life, and secondly that they have the academic background...to do what they want to do (Gladys, headteacher of girls' grammar school).

I think we really change kids' lives. I can go home at the end of the day...and know I've changed someone's life...I know I've made a difference with something I've said, or something I've done, or something somebody else has done, because of what I've created, in a sense...Here, more than anywhere else, in our set-up, you see a difference...It's [about] changing children...I know that we turn out better people at the end of their school time with us (Fiona, headteacher of boys' EBD school).

Whilst there were considerable similarities between the values expressed by the pedagogues and the politicised leaders, the key *difference* between the two types was how that sense of values informed the women's career decisions. The pedagogues related their pupil-centred values directly to their own pupils and to their work in the classroom, seeing this as the most important way in which they could enact their values and make a difference to pupils' lives. The politicised leaders on the other hand contextualised their pupil-centred values within a broader politico-educational philosophy, which, as illustrated in Claudette's comments about social class, for example, was often rooted in their own life history and which inspired them to seek out positions of influence in order to exert their influence as widely as possible. They perceived themselves as agents of change, and saw whole-school leadership as the domain in which they could exert the optimal influence, as illustrated in Claudette's comments about headship being the only post in which one could influence what happened in schools. The strong sense of politico-educational values held by the politicised leaders fuelled their career motivation, translating into a strong sense of mission and purpose that drove them to seek positions of maximum influence. Typically, narrators themselves linked this to their politicised identity. Wilma, for instance, felt that her move into school leadership had been 'issues-led', and described herself as 'passionate about equal opportunities' and 'quite politically left-wing'. In this respect there were certain similarities with the headteachers in Evetts' (1994 p.10) study, whose career decisions were linked to 'an internal development of identity', a

process which involved 'reacting and responding to external changes'. There were also clear echoes of Bradley's (1996) notion of levels of identity, as the women moved from passive, to active, to politicised identities.

Views about the sort of education that should be offered took a variety of forms for different women. Some, such as Harriet and Brenda, saw the benefits of independent selective, academic environments, which, they felt, offered more freedom to school leaders to do what they felt was best for their pupils. Others, like Harriet and Gladys, advocated girls' only education as key in developing confident, independent young women. About a half of the headteachers were committed to comprehensive education, including those like Sally and Claudette, whose circumstances had led them to work within a selective system. As with Claudette, a commitment to a particular type of education had informed most women's choice of schools. Gladys, for example, had particularly sought out girls' grammar schools, Brenda independent schools, and so forth.

A high degree of self-belief and personal agency were evident in the narratives of the politicised leaders. Focussing primarily on their values, their sense of social justice, and the influence they could exert, the women did not appear to doubt their own abilities to make a difference.

All three types in the 'career path seen as self-defined' category - planners, pedagogues and politicised leaders - are characterised by a high degree of personal agency. The women matching these types perceived that they had shaped or were shaping their own careers. I turn below to the second category in the typology, drawn from the narratives

of the women who perceived their career paths to have been defined by factors external to themselves. The implication of this is that either a lesser degree of personal agency characterises the approach of these types, or that there were external constraints on their capacity to act.

Category two: those perceiving their careers as externally-defined (pushed prevaricators, pragmatists, and protesters)

The three types in this category saw their career decisions as primarily defined by factors external to themselves. This implies that the women exerted a lesser degree of personal agency in making life and work choices than those in the self-defined category above, or that the restrictions on their lives were such that the potential scope of their agency was curtailed. Below I discuss each of the three types – pushed prevaricators, pragmatists and protesters. As above, I begin each sub-section with a brief description of the key characteristics of the type. I then illustrate this with an example of a woman who matched the type closely, and then discuss how the type related to the broader sample.

Pushed prevaricators

The key characteristic of pushed prevaricators is that, rather than taking full responsibility for their own career development, they depend on the support of others, usually senior colleagues in the professional domain. They avoid making conscious career decisions or planning career moves alone and are reluctant to apply for promotions unless actively encouraged to do so by a respected mentor, often a senior manager. They tend to under-value their own ability and potential, and lack self-confidence. They feel a need for encouragement and feedback from others to boost

their professional self-esteem and confidence, and are much more likely to apply for promotions as a result of suggestions, encouragement and mentoring from professional colleagues. The support of (usually senior) colleagues can therefore be a determining factor in the career development of the pushed prevaricator.

Mid-career teacher Stella provides an example of someone fitting this type who has benefited from support and so progressed in her career.

The pushed prevaricator: Stella, mid-career teacher

Stella (see table eleven, p.109) was 43 and had been teaching for ten years. She had always worked in the same school, a mixed non-selective school in Southshire, where she was an English teacher. She also had responsibilities as examinations officer and member of the senior membership team.

[This] is the only place I have worked since I did my teaching practice. It was by being in the right place at the right time that I got that job. I was asked to attend an interview for the job by the head, who was [at the time] acting head of the school where I was doing my teaching practice. He told me a job was available...I sort of fell into the job because the head was there when I was on teaching practice and he offered me the job...

I became deputy head of year in, probably my third year. That was my first promotion, but I was asked to apply for that. I hadn't considered that at all. The job became vacant and I was telephoned. It was suggested that I should apply. I hadn't even considered applying, even though I'd been here long enough. I did then, and I was quite happy doing that, and I did then think that I'd like to be a head of year one day, but they're not jobs that come up very often ...One did come up, and I didn't get it. I was upset by that...It was difficult at first, but I put a brave face on it...I went and talked to the head about it...I was persuaded to be patient...Not long after...I became the exams officer...It was very similar in a way, because I had been taken to one side, because they knew that the lady in post would retire. It was put to me that it was a job I could do. I hadn't considered that, and probably wouldn't have done...But when somebody says to you...

I have spoken to the head about the next step... It was really a question of, did he think I needed to have a paper qualification if I wanted to move?... Although I talked about the next step, it would probably be in five years before I'd be thinking of moving on... That's a huge step to take, isn't it, in a new school?... At the moment I wouldn't consider looking elsewhere, but that could change, I wouldn't rule that out, especially if someone came to me and said, there's a job at this school, you'd be good at it – which is what has happened to me most of the time. I haven't actively looked for things... I think it's probably partly the school I work in... When a post comes up they often know who they think would be suited to the post, so, a little gentle nudging sometimes... and that would probably start at the top, I would think...

[I could become a deputy head] if I happened to be in the [right] place... I wouldn't be looking around for it necessarily, but if it came up and somebody said, you should apply, then I'd probably apply (Stella, mid-career teacher).

In addition to Stella, two other women matched the pushed prevaricator type quite closely. These were late career teacher Ann and headteacher Minnie. Another headteacher, Wilma, also had some matching features of this type. As in Stella's case, there had been a tendency for the women matching this type to be reluctant to take full responsibility for their career development, meaning that the support of others, especially senior managers, could make a crucial difference in terms of their likelihood of progressing to senior positions themselves. Narrators often described how positive feedback and encouragement from others, especially senior colleagues, were important in raising their self-esteem and confidence and making them feel valued, which in turn impacted on their likelihood of applying for promotions. The support of senior managers and colleagues was a particularly important factor in restoring self-esteem following unsuccessful applications and interviews, and a critical factor affecting the experienced teachers' likelihood of making further applications. Again, this is exemplified in the extracts from Stella's narrative.

Several women recounted how they had been encouraged to apply for posts they would not otherwise have considered, for example, mid-career teacher Wanda described how she was 'cajoled' to take on a deputy head of year job. Several other participants related similar experiences. In some cases women described how, like Stella, they had only applied for posts towards which they had been directed by senior managers, and explained that they would otherwise have been unlikely to do so. Some women had only experienced this kind of support once in their careers. Late-career teacher Ann, for instance, said she became a head of year after someone 'tipped her the wink'. After becoming a head of year, she was not active in pursuing further promotions because she felt unsure of what else she could do, and felt there was 'too big a jump between head of year and anything else'. She felt that she had always lacked confidence, and that that had held her back. There was also a sense in which she felt powerless, and uninformed about how to go about developing her career:

When I started [teaching] I didn't really have any [aspirations]. I hadn't thought about the shape that the career might take. I hadn't looked forward to anything... I feel totally bored with what I'm doing but I can't see a way out... I also feel sure that [I have] a lot more... to give and to offer, but that's where the lack of confidence comes in, because I'm not brave enough to go out there and do it, and I think I don't really know. I need to know that I know something before I'll go for it, whereas in reality I know that I learn things better on the job... [but] you can't... expect people to give you a job on that basis... I want a lot more for myself. I have no idea how to get it really (Ann, late career teacher).

The lack of self-confidence to which Ann refers is a key characteristic of pushed prevaricators, resulting in a tendency to avoid risk-taking in their career decisions. Many women expressed a need to feel secure in their role. They would tend therefore to apply only for roles in which they would feel secure, and not put themselves at risk of feeling de-skilled and frustrated by taking on a role for which they did not feel adequately prepared. Late-career teacher Coral commented:

When reading job descriptions, for jobs I've seen advertised ... I've probably not applied for a job, thinking... 'Gosh, I'd never be able to do all that', [whereas] men just say, 'Oh, I can do that!'... It is [a question of confidence] actually. I think I feel I've got to do everything to perfection (Coral, late-career teacher).

Late-career teacher Caroline described her time as acting headteacher as 'the happiest time of my teaching career'. As acting headteacher in a school she knew well, she had 'enjoyed taking the lead'. Having worked there for several years she 'felt very, very comfortable with it'. She commented, 'I felt, yes, I'm safe here...I know what I'm doing'. She would not, though, apply for a headship elsewhere, commenting: 'being a principal in a large school, or any school, just scares me...Budgets scare me to death, things like that I think, well, I wouldn't feel comfortable. I like to feel secure'.

The positive intervention and support of a senior colleague could be very influential in cases where women were reticent about applying for posts they perceived to be beyond the areas with which they felt 'safe' and 'comfortable'. As in the case of Stella, some of the women matching the pushed prevaricator type were in fact active in soliciting the support and direction of senior colleagues, implying that they perceived, consciously or unconsciously, their own need for encouragement and reassurance. By exerting her agency in seeking out the support she needed Stella had, to an extent, taken charge of her career development, and the positive input from her headteacher had enabled her to progress. As in Stella's case, the interest and support of colleagues had made a big difference in the career progression of headteachers Minnie and Wilma, coming at a time that was important in moving them on. Wilma was emphatic that for her, the support had been from what she termed 'informal contacts' – her friends and colleagues in the departmental or pastoral team, rather than as part of a senior leadership-led

support strategy. Headteacher Minnie was clear that her career progression was very much influenced by the support of key senior colleagues. She commented:

I think that I genuinely never considered myself capable of promotion. I was always pushed by somebody else...[The head encouraged me]. That had happened at head of department level. Whatever I did, other people had said, 'You ought to go for that! Why don't you?' (Minnie, headteacher).

Minnie had been prompted to start applying for more senior positions partly because as a single parent she needed more money to support her family, but also because she was 'pushed by a very good head', who persuaded her to apply for a deputy headship, to which she was appointed. Later, after an unsuccessful application for headship, Minnie had decided to leave teaching and return to industry, where she had worked before becoming a teacher. At that point she was 'persuaded by the head and the liaison officer who worked for the LEA to give it just another year', within which time she was appointed to a headship.

Ann had also tried to seek help and advice from senior colleagues. Unlike Stella, though, she had been unable to secure the encouragement and help she needed to move on, despite having some interest in senior leadership:

The [senior management role] that does appeal is looking at data and working out what part of the school works best and what parts don't...I don't know enough about it, it's just that [data] is something that I am interested in. I've tried to get information about ...data - how to use it, how to handle it, how to interpret it - but wasn't very successful. I've tried [to get help] a few times. [I asked] one of our VPs...I asked them if they'd go through things with me, the data that was specific to my year [group], just to build up a base of knowledge in a manageable way, and then move from there, but I keep getting blanked...It was always, 'Oh I haven't got time at the moment', you know, or 'yes, we will'- and we never did! I think that was a bit of dereliction of duty (Ann, late-career teacher).

Whilst, like Stella, Ann had to an extent exerted her agency by trying to be proactive in seeking the sort of support she felt she needed, unlike Stella's headteacher, her

managers did not offer the support she sought, and her career had not developed in the way that Stella's had. Her comment about 'dereliction of duty' by the vice principal she had approached for help is telling. The support, advice and encouragement offered by senior colleagues to would-be aspirant women emerged as ad hoc, arbitrary and spasmodic. Organised, systematic mentoring for career development did not seem to feature, although implicit in Ann's comment is the expectation that it *should* form a part of the vice principal's brief. In the absence of support from respected colleagues, women who are unlikely to take action to progress their own careers are also, arguably, likely to be the least willing to keep asking for help, and so the most likely to disengage from the career development process.

Support with career development, where offered, does appear to make a difference to the career progression of women like the pushed prevaricator type who feel a need for help and support. The support offered is not only ad hoc and arbitrary: it is also a double-edged benefit, in that by depending on the support of others (support that may or may not be made available depending on the individual senior leader), women remain dependent on others to allow them access to the skills and knowledge that enable them to progress to more senior positions. By soliciting direction from senior colleagues the pushed prevaricator to an extent abdicates responsibility for her own career development. The power remains, essentially, in the hands of the gatekeepers to senior leadership positions, senior leaders. Although arguably the pushed prevaricator is exerting her agency in seeking out sources of support, she then chooses to rely on them instead of risking making her own decisions. The degree of personal agency characterising her approach is rather less than that of the planners, pedagogues and politicised leaders, discussed above.

Pragmatists

The key characteristic of pragmatists is that their careers are fitted around their other priorities or responsibilities. Usually this means family and childcare responsibilities, but in some cases it can mean health issues or partners' careers. Pragmatists are willing to seek promotion and take on additional responsibility at work but only if the resulting workload is manageable and does not detract from other responsibilities, such as caring for children. Because of the limitations on their lives, geographical and other, they are more likely to respond to opportunities that arise in the schools in which they are already working rather than to seek out opportunities elsewhere. They often experience a sense of role conflict that results from combining career and their other responsibilities, such as mothering, or caring for elderly relatives, and balancing the two becomes a priority. They are typically less ambitious than earlier in their careers, adjusting their aspirations to fit around the other priorities and responsibilities in their lives. Marjory (see table twelve, p.110) provides a good example of a pragmatist.

The pragmatist: Marjory, late-career teacher

Marjory was 52. She was married for the second time and had four children, aged 24, 22, 18 and 12. Her twelve-year-old son had Down's syndrome. Marjory had been teaching since she was 22, and in her current school for the last 13 years. She was a teacher of modern foreign languages (mfl) and had held responsibilities both within mfl and within the pastoral programme for the last six years.

I've always taught, but I've had little gaps off for having the children, and some periods of part-time...The first one was a career break, but after about a year, my old school asked me to go back to cover a maternity leave...[With the other three I took] maternity leave...Each time – except for the last one actually - I've thought 'Oh I'll be fine working full-time!', and realised I can't, actually! So I've had to drop to part-time...Sometimes I chose to give up responsibility points...I also dropped some this year...because I had too much work to do and was

too tired, stressed...[The two eldest children are at university now]... This sounds ridiculous, you'd think four children at home *must* be worse than having one child and an eighteen-year old at home – but it isn't actually, because the older children used to help us out with the younger ones. A lot of the time now it's just my husband and I and [my youngest son], which means at the weekends, I was doing a lot of school work and trying to get housework done and trying to take [my son] out because he was bored. So it was just getting ridiculous. I was dreading anybody asking me to do anything socially that took a whole day of the weekend, and in the week it wasn't possible. [It did create home-work conflict for me]. I managed that by dropping my responsibilities at work, my two extra points for the tutorial programme and health education, and just working on main scale. But my timetable looks incredibly full. I now have one point within the [modern foreign languages] department, which I hoped I would be able to cope with, because it's also for financial reasons that I work full time, with the third child in a row to go to university. But I'm intending to stop, next summer, on the full-time... The reason I have decided to leave at the end of next year and not in two years' time, which is what I really would have done, because I would've been 55, is because my mother is developing Alzheimer's and I want to be freer to be able to go and help with her. And as a teacher you can't, unless it's absolutely, a total emergency...

I've always had to stay in teaching, because I had a big gap between my two marriages, and looking after the children during the holidays was just so much easier staying in teaching... The way my career's gone has been directly linked to having the children, and therefore I have not sought further development simply because I have not got the time to do it properly... Having children has really affected how I've had to think about stuff...

In the next few years I see myself working quite a lot of hours, but not full-time, and more flexibly... I don't want to spend every evening working and exhausted or rushing to catch up... Quality of life has become more important now. I have to think about my own health as well. I have [been ill and] had three weeks off recently. I was exhausted... I was really, really tired... I had already been thinking about dropping the tutorial stuff, so when I got back I wrote my resignation letter... The idea is to have a bit more time... for myself and my family life... to be able to take exercise, to look after myself, to be more available to my [family]... and friends (Marjory, late-career teacher).

Eighteen women closely matched the pragmatist type, the second biggest group after the pedagogues. These included four NQTs, ten experienced teachers, and four headteachers. In addition, one experienced teacher and one headteacher had some matching features of the type, and one other experienced teacher had been a pragmatist

in her earlier approach to career. Unsurprisingly, this type was closely associated with motherhood, although not all mothers in the study were pragmatists and not all pragmatists were mothers.

These women all perceived that factors external to themselves (usually motherhood) had in some way or at least at some point determined the options that were open to them in career terms. However, within those constraints they did make decisions, exerting their personal agency to negotiate the shape of their own careers, and balancing judgements about work against the realities of their lives outside work. This resonated with the findings of Evetts (1994 p.10), who reported that career was viewed by the headteachers in her study as a continual process of negotiation within the particular set of constraints and opportunities in which individuals found themselves, so that their career decisions were 'not so much part of a strategy as a way of life'. I discussed in chapters two and six the career decisions of women who combine teaching and motherhood, and much of that discussion is of relevance in discussing this type, so is not repeated here. The pragmatists differ from, for example, the pushed prevaricators, in that they *will* seek out opportunities and make decisions for themselves, for example applying for posts within their own schools or areas, if this combines well with, for instance, family. For example, mid-career teacher Sarah, who was married to a vicar and had two young children, explained:

I first became head of languages at [school A]...then head of languages at [school B]. I moved there when I'd just had my little boy. I moved there to cut out the travelling, and it was on an extra point...When my husband was selected for ministry, I moved with him to a school in [city]...I just wanted to widen my experience for if I wanted to go for senior management...I wouldn't look anywhere that would mean me travelling more than half an hour...and this is likely to continue to shape my career decisions... We've been in this parish for seven years, so we are likely to have a move in the next two or three years, so that would be

when I'd be looking for my next career move, I think (Sarah, mid-career teacher).

Other characteristics of this type, such as the impact of role conflict on the women's approach to career, and the tendency to modify career aspirations, were discussed at some length in the sections on motherhood in chapters two and six, so again, these are not repeated here. In terms of personal agency, however, although the women matching this type perceived their career decisions as defined by external factors, they did not emerge as passive, but as perceiving that there were limits on the power of their personal agency, given the reality of their responsibilities. Whilst as Marjory commented, their career path was 'directly linked' to having children, they were not totally shaped by this but had made career choices within a limited set of options along the way. As discussed in earlier chapters, the key factor limiting many women's choices is the widely held assumption that they, rather than men, will take primary responsibility for childcare. If this remains a given and continues to be unchallenged, the effect is likely to continue to be restricted options open to women. However, Giddens (1998) argues that it is through human agents' actions that social structures are maintained, and equally can be *changed* through the actions of human agents. Reflexive human agents are knowledgeable about what they are doing. They have the potential to act 'otherwise' (*ibid.*, p.78), in the personal as well as the professional domain, although the power of pressures on women to take on the primary childcaring role should not be underestimated, as noted by Jackson (1994) and Mann (1995), and discussed in earlier chapters.

Protesters

The key characteristic of the protesters is that they analyse and identify the factors external to themselves that have limited their career progression, although they are also

critical of their own actions in retrospect. They experience a sense of anger, indignation and frustration that results from the awareness they have developed or are developing of the factors blocking their career development. Typical factors identified include discrimination, lack of support, negative attitudes from others in the professional domain, limited ranges of opportunities available to them in the working context, family responsibilities or other workplace-specific problems and limitations. Their increased levels of awareness translate into a stronger sense of self-determination. An example of the protester type is provided by Coral (see table twelve, p.110).

The protester: Coral, late career teacher

Coral was 52. She was married and had two daughters. She had been teaching for 27 years. At the time of the interview she was working as a supply teacher, but had been a teacher of mfl for most of her career.

I went to [a girls' grammar school]...There wasn't a lot of career guidance and you ended up going for university or teachers' training college...Even at university we didn't get an awful lot of career guidance...If you went to university you ended up doing a PGCE... [Other options] were very looked down upon...If I had my time again I think I would have done something completely different...

I stayed [in my first teaching job] for three and a half years...I wanted to do some further 'A' level and GCSE work...so I moved sideways to [next school]...I was quite happy for a while, but then the pastoral side of things started to interest me and there was a bit of a clash between the language interest and the pastoral side. I think if I'd pursued the language side of things, I could have become a head of department fairly quickly. At the time, I think it would have upset my husband's and my relationship had I gone for head of department...I think if [he] had got a head of department's job first, then I could have gone on and done it, but he very much felt that he wanted to be the main breadwinner really...

There was an opening in the pastoral field there, and I...[became] an assistant head of year... Then when somebody went on maternity leave I ended up doing their job as division head...I played quite a major role there...That was probably the high point of my career...I should have gone on from that to do something really...I would have liked to have

[progressed to deputy headship]...I stayed [in that school] longer possibly because I was enjoying the roles that I was doing there, but also because I wanted some stability for trying to run a family and a job as well...

I was so burning to be a head of year I decided that I had to move schools...because at [the school I was at] they were all going to stay there until they retired or dropped dead basically...I had become frustrated because I couldn't get on in the school. I had the potential to do a senior management job...but there was nothing there because people were holding on to positions. So I moved. The problem was when I moved it was like starting all over again, like a new teacher...I was suddenly overwhelmed with the problems of being in an inner-city school...It was a massive learning curve...I had my second child whilst I was in [this school] so I stayed there for a while, and I suppose I wasn't looking for promotion during those years when I was trying to look after a child...I think with two children it certainly compounds things, you start to back off... You are juggling all the time...I have never felt that I wanted to be that far away from my family and I suppose that has also limited my career...I've always felt that I would want to be within about 10 or 15 minutes of getting home in case there was a problem. That has been at the back of my mind, that I would have to be the one to deal with it...[and that has always been the case], and it shouldn't have been. I have obviously taken that role on myself. I have two roles, work and home...if I wanted my job, I had to make sure that I was available to sort out the other things as well. You end up by taking on a dual role...I think it's still instilled within you...that mum in fact runs the house...it's what's expected of you by parents...but I think some of it is actually by yourself...

I did apply for a year head's job in [a different school]...It was given to a younger person...[with] less experience...For a while I felt that ageism was the problem more than sexism...Recently I've thought, there's no point applying any more because they are going to appoint somebody younger, cheaper, and more dynamic...

When I first started teaching I was going to become a deputy head...I was going to really get up the career ladder...I don't have the energy now, for senior management...and maybe my perspectives have changed. I've got energy for other things...school is not my top priority now (Coral, late-career teacher).

In addition to Coral, late-career teacher Sandra matched the protester type closely.

Extracts from Sandra's narrative can be found in appendix eight, where they are included principally as evidence of how discrimination can shape women's careers, but

are also illustrative of the characteristics of the protester. Two other mid-career teachers and two headteachers also had some characteristics of this type.

It is noteworthy that the women matching this type included only those in the latter stages of their careers, who had come to form a view retrospectively of how their careers had been shaped by factors they perceived to have been largely beyond their control. Headteacher Minnie for example talked about her experiences of negative and discriminatory attitudes towards female headteachers from (female) governors on selection panels, and late-career teacher Olivia about the covert discrimination she suspected had worked against her in a previous school.

Most of the women of this type were to some extent also self-critical, looking back at how they had themselves taken actions (or failed to) that then had a detrimental influence on their career. The factors protestors identified as thwarting their career development were not offered as *excuses* for their own lack of action – the women were at times critical of their own actions as well. As with the pragmatists, they had become conscious of personal as well as professional factors restricting their potential progression. Whilst Coral, whose edited narrative I include above, listed a number of stages at which her career development was hijacked by factors beyond her control, she also recognised that she should have taken the initiative to apply for deputy headship when her career was at its ‘high point’, and that she took it upon herself to be the parent who took the main responsibility for childcare (as did all of the mothers in the study), which also limited the possibilities open to her.

Importantly, the women matching this type perceived in retrospect that the degree of personal agency in their career decisions had been lower than it would be now. There was a sense in which these women had developed an awareness of the restrictions on their lives and on how they had complied with them, thus reinforcing the power of the constraints on their lives and career options. In retrospect, they saw that they had lacked this insight earlier in their lives. Sandra commented for instance:

In addition to external prejudice, I am culpable in respect of prejudice too. I am complicit in that sexism. I have done it to myself...In younger years I substituted seeking promotion within my own career...by seeking male partners who wanted to gain promotion ... It wasn't self-evident to me at that time that I was behaving in that way, but now aged 48 I do suspect I did this. I think I derived some sort of professional satisfaction vicariously through my partners' success and was satisfied with this as a substitute for actually enacting those roles myself. Suffice to say, that would not be so now!

It is intriguing to compare the increased awareness and level of critical reflection that characterised the protestors, exemplified here in Sandra's comments, with the notion of the authentic self posited by relational autonomy theorists (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000; Barclay, 2000; Meyers, 1989). The autonomous agent, Barclay (*op. cit.*, p.55) argues, 'reflectively engages' with social forces, the authentic self is constructed in relation to experience and the capacity for self-determination developed through her reflective engagement with the interrelationship of self and social context. The examples of protestors cited above illustrate how their reflective engagement with the interrelationship of themselves and their social context led the women to an understanding of how their career decisions had been shaped by social forces as well as by their own actions (and inactions). In all cases the protestors were women in the latter stages of their careers. They were able, retrospectively, to recognise and take responsibility for their own actions, which Benson (2000; 1994) argues is pre-requisite to self-determination. This seemed to translate for the protestors in this study into a

renewed sense of self-determination. Coral had changed her priorities and intended to direct her energies into other areas of her life; Sandra would no longer be prioritising partners' careers over her own; headteachers Sally and Minnie had been determined to pursue headship posts despite encountering negativity and discrimination amongst selectors.

This does raise the question of why Sandra and Coral only became aware of how their careers were being curtailed relatively late in life, and how differently their careers might have developed had they formed these insights earlier. Gardiner (1995) and Meyers (1989) argue that the individual's potential for self-determination develops via the particular set of social contexts she encounters in the personal and professional domains of her life, and McCleod and Sherwin (2000) emphasise the need for encouragement from others, and opportunities that allow the individual to develop and use her potential capacities of self-determination, of which self-trust, self-worth and self-esteem are an integral part. Conversely, the capacity for self-determination can be blocked by social contexts that deny the individual the opportunities she needs to develop her self-determination skills (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000).

It would seem there are implications here for the sort of support and opportunities that might be offered in schools to enable and empower women to take control of their own career development, and for the sort of actions women who have developed a critical awareness of their own career paths might take collectively to raise awareness of how potential is stifled.

Summary

Drawing on the forty narratives, I showed in this chapter how the varying degrees of agency apparent in the women's approach to career emerged as a key factor affecting their career decisions. A summary of the main points follows.

The focus on agency adds a new dimension to the debate about career-shaping factors, moving beyond a 'barriers to progression' approach. Through the life history narratives it was possible to gain insights into the ways in which agency and structure intermesh to frame women's career decisions.

Participants seemed to perceive their careers either as defined by themselves, or as defined by factors external to themselves. Within these two categories a number of types of approach to career were discernible, which I presented as a typology. I argued that whilst there are limitations on women's lives, careers are not shaped by constraints alone, and that the extent to which women were aware of their own potential for agency, and the ways they chose to exert it, were important factors affecting career decisions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

I have reported in this thesis on a life history study of forty women teachers. I set out to seek participants' perceptions of the factors affecting their career decisions. As a part of this, insights were sought into the factors affecting the likelihood of women aspiring to, applying for, and achieving headship. I opened the thesis by discussing, in chapter one, the origins of my interest in the topic of women teachers' careers, and mapping my own career approach and experiences against the typology of women teachers' approaches to career presented in chapter ten. I described the PhD process as a 'personal journey', during the course of which I had gained new insights not just into other women's career decisions but into my own as well. It has also been a personal journey as a feminist researcher, along which my preconceptions have been challenged and my awareness raised of the centrality to feminist theory and feminist action of personal (and collective) agency. 'Feminist' theory that focuses only on repression, without recognition of our ability and potential as women to *act*, reinforces our sense of helplessness and powerlessness. By seeking only evidence to confirm the existence of structures that constrain and restrict us, we effectively research ourselves into a corner. My personal journey in writing this thesis has led me to a new understanding of feminist research: it must, of necessity, incorporate hope for women, a means of improving women's lives through women's actions.

I started the thesis with barriers in mind. Were I to begin again now, it would be with the intention of focussing on indications of women's agency, and seeking insights into how women act to take control of their lives. It has been partly through extensive reading of feminist theory that my ideas have changed. Equally, though, it has been via the open-endedness of life history interviewing that I have been able to gain such rich insights that my original preconceptions have been blown away. Were I to begin again, then, it would be with a greatly enhanced sense of confidence in the feminist life history interview approach. In contrast to my early pilots of the interviews, in preparation for which I tentatively drew up semi-structured interview schedules, unsure that open-ended questions would really elicit the data I sought, I would from the start use very few, very open forms of questioning. In addition, given that a major strength of the approach is the potential it offers to gather rich, subjective data on the life experiences and perceptions of the individual woman, I would seek to re-interview a smaller number of women a number of times, as a result of which the emancipatory and empowering benefits of the approach might also be facilitated to better effect.

Nonetheless, the data generated in this study have been both rich and detailed, enabling fresh insights to be gained into the multiplicity of factors influencing women teachers' career decisions, and novel theoretical models to be advanced that are both timely and relevant to the women currently working in British secondary schools. In the rest of this chapter, I present a summary of the key findings of the study, and make practical recommendations for action at national, institutional and individual levels.

Summary of key findings

The thesis was constructed around the themes emanating from the narratives of the participants in the study, from which it was possible to identify three inter-related spheres of influence on women's career decisions: societal factors, institutional factors and individual factors. These formed the basis for the literature review and analysis sections of the thesis. A summary of the key findings follows.

In terms of home-based socialisation, parents were seen by the majority of narrators to have been supportive of their daughters' education, communicating high aspirations rather than directing them into teaching. School-based socialisation on the other hand was cited by all generations as influential in leading them into the teaching profession. Most narrators were conscious of their gender having played at least some part in shaping their educational opportunities and career choices, which would seem to tie in with evidence of the gendered nature of schools explored in chapters three and seven. The older women in the study, who grew up during the 1960s and 1970s, were more conscious of teaching having been seen at the time as a respectable job for a woman, and the only real career option for a bright girl. Some of them were clear that their own schooling had effectively stifled their potential and limited their career options. For the younger women in the study, it was, in most cases, positive experiences of school that led to their choice of teaching as a profession, rather than a sense of limited options.

It became apparent that the women who were mothers, or likely to become mothers, assumed primary responsibility for childcare, and there was considerable evidence of the impact of their maternal roles on their career decisions. Although teaching was seen as compatible with motherhood, combining the two entailed considerable practical and

emotional difficulties. The provision of support for the women coping with the two roles emerged as informal, ad hoc and arbitrary, and there was no evidence of any systematic, organised support for women teachers with children.

Fewer of the headteachers were mothers, and those who were made far fewer references to feelings of guilt or conflict in combining the two roles. In addition, supportive partners were more often discussed by headteachers, although they did not emerge as dependent on such support.

Links between teaching and nurturing were evident in all groups, suggesting that women's maternal and relational roles are important influences on career decisions. Several of the younger women linked their choice of profession to the nurturing role they had played with siblings or other younger children, and a liking for children was cited by more NQTs than other teachers as their reason for choosing teaching. Positive relationships with pupils, and seeing pupils' achievements, were, however, important sources of satisfaction motivating women of all generations. For many women, this translated into a preference for a classroom-based rather than a school leadership career.

Whilst headteachers shared these pupil-centred values, they were more likely to contextualise these within in a wider politico-educational framework, and to have a more politicised identity than other teachers, rooted in their own life history. This spurred them on to seek positions in which their influence was maximised, and drove the aspirations they had for their schools. The success of their schools, and the pupils in them, were their main sources of satisfaction and motivation.

The need for challenge and fulfilment, underpinned by an ethic of care, was a common theme across all groups. Most women measured their own success in terms of their pupils' achievements and the quality of their relationships with pupils and colleagues. A model of women teachers' relational needs and motivation was presented, in which relationships and fostering others' achievements were key parts. Positive, supportive working relationships with colleagues were important to women at all career stages. NQTs placed greater emphasis on their own support needs, and headteachers on the importance of positive relationships as an essential part of an effective school, rather than as a source of personal, emotional support.

Most experienced teachers and headteachers had encountered sexism and discrimination in some form during their teaching careers. The examples given varied from relatively trivial and unconsciously perpetrated instances of sexism, to highly discriminatory practices and attitudes. The most commonly cited examples related to women with children being denied developmental opportunities, seemingly on the basis of assumptions made by school leaders about their domestic roles. Other covert forms of discrimination endemic in the particular culture of individual institutions included male colleagues' sexist attitudes, an institutionalised favouring of men in access to promoted posts and developmental opportunities, and the grooming of young male teachers for promotion, which was often perceived to take place through informal male sporting and socialising networks that exclude women. Several of the headteachers in the study had started to experience sexist and discriminatory attitudes towards them when they became headteachers, or when they started to apply for headships. They reported that the most common (though not the only) sources of sexism and discrimination were school governors and pupils' fathers. Some women teachers were discouraged from

aspiring to senior posts by their awareness of the negative attitudes female leaders had to face.

Contradictions characterised the women teachers' perceptions of school leadership. Whilst most claimed to be uninterested in applying for senior posts, they typically talked enthusiastically about how they would approach a leadership role and what their priorities would be in post. However, most were adamant that they would not consider headship. A number of negative perceptions about headteachers and their work emerged. Headteachers were seen to have to espouse values at odds with the pupil-centred priorities of women teachers. They were seen to have to be tough and coercive, and to be lonely and unpopular as a result of their role. The sort of work in which they had to engage was seen to be dull and tedious, and to leave insufficient time for their lives outside school.

There were fundamental differences between the way in which headship was perceived by the headteachers and by most other teachers. Most of the teachers perceived the role as potentially repressive, and as a job that would control them, forcing them to adopt abhorrent values and ways of working, and harming their personal lives. The headteachers, however, perceived the freedom the post offered them to work in their preferred ways and to effect wide-scale change and improvement. They viewed themselves as agents of change. They were aware of their own potential for agency and able to exert it, both in their approach to managing their own career development and in their actions as headteacher.

Drawing on the women headteachers' perceptions of themselves in their roles, an alternative paradigm of school leadership was posited. The key features included promoting a pupils-first philosophy in schools; leadership styles characterised by a fusion of toughness and caring; flexibility of approach to suit the context; the promotion of positive school-wide relationships coupled with personal skills of emotional rationality; established networks of personal and professional support outside school; an enjoyment of challenge and change; and effective work-life balance strategies.

Women teachers' awareness of their own potential for agency, and the extent to which they exerted it in their approach to career, emerged as key factors affecting career decisions. It became apparent that there were two distinct sorts of narrative: participants seemed to perceive and describe their careers either as self-defined, or as defined by factors external to themselves. A number of types of approach to career were discernible within these categories, which I presented in the form of a typology. An important factor distinguishing the different types was the differing degrees of personal agency evident, which varied considerably. For example, some women took full control of and responsibility for their own career decisions, planning career moves and proactively seeking experience that would facilitate their progress. At the other end of the scale were women who relied on others to direct career moves for them, and avoided taking conscious responsibility for their own career progression. The typology of women teachers' career approaches constitutes an important part of the thesis and an original contribution to knowledge, moving beyond barriers-based accounts to consider how agency and structure intermesh to frame women's career decisions. As an innovative conceptual tool for use in analysing women teachers' careers, the typology offers the potential for new insights to be gained into the interrelationship of the

individual woman and her life context, and the complex range of factors at play, as she negotiates life and career decisions.

In summary, whilst evidence emerged of a range of structural constraints on women's career options, in particular women's maternal roles, and discriminatory practices endemic in educational institutions, it also became apparent that women can, and do, make their own decisions and exert their agency in negotiating the particular set of constraints that characterise their lives. The extent to which women are conscious of their own potential for personal agency, and the degree to which they exert it, are therefore major factors influencing career decisions.

Recommendations

This study has highlighted some issues that lend themselves to further investigation by schools and policy makers. A range of inter-connected factors have been highlighted that influence women teachers' career decisions, some of which contribute to the continuing under-representation of women in secondary headship posts. The complexity of the issues raised does not lend itself to simple solutions. However, changes can be made that will improve conditions for women. I consider here action that might be taken at national and institutional levels, and then in my concluding comments reiterate the importance for women of exerting their personal agency and taking control of their life and career decisions.

National level action

A number of considerations emerge from this study for action by government policy makers, which I itemise below.

Preparation and monitoring of school governors

School governors' powers have increased considerably in recent years. There is cause for concern in that school governors were identified by headteachers in this study as the main sources of sexism and discriminatory attitudes. The 'Gender Equality Duty' (GED), which comes into force in April 2007, requires public bodies to be proactive in promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination, both in the services they provide and in their employment practices. (EOC, 2007b; McNeill, 2007). With effect from April 2007, school governors are thus responsible for ensuring the GED process is appropriately handled in schools. It is therefore imperative that they are adequately equipped for the task. This requires that they embrace the professional values on which the GED is based and that they have the understanding and sensitivity needed to effect necessary change. Student teachers and NQTs have to provide evidence that they espouse professional values and enact them in their professional behaviour, demonstrating a commitment to the principles of inclusion through their work. Failure to do so means failure to achieve Qualified Teacher Status. No such demands, however, are made of school governors, the most powerful people associated with schools. Theoretically, therefore, racist, sexist bigots could wield considerable power over staff appointments and promotions, and in decisions relating to the management of the school. Action is urgently needed to raise governors' awareness of the principles underpinning the GED, to provide training and support in its execution and to monitor the extent to which a commitment to equality, in all its complexity, underpins their actions and decisions. In addition, it may be appropriate to review procedures for appointment and selection of school governors in order to ensure headteachers are supported rather than impeded in their work, and to ensure equity in appointments to headship.

Equal pay for male and female headteachers

I discussed in chapters three and seven the difference in the salary of male and female headteachers and, to a lesser extent, deputy headteachers. There is an urgent need for a national investigation into how headteachers' pay is negotiated, and measures taken to redress the balance.

Fostering equity in parenting and professional roles

Measures taken at national level can facilitate a shift towards a culture in which both men and women take responsibility for childcare, and can take on professional or parenting roles as and when they choose. There is a need for a proactive approach in promoting the acceptability of fathers taking primary responsibility for childcare. In addition, the provision of organised, affordable childcare systems will enable parents to combine professional and parenting roles and to have the flexibility to share childcare. Clearly such changes have implications for private as well as public roles of men and women, and implications for the power balance in male-female relationships.

Institutional action

The GED marks a shift in emphasis from a culture in which it was left to the individual to complain about unfair treatment, to a culture in which the institution is responsible for adopting a strategic approach to ensuring equity. Guidance for schools (EOC, 2007b) indicates that the onus will be on school governing bodies to assess the impact on women and girls of the school's policies and practices, and to be proactive in promoting equality for male and female members of the school. This new requirement provides schools with an ideal opportunity to scrutinise their own policies and practices,

with a view to ensuring equity in the provision of developmental and career opportunities to men and women teachers.

Generic, non-statutory guidance on the GED (EOC, 2007c) recommends the use of in-house and other data to analyse and identify the ways in which inequality results from institutional policy and practice, to formulate objectives, and then to monitor and report on progress towards the objectives. It is interesting to note that the guidance specifically recommends that it is inadvisable to rely on one form of data, such as statistics, and advocates that use also be made of qualitative forms of data, such as interviews, in order to understand the complexities behind the statistics - to investigate not just the 'what' but the 'why' (*ibid.*). This will entail a thorough, transparent scrutiny of institutional policies, procedures and processes, both formal and informal, that act to advantage men and disadvantage women. Given the shift in emphasis from the well-established culture of quantifiable outcomes to more qualitative forms of investigation implicit in the guidelines, it would seem that universities may have a role to play in providing appropriate support for schools with data collection methods and issues associated with choosing the right people to undertake research projects – for example, a male chair of governors may not be the most appropriate choice of interviewer for investigating women teachers' experiences of discrimination during pregnancy.

Pointers for school-based research

To be meaningful, the school-based investigations would of necessity need to involve members of the institutions on as wide a scale as possible. This implies consulting with women teachers, for example, in order to identify priority areas for research within the

particular institution, and involving them as respondents and researchers. The findings of this study suggest that there are three key areas in which research at school level might usefully be undertaken:

1. Investigation into the ways in which women teachers are disadvantaged by discrimination endemic in the particular institution.
2. Identification of the practical support systems that need to be in place to facilitate women's career progression.
3. Development of strategies that will enable a cultural shift to be effected, such that men and women are enabled to undertake both parenting and professional roles.

I suggest below possible research questions within each of these three areas of focus for consideration by institutions.

Research questions

1. Investigation into the ways in which women teachers are disadvantaged by discrimination endemic in the particular institution.

What are the women's experiences of direct discrimination and sexism, and of institutional reaction to the reporting of such incidences?

What are the perceptions of women teachers in the school with regard to the impact of covert and informal types of discrimination on men's and women's careers?

Is there evidence of sex-segregation in terms of the type of work undertaken by men and women teachers (for example, are women more likely to be in pastoral roles than other

types of responsibility posts)? Are some types of work more conducive than others to achieving further promotion?

What steps can be taken to foster a positive anti-sexist institutional culture?

2. Identification of the practical support systems that need to be in place to facilitate women's career progression.

What changes can be made to the existing career structure? (areas for consideration might include, for example, the viability of flexible working arrangements, job sharing possibilities at all levels, the flattening out of the management structure, the possibility of career breaks for men and women of, for example, up to three years without loss of status on return).

What is the institutional potential for developing in-house courses and developmental opportunities? (for example, allowing insights to be gained into the role of headteacher via work-shadowing experiences, and/or courses and seminars led by senior leaders with a view to fostering interest in whole-school management).

How effective are current school-based career advice and development systems? What good practice exists already and how can this be extended and developed?

Is there a need for workplace-based childcare facilities for staff children? (Every day? During parents' evenings/school events? On training days? For occasional use?)

3. Development of strategies that will enable a cultural shift to be effected, such that men and women are enabled to undertake both parenting and professional roles.

What strategies need to be in place in order to encourage men to take up opportunities for parental leave, career breaks and flexible working arrangements?

Concluding comments: action by women teachers

The study raised a complex range of issues and influences implicated in framing the career decisions of individual women teachers. I have made a number of suggestions for pragmatic action at national and institutional levels. However, ultimately it is the individual and collective actions of women that are potentially the most powerful in effecting long-term change. With regard to the GED, for example, whilst the responsibility for eliminating inequality is to be placed in the hands of the school governors, it is unlikely that this will be achieved without significant input from women teachers, who will need to be vociferous and take the lead in ensuring change is effected. It is too important to risk leaving it to governors.

My intention in undertaking this study was not to produce a 'how to become a headteacher' guide for ambitious women, and therefore I have not sought to provide a checklist of career development strategies. I would conclude, though, that whilst there are restrictions on women's lives, taking control of one's own life and career decisions is a powerful and liberating process, which involves three key stages: developing an awareness of the factors that act to limit our freedom, becoming conscious of our own ability to take action, and *acting*, be this in resolute resistance to restrictions or as a small step towards self-determination.

Appendix one

Key changes altering the rights and status of women

Table one: key changes altering the rights and status of women (sources: EOC, 2007a; Fawcett Society, 2007; David, 2003; Women and Equality Unit, 2003; Fairbairns, 2002; Murray, 2001)

1918	Representation of the People Act: propertied women over the age of thirty and married women gain the right to vote
1920	Oxford University gives women degrees
1923	Matrimonial Causes Act: wives are allowed equal grounds for divorce
1928	Equal Franchise Act: women attain the same voting status as men
1944	The Education Act: free education for all; marriage bar for women teachers ends
1946	Royal Commission on Equal Pay recommends equal pay for women teachers
1948	Cambridge University admits women to full degrees
1949	Legal Aid and Advice Act makes it easier for women to petition for divorce by helping with the costs of divorce
1953	Equal Pay for male and female teachers accepted
1964	Married Women's Property Act gives married women a legal right to half of any savings they made from housekeeping allowance
1967	The Abortion Act
1967	Government sanctions official support for the provision of contraceptives
1969	Divorce Act enables 'no fault' divorce
1970	Equal Pay Act
1974	Consumer Credit Act: discriminatory treatment of women outlawed
1974	Contraception made available through NHS free of charge
1975	Employment Protection Act, giving limited maternity rights
1975	The Sex Discrimination Act
1975	Equal Opportunities Commission established
1975	Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act
1976	The Race Relations Act
1980	The Employment Act: women gain the right to paid time off work to attend for ante-natal care
1983	Equal Pay Act amended to introduce equal pay for work of equal value
1994	House of Lords gives equal rights to part-time workers
1999	Employment Relations Act gives right to parental leave and extends right to maternity leave
2002	Sex Discrimination (Election candidates) Bill allows positive action for selection of women candidates
2003	The Local Government Act, as a part of which clause 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act, which restricted free speech on homosexuality, is repealed
2003	Equal Pay Act 1970 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations introduced
2007	Gender Equality Duty

Appendix two

Percentage representation of women in senior posts

Table two: average percentage representation of women at senior levels (adapted from EOC, 2007a).

Employment sector	%
Politics	29
Business	14
Media and Culture	17
Public and voluntary sectors	24

Table three: percentage of secondary headships held by women (maintained schools sector) (adapted from DfES, 2006)

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
%	26	28	29	29	31	32	32	34	35

Appendix three

Average annual salary of headteachers and deputy headteachers

Table four: average annual salary of headteachers in the maintained schools sector in England and Wales by sex and phase, March 2005 (Source: DfES, 2006).

Phase or type of school	Men	Women
Nursery and primary	£46,900	£45,400
Secondary	£64,900	£61,000
Special and PRU	£56,100	£51,900
<i>All sectors</i>	<i>£52,300</i>	<i>£47,200</i>

Table five: average annual salary of deputy headteachers in the maintained schools sector in England and Wales by sex and phase, March 2005 (Source: DfES, 2006).

Phase or type of school	Men	Women
Nursery and primary	£40,100	£39,200
Secondary	£47,300	£46,500
Special and PRU	£44,800	£43,300
<i>All sectors</i>	<i>£45,100</i>	<i>£41,800</i>

Appendix four

Models of motivation

Table six: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (adapted from Maslow, 1943)

Higher order needs
SELF-ACTUALISATION NEEDS: the need to realise one's full potential
ESTEEM/STATUS NEEDS: the need for recognition and self-esteem
SOCIAL NEEDS: belonging, love, affection and friendship
SAFETY NEEDS: shelter from danger
PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS: the need for food, water, warmth
Lower order needs

Table seven: Doherty and Horne's three types of needs (adapted from Doherty & Horne, 2002 p.221)

WARMTH NEEDS: such as the need for support, affection, belonging, friendship, acceptance and unconditional positive regard
APPLAUSE NEEDS: including the need for recognition, approval, admiration, gratitude, congratulation, reward, success, positive strokes, achievement and pleasure
POSSESSION NEEDS: such as the need for one's own desk, parking space, office, work, etc.

Appendix five

Gray's feminine and masculine paradigms

Table eight: Gray's feminine and masculine paradigms (adapted from Gray, 1993 p.111)

NURTURING ('FEMININE') PARADIGM	DEFENSIVE/AGGRESSIVE ('MASCULINE') PARADIGM
caring	disciplined
creative	conformist
intuitive	normative
aware of individual differences	evaluative
non-competitive	competitive
tolerant	highly regulated
subjective	objective
informal	formal

Appendix six

Details of local education authorities

The names accorded to the education authorities are pseudonyms in order to help protect the anonymity of the women interviewed.

Southshire

Southshire (Southern England) is one of the few remaining areas in Britain in which selection at age 11 occurs. All state school pupils in the area sit the 'Southshire test', which is based on the same principles as the former eleven plus examination (see glossary p.ii). The highest achievers (around 20-25%) gain entry to the selective grammar schools, many of which are single sex. The rest go to non-selective secondary schools (some of which are also single sex). Although these are commonly referred to locally as 'comprehensive schools', they are actually more akin to the Secondary Moderns found throughout Britain during the latter half of the twentieth century, in that they do not incorporate the full ability spectrum. I refer to them in this study as 'non-selective' schools.

Middleton

Middleton is a city in the Midlands. Secondary education provision includes both 11-16 and 11-18 mixed comprehensive schools, many of which are also community colleges. There are a small number of single-sex schools.

Midshire

Midshire is a shire county in the Midlands. Secondary education is organised on a two-tier basis, that is 'high schools' (for pupils aged between 10 and 14), and 'upper

schools' (for 14-19 year olds). Most schools in the area are comprehensive community schools, although the intake is rather more privileged than in neighbouring cities.

Weston

Weston is an industrial city in the Midlands. Most schools are 11-18, mixed comprehensive schools. Most are also community colleges.

Woldshire

Woldshire is a shire county in the south of England. Most schools are 11-16 or 11-18 mixed comprehensive schools.

Appendix seven

The pilot study

I piloted the life history interview with six women, three NQTs and three mid-career teachers. In order to make contact with women willing to be interviewed, I used my professional contacts via the institution in which I was, at the time, working as a PGCE tutor.

I began by drafting semi-structured interview schedules including open-ended questions, but it quickly became apparent that most of the areas I had identified in the schedules would be covered in the course of most conversations, and that fewer, more open-ended interview questions would be the most effective. The pilot interviews confirmed expected timings and enabled me to gain confidence in using open-ended forms of questioning rather than structured schedules, and to use probing questions as needed.

The pilot study raised my awareness of the need to avoid becoming too focussed too early on looking for 'themes', as this could limit my capacity to 'hear' what participants were actually telling me. I was conscious that I needed to resist the temptation to ask leading questions or listen selectively and risk losing important subjective data.

I also became aware that my empathy with the women being interviewed at times led me to share with them my own experiences and opinions. Whilst I felt to do so had benefits for my relationship with the participant in terms of establishing rapport, I was also acutely aware that I could not be said to be distancing myself from the narrator, nor her story, and my interjections could potentially influence her subsequent responses. I

therefore made a conscious effort thereafter to be more cautious about discussing my thoughts and experiences during the interviews, and to try to keep my contributions brief.

The pilot study also raised my awareness of important ethical considerations to which I needed to give some thought in using life history interviews. Two of the experienced teachers in the pilot study talked about the breakdown of their marriages. Both related this to their job. One discussed her divorce in some detail and with some poignancy. The pain was evidently still raw. At the time, to pack up my Dictaphone and leave with no more than a 'thank-you' at the end of the interview would have seemed inhuman and inappropriate, and of course, I stayed, and we talked as friends. This did bring home to me that my role as researcher was distinct from that of counsellor, and to attempt to take on the latter role would be inappropriate. I realised, though, that I needed to prepare participants psychologically for the life history interviews, by warning them of the possibility that narration could take them into uncomfortable or painful areas. I needed to do this in a way that would not frighten them off or create any sense of it being a requirement of the interview that they *must* talk about personal or traumatic aspects of their lives. I opted for giving a gentle warning, whilst emphasising to participants that they must feel free at any time to miss out questions they did not want to answer, or to stop talking or change tack should they find themselves discussing areas they would rather not. In addition, they should feel free to have the tape turned off at any time. In practice no one did choose to do so, in either the pilot or the main study.

Appendix eight

Sandra's story

Sandra was 48 and married with three children. At the time of the interview she had recently resigned from her post as deputy director of continuing education at a large comprehensive school in Middleton. Reflecting back over her career she gave a number of career-shaping examples of institutionalised forms of discrimination from her own experience. Whilst the particular combination of Sandra's experiences is unique to her I include them here because every example could apply to other women too. In addition, her narrative provides an example of the 'protestor' type, as described in chapter eight.

Earlier in her career she had worked in a (10 – 14) high school in Midshire, which she described as a 'career trap':

High schools have very, very few promoted posts in total and there is a preponderance of female teaching staff in them that's unrepresentative of their overall numbers in secondary...[They constitute] a stage between primary and upper school. You expect primaries to be full of women, and you expect the higher up you go in terms of the teaching age range the more men you will find. What Midshire had very successfully institutionalised was an interim phase of education where women's lower status and thereby lower pay within secondary education was ratified, institutionalised and ...much more difficult for women to deal with than in an LEA offering conventional 11 – 18 education. So I didn't move on quickly from there...

When she took on the role of union representative, she encountered negative attitudes from others:

Juxtaposed against conventional expectations of how women might personify within a high school, was myself wearing a union hat, and really, the two couldn't be more counter-posed...I developed that union role, and I did so actually because I derived more job satisfaction from that and was going to continue to do so, which is another career impediment. In the context of the high school, I think the judgement made then of a woman capable of behaving in a way that an NUT rep needs to behave was even more severe...in winning [arguments relating to staffing] what I will have succeeded in doing is consolidating the view

of people working in the school that I was suspiciously askew of a normal high school woman's dispositional profile, and I suspect that some will even have harboured suspicions that I may not have had those sensitivities necessary for the teaching job...

These attitudes resurfaced later, in a different school, when she applied for a post as head of sixth form, which, as assistant head of sixth form, she was well placed to do:

It was my view that because I was the union rep, the senior management would not countenance my presence in that position... The post was advertised, and [a] male candidate was appointed. He then very quickly eschewed that role and took on a different role within the structure of the school, leaving the oversight of the sixth form without any leadership. Colleagues were coming to me and saying, 'why haven't they put you into this position on a temporary basis – you're the second in sixth?' At the same time instructors who had newly gained their teaching credentials were in some cases being offered promoted posts and in that context the refusal to endorse me in a further promotion was a starkly different act. Eventually they asked a male colleague to do the job... I left this situation alone until the governors insisted there was an internal advert for the post. I applied just to be contrary. I did it just so that I could express my huge confusion at interview since they had already, to the best of my knowledge, offered the post to the only other applicant – my male colleague. I did not feel any one of these decisions about who should be head of sixth was sexist. I did think it related to my NUT role but not ever my gender. However, if I look at the succession of three males placed in the post then I would have to stand back and question my own assumptions. I think there may well be some sexism there...

Twelve years into her career, she applied for a head of department post. By the time she was invited for interview she realised she was pregnant, and sought guidance from the LEA and the NUT with regard to the appropriate course of action:

In seeking such advice, I certainly would have been pushing an equal opportunities frontier for that time and I'm not sure that anybody quite knew how to handle what I was asking, including me... I was three months pregnant, and I had told [my current] school this, so, significantly, the head who would write my reference knew. I would have been applying for a post to begin the following September, by which time I knew I would be on maternity leave... Clearly, the then equal opportunities legislation protected my rights as a pregnant woman employee and it would be unlawful for an employer to discriminate because I was pregnant. But what was the situation where actually you were attempting to change posts during pregnancy, during maternity leave? The guidance I got from the LEA was that I should tell the

Headteacher of [the school to which I was applying] of my condition, and thus enable him to understand that I would not be available to actually take up the post in September. The guidance I had from the NUT was that I should most definitely *not* tell the head this, because the only logical purpose as to why information should be disclosed prior to interview, would be because it might make a difference to the final decision he may wish to make – yet if he made a different appointment solely because of my pregnancy, this would transgress Equal Opportunities. They therefore determined that my informing him would implicitly signal that he had the right to take the information into account in making the appointment - an act that would be illegal. I had a long discussion with the LEA about the morality of that circumstance and I found myself caught in a situation where in terms of women's rights it fell on technically clear territory, no employer would lawfully hold a right to discriminate against me as a candidate on the basis of the fact of me being pregnant. However, my ability to attend for an interview where I personally knew that I was putting people into that situation, and I personally knew that I would not be available to take up the job for which I was applying, impacted hugely. I felt dishonest, I felt it was an immoral act of deception on my part and it pained me greatly, and I didn't feel there was any resolution to that really. So I went for the interview – with an all male senior management, and I determined that at the point at which they offered the job I would say something. I didn't quite know how I would handle it from then on...It wasn't a nice situation to be in, and I felt that there were some human limits to the plausibility of enacting Equal Opportunities. In the event, I attended and was not offered the job. I think my own ability to perform in that interview in the same way as though I was not pregnant was never a possibility. I do also think there might have been a 'phone call between the two heads because obviously the head of [my current school at the time] might have been concerned for his own position. Should I be appointed and should this all then be revealed, he might be asked why he hadn't said something to a colleague head...At that particular juncture in time, being a woman enabled me to be a pregnant employee, and it was only the pregnancy that enabled that particular sequence of events to take place. There is no doubt that that was a decisive moment where my career, had I been male, at that particular point, my whole career might still have been different. It also ingrained in my own thinking that whatever legislation was in place, in reality, it really did make a difference to be a pregnant woman and that maybe demanding it be ignored to achieve equality was an entirely flawed concept of equality (Sandra, late-career teacher).

Having started her family, Sandra embarked upon a string of part-time and temporary positions, one of which was in a Midshire upper school. The head at the school, feeling that there were insufficient numbers of women in the senior leadership team invited aspiring females who were in middle management posts to join his leadership team:

He then invited commentary about that from other female staff, and I gave him a document I wrote about it that I don't think he was expecting. I made some points to him along the lines of welcoming his preparedness to embrace the issue of women's position in the workforce in education, but cautioning over his particular strategic response to that. I pointed out that what he'd actually done in some ways compounded their inferior status, because he had contrived for them to work alongside male senior management, thereby undertaking the same tasks, be fully responsible for additional work, but yet remain on their existing pay. I felt that it needed to be recognised upfront that there were good reasons to do that, but it could hide a form of secondary discrimination that was in danger of compounding the plot. I also felt that it should be recognised that they were in there on an inherently different basis to those males who were still, ultimately, on the senior management by right rather than by invitation. Ultimately, those males on the senior management had the absolute right to have the final say on decisions. They were duty bound by contract to be accountable for and responsible for decisions taken by the senior management and those women there by his request, were not. I felt that there were some very deep contradictions there between the actual non-equal basis of women placed in the senior management and his stated intention to attempt to give women equal opportunities. I felt that was OK, so long as you embraced and explored those contradictions and those points... I subsequently went to see him on a matter that should have been unrelated. I went to see him to [ask for]... a permanent contract for the following year [rather than another] temporary contract. He considered this, and I think he was happy to go for permanent status. What he then did was put it to his management team, freshly invited women included, who decreed that any position must be advertised and duly forced him to do this. My difficulty with that is, I was eleven days away from having the right to claim unfair dismissal if somebody else was given my job. Had I been employed for only eleven days longer, I would have fulfilled the qualifying conditions for employment rights and I would have had the right to claim unfair dismissal if they appointed somebody else to my job. I think a lot of heads misunderstand Equal Opportunities, because if you advertise and subsequently select another candidate, thereby causing the person you had employed on a temporary contract to become unemployed, if the original person has gained employment rights, then it is, in law, 'unfair dismissal'. Therefore it should be a circumstance where heads are told by Personnel at the LEA they must definitely not advertise. However, heads have so wholly absorbed the concept that Equal Opportunities is the 'Holy Grail' rule in appointments, they often do not see that there are a few circumstances where they must not advertise. In the event, he obeyed the senior team and advertised and appointed somebody else!... I recall going to see him, and also writing to him to the effect that women who held permanent secure positions in his school, who actually themselves contractually had no right to be party to the decision about how my job should have been advertised, had caused me to become unemployed as a consequence of their

decision... Ironically the only reason I was doing a temporary contract in the first place was because I was a woman who had broken my career by having three children. I felt that this really was an inherently unfair circumstance, where those particular women who had been put onto the management in the interests of Equal Opportunities had been a party to a decision that had impacted on my working circumstances with such devastating consequence. Certainly this appeared to me to be an arguably very hypocritical and double standards expression of Equal Opportunities. When I went through this with the head I actually think he was quite horrified as I explained those implications. I never had chance to also explain this to the women on that management and to this very day, I should still relish the chance! This meant that I then found myself in circumstances where I needed to find other work, and I found that very difficult...

Sandra's most recent post had been deputy director of continuing education at a large comprehensive school in the city of Middleton, a school in particularly difficult and stressful circumstances. She had become physically ill as a result of the stressful circumstances, and therefore approached the school leaders to request a change to part-time working, which was refused:

What I got back in response to my first enquiries, was an immediate rebuttal from the senior management stating I could possibly do this, but I would immediately have to give up my management points, because they could not possibly have somebody in a pastoral management role on a part-time post. I immediately knew that was wrong. I know it's a 'Secondary Discrimination' issue, indeed, the LEA even supports job shares for headteachers lest it be accused of secondary discrimination... I dealt with that very carefully and I just enquired as to why it would be necessary for me to give up my management post. Their response duly came back confirming that they would not allow any pastoral managers to work part-time. To give them the chance to have the LEA explain how their response took them into Secondary Discrimination territory, I even asked them what advice they'd taken, for example, had they sought advice from LEA personnel office? I knew that if they did approach the LEA personnel team, they would be told that, actually, their policy decision was taking them into very dangerous territory. I was told such advice had been sought, though in truth I don't think it was. At that point, I knew that if I was going to pursue that, it was going to take me into a major argument with the school just at that time I was trying to explore how to distance myself from the controversy there. I was on the retreat because of my failing health... The irony is, that if I hadn't been ill I wouldn't have been trying to use that as a solution and even if I was otherwise seeking to go part-time I'd have fought the secondary discrimination and would surely have won since it's such well

established territory. So that left me having to come back in September 2004 on a full-time basis...I gave in my resignation in May 2004 because I knew I could not sustain full-time work there without becoming ill and I could not go part-time and remain in the sixth form without a grisly fight. Within days of handing in that resignation I was 'phoned at home by a colleague who told me that a former male colleague of mine had been offered the Head of Sixth Form at [the school] on a part-time basis. I know that a secondary discrimination case does not require proof of intent on the part of the employer to discriminate. It only requires that you demonstrate there was a different institutional policy that has the end point of causing discrimination. I believe this is exactly what has occurred here. Certainly, I do not think anyone has sat down and consciously decided to discriminate on the basis of gender, but I think they have treated a man and a woman in very different ways because of taken for granted assumptions...

Sandra's own conclusion is fitting:

Certainly, if I review the entirety of the issues I raise over the years that are about gender, the impact of the totality of it does cause me to question how different my career might have been had I been male!

Appendix nine

Summary of participants and career approach types

Table 19: NQTs' career approach types

Types → Name ↓	Closest matches	Some matching features	Previous or earlier type, if different
Susan	Planner		
Danielle	Planner		
Pauline	Pragmatist	Planner, Pedagogue	
Mary	Pedagogue		
Yvonne	Pedagogue		
Rebecca	Pedagogue		
Wendy	Pedagogue	Planner	
Mandy	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		
Daphne	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		
Cindy	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		

Table 20: mid-career teachers' career approach types

Types → Name ↓	Closest matches	Some matching features	Previous or earlier approach, if different
Stella	Pushed Prevaricator		Pragmatist
Win	Pragmatist		Planner, Pedagogue
Carol	Pedagogue		
Rachel	Pedagogue		
Linda	Pedagogue		
Sarah	Planner and Pragmatist		
Gloria	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		
Wanda	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		
Diana	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		
Rhona	Pragmatist and Pedagogue		

Table 21: late career teachers' career approach types

Types → Name ↓	Closest matches	Some matching features	Previous or earlier approach, if different
Marjory	Pragmatist		
Ann	Pushed Prevaricator	Pedagogue; Protester	
Lisa	Pedagogue		
Christine	Pedagogue		
Olivia	Pedagogue	Pragmatist, Protester	
Caroline	Pedagogue		
Sandra	Protester	Pragmatist	Pedagogue
Coral	Pragmatist, Protester	Pedagogue	Planner
Freda	Pragmatist, Pedagogue		
Olwen	Pragmatist, Pedagogue		

Table 22: headteachers' career approach types

Types → Name ↓	Closest matches	Some matching features	Previous or earlier approach, if different
Gladys	Planner	Politicised Leader	
Harriet	Pragmatist, Politicised leader		
Sally	Politicised Leader	Planner, Protester	
Renee	Politicised Leader	Planner, Pragmatist	
Beatrice	Politicised Leader	Planner	
Claudette	Planner, Politicised Leader		
Brenda	Planner, Politicised Leader		
Wilma	Pragmatist, Politicised Leader	Pushed Prevaricator, Planner	
Minnie	Pragmatist, Pushed Prevaricator	Protester	
Fiona	Pragmatist, Politicised Leader		

Table 23: summary: participants and closest match types

Groups → Type ↓	NQTs	Mid-career teachers	Late-career teachers	Headteachers	Total
Planners	Susan Danielle	Sarah		Gladys Claudette Brenda	6
Pedagogues	Mary Rebecca Wendy Mandy Daphne Cindy Yvonne	Carol Wanda Diana Rhona Rachel Linda Gloria	Lisa Caroline Freda Olwen Christine Olivia		20
Politicised leaders				Sally Renee Beatrice Claudette Brenda Wilma Fiona Harriet	8
Pushed prevaricators		Stella	Ann	Minnie	3
Pragmatists	Pauline Mandy Daphne Cindy	Win Sarah Gloria, Wanda Diana Rhona	Marjory Coral Freda Olwen	Wilma Minnie Fiona Harriet	18
Protesters			Sandra Coral		2

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Acker, J. (1992) From sex roles to gendered institutions. *Contemporary sociology*, 21, 565-569.
- Acker, S. (Ed.) (1989) *Teachers, gender and careers*, Lewes, Falmer Press.
- Acker, S. (1994) *Gendered education: sociological reflections on women, teaching and feminism*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Adler, N. J. (1994) Competitive frontiers: women managing across borders. *Journal of Management Development*, 13, 24-41.
- Adler, S., Laney, J. & Packer, M. (1993) *Managing women: feminism and power in educational management*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Ainsworth, M. (1998) The road not taken. IN DAVID, M. & WOODWARD, D. (Eds.) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of senior women in the academic world*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Al Khalifa, E. (1992) Management by halves: women teachers and school management. IN BENNETT, N., CRAWFORD, M. & RICHES, C. (Eds.) *Managing change in education: individual and organizational perspectives*. London, The Open University, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Anderson, A. (2000) The temptations of aggrandized agency: feminist histories and the horizon of modernity. *Victorian Studies*, 43, 43-53.
- Anderson, K., Armitage, S., Jack, D. & Wittner, J. (1990) Beginning where we are: feminist methodology in oral history. IN MCCARL NIELSEN, J. (Ed.) *Feminist research methods*. Colorado, Westview Press.
- Anderson, K. & Jack, D. (1991) Learning to listen: interview techniques and analyses. IN GLUCK, S. B. & PATAI, D. (Eds.) *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history*. London, Routledge.
- Andrew, F. (1996) *An exploration of opportunities and barriers to the development of black managers in public services*, London, Office for Public Management.
- Anon. (1989) "Miss is a lesbian": the experiences of a white lesbian teacher in a boys' school. IN DE LYON, H. & WIDDOWSON MIGNIUOLO, F. (Eds.) *Women teachers: issues and experiences*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Apple, M. W. (1993) Series editor's introduction. *I answer with my life: life histories of women teachers working for social change*. London, Routledge.
- Archer, J. & Lloyd, B. (1982) *Sex and gender*, Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Aveling, N. (2002) 'Having it all' and the discourse of equal opportunity: reflections on choices and changing perceptions. *Gender and Education*, 14, 265-280.
- Ayyash-Abdo, H. (2000) Status of female teachers in the Middle East and North African region. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 26, 191-206.
- Ball, S. J. (1987) *The micro-politics of the school*, London, Methuen.
- Barclay, L. (2000) Autonomy and the social self. IN MACKENZIE, C. & STOLJAR, N. (Eds.) *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency and the social self*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Baxter, J. & Gibson, D. (1990) *Double take: the links between paid and unpaid work*, Canberra, AGPS.
- Beare, H., Caldwell, B. & Millikan, R. (1993) Leadership. IN PREEDY, M. (Ed.) *Managing the effective school*. London, Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Benson, P. (1994) Free agency and self worth. *Journal of Philosophy*, 91, 650-668.
- Benson, P. (2000) Feeling crazy: self-worth and the social character of responsibility. IN MACKENZIE, C. & STOLJAR, N. (Eds.) *Relational autonomy: feminist*

- perspectives on autonomy, agency and the social self*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Biklen, S. K. (1985) Can elementary schoolteaching be a career? A search for new ways of understanding women's work. *Issues in Education*, 3, 215-31.
- Bittman, M. (1991) *Juggling time: how Australian families use time*, Canberra, AGPS.
- Blackmore, J. (1989) Educational leadership: a feminist critique and reconstruction. IN SMYTH, I. & JOHN, W. (Eds.) *Critical perspectives on educational leadership*. Lewes, The Falmer Press.
- Blackmore, J. (1993) In the shadow of men: exclusionary theory and discriminatory practice in the historical construction of 'masculinist' administrative cultures. IN BLACKMORE, J. & KENWAY, J. (Eds.) *Gender matters in the theory and practice of educational administration and policy: a feminist introduction*. London, Falmer Press.
- Blackmore, J. & Kenway, J. (Eds.) (1993) *Gender matters in the theory and practice of educational administration and policy: a feminist introduction*, London, Falmer Press.
- Blair, A. (2006) 1,500 schools 'are left headless and adrift'. *The Times Wednesday January 11 2006*.
- Bracke, S. (2003) Author(iz)ing agency: feminist scholars making sense of women's involvement in religious 'fundamentalist' movements. *The European journal of women's studies*, 10, 335-346.
- Bradley, H. (1996) *Fractured identities: changing patterns of inequality*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Braybon, G. & Summerfield, P. (1987) *Out of the cage: women's experiences in two world wars*, London, Pandora.
- Brockbank, A. & Traves, J. (1996) Career aspirations - women managers in retailing. IN LEDWITH, S. & COLGAN, F. (Eds.) *Women in organisations: challenging gender politics*. London, Macmillan Business.
- Brown, G. & Irby, B. (Eds.) (1998) *Women and leadership: creating balance in life*, New York, Nova Science.
- Brown, G. W. (1997) Oral history: Louisiana Black women's memoirs. IN VAZ, K. M. (Ed.) *Oral narrative research with Black women*. California, Sage.
- Burke, R. J. (1997) Are families damaging to careers? *Women in Management Review*, 12, 320-324.
- Burr, V. (2006) Towards the democratisation of women's relationships: friends as family in popular television. *Psychology of Women Section Review*, 8, 31-37.
- Bush, T. (1994) Theory and practice in educational management. IN BUSH, T. & WEST-BURNHAM, J. (Eds.) *The principles of educational management*. Leicester, Longman.
- Caldwell, B. J. & Spinks, J. M. (1992) *Leading the self-managing school*, London, The Falmer Press.
- Campbell, R. J. (1985) *Developing the primary school curriculum*, London, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Capel, S. (2001) Motivating pupils. IN CAPEL, S., LEASK, M. & TURNER, T. (Eds.) *Learning to teach in the secondary school*. 3rd ed. London, Routledge Falmer.
- Casey, K. (1993) *I answer with my life: life histories of women teachers working for social change*, London, Routledge.
- Certo, S. C. (1992) *Modern management: quality, ethics and global environment*, London, Allyn and Bacon.

- Chanfrault-Duchet, M. F. (1991) Narrative structures, social models, and symbolic representation in the life story. IN GLUCK, S. B. & PATAI, D. (Eds.) *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history*. London, Routledge.
- Christ, C. (1986) *Diving deep and surfacing: women writers on spiritual quest*, Boston, Beacon Press.
- Coffey, A. (2007) The place of the personal in qualitative research. *Qualitative Researcher*, 1.
- Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1989) *Research methods in education*, London, Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000) *Research methods in education*, London, Routledge Falmer.
- Cole, G. A. (1986) *Management theory and practice*, Eastleigh, DP Publications Limited.
- Coleman, M. (1994) Women in educational management. IN BUSH, T. & WESTBURNHAM, J. (Eds.) *The Principles of Educational Management*. Leicester, Longman.
- Coleman, M. (1996) Management style of female headteachers. *Educational management and administration*, 24, 163-174.
- Coleman, M. (2002) *Women as headteachers: striking the balance*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books.
- Colgan, F. & Tomlinson, F. (1996) Women in book publishing - a 'feminised' sector? IN LEDWITH, S. & COLGAN, F. (Eds.) *Women in organisations: challenging gender politics*. London, Macmillan Business.
- Crum Ewing, A. (1998) Luck, hard work and an unplanned career. IN DAVID, M. & WOODWARD, D. (Eds.) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of senior women in the academic world*. London, The Falmer Press.
- David, M. & Woodward, D. (Eds.) (1998) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of women in the academic world*, London, The Falmer Press.
- David, M. E. (2003) *Personal and political: feminisms, sociology and family lives*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books.
- Davidson, M. J. & Cooper, C. L. (1992) *Shattering the glass ceiling: the woman manager*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Davies, B. & Ellison, L. (1991) *Marketing the secondary school*, Harlow, Longman.
- De Lyon, H. (1989) Sexual harassment. IN DE LYON, H. & WIDDOWSON MIGNIUOLO, F. (Eds.) *Women teachers: issues and experiences*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1992) *Symbolic interactionism and cultural studies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- DfES (2006) National statistics first release: school workforce in England (revised). Available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR> (accessed 6th February 2007).
- Doherty, T. L. & Horne, T. (2002) *Managing public services: implementing changes - a thoughtful approach*, London, Routledge.
- Doyle Walton, K. (1998) Against the tide: the career paths of women chief academic officers of American colleges and universities. IN DAVID, M. & WOODWARD, D. (Eds.) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of women in the academic world*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Edwards, S. & Lyons, G. (1994) Female secondary headteachers - an endangered species? *Management in Education*, 8, 7-10.
- EOC (2007a) Sex and power: who runs Britain? 2007. Available at <http://www.eoc.org.uk> (accessed 7th February 2007).

- EOC (2007b) The gender equality duty and schools: guidance for public authorities in England. Available at <http://www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty> (accessed 4th April 2007).
- EOC (2007c) General guidance: overview of the gender equality duty. Available at <http://www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty> (accessed 1st March 2007).
- Ernst, S. (2005) The construction of gender and leadership: figurational approaches to organizational development and women in transition. IN MAIONE, V. (Ed.) *Gender equality in higher education*. Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Evetts, J. (1994) *Becoming a secondary headteacher*, London, Cassell.
- Fairbairns, Z. (2002) Saying what we want: women's liberation and the seven demands. IN GRAHAM, H., NEILSON, A., ROBERTSON, E. & KALOSKI, A. (Eds.) *Saying what we want: women's demands in the feminist seventies and now*. York, Raw Nerve Books.
- Fawcett Society (2007) Key dates in women's history since 1918. Available at <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk> (accessed 8th February 2007).
- Ferrario, M. (1994) Women as managerial leaders. IN DAVIDSON, M. J. & BURKE, R. J. (Eds.) *Women in management: current research issues*. London, Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Fidler, B. & Atton, T. (2004) *The headship game: the challenges of contemporary school leadership*, London, Routledge Falmer.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1967) *A theory of leadership effectiveness*, New York, McGraw-Hill.
- Fine, M. (1994) Dis-stance and other stances: negotiations of power inside feminist research. IN GITLIN, A. (Ed.) *Power and method*. New York, Routledge.
- Gardiner, J. K. (Ed.) (1995) *Provoking agents: gender and agency in theory and practice*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
- Gibbons, C. (2005) Identity boundaries and the impact of segregation and integration on lesbian teachers' personal and professional lives. *British Psychological Society Psychology of Women Section Annual Conference 2005*.
- Giddens, A. (1976) *New rules of sociological method: a positive critique of interpretative sociologies*, London, Hutchison.
- Giddens, A. (1979) *Central problems in social theory: action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The constitution of society*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge, Polity.
- Giddens, A. & Pierson, C. (1998) *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: making sense of modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a different voice*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.
- Gluck, S. B. & Patai, D. (Eds.) (1991) *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history*, London, Routledge.
- Grant, R. (1989) Heading for the top - the career experience of a group of secondary deputies in one LEA. *Gender and Education*, 1, 113-25.
- Gray, H. L. (1987) Gender considerations in school management. *School Organisation*, 7, 297-302.
- Gray, H. L. (1989) Gender considerations in school management: masculine and feminine leadership styles. IN RICHES, C. & MORGAN, C. (Eds.) *Human resource management in education*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Gray, H. L. (1993) Gender issues in management training. IN OZGA, J. (Ed.) *Women in educational management*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

- Grogan, M. (1996) *Voices of women aspiring to the superintendency*, New York, SUNY Press.
- Hakim, C. (2000) *Work-lifestyle choices in the 21st century: preference theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hall Carpenter Archives/Lesbian Oral History Group (1989) *Inventing ourselves: lesbian life stories*, London, Routledge.
- Hall, V. (1996) *Dancing on the ceiling: a study of women managers in education*, London, Paul Chapman.
- Handy, C. B. (1976) *Understanding organizations*, Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Hanley, S. J. & Abell, S. C. (2002) Maslow and relatedness: creating an interpersonal model of self-actualization. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42, 37-57.
- Hannam, J. (1997) Women, history and protest. IN ROBINSON, V. & RICHARDSON, D. (Eds.) *Introducing women's studies*. 2nd ed. London, Macmillan.
- Hekman, S. J. (1995) Subjects and agents: the question for feminism. IN GARDINER, J. K. (Ed.) *Provoking agents: gender and agency in theory and practice*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
- Herzberg, F. (1966) *Work and the nature of man*, World Publishing Co.
- Huber, J. (1973) Symbolic interaction as a pragmatic perspective: the bias of emergent theory. *American Sociological Review*, 38, 274-284.
- Hudson, A. (2005) Citizenship education and students' identities: a school-based action research project. IN OSLER, A. (Ed.) *Teachers, human rights and diversity*. Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books.
- Jackson, R. (1994) *Mothers who leave*, London, Pandora.
- Jirasinghe, D. & Lyons, G. (1996) *The competent head: a job analysis of heads' tasks and personality factors*, London, Falmer Press.
- Kim, J. L. S. & Ling, C. S. (2001) Work-family conflict of women entrepreneurs in Singapore. *Women in Management Review*, 16, 204-221.
- Kingman, L. A. (1997) European American and African American men and women's valuations of feminist and natural science research methods in psychology resistance. IN VAZ, K. M. (Ed.) *Oral narrative research with Black women*. California, Sage Publications.
- Lahtinen, H. K. & Wilson, F. M. (1994) Women and power in organizations. *Executive Development*, 7, 16-23.
- Lawlor, H. (1999) *Effective leadership in schools: an overview*, Canterbury, Centre for Education Leadership and School Improvement, Canterbury Christ Church University College.
- Limerick, B. & Anderson, K. (1999) Female administrators and school-based management. New models in an era of change? *Educational Management and Administration*, 27, 401-414.
- Limerick, B. & Heywood, E. (1994) Training for women in management: the Australian context. *Women in Management Review*, 8, 23-30.
- Limerick, B. & Lingard, B. (Eds.) (1995) *Gender and changing educational management*, Rydalmere, NSW, Hodder Education.
- Mackenzie, C. (2000) Imagining oneself otherwise. IN MACKENZIE, C. & STOLJAR, N. (Eds.) *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency and the social self*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Mackenzie, C. & Stoljar, N. (Eds.) (2000) *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency and the social self*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Mackinnon, A. (1997) *Love and freedom: professional women and the reshaping of personal life*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Maddock, S. (1999) *Challenging women: gender, culture and organization*, London, Sage Publications.
- Mann, P. S. (1995) Cyborgean motherhood and abortion. IN GARDINER, J. K. (Ed.) *Provoking agents: gender and agency in theory and practice*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943) A theory of human motivation. IN VROOM, V. H. & DECI, E. L. (Eds.) *Management and motivation*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd.
- McLay, M. & Brown, M. (2000) Training for headship Perceptions of preparation and training for headship in independent secondary schools in England: eight case studies. *Management in Education*, 14, 20-22.
- McLeod, C. & Sherwin, S. (2000) Relational autonomy, self-trust, and health care for patients who are oppressed. IN MACKENZIE, C. & STOLJAR, N. (Eds.) *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- McMaster, M. & Randall, S. (1995) Issues in changing the gendered culture of educational organisations. IN LIMERICK, B. & LINGARD, B. (Eds.) *Gender and changing educational management*. Sydney, Hodder.
- McNay, L. (2000) *Gender and agency: reconfiguring the subject in feminist social theory*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- McNeil, R. (2007) Let's talk about sexism. *The Teacher (March)*.
- McRae, S. (2003) Constraints and choices in mothers' employment careers: a consideration of Hakim's Preference Theory. *British Journal of Sociology*, 54, 317-338.
- Meyerhoff, B. (1982) Life history among the elderly. IN RUBY, J. (Ed.) *A crack in the mirror: reflexive perspectives in anthropology*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Meyers, D. T. (1987) Personal autonomy and the paradox of feminine socialization. *Journal of Philosophy*, 84, 619-628.
- Meyers, D. T. (1989) *Self, society and personal choice*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Meyers, D. T. (1998) Agency. IN JAGGAR, A. M. & YOUNG, I. M. (Eds.) *A companion to feminist philosophy*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Meyers, D. T. (2000) Intersectional identity and the authentic self? Opposites attract! IN MACKENZIE, C. & STOLJAR, N. (Eds.) *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency and the social self*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Meyers, D. T. (2002) *Gender in the mirror: cultural imagery and women's agency*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Miller, J. (1996) *School for women*, London, Virago.
- Millett, K. (1969) *Sexual politics*, London, Rupert Hart-Davis.
- Moreau, M. P., Osgood, J. & Halsall, A. (2005) *The career progression of women teachers in England: a study of barriers to promotion and career development*, London, London Metropolitan University.
- Morgan, C., Hall, V. & Mackay, H. (1983) *The selection of secondary heads*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Morley, L. (2000) The micropolitics of gender in the learning society. *Higher Education in Europe*, XXV, 229-235.
- Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Stoll, L. & Lewis, D. (1993) Key factors for effective junior schooling. IN PREEDY, M. (Ed.) *Managing the effective school*. London, Paul Chapman Publishing.

- Munro, P. (1998) *Subject to fiction: women teachers' life history narratives and the cultural politics of resistance*, Buckingham, OUP.
- Murgatroyd, S. & Gray, H. L. (1984) Leadership and the effective school. IN HARLING, P. (Ed.) *New directions in educational leadership*. London, Falmer Press.
- Murray, J. (2001) 20th century Britain: the woman's hour. Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/jmurray> (accessed 7th February 2007).
- Neill, S. R. S. J. (2007) A serious business: an NUT survey of teachers' experience of sexism and harassment in schools and colleges. Available at www.teachers.org.uk (accessed 24th February 2007).
- Nelson-Kuna, J. & Riger, S. (1995) Women's agency in psychological contexts. IN GARDINER, J. K. (Ed.) *Provoking agents: gender and agency in theory and practice*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
- Nelson, M. K. (1992) The intersection of home and work: rural Vermont schoolteachers 1915-1950. IN ALTENBAUGH, R. J. (Ed.) *The teacher's voice: a social history of teaching in twentieth century America*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Neville, M. (1988) *Promoting women: successful women in educational management*, Auckland, Longman.
- Newman, M. A. (1994) Gender and Lowi's thesis: implications for career advancement. *Public Administration Review*, 54, 277-284.
- Oakley, A. (1981) Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. IN ROBERTS, H. (Ed.) *Doing feminist research*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Oleson, V. (1998) Feminisms and models of qualitative research. IN DENZIN, N. K. & LINCOLN, Y. S. (Eds.) *The landscape of qualitative research*. California, Sage Publications.
- Oram, A. (1989) A master should not serve under a mistress: women and men teachers 1900 - 1970. IN ACKER, S. (Ed.) *Teachers, gender and careers*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Osler, A. (1997) *The education and careers of Black teachers*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Ouston, J. (Ed.) (1993) *Women in educational management*, Harlow, Longman.
- Ozga, J. (Ed.) (1993) *Women in educational management*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Ozga, J. & Walker, L. (1995) Women in education management: theory and practice. IN LIMERICK, B. & LINGARD, B. (Eds.) *Gender and changing educational management*. Rydalmere, NSW, Hodder Education.
- Patai, D. (1994) When method becomes power (response). IN GITLIN, A. (Ed.) *Power and method*. New York, Routledge.
- Peterson, E. A. (1997) African American women and the emergence of self-will: the use of phenomenological research. IN VAZ, K. M. (Ed.) *Oral narrative research with Black women*. California, Sage Publications.
- Pfister, G. (1998) The struggle for balance: the career of a German university professor. IN DAVID, M. & WOODWARD, D. (Eds.) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of senior women in the academic world*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Plummer, K. (1983) *Documents of life: an introduction to the problems and literature of a humanistic method*, London, Allen and Unwin.
- Riches, C. (1994) Motivation. IN BUSH, T. & WEST-BURNHAM, J. (Eds.) *The Principles of Educational Management*. Leicester, Longman.

- Riches, C. & Morgan, C. (1989) *Human resource management in education*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Roberts, E. (1984) *A woman's place: an oral history of working-class women*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Schein, V. E. (1989) Would women lead differently? IN ROSENBAACH, W. E. & TAYLOR, R. L. (Eds.) *Contemporary issues in leadership*. 2nd ed. Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press.
- Schein, V. E. (1994) Managerial sex typing: a persistent and pervasive barrier to women's opportunities. IN DAVIDSON, M. J. & BURKE, R. J. (Eds.) *Women in management: current research issues*. London, Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Schmuck, P. A. (1986) School management and administration: an analysis by gender. IN HOYLE, E. & MCMAHON, A. (Eds.) *The management of schools, world yearbook of education 1986*. London, Kogan Page.
- Scott, J. W. (1992) Experience. IN BUTLER, J. & SCOTT, J. (Eds.) *Feminists theorize the political*. New York, Routledge.
- Sedgmore, L. (2007) Inequality rules, and it's not OK. *The Times Educational Supplement Friday March 2, 2007*.
- Senge, P. (1993) *The fifth discipline*, London, Century Business.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1990) Adding value to leadership gets extraordinary results. *Educational Leadership*, 23-27.
- Shakeshaft, C. (1989) *Women in educational administration*, California, Sage.
- Shakeshaft, C. (1993) Women in educational management in the United States. IN OUSTON, J. (Ed.) *Women in education management*. Harlow, Essex, Longman.
- Shakeshaft, C. (1995) Gendered leadership styles in educational organisations. IN LIMERICK, B. & LINGARD, B. (Eds.) *Gender and changing educational management*. Rydalmere, Hodder.
- Shakeshaft, C., Nowell, I. & Perry, A. (1991) Gender and supervision. *Theory into Practice*, 30, 134-39.
- Sharpe, S. (1976) *'Just like a girl': how girls learn to be women*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd.
- Sherman, A. (2000) Women managing/managing women: the marginalization of female leadership in rural school settings. *Educational Management and Administration*, 28, 133-143.
- Skinner, B. F. (1974) *About behaviourism*, London, Cape.
- Smith, D. E. (1987) *The everyday world as problematic*, Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- Southworth, G. (1995) *Looking into primary headship: a research based interpretation*, London, Falmer Press.
- Spender, D. (1982) *Invisible women: the schooling scandal*, London, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society.
- Stacey, M. (1998) A flying start. IN DAVID, M. & WOODWARD, D. (Eds.) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of senior women in the academic world*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking out again: feminist ontology and epistemology*, London and New York, Routledge.
- Thomas, A. M. (2005) 'Are we there yet?' Assessing the success of university sexual harassment policies. *Fourth European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education*. Oxford.

- Thomas, E. (1998) Health and efficiency. IN DAVID, M. & WOODWARD, D. (Eds.) *Negotiating the glass ceiling: careers of women in the academic world*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Thompson, M. (1992) Appraisal and equal opportunities. IN BENNETT, N., CRAWFORD, M. & RICHES, C. (Eds.) *Managing change in education: individual and organizational perspectives*. London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Tierney, W. G. (1994) On method and hope. IN GITLIN, A. (Ed.) *Power and method*. New York, Routledge.
- Toren, N. (2005) The persistence of gender inequality in academia. IN MAIONE, V. (Ed.) *Gender equality in higher education*. Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Unger, R. K. (1983) Through the looking glass: no wonderland yet! (The reciprocal relationship between methodology and models of reality). *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 8, 9-32.
- Vroom, V. H. & Deci, E. L. (Eds.) (1970) *Management and motivation*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd.
- Walford, G. (2007) Embodied ethnographic practice. *Qualitative Researcher*, 6-8.
- Wallace, M. (1988) Towards a collegiate approach to curriculum management in primary and middle schools. *School Organisation*, 8, 25-34.
- Watkins, D. (2007) Heads in the sand, backs against the wall: problems and priorities when tackling homophobia in schools. Available at www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk (accessed 26th February 2007).
- Weightman, J. (1989) Women in management. *Educational management and administration*, 17, 119-122.
- West-Burnham, J. (1992) *Managing quality in schools*, Harlow, Longman.
- White, R. T. (1997) Talking about sex and HIV: conceptualizing a new sociology of experience. IN VAZ, K. M. (Ed.) *Oral narrative research with Black women*. California, Sage Publications.
- Wilson, F. M. (2005) Caught between difference and similarity: the case of women academics. *Women in Management Review*, 20, 234-248.
- Wilson, V., Powney, J., Hall, S. & Davidson, J. (2006) Who gets ahead? The effect of age, disability, ethnicity and gender on teachers' careers and implications for school leaders. *Educational management administration and leadership*, 34, 239-255.
- Women and Equality Unit (2003) Workplace guidance on the Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) regulations 2003. Available at <http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research> (accessed 24th April 2007).
- Wragg, E. C. (2005) *The art and science of teaching and learning*, London, Routledge.