A social identity approach to career development: possible selves and prototypical occupational identities.

Julia Yates

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School of Psychology

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Abstract

The notion of identity lies at the heart of many career theories, yet the concept is not well or consistently defined within the literature. This programme of doctoral research aimed to explore two specific variants of career related identity: occupational prototypes and possible selves. The first study gathered data from psychology students (n=24) through focus groups. Participants described their prototypical representations of members of four occupations (social worker, primary teacher, clinical and occupational psychologists). A content analysis revealed that these were detailed and multidimensional. Additionally, the data provided forty items for a self-report measure to assess the degree of match between an individual's possible self and an occupational prototype (PS to OP Match), used in Study 2. The second study examined the associations between possible self salience, PS to OP Match, and career goals and motivation for female psychology students (n=87). The results revealed significant, moderate correlations between possible self salience and both career goals and career motivation, and a significant weak correlation between PS to OP Match and career motivation. No evidence was found for an association between PS to OP Match and career goals. In Study 3, the data collected in the first study were subject to a second analysis (classic grounded theory) to identify the characteristics symbolised by the features of the occupational prototypes described. A framework of occupational identities was developed which reflected participants' conceptualisations of these occupational identities. The framework incorporated four interpsychic dimensions (successful, cool, cultured and intellectual) and four intrapsychic dimensions (warm, energetic, fun and conventional). In the fourth and final study, the responses of four career practitioners to the framework were explored using grounded theory. The semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants drew on stereotypes and preconscious cognition when thinking about careers. The practitioners found it uncomfortable to engage with conceptualisations of occupations which were constructed through stereotypes and preconscious cognitive processing, but despite this discomfort, felt that career conversations based on the framework could add value to clients. The results of the research programme make a contribution to the theoretical understanding of the nature of perceptions of occupational identities, provide empirical evidence about the impact that possible selves may have on career development, and offer a new framework of occupational identities which can be used to raise awareness of preconscious thoughts in career practice.

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Chapter 1

The challenges of career research

1.1. Introduction

The thesis aims to make a theoretical, empirical and practical contribution to the field of career development. The introduction will consider the unresolved question of what constitutes a 'good' career decision, the complexities of career development and the challenges of bridging research and practice. Key drivers of change in the current labour market will be outlined and a summary of the implications of the current labour market for individual careers, and the response of career research to the changes will then be provided. The chapter will end with some key definitions and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.2. The challenges of career research

In Chapter 2, a review of the relevant theoretical perspectives that underpin this research will be given, but before addressing the subject matter of the research itself, it is useful to provide context by considering the purpose of career research and some of the particular complexities which must be addressed by those trying to explore and make sense of this field.

The discipline is concerned with developing an understanding of the processes of career choice and development; it is about explaining 'the complexities and implications' of career choices (Khapova & Arthur, 2014, p.5), and reducing complex career behaviours into concepts which are easier to understand (Young, Marshall & Valack, 2007). The insights gained should inform

policy and practice, and help individuals make better career decisions. Career research operates at two levels: theoretical and empirical (Bhattacherjee, 2012). At a theoretical level the goal is to develop abstract theories which account for relationships between phenomena. At an empirical level, the aim is to test the constructs and relationships described in the theories, to ascertain whether or how they apply in the physical world. Research is both inductive (taking observed data as the starting point) and deductive (starting with a theory or hypothesis).

The aim for many scholars is not just to explore the arena, but to assess the processes: we are not just interested in how people make decisions, but in how people make good decisions. There needs therefore to be an understanding of what constitutes 'good' career choice and development.

1.2.1. What is a good career decision?

The idea of a good decision may make sense intuitively, but a precise and satisfactory description has proved elusive within the career literature (Hodkinson, 2008; Krumboltz, Rude, Mitchell, Hamel, & Kinnier, 1982). First, it is important to ascertain who might benefit from a good career decision and which perspective is considered in the assessment of whether the decision is a good one. The focus of this thesis is the individual but it is worth noting that a good career decision may benefit the individual – in what Watts (1999) refers to as 'worthy private good' (p.13), or broader society – the 'public good' (p.13). Career decisions considered of wider societal benefit might lead to higher productivity, greater equality in society or in a better skilled economy (Killeen, 1996; OECD, 2004). Public and private good are not always distinct; lower levels of unemployment, for example, may benefit both the individual and the wider state. It is, however, the idea of the private good which is of greater relevance here, and which will now be considered in more depth.

The idea of a good decision, is often equated with the outcome of the decision making process: a good decision is one which leads to a good outcome (Varenhorst, 1975), but this presupposes that the outcome of the decision is entirely based on the decision itself. As discussed below, careers are complex and the ultimate success of one career choice is influenced by a wide range of factors (Pryor & Bright, 2003), the decision making process being but one of them. An alternative assessment of a good decision could be based on the quality of the process: a good decision is one that is made using a good process. Again, however, there is

no empirically derived consensus about a good process for career decision making (Krumboltz, Scherba, Hamel, & Mitchell, 1982). This then leaves the career researcher with a conundrum: the aim of career research may be to support clients to make better career decisions, but if there is no clarity on the nature of a good career decision, how can the success of the research be identified or measured?

If the notion of a good career decision is rejected as a measure, an alternative outcome used in the literature is that of a successful job hunt. This is perhaps easier to measure, but not necessarily easier to define: a successful job search could be defined as one which culminates simply in a job (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowiz, 2001), in a larger number of job offers (Saks, 2006), in a job hunt that has short duration (Basten, Fagereng, & Telle, 2014), in a satisfying (Wei-Cheng, & Kopischke, 2001) or well-paid job (Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Azikic & Nauta, 2010) or in a job which shows high levels of person-environment fit (Edwards, Caplan & Harrison, 1998). Each of these measures is used within the literature and although there are overlaps, each seems to have slightly different antecedents.

At a more distal level, the aim of career research could be to identify the factors which lead individuals towards a fulfilling life. A positive career outcome, defined in this way, will vary from one individual to another. People might find greater or lesser life fulfilment through a job, a fulfilling job, a means to an end job, a 'this will do for now' job, a course, a career break, a promotion, a pay rise, a financial investment or a decision to give up work (Blustein, Kenna, Gill & DeVoy, 2008). The literature incorporates the use of objective and subjective career success as measures – objective career success being salary, prestige and seniority, and subjective being job satisfaction and an individual's perception of their success (Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005). Yet this too may not be the whole picture. A new parent who decides to leave a successful and satisfying career to stay at home with their child could be making a considered and appropriate decision to sacrifice high levels of objective and subjective career success for higher levels of life fulfilment. This decision would receive a low score on most measures of a good career outcome, but might be just the right choice for the individual. The use of career success as a measure too raises questions about the origins and implications of definitions of success, which have been critiqued from both theoretical and ideological perspectives (Gunz & Heslin, 2005; Ringrose, 2007).

Adopting a different approach, career scholars use a range of career learning outcomes to

assess whether an intervention is deemed successful, or whether a particular attribute or context, is of value to an individual within their career. Common learning outcomes which are applied in this way include career decision making self-efficacy (Taylor & Betz, 1983) which is a measure of the degree to which an individual is confident about their ability to make a career decision; career decidedness (Gati & Asher, 2001) which is a measure of how clear an individual's career goals are; and career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) which is the degree to which an individual can anticipate and respond to changes in the workplace or labour market. These are useful, but only in so far as these factors contribute to a secondary outcome: clear career goals are only relevant to a discussion about good career outcomes if they lead to a better job choice. The inclusion of the career learning outcomes commonly used within the career literature is often justified by evidence of links to other constructs. The discussions can become axiomatic, as one learning outcome is justified by its associations with another learning outcome and that is justified by its associations with yet another, and so on. The inclusion of career adaptability as an outcome, for example in Ginevra, Pallini, Vecchio, Nota & Soresi, (2016) is justified on the grounds that it has previously established links with career decidedness, vocational identity and career interests (Rossier, 2015). Alternatively, the use of career learning outcomes can be validated through evidence of associations with positive career outcomes, but the researcher then faces the dilemmas outlined above, associated with defining a good career outcome. Expedience plays its part in the popularity of career learning outcomes as a proxy for successful career outcomes. The constructs are often clearly defined, may have robust psychometric measures to assess them, and gathering the data can be done contemporaneously with the other aspects of the research, which makes it easier to establish clear links between the phenomena under scrutiny.

The challenge of working out how to identify success then is one which career researchers need to address. A further challenge, to which this section will turn next, is that of making sense of the complexity of career choice and development.

1.2.2. The complexity of career choice and development

Career choices are complex. Sears (1982) points out that career development is influenced by psychological, sociological, physical, economic and educational factors. Choices are yet more complex because they are influenced by factors beyond the control of the individual (Pryor & Bright 2003) and below their conscious awareness (Krieshok, Black & MacKay, 2009). The

multidisciplinary nature of career choice is reflected in the corresponding academic endeavour. Career as an academic discipline lies at the intersection of education, psychology, sociology and business (Arthur, 2008). The academic literature, as a whole, addresses the full range of influences, and individual researchers will acknowledge the multifactorial and interwoven nature of the discipline. Yet authors tend to focus on one or two aspects alone (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1983), leading to the 'segmented and disparate nature' of career theories (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.147). Notwithstanding the integrated approaches which have been proposed (for example, Patton & McMahon's Systems Theory Framework, 2014), and calls in the literature for a more pluralistic approach (Dany, 2014; Khapova & Arthur, 2011), the literature continues to be dominated by discipline-specific research (Arthur, 2008).

Research in this field then needs to navigate the complex web of factors which influence career decisions. Identified above as a key goal for career research was the need to inform practice. In the next section some challenges associated with applied research will be outlined.

1.2.3. Bridging research and practice

As an applied discipline, a common aim in career scholarship is to to take pure research and apply it in a physical context (Bhattacherjii, 2012), using a body of theory to find solutions to practical problems (Killeen & Kidd, 1995). Researchers working in this arena need to provide research which not only describes and explains the nature of career choice and development, but also provides theories and research which enhance these processes. Research therefore needs to be appropriately focused and easily applied.

The distinction between normative and descriptive theories is one which has been widely used in research which explores judgement and decision making (Over, 2004), but is seldom explicitly applied to career decision literature (Baruch, 2003; Hodkinson, 2008) despite clear synergies between the two academic fields. Descriptive theories aim to provide an account of how decisions are actually made; normative theories aim to provide guidelines on how decisions ought to be made (Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 1988), and examples of theories of both genres can be identified widely in the career literature. Descriptive theories alone are not sufficient: theories which describe and explain how people make career decisions and how their careers develop are important, but these theories do not provide practitioners with the tools they need to support their clients towards better decisions. Normative theories, however, risk being so far removed from the realities of people's decisions that their advice

may not be easily heeded. Both descriptive and normative theories need to be developed and synthesised into prescriptive approaches which provide guidelines for good practice which are grounded in reality (McFall, 2015).

The second challenge facing both researchers and practitioners is to bridge the gap between research and practice. There have been calls in the literature for closer links between research and practice (Patton & McMahon, 2014) and Sampson, Dozier and Colvin (2011) argue that practitioners seem to have limited interest (Kidd, Killeen, Jarvis & Offer, 1994) and success (Miller & Brown, 2005) in translating career theory into practice. The discrepancy between theory and practice is particularly notable in the continued dominance of trait and factor approaches in practice, despite a lack of support in academic circles (Bimrose, Barnes, Hughes & Orton, 2004; McMahon & Patton, 2010). This challenge, which is common to many applied academic disciplines, is considered particularly difficult in this arena because the concepts are often highly abstract (Jepsen, 2009).

Providing career research which is easy to access, written in language that is meaningful to practitioners and which provides practical tools which are usable within their working context is thus a further challenge for the career researcher.

In the next section, attention will turn to the labour market. The nature of the labour market has an influence on the lives and opportunities of those making career decisions, and therefore it is an important contextual factor to consider.

1.3. The changing landscape of the world of work

Globally, it is a time of uncertainty and change in the labour market. Whilst the changes in the global labour market are not central to this thesis, they do have an impact on those making career choices, and on the career theories which are developed to support them. A brief overview of some key drivers of change will therefore provide some useful context.

1.3.1.   The global labour market: drivers of change

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) identifies three key drivers of change in the current global labour market: technology, demographics and globalisation. Although conceptualised as the antecedents of change, the ILO notes that these could be described as the consequences of change too, thus highlighting the complexities of the global world of work (ILO, 2006).

The development of new technologies is having a profound impact on employment, and the pace and reach of these innovations is increasing exponentially (World Bank, 2005). The impact can be seen in work processes and products, and in the movement of labour and other capital. The ILO (2006) emphasises their significance, stating that 'the rapid spread, ongoing development and pervasiveness of this flow of innovation is driving a massive reconfiguration of world production and distribution […] with major consequences for employment patterns.' (p.6.). One much vaunted opportunity which has arisen as a consequence of the internet is the shared or gig economy in which organisations such as Airbnb and Uber are seen to challenge traditional business models (Hooley & Borbély-Pecze, 2017).

Demographic changes in the global work force have influenced the nature of labour markets and opportunities (ILO, 2005). An ageing population, most notably in the west, has led to an ageing workforce. This has resulted in rising youth unemployment as older workers stay on in their jobs for longer and as a consequence, there are fewer opportunities for young people (Helyer & Lee, 2012). Women's representation in the workforce continues to rise, but facilitating a more gender-equal work force is not without its challenges. Women still undertake a disproportionate amount of unpaid home and caring work, and are overrepresented in low skilled and low status jobs, leading to a continued significant gender wage gap globally (Bimrose, McMahon & Watson, 2015). Levels of migration too continue to increase (ILO, 2016a).

In recent years, a global market economy has emerged which has had a profound impact on labour markets across the world. Its emergence has been facilitated by the reduction in local, regional and national boundaries, the easing of restriction of movement, and the lowered costs of transportation and telecommunications (ILO, 2016b). Organisations are competing in a global market and this has intensified competition, leading to the relocation of production and lower skilled work to low paying places.

These newly configured labour markets have their consequences for the career paths of individuals and it is to these that attention will now turn.

1.3.2. What this means for individual careers

Career paths are now considered increasingly volatile and unpredictable (Bimrose, Barnes & Hughes, 2008). Bimrose and Herne (2012) describe today's career paths as 'multifaceted, unstable, cyclical and transitional over the life course' (p.338). These new configurations of

career require a new set of skills, and individuals need to be suitably equipped to navigate the complexities of the work force, anticipate and adapt to change, and prepare for multiple transitions (Dix & Savickas, 1995).

Amidst a panoply of changes in the labour market, there are two which seem particularly pertinent to individual careers. The first is the pace of change within the workplace, spurred on by developing technologies. The second is the increased emphasis of individual agency: the proactive motivation of individuals towards their own career development (Lam & de Campos, 2015).

In response to the first of these, the pace of change, workers need to acknowledge and adapt to the fast pace of change within the labour market. Attention has been paid to the suggestion that workers are now facing an increased number of job and career changes during their working lives (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999), but it is arguable whether this increased focus actually reflects an increase in the number of changes (Burgess & Rees, 1996; Guest & MacKenzie Davey, 1996; Kattenbach et al., 2014). Less controversial perhaps is the idea that change of one sort or another, is an integral part of working lives (Grzeda, 1999). Individuals are well advised to develop the skills or attributes of adaptability and resilience. Adaptability is the ability to anticipate change and resilience refers to the coping strategies which allow individuals to respond positively to change (Bimrose & Herne, 2012).

The second key change which is widely reported in the literature is that workers now are expected to take control of their own careers and career development in order to maintain and manage their employability (Arnold, 2002; Collin & Watts, 1996). Arguments are put forward that workers can no longer rely on their organisations to ensure that they develop the right skills and gain the right experiences to ensure that they maintain their ability to add value to organisations. Instead they need to engage in strategic career planning and proactive career development.

Workers then need to develop a new set of career skills which will allow them to navigate the fast-moving landscape. A new theoretical and practical approach to career and career choice too is needed to account for and accommodate these new requirements.

1.3.3. What this means for career research

A number of theories have been proposed to describe the nature of modern career paths.

Arthur and Rousseau (2001) describe the *boundaryless career*, in which career paths are not limited to progression within the boundaries of a single organisation, occupation or geographical area. This idea has been much discussed, but empirical evidence calls into question how widespread or desired a boundaryless career path may be (Rodrigues & Guest, 2010) and arguments are made that organisational, geographical and national boundaries remain central to people's careers (Inkson, Gunz, Canesh & Roper, 2012; Leach, 2015). Hall (1996) proposed the *Protean career* which conceptualises careers as fluid and changeable. He suggests that careers should be self-directed and values driven and that individuals now need to manage multiple identities. Building on the importance of agency, and acknowledging the role of identities in career, Fugate, Ashforth and Kinicki (2004) propose a three dimensional psycho-social model of employability. They propose that negotiating careers in the current employment landscape requires individuals to be personally adaptable, develop social and human capital, and have a clear sense of their own identities. Those who are personally adaptable are able and willing to change themselves in response to, or in anticipation of, changes in the work domain. Those with high levels of social capital have broad ranging and useful networks, and those with high human capital have a range of valuable skills, experience and expertise. Identities are described here as '"Who I am" or "who I want to be"' (2004, p.17). The notion of identities has been subsumed in a range of career theories (Ibarra, 1999; Meijers, 1998; Ng & Feldman, 2007) and is a central aspect of contemporary career scholarship. It is identity in a career context which forms the central thrust of this thesis and is a construct that will be described and analysed in depth in the next chapter.

In sum, there are considerable challenges which face the career researcher. The subject is broad, multidisciplinary and complex; research needs to not just describe experiences but offer workable suggestions to improve behaviour; the subject matter the world of work is fast changing and unpredictable; and theories and practice need to adapt to the new and changing environment. Career theory is responding to these challenges and changes, but theoretical and empirical research which is applicable to practitioners needs to gather its pace to ensure that it continues to add value (McMahon & Patton, 2014).

Mindful of this context, the focus of this introductory chapter will now turn towards this programme of research.

1.4. Definitions

Before embarking on the substance of the thesis, it may be useful to clarify key terms and acknowledge assumptions. *Career* is a much defined term in the academic literature. The definition which is adopted in this thesis is from Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989), who distil the concept to the twin notions of work and time, suggesting that career is 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time' (p.8). The authors are keen to stress the all-encompassing nature of their definition, explaining that 'everyone who works has a career' (p.9).

Career development then refers to the process of researching, choosing and developing one's career (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad & Herma, 1951; Herr, 2001) and *career development theory*, which is also referred to here as *career theory*, is the academic discipline which aims to explain and support individuals' career development.

The terms *career practice* and *career practitioner* are used. The nomenclature within the career profession is complex and arguably confusing. Practitioners in the UK describe themselves as consultants, counsellors, advisers, coaches and guidance workers, and it is a moot point whether the practice is consistently different (Yates, 2011). Within the academic literature, research from the US tends to refer to career counselors, and within the UK literature is more likely refer to guidance workers. These debates are not the subject of this thesis and so the neutral terms of *career practice* and *career practitioners* have been chosen to subsume all the varieties of work and workers who support people in their career development (Sampson, 2008). Similarly, the term *career conversation* is used to cover a range of interventions, often one to one, between a career practitioner and a client, which aim to support the client's career development.

It is important here too to note the limitations of the scope of the approach to career adopted in this thesis. The body of literature drawn on most heavily in this thesis is western and published in English. This is the literature which best helps to explain and answer the research questions, but there are some assumptions within this literature which should be highlighted. First, this literature emanates from an individualist culture and therefore assumes that career choices are made by the individual, for the individual. It is important to acknowledge that this approach would not be relevant in a collectivist culture in which career decisions are more likely to be made with, and for the good of, a broader social group of family or society

(Arulmani, 2007, 2011).

Then there is an assumption within much of the literature that individuals do have career choices to make. This speaks to issues of both class and culture. Whilst the notion of an identity approach to career choice and career practice assumes that individuals face career decisions, there are many in the UK and overseas for whom the very notion of a choice about a career is unrealistic.

Finally, the mainstream career literature implies that a career has the potential to meet the full range of psychological needs, identified by Maslow (1943), and that as well as providing the means to an income and relationships, can provide a route to self-actualisation and fulfilment. There are notable writers within the western tradition of career scholarship, who make the point eloquently that career theories should not make this assumption, and offer alternative theories aimed specifically at those 'for whom work serves more as a means of survival than an expression of talents and personality' (Blustein, Kenn, Gill & DeVoy, 2008, p.295).

The focus adopted within this thesis is not unusual. The ILO highlights globally, a two tier labour market, but suggests that disproportionate attention is paid to the state of play in the western and developed labour market. They note that half the world's working population exists in poverty, earning just $2US per day and point out that only 16% of the world's working population lives in the EU and developed countries (other Western European countries, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand). Yet the focus of most literature on career development is the western model (ILO, 2006).

The thesis then predominantly addresses the career choice and development of those in western societies, who have a degree of freedom to make career choices, and for whom career may constitute a route to self-actualisation. These are the clients I work with and this reflects the context in which this research has been conducted. But it is important to acknowledge that this is not the experience of all.

1.5. Conclusion

As mentioned above, this thesis is concerned with identity in career choice, and focuses specifically on two variants of career identity: occupational prototypes and possible selves. The research programme makes a contribution to the theoretical understanding of the nature of perceptions of occupational identities, provides empirical evidence on the impact that possible

selves may have on career development, and offers a new framework of occupational identities which can be used to raise awareness of preconscious thoughts in career practice.

The research in this thesis incorporates both inductive and deductive elements, with Studies 1 and 3 data-driven, and Studies 2 and 4 focused on testing ideas. The research is descriptive, aiming to describe aspects of the career development process and contribute to an account of how it actually happens in the real world. The findings offer contributions to both theory development and the empirical base. The data-driven nature of the research has helped to ensure a pluralistic approach and efforts have been made to integrate the findings with each other, with existing literature and with a range of theoretical approaches. The thesis aims to bridge the gap between research and practice, exploring in Study 4, how the findings could add value in career practice.

In the chapter which follows, a summary and critical evaluation of the most relevant literature will be given. The methodological approach for the programme of research will be introduced in Chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 present the findings and discussions for the four empirical studies. Each of the empirical chapters begins with a summary of the literature which is most relevant to that particular study. In some cases this will constitute a brief recap of the literature introduced in Chapter 2. In other cases, where the findings of the studies take the narrative in unexpected directions, new literature is introduced and discussed in more depth. These chapters also include an introduction to the specific methodologies used for each study. In Chapter 8, a summary of the overall findings and how they are integrated is provided, and a discussion highlights the contribution the findings overall can make to both career theory and career practice.

Chapter 2

An identity approach to career: a critical evaluation of the literature

2.1 Introduction

The psychological construct of identity has a bearing on career choice and career development. This is widely acknowledged in the career literature, and identity, in various forms, can be seen in a range of theoretical approaches to career. An appreciation of how identity influences career and how career identity develops is important to our understanding of career development as a whole, but whilst identity now lies at the heart of many contemporary career theories, gaps remain in the literature. The central theme of this thesis is career as identity; in this chapter the relationship between identity and career will be examined, and a critical evaluation of the literature provided.

In order to situate this identity approach to career within the theoretical landscape, this chapter will begin with some context, with an introduction to the history of career theories and a brief description and critique of 'trait and factor' or matching theories. These theories

dominated career theory and practice in the 20th century but whilst they remain central to much career practice, the academic community has in large part rejected the approach (Patton & McMahon, 2014). The chapter will then turn its attention to more contemporary career theories, which have been developed in response to changes in society and in the labour market, and which build on theoretical developments within other disciplines. The ideas which underpin these contemporary approaches, reflect a new paradigm in career theory (Savickas, 2012) which has at its heart, career identity. Three key ideas, identity theory, the self-concept and social identity theory, will be introduced and theories of career identity will be summarised, exploring identity from the perspectives of those within an occupation and those outside it. The notion of possible selves (Markus & Nurius 1986) and their demonstrable and potential contribution to career development will be discussed and the chapter will conclude with a review of the gaps in the current literature and an explanation of the overarching research questions of the thesis.

2.2. Career Theories

Career development, as an academic discipline has had a relatively brief history. Parsons (1909) is often credited as the founding father of career development theory and since then many approaches and myriad theories have been put forward to help make sense of the complicated process of career development. Walsh and Osipow (2009) suggest that 'differential, developmental, social learning, cognitive, sociological, economic and mathematical models have all been used' to inform career theories (p.vii). Trait and factor approaches, still influential in practice and to some degree in theory today, have their origins in Parsons' writing. In these the goal of career development is to identify traits in the individual which would meet the requirements of the role. A good match between the potential contribution of the individual and the demands of the environment, according to this approach, leads to a good 'person-environment fit', higher productivity and job satisfaction (Rounds & Tracy, 2009). In the mid 20th century a new paradigm of developmental career theories emerged (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad & Herma, 1951; Super, 1963). These theories consider the notion of development and acknowledge the part that ages and life roles play in career choice, proposing the idea of stages of career development. A new focus on the cognitive processes can be seen in the career theories which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s (for example, Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994), and at this time Bandura's notion of self-efficacy

(Bandura, 1977) was integrated into mainstream career theories (Betz & Hackett, 1981, 1986). Alongside these predominantly psychological approaches to career choice and career development, a number of structural career theories emerged, which take a more sociological perspective. These approaches (for example, Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1996; Roberts, 1977) acknowledge the social context in which individuals are making career decisions, and suggest that choices are in large part determined by issues of class and capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Now in the 21st century the focus has shifted again, and the influence of constructivist approaches can be seen (McMahon, 2016; Savickas, 2012).

The literature offers a number of different interpretations and responses to these theoretical developments. According to some scholars, the developments in career theory over the last twenty years are revolutionary (Savickas, 2015b): the established trait and factor approaches have been rejected in favour of new approaches and are now considered obsolete, and the two paradigms of career are deemed mutually exclusive (Sampson, 2009). An alternative interpretation is that the new developments in career theory add value to existing approaches, and arguments are put forward (for example, Pryor & Bright, 2011) that the bifurcation of career theories is neither needed nor useful, encapsulated by the title of Sampson's paper 'An Unnecessary Divorce' (p.91). Going yet further the case will be made in this chapter that the notion of finding a good match between an individual and their future environment can indeed be discerned within the new breed of career theories. Self to prototype matching, for example, covered in depth below, explicitly incorporates the idea of trying to find a match between two aspects of identity, one personal and one work related. In this chapter the argument will be made that the theoretical shift is more evolution than revolution and that future directions for research which allow for a synthesis between different aspects of career theories will be of value for the discipline.

This thesis is concerned primarily with the idea of identity in career development, a construct which is central to much of current career scholarship, but the programme of research also engages with self to prototype matching (Cantor & Mischel, 1979) as a decision making mechanism which may account for the influence of identity in career choices. The section will therefore start with a description and critical evaluation of the traditional matching theories before offering a broader overview of some of the key aspects of contemporary career theories.

2.2.1. Trait and factor matching theories

The trait and factor, or matching approach has been the dominant paradigm for career practice in the UK and the US (Patton & McMahon, 2014) and numerous models have been put forward which lay claim to identifying the constructs which best predict person-environment fit (Tinsley, 2000). The premise of these theories is that workers are more satisfied and more effective in jobs whose principal characteristics reflect their interests, values and skills (Dawis & Loftquist 1994; Holland 1959). The empirical evidence for these ideas raises questions about their conceptual and practical limitations (discussed below), yet their intuitive appeal means that policy makers, clients and practitioners remain firmly wedded to them (Bimrose, Barnes, Hughes, & Orton, 2004; McDaniels & Gysbers 1992; McMahon & Patton, 2010).

Holland's (1985) theory of vocational personalities is widely accepted as one of the most influential of the trait and factor or matching theories (Schinka, Dye & Curtiss, 1997). Holland's model identifies six personality types which are thought to reflect the range of career interests. Holland found that within a particular occupational group, there was a preponderance of similar personality types. The personality types are known by the acronym RIASEC, which stands for:

- Realistic: conforming, frank, genuine, hard-headed, materialistic, natural, normal, persistent, practical, self-effacing, inflexible, thrifty, uninsightful
- Investigative: intellectual, introspective thinkers who are inquisitive, curious and methodical
- Artistic: creative, intuitive, expressive with a strong imagination and an enjoyment of abstract thoughts and ideas
- Social: kind, caring, empathic and warm
- Enterprising: energetic, sociable, lively, ambitious risk-takers
- Conventional: detail orientated completer finishers

(Holland, 1985)

The model places the personality types in a hexagon with more similar types adjacent to each other. The least similar types are opposite each other (Realistic and Social, Artistic and Conventional, Investigative and Enterprising) but it is useful to note that the opposites are distinct types with different characteristics and do not represent the two poles of a single

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dimension.

Despite the dominant position that has been bestowed on this approach within both the theoretical and practical arenas, the empirical evidence is limited. Holland assumed that a close match between vocational personality and the career chosen would be likely to lead to job satisfaction (Nordvik, 1996) but evidence calls the link between a close match and a good career choice into question, highlighting a lack of empirical support (Spokane, Meir & Catalano, 2000). Arnold (2004) proposes a number of possible reasons for the lack of convincing empirical evidence for the Holland's theories, including the possibility that the theory omits some key constructs. Arnold (2004) wonders if a more pertinent question to ask is 'what do I want to achieve and how do I want my life to be?' (p.99) hinting perhaps at the importance of lifestyle beyond the 9 to 5, and the holistic emphasis seen in contemporary career scholarship which will be mentioned below. Another doubt is whether this approach, initially developed in the 1950s, is useful in the current labour market: a theory whose premise is that relatively stable characteristics such as personality and values (Roberts & Delvecchio, 2006) should predict career choice may not be suited to or relevant in a labour market that is characterised by rapid change (ILO, 2006). The approach assigns one personality type to a particular job so is predicated on the notion that only one kind of person can make a positive contribution a particular role (Jutesen, 2001), an idea which is limiting both to individuals and to organisations. There is, too, an assumption in the approach that career choice is an isolated event, that people make a career decision just once in their lifetime and then follow a prescribed course until retirement (Savickas, 2012). Holland's theory is faulted for its limited scope. It has been shown to be too culturally specific for a modern multicultural workforce, and its relevance to women's careers has been questioned (Rounds, Davison & Dawis, 1979). It assumes that individuals are free to make choices (Roberts, 1977, 1997), acknowledges only a small range of factors which are known to influence career development (Brown, 1990) and is not thought sufficiently broad to represent a full range of vocational interests (Deng, Armstrong & Rounds, 2007). Finally, the theory is criticised for assuming too much stability in individuals, as it does not account for personality development, a change in interests or intra-individual variation (Zunker, 1994).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Sampson (2009) warns 'not to throw the baby out with the bathwater' (p.92). He suggests that much of the criticism of Holland's matching model should

be levelled at the way it has been used in practice and not at the model itself or the concepts behind it. Sampson stresses that the identification of a match should come from the individual rather than a computer-generated algorithm, and argues that 'matching is best used as a stimulus for exploration as opposed to providing the answer' (p. 93). Matching then could continue to be understood as a mechanism for providing valuable insights for clients, but needs to be conceptualised more broadly than it has been, with consideration given to a wider range of constructs to be matched (such as lifestyle and identity). This idea which will be examined later in the thesis, as we explore the idea of self to prototype matching, in which the match between one's identity and prototypical identity of a member of an occupational group influence career choice (Cantor & Mischel, 1979).

A second influential trait and factor theory is the theory of work adjustment (TWA) (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). In this trait and factor theory, as with Holland's approach, the search for a match between an individual and the work environment remains the central goal, but in contrast to the RIASEC model, the TWA does not conceptualise either individuals or workplaces as fixed and rigid. The authors suggest instead that work is an interaction between the individual and the workplace, and describe 'work adjustment' as the process of maintaining a correspondence between the individual's needs or wants (satisfaction) and the requirements of the role (satisfactoriness) arguing that this balance is maintained by adjustments both within the individual and within the workplace. Satisfaction is thought to be a result of the degree to which an individual feels that their values are met (values defined here as achievement, comfort, status, altruism, safety and autonomy), and satisfactoriness is considered the product of a good match between the individual's abilities and the requirements of the job. The TWA thus offers more flexibility than Holland's RIASEC model, in that it acknowledges some fluidity in the nature of individuals and environments but although this model has a strong theoretical basis, the empirical evidence is limited (Tinsley, 2000).

A third traditional approach, and one which is perhaps closest to the heart of the subject matter of this thesis comes from Gottfredson (1981, 2002). Gottfredson's theory succeeds in integrating a number of theoretical strands, acknowledging the influence of both individual and environmental factors in career choice, and conceding the benefits in both the matching approaches outlined here, the developmental approaches (for example, Super, 1953) which conceptualise career choice as a process of development (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad &

Herma, 1951) and the structural approaches which highlight the influence of social context (Roberts, 1977). Gottfredson was interested in exploring the impact of gender and class on career choice, and her theory was developed to explain why children limit themselves to occupations which are considered suitable for their sex and class, long before they themselves have experienced barriers associated with these demographic characteristics. Her theory of circumscription and compromise contends that individuals hold occupation stereotypes: cognitive images of occupations which incorporate a range of information including the personality, lifestyles, gender and class of those who work in particular roles. The theory posits that individuals will compare the occupational stereotypes of a range of possible jobs with some core elements of their self-concept. They will reject career options which are not considered to be a suitable match of gender and class or prestige and will then make their career choice on the basis of the match between personality, interests and values, out of those options which remain. Gottfredson uses the term 'compatibility' within her writing (Gottfredson, 2002 p. 101) but explains that for her, the definition is synonymous with the notion of person-environment fit as used in Holland's writing.

Gottfredson's theory then at its core is a matching identity theory. It assumes that individuals are looking for a good match between themselves and their job role, but conceptualises both the individual and the job role in terms of identities: self-identity and a prototypical occupational identity. In this we can see echoes of the self to prototype matching approach which will be covered in more depth later in the chapter.

This then is a summary of three of the key matching theories which dominated career theory in the 20th century. Contemporary theories have tended to move away from the notion of matching (Sampson, 2009) but there are some calls in the literature which suggest that a wholesale rejection of the matching paradigm of career theory is not the most fruitful direction for career research. Sampson points out that there is considerable merit in the concept of matching, although not always in the way it is applied in practice (Sampson, 2009) and Tinsley (2000) stresses that the notion of matching the person and their environment, per se, is not necessarily problematic, but it is the nature of what is matched which may require further theoretical refining. Tinsley suggests that future research could usefully aim to elaborate the theoretical basis for matching theories.

This thesis concerns the role of identity in career choice and career thinking, and explores the influence that a match between identities may have on career choice: the identity of the individual and the identity which the individual associates with the occupation in question. This line of enquiry takes the concept of matching from the 20th century, modern career theories and updates it in the light of the contemporary acknowledgment of the role of identity in careers. It is these to which we will now turn, describing the developments in career theory which highlight the role that identities play in career.

2.2.2. Contemporary career theories

The notion of career as identity is one of a number of key constructs which recur frequently in contemporary career theories. Before a more in depth treatment of identity in career theories, the contemporary theoretical landscape will be summarised.

In response to the criticisms of trait and factor theories and acknowledging the changed and changing nature of the world of work, many theories have emerged over the past 20 years which have recalibrated career theory. The research which has been conducted extends the boundaries of our understanding, but the broad ranging, disparate and eclectic theories which have emerged are not easy to integrate. This complex array of theories is most often described by categorising the theories by academic discipline or by theoretical influence (for example, sociological and psychological career theories, or those influenced by structural or identity theories). In this introduction, mindful of the calls in the literature for a more integrated or pluralistic approach to career scholarship (as outlined in the previous chapter), an approach was sought which could present a range of current career theories within a single, integrated landscape, rather than as a series of discrete paradigms. The model presented in Figure 1 is a framework which encompasses the key theoretical assumptions of our current understanding of career development (Yates, 2016).

The model is intended to offer a synthesis of a broad range of the most compelling and well evidenced theoretical assumptions of 21st century career theory. It comprises an overarching question ('How can I be who I want to be?') and four elements which contribute to finding an answer to this question. The elements of the model are described discretely but it is

acknowledged that in practice they interweave and develop concurrently rather than sequentially.

The new paradigm of career theories has, as the fundamental goal of career development, an answer to the question 'How can I be who I want to be?' (Blustein, 2013; Tinsley, 2000). This is a broad question and does not specify 'career' or other similar terms. Contemporary career theories tend to be predicated on the assumption that a career or job is often able to lead to, or enable self-actualisation, but theories such as Life Design (Savickas, 2012), the Psychology of Working (Blustein 2013) and The Kaleidoscope model (Maniero & Sullivan, 2005) acknowledge that the answer to this overarching question might not include a career or a job. Implicit in this overarching question is a refusal to make a clear distinction between work and life. This echoes the 'holistic' philosophy seen in Life Design (Savickas, 2012) and narrative approaches (Cochran, 1997). A sympathy between one's inner self-concept and one's occupational identity has been shown to have a significant impact on job satisfaction (Perdue, Reardon & Peterson, 2007; Verquer, Beehr & Wagner, 2003). The blending of work and non-work identities has also been explored in occupational literature too (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013), and this will be revisited later in the chapter.

Figure 2.1

A meta-theoretical framework of contemporary career theories, adapted from Yates (2016)
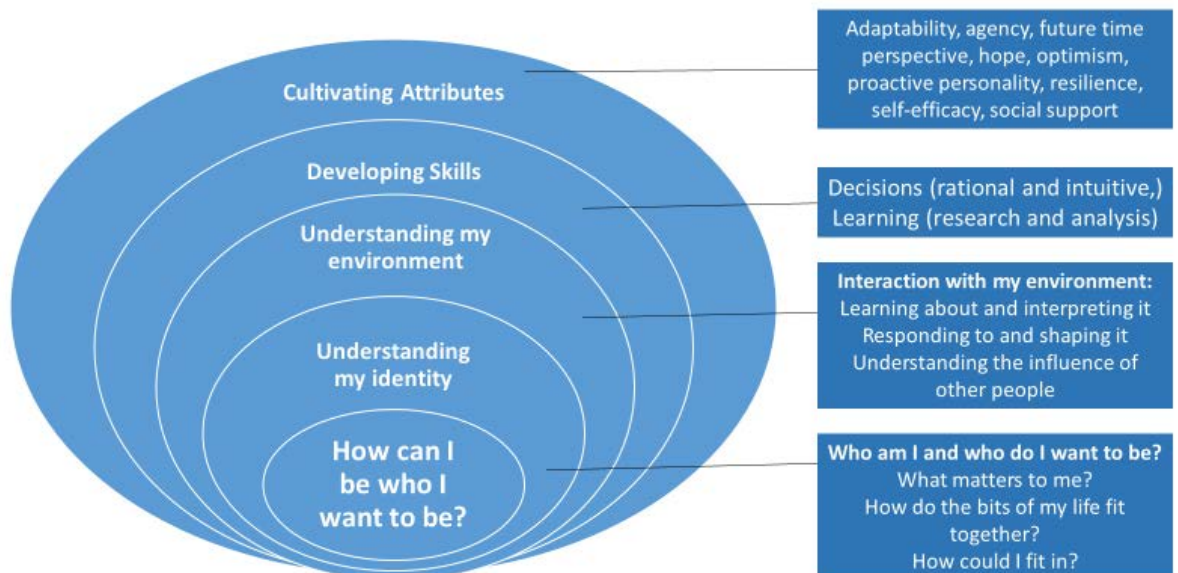
Identity

An overview of the career theories which focus specifically on identities will be presented below but in brief, identity has been central to career theories in the form of the self-concept since it was introduced to the field by Super in 1963. Career theories now offer a number of avenues which can explain the journey towards a clear sense of current and desired identities, and encompass values (Brown, 1996; Colozzi, 2003) and purpose (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Seligman, 1998). Those making decisions are encouraged to work out 'How do the bits of my life fit together?', a question which addresses the different aspects of life and conceptualises lives and futures holistically (Maniero & Sullivan, 2005; Savickas, 2012). The last question posed in the model: 'How could I fit in?', invites people to consider their own identities in terms of their social identities (Hogg & Terry, 2000) and the groups they might align themselves with (Peters, Ryan, Haslam & Fernandes, 2012).

Environment

The second arena which is core to contemporary career theories is the environment, acknowledged as fluid, interwoven and constructed, to some degree. The first task here is to learn about and interpret one's environment. Individuals engaged in this process develop an insight into how the world works, an understanding of currency such as social and cultural capital (Chudzikowski, & Mayrhofer, 2011; Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997), an appreciation of the fluid nature of the environment and the impact and opportunities presented by chance events (Bloch, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003). The second aspect of 'understanding my environment' highlights the dynamic nature of the relationship between the individual and the environment, focusing on the ways in which the environment influences the individual (Blustein, Schultheiss & Flum, 2004) and in which the individual can influence the environment (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Particularly influential within our environments are other people. Traditional approaches have advocated the value of independent thinking and decisions (Gati, 1986; Holland 1997) but more contemporary career theories acknowledge the inevitability of the influence of others and the benefits it can confer (Agarwala, 2008; Schultheiss, 2003).

Skills

In the third aspect of contemporary career theories, as conceptualised in this model, are the two skills of learning and decision making which individuals need to develop to aid the career decision making process. In order to negotiate their career development, individuals need to

know how to learn. Theories can incorporate the skills to research (gather information) and analyse (make sense of the information). Career theories acknowledge that career information absorbed is accumulated through both formal and informal sources (Greenbank & Hepworth, 2008) and individuals can learn about work from their own experiences and through watching others (Hoffner et al., 2006).

Traditional models of career state explicitly or implicitly, that a rational approach to decision making is the best way to reach the best conclusion (Krieshok, Black & McKay, 2009; Yates, 2015). More recent evidence indicates that career decisions are often made below the level of consciousness (Greenbank, 2014) incorporating emotions as well as cognitions (Kidd, 1998). Research too indicates that a combination of rational and intuitive strategies better reflects real world decision making (Ferreira, Garcia-Marques, Sherman & Sherman, 2006) and may be the strategy most likely to lead to good career outcomes (Singh & Greenhaus, 2004). Decision making research even goes so far as to suggest that for complex, probabilistic decisions, such as those we face when making a career choice, the intuitive decision making system is likely to outperform the conscious rational system (Dijksterhuis, Bos, Nordgren, & van Baaren, 2006).

Attributes

At this final level the personal attributes which can support an individual as they build up a picture of their current and desired identity, and as they strive towards their career goals are set out. Numerous attributes have been shown to have a positive impact on career decision making and job search. Amongst others, self-efficacy (Tang, Fouad & Smith, 1999), self-clarity (Hannover & Kessels, 2004), social support (Hirschi, Niles & Akos, 2011) and social support satisfaction (Antonucci & Israel, 1986) have all been shown to have a positive impact on career outcomes, including career decidedness, motivation and job search. Agency is a core pillar of many of the theories and is linked to motivation and satisfaction (Chen, 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2011). Two personality traits, conscientiousness and neuroticism, have been shown in the literature to be associated with career decidedness (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Wanberg, Hough & Song, 2002), with high levels of conscientiousness and low levels of neuroticism shown to have a positive association with career decidedness.

This then completes the overview of the key constructs and theories within contemporary career scholarship. In many ways, the underpinning ideas are not too distant from those which dominated 20th century career research, with self-awareness and opportunity awareness

reinvented as identity work and understanding the environment, and ideas about decision making and learning developed to incorporate new understandings of human cognition. Some terms which have long been acknowledged as playing a part in career decisions are now taking centre stage: career identity has evolved conceptually from Super's (1963) notion of the self-concept in career development, and the idea that career decisions are holistic has its roots in the work of the developmental career theorists (Ginzberg et al., 1951).

This section of the chapter has provided a brief and selective overview of some of the most relevant career theories, situating the notion of identity within a historical and contemporary theoretical landscape. It has been argued that the notion of matching, although not universally fashionable in contemporary career scholarship, is perhaps still a construct which has relevance in career choice and career development but needs to be better aligned with other pertinent constructs such as identity, now acknowledged as a core pillar of career development.

Identity will now be examined in more depth. The construct of identity is complex, but has been present in some guise in career theories since Parsons (1909) identified the importance of an understanding of oneself to career decision making. It has taken a number of forms since then and is discussed in the literature in relation to vocational identity (Holland, 1959), the self-concept (Super, 1963), career identity (Meijers, 1998), provisional selves (Ibarra, 2005), occupational identity (Pratt, Rockman &Kauffman, 2006) and organisational identity (Ashforth & Johnson, 2002). Yet despite its increasing prevalence in the career literature, its theoretical underpinning is not widely acknowledged or clearly articulated, and the different variants of career related identity are not always well researched or integrated. In order to identify the theoretical gaps around identity within the career literature, it is useful to begin with an introduction to general identity and social identity theories before focusing upon the position identity holds within the career literature.

2.3. Identity

The construct of identity has been much theorised in the social science literature, and two of the most influential theories which have emerged are identity theory (Stryker, 1968) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Although the two theories in many ways occupy the same theoretical space and have much commonality (Stets & Burke, 2000) the roots of social

identity theory (SIT) lie in psychology and the roots of identity theory in sociology (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995) and the literatures which explore identity theory and social identity theories too have kept their distance; Hogg et al. (1995) commented that there had been 'remarkably […] no cross referencing' (p.255). This gap has been addressed to some degree since then (Stets & Burke, 2000; Stets & Serpe, 2013) and it is now accepted that identity is best understood through the lenses of both theories (Stets & Serpe, 2013).

Within the career literature, the theoretical underpinning of career related identity, in its various guises, is infrequently articulated (Vondracek, 1992), and Pratt, Rockman and Kaufman (2006) argue that identity development is not often explicit in career theories although is implicit in many. If it is accepted that a more in depth understanding of career identity will come from a synthesis of the approaches grounded in SIT and those grounded in identity theory, then an understanding of each theory is important in order to ensure that our understanding of identity in career is informed by both.

These two general theories of identity, (identity theory and SIT) will be introduced in brief, and then the chapter will turn its attention to the career theories which incorporate identity, looking specifically at occupational prototypes and possible selves.

2.3.1. Identity theory

The underpinning philosophy for identity theory is symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). This theory provides an important theoretical lens for this thesis and as such is introduced in some depth in Chapter 3 (Methodology), but to understand the origins of identity theory, it is useful to highlight here one aspect of symbolic interactionism (SI), which is the notion of a socially situated self. According to SI, people are active and creative and they develop an understanding of their self through interacting with society and thinking about who they are in relation to other people and to social structures (Stets & Serpe, 2013). Kuhn (1964) developed a 'self-theory' from SI in which he describes the self as being made up of a stable core of attributes which provide continuity but that this stable core then interacts with the social structures and this results in the development of different 'selves' or identities. The identity is the result of the core self, meeting with society. As society is complex and formed of many

different structures, each of us will have many different selves (James, 1890).

An identity then is the meaning that an individual accords to a particular self and it is this aspect of SI that is the focus of identity theory (Stryker, 1968, 1987). The interaction between the individual and a specific aspect of society leads to the enactment of a particular role, and the interpretation that the individual puts on that self constitutes an identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). Stryker introduces *identity salience* which is a measure of how committed an individual is to a particular identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1994), and Rosenberg (1979) describes *centrality* which is a measure of how closely the identity is linked to the aspects of one's self-concept which are particular important to us. Identity theory focuses on the roles which people occupy in society (family or work roles, for example) but acknowledge the influence of other attributes of the self, such as gender or race (Hogg et al., 1995).

Goffman (1959) applies a dramaturgical approach to the idea of social roles. Using the metaphor of the theatre, he suggests that roles are parts we play and highlights the idea that each role has its associated settings, scripts, props and actions, which serve to guide our behaviour. Goffman stresses the importance of the audience, highlighting the social nature of the roles performed.

2.3.2. Social identity theory

Social identity theory (SIT) was conceptualised by Tajfel and Turner (1986). SIT, as with identity theory acknowledges that identity is made up of different elements. Personal identity is the self-knowledge that derives from our uniqueness – the attributes and experiences that make us distinct from all others. Social identity is the part of our identity that derives from our similarity to others – the attributes and experiences that are shared with others in a group. Simply being a member of a group is not enough to confer a social identity; the social identity comes through the knowledge that one is in a group and the emotional and value significance of this membership. Social identity theory can serve as a framework to explain behaviour (both the behaviour of the individual and intergroup behaviour). There are two key processes involved in the development of social identities (Hogg & Terry, 2000). The first is categorization, which involves sorting oneself and others in to groups – making decisions

about who fits into which group. The second is seeking positive group distinctiveness, which involves identifying the behaviours, attributes or characteristics that are peculiar to that particular group and not present in other groups.

Self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Weatherell, 1987) builds on the insights of SIT, providing an explanation of the cognitive processes that individuals engage with when developing a social identity. Individuals will invoke an in-group prototype, which is their conceptualisation of the typical, or average member of the group, and they will then 'cognitively assimilate' themselves to this prototype, as they start to see themselves as more similar to the prototype. This process inevitably leads to their own self-concept becoming less distinct, and this is known as depersonalization. Prototypes are representations of the stereotypical defining qualities of group members (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Through the processes of self-categorization and depersonalisation individuals change their behaviour to conform more to the prototypical group behaviour.

This notion of self-categorization seems of particular relevance to career theories, as it deals with the process of developing social identity – the transformation from the out-group to the in-group, as happens when someone makes a move into an occupation.

There are a number of motivators driving the development of social identities. Hogg and Terry suggest that 'certainty renders existence meaningful' (2000, p.124) and a social identity can reduce uncertainty by providing a clear set of attributes to identify with, and providing some certainty about our place in the world. Another key driver which leads to social identities is self-enhancement. Group membership can make people feel better about themselves, as they choose to be members of groups whose members they admire, and groups which they feel will confer a higher status on them (Hogg & Terry, 2000). If the group in question shows characteristics that an individual admires (for example, competence, power, virtue or moral worth) then identifying with that group makes them feel that they have those qualities themselves, and this raises self-esteem (Turner, 1975). Possible selves will be discussed in some depth later in the chapter but it is useful to note here that group membership particularly enhances self esteem if membership of that group is seen to be leading towards a hoped for possible self (Cameron, 1999).

In the development of a social identity, individuals show a tendency to try to maintain some continuity of their self concept. A group identity that maintains continuity with the current self concept is attractive first because individuals find it easier to identify and process self-relevant information and second because people are drawn to groups which have similar characteristics to their own (Steele, 1988). This is aligned with Rosenburgh's notion of centrality (1975), described above as a key aspect of identity theory.

Social identities can be communicated in many ways. Individuals conceptualise a wide range of aspects of their lives as symbols and make choices which they expect will communicate particular messages about their personal and social identities (Elliott, 1999); as Piacentini and Mailer state, 'the symbolic meaning of goods is used as an outward expression of their self-concept and connection to society' (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004, p.252). The process of communicating an affiliation to a particular group is dependent on a shared system of codes. For the message to be sent successfully, an individual must encode and others must decode the symbols (McCracken & Roth, 1989). Both the individual and those they are aiming to communicate to need a shared understanding of these codes. The symbols of individual and group identity can take a wide range of forms. Chernev, Hamilton and Gal (2011) list hobbies, sports team affiliation, music choices and clothing as traditional forms of identity expression, and highlight recent technological developments which mean that the range of symbols which can communicate messages about one's identity now includes the choice of ringtone, and mobile phone wallpaper. Language too can be a badge of social identity (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982), and Elsbach (2004) highlights the symbolic power of even office décor.

Similarities and Differences
There are clearly similarities between these two theories. Both identity theory and SIT understand the self as socially constructed and acknowledge the reciprocal influence of self and society, and both understand that there is a personal identity which is distinct from the socially facing identity. One of the key differences between identity theory and social identity theory is how they conceptualise the aspects of identity which are socially situated. Both theories contend that identity is made within society, but for identity theory, this aspect of identity is grounded in the notion of roles, and in social identity theory, the idea of belonging

to a group is more key (Stets & Burke, 2000): whilst identity theory talks about performance and expected behaviour, SIT talks about norms and prototypes. Within identity theory, behaviour is considered the result of taking on a role and conforming to the expected behaviour in that role. For SIT, assimilating to the norms of the group as identified through prototypes is deemed more relevant.

Two of the key general theories about identity have been introduced, but this thesis is concerned with identity in a career context. The next section therefore, will provide an overview of the 'piecemeal and disorganised' (Savickas, 2011, p.28) literature which addresses career identity, responding to Vondracek's suggestion (1992 p. 129) that we need to take 'a serious look' at the way in which the notion of identity is conceptualised and theorised in career literature.

2.3.3. Career identities

The debates about identity recognise that the theories are complementary rather than competing (Stets & Serpe, 2013), and indeed, within the field of career, both the role the individual plays and the occupational or organisational membership they assume seem to be germane to career identity (Thoits & Virshup, 1997). Yet the literature around identity in a career context is fragmented and does not seem to share a common language or a set of agreed definitions. The construct of identity appears in career literature in many different forms and it is argued here that the scholarship around career identity needs further empirical evidence and theoretical refining in order to make the construct of identity more meaningful within career theory and practice. The chapter will now provide an overview of identity as it appears in various guises within the career literature. An understanding of the theoretical landscape as it pertains to career identity will facilitate the identification of the gaps which remain.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the notion of identity lies at the heart of much contemporary career scholarship, yet in many cases the construct is not clearly or specifically defined (Blustein, 1994; Savickas, 2011): Pratt et al. (2006) submit that identity is implicit but

not explicit in many career theories, and McMahon and Watson (2013) suggest that it has often been subsumed in discussions about the self, pointing to the concepts of self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1981) and the self-concept (Super, 1963) both of which have more overtly formed a core pillar of theoretical career literature. We can see then that understanding the way the term identity is used in career theories and career research is not straightforward, but disentangling the uses of 'vocational identity', 'the self' and 'career identity' in the literature may constitute a helpful start.

In the mid-20th century, Holland coined the term 'vocational identity', defined as 'the possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals, interests, personality and talents' (Holland, Gottfredson & Power, 1980, p 1181). Holland's understanding of vocational identity is more aligned with the notion of a core (in identity theory) or the personal identity (in SIT), in that it does not emphasise the socially situated self, nor acknowledge the idea of multiple selves, or the influence of roles or group membership. This term is still in current usage in career literature, but is not defined in a consistent way. It is sometimes used as Holland did, as a synonym of self-concept (Koen, van Vianen, Klehe & Zikic, 2016); and sometimes treated as a socially situated self which connects an inner self-concept and the roles which an individual performs (Loh, Lee & Ali, 2016; Ouyang, Jin & Tien, 2016).

Savickas (2011) provides a useful overview of the self in career theories, describing the evolution of the self in career literature from the *self as object* (Parsons, 1909) through the *self as subject* (Super, 1980) to the *self as project* (Meijers, 1998; Savickas, 2005). This third version, that which is incorporated in many contemporary career theories, is a synthesis of the first two and Savickas describes this conceptualisation of the self as *identity*. Savickas notes the similarities in these definitions to James's understanding of the self as comprised of the 'I' and the 'me' (James, 1890) published over a century before. Savickas acknowledges the socially situated notion of identity which is seen in identity theory and SIT, describing career identity as a psychosocial construct and proposes that 'identity tells the story of a self in a context' (p.25). The more general identity theories are not mentioned explicitly as influences in Savickas's review, but Savickas explains that the socially situated self is based on the roles which that individual performs (Savickas, 2011, p. 25), suggesting an affinity with identity theory.

The term 'career identity' is widely used in contemporary career writing (recent papers include

Loh, Lee & Ali, 2016; Meijers, Lengelle, Winters, & Kuijpers, 2017; Murdock, Strear, Jenkins-Guarnieri, & Henderson, 2016). Whilst Savickas (2011) offers a useful review of the evolution of the self in vocational psychology, with its eventual emergence as identity, in most of the career literature definitions of career identity are assumed or glossed over. It is used as a construct which tells people 'who they are and who they could become' (McMahon & Watson, 2013, p.277) but it is rarely defined more explicitly. The term is sometimes used synonymously with vocational identity, occupational identity or even career decidedness (Loh et al., 2016), and explicit associations with the more general literature on identity are rare.

The argument has been made that there is a lack of specificity in the way that career identity is often discussed in the career literature, but there are exceptions to this and some associations between career identity and the general identity theories can be seen. The notion that career identities are a product of a dialogue between the self and society can be identified within the career literature. La Pointe articulates career identity as 'co-constructed, socially situated and performed in interaction' (2012, p.2) and Meijers and Lengelle (2012), refer to Dialogical Self-Theory (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) in their definition of career identity and describe it as 'a dynamic multiplicity of personal (as opposed to social or cultural) positions or voices regarding work.' (p.157). The notion of roles, too, a defining aspect of identity theory, is acknowledged in key career theories, including the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Loftquist, 1984), Super's Life Span Life Space model (1980), the Kaleidoscope Model (Maniero & Sullivan, 2005), and Ng and Feldman (2007) applied the notion of role identity to the school to work transition. The two variants of identity which are subject to scrutiny in this thesis are possible selves and occupational identities, and both of these are explicitly grounded in SIT.

It is thus established that whilst career identity is now widely discussed in the career literature, there is progress to be made in terms of definitions and theoretical integration. The development of a more complete picture of the terms which are used and the meanings accorded would render the body of literature more meaningful as a coherent whole. Establishing closer links between the construct and general identity theories would ensure that identity as it applies in a career context has a well conceived theoretical basis.

As mentioned above, there are two variants of identity which are particularly pertinent to this thesis: occupational identities and possible selves. An occupational identity is the social identity adopted by and accorded to an individual as a result of their membership of a

particular occupational group. Possible selves are ideas of the different identities which an individual could imagine assuming in a hypothetical future. The focus of the chapter will turn now to the first of these, occupational identities and the research in this arena will be described and evaluated.

2.3.4. Occupational identities

Research into occupational identities indicates that they are significant (Brown & Bimrose, 2015) and they serve as prominent identity badges to oneself and to others (Ashforth, 2001). Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006) describe an occupational identity as 'a social identity that can be especially greedy and demanding' (p.1031) and research suggests that they may be 'more pervasive and important than ascribed identities based on gender, age, ethnicity, race or nationality' (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p.121).

Brown and Bimrose (2015) describe the process of occupational identity development. They propose that individuals first need to become aware that they are members of a particular occupational group and they need to consider what this means to them. This reflects the process described above that, critical to the development of any social identity, is an awareness of group membership and an understanding of what that group membership means to an individual (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Brown and Bimrose situate this process socially, emphasising that the views of others are pivotal to the final analysis of what, for example, 'being a social worker' will mean to a social worker, which echoes Erikson's thinking (Erikson, 1963) that identity development is a product of the interaction between the self and society.

Brown and Bimrose suggest that occupational identity development is a product of both continuity and change. Continuity can stem from an individual doing the same job for an extended period of time, moving from one job to another within the same occupation, or transferring skills and expertise from one arena to another. Continuity can therefore be seen whether the individual remains in one position or moves around. Change too can come through skill development or a change in responsibilities within the same role, or from moving from one context to another. An occupational identity will evolve in response to events, but a positive occupational identity will develop in such a way as to maintain the self concept. In the

aftermath of a significant change, the reconciliation of a new occupational identity with one's previous identity and self-concept has been shown to be important, and individuals may need to re-author their old identities in order to incorporate a consistent self-concept in their career narratives (Savickas, 2011). Haynie and Shepherd, for example, explored the career transitions of ex-military personnel whose injuries forced them to leave the armed forces. They found that the ability to identify a common thread between the military identity and their new civilian identity was a crucial factor in their participants' ability to accept and embrace their new occupational identity (Haynie & Shepherd, 2011).

The social context and the dialogue between the individual and society are core aspects of occupational identity and identity development, but individual choice, experiences and meaning making processes clearly play a core part (Glover, 1988). Brown and Bimrose (2015) also suggest that the opportunity structures (Roberts, 1997), power systems (Lukes, 2005), and personal ideology shape the development of the occupational identity, and this range of influences emphasises the complexity of the interplay between the social and the individual.

Core to occupational identity is the notion of group membership and as such, this variant of identity is differentiated from career identity which is most usually centred around self-concept or roles. But whilst these definitions and distinctions are refined, arguments have been put forward recently that the nature of career related identities is changing as attitudes to work and non-work develop. Much of the literature published in the latter part of the twentieth century has been grounded in the assumption that work and nonwork are starkly divided parts of life (Kanter 1977, Zelizer 2005), but we have seen a remarkable change in the workplace over the last generation. Factors such as declining job stability (Kalleberg, 2009), workforce diversity (Deal, Altman & Rogelberry, 2010) and technology (Barley, Meyerson & Grodal, 2011) are contributing to an evolving relationship between our work and non-work identities, with clear barriers between them blurring (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Although we can see the common theme of the blurring of boundaries within both organisational and career literature, the notion of a more blended identity is not widely incorporated into theories of work identity. Ramarajan and Reid sum this up arguing that 'together these three changes [stability, diversity and technology] in the social organization are reshaping the boundaries between work and non-work identities, yet organizational scholarship on identity

has not kept pace' (2013, p.624). These identified blurred boundaries echo the focus on a holistic approach to career, highlighted earlier in the chapter, and further exploration of this could be of value within career literature too.

One last theoretical comment to note here refers back to the notion of centrality (Rosenburgh, 1979) which was introduced above. An aspect of identity theory, centrality, explains that those identities which are closely aligned to the key characteristics of our personal identity, are most important to us. As the boundaries between work and non-work identities become less distinct, work identities may become more central, with aspects of personal identity incorporated into work identities. This may suggest that a focus on career related identities will become increasingly important as a choice about a work identity becomes more closely aligned with the core aspects of personal identity and therefore imbued with a high degree of centrality.

This introduction to identity within a career context highlights the complexity of the construct. Identity has been considered core to career theories since 1909, yet our understanding of the construct of identity within a career context remains inconsistent. The argument has been put forward that stronger links with general theories about identity such as identity theory and SIT could help to clarify the use of the term within the career literature.

The literature on occupational identities described above is explored from the perspective of those within the occupations themselves. This thesis however concerns occupational identities and the role they may have in shaping career decisions. Rather than the occupational identities of those within particular occupations, it is the perception of an occupational identity held by those outside the profession, which is of greater relevance here. Those making a decision about joining one particular occupational group will do so from a position in the out-group. It is therefore the occupational identity as perceived by those outside the profession which will have the impact, rather than the occupational identity as experienced by those within the in-group. Stereotyping is a mechanism for interpreting, storing and making sense of occupational identities from the outside, and in the next section, a short introduction to stereotypes will be offered, before the focus turns to occupational stereotypes themselves.

2.4. Stereotypes and prototypical occupational identities.

2.4.1. Stereotypes

Earlier in the chapter, the processes involved in learning about the world of work were discussed. Making sense of careers information is an enormous challenge (Hoffner et al., 2006). Each of us is bombarded with information about jobs, occupations, industries and the labour market from different angles each day. Every time we contact a call centre, book a doctor's appointment or buy a stamp, we are feeding, expanding and confusing our knowledge of the world of work and the cacophony of information must be synthesised to form a coherent picture that allows evaluation and decision making. Stereotypes can provide a cognitive shortcut which enables us to make sense of the overwhelming complexity of the world of work (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996).

A stereotype is a belief about someone which is based on the knowledge of the group to which they belong. Stereotypes are the result of an information processing strategy that facilitates quick judgements about others. Stereotypes are thought to shape the knowledge, beliefs and expectations of others (Hamilton & Sherman, 1996), as they form the basis for perceptions and representations of others. They have been widely studied (for example, Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000), and much of the work has looked at stereotypes of groups whose members already face discrimination in society, particularly gender and racial groups (Quadflieg & Macrae, 2011). This focus both reflects and perpetuates the belief that whilst stereotyping may make understanding easier, it risks propagating inequality.

Lippman first coined the phrase 'stereotypes' describing them as fixed impressions which are used to help people to make sense of a complex and changing world (Lippman, 1922). Stereotypes can have an assortment of features, including personality, behaviour and appearance (Kawakami, Young & Dovidio, 2002). Stereotypes are created early, and can be discerned in primary school children (see Bigler & Liben, 2006, for a review). They develop through exposure to a range of influences. Social-learning perspectives hold that stereotypes are a kind of cultural heritage, passed on from care givers to children and cemented by peers

(Castelli, Carraro, Tomelleri & Amari, 2007). Television and other forms of mass media also play a part. Cultivation theory suggests that we acquire conceptions about the world as a result of the frequent exposure to consistent and repetitive images on television (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz, 2008; Sigornelli & Morgan 1993). This finding is supported by other studies (Wright, Huston, Truglio, Fitch, Smith, & Piemyat, 1995) suggesting that occupational role schemata, stored as stereotypes, are developed from exposure to television as well as through reality.

Alongside an acknowledgement that stereotypes constitute an effective cognitive strategy for managing the cognitive load required to negotiate the overwhelmingly complex world (Fiske & Nuberg, 1990), a number of theories suggest different reasons for the widespread use of stereotypes. Quadfleig and Macrae (2011) suggest that there is a human need for stereotypes stating that 'a compelling set of cognitive biases, motivational needs and social learning mechanisms' lead to the development of stereotypes (p.218). Storing information in the form of stereotypes is thought to be a valuable strategy for maintaining self-esteem: it is important to believe that the in-group of which we are a member, is superior to the out-group, so we create narratives which portray other groups in a negative light (Bigler & Liben, 2006). A further explanation for the reasons for stereotypes comes from stereotype content theory (Fiske, Cuddy & Glick, 2007). Research in the US has identified some features consistently found in the content of stereotypes, notably the dimensions of warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2007). Cuddy et al. (2009) propose that these two dimensions allow individuals to identify whether a person has the desire and capability to harm them. These two questions have emerged in a wide range of social psychology literature (see Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008, for a review). Wojciszke, Bazinska, and Jaworski, (1998) find that these two questions explain 82% of the variance in the global impressions of other people.

As well as conserving limited cognitive resources, stereotypes can help to reduce uncertainty and increase predictability (eg Mendes, Blascovich, Hunter, Lickel & Jost, 2007) which is particularly valuable when the information is incomplete or ambiguous. They can be used as shorthand in communication (Maass & Arcuri, 1996), and they can be used to maintain a power imbalance. A stereotype can help to resolve a cognitive dissonance arising from a discrepancy between a desire for a fair world and an observed inequality, offering an ostensibly plausible reason for, for example, lower wages for women (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Stereotypes are introduced here because of a possible influence they may have on career choice. As such an assessment of their accuracy may be important. Considerable energy has been devoted to a debate about their accuracy. Hilton and von Hippel (1996) suggest that stereotypes can be based on real perceptions of a group, in which cases they are likely to be broadly accurate, although will gloss over individual differences. They also highlight that stereotypes can be quite inaccurate if not based on real characteristics of a group, and that those most likely to be inaccurate are often the stereotypes associated with enduring characteristics such as race and gender. Jussim et al. (2009) reviewed a wide range of research on this topic and concluded that most studies found that the stereotypes held were accurate or near misses, although other studies indicate that the stereotyped characteristics for some groups were less likely to be accurate (such as national characteristics, Terracciano et al. 2005, or political views, Park, Ryan & Judd, 1992). Judd and Park (1993) provide some support for the idea that stereotypes will usually have at their core a 'kernel of truth'. The literature reveals a limited array of studies which examine the accuracy of occupational stereotypes (Pocius, 1995), but there is evidence that the sex role and prestige occupational stereotypes are a reasonably accurate reflection of reality (Beavis, 2007).

Bordalo, Coffman, Gennaioli and Shleifer (2016) describe three different theoretical interpretations of stereotypes. The first is an economic one (Arrow, 1973; Phelps, 1972). This approach describes stereotypes as a form of statistical discrimination, based on probabilistic judgements. Assumptions and expectations which stem from stereotype thinking are considered rational: if most women are nurturing, it is logical to assume that any given woman is going to be nurturing too. The second approach is a sociological one in which stereotypes are deemed to be both insidious and inaccurate. Their existence is thought to reveal underlying prejudices in those who hold stereotypical views and their role and their purpose is to maintain a power status quo (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Schneider, 2004). This interpretation of stereotypes is important and relevant in some contexts, but its value can be overstated, in that, as highlighted above, many such stereotypes are accurate, at least to some degree, and have been shown to be as likely to be positive as negative (Bordalo et al., 2016). The third approach is rooted in social psychology and conceptualises stereotypes as cognitive schemas (Schneider, Hastorf & Ellsworth, 1979). According to this theory, stereotypes are intuitive generalisations which individuals use on a daily basis to save on cognitive resources. They can be inaccurate but more often are based on

a kernel of truth (Judd & Park, 1993), so provide exaggerated versions of real differences. This approach holds that prototypes are based on both consensual stereotypes and personal beliefs (Haslam & Wilson, 2000) and are stored as cognitive schemas: mental models based on memory objects (Derry, 1996).

Prototypes have been mentioned previously in this chapter in terms of their role in determining behaviour in self-categorization theory. Here they are discussed again, as one mechanism to explain how stereotypes are represented within cognitive structures. Prototypes were described earlier as depictions of an average group member. Rosch and Mervis (1975) suggest that the categories of different groups are better distinguished if the features of a group are put together in a single representation – a prototype. In this way the prototype can represent all the key features of the stereotype of the group in a single construct and differences between one prototype and another are easier to notice than between one list of features and another (Brewer, Dull & Lui, 1981). Prototypes are not a list of attributes or defining feature, but are 'fuzzy sets that capture the context-dependent features of group membership' (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p.123), so where stereotypes are lists of attributes, prototypes are identities. They can include a wide variety of features – values, feelings, behaviours, attributes, and are devised according to the principle of 'meta-contrast', trying to make the ingroup more homogenous whilst maximising the differences between the in group and the out group. Prototypes are thus one particular form of stereotypes in which the most salient stereotypical characteristics and features associated with the members of a group are represented in an impression of a single individual as a prototypical social identity.

Stereotypes are introduced here as a cognitive mechanism which help people outside a particular occupation conceptualise those within it, and prototypes, as a representation of these stereotypical characteristics in the form of identities. Having introduced the ideas in broad terms, the next section will concentrate on the literature which has explored prototypes as they related specifically to occupational groups.

2.4.2. Occupational Prototypes

Gottfredson's (1981, 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise was introduced earlier in the chapter as one of the most influential career theories of the late 20th century. The

theory holds that career choices are made through a developmental process which matches the self-concept to occupational prototypes. In her original monograph which introduced the theory (Gottfredson, 1981), Gottfredson reviewed the literature on occupational prototypes which had been published at that time and concluded that sex role and prestige were the two dominant aspects of occupational prototypes. One early source of data on occupational prototypes which Gottfredson cites is the work of O'Dowd and Beardslee (1967), who conducted significant work in this field. In a large scale, ten year project which examined data from over 5000 college students, they identified that their participants conceptualised occupations in terms of occupational prototypes and that these identities were almost exclusively pictured outside work, associated with a wide range of characteristics including interest in culture, sociability, social success and conservatism. A review of the more recent research which examines occupational prototypes, reveals considerable empirical work which has been conducted on the occupational prototypes identified in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers. Research in the STEM field has uncovered a range of prototypical features, some widely shared (Ryan, 2014). Prototypical occupational identities of computer scientists are not motivated to care for or work with other people and they are conceptualised as intelligent, with an obsessive interest in code (Diekman et al. 2010). Both the desire and the ability to develop good personal relationships for these computer scientist prototypes is thought to be limited (Hannover & Kessels, 2004). Prototypical scientists more generally, are imagined as hard to understand (Sjoberg, 2002) and, 'dull, authoritarian, abstract, theoretical fact-orientated and fact-overloaded, with little room for fantasy, creativity, enjoyment and curiosity' (Taconis & Kessels, 2009 p. 1118).

The prototypes described in these studies have included factors which are relevant beyond the core job roles. Packard and Nguyan, for example, (2003) provide some evidence that girls are put off careers in science because they feel that those who pursue these career paths are less likely to have a family and Kessels et al. (2006) found that scientists are envisaged as unfeminine. The prototype of a computer scientist (Diekman et al 2010) has been shown to enjoy reading science fiction novels and to be socially awkward, and prototypical computer scientists are thought to be likely to lead a life which revolves around technology (Margolis & Fisher, 2002) and have 'geeky' interests (Cheryan et al., 2013). This body of research suggests that prototypical occupational identities are conceptualised holistically, as these

representations include activities and behaviour outside the workplace, and the attributes invoked are those which apply both within and beyond their job roles. This reflects the ideas within contemporary career theories, discussed earlier in the chapter, that when individuals choose their careers they consider themselves in terms of holistic identities, considering their own activities and behaviour outside the workplace, and their own attributes as applied both within and beyond their job roles. This evidence which reflects the holistic nature of our conceptualisations of occupational identities then has some synergy with the new paradigm of career theories, but is as yet not well researched nor integrated within career scholarship.

It is clear then that occupational identities are conceptualised by those outside the occupation in terms of prototypes, and that these occupational prototypes are composed of a range of qualities both directly relevant to and going beyond the workplace. What kind of impact, if any at all, these prototypes have on career decision making is the question addressed in the next section.

2.4.3. Stereotypes, prototypes and career decision making

Mainstream career theories have paid limited attention to the role of stereotypes in career decision and career development, beyond the advice to reject them in favour of 'accurate occupational knowledge', (Watson, Nota & McMahon, 2015, p. 176) and warnings to avoid conforming to occupational gender stereotypes (Peila-Shuster, 2015). But there is one notable exception in which occupational stereotypes are woven into the fabric of a career theory. Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise, introduced earlier in the chapter, emphasises the importance of occupational stereotypes in career decision making (Gottfredson, 1981) although mindful of the negative connotations which can be associated with the term 'stereotype', Gottfredson opted instead to use the phrase 'occupational image' (p.547). She suggests that occupational information is stored in the form of stereotypes which are organised into a cognitive map of occupations. Gottfredson contends that occupations in this cognitive map are classified along two dimensions: gender and prestige, and that individuals assess their suitability for a particular role on the basis of the match between their self-image and their occupational stereotype. According to this theory, children develop through stages, first becoming oriented to sex roles (aged 6 – 8), then becoming aware of

prestige and their own abilities (aged 9 – 13) and finally incorporating their interests and values, and acknowledging the impact of external barriers. In her original theory, Gottfredson proposed that as people made their career choices, they were more likely to compromise first their interests, followed by their identity around prestige or social status, and finally, were least likely to make choices which violated their gender identity. The evidence which has tested the theory in general seems to support the notion that interests, sex roles and prestige are all important factors in decision making (Pryor & Taylor, 1986, 1989; Taylor & Pryor, 1985) but the evidence reveals complexities, with, for example, engineering students valuing prestige over interests and social work students valuing interests over prestige (Holt, 1989). Gottfredson's revised theory, (Gottfredson, 2002) holds that the aspect of identity (gender, status or interests) which is compromised first will depend on the degree of compromise required: if the degree of compromise is high, then gender identity will be preserved; if the degree of compromise required is low, it may be sacrificed.

Gottfredson places the notion of occupational prototypes at the heart of career decisions, yet considers these prototypes only in terms of two dimensions: sex role and prestige. She justifies this choice on the basis of the existing literature, in which stereotypes of gender and prestige dominated, but also cites the work of O'Dowd and Beardslee (1967) who, as mentioned earlier, found that occupational images incorporate a wide range of characteristics beyond (although including) gender and levels of prestige. The focus of subsequent literature which has scrutinised and tested Gottfredson's ideas has been the developmental aspect of the self (for example, Cochran, Wang, Stevenson, Johnson, & Crews, 2011; Hesketh, Durant & Pryor, 1990), while considerably less has explored occupational prototypes (Beavis, 2007). A full exploration of the influence which occupational prototypes have on career decisions cannot be said to be offered within her theoretical framework.

Self to prototype matching (Niedenthal, Cantor, & Kihlstrom, 1985) is another approach to career decision making which places occupational prototypes at centre stage. Similar to Gottfredson's theory, this contends that decisions are made on the basis of the perceived similarity between one's self and one's prototype of a particular occupational group. This approach explores the notion of occupational prototypes more broadly, acknowledging the presence of a wider range of prototypical characteristics, not limited to gender and class.

Hannover and Kessels' model of the self to prototype matching process (2004) involves two stages: a) the individual imagines the prototype for each option under consideration b) compares the defining prototype characteristics with those of the actual or desired self and chooses the best match. Empirical evidence of its role in career related decisions comes from studies which identify that a close self to prototype match is associated with a related career choice. Moss and Frieze (1993) conducted a study with MBA students. Their findings show that students who rated themselves as similar to a particular occupational prototype were more likely, some months later, to state an intention to apply for jobs in that field. Other evidence come from education choices. Ryan, for example (2014) identified that students studying STEM majors in the US were more likely to have a close match between their self and their occupational stereotype. Hannover and Kessels, (2004) found that the low take up of maths and science subjects at school can be explained by the gulf between the prototypes of maths and science students and the self images of the students, and Taconis and Kessels (2009) found that perceived fit between self and prototypical science student predicted the chances of a group of Dutch and German students studying science.

The nature of the self-concept and its relationship to identities was discussed briefly earlier in the chapter. The self is clearly highly complex. The literature around self to prototype matching cited above somewhat glosses over this complexity, and researchers define the 'self' aspect of 'self to prototype' in different ways, conceptualising it as an approach that could make use of the current self (Niedenthal et al., 1985) or, more often, a desired possible self (Hannover & Kessels, 2004; Quinlan, Jaccard & Blanton, 2006). One could infer that the assumption is that the decision-making process works in the same way whether it makes use of the current self, a future self or a possible self, but this assumption has not been questioned theoretically or tested empirically.

The literature thus provides some evidence that information about the world of work is stored in the form of prototypical occupational identities. There is evidence too that these prototypical occupational identities have some impact on career decision making through the mechanism of self-to-prototype matching. Understanding of the nature of the occupational identities is less comprehensive and the literature does not offer a clear account of the

features and characteristics which are perceived, stored and which contribute to career decisions. The way in which 'self' is included in this model is not always consistent but is most often assumed to be a future or a possible self. It to this topic therefore that attention now turns, as the existing literature about possible selves and their role within career choice is explored.

2.5. Possible selves

As noted earlier, the nature of the self is complex. One aspect of the self which seems to hold promise in career theory is possible selves.

2.5.1. Possible selves

Born out of social identity theory, the notion of possible selves was first articulated by Markus and Nurius (1986). Possible selves are ideas of what one might be, or what one might become. They can be expected possible selves, hoped for or feared possible selves, and can be descriptive, or motivational, generating avoidance or approach behaviours. Markus and Nurius contend that they are based on our perceptions of our past selves and are grounded in past performance, social comparisons and cultural and historical contexts.

The possible self is conceptualized as narrative in its nature. Erikson (2007) suggests that possible selves are 'stories we tell ourselves about ourselves in a hypothetical future situation' (p.350) and they reflect a meaning making process (Waid & Frazier 2003). Our possible selves tend to be consistent with our self-concept (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). The self-concept, in this context is defined as a domain-specific measure of one's perception of one's abilities (Marsh, 1990) and has been shown to have an impact on behaviour through motivation and self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 1982). The self-concept develops through the interaction between one's personal experience within the particular domain and the feedback from the environment (Beier, Miller & Wang, 2012). Possible selves develop in part through the same mechanisms as the self-concept but they are more malleable and fluid than our self-concept because they do not need to be realistic (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and are continually being moderated as our experience of the world and our self-concept change. Social forces too have a considerable impact on possible selves. Frazier and Hooker (2007) explain that 'socially recognized normative developmental tasks are integrated into possible selves' (p.51). They are

continually being moderated. Possible selves that become detailed and complete do so through thinking, observation, practice and feedback from the environment.

Possible selves have been shown to have an impact on our behaviour in a number of ways. They have an effect on how we see our current selves (Strahan & Wilson, 2007) by providing us with a yardstick: measuring our current self against a possible self allows us to assess how much we have achieved on a scale. They have an impact on our goal setting, allowing us to identify more numerous and more specific goals (Hock, Deshler & Schumaker, 2007) and they enable us to convert future events into current goals (Strauss, Griffin & Parker, 2012). They facilitate the identification of the steps needed to realise those goals (Robinson, Davis & Meara, 2003) by organising thoughts and keeping a focus on future orientated activities. Finally, they increase motivation to ensure that the activity is maintained until the goal is met (Lee & Oyserman, 2009).

The link between motivation and the self-concept seems to play an important part in explaining the goal-directed nature of possible selves (Cross & Markus, 1994; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). A possible self is usually a personal goal which, if realised, would lead to an attractive future self-concept. The process of pre-experiencing this appealing future version of ourselves stirs up positive emotions which make the future possible self yet more attractive (Cross & Markus, 1994). Compounding the motivating effect of the emotions of the pre-experience is the impact of episodic future thinking. Strauss et al. (2012) suggest that episodic future thinking – imagining, quite specifically, a particular moment in the future, entails a degree of personalisation which can help an individual to identify the steps which need to be taken in order to reach the goal. Envisaging a specific moment involves the self-concept in a way that a more general view of the future may not and this increased personalisation encourages an individual to think not just in the abstract about the actions needed to achieve their goal, but to identify the steps they need to take both personally and specifically. An individual who has envisaged themselves in some detail as a doctor, thus making their possible self salient, might, for example, respond to a question such as '*What actions do **I** need to take to become a doctor?*' with a detailed plan such as '*I could ask Ben's dad if I could shadow him in anaesthetics at St George's*' rather than a more general *'I need to get some work experience'* which would be more likely to follow from a career goal which has not been considered or pre-experienced as a salient possible self.

Salient possible selves thus contribute to setting goals and identifying requisite sub-goals. A wealth of literature attests to the positive impact that goals have on achievement. Locke and Latham (2002) explain the power of goal-setting, identifying four consequences of goals which increase an individual's chances of success. Goals direct attention and effort towards the goal and away from other distractions - both cognitively and behaviourally (individuals ensure that their efforts are linked to achieving their goals), they lead to the use of more effective strategies (people either use strategies they already have, transfer strategies over or learn new strategies when they have a specific goal in mind), goals energize and they enhance persistence.

2.5.2. Possible selves and careers

Strauss et al. (2012) highlight the strong link between possible selves and career decisions, describing the role of possible selves as providing 'a compass for individuals as they navigate through the fog of multiple career trajectories and enable them to align their jobs, careers and values' (p.588) and there is good reason to believe that possible selves may have a part to play in career development and career practice. This belief is based in part on empirical evidence which has specifically looked at these associations and in part on an indirect link which could be assumed between possible selves and career outcomes, mediated by constructs such as motivation, goal setting and future time perspective. The empirical research which links possible selves and career outcomes explicitly will first be summarised.

Possible selves have been shown to be useful in making career decisions as they help individuals to identify proximal and distal goals and to understand the steps needed to get there (Robinson et al., 2003). A possible selves intervention with school and college students examined the link between possible selves and academic motivation (Hock, Deshler & Schumaker, 2003). In this study, salient possible selves were found to help students to identify their career goals and to make those goals specific (Locke & Latham, 1990 demonstrate that specific goals are more likely to lead to action) and the authors found that the possible selves intervention increased academic motivation. The authors suggest that the students' academic motivation increased because they were conceptualising academic success as a means to achieving their career goals. Chalk, Meara and Day (1994) used possible selves as a mechanism to explore gendered occupational roles. Their study provides support for links between

possible selves and occupational choices, finding that the female participants anticipated that their future possible selves would be likely to be unhappy in masculine jobs, but gives no information about the mechanisms involved. Brower and Nurius (1993) propose that possible selves are used to make career decisions. Their suggestion is that we hold up job opportunities against our vision of our desired possible self, and make career decisions based on the discrepancies between them. There is some empirical support for this framework for decision making from Packard and Nguyan (2003), who examined the decision making processes of girls choosing (or not) to pursue a career in science. Their findings were that individuals will only choose a career in science if they 'value having a lifestyle and career of a scientist' (p.252), and that girls are put off these careers by the idea that a science career is not associated with family life. One methodological limitation of this study is that the participants were asked to talk about their career plans, rather than being asked to envisage a future self. Mindful of Erikson's emphasis on the importance of pre-experiencing as a core aspect of a possible self (Erikson, 2007), this may indicate that this study was not necessarily identifying participants' possible selves.

Ibarra (2005) puts forward a model of identity transition in voluntary career change. The process she proposes involves disengaging from a central, behaviourally anchored identity whilst exploring new possible selves and then integrating an alternative identity. The model has four stages: 1) something motivates an individual to start exploring new identities 2) the individual starts doing things to test out this identity. Ibarra describes this as a 'liminal' period, as the individual assumes a 'tentative self', as a halfway step between a possible self and a new identity. 3.) the individual experiences identity conflict 4) the individual rebuilds their identity around the new occupation. Ibarra's model is a useful framework for exploring identities during a career transition, and the role that possible selves play in assimilating the new identity, but the model fails to explicate the cognitive processes of making the career choice, moving straight from exploring several possible selves to choosing one. Ibarra's model contains few references to the career change literature and does not address the process of the choice; she uses quotes from individuals to provide support for her model, but further empirical evidence could strengthen our understanding of the process.

Turning now to the indirect evidence which denotes a link between possible selves and career

outcomes, a number of constructs which are enhanced by possible selves which have been shown elsewhere to impact on career decision making can be identified.

Highlighted above was that salient possible selves are linked to a number of psychological constructs. They have been shown to help with goal setting (Hock et al., 2003), identifying the steps needed to take (Robinson, 2003), motivation and proactive behaviour (Strauss et al. 2012), and to increase future time perspective (Day, Borkowski, Punzo & Howespian, 1994; Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015).

Goal setting and motivation, have both been shown to be important in career management. Goal setting is one factor which can lead to a successful job hunt (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001) and within career management to 'organize thought, direct action, and serve as a monitoring device to assess progress and identify obstacles to future satisfaction' (Greenhaus, Callanan & Kaplan, 1995, p.6). In a large scale meta-analysis of the factors which lead to a successful job hunt, motivation was shown to lead to high job search intensity (Kanfer et al., 2001), which is linked to quicker success in job search (Wanberg, Zhu, Kanfer & Zhang, 2012). Proactive career behaviours (which are considered a proxy for motivation) have been linked to successful career outcomes (De Vos, Dewilde & Clippeleer, 2009; Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001).

One further mechanism which enhances the motivational impact of possible-selves and which provides an indirect link between possible selves and positive career outcomes is future time perspective. This refers to the degree to which an individual makes a clear link between their current behaviour and future outcomes (Gonzalez & Zimbardo, 1985). Future time perspective has been suggested as a quality which enhances career decision making (Greenbank, 2014; Walker & Tracey, 2012), and there is some evidence that interventions, aimed at increasing the salience of subjects' possible-selves can strengthen links between their present activities and their future possible selves (Bennett, Roberts & Creagh, 2016; Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015).

The literature indicates then both directly and indirectly that possible selves may have a role to play in career development, as there is reason to believe that having a salient possible self may link with career goals and motivated career behaviour. What is now needed is empirical research which clearly establishes the associations between these constructs. This would constitute a starting point for a more in depth programme of research to explore the potential value of possible selves within career theory and career practice.

2.6. Conclusion and research questions

A hundred years of career research has developed our understanding of the complex web of the factors and processes which lead to career decisions. Yet questions remain. The traditionally dominant 'matching' paradigm in which individuals' choices are based on links between job roles and interests and values has been somewhat discredited theoretically, but the idea of matching identities (one's own identity with the identity associated with a particular occupation) seems to hold some promise and further investigation would be of value. Identity theories are core to the new paradigm of career theories, but it was noted earlier in the chapter that the literature which examines identity and its variants as part of career development is fragmented and not well theorised. The notion of an identity approach to practice has been discussed in the literature (for example, Meijers, 1998) and models for its use in career conversations have been put forward (for example Ibarra, 1999 and 2005). However the empirical evidence which could lead to a full understanding about how this mechanism might work, and which could provide an evidence-based approach to practice is limited.

This thesis focuses on two particular aspects of identity: possible selves and occupational identities. Existing literature provides some empirical evidence about possible selves within a career context, but their role in self to prototype matching is not well explored and the literature provides little which integrates them with other relevant constructs in this field. Occupational identities have been examined in the literature, but the ways in which prototypical occupational identities may influence career decision making have not been covered in depth. Existing literature provides some support for their existence, and there is some evidence that they have some impact on career choice, but understanding is far from comprehensive: research has not ascertained the nature of occupational prototypes, how they develop and what kind of impact they have on career decisions. Some empirical evidence suggests that these two mechanisms (identities and prototypical occupational identities) may link to influence career decisions through self to prototype matching, but questions remain about the nature of the self and the nature of the prototypes used in this process.

This programme of doctoral research then explores a number of aspects of a social identity

approach to careers, with a view to making a contribution towards establishing an empirical evidence base to strengthen the understanding of the processes involved, and to provide a robust basis for career practice. The main research question which this thesis aims to answer is:

- What is the nature of prototypical occupational identities and what is their role in career decision making?

To this end, the following questions will be examined:

- What are the features of prototypical occupational identities?
- What are the links between possible selves, the features of prototypical occupational identities, and career goals and motivation?
- What do the features of prototypical occupational identities symbolise?
- How could prototypical occupational identities be used in career conversations?

In this chapter, a critical review of some of the most relevant aspects of the literature has been offered, and the overall research questions specified. In the next chapter, attention will turn to the methodology which underpins the programme of research.

Chapter 3

The mixed research paradigm: a justification

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and explain the underlying philosophical position of the researcher and the choice of mixed methods. Philosophically the research is driven by pragmatism, and the programme of research is mixed methods, incorporating two qualitative methods (content analysis and grounded theory) and a quantitative study. This chapter offers a theoretical introduction to the overarching ontological and epistemological approaches. Subsequent chapters will present the conceptual and procedural aspects of the specific methodologies, detailing exactly how the methods were applied in each study, with the content analysis covered in Chapter 4, the quantitative approach in Chapter 5 and the grounded theory in Chapters 6 and 7.

In order to give a comprehensive explanation of the methodological position adopted within this thesis, there are four levels of philosophical foundation that are useful to consider (Crotty, 1998):

- Paradigm worldview
- Theoretical lens
- Methodological approach

● Methods of data collection.

The first two of these will be discussed in turn and the position adopted explained. Choices made at the third and fourth levels (methodological approach and methods of data collection), will be addressed within the chapters which consider each study separately (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

3.2.   Paradigm Worldview - Pragmatism

Philosophical positions tend to be closely linked to the methodology a researcher chooses. The philosophical position which underpins this programme of study is pragmatism (Peirce, 1906). Pragmatism is a philosophical movement which proposes that the meaning of a proposition lies in the consequences of accepting or implementing it (Peirce, 1906).

Typically a researcher might begin by identifying their world view. This then provides guidance for the methodologies which are sympathetic to both the researcher and their research (Crotty, 1998). Paradigm world views can be located on a broad continuum. At one extreme positivism holds that there is a single objective reality and truth, and associated quantitative methodology offers a way to discover this (Comte, 1865). Constructivists, at the other end of the spectrum, view the world as being made up of multiple truths, and believe that there is no objective reality – reality only exists from a perspective, so there are as many realities as there are perspectives (Piaget, 1967). Qualitative methods are useful for exploring these perspectives further (Cresswell, 2003).

Traditionally, research within psychology tended towards a positivist paradigm and was conducted using quantitative methods (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994). Researchers in the social sciences however found that a numerical analysis could only provide a partial answer as 'the uniqueness of an individual's personality could not be captured purely by means of abstracting dimensions from aggregate statistical scores' (Henwood & Pigeon 1994, p. 226-7). Qualitative methods constitute an alternative means to generate knowledge which acknowledges the subjectivity of experience, the complexity of behaviour and the variability of meaning. These qualitative methods reflect a postmodern understanding of the world, with no single truth, but myriad subjective and dynamic meanings and experiences (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994).

Given the close link between worldview and research methodology, a mixed methods approach therefore leaves the researcher with a quandary: if a mixed methods approach

seems to be the best way to answer the research question, what does this then mean for the ontology of the research(er)? If a researcher accepts the existence of a single reality (as surely they must when they choose a quantitative methodology) then how can they value the exploration of multiple realities in qualitative studies?

3.2.1. Pragmatism

The philosophical school of pragmatism can provide a solution. Numerous scholars are credited with influencing and guiding the development of the school, but it could be argued that pragmatism was first proposed in the 1890s by Charles Sanders Peirce, was developed in the twentieth century by William James and John Dewey, and evolved through the work of Richard Rorty in the latter part of the last century (Thayer, 1981). Pragmatism is the world view most typically associated with mixed methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), and the starting point for pragmatic researchers is not 'What is my world view?' but 'What is the problem I want to solve?'. Pragmatism is concerned with the nature of the problem or question and the effects of the research, and holds that ideas are evaluated through their consequences. The research position is therefore pluralistic, as different contexts demand different approaches (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

There is ambiguity in the definitions of pragmatism. Rather than a clear and cohesive argument, it could perhaps better be described as a series of loosely connected philosophical themes, contentions and commitments. Its founding fathers disagreed on many issues, in part a result of their diverse backgrounds (Smith, 1999). Peirce's construct was logical and metaphysical, James's psychological and Dewey's sociological. Lovejoy (1908) identified thirteen different schools of pragmatism, and the approach has diversified considerably since (Talisse & Aikin, 2008). The schools differ on a range of dimensions, but all share the belief that ideas should make a difference and should guide our behaviour (Smith, 1999). The link between ideas and action is key throughout pragmatism, with the pragmatists believing that ideas can be judged and understood through (and only through) the actions to which they lead.

There are a number of topics at the heart of pragmatics, including metaphysics, politics and ethics, but most relevant to the present programme of research is pragmatism's conceptualisation of epistemology. Epistemology is about the study of knowledge: what we know, how we know it and how we demonstrate what we know. Pragmatism incorporates two

innovative approaches to understanding knowledge: anti-epistemology and pragmatic epistemology (Talisse & Aikin, 2008). Both approaches take as their starting point the writings of Peirce (1931) and whilst proponents of each interpret his text in a broadly similar way, their paths diverge in their proposals of how researchers might respond to this new thinking around epistemology.

Peirce's (1931) starting point is that we must not block the road to enquiry with dogged adherence to processes. This he describes as his first rule of reason. He suggests that too much of the focus of enquirers is on their worldview and these arguments are inevitably flawed, serving only to prevent the researcher from researching. Peirce highlights the problem of 'infinitism' within epistemology, which follows this logic: if epistemology is all about analysing the rigour of 'reason', then we can only decide what constitutes good reason by relying on previously accepted good reason. This previously accepted good reason will then be based on good reasons accepted beforehand, and so on ad infinitum (Peirce, 1931). Peirce therefore concludes that there is no value in trying to sort out the superordinate questions before the more subordinate: it is simply not possible to follow our logical arguments right back to first principles, because every proposition is based on something else. This calls into question the whole approach to epistemology which has traditionally assumed that the answers to more immediate questions should be predicated on the answers to more fundamental questions. Peirce does not suggest that superordinate answers do not shape subordinate answers, but more that this is not a helpful way to proceed: steadfast observance of the principle that we must reach conclusions on the former before we address the challenges of the latter will result in no meaningful action. It is this logical argument which can give support to the principle within mixed methodology that the researcher does not need to commit to a particular world view before deciding which methodology is most appropriate for answering a research question.

Peirce's notion of infinitism leads to another of his key principles for epistemology which is that of fallibilism. As explained above, Peirce does accept that the answers to the fundamental questions will have an impact on the answers to the more everyday questions, but proposes that for research to make any meaningful progress, researchers need to put that belief to one side. Dispensing with finding solutions to the fundamental questions before addressing the more immediate ones therefore admits the possibility that any conclusions we reach from our

research may be wrong. Researchers need to embrace this possibility and be open to criticism and willing to change their minds.

Peirce's ideas of infinitism and fallibilism are thought by some pragmatic schools (Talisse & Aikin, 2008) to lead to a position of anti-epistemology, in which the whole premise for epistemology is acknowledged to be flawed, and therefore not relevant to the practice of research. Anti-epistemology (Dewey, 1991) holds that knowledge will always be relative (ie always based on something else, which will be based on something else, ad infinitum), that knowledge is always based within a historical context, and therefore that truth should not be the goal of enquiry. Seeking truth above all else will either mean that nothing will be achieved, or that the truth is believed to have been found, when it has not.

An irony here is that anti-epistemology is, of course, an epistemology in itself. All its logical arguments assume that a particular set of epistemic beliefs are better than others. Other pragmatists have rejected anti-epistemology in favour of pragmatic epistemology (for example Rescher, 2001; Sellars, 1997). They suggest that a more appropriate analysis of Peirce's writings should lead us to see the pragmatic view of epistemology not as a rejection of the whole notion of a theory of knowledge, but as a reconstruction of the theory of knowledge, reframed in the light of this new understanding of the limitations of knowledge and truth. Research may lead us to certain beliefs, but because they are predicated on other beliefs, which we cannot hold to be true, these new beliefs are open to revision at any point. The key for the pragmatic epistemologists lies in our ability to manage this. We need to maintain a cognitive belief system in which our beliefs, our research, our experience and our intuition fit together and each of these elements serves to make sense of each other. This is known as the reflective equilibrium (Sellars, 1997), and it is proposed that researchers work on the premise that propositions are 'plausibly held' until new information or arguments come to light which challenge them. These plausible or presumptive reasons are propositions that we assume are true, but which we forgo when information challenges them (Rescher, 2001).

Pragmatism therefore concludes with a constructivist interpretation of epistemologies: epistemologies are designed to meet particular needs and solve particular problems (Dewey, 1991).

As mentioned above, there are many different schools of pragmatism. At the centre of one of the most dominant schools of the late twentieth centre is Rorty (1979) whose neopragmatism

has developed the traditional views of Dewey and James in new directions. It is this particular school of pragmatism which has most influenced this programme of research and to which this chapter now turns.

Rorty and Neopragmatism

One key characteristic of neopragmatism is a heavy emphasis on language. Where pragmatism focuses on action, the neopragmatists stress the important role language plays in action, highlighting the part that description and re-description can play in changing a problematic situation. Rorty's (1989) emphasis on language constitutes a shift in ontology as it illustrates his rejection of representation as a characteristic of human knowledge. He describes language as a tool box rather than a photography box, illustrating his view that language does not reflect reality, but has a constitutive function, used to create reality. He suggests (Rorty, 1991) that at the core of pragmatism is the need 'to replace the notion of true beliefs as representations of "the nature of things" and instead to think of them as successful rules for action' (p.65-6). Neopragmatics can in this way be closely aligned with symbolic interactionism (discussed in more depth below). Extending Rorty's conceptualisation of the role of language to other symbols (such as those we are examining in this research), symbols can be understood as objects which do not simply represent reality but which create reality.

The second arena in which neopragmatism diverges from Dewey's traditional pragmatics is in epistemology. Rorty (1989) replaces objectivity in science with solidarity as a social relationship amongst scholars: what matters in academic research is a shared perspective. Epistemological approaches, he proposes, do not represent fundamental differences in reality, but are more to do with a shared use of particular words. He rejects the notion of scientific methods as an epistemic strategy, suggesting instead that it indicates a kind of morality – highlighting the importance of an open society.

Pragmatism provides an underlying philosophical foundation both for the theory of symbolic interactionism and for the methodological approach of mixed methods. Symbolic interactionism is discussed in more depth below, but in brief, it is a theory of human group life and human behaviour (Blumer, 1969), specifically concerned with the symbolic meanings of objects. Pragmatism holds that meanings are linked to the use of words, so the meaning of a

word is determined by its use. One can see here a link between the fundamental pragmatic notion that things are defined solely by their consequences (a word is defined only by the ways it is used) and symbolic interactionism, where words are conceptualised as symbols, rather than constructions which have an intrinsic meaning.

Pragmatism has been proposed as the ideal paradigmatic foundation for mixed methods research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Pragmatism is principally concerned with 'what works' and therefore can value both objective and subjective knowledge and use both quantitative and qualitative methods in research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Pragmatists view knowledge as a means to an end – the purpose of the knowledge gained through research is not just to describe the world, but to make changes. The ontology of the pragmatic researcher is one that accepts both a single reality and multiple realities, depending on the nature of the subject under scrutiny. This sympathy with a mixed methods approach can be seen in some of Peirce's early writings (Peirce, 1931) where he describes the value of approaching the same problem with different methodologies, suggesting that researchers 'may at first obtain different results but as each perfects his methods and his processes, the results are found to move steadily together towards a destined centre' (1931, p.407).

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) have argued that research that mixes qualitative and quantitative methods, which places the research question rather than the worldview at the heart of the research design, which eschews dichotomies such as post-positivist / constructivist, a single truth / multiple realities, and which keeps the application of the research in mind, aligns well with a pragmatic world view. The researcher can combine quantitative and qualitative methods within a study as the research design is chosen as the best way to collect the most appropriate data to answer the research question.

Pragmatism provides both the ontological and the epistemological positions for this study. This programme of study explores the complex and multifactorial phenomenon of career decision making and aims to generate knowledge which will contribute to the practical goal of helping individuals to make better career decisions. As such, pragmatism's focuses on what works, the value it holds for both subjective and objective knowledge and the freedom it gives to the researcher to choose the research method which will best answer the research question all support the overall goals of the research.

Pragmatism thus constitutes the paradigm world view for this thesis, which is the first of

Crotty's (1998) philosophical foundations of research. At Crotty's second level is the theoretical lens. Symbolic interactionism which has already been mentioned in conjunction with both pragmatism, in this chapter, and identity, in Chapter 2, will now be introduced in more depth as a key theoretical lens which will help to elucidate and integrate the findings of this programme of study.

3.3. Theoretical Lens – Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism grew out of pragmatism in the twentieth century (Denzin, 1992). In order to understand it more fully, it is useful to widen the focus to incorporate some broader academic disciplines. Social science attempts to apply scientific principles to learning about humans, aiming to uncover the causes of what we think and do (Bhattacherjee, 2012). There are a number of perspectives within the social sciences; most relevant to us here are sociology and psychology. Both tend to have a deterministic element to them, acknowledging that to some extent individuals are products of either their social context or their genetic make-up and upbringing. Social psychology brings some of these two elements together. It is the study of 'the influences that people have upon the beliefs and behaviour of others' (Aronson 1992, p.6). Symbolic interactionism is one school of social psychology which examines social interaction and identity, and which has a particular emphasis on free will. Symbolic Interactionism is described (Denzin, 1992) as located at the intersection of interaction, biography and social structures at a particular moment.

3.3.1. Influences

The origins of symbolic interactionism are often traced back to Mead (1863 – 1931). Mead was influenced by a number of different schools of thought, including pragmatism (in particular the work of Peirce, Dewey and James), Darwinism and behavioural psychology (Strauss, 1964). From pragmatism, symbolic interactionism developed the idea that we do not just respond to our environment but we interpret it; we observe and analyse our environment through the lens of what we can usefully apply; research should focus on what people actually do. From Darwin, Mead learned to see humans and human society as dynamic. From the behaviourists he learned to understand humans by observing their behaviour, although diverged from the behaviourists by incorporating thought into his conceptualisation of behaviour (Desmonde, 1957).

The emphasis in symbolic interactionism is on the interaction between individuals and their

environment, with a clear acknowledgement that the influence is bi-directional: people both influence and respond to their contexts.

Berger and Luckmann were influenced by the work of Schutz (1967) and Mead (1934) and their ideas were influential in the development of SI. They hold that reality can be conceived as subjective and objective at the same time. They maintain that reality is socially constructed, in that behaviour, ideas and other constructs become so widely used and so easily understood within society that they assume a reality – they become real.

Berger and Luckmann describe the idea of the symbolic universe, which is a cognitive construction. It incorporates all objective and subjective reality, and provides a framework which shows how constructs connect with each other and how they are meaningful. The symbolic universe provides order and reduces uncertainty as it 'puts everything in its right place' (1966, p.116). Berger and Luckmann highlight the important role that institutions play in the development of a sense of self and of a socially defined reality, suggesting that whilst the individual comes to define themselves in terms of social institutions, the individual too is capable of effecting a change on the institutions themselves. Linking with the focus on symbols which is core to SI and central to this thesis, their writing stresses the importance of signs, suggesting that they have the 'explicit intention to serve as an index of subjective meanings' (1966, p.50). Language, according to Berger and Luckmann, is the most significant system of signs, and is the mechanism through which ideas and experiences are stored, communicated, interpreted and categorised.

3.3.2.   Key tenets of symbolic interaction

Before the specific area of symbols is discussed, it is useful to have an understanding of some of the assumptions which underpin the whole theory.

Symbolic interactionism has, as its core, interactions, and symbols serve as tools for communication within these interactions. We interact with ourselves, with each other and with our contexts, and as well as influencing us, it is these interactions which create our selves, our contexts and our societies.

According to symbolic interactionism humans are social beings and can only be understood as such and even the self is socially created (Shibutani, 1955). Society is core to us. Each of us

exists in many different societies simultaneously. These societies change over time, and they influence and are influenced by us. Societies are created through interaction. Considerable time is spent interacting with others, influencing and being influenced, understanding and interpreting. This is the source of society and our social identity. To some degree is possible to put oneself in the shoes of others and see the world from their perspective. One may be able to empathise, imagining and working out what others are thinking, why they behave the way they do and how they respond to others.

One difference between symbolic interactionism and other social science perspectives is the assumption of free will (Wariner, 1970). Many other schools of thought emphasise determinism, assuming that behaviour is shaped by forces beyond our control –whether these forces are located within our nature or within our environments. Symbolic interactionism in contrast holds what Wariner (1970) describes as an 'emergent human' view, in which individuals are considered to be unique and constantly changing, and have free will.

The emphasis placed on free will can be seen in the symbolic interactionist assumption that people are always thinking (Hertzler, 1965). Our minds are engaged with situations: understanding and analysing them, solving problems and deciding what action to take. Thinking takes the form of an interaction with ourselves. The self (from a symbolic interactionism perspective) is not the essence of who an individual is, but a mercurial phenomenon, developed through our social interactions. Thinking is an interaction between us and our self.

Symbolic interactionism acknowledges the existence of an external, objective reality, but regards as more important the notion of a socially defined reality (Becker, 1963). Contexts are ever present, but it is the definition of an environment which is important, not the 'reality'. Actions are determined by our understanding of the context in which we find ourselves. We are continuously acting, defining situations, responding to them and determining our behaviour. Our choice of behaviour then controls and creates our environment.

Symbolic interactionism focuses on a number of key areas, but for the purposes of this programme of research, the most relevant is the conceptualisation of symbols.

3.3.3. Symbols

Symbolic interactionism contends that reality is social and that what is seen is developed

through interaction with others (Charon, 2010). The world is understood according to social definitions, developed throughout our lives, through implicit and explicit learning (Collins, 2010): we know what it is to be a doctor by interacting with doctors, observing others with them, watching dramatisations which feature fictional doctors, and absorbing information from the way doctors are treated and positioned in conversations.

Perceptions of the world include perceptions of objects. These objects need to be interpreted to understand and define everyday reality (Blumer, 1972). Symbolic interactionism argues that objects are socially defined – objects are observed, catalogued, interpreted and given meaning through social interaction. Something becomes an object because people decide to give it importance. Meaning comes from how people act towards it (in the way that a white coat in a hospital engenders respect).

A single physical object will be a number of social objects, depending on the perspectives of those observing it. The white coat could be 'what I wear to work', 'an item of clothing in a pile of laundry' or 'my doctor's coat'. Objects are not limited to physical things. They can include attitudes, behaviours, words and accents, amongst others.

Symbols are social objects, created through social interactions, used intentionally and understood by others. The meanings are arbitrarily assigned ('let a white coat stand for authority'), and are dynamic, changing between social groups and over time. Symbols are meaningful – they are quite intentional and deliberate and go beyond a response reaction. A social object becomes a symbol when an individual uses it to communicate: a car is simply a social object if it is used simply to get from A to B, but it becomes a symbol if used to communicate wealth and success.

The importance of symbols

According to symbolic interactionism, symbols are crucial to our understanding of the world. Charon (2010) suggests that 'symbols create our reality, make complex society possible, and contribute a number of important qualities that together make the human unique in nature' (p.59). Both the provenance and impact of these symbols is complex. Charon (2010) suggests the following as three points which sum up the role and the significance of symbols:

1. Symbols create reality. They translate reality into something that can be analysed, understood and communicated. Our reality is a symbolic one – it is symbols which give

our reality meaning.

2. Symbols create culture and society through socialization, a shared understanding, communication, co-operation and cumulative knowledge.

3. Symbols transform the individual through: a) naming, memory and categorization - language enables thoughts to be crystalised and very subtle distinctions to be identified; b) perception - having named an object, we notice it; c) transcendence of space and time - symbols allow us to incorporate previous and vicarious learning; d) abstract reality - symbols provide a mechanism through which we are able to imagine a reality beyond the concrete, which might include identifying goals for ourselves, possible future selves, imagining others' jobs and lives; e) creativity - it is symbols which allow and fuel our creative thinking; and f) self-direction - communicating with ourselves, identifying goals and solving problems.

Symbolic interactionism has its own definition of the self which is a social object arising in social interaction. Stryker (1959) explains that 'we come to know what we are through others' responses to us' (p.116). The self is therefore dynamic - a process rather than a finished product (Berger 1963). A key part in the development of the self is taking the role of other as you see yourself from outside. The symbolic interactionist self is not limited to a single representation since usually it would have several overlapping selves at any one time. Indeed symbolic interactionism has been linked with the concept of possible selves, described as a theoretical approach which is thought to be a 'valuable basis for examining possible selves' (Hogg, Banister & Stephenson, 2009, p. 149).

Symbolic interaction takes scientific analysis away from a linear causal model to something more relativist, focusing on the process. Symbolic interactionism acknowledges that meanings change over time and are dependent on different perspectives, and that experiences influence perspectives. The symbolic interactionist researcher needs to try and find links between perspectives. These links themselves become a phenomenon, and the phenomenon can then be sustained and recreated.

3.3.4. Symbolic interactionism in this thesis

An engagement with symbolic interactionism adds value to this programme of research in a number of ways, underpinning methodology and enhancing data analysis. Associations between symbolic interactionism and grounded theory are generally accepted (Benoliel, 1996;

Strauss & Corbin, 1990) but the exact nature of the links are not always explicit (Klunklin & Greenwood, 2006). Parallels between the two theories can be drawn at the levels of data collection, data analysis and interpretation. Blumer (1969) outlines the symbolic interactionist focus on direct examination of the real world, and this is mirrored in the value placed on real world data within grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Blumer's (1969) methodological processes of exploration and inspection resonate with the stages of data analysis in a grounded theory study (Charmaz & Henwood, 2013), ensuring that the theories which emerge are grounded in the data. Symbolic interactionism too can be used as an explanatory framework to add depth to the analysis of findings, enriching understanding of the use and meaning of the symbols exposed through the findings. Symbolic interactionism underpins the concepts within social identity theory and in particular enhances an understanding of social identity markers. This leads to a richer interpretation of the occupational prototypes described in Study 1 (Chapter 4) and further analysed in studies 3 and 4 (Chapters 6 and 7) and a more insightful analysis of the inferences which can be drawn from the new measure used in Study 2 and described in Chapter 5.

3.4. Methodological Approach – Mixed Methods

This chapter now moves on to a discussion of mixed methods, explaining the reasons for this choice of approach and the research design used in this research programme.

3.4.1.   Mixed Methods

Traditionally, researchers within the social sciences have aligned with either qualitative or quantitative paradigms, espousing the associated ontology, epistemology and methodologies, and arguing forcefully for the virtues of their chosen paradigm (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This almost tribal approach to research is supported by the incompatibility thesis (Howe, 1988) which holds that different data types and methods of analysis cannot defensibly be combined within the same study. Although this approach has dominated, it is not universally lauded, and some researchers argue that the differences between the paradigms are not so great. Johnson et al. (2007) remind us that 'dividing lines are much fuzzier than typically suggested' (p.117). Schwandt (2000) argues that the distinctions are simply unproductive and Yardley and Bishop (2013) suggest the challenges emanating from these differences can be overcome fairly easily. Yardley and Bishop highlight that both approaches share key underlying principles, suggesting that 'all human inquiry involves imagination and

interpretation, intentions and values but must also necessarily be grounded in empirical, embodied experience' (2013, p.355). Some scholars such as House and McDonald (1998) go so far to suggest that it is necessary for psychologists to interpret qualitative as well as quantitative data in order to gain a full understanding of humans, and McMullen (2002) highlights the risks associated with a refusal to embrace other approaches, stressing that strict adherence to a single method could lead to curtailed 'thoughtful conversations and debate' (p.198).

The focus on mixed methods emerged in response to these 'paradigm wars' as a third research paradigm (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Mixed methods research allows a researcher to engage with a topic from more than one perspective, allowing the research to benefit from the rich, contextualised, subjective data of qualitative approaches, as well as the compelling and more objective data from quantitative research. The approach is relatively new to the research arena but has been adopted widely by researchers from a range of disciplines.

The early mixed methods researchers sought to combine methods for the purpose of validity, and the term 'triangulation' was coined to describe the process of using two or more research methods in order to produce results which are less susceptible to errors (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966). Mixed methods continues to be used for the purpose of corroboration but has now developed its own epistemological position which deems it impossible to understand a phenomenon without seeing it from (at least) two sides (Johnson et al., 2007). Johnson et al. (2007) stress that mixed methods is a *synthesis* of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, not merely a *combination* of them. This encapsulates the idea that the value of a mixing methods approach is not just as a mechanism to compensate for the methodological weaknesses of the traditional paradigms, but is a better approach to examining complex phenomena. The authors also propose that the term 'mixed research' should be used in preference to 'mixed methods' (after Greene, 2006) to emphasise that the mixing is valuable at many levels: data collection, methods and philosophy.

Early definitions describe mixed methods research simply as that which involves both a quantitative and a qualitative study (for example, Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). This combination of quantitative and qualitative studies remains at the heart of current mixed methods definitions (Johnson et al. 2007), although definitions now vary based on the timings of the integration of the studies and the levels at which the two paradigms should be

combined. Some suggest that the combination should occur at all levels (worldview, language and interpretation) and others that the mix should be limited to methodologies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzin, 2004).

Rossman and Wilson (1985) suggest three particular rewards which can be reaped from combining qualitative and quantitative methods: for validation by triangulation, to enable a deeper analysis through richer data and to broaden thinking through noticing differences in the findings from the two kinds of studies. Johnson et al. (2007) incorporate these three advantages in the following definition:

> 'Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.' (p.123).

3.4.2. Mixed research in this thesis

The choice of mixed methods in this programme of doctoral studies is both conceptual and practical.

Career development research lies at the boundaries of psychology, sociology, education and management (Patton & Collin, 2009) and as such the field lays claim to philosophical roots in logical positivism and social constructivism (Brown, 2002). Positivist, quantitative research has dominated (McMahon & Watson, 2006), although there have been recent calls for more numerous (Bimrose & Herne, 2012) and more rigorous (Stead et al., 2012) qualitative approaches within the field. Cameron (2010a) in her review of 99 articles published in the Australian Journal of Career Development from 2004 – 2009 found only 4% to use mixed methods which compares unfavourably with similar reviews in related areas. Powell, Mihalas, Onwuegbuzie, Suldo, & Daley (2008) found 13.7% of the 438 articles published in school psychology journals from 2000 – 2005 used mixed methods, and Cameron (2010b) found 15% of the 106 articles published in the International Journal of Training Research from 2003 – 2008 to use mixed methods. The lack of emphasis placed on mixed methods research in the career development arena has not gone unnoticed. Patton and Collin (2009) call for greater emphasis on multidisciplinary research in career development – both theoretical and

methodological, Cameron (2010a) stresses the need for more mixed methods research and research training in the field, and Perry, Dewaulder & Bonnett (2009) proposes mixed methods as the ideal vehicle for career research. It is argued here that the complex, holistic and multifactorial nature of career and career decisions (as discussed in more depth in Chapter 1) indicates that a mixed methods approach is particularly suited to research in this arena.

At a more pragmatic level, Bryman (2006) proposes a typology of reasons for mixing methods and this includes two justifications which are particularly pertinent to the decisions made here. The first is that different methods are differentially appropriate for answering different questions. The second of Bryman's (2006) reasons for mixing methods is for instrument development. The first study reported here requires qualitative data to develop an instrument to be used in the second study, and the particular research questions for the second and third and fourth studies indicated that different approaches would be appropriate for different studies. In Study 2 the research aims to identify a correlation between factors, best achieved with numerical, quantitative data, and in Studies 3 and 4, the aim is to explore meanings, best achieved through verbal, qualitative data.

One final tension which the mixed methods researcher must resolve is that of rhetoric, highlighted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) as one of the key elements of the research process. The two traditional research paradigms each has its own language. Quantitative studies tend to adopt a more formal register and use the passive voice as a more objective way to report results. In contrast qualitative researchers are more likely to discuss their findings more informally and, acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher, may make use of the first person. In this thesis a balance is struck in this respect, shifting between a more formal tone in the quantitative chapters and a more informal style for the qualitative studies.

3.4.3. Research Design

The programme of research reported here is conducted using mixed methods and incorporates a range of methodologies. The first study is qualitative in its nature, using data gathered from focus groups and analysed by content analysis. The second study is quantitative, using numerical data gathered from a self-report questionnaire analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The third and fourth studies use a grounded theory method.

The project was multiphasic and the two methodologies were mixed to meet the overall project objectives (i.e. it was not a quantitative project with qualitative added, nor a qualitative project enriched by quantitative, but a project whose overall research questions were best answered with the data generated from both qualitative and quantitative methods). A multiphase design is used when a researcher examines a question using a series of studies, both qualitative and quantitative, sequential and aligned. Each study builds on the findings of the previous to work towards a fuller understanding of a central theme. Traditionally, multiphase designs have followed a sandwich model, alternating qualitative and quantitative (Sandelowski, 1995), but it is now common for multiphase designs to follow different sequences. This kind of design provides an overarching framework to maintain cohesion between a number of separate but related studies working towards a single goal. Multiphase design is thought to be particular useful with long term projects (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2011), with a layering of knowledge emerging from a programme of research conducted over a long time frame.

The diagram below (Figure 3.1) illustrates the phases of the multiphase design as they were originally conceived. In this design the first study was conceived as qualitative, gathering data through focus groups and the data to be analysed by content analysis. The analysis from Study 1 forms the basis for one of the instruments used in study two. The second study was quantitative in its nature. Through a survey numerical data would be collected which were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research question and design of the third and fourth study would be decided in response to the findings and analyses of the first two studies.

Data were collected for Study 1 in April and May, 2014; for Study 2 in February and March 2015 and for Study 4 in May – September 2016. Ethical approval for each study was obtained before data collection began (Appendices A1, B1 and D1).

The methodologies used for each study will be discussed in detail in the introduction to the empirical chapters, (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Figure 3.1. The Multiphase Design
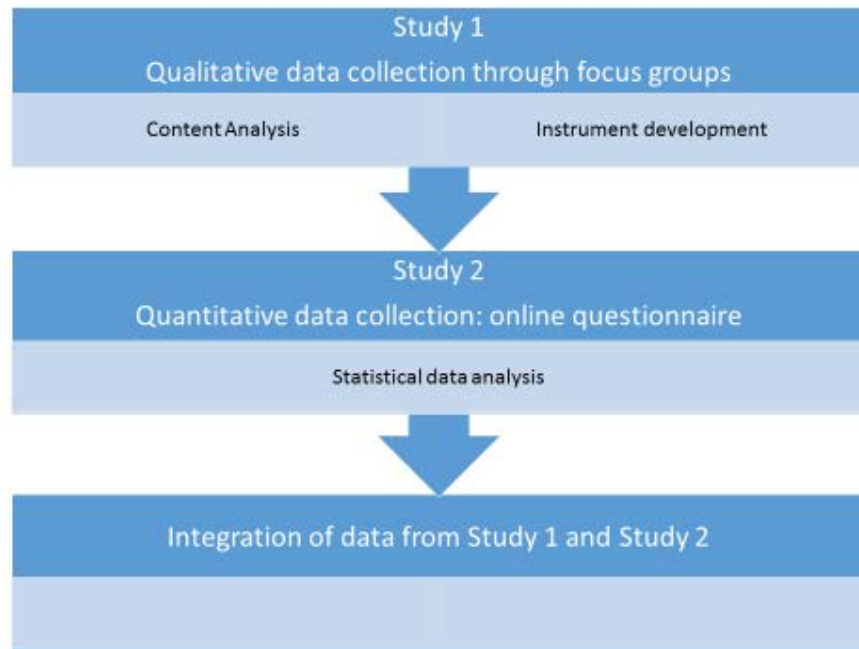
3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach adopted throughout the programme of research, describing and providing a justification for the conceptual choices made. Pragmatism provides the philosophical basis of the programme, informing the ontological and epistemological positions taken. Symbolic interactionism, as the theoretical lens through which the research is conceived and interpreted enriches the understanding of grounded theory and the analysis of each set of findings. The approach of mixed research was discussed and the multiphase mixed methods design was introduced. The methodologies chosen for each study will be described and the reasons for the choices justified in the empirical chapters (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) along with a description of the data collection and analysis procedures.

The thesis moves now to a description of the empirical work conducted. The next chapter introduces the first empirical study which explored the nature of occupational prototypes.

Chapter 4

Study 1 What kind of shoes does a social worker wear?

4.1. Introduction

The first study of this mixed methods programme of research was qualitative and addressed the first of the four subordinate research questions presented in Chapter 2, namely, what are the features of prototypical occupational identities?

The aim of this study was two-fold. The first aim was to explore the scope and nature of participants' conceptualisations of prototypical occupational identities. A second aim was to generate some suitable items to incorporate within a measure in Study 2. In Study 2 I sought to find out whether participants' prototypes of the occupations they were considering matched their desired possible selves, and whether the degree of match correlated with the degree of career decidedness. I therefore needed a list of items (words and short phrases) from which participants could select those terms which most closely reflected their desired occupational prototype and their future desired possible self.

The crux of the test for Study 2 was the extent to which the two images in participants' minds

(their occupational prototype and their future desired possible self) were similar: it was the match that was important not the items chosen. It was therefore considered not crucial that the items in the lists should include exactly the terms the individual would have used to describe their images. However, it did seem to make common sense to try to find terms for the measure which were likely to resonate with the participants. To this end, this Study 1 drew participants from the same population that would be used for Study 2, namely students studying for BSc or MSc in Psychology at UEL, and the occupations chosen for discussion in the focus group were those which were likely to have broad appeal for the cohort of students.

Four common popular graduate destinations of this population were identified from the annual Destination of Leavers' of Higher Education survey (HESA, 2013) and participants' prototypes of members of these occupations were elicited and explored. The study used focus group discussions to build up a detailed picture of the prototypes, incorporating details of their personalities, lifestyles, appearance and leisure pursuits, along with any other details that emerged. A content analysis identified the key elements of the prototypes and isolated some suitable items for use in Study 2.

This chapter begins with a brief recap of the more relevant aspects of literature (4.2), and then provides a description of the methodology used (4.3). The findings of Study 1 are presented (4.4) and the chapter will end with a discussion interpreting the findings in the light of relevant literature (4.5).

4.2.   Overview of the literature

This study explores the nature and scope of prototypical occupational identities. A detailed review of the most relevant literature was provided in Chapter 2, but a brief recap will be offered here, revisiting what is reported in the literature about occupational prototypes, their nature, how they develop and how they are stored.

4.2.1. Occupational prototypes

Prototypes are one form of stereotype in which the features and attributes of the stereotype of a particular group are combined and represented in a single conceptualisation of an identity (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). Occupational prototypes are the stereotypical identities of a particular occupational group (a perception of a typical social worker, for example). Stereotypes and prototypes are cognitive shortcuts which allow people to make sense of complex and

overwhelming information, but can be used to perpetuate social inequalities (Schneider, 2005). They tend to be fairly accurate (Jussim et al., 2009), but gloss over individual differences (Hilton & Von Hippel, 1996).

Prototypes are socially constructed and draw on a wide range of influences: intergroup and intragroup, interpersonal and intrapersonal (Bar-Tal, 1997). Bar-Tal (1997) provides a model to account for the development of stereotypes which has three factors: background variables, transmitting mechanisms and mediating variables. Background factors might include the nature and history of the relationships between two groups (Sherif & Sherif, 1969), socio-political factors (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993; Simpson & Yinger, 1985), and the characteristics of the group being stereotyped (Kinlock, 1974). The transmitting mechanisms are the means by which an individual learns about the group and its member. Transmitting mechanisms might include parents (Barton et al., 2001), teachers (Lee, 2002) peers (Castelli, Carraso, Tornelli & Amari, 2007), television and other forms of media (Mastro, Behn-Morawitz, Kopacz, 2008), as well as personal experience and direct contact with members of the group (Fiske & Nuberg, 1989). The third factor, mediating variables, is comprised of the individual characteristics of the person who holds the stereotypical view. These might include personality, values and cognitive skills (Mackie & Hamilton, 1993) and can have an impact on how the individual interprets the messages which they receive.

4.2.2. The nature of prototypes

The prototypical occupational identities of a number of occupations have been reported in the literature. Much of the research has focused on the prototypes of occupations within the science, technology, engineering and maths field and the focus of the research has been to find out why the occupations are not popular, particularly with girls. This research has identified a range of types of characteristics which are associated with one profession or another. The features of the prototypical occupational identities are typically personality characteristics (for example, Cory, 1992, found that prototypical accountants are methodical) but features of different sorts are included too. Studies include information about prototypical appearance (prototypical scientists are pale and wear glasses; Mercier, Barron & O'Connor, 2006), hobbies (prototypical computer scientists read science fiction; Cheryan, Drury & Vichayapai, 2013) and lifestyle (prototypical female physicists are not likely to have families; Packard & Nguyen, 2003). One major study (O'Dowd & Beardslee, 1967) explored the nature

of 15 prototypical occupations as identified by a range of college students in the US. The study was conducted 50 years ago so the implications should be interpreted with caution in the current day, but the findings still seem relevant. The features described in the semi-structured interviews included personality characteristics (deep, interesting, thoughtful), hobbies (plays chess, interested in art), aspects of class (has good taste) and descriptions of family (has a pretty wife, happy home life). Notably, the authors found that almost all of the descriptions were based on the occupational prototypes outside work. No evidence was found of a more recent study which explored the scope and nature of occupational prototypes and it is this gap in the literature that the current study aims to address.

4.2.3. Storage of prototypes

Occupational prototypes are thought to be stored in the form of cognitive schemata (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994). These are stores of information that allow people to select the information they will process, and to organise it, and these schemata are used to guide their behaviour and interpret the behaviour of others. Epstein (1984) suggests that they are stored below the level of conscious awareness. The encompass a wide range of types of information about the occupations and those who inhabit them, including emotions, cultural beliefs, values and lifestyles (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994).

The literature therefore offers some explanation of the way that prototypes are formed and stored and the nature of occupational stereotypes. Information about the scope and nature of occupational prototypes however is more limited, and this gap is the focus of this first study.

4.3. Methodology

This study aimed to explore the prototypical occupational identities held by participants. Four occupations (social worker, primary school teacher, clinical psychologist and occupational psychologist) were chosen for discussion, and data were gathered through a series of four focus groups, with 24 participants drawn from the psychology programmes at UEL. The focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and a content analysis was conducted, to describe the prototypes which were discussed in the focus groups and to generate items which could be used in a measure for the second study.

4.3.1. Preliminary identification of occupations.

For the focus group discussions, I wanted to identify occupations which were likely to be both familiar and appealing to the participants in this study. I thought that choosing occupations which participants knew something about and felt positive towards would lead to fuller discussions and richer data.

To this end, I identified four popular occupational choices of previous graduates from the BSc in Psychology at UEL. The survey of Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) is a national survey, conducted in January each year, which identifies the first destinations of more than 80% of graduates from each undergraduate course in the country (HESA, 2013). The data from this survey provided the details of the occupational and further study choices which were made by an earlier cohort of graduates from the BSc in Psychology at UEL. The most recent DLHE survey published in April 2014 at the time of the study, examined the destinations of students who graduated in 2012. It was thought that these occupational choices were likely to be familiar and attractive to the current cohort of BSc Psychology undergraduates at UEL, from which population my participants were drawn.

Although a useful starting point, the DLHE data do not provide a straightforward account of the occupational aspirations of a cohort of graduates (Christie, 2016). The data for the HESA survey is collected just six months after students have finished their degree programmes and evidence suggests that graduates often take three years to establish themselves in the career of their choice (Purcell et al., 2012). The DLHE data therefore offer just a snapshot of graduate destinations which are often short lived and may not reflect graduates' aspirations. At the time of the DLHE survey, a proportion of graduates will be working in temporary, and often low level roles whilst they decide what they want to do, or whilst they are looking for work in their chosen field (Christie, 2016). The DLHE data revealed that a significant number of the graduates from UEL were working in non-graduate jobs in sectors such as retail and hospitality, and were in jobs which were not related to their degree subject and which may well not reflect their long term career goals. Other graduates will take 'stepping stone' jobs which can provide the experience required before they can pursue their chosen careers. Aspiring teachers, for example, may work as teaching assistants before applying for a teacher training programme, and clinical psychology doctorate programmes specify that applicants need to have considerable relevant work experience before they will be accepted onto the programme. Finally, many occupational choices require a period of further study before graduates can

apply for jobs in that particular field (for example, social work, teaching), so the DLHE survey would record future social workers as students of a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work.

For the purpose of this study, I was interested in occupational identities, rather than student identities, and the choice of career, rather than temporary or interim steps on the way. As a result, the occupations included in this analysis were:

- Graduate level jobs, as defined by HESA (2013).
- Graduate level jobs that non-graduate destinations might be leading to: a graduate working as a teaching assistant, for example, was deemed to be aspiring to become a teacher and therefore was coded as *teacher*.
- Jobs that vocational post graduate courses are likely to lead to: a graduate studying an MSc in Occupational Psychology, for example, was assumed to be aiming for a job as an occupational psychologist and therefore was coded as such.

Four popular graduate occupations were identified: primary teacher, social worker, occupational psychologist and clinical psychologist. These four occupations, together, made up 28% of the destinations which met the criteria explained above, and it was thought that four occupations would provide enough breadth of data yet be a manageable number to explore. These occupations formed the basis of the focus group discussions.

4.3.2. Focus Group

Focus groups are a widely used form of data collection for qualitative research within the social sciences (Hyde, Howlett, Brady & Drennan, 2005). Their widespread use has led to a perception that focus groups are a straightforward method for collecting data (Sherrif, Gugglberger, Hall & Scholes, 2014) but they can be complex and challenging and their usage needs to be justified and described thoughtfully.

There are a number of related group based methods for data collection. At one end of the spectrum, a group interview allows the researcher to conduct a number of simultaneous one to one interviews. At the other end of the scale, the German tradition of a group discussion (Gugglberger, Adamowitsch, Teutsch, Feldre-Puig & Dur, 2013) puts the group firmly in control of the content and structure of the interaction. A focus group, however, differs from both of these. It is a method which allows an insight into the group's collective experiences, and the

discussion is structured to allow as much freedom and interaction as possible, whilst maintaining the focus on the topic (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). In a focus group, the expectation is that the group dynamic and the interaction between group members will allow the individuals to explore and clarify their own views more effectively than they might in a one to one interview. The themes are actually constructed within the group setting (Gough, Fry, Grogan & Conner, 2009) and in this way focus groups are able to capture something of the essence of the 'social construction of experience' (Kitzinger, 1994, p172). The focus group data can reveal information about the group itself, its dynamics and its shared and unique culture (Sherrif et al., 2014) whilst simultaneously generating insights within each group member, as comments and responses from others spark off new thoughts in individuals (Gough et al., 2009; Warr, 2005).

Focus groups were considered to be suitable for the present study for a number of reasons. Focus groups are widely used for exploring new topics that we have little understanding of (Sim, 1998) as a significant volume of data can be collected efficiently - a factor which is particularly relevant to this project as limited literature has been found which addresses this topic. The aim of this study was to produce a list of items which resonated with a wider group; a focus group will give a broader range of views than one to one interviews and more depth than an online survey. Focus groups tend to homogenise views as people with extreme opinions are less likely to voice them in a group setting than within a one to one. For many topics this could render the data less relevant, but it makes focus groups an effective route to a better understanding of typical behaviour or socio cultural norms, which are relevant to this study. Although individuals will have their own individualised prototypes, there is evidence to suggest that occupational prototypes are widely shared (Ryan, 2014). For the purposes of this study, it is the shared elements of the prototypes rather than the idiosyncratic which are more relevant as they will be used in a list of items for Study 2 which is hoped will resonate with a larger number and range of people. Finally, the group interaction can lead to more elaborate opinions. Group members may challenge each other more than an interviewer might in a one to one interaction, so participants are moved to explain themselves in more depth or justify their point. This can lead to more in depth discussions and to uncovering 'subtle nuances and details' (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, p. 136) which will allow the subtleties of participants' occupational prototypes to be revealed.

The principle methodological challenges presented by focus groups (Hennick, 2007) are that individuals will not necessarily feel comfortable voicing their personal views, and that issues of a sensitive nature are not generally thought to be suitable topics. Neither of these issues is significant within this study, as the value of the findings is not predicated on full disclosure of each participant's views, and the topic is not thought to be a particularly delicate one.

Participants

Participants for this study were drawn from students on psychology programmes at the University of East London (UEL). This first study aimed to provide data to be used as a measure in Study 2. For this reason it was thought to be useful for the participants from both studies to be drawn from the same cohort. Psychology students are suitable participants for a number of reasons, beyond the obvious practical advantages. General psychology programmes do not qualify graduates to start work in specific roles, but provide a good basic training for a relatively small range of occupational choices, such as clinical, occupational or educational psychologists (Prospects, 2015). As a result, students' choices are likely to be relatively homogenous, but participants are expected to manifest different degrees of career decidedness (Smith, 2011).

Once ethical approval was granted, an email was sent to all undergraduates enrolled on the BSc and MSc programmes in psychology. Students who responded were sent a participant information sheet and invited to attend a focus group. In total, 24 students participated in four focus groups. No demographic data was collected as part of the study. It was thought that this would help to maintain anonymity of participants, and that this lack of detail would not impact on the value of the data collected.

Homogeneity

The degree of homogeneity of participants within a focus group is important because it is thought that participants are more likely to be open about their opinions with people whom they see as similar to themselves: 'group homogeneity fosters an open, productive discussion among participants' (Hennick et al. 2011, p. 150). Although the demographic characteristics of the group were diverse (in terms of ages, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds), the students were all current psychology students at UEL. To further encourage an open discussion, I made

it clear in the introduction that there were no right or wrong opinions, and that I was looking to find a range of views. I hoped this would engender confidence in the participants and encourage them to voice their opinions.

Level of acquaintance

Level of acquaintance between participants is another factor to consider (Owen, 2001). Groups of strangers take more time to warm up, but can be more likely to lead to frank exchanges of views. Groups of friends take less time to get to know each other, and the knowledge that they already share about each other can lead to more detailed discussions as participants can prompt each other and remind each other of details. However, existing relationships can lead to less detailed discussions as participants have a body of shared knowledge and assumptions that are taken as read and therefore not expressed, leading to the moderator missing out on these underlying details. The topic under discussion in the focus groups was not considered to be of a sensitive nature, so using a group of strangers within the focus group was not thought likely to be advantageous, and as the topic centred on the mental images of individual participants, rather than on experiences, the chances of losing much valuable information through shared assumptions was thought to be limited. Participants in these focus group were in the same academic department, so may or may not have pre-existing relationships, but as this factor was not thought likely to affect the validity of the focus group, the level of familiarity among the participants was not of particular concern in the study.

Group size

Focus groups typically have six to twelve participants (Krueger, 1994). This is considered sufficient for a lively discussion, but small enough to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to voice their views. Focus groups with a larger number of participants are thought to be more likely to engender a relaxed atmosphere, but may be more difficult to manage and data more challenging to transcribe (Hyde et al., 2005). Smaller groups can lead to more focused discussions and more balanced contributions from all participants (Sherriff et al., 2014). I hoped for groups of ten but although twelve participants were invited to each focus group, the final number of participants was six for each of the four groups.

Location

The location was a room in the School of Psychology at UEL. This was thought to be convenient for all participants, and was quiet and free from distractions. Chairs were arranged around a round table, to allow for more comfortable and interactive participant to participant interactions.

Data collection

The sessions were recorded on two audio devices. Collecting data in focus groups can be challenging because the data is provided by the group interaction as well as the individual voices so notes were taken in order to record any significant issues that may be missed on an audio recording.

Moderator

An effective focus group relies on the quality of the individual running the session. There are two key responsibilities a facilitator must assume: first, to manage the session to ensure that the discussion is focused and purposeful; second, to create an atmosphere which encourages participants to contribute fully and authentically (Hyde, et al., 2005; Robinson, 1999). To manage the process, the moderator needs to ensure the participants understand what is expected of them, must ensure that key questions are covered in appropriate depth within the time frame, and must make sure that they do not lead or influence the discussion. The moderator additionally needs to manage the dynamics of the group to ensure that all voices are heard and none dominates. To ensure that participants feel comfortable enough to voice their views, the moderator must present the topic in an engaging way to engender a lively discussion, and must manage the discussions to make every participant feel that their views are valid, and that differences can be discussed in an open and relaxed way (Owen, 2001). One key consideration here is that of confidentiality. The researcher is not in a position to guarantee confidentiality from a focus group discussion in the way they may be able to from a one to one interview. The participants in a focus group are not bound by any professional ethical code to respect the confidentiality ground rules which may be agreed, so it is particularly important that all participants understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality (Tolich, 2009).

Mindful of these considerations, I set a warm and informal tone for the discussions, tried to

make sure that instructions were clear and gave plenty of time for questions. Issues of confidentiality and mutual respect were stressed. The focus groups were lively and the transcripts revealed considerable laughter throughout which indicated a positive atmosphere.

Discussion Guide

It is customary for a researcher to devise an interview schedule or discussion guide with a list of questions of topics to cover during the focus group (Hyde et al., 2005). A discussion guide ensures that the discussion is sufficiently wide ranging to generate data that will answer the research questions. The questions are prompts for the moderator. Depending on the nature and direction of the discussion, the moderator will choose which questions to ask and how exactly to phrase them. Mitchell and Branigan (2000) suggest that the questions should be prepared in advance, should be clear and open, and should aim to bring out differences between participants' views, to stimulate discussion. It is difficult to generalise about an appropriate number of topics or questions for a focus group, as it will depend on the nature of the topic and the makeup of the participants. Sherriff et al. (2014) propose that five to seven topics, with 5 to 10 specific questions might be a suitable starting point, perhaps supplemented with some opening questions to serve as ice-breakers, and give participants a chance to get used to talking in this environment.

Below (Figure 4.1) is an outline of the structure of the focus group. The questions were based on previous literature which covered occupational prototypes, and in the absence of much published work, my own intuition of the kinds of topics which might lead to insightful conversations.

Number of focus group

As there were four different occupations under scrutiny, it was thought that a minimum of four focus groups was needed. This would then ensure that an impact on the validity of the data through order effect was avoided. Each occupation was discussed first on one occasion, and each discussed by two or three of the groups overall. Whilst it would have been interesting to have each occupation discussed in each focus group, I wanted in-depth discussions and it was thought that this would be likely to result in focus groups which were long and risked fatigue in participants. The first focus group discussed social workers and primary teachers, the second covered primary teachers, occupational psychologists and clinical

psychologists, the third group discussed clinical psychologists, and social workers, and the final group covered occupational psychologists.

Figure 4.1. Focus Group Discussion Guide

Introduction
Introductions to each other
Introduction to the study
Ethical issues
Explanation of how the discussion is to be conducted

Introductory question
What do you think are some of the typical jobs that psychology graduates end up going into?

Key questions
Before we talk about this, I want you to picture in your mind's eye a typical occupational psychologist / clinical psychologist / social worker / primary teacher.
What are they like?
Are they male or female? What sort of age? Ethnicity? Social class?
What are they wearing?
Family:
Who do they come home to?
What is their partner like? What do they do for a job? What ages are their kids?
Leisure:
What sorts of things would they like to do after work?
What do they do at weekends?
What kind of holidays would they enjoy?
What would they like to watch on TV?
What do they read?
Material things:
What is their home like? (inside and out)
What is their mode of transport of choice?
Where do they shop?
Values:
What direct debits would they have set up?
What possessions would they save if their house caught fire?

Closing question:
Did anything surprise you about these mental images?

4.3.3. Data Analysis

A key aim for the data from the focus groups was to generate some items for a measure for Study 2. A content analysis was considered the most appropriate method to achieve this goal. This kind of analysis constitutes a rigorous approach to identifying particular features which recur within the conversations. Whilst the number of occurrences of a particular feature does not necessarily point to its significance, it could be considered an indicator of the prominence of a particular feature in the minds of the participants, and might suggest that features which dominated the focus group discussions may have some resonance with the larger population to be surveyed in Study 2.

Content analysis (Berelson, 1952) aims to analyse data within a specific context in view of the meanings attributed to them. It is a 'systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding' (Stemler 2001, p.1). A content analysis aims to make sense of a particular context through close scrutiny of the words used: 'Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to the contexts of their use' (Krippendorff, 1989, p.18). Words as symbols communicate more than themselves, revealing things about the speaker and the social interaction. Content analysis acknowledges this and scrutinises words as symbols, revealing antecedents, correlates or consequences of communication. In this it is possible to identify an alignment with symbolic interactionism in the focus on symbolic meaning and the acknowledgement of the importance of context.

Data for content analysis can come from a range of sources, most commonly written texts but also transcribed conversations, speeches, radio broadcasts and interviews. The data is most often in the form of words, but content analysis can be used to understand other forms of data such as drawings (Wheelock, Haney & Bebell, 2000) and actions (Stigler, Gonzales, Kawanaka, Knoll & Serrano, 1999). What is required for the analysis is data which contains enough items which have reasonably stable meanings for a group of people.

As with many research methods, scholars conceptualise content analysis in different ways, and each conceptualisation is associated with a different set of procedures. Krippendorff (1989) suggests that there are three groups of definitions of content analysis, in which the meaning of the content (i.e. the words) comes from a different source. For the first set of definitions (e.g.

Berelson, 1952) the content or meaning is thought to be inherent in the text. Berelson (1952) proposes a quantitative definition of content analysis which aims towards objective and systematic analysis, with no opportunity for interpretation or reading between the lines, and assumes that the meaning of a word is objective and is contained in the word itself. The second group of definitions of content analysis locates the meaning of a text within the source of that text (e.g. Holsti, 1968). These definitions suggest that meanings are communicated via a process of encoding and decoding: the meaning is encoded into language (or other content) by the communicator and decoded from language back to meaning by the recipient. The role of content analysis is to make this process explicit. Critics (e.g. Shapiro & Markoff, 1997) highlight that this definition leaves the researcher with the challenge of making objective and accurate inferences of the communicator's intended meanings. The third definition of content analysis (e.g. Krippendorff, 2003) acknowledges the role of the researcher and the research in contributing to the meanings inferred. Drawing from a more social constructivist perspective, conceptually aligned with this research, this definition holds that texts have no intrinsic meaning and will be interpreted in different ways by different recipients in different contexts.

Content analysis rarely aims at literal analysis but can be used in this way for particular purposes (to establish, for example, the exact wordings of a particular message). The researcher strives for validity by ensuring that all units wherever they occur in a text are given equal weighting in the analysis. The approach can therefore reveal trends and themes unavailable to the casual reader.

The basis of content analysis is counting frequencies, but despite its simplicity, content analysis can provide a rich meaning, by dint of its rigorous application of coding and categorization. The actual process of identifying which words to count needs to be undertaken thoughtfully (Shapiro & Markoff, 1997).

There are two different approaches to content analysis, most often described in terms of qualitative and quantitative content analysis (Berelson, 1952). A key distinction is the difference between manifest and latent content – the manifest content is the language the communicator has used, and the latent content is the meaning the communicator intended to convey. Quantitative content analysis focuses on the manifest content and calculates frequencies of words and similar terms (Morgan, 1993). Qualitative content analysis is more concerned with the latent content of the data and identifies this through inferences (Weber,

1990). Bereiter and Scardemalia (1987) highlight the difference between knowledge telling, which is the outcome of the descriptive quantitative content analysis does, and knowledge transforming, which is the result of the inferential qualitative content analysis.

Quantitative content analysis has been criticised for missing the meanings (Weber, 1990) and Bullen (1998) notes that in practice the quantitative approach is often used to make inferences about the constructs it identifies. Both of these two critiques of the approach are problematic: quantitative content analysis was originally developed to describe the surface content of communication, and in the original and descriptive approach, the quantitative content analysis sticks faithfully to the data and offers no interpretation (Kaplan, 1964).

Boettger and Palmer (2010) suggest that in terms of process, the two approaches to content analysis diverge first during the coding, with qualitative content analysis using an inductive approach, identifying themes from the data and quantitative content analysis identifying data based on deductive pre-set codes. The quantitative analysis involves the development of a code book which defines and illustrates all the variables in question. In the analysis, the quantitative method identifies the frequency of codes and allows for inferential statistical test which can identify relationships and statistical significance. McKeone (1995) describes the difference as the distinction between prescriptive and open analysis, in which prescriptive analysis is based on predetermined codes and open analysis draws from the text.

In theory, the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative content analysis are clear (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Qualitative is inductive and quantitative deductive; qualitative uses purposely selected texts and quantitative uses random sampling or other probabilistic approaches; qualitative content analyses focuses on the themes and the data lead to descriptions and typologies and quantitative content analyses lead to findings which can be explored using statistical techniques. In practice, however, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and some suggest (for example, Weber, 1990) that the best content analyses combine the two approaches.

Strengths and Limitations of Content Analysis

Content analysis sits between a qualitative and a quantitative methodology (Stempel, 1989). It uses words as data but analyses them numerically. This gives the researcher the opportunity to capitalise on the strengths of both approaches to data analysis (Prasad, 2008). The researcher can then identify some more specific and objective data which may go beyond, or enhance

impressionistic observations of phenomena. The context-specific nature of the approach can also serve to provide a qualitative dimension to the data analysis. The methodology also brings some practical advantages in that it can assist the researcher to cope with large amounts of data and requires minimal costs beyond the time of the researcher.

The methodology relies in large part on the inferences of the researcher. Data are coded based on the assumptions the coder makes as to the meanings intended by the communicator. The premise of the methodology is that the frequency of a word is an indicator of its importance (Weber, 1990). This may of course be true, but there could be a number of alternative explanations - some concepts, for example, might be more socially difficult to raise than others, and therefore mentioned less frequently despite their significance. Finally, there are issues of reliability and validity (Krippendorff, 1980) which have not been fully resolved.

Content analysis in this study

Content analysis is at its core a data reduction technique. It is a system for taking large amounts of data and reducing it to meaningful and manageable codes (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). The first goal of this study was to identify 40 or so items from the data gathered from the focus groups and therefore a method of data analysis centred on data reduction was considered appropriate.

This study for the main part follows the process associated with a quantitative content analysis. The focus is on the manifest content of the data, and the analysis seeks to describe rather than explain the data. However, as the study is exploratory in its nature, the process is an inductive one, using an open analysis, and codes are emergent.

Process

Zhang and Wildmuth (2010) identify eight stages which were used as a guide in this analysis.

1) *Prepare the data*

The data need to be transformed from whatever medium they are in in their original form to written text. In this study, the data were the spoken words from the focus groups and they were prepared by being audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

2) *Define the unit of analysis*

Before any analysis can take place, the researcher must define the unit of analysis, whether this should be a conversation, utterance, phrase or word. De Wever, Schelleur, Valche & Van

Keer (2006) highlight that these decisions can have an impact on the coding decisions as well as the degree to which the findings can be compared with others. Coding units can be defined in different ways (Stemler, 2001). The units could be defined by their natural units (such as a newspaper article or a group discussion), alternatively, they could be defined by boundaries the communicator imposes, (such as a paragraph, a sentence, or an utterance), thirdly, the codes could be based on 'referential units' which are words or groups of words which represent something in a particular way – this is thought to be particular useful for identifying 'attitudes, values or preferences' (Stemler, 2001, p.4), finally the data can be coded at a propositional level, identifying the meanings underpinning the words. This is the most complex level as the analyst is required to make inferences about the underlying assumptions.

Referential units were considered to be the most appropriate level of units for this analysis. In order to make the measure for Study 2 the most meaningful, each item needed to be distinct (the inclusion of synonyms would lead to a less discriminatory measure), but it is the manifest rather than the latent content that I sought – the symbols themselves rather than the constructs they symbolise. The units were either single words or short phrases.

3) Develop categories and a coding scheme

A category is a group of words which have a similar meaning (Weber, 1990). A code is a label for the category. Coding can take place in a number of different ways, but in essence coding involves putting words or groups of words with the same meaning or similar connotations together in a single category. Codes can be developed from previous theories or other studies (deductive, a priori codes) or from the data themselves (inductive, emergent coding). Zhang and Wildmuth (2010) suggest that for studies where there is no existing theory, the codes should be developed inductively from the data. This is the process adopted for this study, on the grounds of a lack of existing theory. Weber (1990) highlights the importance of ensuring that the categories are mutually exclusive, so that one unit of analysis cannot fall into two categories.

4)   Test your coding scheme on a sample

This step has more relevance for a priori coding, so for this study this step was omitted.

5)   Code all the data

The codes need to be applied to the whole body of the text. The analyst during this stage

needs to stay faithful to the data and needs to check the codes repeatedly to make sure that they adhere to the original definitions of the codes.

In this study, the transcripts for each occupation were examined, and words and phrases which carried significant meaning were coded. A concerted effort was made to ensure that the coding was only semantic to minimise interpretation and judgement. Some of the codes were devised to group synonyms together. 'Messy' and 'chaotic', for example, were both used to describe a social worker prototype's home, and were thought to be sufficiently similar to be coded together. Other symbols were coded under a higher order construct: 'Eastenders', 'Coronation Street' and 'Soaps' were all coded as 'soap operas'.

6) *Assess your coding consistency*

Coding consistency needs to be checked frequently to make sure that the analysis is true to the codes and to the data consistently (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coding for this study took place over a number of weeks. As part of this process, the codes were checked and double checked to ensure that the decisions made about which codes to ascribe to the data at the end of the process were the same as those made at the start.

7) *Draw conclusions*

When the data is analysed and the results collected, the researcher can start to make inferences and draw tentative conclusions from the findings, perhaps identifying links and noting patterns between the data collected. The quantitative nature of the analysis meant that this stage was foreshortened. The results were checked to ensure that the categories were distinct and meaningful and that they would be easily understood.

8) *Report your methods and findings*

Codes were included in the results where there were two or more examples of the code for a particular occupational prototype.

Reliability in content analyses can be examined either using intra-rater reliability (i.e. does the same coder generate the same codes from the text at different times) or inter-rater reliability (i.e. are the same texts coded in the same way by different people?). As this study was conducted by a single researcher, reliability was assessed through establishing intra-rater reliability. Part of the text was coded twice by the researcher, with the second coding two weeks apart from the first.

4.3.4. Procedure and ethics

The aim of this first study was to explore the perceptions of the occupational prototypes held by participants, and four occupations which were thought to be likely to be familiar and attractive to the student participants were identified through an analysis of the DLHE survey (HESA, 2013). Once ethical approval was granted (see Appendix A1), an email was sent to all psychology students at UEL, explaining the study in brief, and inviting students to take part. Participants (n=24) were asked, in 4 focus groups, to describe the prototypical occupational identities they associate with members of each occupational group. The discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed with a quantitative content analysis, and the results of this analysis will be presented in the next section.

4.4. Results

An overview of the results of the content analysis of all four prototypes (primary teachers, social workers, clinical psychologists and occupational psychologists) will be summarised and the results of each prototype then presented in turn.

4.4.1. Overview of results

Demographically, all four prototypes were more likely to be female, and all were middle class. All prototypes were associated with family and friends. The ages of the prototypes seemed to have an impact on the nature of the types of activities the prototypes enjoyed, with the teachers, most likely to be in their 20s spending time with their parents and the social workers, more likely to be in their 40s spending time with their children. The teachers enjoyed nights out with their friends whereas the clinical psychologists were more likely to have barbeques at home with friends and their families. The teachers were most likely to be single (perhaps again a function of their youth), with the other three more likely to be in long term relationships with the clinical psychologists most likely to be married.

Clothing seemed to be an area which differentiated the prototypes. Occupational psychologists were smart and business-like, being most likely to wear fashionable clothing and suits and heels. Clinical psychologists and teachers were seen in smart-casual clothing and nice flat shoes. Social workers were most likely to be dressed casually and to wear comfortable shoes.

Politically, each prototype was mixed, with the social workers the most left wing (Labour and Green Party voters) and the occupational psychologists most right wing (Conservative supporters) and the teachers the least likely to be interested in politics. The clinical psychologists were likely to have public sector partners and the occupational psychologists were more likely to have partners working in the corporate sector.

The clinical and occupational psychologists and the social workers might all choose a City Break for holidays, and the teachers and occupational psychologists would be likely to go on activity holidays, where the social workers would prefer something more relaxing.

Detailed results for each of the prototypes will be presented in turn.

4.4.2.   Primary Teacher

Primary teachers were discussed by two of the focus groups. It was covered in focus group 1, alongside social workers and focus group 2, alongside clinical psychologists and occupational psychologists, generating prototypes from 12 participants. Not all participants generated items for each code. The results below were mentioned a minimum of twice in the data and frequencies were between 2 and 11.

Table 4.1. presents the content analysis of the Primary Teacher Prototype data

Demographics. The prototypical primary teachers depicted by the participants were mostly female (8) with just 4 males. They were reported to be the youngest of the occupational groups, with 10 in their 20s and 2 in their 30s. This age was reflected in their family set ups, with 5 living in rented accommodation with flat mates, only 4 married and 4 with children. Their youth is emphasised with seven comments about spending leisure time with their parents (4 with just their mum and 3 with their parents). The participants envisaged their prototypes as middle class, with 7 comments on this.

Table 4.1. Primary teacher prototypes: code frequencies*

Friends (11)	Outdoors (4)	Diet (2)	Professional (2)
Books (7)	Downton (4)	Beer (2)	Reading (2)
Humour (6)	Soaps (4)	Centre Parcs (2)	Green-party (2)
Smart-casual (6)	Beach (3)	Reading (2)	Marking (2)
Flat shoes (5)	Nice (3)	Next (2)	Activity (2)
Labour (5)	Football (3)	Dull (2)	Routine (2)

Bike (5)	Parents (3)	Sweet (2)	Karaoke (2)
Flatmates (5)	City-breaks (3)	Pub (2)	Comfy (2)
TV (5)	Conservatives (3)	Ballet flats (2)	Charities (2)
Kids (4)	Colleagues (3)	News (2)	Weatherspoons (2)
Well-organised (4)	Escape (2)	Ikea (2)	Boring (2)
Married (4)	Cardigan (2)	France (2)	Marches (2)
Mum (4)	Painting (2)	Girls' night out (2)	Gym but doesn't go (2)

* Numbers in brackets are the number of times the code was mentioned in the focus groups

Appearance: The primary teacher prototypes were reported to be dressed smart-casually (6) with flat shoes (5 'flat shoes', 2 'ballet flats' and 2 'comfy shoes') with perhaps a cardigan (2) and with a hint of professionalism (2). Primary teachers were thought to be interested in dieting (2) (or at least discussing and reading about it), and might have a gym membership that they did not use (2).

Leisure: The most common code throughout the entire teacher prototype was 'friends' which came up eleven times in the discussions. Friends seem to play a significant role in the teacher prototypes' spare time, as they meet for a range of activities including going to a pub (2) such as Weatherspoons (2) and drinking beer (2). The teacher prototype might enjoy a girls' night out (2) possibly with colleagues and this could include some dancing (2) or karaoke (2). The primary teacher prototypes enjoyed reading books (9), watching television (5) programmes such as Downton Abbey (4), the soaps (4) , football (2) or the news (2). Television was thought to allow the teachers to escape from real life, or as a background to the marking that they need to do. Holidays might entail lying on a beach (3) perhaps in the South of France, city breaks (3), activity holidays (2), or Centre Parcs (2) for those with children. If they went shopping, it might be to Next (2) or Ikea (2).

Personality: The most frequent personality descriptor was humour (6). The teacher prototypes were described as particularly enjoying comedy programmes (2) and laughing with friends. Prototypical teachers were described as well organised (4), fond of routine (2), nice (3) or sweet (2) but dull (2) or boring (2).

Politics: Left leaning, politically, the prototype teacher was thought to be most likely to vote Labour (5) or Green (2), but with three more likely to support the Conservatives. They might

enjoy a political discussion (2), or join in with a political demonstration or march (2), and might donate money to a children's charity (2).

4.4.3. Social Worker

The social worker prototypes were discussed in two of the focus groups (focus group 1, alongside primary teachers and focus group 3, with clinical psychologists) , generating prototypes from twelve participants. Table 4.2 presents a content analysis of the codes.

Table 4.2. Social Worker Prototypes: code frequencies*

Chaotic (10)	Kids (4)	Sensible (3)	Marches (2)
Family (6)	M&S (4)	Meal (2)	TV (2)
Friends (6)	Cleaning (4)	Necklace (2)	Vote (2)
Relaxing (6)	Warm (4)	Neat (2)	Partner (2)
Labour (5)	Garden (4)	Happy (2)	Husband (2)
Nice (5)	Cat (3)	Short-hair (2)	
Casual (5)	Children's charity (3)	Documentaries (2)	Vegetarian (2)
Comfortable shoes (5)	Single (3)	Reading (2)	No-make up (2)
Shopping (5)	Not-fashionable (3)	Independent (2)	

* Numbers in brackets are the number of times the code was mentioned in the focus groups

Demographics: The social work prototypes were female (9) and were older than the teachers, with 5 in their 30s and 4 in their 40s. Family seems to be important to the prototypes (6), with 5 in long term relationships (3 mentions of husband and 2 of partner) and 4 occurrences of kids. Three were single and 3 were pictured with a cat.

Home: The most common code was 'chaotic' (10) which applied to the social worker prototypes' homes, although there were 2 occurrences of homes being described as 'neat'. The garden was seen to be important to 4 of them.

Appearance: Social worker prototypes were seen as casual dressers (5), more interested in practicalities (sensible, 3) and comfort (comfortable shoes, 5) than fashion (not-fashionable, 3), and may be unlikely to wear make-up (2). Two were pictured with a necklace and two with

short hair. Clothing might be bought from Marks and Spencer (4).

Leisure: Friends were thought to be important to the social worker prototypes, with six occurrences in the data. The social workers spend a good portion of their weekends engaged in domestic chores, cleaning (4), and shopping (5). More pleasurable pursuits included watching TV (2), possibly documentaries (2), reading, and having meals with family or friends, possibly eating home grown tomatoes or vegetarian food (2).

Politics: The social worker prototypes were thought to be left wing (5 voting for the Labour Party). They were imagined as sufficiently politically engaged to vote (2) and might go on political marches (2). They might give money to a children's charity.

Personality: The social worker prototypes' personalities were described as 'nice' (5), 'warm' (4) and 'happy' (2).

4.4.4. Clinical Psychologist

Clinical psychologist occupational prototypes were generated within 2 focus groups (focus groups 2 and 3 and was discussed by twelve participants in total. Table 4.3. presents a content analysis of the most frequent clinical psychologist codes.

Table 4.3. Clinical psychologist prototypes: code frequencies*

Kids (9)	Classic (4)	Left-wing (3)	Teacher (2)
Unconventional (7)	Personal (3)	Reads (3)	Neutral (2)
Trendy (5)	Shirt (3)	Guardian (3)	Professional
Spouse (5)	Design (3)	Glamping (2)	Intellectual (2)
Jeans (5)	Smart (3)	Bike (2)	Social-life (2)
Suit (4)	Guardian (3)	Cultural (2)	Work (2)
Accessories (4)	Labour-party (3)	Middle class festival (2)	Family (2)
Scandi drama (4)	City-break (3)	Partner (2)	Barbeques (2)
Active (4)	Quirky (3)	Content (2)	Booker-prize winner (2)
Authentic (4)	Smartly-dressed (3)	Creative (2)	Outdoors (2)

* Numbers in brackets are the number of times the code was mentioned in the focus groups

Demographics: Most clearly, the clinical psychologists were thought to be middle class, with

every participant in the focus groups stating this explicitly (12). They could be female (6) or male (5), and most had or wanted to have children (9). The prototypes were generally reported to be a little older than the primary teachers, in their 30s (4) or 40s (4). They were described as likely to have a spouse (5) or partner (2), who worked for the public sector in a profession such as teaching (2).

Appearance: the phrase which summed up the dominant look of the prototypical clinical psychologists was 'conventional with a twist'. They were usually seen as fairly 'smartly-dressed' (3), looking professional (2) or classic (4), wearing perhaps a suit (4) and shirt (3) or jeans (5), but would be fashionable (5) and they might make the outfit personal (3) with accessories (4).

Leisure: The clinical psychologists were considered likely to bring their work home with them (2), but were also thought to have a good social life (2), which might involving spending time with their family (2), and perhaps doing something active (4) or outdoors-y (2). When staying in, the clinical psychology prototypes might watch Scandinavian dramas (4) such as The Killing or might read. In terms of holidays, they might enjoy a city-break (3) for a bit of culture (2), a middle class festival (2) such as Latitude or Hay, and might collect knick-knacks from their travels to decorate their homes (2).

Politics: The clinical psychology prototypes were thought to be more likely to be left wing in their political leanings (3), supporting the Labour party (3) and reading the Guardian (3).

Personality: The participants described their clinical psychology prototypes as unconventional (5), authentic (4), intellectual (2) and creative (2) and felt that they were 'content' (2) with their lives.

4.4.5. Occupational Psychologist

Table 4.4. Occupational Psychologists Prototypes: code frequencies*

Trendy (11)	Business-like (4)	Polished (3)	Social-life (2)
Professional (9)	Well groomed (4)	Good-looking (3)	Helpful (2)
Suit (6)	Lib Dem (4)	Car (3)	Active (2)
Image(6)	Political discussion (4)	Casual (3)	Tube (2)
Heels (5)	Designer (3)	Stylish (2)	Credible (2)
Approachable (5)	Clever (3)	Smart (2)	Restaurants (2)
Smart (5)	Sporty (3)	Friendly (2)	Uniform (2)
Banker (partner) (4)	Single (3)	Bike (2)	L K Bennett (2)
Cultural (4)	Out-doors (3)	Guardian (2)	Creative (2)
Right-wing (4)	Sophisticated (3)	Smart shoes (2)	Smart-casual (2)
Mediterranean (4)	Family (3)	Girlfriend (2)	City-break (2)
Friends (4)	Controlled (3)	Dog (2)	Competence (2)

* Numbers in brackets are the number of times the code was mentioned in the focus groups

Occupational psychologists were discussed in focus groups 2 and 4, generating twelve occupational prototypes

Demographics: demographically, the occupational psychologist occupational prototypes were mixed, with 9 female and 3 males, 5 in their 30s, 4 in their 40s and 2 in their 20s. They are described as middle class (4), 6 are described as being in relationships (4 with a partner and 2 with a girlfriend) and 3 as single. Occupational psychologists might have partners who work in corporate settings such as banking (4) and might have a dog (2).

Politics: the group of occupational psychologists are interested in politics, with 4 enjoying a political discussion, but tend to be more right leaning than the other prototypes, with 4 right of centre and 4 Liberal Democrats, although 2 would read the Guardian, a more left wing newspaper.

Appearance: Image seems to matter to our occupational psychologists (6) with 2 going so far as to describe their work clothes as a 'uniform'. The image they wanted to portray was one

that is credible (2) and competent (2). It was emphasised that care was taken with their appearance, with 4 described as 'well-groomed', 3 as 'polished' 3 as 'sharp' and 5 as 'smart'. Their clothes tend to be business-like (4) with six wearing suits, stylish (3, stylish and 3, sophisticated) and fashionable, with 11 occurrences of 'trendy', and 3 of 'designer'. Shoes are smart (2) and the female occupational psychologists are likely to be seen in heels (5). At weekends they are likely to dress down to casual (5) or smart-casual (2). An attractive group, three of the occupational psychologist prototypes were specifically described as 'good-looking'.

Leisure: The occupational psychologists were likely to enjoy the outdoors (3), perhaps engaged in sport (3) or other active pastimes (2) such as cycling (2). Holidays might be to the Mediterranean (4) or city breaks (2) and would be likely to include some cultural activities (4). Occupational psychologists were thought to have an active social life (2) perhaps spending time with friends (4) and family (3) and might enjoy eating out (2).

Personality: The occupational psychologist prototypes were described as approachable (5), and friendly (2), but were also thought to be clever (3), controlled (3) helpful (2) and creative (2).

This then concludes the presentation of the results of the content analysis of the 4 occupational prototypes. The second aim of this first study was to generate items for a self-report measure which would be used in Study 2. It is to this that attention will now turn.

4.4.6. Item generation

The self-report measure would assess the degree to which an individual imagines that their future possible self matches the prototypical identity of the occupation they are considering. Participants would be asked to imagine their desired possible self, and then report the degree to which they feel that items on a list are similar to this representation of their future self. They would then be asked to evoke a representation of a typical member of the occupation they are thinking of joining after finishing their programme of study, and are then presented again with the same list of items. Participants would be asked to report the degree to which they feel that items on this list are similar to this representation of the occupational prototype. The degree of match is calculated through a comparison of the two sets of responses.

Cheryan et al. (2013) suggest that a list of between 40 and 60 items is suitable for a measure

such as this. I was therefore looking for 10 – 15 words from each occupational prototype to ensure an even spread of items across the occupations discussed.

To endeavour to appeal to as wide a range as possible of participants, a broad range of words or phrases were selected, including those which characterised demographic features, appearance, leisure activities, personality and values, representing the gamut of topics discussed in the focus groups. The items were taken directly from the data obtained through the focus group discussions, but the final choice of items was made on the basis of both the frequency of data and the desire for a wide range of suitable and comparable items for the measure. As such, a small number of items were included in the final list which were not in Tables 4.1 – 4.4. Their inclusion was based on a need to provide participants in Study 2 with a selection of similar items from which to choose. Birkenstocks, for example, were included as an example of a feature associated with the clinical psychologists, and their inclusion meant that participants in Study 2 could choose between four different types of shoes, associated with the four occupations in question: ballet flats, comfortable shoes, Birkenstocks and heels. No words or phrases were chosen which were thought to have negative connotations, so words such as 'dull' or 'chaotic' were omitted. Table 4.5. presents the terms which were selected from the focus group data as items for the new self-report measure.

Table 4.5. Items for the new self-report measure

	Primary Teacher	Social Worker	Clinical Psychologist	Occupational Psychologist
Demographic	20s Female Living with husband Living with flatmates	40s Living with family Older children Cat	30s Living with partner Young children Partner in the public sector	Single Dog Partner in business
Appearance	Ballet-flats Smart casual at work	Comfortable shoes Casual clothes at work M&S Not particularly fashion conscious	Flat boots Birkenstocks Accessories to give the outfit a personal touch	Heels Sharp suit LK Bennett Well-dressed Stylish Fashion conscious

Going out	Girls night out Dancing Karaoke Pizza Express Pub Activity holiday	Relaxing with friends Camping	Barbeque with friends Glamping Hay festival	Trendy cocktail bar City breaks Outdoors activities
Staying in	Soaps Downton Abbey Comedies Chick lit Time with mum	Documentaries Gardening	Scandinavian drama Booker prize winner	Neat home
Personality	Sweet Funny	Warm	Quirky	Sporty Controlled
Values	No great interest in politics	Green Political marches	Labour	Conservative Political discussions

The items were put into a single list and incorporated in the survey for Study 2. The survey design and results are described in detail in the next chapter.

4.5. Discussion

At the heart of this thesis lies the presumption that career choices are choices about identity. Rather than aiming to identify a job that might suit an individual, an identity approach to career choice suggests instead that individuals are aiming to find an identity which suits them: instead of asking 'What do I want to do?' they are wondering 'Who do I want to be?'. The social identities of different occupational groups are therefore pertinent to those interested in career decision making. If an individual is making a decision not just to *teach*, but to *be a teacher*, then their understanding of what it means to be a teacher is likely to be important.

In this first study, the conceptualisations that participants hold of the identities of four different occupational groups (social worker, primary teacher, occupational psychologist and clinical psychologist) were explored. The study explored the first of the subordinate research questions outlined in Chapter 2, and addressed the first part of the overall research question, examining the nature of the features of prototypical occupational identities.

Participants were asked to describe their individual occupational prototype – their image of a typical member of each occupational group. Specifically, I was interested to explore the nature

and scope of these prototypes, curious to identify the range of features which might emerge and to see whether the participants' prototypes incorporated features and details associated with their lives beyond work.

The prototypes contained a high level of detail. The descriptions of the prototypes focused on the person as a whole rather than just them in the workplace, and no limit was found to the details participants were able to provide. As well as being detailed, the images were nuanced. Participants did not just describe shoes as flat, but differentiated between flat boots, comfortable shoes and ballet pumps. Research on cognitive schemata (Derry, 1996) could be useful for helping us to make sense of this. A schema is a store of organised knowledge about a phenomenon which has been learnt through direct or indirect experience (Piaget, 1971). Piaget developed the term to account for children's motor development but it has been applied widely since to abstract knowledge (Lewis & Durrant, 2011). The schema acts as a framework within which individuals can store and organise the new relevant information which they encounter. Occupational identities are thought to be stored in the form of schemata and MacKinnon and Langford (1994) suggest that there can be a significant volume of wide ranging information which is associated with the occupational identity stored. They describe the schemata of occupational identities as having 'an endless amount of information' (p.233) which resonates with the high level of detail which the focus group participants offered.

The level of detail did not seem to be constrained by the participants' conscious knowledge and understanding of the occupations in question. A number of the participants stated that they did not know what an occupational psychologist did, yet they had a clear image of a typical occupational psychologist in their minds. This reflects the suggestion by Epstein (1984) that occupational schemata are stored in the preconscious: they are within existing cognitive stores but are only brought into conscious awareness when attention is directed to them. Schemata are thought to be stored at what is known as the preconscious level. Knowledge stored at this level is accessible, but only when a deliberate effort is made to access it. MacKinnon and Langford (1994) discuss this notion of detailed occupational schemata stored at the preconscious level in their research on occupational prestige. They assume that when we are analysing occupational prestige, we base our assessment on the implicit knowledge we have about the income and education of members of each occupational group. They propose

that this knowledge that we draw on when making assessments of occupational prestige comes from schemata of occupational identities which suggest that occupational identities 'generate expectations for the defining characteristics of occupations and people-in-occupations (their character traits and emotions, cultural beliefs and values, lifestyle and so on).' (1994, p.219). This is perhaps the source of information that the participants have drawn on to identify their detailed prototypes of occupational identities.

This is an idea to which I will return in the discussion of the final study, in Chapter 7.

Prototypes varied, but tended to combine significant shared elements with aspects which were quite distinct. Some individuals could evoke more than one prototype for a single occupation. This combination of the shared and the particular reflects the range of influences which are known to shape the development of stereotypes (Bar-Tal, 1997), as the cognitive schemata of different occupations are informed by both shared experiences (such as images from the media) and individual experiences (for example, my primary teacher). These meaning making cognitive processes which can be inferred from the data, resonate with the contemporary constructivist approaches to career (for example, Savickas, 2012) which acknowledge that individuals construct their own career narratives.

As previously discussed, existing literature provides some empirical evidence about stereotypical perceptions of occupations. Most of the studies have explored stereotypical characteristics of members of the occupational group, rather than prototypes, and the research tends to focus on work-related characteristics. Cory (1992), for example highlights a range of personality characteristics which are associated with accountants, and Loosemore and Chin Chin (2000) identify characteristics associated with a range of occupations in the construction industry. Cheryan et al. (2013) go a little beyond the 9 - 5 in their analysis of stereotypes of computer scientists, finding that the stereotypes include details of what the computer scientists might read. This current study, however, suggests a breadth of detail which has previously not been drawn out in the literature. The participants in this study were asked specifically to talk about their occupational prototypes more broadly, with questions which invited them to focus on their occupational prototypes both in work and out of work. Participants identified a vast array of physical and behavioural identity markers, not limited to work related features. These included details about what the prototypes would wear (both in the workplace and over the weekends), where they might go on holiday, what their hobbies

were, what their homes were like and details about their friends and families. The participants in the study seemed to be able to answer any question, and to take the narrative in any direction. Participant prototypes were nuanced with details given about the colours of clothing ('dressed all in black'), the shops they might frequent ('Whistles, or maybe LK Bennet) or the height of the heels on their shoes ('flat boots'). This echoes the subtleties of dress markers that Elsbach (2004) discusses, including 'the style, color, fabric and accessories of work clothes' (2004, p.102) which, she suggests, are both intended and interpreted as symbols of work identity. But the depth and breadth of the participants' perceptions of the occupational identities extends the boundaries of the existing research in this field.

The focus on features beyond those directly related to the job itself is, arguably, a product of the questions the participants were asked. I was interested in finding out whether or not participants' prototypes were exclusively work-related, and therefore directed the discussions towards the lifestyles, hobbies and homes of the prototypes. The participants were however given ample opportunities to redirect the conversation to more work-related arenas, and chose not to. Some participants were explicit about their lack of knowledge about the nature of the occupations discussed, yet those who reported that they had no idea what an occupational psychologist did during the working day could still describe their wardrobes and homes, and identify their partners' occupations and pets. This echoes the observations of O'Dowd and Beardslee (1967) who noted that their participants seemed to have 'a more secure sense of the life-style features of an occupation than its on-the-job demands' (p.3). These two studies were conducted nearly 50 years apart (O'Dowd and Beardslee's study in 1967 and the current study conducted in 2014), yet the findings of both indicated that the university students who participated had an existing cognitive store of information about a range of occupational identities, which was clearer and more elaborate than their knowledge about the jobs themselves. This may indicate that people who are engaged in making career decisions develop their own conceptualisations of the world of work which are based on identities rather than job duties.

The specific features of the different occupational prototypes identified in this study are difficult to integrate with existing literature. This study reveals that participants imagined typical social workers to live in chaotic households, primary school teachers to enjoy karaoke and clinical psychologists to live in Stoke Newington. As highlighted above, previous research

on occupational prototypes has not explored a wide range of different occupations and has generally focused on personality traits that are relevant to the jobs themselves. This lack of empirical evidence covering the broader features of occupational identities suggests that the findings of this study make an innovative contribution to career theory.

4.6. Conclusion

The first study in this programme of doctoral research has uncovered some unexpected and novel results. This study explored the perceptions of occupational identities and revealed that the participants had clear, detailed and nuanced perceptions of occupational identities, which may be unconnected to their conscious understanding of the occupations themselves. Their perceptions of occupational identities included details of homes, lifestyles, appearance, family and holidays, and participants' narratives were fluid and expansive. Previous research indicates that occupational prototypes have an influence on career goals and motivation through the process of self to prototype matching. Yet previous studies have not conceptualised prototypical identities with the breadth and detail revealed in this study, and have not focused on the non-work related features of the prototypes. The next study, described in Chapter 5, explores these ideas in more depth, using a quantitative methodology to examine the impact of occupational prototypes on the career goals and motivation of participants.

Chapter 5

Possible selves, occupational prototypes and career decisions: a quantitative, self-report study

5.1. Introduction

This second study addresses the second of the four subordinate research questions detailed in Chapter 2, aiming to examine the links between possible selves, the features of prototypical occupational identities, and career goals and motivation

The study made use of an online questionnaire to gather quantitative data. The aim of the study was to find out whether the degree of match between a participant's possible self and their prototype of the occupation they are seeking to enter, would be associated with their career decidedness and their levels of job search activity. It was also hypothesised that the degree of salience of their possible self would be associated with both career decidedness and levels of job search activity. A number of other measures (self-clarity, career decision making self-efficacy, social support satisfaction, conscientiousness and neuroticism), which have

previously been shown to correlate with career decidedness and job search behaviours, were recorded for comparison.

The chapter will begin with a brief recap of some of the most relevant aspects of the literature (5.2) and will then summarise the methodology (5.3). The results of both the development of a new measure and the results of the questionnaire will be presented (5.4) and these will be discussed with reference to the existing literature (5.5).

5.2. A brief overview of the literature

There are three areas of literature underpinning this study, which integrates possible selves, occupational prototypes and the self to prototype matching approach to career decision making. A detailed review of the literature was presented in Chapter 2, but here I will summarise the most relevant aspects.

5.2.1. Possible Selves

The notion of possible selves has been at the edges of career literature for some time. Ibarra (1999, 2005) applied a model of possible selves to the process of career change within the context of an identity-approach to careers, and this has gained some currency in practice, but the empirical evidence directly supporting the value of possible-selves in a career context is limited.

Born out of social identity theory, the notion of possible selves was first articulated by Markus and Nurius (1986). Possible selves are ideas of what one might be, or what one might become. Possible selves can be expected, hoped for or feared, and Markus and Nurius proposed that they are based on our perceptions of our past selves, grounded in past performance, social comparisons and cultural and historical contexts.

There is evidence that possible selves can have an impact on behaviour through goal setting and increasing motivation. A clear possible self converts a future hypothetical event into a current goal (Strauss et al., 2012) and enables individuals to assess their progress towards this (Strahan & Wilson, 2007). They have an impact on goal setting, leading not only to clearer

overall goals, but also to identification of specific sub goals (Hock et al., 2007) which then assist the individual as they progress towards their overall goal (Robinson et al., 2003). Finally, they enhance motivation, leading to greater persistence (Lee & Oyserman, 2009).

Strauss et al. (2012) highlight the strong link between possible selves and career decisions, and evidence supports the proposition that possible selves may have a part to play in career development and career practice. Possible selves have been shown to be useful in making career decisions as they help individuals to identify proximal and distal goals and to understand the steps needed to get there (Hock et al., 2003; Robinson et al., 2003) and salient possible selves have been shown to help with career motivation and proactive job search behaviour (Strauss et al. 2012) which have both been linked to positive career outcomes (De Vos, Dewettinc & Buyens, 2009; Hirschi, Lee, Porfeli & Vondracek, 2013; Seibert Kraimer & Crant, 2001).

The literature indicates then that possible selves may have a role to play in career development, as there is reason to believe that having a salient possible self may link with career goals and motivated career behaviour. What is now needed is empirical research which clearly establishes the associations between these constructs to provide a starting point for a more in depth programme of research to explore the potential value of possible selves within career theory and career practice.

5.2.2. Self to prototype matching

Self to prototype decision making is proposed here as a mechanism which incorporates the role of the possible self in the career decision making process.

Self- to prototype matching (Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Cantor, Mischel & Schwartz, 1982; Niedenthal, Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1985) is a decision making process which involves matching either current or desired selves to prototypes. The process involves two stages a) the individual imagines the prototype for each option under consideration b) the individual compares the defining prototype characteristics with those of the actual or desired self and chooses the best match (Hannover & Kessels, 2004). Self to prototype matching was originally conceived in the context of social decision making, with early studies involving decisions about housing (Cantor & Mischel, 1979) and health behaviours (Niedenthal, Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1985). More recently it has been explored in academic and career domains, and has been

shown to have an impact on career related decisions in a range of contexts (Chalk, Meara & Day, 1994; Packard & Nguyan, 2003; Rommes, Overbeek, Scholte, Engels and De Kemp, 2007), often with a particular emphasis on students' decisions about whether to study STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and related subjects (Cheryan et al., 2013; Hannover & Kessels, 2004).

The research into self to prototype decision making tend to make use of lists of qualities, associated with a particular occupational identity. Typically, the items which are included on these lists are personality characteristics.

5.2.3. Occupational prototypes

A prototype, an idea of an average member of a particular social group, is a cognitive representation of a number of stereotypical features. Prototypes are representations of social identities (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994) distinct from stereotypes which are lists of attributes or defining features (Hogg & Terry, 2000), and a prototypical occupational identity is a conceptualisation of a typical member of an occupational group, such as a typical academic or a typical social worker. Occupational prototypes are known to encompass a range of factors, directly related to the role and moving beyond qualities needed for the job itself. Cheryan, Plaut, Handron, and Hudson (2013, p. 60) explain that they 'span multiple components, including traits, behaviours, and physical appearance', but the literature is patchy and does not provide a clear taxonomy of factors that are most often included.

Study 1, described in more depth in Chapter 4, explored the conceptualisations of prototypical occupational identities which were held by participants, students on the BSc in Psychology at UEL. The study examined the nature of the social identities of four occupational prototypes: primary school teachers, social workers, clinical and occupational psychologists, and results suggest that these occupational identities are multi-dimensional and detailed, incorporating social identity markers from a range of aspects of life, beyond the workplace: past-present-future, work-leisure-family, personality-values-motivations, and a host of other details. The results suggest that participants' concepts of the social identity of a particular occupational group stretches far beyond the characteristics associated with the work itself.

Taken together, the literature summarised above might lead us to conclude that possible selves have an impact on career outcomes by clarifying career goals and increasing motivated career behaviour, that occupational prototypes and possible selves have an impact on career decisions through the mechanism of self to prototype matching, and that occupational prototypes are composed of a range of factors directly linked to and beyond the job itself. There is, however, limited evidence to link these bodies of research (Peters et al., 2012).

5.2.4. The present study

This study begins to address this gap, aiming to examine the link between possible selves and two career learning outcomes of career decidedness (a measure of the clarity of career goals) and job search activity (a measure of motivated career behaviour), and aiming to explore whether the self to prototype match, based on the conceptualisation of the prototypical occupational identities identified in Study 1 has an association with career decidedness and job search activity.

To develop a strong foundation for the integration of possible selves within the career literature, it was thought that it would be useful to examine how the strength of any associations between possible selves and career decidedness (career goals) and proactive career behaviour (motivated career behaviour), compares with the associations between these elements and other constructs within the mainstream of career literature.

The dependent variables for this study are the career learning outcomes of job search behaviour and career decidedness. These have been examined extensively within the career literature. The antecedents of these outcomes are complex and include environmental and intrapersonal factors. In terms of personality, key antecedents of career decidedness have been shown to be self-clarity (Jones, 1989) and the personality traits of neuroticism and conscientiousness (Chartrand, Rose, Elliott, Marmarosh & Caldwell, 1993). Career decision making self-efficacy has emerged as having a consistent, although moderate, correlation with both career decidedness (Taylor & Popma, 1990) and job search behaviour (Shirai, Shimomura, Kawasaki, Adachi, & Wakamatsu, 2013). A strong environmental factor that has emerged is social support, often measured as social support satisfaction, which has an association with both career decidedness (Whiston & Keller, 2004) and job search behaviour (Brown, Cober,

Kane, Levy & Shalhoop, 2006).

Two specific hypotheses were tested:

H1   The degree of PS to OP Match is associated with levels of (a) career decidedness and
        (b) job search activity

H2   The salience of an individual's possible-self is associated with levels of (a) career
        decidedness and (b) job search activity

5.3. Method

In study 2, numerical data were gathered using an online questionnaire.

5.3.1. Philosophical underpinnings of the quantitative paradigm

Historically, quantitative research has been underpinned by the ontological position of
positivism (Smith, Booth & Zalewski, 1996), a term coined by the French philosopher Auguste
Comte (1798 – 1857). Positivists hold that there is one truth which exists independent of
human perception (Sale & Brazil, 1994). Reality exists as a single, objective truth, and this truth
is knowable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The researcher is considered able to examine
the phenomenon without influencing it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Positivism assumes that
knowledge should be derived from that which can be observed either in real word situations or
in experiments. It is thus related to the epistemological positions of empiricism, which holds
that knowledge can only be gleaned from experience and from the evidence we get from our
senses.

Social scientists who espouse this philosophy assume that social phenomena should be treated
in social science research the way that natural phenomena are in the physical sciences (Tuli,
2010). Social science researchers operating within this ontological position are seeking
scientific explanation, looking to find laws which govern human behaviour, in the way that
biologists are looking for laws that govern nature (Schulze, 2003). The philosophy assumes that
patterns of social reality are stable and that our knowledge of them is additive (Crotty, 1998).
The goal of the researcher is to try and find the most objective research methods in order to
get as close to this reality as possible (Ulin, Robertson & Tolley, 2005). Researchers are looking
to quantify constructs and then examine how they interact with each other using empirical and
experimental research designs. They aim to test laws of human behaviour and explain the

behaviour in terms of cause and effect by measuring behaviour using standardized tools (Tuli, 2010).

The positivist ontology and empiricist epistemology require a research method which is objective and which can test hypotheses and measure effects. Quantitative methods produce numerical data which constitutes hard evidence (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003) so although positivism does not commit itself to any particular research method (Martin, 2003), a quantitative methodology is an obvious choice for researchers working within a positivist ontological position (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005).

Positivism dominated psychological research in the mid-20th century, but more recently quantitative researchers in the social sciences have tended to espouse a position of post-positivism (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). Post-positivists accept some of the critiques of positivism that the researcher is a part of the world being explored and as such cannot but influence the phenomenon under scrutiny. Post-positivism adheres to the positivist notion that there is an objective reality, but questions whether this reality is knowable. The goal of the post-positivist researcher is to try and represent reality as far as possible whilst acknowledging the possibility that the reflection of reality may be altered by the researcher or research process. Post-positivist researchers tend to emphasise confidence rather than certainties, highlighting the possibility that the research may not be a perfect representation of reality (Sukamolson, 2010).

5.3.2. Quality within the quantitative paradigm

If quantitative studies aim to explain behaviour by measuring behaviour, it is clearly vital that the measures used meaningfully capture the constructs they are aiming to quantify (Adcock & Collier, 2001). This is what is known as validity, explained by Bollen (1989) as 'whether a variable measures what it is supposed to measure' (p. 184). Adcock and Collier (2001) stress that measurement validity applies at different levels, suggesting that at its heart lie the links between concepts, indicators and scores: 'measurement is valid when the scores derived from a given indicator can meaningfully be interpreted in terms of the systematized concept that the indicator seeks to operationalize' (2001, p.531). One important aspect of validity is measurement error. Errors can be systematic, described as bias, or random, described as reliability. Scores can only be regarded as valid if they are free from both systematic and random errors (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Validity in social science research has traditionally been conceptualised as the combination of content, criterion and construct validity (Guion, 1980). Content validity is the degree to which the scale reflects the concept it purports to measure; criterion validity is the degree to which scores on one particular scale correlate with scores from other scales which are thought to measure the same construct; construct validity assesses the degree to which the scores on a particular scale interrelate with scores from scales which measure different but theoretically related constructs (for example, construct validity might be shown if the scores for career decidedness showed a strong inverse correlation with those for career indecision). The application of this 'holy trinity' (Guion, 1980, p.386) of validity has been criticised. Angoff (1988) points out that researchers have inferred that any one of the three types of validity is sufficient to ensure a valid measurement. More recently a unitarian approach to validity has been proposed, with researchers using multiple sources of evidence to demonstrate validity (Shepard, 1993).

A researcher needs to make careful choices about the concepts to be tested. Within social science research this can be difficult as the concepts are often complex; Gallie (1956) uses the term 'contested concepts' to highlight the challenge of defining and making choices. Researchers are advised to make use of a theoretical underpinning to help make choices (Kaplan, 1964).

Given the mixed methods approach taken in this programme of research, it may be useful to highlight some of the contradictions and possible tensions in the broad construct of validity as interpreted within the two paradigms which are combined. Validity in quantitative research links to a range of other empirical values such as objectivity, generalisability, universal laws and facts. Qualitative research, closely linked to the relativist tradition which rejects the notion of a single, static, objective reality, seeks instead to understand meanings and acknowledges the multiple realities grounded in individual perspectives and interpretations. Winter (2000) highlights two particular notions, generalisability and researcher involvement, which illustrate the opposing views of good quality research within the two paradigms. Generalisability is sometimes considered a core pillar of validity within quantitative research (Maxwell, 2002), but is of little importance to the qualitative researcher, whose philosophical position recognises multiple realities. Researcher involvement in a quantitative study threatens the validity of the study, but enhances it in qualitative research (Winter, 2000). Validity within

qualitative research remains an important goal for researchers, but the definitions can vary. Some qualitative researchers (for example Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) have adopted a different set of terms which are thought to be more sympathetic to the qualitative paradigm, such as trustworthiness, relevance, plausibility and methodological rigour.

Ensuring high quality research is important within this programme of doctoral research for both the quantitative and the qualitative studies, but the nature of how to ensure and evaluate the quality varies from one study to another. The traditional definition of 'validity' as used in this quantitative study will be addressed in the methodology section below. Here, notions of objectivity, reliability, validity and generalisability will be discussed. Within the qualitative studies, described in Chapters 4, 6 and 7, discussions around validity will centre on notions of trustworthiness and plausibility.

This quantitative study assumes an epistemological position of post-positivism. The assumptions are that there are generalizable approaches to decision making. The study explores whether self to prototype matching, using possible selves and predominantly non-work features of occupational prototypes is one such mechanism. There are two hypotheses, outlined above, and the study is designed to falsify the null hypotheses. Every effort was made to minimise the impact of researcher bias and to use valid instruments.

Having established some key conceptual aspects of this quantitative study, the chapter now turns to providing an account of the procedural elements of the study.

5.3.3. Participants

87 female students completed the questionnaire.

The data which were used for the construction of the PS to OP Match measure (a new self-report measure developed specifically for use in this study and described below) were gathered from the participants of Study 1, all of whom were women. These participants were asked to describe their idea of typical members of particular occupations and it was thought that the features of the occupational prototypes generated by women could, conceivably, be different from those which might be generated by men; the items on the PS to OP Match scale might therefore be more likely to resonate with the female participants. It was therefore

decided that in Study 2 the participants should be women. The majority of the participants in Study 2 described themselves as white British (49%), with 22% other white, 11% black Caribbean and 5% Indian. The other participants were mixed race (3%), other Asian (2%), Chinese, black African, Pakistani (1% each) or described themselves as having other ethnicities (5%). 49% of participants were reported to be in the first year of their programme, 32% in their second year and 19% in their third year. The mean age of applicants was 32 (standard deviation 10.16) and their ages ranged from 18 to 59.

5.3.4. Measures

The majority of the constructs were measured using pre-existing instruments, but one scale (PS to OP Match) was devised specifically for the purpose of this survey.

Degree of match between possible-self and desired occupational prototype (PS to OP Match).
As this measure was created specifically for this study, the process involved in the design will be discussed in some depth here.

The design of this measure replicates a process described in existing literature (for example, Cheryan et al., 2013; Hannover & Kessels, 2004; Niedethal et al., 1985) for the development of similar tools. Typically studies focus on one particular prototype, such as 'a computer scientist' or 'a smoker'. The self to prototype match is measured using a list of items (often trait adjectives) which have previously been shown to be associated with the prototype in question. The number of items on the lists ranges from 30 to 100. The items are drawn from previous literature where it exists, or are generated in a pilot study in cases where the social identity under scrutiny has not been explored in this way before. Participants are asked to describe the extent to which they feel that their current or future selves are associated with each item on the list, and to rate this on a Likert scale of 1 (not at all associated) to 5 (very associated): the higher the score, the closer the match.

The measure devised for this study needed to differ from those described above in two key ways. One purpose of the study was to explore the prototypical occupational identities in more depth than has been done previously. To this end, it was important that the list of items went beyond the trait adjectives which had been used before and incorporated a range of the

features which had emerged in the focus group discussions in Study 1.

The second difference was that where previous studies explored the PS to OP Match for one prescribed occupational prototype, this study would be making use of each participant's own individual conceptualisation of the prototypical occupational identity for their desired occupation. This measure therefore needed to be able to explore self to prototype matching as applied to any occupation, rather than for a single predetermined profession or subject area. This second difference led to a change in procedure. In previous studies the list of items had been chosen as those which are generally associated with one particular social identity (for example a physics student or a computer scientist). The participants in previous studies therefore only needed to identify which of the items applied to them themselves in order to identify the degree of match. In this study, the participants would first need to identify which of the items were associated with their own prototype of the occupation they had chosen, and then to identify those which also applied to themselves.

To this end, before being presented with the list, participants were asked to identify their chosen future profession, and were then asked to rate the extent to which they associated each item on the list with a typical member of that profession. This was measured on a Likert scale from 1 - 5 ('not at all associated', 'slightly associated', 'somewhat associated', 'moderately associated', 'extremely associated'). Participants were then asked to imagine a desired possible future self, and to state on the same scale the extent to which they associated the items with this future image of themselves. The degree of match was calculated on the basis of the similarity of the ratings from the two lists. Each participant was presented with both lists, but the order in which they were presented was varied to avoid the impact of order effect on the data.

As this was a new measure, it was operationalised at a conceptually broad level. It was thought that the construct might be composed of different domains (such as leisure activities, personality traits, appearance and values) and the number of items needed to allow for an empirically informed view of the breadth of the construct. 35 items were chosen, covering the possible conceptual ground. The items for these lists were generated from the analysis of Study 1 (the method, findings and analysis for this study are described in more depth in

Chapter 4), in which participants were asked to describe a prototype of a typical member of four occupations popular with psychology graduates at UEL (social worker, primary teacher, occupational psychologist, clinical psychologist). Items were wide ranging and included demographic factors (such as age, sex), leisure choices ('likes gardening', 'enjoys karaoke') and clothing ('would wear comfortable shoes', 'wears accessories'). Items selected for the measure were those mentioned frequently in the focus group data and those which would provide a range of types of items: demographic, attitudinal and behavioural. In order to differentiate between different kinds of identities, some very common features (such as 'friends', 'parents', 'wears jeans') were not included. The data from the focus groups generated 35 items (see Appendix B2 for the final measure as presented to the participants). This number was towards the low end of the range of other similar measures, but it was decided that a shorter scale would help to keep the whole questionnaire a more manageable length for participants and would be likely to lead to less participant fatigue and fewer incomplete responses.

Career decidedness

The measure chosen for this survey was the Career Decidedness Scale from the Career Decision Profile (Jones 1989). This is a 16-item questionnaire which assesses a range of related dimensions such as choice-work salience, indecisiveness, comfort and reasons. It includes a two item scale which measures career decidedness:

- I have an occupational field in mind
- I have decided on the occupational area I want to enter

rated on a scale from 1, 'strongly disagree' to 8, 'strongly agree'.

Construct validity for this scale was established (Jones, 1989) through a moderate correlation with career salience (r = .30, p<.0001) which has previously been associated with high levels of vocational decidedness (Greenhaus & Simon, 1977). In this study the Cronbach's alpha was 0.77.

Job Search Activity

This was measured in this study by two scales: job search behaviour (JSB) and proactive career behaviour (PCB).

Levels of JSB were measured by Sun, Song and Lim's (2013) scale. This scale consisted of 12 items, and participants were asked to state on a 5 point Likert scale (from 1 = never to 5 = very

often) how often they have done each of 12 job searching activities in the last month. Items included "*looked at job vacancies on website*" and "*talked with friends or relatives about possible job leads*". This list was reproduced in the questionnaire in the current study, with a number of minor language changes (for example 'CV' replaced 'resume' and 'Job Centre' replaced 'state employment service') to make it accessible to a UK audience

PCB was measured using Strauss et al.'s (2012) list of proactive career measures. This list assesses four types of pro-active career behaviour: pro-active skill development, networking, career consultation and career planning, and examples of statements include *'I develop skills which may not be needed so much now, but in future positions'* and '*I make my supervisor aware of my work aspirations and goals*'. Confirmatory factor analyses showed that a four-factor structure in which factors representing the four subscales were specified to load onto a higher order proactive career behaviour factor provided a reasonable fit to the data, and Cronbach's alpha was reported as .92 (Strauss et al., 2012). In this study the Cronbach's alpha was 0.91.

Both scales cover the actions which are likely to lead to a successful job search, but where the behaviours on the PCB scale are those which are laying the foundations for a successful job hunt (building networks and planning), those on the JSB scale are those required to actually find a job.

Self Clarity

The Self-Concept Clarity Scale (SCC; Campbell et al., 1996) was chosen to measure this construct in the online questionnaire. This is a 12-item instrument designed to measure the extent to which an individual's self-beliefs are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable (e.g., "*My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another.*"). Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*not at all descriptive of me*) to 5 (*very descriptive of me*), with higher scores representing greater self-concept clarity. The SCC has demonstrated evidence of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha in this study was .86), construct validity, and criterion validity (Campbell et al., 1996).

Salience of possible-selves

The number of existing scales for measuring possible-self salience is limited and the measure

selected for this questionnaire was chosen as it is parsimonious and has previously demonstrated good reliability. The scale was devised by Strauss et al (2012) and consists of five questions including '*I can easily imagine my Future Work Self'* and '*The mental picture of this future is very clear'*. Their questions were based on those developed by King and Raspin (2004) with two added to improve internal reliability. King and Raspin reported reliabilities from .65 to .83 for measures of salience based on the first three questions. Strauss et al. reported Cronbach's alpha of .92 for all five questions. Items were rated on a 5 point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha in this study was 0.82.

Social support satisfaction

A six item social support satisfaction test was chosen as the measure in this study (Sarason, Sarason, Shearin & Pierce, 1987) Questions included '*Whom can you really count on to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?'* and '*Whom can you really count on to care about you, regardless of what is happening to you?'*. Participants were asked first to list the names of people who fulfil these roles in their lives and then to rate their satisfaction with this social support on a 6 point Likert scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Satisfactory validity was shown through moderate correlations with a French version of the same scale. Cronbach's alpha for the scale in this study was 0.95.

Personality Measures

Donnellan, Oswald, Baird and Lucas (2006) developed 'tiny-yet-effective' (p. 192) measures of the big five personality factors, known as the mini-IPIP scales, using just four items per Big Five trait. Their studies suggested consistent and acceptable internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha at or above .60) and a comparable pattern of validity with other Big Five measures. Participants are asked to report on a 5 point Likert scale whether a statement is true for them. Items for conscientiousness include '*get chores done right away'* and '*like order'*. Items for neuroticism include '*get upset easily'* and '*seldom feel blue'*. Cronbach's alpha for this study was 0.57 for neuroticism and 0.35 for conscientiousness. These scores are lower than anticipated and the implications for the interpretation of the results are considered below.

Career decision making self-efficacy

The measure used in this online survey was the short form of the career decision making self-efficacy scale devised by Taylor and Betz (1993). The questions ask about respondents'

confidence that they could, for example, '*decide what you most value in an occupation*' and '*make a career decision and then not worry if it was right or wrong*'. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from *I have no confidence at all* (1) to *I have complete confidence* (5). Numerous articles published in the career literature attest to the scale's psychometric properties (for example, Betz, Klein & Taylor, 1996; Gati, Osipow & Fassa, 1994; Luzzo, 1996; Peterson & del Mas, 1998) and confirm that the scale is based on clearly defined theory, has internal consistency and high test- retest reliability (Creed, 2001), with alpha coefficients which range from .73 to .83 (Taylor & Betz, 1993). Cronbach's alpha for the scale in this study was 0.96.

Demographic features

Participants were asked to state their age, and were given a drop down menu from which to choose their ethnicity, sex and year of study. The list of ethnic groups from which participants could choose mirrored the list used by the University to record the ethnicity of students.

5.3.5. Procedure and ethics

Once ethical approval had been granted, (see Appendix B1) an email explaining the study and inviting students to participate was sent to all students currently enrolled on the BSc in Psychology within the School of Psychology at UEL. The survey was delivered online through SurveyGizmo. It measured 16 elements, incorporated 160 questions and took participants on average 19 minutes to complete. A full copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B3.

5.4. Results

5.4.1 Data Analyses

Data were gathered in SurveyGizmo and exported into SPSS for analysis. Each possible response was recorded as a single variable (i.e. participants responding 'strongly disagree' were entered as a one variable, and participants responding 'moderately disagree' were entered as another) so the data were recoded and added together to form a single variable on SPSS for each item. Items were reverse scored where appropriate. The data were screened and

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missing values were replaced by the median score for each variable.

The variables were then summed into total scale scores (for example, the five items from the clarity scale were added together). The degree of PS to OP Match between the characteristics associated with an individual's OP and their future PS was calculated by subtracting the scores on the occupational prototype scale from the scores on the possible selves scale for each item and adding the resulting scores of all items together. For example, if a participant reported that their future possible self was extremely associated with having a cat (5) but their occupational prototype of a social worker was not very associated with having a cat (2), the score on this item would be 3.

Before inferential statistics were computed, the new measure (PS to OP Match) was examined for its distribution of scores. Scores were normally distributed so no transformations of the variables were performed (a histogram can be found in Appendix B4). One-tailed correlations were then run between the variables to identify associations between constructs.

An analysis of the properties of the PS to OP Match measure will be presented first followed by the results of the study.

5.4.2. Development of the PS to OP Match Scale

In order to establish the psychometric properties of the new measure, a factor analysis was planned, however the ratio of participants to items on the scale (87: 35) was not sufficient to produce a stable factor pattern matrix, so data reduction analyses were conducted in the first instance.

The items referring to demographic factors (age and sex) were deleted from the scale, as these were considered to be qualitatively different from the other attitudinal and behavioural items, in that there was no evaluative component involved. The resulting Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .88, and three items were identified (fashion consciousness, trendy cocktail bars and comedy shows) the deletion of which from the scale increased the Alphas score marginally. Table 5.1. presents the Cronbach's Alpha scores for the PS to OP Match scale.

Table 5.1. Cronbach's Alpha Scores for the PS to OP Match scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Wears comfortable shoes	.31	.88
Wears Birkenstocks	.24	.88
Has a cat	.35	.88
Enjoys activity holidays	.57	.87
Goes on city breaks	.59	.87
Wears smart casual clothing	.40	.88
Has a dog	.46	.88
Wears casual clothing	.46	.88
Is fashion conscious	.13	.89
Is not fashion conscious	.36	.89
Likes a girls' night out	.43	.88
Likes karaoke	.50	.88
Likes a barbeque	.65	.87
Likes a trendy cocktail bar	.11	.89
Goes camping	.58	.87
Goes glamping	.55	.87
Enjoys outdoor activities	.57	.88
Watches comedy shows	.22	.88
Watches soaps	.32	.88
Reads chick lit	.44	.88
Watches documentaries	.61	.87
Enjoys gardening	.67	.87
Watches Scandi dramas	.51	.88
Lives in a neat home	.46	.88
Has no interest in politics	.34	.88
Votes Labour	.48	.88
Votes Green	.38	.88

n=87

This process was repeated and eight additional items were identified whose removal would increase the Cronbach's alpha for the scale (namely, *wears comfortable shoes, wears Birkenstocks, is fashion conscious, likes a trendy cocktail bar, watches comedy shows, has no interest in politics, votes Green, and wears a sharp suit*). The resulting scale consisted of 24 items with the Cronbach's Alpha increasing to 0.893. The resulting ratio of items to participants (24:87) was thought to be adequate for performing a factor analysis.

The final list consisted of 24 items, presented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2. The final list of 24 items for the PS to OP Match Scale

1.   Reads chick lit
2.   Wears high heels
3.   Wears comfortable shoes
4.   Has a cat
5.   Enjoys activity holidays
6.   City breaks
7.   Has a dog
8.   Wears smart casual clothing
9.   Casual clothing
10. Is not fashion conscious
11. Likes a girls' night out
12. Enjoys karaoke
13. Likes a barbeque
14. Goes camping
15. Goes glamping
16. Enjoys outdoor activities
17. Watches soaps
18. Watches documentaries
19. Enjoys gardening
20. Watches Scandi dramas

21. Lives in a neat home
22. Has no interest in politics
23. Votes Labour
24. Votes Green

In the first instance a scree analysis was conducted with this reduced list. The scree plot (Figure 5.1) indicated one factor to be extracted (as after Cattell, 1966). A factor analysis was conducted specifying a one factor solution which explained a total of 32.55% of the variance in the correlation matrix. Table 5.3. presents the factor loadings for each item.

A subscale was computed based on the eight items with factor loadings over 0.6. It was thought that a sufficient level of coverage of the construct would be obtained with eight items on a scale. These items were: *likes a barbeque, enjoys outdoor activities, enjoys gardening, goes on city breaks, goes camping, enjoys activity holidays, watches documentaries, goes glamping.* The new subscale demonstrated good internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85.

Figure 5.1. Scree Plot for the PS to OP Match scale

Scree Plot
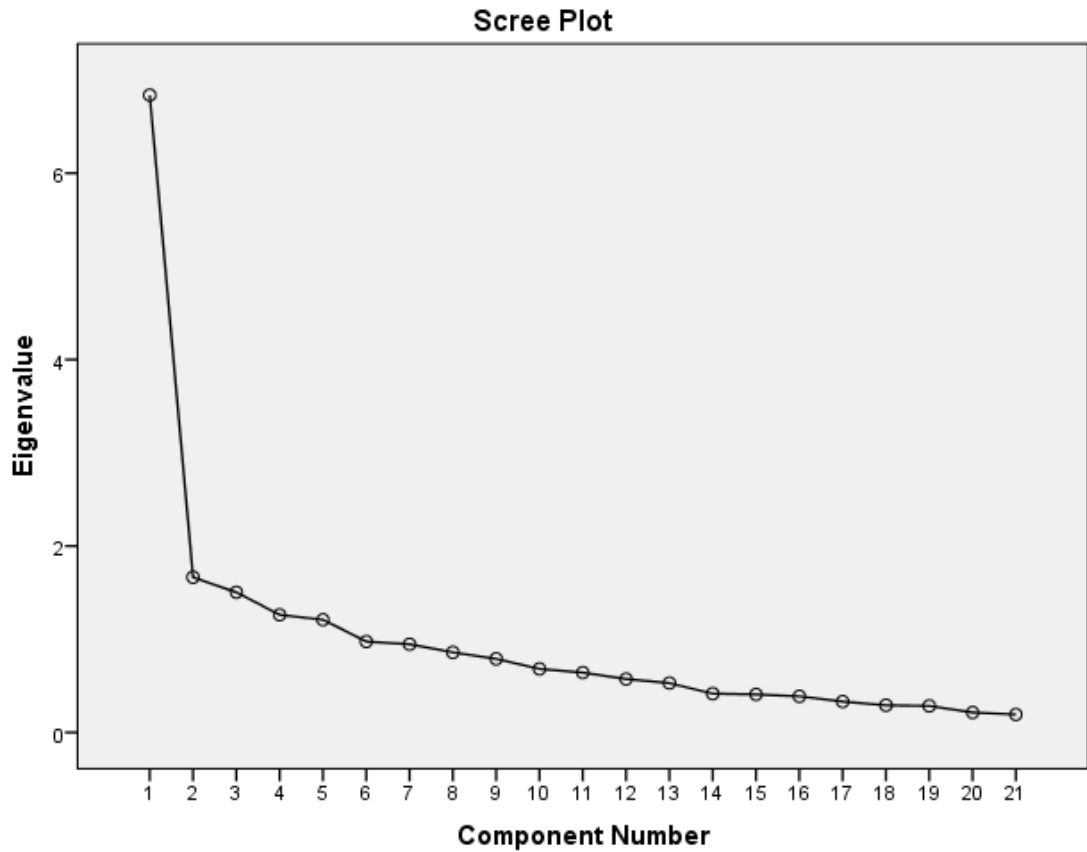
Table 5.3. Component Analysis showing the loadings of each item onto the factor extracted.

Item	Factor Loading
Likes a barbeque	.71
Enjoys outdoor activities	.68
Enjoys gardening	.68
Goes on city breaks	.66
Goes camping	.65
Enjoys activity holidays	.64

Watches documentaries	**.64**
Goes glamping	**.62**
Watches Scandi dramas	.58
Likes karaoke	.55
Votes Labour	.54
Lives in a neat home	.52
Has a dog	.51
Likes a girls' night out	.51
Reads chick lit	.49
Wears casual clothing	.47
Votes Green	.45
Wears smart casual clothing	.45
Is not fashion conscious	.42
Has a cat	.41
Watches soaps	.39

5.4.3. Results of the Study

Two specific hypotheses were tested:

H1 The degree of PS to OP Match is associated with levels of (a) career decidedness and (b) job search activity

H2 The salience of an individual's possible-self is associated with levels of (a) career decidedness and (b) job search activity

The results partially support both hypotheses.

Table 5.4., below, presents the correlations between the key independent variables of possible-self salience and PS to OP Match, and the dependent variables of career decidedness

and the two scales of job search activity. Significant moderate correlations were found between possible-self salience and the dependent variables of PCB (r=.39, p<0.001) and career decidedness (r=.59, p<0.001). A statistically significant but weak correlation was found between the PS to OP Match and JSB (r=0.23, p<0.05).

Table 5.4. Correlations (1-tailed) between possible-self salience and PS to OP Match, and career decidedness, proactive job search and job search behaviour

	Career Decidedness	Proactive Career Behaviour (PCB)	Job Search Behaviour (JSB)
Possible-Self Salience	.59**	.41**	.13
PS to OP Match	.10	.10	.23*

N=87

*p<0.05, **P<0.001

Table 5.5. presents the correlations between the other independent variables measured (self-clarity, conscientiousness, neuroticism, social support satisfaction and career decision making self-efficacy) and career decidedness and the two scales of job search activity. None of the independent variables showed significant correlations with JSB, but significant correlations were found between neuroticism, self-clarity and career decision making self-efficacy and PCB (r = -.23, p<0.001, r=.36, p<0.001, and r=.37, p<0.05, respectively) and between neuroticism and career decidedness (r=-.24, p<0.05). No significant correlations were found between either conscientiousness or social support satisfaction and any of the dependent variables.

In order to explore the relationship between the dependent variable of PCB and the independent variables which were found to be bivariately associated (possible self salience, neuroticism, self-clarity and career decision making self-efficacy) the variables were entered into a standard multiple regression. The ratio of sample size to number of independent variables (87:4) met the recommended requirement of 15 participants per predictor (Stevens, 1996). The data were checked for multicollinearity (high correlations between two or more

predictor variables) and singularity (perfect correlations between two or more predictor variables). The tolerance values for the independent variables (measuring the influence of each independent variable on the other independent variables) were above .10 (.85, for PS salience .73, for neuroticism, .63 for self-clarity and .84, for career decision making self-efficacy) and VIF values below 10 (1.18, for PS salience, 1.37 for neuroticism, 1.58 for self-clarity and 1.2 for career decision making self-efficacy), indicating that multicollinearity was not likely to be present. The scatterplot revealed a reasonably straight diagonal line, suggesting no major deviations from normality (see Appendix B5) thus meeting the assumption of normality, and a scatterplot (see Appendix B6) indicated that the residuals were rectangularly distributed indicating that the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity (equal error terms along the regression) were not violated.

Table 5.5. Correlations (one-tailed) between conscientiousness, neuroticism, social support satisfaction and career decision making self-efficacy, and career decidedness and the two scales of job search activity for female participants

	Career Decidedness	Proactive Career Behaviour	Job Search Behaviour
Conscientiousness	-0.08	.08	.01
Neuroticism	-.24*	-.23**	.04
Self-clarity	.12	.36**	-.02
Social Support Satisfaction	.01	.20	-.07
Career Decision Making Self -efficacy	.15	.37*	-.14

N=87

*p<0.05, **P<0.001

The model summary revealed that it accounts for 26% of the variance in the dependent variable of PCB (F (4,82)=7.10, p<0.001). Possible self salience was shown to make the strongest unique contribution to explaining the model (B=0.27, p=0.01). The Beta value for

career decision making self-efficacy was slightly lower but still significant (B=.24, p=0.3). The other two independent variables of neuroticism and self-clarity did not make significant unique contributions to the prediction of the dependent variable.

Table 5.6. presents a correlation matrix for all the variables.

Table 5.6. Correlation Matrix

	CD	PSS	Clarity	PCB	JSB	Cons	Neuro	SSS	CDMSE	PS to OP M
CD	1									
PSS	.59**	1								
Clarity	.12	.37*	1							
PCB	.29**	.39**	.36**	1						
JSB	-.02	.1	-.02	.07	1					
Cons	-.08	.05	.24*	.08	.01	1				
Neuro	-.24*	-.27*	-.51**	-.23**	.04	-.23*	1			
SSS	.01	.18	.26*	.20	-.07	.10	-.16	1		
CDMSE	.15	.24*	.39**	.37*	-.14	.00	-.26*	.63**	1	
PS to OP M	.10	.24*	.01	.10	.23*	-.09	-.19	.01	-.02	1

*p<0.05, **p<0.0001
N=87
Note: CD = Career decidedness, PSS = possible-self salience, Clarity = self-clarity, PCB= proactive career behaviour, JSB = job search behaviour, Cons = conscientiousness, Neuro = neuroticism, SSS = social support satisfaction, CDMSE = career decision making self-efficacy, PS to OP M = possible self to occupational prototype match.

5.5. Discussion

The discussion will begin with some comments about the PS to OP Match scale which was developed as part of this study, and follow with a discussion about the results of the questionnaire study.

5.5.1 PS to OP Match scale discussion

The initial scale to measure the PS to OP Match of the participants consisted of 35 items covering a broad range of constructs, demographic, behavioural and attitudinal. Once the scale was reduced to 24 items, a scree analysis revealed one empirically derived factor and a subscale was computed based on the items with the strongest factor loading onto this component. The result of the factor analysis suggest that a PS to OP Match is a unidimensional construct. This is unusual in a psychological construct, and is at odds with the current thinking in career theory (for example, Savickas, 2015b) which stresses the holistic and multidimensionality of the antecedents of career choices. Further research, discussed below in more depth, could explore this idea.

The subscale consisted of eight items all of which were activities which could be thought to symbolise a high level of cultural capital, such as going on city breaks, watching documentaries and enjoying outdoor activities. Types of items which were excluded from the final list included those which represented attitudes (such as voting behaviour), outward image (choice of clothing, style of home), and activities which might not be considered typically middle-class (enjoys karaoke, reads chick-lit). Television choices perhaps most clearly illustrated the class dimension, with 'watches documentaries' (which could be thought of as a middle class choice) appearing in the final subscale and 'watches soaps', which is less likely to be associated with a middle-class lifestyle, having the lowest factor loading of all the items.

What does this say about the scale and what exactly it is measuring? The scale was designed to measure the degree to which an individual's future possible self matches the occupational prototype of their current preferred occupational prototype. The list of items consisted exclusively of lifestyle choices, beyond those directly associated with the occupations themselves. This narrow focus was in part the result of the structure of the focus group discussions: the participants in Study 1, from whose discussions the items were derived, were encouraged to explore the prototypical occupational identities holistically, and not encouraged towards in depth descriptions of features which were directly related to the workplace. The results can therefore not provide a comprehensive account of the nature of a true or full PS to OP Match, as they are limited by the parameters of the focus group interview questions; it is not possible to claim that lifestyle choices are the best way to articulate a PS to OP Match,

because those were the only features which participants were encouraged to discuss. The results do indicate, however, that lifestyle choices constitute at least part of a PS to OP Match: when participants think about the degree to which their future selves match their desired prototypical occupational identities, they do conceptualise the match to some degree in terms of the non-work activities they might enjoy. This indicates, for example, that when contemplating their own future, a psychology student might be thinking '*I could see myself as a clinical psychologist because I would like to go on city breaks and watch documentaries and I could imagine clinical psychologist going on city breaks and watching documentaries*.'

The literature review in Chapter 2 highlights that there is a limited range of existing evidence which examines the nature of occupational prototypes in depth. Most of the research into stereotypes has focused on gender and racial stereotypes (for example, Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, 2008; Master, Cheryan & Meltzoff, 2016). Those studies which have examined occupational prototypes have tended to be limited to occupations within the STEM area (for example Cheryan, Drury, & Vichayapai, 2013), and tend to explore the prototypes through trait adjectives (for example Hannover & Kessels, 2004) rather than lifestyle features.

There are exceptions. Mead and Mertraux (1957) asked middle school students to describe a typical scientist, and this and numerous subsequent similar studies have delineated stereotypes of scientists' appearance, (bespectacled, unattractive, skinny and pale, according to Mercier et al., 2006). Cheryan, Plaut, Handron and Hudson, (2013) in addition to a number of work-related features (obsessed with computers, technologically-orientated and intelligent), found that participants described the prototypical computer scientists as lacking in interpersonal skills. However studies which incorporate lifestyle choices in their descriptions are uncommon.

The exploration in this study suggests that the participants here conceptualise the match between their choice occupational identity and their future self in terms of their leisure activities. Leisure activities have been shown to have a clear association with quality of life (Raphael, Brown, Renwick & Rootman, 1996; Schalock, 1990) and a link with meaning in life (King, 2004). Given the positive role which leisure activities play in one's life, a career decision making mechanism which incorporates an acknowledgement of leisure activities seems

appropriate.

The choice of activities indicates there is an aspirational or class component to the choices, aligned to Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' (2006). Cultural capital is defined as a range of choices in one's life which symbolise one's class and therefore (according to Bourdieu) one's position in society. Bourdieu (2006) describes the notion of embodied cultural capital which refers to the symbols of class and status which can be seen in an individual's choice of clothing, language, leisure activities and possessions - what Moore (2010) refers to as 'emblems of distinction' (p.106). Bourdieu (1984) highlights that these symbols are chosen both for association (to make us feel similar to those we would like to be associated with) and distinction (to make us feel different from those we would not want to align ourselves with). Whilst these choices are important in creating a cohesive social identity – defining 'people like us', they are also symbols of the social hierarchy and can illustrate where particular individuals and groups sit within the accepted class hierarchy. Bourdieu (1971) describes symbols of cultural capital as either 'noble' indicating high status, or 'vulgar', indicating low status. This distinction may be a useful one to allow us to understand how the items which were on the final subscale differ from those which were not. The items which were found to illustrate the PS to OP Match best in this study could all be seen as 'noble' symbols of high cultural capital, with *'watching documentaries'* emerging as a stronger item than the more 'vulgar' *'watching Soaps'*, and the 'noble' *'enjoys a barbeque'* stronger than the 'vulgar' *'enjoys karaoke'*.

This is perhaps not surprising given the nature of the participants – all university students, who, in general make the choice to go to university at least in part with the expectation that their degree will lead to the chance of a 'better' job (NUS, 2008). A focus on features associated with an aspirational lifestyle seems plausible given that the students' current activity (i.e. studying at University) is geared towards opportunities for a 'better' life. The educational setting in which the study was conducted too resonates with Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Bourdieu puts forward that social inequalities are perpetuated in society, in large part, through parents endowing their children with cultural capital, and suggests that the education system facilitates this by rewarding and valuing these noble symbols of high cultural capital (Tzanakis, 2011). The focus of these university students on features which symbolise high symbolic capital is quite consistent with

Bourdieu's suggestion that high symbolic capital is a much prized quality within the participants' current University environment. Empirical research too supports a link between educational attainment and prestigious leisure preferences (Dumais & Wards, 2010). A further demographic feature which may have influenced the results is the link which has been shown between women and high culture leisure activities (Bennet, Bustamante & Frow, 2013, Bihagen & Katz-Gerro, 2000). Given that the participants in this study were women, this may have skewed the results towards activities which have a high level of symbolic capital.

The exploration of the nature of a PS to OP Match indicates that these participants' understanding of their own futures in relation to occupations goes beyond features associated with the job itself: when considering themselves in different roles in the future, the participants considered the lifestyle and leisure pursuits they might choose. But where does this information come from? How did the participants decide that, for example, the prototypes of clinical psychologists enjoy city breaks, and those of social workers go camping? It is interesting to reflect on the sources of this information and possible implications for its accuracy and value.

Some of the participants may have had personal experience of professionals currently working in their chosen field. It is conceivable that they have spent time with social workers and know that camping is a popular choice. This is unlikely, however, to have been the case for all participants. Other possible influences which have been seen in the development of stereotypes of scientists, could include parents (Barton et al., 2001), teachers and friends at school (Lee, 2002) and the media and popular culture (Steinke, 2005). Whether these sources are likely to have given the participants the detailed level of information which they revealed in their responses to the questionnaire is arguable.

Wide ranging occupational information is available to young people through career books, websites and careers activities in educational settings. This kind of formal career support aims to ensure that career decision makers have access to high quality, impartial, up to date labour market and occupational information (for example, The CDI, 2014) in order to ensure that clients have the requisite information on which to base their career decisions. The occupational information provided is primarily work-focused, covering, for example, work

duties, qualifications and skills needed (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2016), and occasionally touches on the work aspects of the work-life interface such as opportunities for part time work or self-employment. Career education programmes will often address the issue of inaccurate occupational stereotypes, either explicitly, by exposing and countering them, or implicitly, by using non-traditional case studies or images to accompany the job information (Barnes, Bassott & Chant, 2011), but the focus of these sessions tends to be restricted to stereotypes of the traditional inequality strands such as gender, race and sexuality. Information about occupational identities and the lifestyles associated are not generally researched or discussed within the career development field.

It could be concluded that the participants' store of information has not principally been garnered through a formal programme of careers education. Jussim, Harber, Crawford, Cain & Cohen (2005) however remind us that the origins of a stereotype are not relevant to an assessment of whether the stereotype is accurate. This could lead us to what is perhaps a more important question: how accurate are these prototypes?

Jussim, Cain, Crawford, Harber & Cohen (2009) discuss the challenges and limitations of the research into stereotypes, pointing out that much of the academic research which covered stereotypes examines the impact of the stereotype; considerably less focuses on whether the features of stereotypes are accurate and the authors highlight that defining accuracy in itself is fraught with difficulties. In their large scale review of stereotype research into race and gender (which counts for a large part of the research into stereotypes), Jussim et al. state that most stereotypical views were fairly accurate, reporting that 'accurate or near miss judgements predominate in every study' (2009, p. 212). Other studies however show that in some contexts, stereotypes are more likely to be inaccurate, for example, political stereotypes in the US (Park, Ryan & Judd, 1992) and national stereotypes regarding personalities (Terracciano et al., 2005).

The literature then does not afford us with sufficient information to judge whether these prototypical occupational identities are accurate, and it seems that the determination of this is an important next stage in the research into this field.

Implications for practice

This has interesting implications for career practice. Many resources are directed towards developing accurate and up to date careers information to help young people (and others engaged in career decisions) make informed career choices. One implication from the exploration of this measure is that the careers information researchers may not be concentrating their efforts on gathering and disseminating the information which is most pertinent to their clients. Career resources provide significant detail on the skills, duties and career progression of typical members of particular occupational groups, but little or nothing on their leisure pursuits and cultural capital of those in the field (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2016). This is a topic will be revisited in Chapter 8.

Further research

There are a number of unanswered questions. The evidence from this study indicates that prototypical occupational identities are associated with a range of features, but this area could be more widely explored. The studies here have focused on just four occupations and further research could explore the features of the prototypes of other occupations, could incorporate work-related features to compare the relative impact, and could examine whether other populations conceptualise occupational prototype in a similar way. The participants in this study appeared to conceptualise the match between the occupational prototype and their possible self in terms of activities rather than attitudes. A more in depth examination of this would be of great interest and further research could explore why behaviours are more likely to articulate the PS to OP Match than attitudes, whether they articulate it more accurately, are easier to access, or are more likely to symbolise important underlying behavioural dispositions. Finally, as highlighted above, the accuracy of the prototypical identities is not ascertained. Further research to explore whether or not participants' conceptualisations of different occupational identities is accurate would allow for consideration of the implications for career decision making and career practice.

5.5.2. Questionnaire results discussion

The results of this quantitative analysis partially supported both hypotheses, and each will be discussed in turn.

H1   The salience of an individual's possible self is associated with levels of (a) career decidedness and (b) job search activity

Possible-self salience was found in this study to be significantly associated with career decidedness (r=.59, p<0.001). The correlation accounted for a moderately substantive 35% of the shared variance between these variables. The salience of the participants' possible-selves was also significantly associated with the amount of PCB with which they were engaged, explaining 15% of the variance of this construct. The topic under discussion is a complex one, but given that these constructs are multivariately determined, such levels of association are of interest. There were no associations found between the salience of the participants' possible selves and their levels of JSB.

The findings from this study suggest that the role of possible selves in career decision making could be of interest and worthy of future research. The results indicate that for this group of participants, those with salient (i.e. clear and accessible) possible selves were more likely to have clear career goals (as measured by career decidedness) and were more likely to be engaging with the kind of behaviour which could lead them to achieve their goals (as measured by PCB).

Research on possible selves has taken place in a wide range of fields, including education, (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004), dysfunctional behaviour (Oyserman & Markus, 1990), culture (Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995), health (Hooker & Kaus, 1992) and exercise (Ouellette, Hessling, Gibbons, Reis-Bergan & Gerrard, 2005) but a broad understanding of the role possible selves may play in career development has yet to be established. Some studies have provided empirical support for the link between careers and possible selves but the impact of the construct has not yet emerged with clarity and consistency. PS salience has been found to be associated with a number of different career constructs including employment status (Guan et al., 2014), self-esteem (Cai et al., 2015), academic motivation (Hock et al., 2003), PCB (Strauss et al., 2012), and career exploration (Cai et al., 2015). The nature of the relationships studied, however, have sometimes been shown to be complex. Guan et al. (2014) found that the relationship between possible self salience and employment status was partially mediated by both career adaptability and job search self-efficacy and Strauss et al. (2012) focus on the potential role of possible self salience in

moderating the association between PS to OP Match and career decidedness and PCB. A recent study of Chinese students (Cai et al., 2015) indicates that a proactive personality, may have an impact on the salience of possible selves through partially mediating the association between career exploration and possible self salience. This study builds on the existing research, providing clear evidence of the moderate associations between possible self salience and both career decidedness and PCB.

Overall, four of the independent variables in the study were found to have statistically significant correlations with PCB: possible self salience, neuroticism, self-clarity and career decision making self-efficacy. A multiple regression revealed that possible self salience made the strongest unique contribution to explaining the variance in PCB. Career decision making self-efficacy was also found to be a significant unique predictor, but the independent variables of neuroticism and self-clarity made no unique contributions to PCB and no correlations were found between PCB and either conscientiousness or social support satisfaction. As outlined above, these other constructs have been found in previous literature to be associated with a range of positive career outcomes, and in particular, career decision making self-efficacy is established as a core pillar of much evidence based career practice. The findings from this study suggest that possible self salience may be a more significant construct than has previously been acknowledged. Further research is needed to clarify its role, but the results from this study indicate that this could be a promising line of enquiry to help us further understand the career development process.

Whilst the results of this study indicate an association between possible selves and PCB, there is no information about causality: the findings reveal a relationship, but as far as the results indicate, it is as plausible that high levels of career decidedness or PCB lead to more salient possible selves, as the other way round. Establishing the direction of causality is important for any inferences that might be made about the implications for practice.

This study then provides some evidence that the salience of an individual's possible self may have a substantive and significant part to play in their levels of career decidedness and the amount of activity they engage with, but further research is needed to clarify the nature of the construct and its role in career development.

H2   The degree of PS to OP Match is associated with levels of (a) job search activity and (b) career decidedness

There was no significant correlation reported between PS to OP Match and either career decidedness or PCB behaviour, but a weak correlation (r=0.23, p<0.05) between PS to OP Match and JSB. These results indicate that for this cohort of female psychology undergraduates, those whose possible selves matched closely with the prototypical occupational identity of their preferred job choice were more likely to be engaged with the kind of behaviour which would lead them to a successful career hunt, but were no more likely than others to have decided what direction they wanted to take when they graduated.

The PS to OP Match showed a statistically significant correlation with one of the two measures of job search activity (JSB) but no statistically significant correlation with the other (PCB). A comparison between the correlations seen for the two scales of job search activities (PCB and JSB) may offer an explanation for this apparent paradox. The PCB scale showed significant associations (see Table 5.4) with five of the independent variables (self-clarity, possible-self salience, conscientiousness, social support satisfaction and career decision making self-efficacy). These results are consistent with previous literature (for example, Strauss et al. 2012) which has identified such links.

The scale for job search behaviour showed a weak correlation with PS to OP Match, no correlations with any of the independent variables, and only a moderate correlation with the other measure of job search activity. Given the previous empirical evidence of associations between these independent variables and job search behaviour (Brown et al., 2006, Shirai et al., 2013), the absence of statistically significant link here is unexpected and needs consideration.

How then can this be explained? Both scales measuring job search activity were relatively recent (2012 and 2013) versions of previous scales which had been updated to ensure they were applicable to college students, and to account for modern job search habits. Both had been tested on college students and had previously demonstrated good reliability scores (Sun et al., 2013 report .91 for the JSB scale and Strauss et al., 2012 report .92 for the PCB). Reliability scores within this study too were good (0.91 for each). A close look at the particular items on each scale reveals some conceptual differences in the two measures. Both scales measure how often they have carried out particular job search related activities in the last month, but whilst the PCB scale includes a range of behaviours which build up a picture of an

individual who is laying the groundwork for future opportunities, the behaviours in the JSB scale refer to the kind of behaviour which would help an individual to secure a job in the immediate future. The PCB scale, for example, includes items which refer to career planning *'I engage in career path planning'* and which ask about longer term strategies *'I develop knowledge and skill in tasks critical to my future work life'.* The JSB scale, in contrast includes behaviours which might have an immediate impact such as *'Contacted a recruitment agency'* and *'sent your CV to potential employers'.* The participants in this study were current students, and were invited to complete the survey in February and March, halfway through their academic year and nearly half reported that they were in their first year of study. The study by Sun et al. (2013) which described the development and testing of the JSB scale used participants who were described as 'graduating' and who had previously declared their intention to look for a full time job. It is possible that the timing of this study meant that the participants were not ready to engage in the job seeking behaviours in the JSB Scale, as they were months or years away from wanting to start a job, but were in a position to engage in the longer term and more strategic behaviours identified in the PCB scale. This provides a plausible explanation for the differences in the correlations seen between the independent variables and the two different job search behaviour scales, and might indicate that stronger correlations could have been found between the independent variables and the JSB scale had the survey been completed closer to the end of the participants' academic programmes.

Whilst this discussion may shed some light on the reasons for the non-significant correlations between the independent variables and JSB, it provides no explanation for the absence of significant correlation between the PS to OP Match and either PCB or career decidedness as previous literature may have implied.

One straightforward explanation for these results is simply that there is no association between PS to OP Match and PCB or career decidedness. The results may be an accurate reflection of the decision making processes of the participants, and it may be that seeing a typical social worker as similar to your own future possible self simply has no link with how clear you are that you want to be a social worker. Existing literature theorises that a match between an individual's desired possible-self and their conceptualisation of an occupational prototype may have an impact on decision making (Hannover & Kessels, 2004) and provides some evidence supporting the theory (Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Moss & Freize, 1993). The

empirical evidence of this decision making mechanism as an approach to making occupational choices however is limited, in that most of the career-related evidence which supports this decision making approach centres on study choices rather than occupational choices directly. The results of this current study provide no further empirical support for this theory in a career context.

There are however a number of alternative explanations which could be useful to consider. A false negative result could have been caused by a number of issues which concern the sample and the scales used in the questionnaire.

It is possible that a larger number of responses could lead to a different statistical output. The correlations found were extremely low (0.10) between PS to OP Match and Career Decidedness which suggests that whilst the size of the sample is, technically, a possible explanation for a false negative, the data collected from a large sample size would need to make a substantial difference to the overall data to result in statistically significant correlations.

The group was relatively homogenous, with participants all enrolled on a degree programme in psychology at UEL, and all female. A more mixed group may have produced a different profile of results. As with the sample size, this does not seem to be the most plausible explanation. Most of the research evidence in this field has used undergraduate students as participants so even if the results reported in the existing literature were not generalizable to other populations, a similar effect would have been anticipated with the cohort used for this study. Other evidence has made use of participants from the US (for example, Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Packard & Nguyen, 2003) whilst the participants in this study were all UK based. Although national or cultural differences may have some effect, the career decision making literature broadly does not report substantial differences between US and UK decision making processes. Gender can have an impact on career decision making processes, but does not tend to change the nature or direction of an effect, just the overall levels (men, for example, tend to have higher levels of career decision making self-efficacy, and higher levels of career decidedness, but these two constructs are similarly correlated for male and female populations, (Taylor, & Betz, 1983).

Alongside issues with the sample, the choice of scales used in the questionnaire may be useful to revisit.

The results revealed surprisingly few correlations between the career decidedness scale and the independent variables. One explanation could be that this choice of construct was not the most suitable. Career indecision is a construct which is more often used in the career literature, but for conceptual reasons, it was thought that a measure of career decidedness would be more relevant to the context of this study. Career indecision is a broader construct and refers to the 'ability to make socially required career decisions' (Super & Jordan, 1973, p.4). It is linked with the notion of career maturity and is a sign of a developmental delay in the process of career maturation (Chartrand et al. 1994). Career decidedness in contrast, rather than describing an individual's potential ability to make career decisions generally, concerns an isolated decision, and identifies how much progress has been made towards that particular decision. This current study focuses on one single career decision, and participants are asked to identify an occupational prototype which refers to that particular choice. Career decidedness was therefore considered a more relevant construct to measure.

Career decidedness did correlate significantly (r=.28, p<0.001) although weakly with PCB scale, which gives some support for the idea that the notion of career decidedness is a relevant one – those who know what job they want to do are putting more effort into trying to find employment.   The test-retest reliability (.66) and the alpha coefficient for the scale (.85) were both acceptable (Jones, 1989), but the scale consisted of just two items and measured career decidedness as a single construct. Empirical evidence suggests that career decidedness is a unidimensional construct (Savickas, Carden, Toman & Jarjoura, 1992) but literature highlights previous debates over the complexity of the construct (Savickas, 1994). The findings of this study may suggest that this discussion could be usefully revisited.

It was noted earlier that the Cronbach's alpha for the two personality measures was low (0.57 for neuroticism and 0.35 for conscientiousness). It is plausible that a different measure for these two constructs could have led to a different set of results.

The PS to OP Match measure was a new one, developed specifically for this questionnaire study and its psychometric properties had not previously been tested. One possible explanation for the lack of observed link between the PS to OP Match and career decidedness is that the PS to OP Match scale was not suitable. The initial tool consisted of 35 items generated from four focus groups, and included a wide range of types of construct including aspects of appearance, leisure activities, political leanings and aspects of home. The internal

reliability of the scale was good (Cronbach's alpha of 0.85) and a number of factors were considered in the development of the scale aiming at enhancing its validity: participants for both studies were from the same overall population (psychology students at UEL), focus group participants were encouraged to discuss a wide range of topics, and a wide range of items were included in the measure. Despite this effort to generate a list which would resonate with the participants, the measure could still have been too generic.

The focus group data revealed that there was no single agreed prototype for any particular occupation, and participants stated that their mental pictures were influenced by their individual experiences as well as their shared participation in society. The list was based on the occupational prototypes of just four occupations (clinical and occupational psychologists, primary teachers and social workers) and generated by just 24 individuals. There were overlaps in the identity markers ascribed to the prototypes of each profession, but differences too: primary teacher prototypes were male and female, older and younger, with left and right political constructs, and individual focus group participants reported that they could have chosen a different version of their occupational prototype. There are clearly numerous versions of these occupational prototypes, and numerous variations within each, and the scale used just 35 individual features. What impact might this have had on the responses of, for example, a survey participant who wanted to become an accountant? Or on one who wanted to become a social worker, but whose OP was based on their own experiences and therefore quite different from those discussed in the focus groups? It is conceivable that one participant may have associated none of the items in the scale with their future possible-self, nor with the occupational prototype of their desired job. Perhaps an approach in which each participant were to generate their own list of identity markers and compare that with their own future possible-self might produce different results.

One conceptual choice which may have had an impact on the results of the survey was the choice to focus on the identity markers themselves. This decision may have meant that the survey was not expressed at the most useful level of abstraction. The focus group data indicated that the items generated were symbols, with focus group participants stating explicitly that the features they described were representations of personal qualities (for example, one participant from focus group 2 said '*mine would wear something unconventional like Birkenstocks')*. It is conceivable that whilst the specific identity markers were highly

personal to each individual (for one person, for example, a warm personality could be best illustrated by the choice to cook a hearty stew, and for another it could be better illustrated by wearing round-toed ballet-pumps), the characteristics which they symbolise could be more widely shared. Perhaps social workers are widely conceptualised as 'warm' people, but whether this is best illustrated by footwear or food choices, is down to the experiences of each individual. A scale based on the characteristics which are symbolised by the identity markers could perhaps be a more valuable tool for identifying an association between possible selves, occupational prototypes and career outcomes.

One final methodological decision is worth exploring. The data generated from the focus groups suggested that participants were not always aware that they had this knowledge (focus group participants commented that they surprised themselves with the level of detail they were able to describe, for occupations they didn't believe they knew anything about). An online survey may not be the most effective way to explore information stored in this way. Some focus group participants struggled to identify the detail of their prototypes at the start of the discussion, but the nature of the focus group meant that participants were encouraged through the questions of the facilitator and through the discussion to bring their ideas into their consciousness, and through putting their ideas into words, to render their thoughts concrete (Roth, 2010). The participants in the online survey were not given this support when building up the detail of either their occupational prototype or their future possible self. It is conceivable that the respondents to the online survey may have given different responses had they been given the same encouragement and the same amount of time to invoke these images. Further research could usefully explore this arena.

These arguments constitute possible explanations for the lack of supporting evidence for the hypothesised link between PS to OP Match and career decidedness or job search activity.

5.6. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the links between possible selves, the features of prototypical occupational identities and career goals and motivations. The study has generated interesting findings. Significant and moderately substantive correlations between the salience of an individual's possible-self and their career decidedness and level of PCB, were identified. This constitutes a new and potentially valuable direction for research on possible selves and for

career practice and theory.

A significant correlation was found between levels of PS to OP Match and JSB, providing some support for the self to prototype match theory incorporating a wide range of occupational identity markers. The PS to OP Match generated no associations with career decidedness or PCB, but a number of plausible explanations for this lack of association have been discussed. A generic online questionnaire was perhaps not the most appropriate method for collecting data which may be stored below the level of consciousness and which may be highly individual. The discussion above highlights that a scale which uses specific identity markers may have limited value in identifying a match between an individual's possible-self and the prototype of a typical member of the occupation they are considering. An exploration of the characteristics which these identity markers symbolise may constitute a fruitful direction for future research, and this will be focus of the next study.

Chapter 6: A grounded theory of occupational prototypes

6.1 Introduction

This study examines the third of the subordinate research questions set out in Chapter2, and aimed to identify the characteristics symbolised by the features of the prototypical occupational identities.

One aim of Study 2 was to examine whether non-work social identity markers influenced career decision making through the mechanism of possible selves to occupational prototype matching. No evidence was found to support this. In Chapter 5 several possible explanations for this lack of association were put forward. One of these was that the social identity markers associated with occupational prototypes or with possible selves are peculiar to the individual or job. The design of Study 2 relied on participants recognising from a predetermined list of 35 items, a number which they associated convincingly (either positively or negatively) with the particular possible self they were imagining and with their chosen profession. Thus a valid outcome of the study was predicated on the assumption that the same items would resonate with all participants.

A number of possible avenues for further research presented themselves, but one which was of particular interest considered whether using a list of social identity markers was the most

useful way to capture participants' conceptualisations of occupational prototypes and possible selves. One course of exploration could therefore be to revisit the data from Study 1 and try and ascertain what the social identity markers represented: what they symbolised.

The possible value of this course of action was strengthened by the hints in the content analysis of the data in Study 1 that there was more to explore. During the focus group discussions and transcriptions, it emerged that the data were richer and more varied than I had anticipated. Comments from participants highlighted that the features of the prototypes were full of meaning, and that they symbolised characteristics of the imagined prototypes. A secondary analysis would allow me to delve a little deeper into the meanings behind the features, to try and understand the grammar of the symbols. Methodological pluralism advocates the idea of examining the same data through more than one lens in order to produce a richer and more complete reading of the data (Willig, 2013). The argument put forward for combining different qualitative methods echoes that used to promote the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, namely that competing readings of the same data are more likely to produce more plausible or trustworthy interpretations of the complexities and contradictions of human experience (Frost, 2009).

Grounded theory was the clear choice of data analysis. The data took me by surprise, so the very impetus to conduct an analysis was grounded in the data and completely inductive. To supplement the descriptive content analysis, a method was needed which would start to explain what the description meant, and because I had not expected the study to take this turn, I had few assumptions, no hypothesis, and had scant understanding of the relevant literature (Christiansen, 2007). Grounded theory seemed to provide the ideal vehicle to allow me to devise an explanatory theory, generated inductively from the data, to provide a conceptual explanation (Glaser, 2003).

This current study and the subsequent and final Study 4 were developed in response to the findings of the first two studies. Both these last two studies draw on classic grounded theory (CGT), but where study 3 makes use of grounded theory as a method, Study 4 embraces it as a methodology. Study 3 uses CGT as a method of analysis for existing data (collected from the focus groups in Study 1); Study 4 was conceptualised as a CGT study and therefore the design and data collection as well as the analysis all follow CGT guidelines. In this chapter, I present an introduction to both the conceptual and procedural aspects of CGT methodology (6.3)

together with the findings (6.4) and discussion (6.5) for Study 3. In Chapter 7, I will describe how CGT was used in Study 4 and present the findings and discussion for this final study.

This chapter will begin with a summary of some of the most relevant literature (discussed in more depth in Chapter 2), then will offer an overview of the methodology, present the grounded theory and discuss the findings in the light of current research.

6.2. Brief overview of the literature

This study concerns occupational prototypes and the characteristics that may be symbolised by the features of these prototypes identified in the focus groups in Study 1. The literature on occupational prototypes and the role they play in career decisions was discussed in some depth in Chapter 2. Here the notion of symbols, covered in Chapter 3 (Methodology) as part of the introduction to symbolic interactionism (SI), will be revisited and the literature about work-related symbols introduced and explored in a little more depth. Finally, an overview of a number of theoretical frameworks which represent conceptualisations of the world of work will be offered to provide some theoretical context for the framework of occupational identities which has emerged from the findings of this study.

6.2.1 Work related symbols

The grounded theory which emerged from the data and which is described below provides a framework which helps to make sense of the particular features of the occupational prototypes by offering an explanation of their meanings. The features are symbols and the grounded theory focuses on the constructs symbolised.

Semiotics (Saussure, 1916) and symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) (SI) both seem to lay claim to offering an approach which might help us to make sense of the whole notion of symbols. Both approaches are concerned with signs and symbols and their meanings but SI offers a theoretical underpinning which is more fluid, embracing different perspectives, and changes over time. SI too is broader than semiotics – looking not just at how symbols are co-constructed within society, but also focused on the ways in which individuals interact with symbols (Blumer, 1968; Mead, 1934). The assumptions in SI are that people act not based on what happens but based on how they interpret what has happened. These interpretations or symbols are grounded in social interactions – formed through the interplay between the self and society. This approach seems to fit with the qualitative nature of the study and the

grounded theory approach to the analysis and so I will now offer a summary of some key aspects of SI's interpretation of symbols.

Making sense of the world of work is no mean feat. One response to this challenge is to learn from objects. In every encounter which feeds our world of work knowledge, we can become aware of the clothes, homes, hobbies and choices of people who fall into particular occupational groups. To make sense of these, we isolate, identify and catalogue them. Each of these social objects becomes a symbol, laden with meaning. At a hospital visit, we see how the receptionists, doctors, cleaners and nurses behave, how they talk, what they wear and how they interact with each other, and these symbols begin to help us to construct a story. The symbols have no intrinsic link to their meaning, but the meaning emerges from the way that we see people responding to the object – we gradually notice that people in white coats in a hospital are treated with more deference than those wearing blue overalls. These symbols have a key role in the way that we make meaning from our surroundings 'It is the symbol that translates the world from a physical sensed reality, to a reality that can be understood, interpreted, dissected, integrated and tested' (Charon 2010, p.59).

These objects are used by individuals to communicate identities, and it is this, in part, that makes them relevant to our career decision making. The objects tell us something about the occupational identities of these people and are therefore key to our understanding of the world of work. Messages about our identity are conveyed to others through many different kinds of objects 'our friends, cars, religious objects, neighbors, clothing and hair tell us that we want them to know about us, the identity we wish them to see' (Charon 2010, p.148). Symbols in a work context include artefacts, language, metaphors, ties and rituals, stories and myths, and they are described as a language which communicates identity and status (Pratt & Rafaeli, 2001). Choice of clothing can be particularly eloquent (Lurie, 1981). Pratt and Rafaeli (1997) explored the symbolic meanings of dress in a hospital context and their findings give a clue as to why we ascribe symbolic meanings to clothing. They highlight that where discussions around identities within the hospital context were challenging ('arduous to sort through', p.862), discussions around dress seemed to be easier: 'a focus on dress, however made the process of negotiating and navigating these [identities] more manageable' (p.862). Features are thus used as cognitive heuristics which allow individuals to navigate, make sense of and represent complex phenomena in a manageable and accessible way.

There are two clear gaps in the literature which covers work-related symbols. First, as highlighted by a number of scholars (Kocoglu, Akgun & Keskin, 2016; Pratt & Rafaeli, 2001; Strati, 1998) the research around organisational symbols has been largely descriptive, and there have been limited attempts to provide some more conceptual analysis of the symbols, or to offer frameworks to elucidate the meanings behind the symbols or which could be used as a practical tool. The second gap is the absence of research which explores the prototypical symbols of occupational groups. In Chapter 2, I highlighted the distinction between occupational identities as described by those within the occupation – the ingroup, and the perception of occupational identities as described by those outside the occupation – the outgroup. This thesis is concerned with people making decisions and as such it is the **perception** of occupations from the outside which is of greater relevance here. The exploration of the perceptions of organisational or occupational symbols from the outgroup has not been widely covered in the literature. This study makes a start at addressing both of these gaps, providing a framework of the characteristics symbolised by the features of prototypical occupational identities as imagined by those outside the profession.

It is useful to situate the findings of empirical research within the context of similar studies or theories in the existing literature. Whilst I was unable to identify any other similar frameworks which specifically explored the symbolised characteristics of occupational prototypes, there are myriad frameworks which represent conceptualisations of the world of work. I have identified seven which are either widely used in career work, or which are particularly relevant to the findings of this study. Other than Holland's RIASEC framework (Holland, 1959) which was introduced in Chapter 2 as a key matching approach, the other frameworks have not yet been discussed in this thesis, so will be introduced in a little more depth.

6.2.4 Theoretical Frameworks

For this review I have chosen to explore The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers., 1962), Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities (RIASEC) (Holland, 1985), The Five Factor Model (FF) (Costa & McCrae. 1985), Schein's Career Anchors (Schein, 1978), Reversal Theory (RT) (Apter, 1982). In addition to these theories from psychology, I have included two relevant sociological frameworks, which can help us to understand the place occupied by career within society: Bourdieu's (1983) notion of capital and MacKinnon and Langford's (1994) framework of occupational prestige. The choice of these particular theories was based on the position

they occupy within theory and practice in the UK, and their relevance to the findings of this study.

RIASEC

Holland's (1985) theory of vocational personalities is widely accepted (eg Schinka, Dye & Curtiss, 1997) as one of the most influential taxonomies of individual factors which relate to occupations. Holland's model identifies six personality types which are thought to be illustrative of an individual's career interests. Holland found that within a particular occupational group, there was a preponderance of similar personality types. The personality types are known by the acronym RIASEC, which stands for realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. Although widely used in practice and very influential in theory, there are clear limitations to Holland's model, discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

Schein's Career Anchors

Schein (1978, 1996) suggested that a fulfilling career is one which is congruent with the individual's values. Schein based his eight anchors on observations of career paths. He conceptualised these as facets of personality which become increasingly stable over the course of a career path. Schein's anchors are:

- Technical competence: the opportunity to apply your specific skills at a high level;
- Managerial competence: working with others, bringing out the best in them and taking responsibility for a team goal;
- Organizational security: the knowledge that your job in the organisation is safe;
- Entrepreneurial Creativity: building up a product or business of your own;
- Autonomy: being your own boss, making your own choices;
- Service: dedication to making the world a better place;
- Pure challenge: solving unsolvable problems;
- Lifestyle: a job that allows you to live the rest of your life the way you want to.

Despite the widespread usage of Schein's anchors in career practice (Evans, 1996), the empirical evidence on which the model is based is limited, with support from only a small number of small scale studies (Steele & Francis-Smythe, 2007). Criticisms too have been levelled at the model at a conceptual level, with claims that it is theoretically underspecified (Feldman & Bolino, 1996).

Five Factor Model of Personality

The Five Factor (FF) model (Costa & McCrae, 1985) is perhaps the most influential theory of personality. It is thought to constitute a 'useful set of very broad dimensions that characterize individual differences' (Digman, 1990, p.436). The Five Factors are:

- Extraversion: sociability, thinking out loud, liveliness;
- Neuroticism: the tendency to experience negative emotions;
- Agreeableness: the desire to help and empathise with others;
- Conscientiousness: self-control and the desire to live in a regulated world;
- Openness to Experience: intellectual curiosity and an active imagination.

The Five Factor model has been used widely in career research, linking personality characteristics with career success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen & Barrick, 1999) career decision making (Page, Bruch & Hasse, 2008; Martincin & Stead, 2015) and career outcomes (Wille, De Fruyt, & De Clercq, 2013).

Reversal Theory

Developed by Apter (1982), Reversal Theory, in contrast to more mainstream theories of personality, highlights the changeable nature of motivations, and stresses that one individual may have a range of different behavioural responses to a situation, depending on the context. Apter (1982) proposes four 'states' which are presented as dichotomies:

- Serious or Telic / Playful or Paratelic: In a telic state we are motivated by an end goal, and in a paratelic state, we are motivated by the activity itself;
- Conforming / Negativistic: In a conforming state, an individual seeks to conform to the norms and rules of an environment, and in a negativistic state, the individual strives to break the rules and stand out from the crowd;
- Mastery / Sympathy: Those in a mastery state are looking to find power and control, and those in a sympathy state are seeking to receive or provide care and emotional support from or for others;
- Autic / Alloic: In an autic state, the individual is looking to fulfil their own needs and in an alloic state the individual seeks to fulfil the needs of others.

The theory suggests that an individual can only experience one state at a time, but is likely to shift from one to another. Reversal theory has not been applied to the arena of careers.

Myers Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI, Myers, 1962) is a psychological tool based on Jung's

theory of personality type (Jung, 1971/1923). The theory posits that we have innate preferences for behaviour which can be mapped onto four dichotomies:

- Extraverts are orientated towards the outer world, introverts towards their inner world;
- Sensing types understand the world by relying mostly on information gathered from their senses, intuitive types prefer to rely on links and meanings generated from their subconscious;
- Thinking types make decisions objectively, feeling types make decisions subjectively;
- Judging types prefer to exist in a world where decisions have been made, perceiving types prefer to take in information.

The MBTI theory holds that whilst individuals behave in different ways, they will have a preference for particular types of behaviour which is innate and consistent throughout their lives. The MBTI profiles of various occupational group members have been tested and recorded and used to make recommendations for career choice (e.g. Thorne & Gough 1991).

Critics of this theory suggest that the simplicity of the theory and the dichotomous nature of the model do not operationalise Jung's theory faithfully (Barbuto, 1997), and that although hundreds of studies have been published on personality type, they mostly concern applications of the tool, rather than empirical evidence (Bayne, 1997). Caution is advocated in the application of the approach in career practice (e.g. Pittenger, 2005) on the grounds of the theoretical and empirical limitations and the tendency for the stereotyping of results.

Bourdieu's Capitals

Bourdieu (1983) has given us one of the most widely used taxonomy of different forms of power in our society. Bourdieu described four types of 'capital', and suggests that certain choices of behaviour are determined by an individual's social class.

- Economic capital: the financial resources available to an individual;
- Social capital: the resources available to an individual through their network;
- Cultural capital: tastes, aesthetic preferences, hobbies, competencies and skills which symbolise class;
- Symbolic capital: other symbols which denote power such as attention.

Bourdieu's ideas are widely cited in career writing and have been influential in a career theories such as Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, (2011) and Hodkinson and Sparkes, (1997).

Occupational Prestige

Occupational prestige seems, self-evidently, to have an important role in occupational choice, but traditional career theories have not tended to incorporate this into their frameworks. There is evidence that it plays a part in career interests and perceptions of jobs (Sodano & Tracey, 2008), but despite the potentially potent combination of its intuitive appeal and empirical evidence, it has been only lightly touched on in mainstream career theories, most notably by Gottfredson (1981) in her theory of Circumscription and Compromise.

Occupational prestige is a cultural phenomenon, and there is evidence that cultures vary in the degree of prestige awarded to particular jobs (Walker & Tracey, 2012b). Sennett (2003) suggests that occupational prestige is based on reputation, honour and respectability, but the concept is ill defined in the literature (Rothman, 2002). In general it is thought to be a multi-dimensional concept, and is usually assumed to include income, education, authority and power (Ulfsdotter Eriksson, 2013).

Whilst occupational prestige has failed to take centre stage in career research, more has been written about the concept in literature on social stratification. MacKinnon and Langford (1994) conceptualise occupations as social identities and echo Stone's (1962) assertion that occupational identities connect the self to a societal structure. MacKinnon and Langford (1994) propose that occupational identities are stored as schemata, 'embodying an endless amount of information' (p. 233). Their framework for the factors associated with occupational prestige are education, income, potency (the impact, significance or power of an occupation), activity and evaluation (moral worthiness).

Summarising the theoretical context described above, evidence tells us that that individuals hold conceptualisations of occupational prototypes in their cognitive structures, and we know that these prototypes have an impact on career thinking. Yet two key pieces of the puzzle are missing. First although the literature is beginning to build up a picture of the nature and scope of the features of a range of occupational prototypes (Cheryan et al. 2013; Hannover & Kessels, 2007; Study 1 from this programme of research), the meanings behind these features have been described rather than analysed (Pratt & Raffaeli, 2001). Secondly, given that the accuracy of these prototypes is questionable (Jussim et al., 2009), it seems that it is important to bring them into the practitioner arena and to offer tools which will enable practitioners to have meaningful conversations with clients about their prototypical representations of

occupational identities. This study then begins to address these gaps in the literature, proposing an empirically driven framework of prototypical occupational identities.

In this brief introduction the literature on stereotypes and the links between occupational prototypes and career thinking have been examined, and seven frameworks which have been used to better understand individuals, occupations, or the link between the two have been introduced. Study 1, revealed a wide range of features which were associated with particular occupational prototypes. This third study in the programme of research aims to identify the characteristics which those features symbolise. In doing so this analysis responds to calls in the literature for further analysis of work-related symbols, which goes beyond a description of the characteristics (Kocoglu, Akgun & Keskin, 2016; Strati, 1995) and it is hoped that the findings of this study will make a contribution to our understanding of how people conceptualise occupations.

Attention will turn now to the methodology, and grounded theory will be introduced, before the findings of the study are presented. The chapter will end with a discussion that incorporates the findings of the study within the literature.

6.3. Grounded Theory Methodology

6.3.1. Conceptual Aspects of Grounded Theory

The third analysis returned to the data collected in Study 1, and applied a grounded theory analysis. Grounded Theory requires close adherence to the data, and to avoid any contamination with preconceived ideas about the data, codes and themes, typically, Grounded Theory would be the first analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this programme of research, the content analysis was conceived as preceding the grounded analysis.

In the initial design of the programme of research, it had been decided that the data from Study 1 would be analysed only once, using a content analysis. In the light of the results of study 2, it was decided that the data might yield further insights and it was thought that a Grounded Theory analysis would provide a more appropriate analysis than even the interpretative level of content analysis. The choice of Grounded Theory is discussed in more detail below, but the decision, in essence, was a response to the absence of existing theories which could help to understand the data. In order to ensure that the Grounded Theory data

analysis was not influenced more than necessary by preconceptions developed through the process of content analysis, the detailed and rigorous line by line coding process recommended in ground theory was strictly followed. This part of the study used grounded theory as a method, applying the process of GT analysis to data which were collected in a study designed for a content analysis. In the fourth and final study, described in depth in the following chapter (Chapter 7), further data were gathered to 'test' the theory which emerged. As this part of the study was conceived as a GT study, it makes use of GT as methodology, applying GT principles to the data collection process as well as the data analysis. As both the third and fourth studies used a grounded theory analysis, a description of the conceptual and procedural aspects of this methodological approach as it applies to both studies will be covered in this chapter.

Grounded Theory has its origins in symbolic interactionism (Mead 1863 – 1931). Mead developed symbolic interactionism (SI) as a response to the traditional polarised paradigms of psychologism (social behaviour is grounded in genes and neural pathways) and sociologism (social behaviour is determined by social structures). In symbolic interaction, it is believed that social behaviour is determined by individuals interacting with the world – individuals shape their environment and their environment shapes them (Charon 2010). A researcher, adopting the symbolic interaction paradigm therefore needs to interpret the data - the actions, or words of the participants, within the context of their environments.

Grounded Theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Both sociologists, the originators of the theory developed it with the express purpose of moving sociological theory forwards. Its use is now widespread, and it can be found in such areas as nursing, education and psychology. It is a method for inductively generating theory (Patton 1990). Glaser defines it (1992) as 'a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area' (p.16). Grounded Theory's name reflects the essence of the methodology, which is that the analysis of data should result in a theory that is grounded in the words, behaviours and perceptions of the participants.

Glaser (1992) sets out the underlying philosophical principles:

- Researchers need to be out in the field to find out what is going on there
- Theories must be grounded in reality

- The experience of participants and the process of research is continually evolving.
- We influence the world and it influences us (symbolic interaction)
- Change and processes are important, and life is complex and variable
- There is an interrelationship between participants' meanings and their actions

In addition to the principle that the theories emerge from the data, Grounded Theory also values the principle of academic rigour, manifest in the systematic, often painstaking approach to analysis. The methodology is thought to be particularly useful in arenas where there is not an existing theory (Crooks, 2001).

Grounded Theory shares many characteristics with other qualitative methodologies, and in tune with a relativist paradigm, it acknowledges that theories are interpretations as they appear from particular angles and are therefore subject to change. As a process, Grounded Theory is interactive and interpretive (Charmaz, 2006). The process of theory development should include the perspective of the participants, and the researcher should develop theories by starting with the data, interpreting it – noting patterns and relationships, abstracting the themes, identifying concepts and finally theorising. There is a focus on making constant comparisons, as the researcher compares the data, the emerging themes and the memos they write throughout the whole process of data collection and analysis (Charmaz & Henwood, 2013).

Willig (2008) acknowledges that 'there is no such thing as a unified qualitative paradigm' (p.151) and Tesch (1990) distinguishes between qualitative approaches on the basis of aims and focus, suggesting that some methods focus on language (for example discourse analysis), others are more descriptive and interpretive, aiming to understand views and culture (for example life histories and ethnography) and others, such as Grounded Theory, focus on theory development. Bryman and Burgess (1994), highlighting the challenges of defining and discriminating between qualitative methods, challenge Tesch's typology. They point out that theory building can be linguistic, descriptive and interpretive. Notwithstanding the challenges of differentiating between qualitative methods, a defining aspect of Grounded Theory is that the focus and purpose is the development of a theory. Within Grounded Theory the theory is verified as part of the process, through category saturation: the research continues to collect and analyse data until no new categories or evidence emerge (Charmaz & Henwood, 2013).

The literature on Grounded Theory perhaps inevitably devotes considerable energy into

describing the nature of a 'theory'. Strauss and Corbin (1994) describe a theory as 'a set of relationships that offer a plausible explanation of the phenomenon under study' (p. 45). A theory is a way to make sense of a range of diverse facts. The suggestion is that a good Grounded Theory will be parsimonious because it will be based only on the data in that particular study. Strauss and Corbin (1994) also propose that a good theory should be a plausible statement of relationships between concepts, linking back to the data and should be conceptually dense – with plenty of conceptual relationships and finally, it should be fluid – acknowledging multiple perspectives and changes over time.

Strauss and Corbin (1994) describe theories as either substantive (i.e. explaining just the current phenomenon) or formal (generalisable). Grounded Theory tends to lead to substantive theories as the theories are closely linked to the data of one particular study.

Grounded Theory is strong on process and it is this that gives the methodology academic rigour. The specific processes applied to the data will depend on our reading of the data and the themes which begin to emerge (Locke, 2001).

Guidelines vary as to the exact number and the sequence of stages through which a Grounded Theory analysis should progress, but Charmaz and Henwood (2013) propose four clusters of activity which they suggest should be a core part of any Grounded Theory analysis:

1. Engage in simultaneous data collection and analysis. In a GT study, the researcher collects and analyses data in parallel. This allows the researcher to shape the data collection to test or clarify the themes that emerge from the initial analysis.
2. Invoke constant comparative methods: a GT analysis is interactive, as the researcher compares codes with each other, with the data, and with the emergent themes. This ensures that the development of the theory is not a stage in the process which the researcher eventually reaches, but runs in parallel with the data collection and coding, ensuring that the themes are genuinely grounded in the data.
3. Develop emergent concepts: the researcher's interaction with the data leads to the emergence of themes which are gradually refined.
4. Adopt an inductive-abductive logic: themes are generated inductively from the data, but the researcher considers all possible theoretical explanations before selecting a final theory.

This approach relies on the researcher finding a balance between their existing knowledge

(experience of the world, understanding of extant theories, opinions) and an open mind. The Glaser school of Grounded Theory (1978) in particular focuses on the importance of an open mind and using inference and propositional thinking in order to ensure that the researcher does not get lost in the data.

Why Grounded Theory?

Grounded Theory is proposed (e.g. Charmaz & Henwood, 2013) as a useful methodology for psychological research, in part because of its versatility. Charmaz and Henwood (2013) suggest that it can be used in conjunction with a range of approaches, and can fit with either a constructivist or a post-positivist epistemology, although its suitability for constructivist research is not universally accepted (Henwood & Pigeon, 1994). Its systematic approach to data analysis provides academic rigour, and its position, bridging quantitative and qualitative traditions in psychology research (Charmaz & Henwood, 2013) allows researchers to 'increase their efficiency and effectiveness in gathering useful data and in constructing focused analyses'. (p.241).

Beyond these advantages, a GT analysis was thought to be particularly suitable for the data collected in Study 1. As we saw from the review of the literature in Chapter 2, there is acknowledgement within the research community, (e.g. Cheryan et al., 2013) that occupational prototypes have some impact on career choices. There have however been no attempts to integrate these results into a coherent framework, or to apply existing theories to understand or explain the results. This atheoretical approach to the research on occupational prototypes may have contributed to the limited impact that this has had on the career decision making literature. Grounded Theory is a methodological approach thought to be particularly useful in 'investigations of relatively unchartered waters' (Stern, 1980, p.20), and is considered the 'method of choice when a descriptive theory is not available' (Crooks 2001, p. 12). It was therefore considered to be suitable for this study.

Grounded Theory can be used as both a method and a methodology (Charmaz, 2006). As a methodology, it brings its own philosophical position to the study, and its principles guide all stages of the research. As a method it constitutes a technique – a set of procedures which a researcher can apply to a data set (qualitative or quantitative) to generate a theory and ensure that the findings from the data analysis are grounded in the data (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007).

Which Grounded Theory? Theoretical splits

Grounded Theory has undergone a number of theoretical splits. In 1990, Strauss and Corbin published *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques,* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which marked the point at which the two original authors, Glaser and Strauss, diverge. Since then a number of authors have taken the theory in different directions. Fernandez (2012) identified four key models of Grounded Theory which are most commonly used within qualitative research: Classic Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1978), the Strauss and Corbin version (1990) known as qualitative data analysis, constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2000) and feminist Grounded Theory (Wuest, 1995).

Glaser's more recent work (Glaser, 1992, 2003) emphasises the emergent nature of the theory, and stresses that the theory can only explain the phenomenon under study. He argues that too much emphasis on systematic coding will detract from insightful meaning and that Strauss and Corbin (1990) have been seduced by the rigour of systematic coding suggesting that with rigorous coding matrices, a theory can conceptualise beyond the immediate study.

Advice in the literature (for example, Fendt & Sachs, 2008; Howell, 2013) is that the choice of which version of GT to apply should be based on the researcher's philosophical, ontological and epistemological stance. Charon (2010, p.47) suggests that the decision should be quite subjective, with the researcher considering 'which method best suits their researcher's personality and preferred modes of working'.

This study has used the Glaser method of Grounded Theory (1978), which has come to be known as Classic Grounded Theory (CGT). This method focuses on the emergence of theories from the data. The basic principles of open coding, constant comparison, theoretical sampling and abstraction are key to the process, but the more fixed coding processes as developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) are not applied.

Numerous researchers over the last twenty-five years have declared themselves to be firmly wedded to CGT (Bowen, 2005; Clark & Lang, 2002; Davis, 1996; Holton, 2007; Schreiber, 2001) drawn by the belief that the more flexible approach of CGT allows for greater creativity and for a clearer link between the theory and data.

The key differences between CGT and Straussian GT appear on the surface to be procedural but are quite fundamental. One key difference is the role that the literature is expected to play

within the theory development. CGT acknowledges that the researcher will come to the study with pre-existing knowledge and understanding of some elements of relevant literature, but suggests that a detailed analysis of the body of literature early on in the process (as advocated in Straussian GT) will influence the researcher and their interpretation of the data. Evans (2013) argues that a pre-study of the literature 'will damage the research by creating early closure to the direction, by misleading the direction to follow and it may in itself be an inappropriate selection of literature' (p.41). The CGT approach, holding off on an examination of the literature until the theory has been developed, will allow the researcher to base the theory much more closely on the data itself. This may sound like a procedural difference but in reality is epistemological: the difference is not just about chronology, but is about what factors should influence a theory. Advocates of CGT might argue that an immersion in the literature before the theory has been generated is bound to have an impact on the nature of the theory, and that this process would therefore result in a theory which is less grounded in the data (Fernandez, 2012).

CGT adheres to the principle of induction – an open process of analysis which begins with the particular and works towards the general. The Straussian approach is described as more of an inductive-deductive approach. Glaser (2007) suggests that CGT should produce abstractions not descriptions and it could be argued (for example, Rennie, 1998) that this is more appropriate to the epistemology of GT than the emphasis placed on deduction and verification that could be seen in the Straussian version: an inductive analysis is more likely to lead to a theory which is grounded in the data; a deductive analysis is more likely to include an element of hypothesis testing, which begins to feel like a different kind of methodology.

One further characteristic of CGT is its emphasis on the freedom of the researcher. This is critical epistemologically, in that it is thought that the creativity of the researcher is stifled by procedural constraints. CGT has only two coding stages and is not prescriptive about the memoing process, encouraging the researcher to note down their thoughts and insights in whatever way suits them as soon as they occur. This emphasis on a free flowing process ensures that the researcher is not distracted from the data for long – distracting thoughts are put to one side as swiftly as possible by writing them down. This freedom leads to an explanatory theory rather than a descriptive one (Hernandez & Andrews, 2012).

In this programme of research CGT was chosen for both Study 3, the re-analysis of the data

collected in Study 1, and for Study 4, described in detail in Chapter 7, in which further data was collected to test the theory. The philosophical approach of pragmatism was introduced in Chapter 3 as that which underpins this thesis. Pragmatism advocates that the research should choose the research method which is most likely to best answer the research question. In this instance, CGT was chosen in response to the lack of existing theorising within this arena. This approach to data collection and analysis was thought to be most likely to lead to a theory which is genuinely grounded in the data. As the data had already been collected when the decision was made to analyse it further, this first aspect of Study 3 makes use of CGT as a method – a technique for data analysis. In the fourth study which incorporated data collection as well as analysis, CGT was used as a methodology, and the design of this part of the study was guided by the philosophy and procedures of CGT as well as the data analysis.

Study 3 was not originally conceived as a GT study, as the decision to analyse the data with grounded theory was not taken until a later stage. It is useful to highlight the distinction between a GT study and a study which uses a GT analysis. Numerous variations of the analysis process have emerged since Strauss and Glaser (1967) introduced the methodology and part of the appeal of GT is its flexibility. Charmaz (2006) highlights that many researchers now apply the core principles of coding, memoing, writing and sampling to assist with theory development without necessarily framing the research as a GT study. This point is exemplified by Reid (2007) who noted that she adopted a Grounded Theory *based* approach when exploring the supervisory structures for careers advisers in South East England. This current study adopts such an approach. Whilst not conceived as a GT study, the rigorous process of the CGT analysis allows for the development of a theory which is firmly grounded in the data. Study 4, in contrast was conceived as a grounded theory, and therefore espoused the approach at a methodological level, adopting a GT approach to data collection, which is described in detail below. This section is illustrated with examples of the analysis process. Further examples and examples of the analysis and memos for Study 4 can be found in Appendix D.

I identified above that this study would use Glaser's (1992) Classic Grounded Theory (CGT). GCT aims to generate a theory that is grounded in the data and not influenced by other factors. To achieve this, the researcher therefore has two objectives: first they need to avoid reading relevant, existing literature which could impact on their understanding of the

phenomenon under scrutiny (Hernandez, 2008); second, the researcher needs to be reflexive. Reflexivity is an awareness of how previous experience and the social context of the research may influence the researcher's interpretation of the data and the development of the theory (Robson, 2002). Proponents of CGT approach acknowledge that it is not possible to eliminate these influences altogether, and that objectivity (whilst arguably desirable) is not a realistic goal for the researcher. The success of reflexivity is contingent on the self-awareness of the researcher and as such will inevitably be partial (Cutcliffe, 2003). Nevertheless, reflexivity is an important part of the process. Memos are suggested as one useful mechanism for noting one's own responses to the data and the emerging theory, and the content of the memos should inform the development of the theory (Charmaz, 2013). Researchers are advised that making a concerted effort, assisted by the processes of memoing and reviewing the literature only after the theory has emerged, 'makes a big difference' (Christiansen, 2008, p.96) in allowing them to follow where the data lead (Lowe, 2005). Yet Glaser (2002) warns against too much introspection. He highlights the potential problem of 'reflexivity paralysis' (2002, p.47) and reminds the researcher that the focus of theory development should be the data not the researcher.

CGT involves the researcher working at different levels during the data analysis and switching between these throughout. At one level is the coding. The researcher needs to go through the data utterance by utterance, line by line and word by word and think about possible meanings, trying to open their minds to all manner of possible explanations (Glaser, 1965). This process is very detailed. At another level, the researcher takes more of an overview, reflecting on the content and process and noticing as links emerge. This is known as constant comparison (Glaser, 1965). The links could be between different examples or codes, different parts of the data, and between existing theories known to the researcher and the data or codes. These thoughts are noted down as memos, which are then revisited when developing the theory. The third level at which the researcher should be engaged is in constant self-reflection. The researcher should be aware of their own experiences and values and should consider what impact these might be having on analysis.

The literature on GT often makes use of words such as 'emerges' and 'develops'. These phrases almost suggest that the theory has a life of its own, emerging and developing by itself from the data. A GT analysis is an inductive process: the data is the starting point, and

categories and themes are based on (or grounded in) the data itself. Alongside the more formal processes of coding and constant comparison, is the role that intuition and subconscious processing play in the emergence of the theory (Holton, 2008). The researcher will immerse themselves in the data, coding, thinking, memoing, wondering, and will then leave this material to one side. When they return to the task, sometime later, there is often more clarity; ideas will have crystalised, new links will be clear, and it can feel that things have just fallen into place. The cognitive processes which make the leap from codes to theory happen below the level of consciousness and this vital stage of the theoretical development is much enhanced by the researcher's dogged refusal to engage with alternative theories before data analysis (Christiansen, 2008). One implication of this process is that it often leads to a period of confusion for the researcher. Christiansen (2008) explains that before the researcher can know and understand, they must go through a phase of not knowing and not understanding, and it is this confusion which triggers the unconscious to start to develop a theory. This can be a challenging time for the researcher, who needs to make sure that they do not rush the process as this can lead to a less thorough theory: 'Rushing or forcing the process will shut down the researcher's creativity and conceptual abilities, exhausting her energy and leaving her empty and her theory thin and incomplete' (Holton, 2008 p. 90).

Much has been made in the GT literature of the links between GT and symbolic interactionism, but the nature of the relationship is complex. It is clear that Glaser and Strauss were influenced by some aspects of symbolic interactionism, in particular, the notion that as humans we are meaning makers, was derived from Blumer's (1969) writings, and is a fundamental tenet of GT. But whilst philosophically GT and symbolic interactionism resonate, one of CGT's fundamental ideologies ensures that the relationship is kept at arm's length. In CGT the theory emerges from the data. This requires the analyst to try to avoid any intrapsychic influences which might prejudice the coding and theoretical processes. Adherence to any particular theory, including symbolic interactionism, would flout this principle, and therefore the CGT analyst must avoid being bound to any one approach.

6.3.2. Procedural Aspects of Grounded Theory

I will move on now to a fuller description of the process I undertook in the analysis of both the data for this study (Study 3) and the data collected in the next study (Study 4) discussed in the next chapter. Table 1 below provides a summary of the stages with brief examples. As

highlighted above, the illustrations are taken from Study 3, but the process reflects that which was used for both analyses. The appendices (C1, C2, D3 and D4) provide fuller examples of the coding and memoing processes for both studies.

Table 6.1. Summary of the stages of a grounded theory analysis

Chronological Stages		What the researcher does	Examples	Researcher's memos
Memos, recording thoughts about the content and process Diagrams of possible relationships between categories Member checking Constant comparison: researcher goes back and forth between theory and data looking for examples Self-reflection: how are my opinions and experience influencing the analysis?	Comparing incidents Open coding	Data is transcribed and analysed immediately after collection. Line by line coding, considers all possible meanings.	Primary teacher prototype wears dungarees. Dungarees are compared to other potentially similar features, such as other items of clothing, or features which might have similar codes.	What could this symbolise? Clothing, casual, scruffy, young, low status, fun, high fashion, low fashion, anti-fashion, anti-authority, unconventional, anarchic, practical. When comparing dungarees to, for example, a 'sharp suit', what are the differences?
	Integrating categories and their properties Open coding	Incidents are compared to categories and elements of categories emerge	Dungarees are considered within the potential categories, and the specific feature is compared to the categories, helping to highlight what those features are.	The dungarees were covered in paint splodges from working with children. I could imaging this full of laughter and loads of fun. She sounds like someone who doesn't think of clothes as a long term investment. The category of 'fun' is emerging as linked to laughter and ephemeral things.
	Delimiting the theory	Theoretical saturation reached – no new categories emerging.	This is a psychological construct – an internally orientated	Now only looking for examples in the data which allow me to develop and

	Selective coding	The theory takes form and the researcher stops looking for examples of further theoretical categories.	notion, linked with other internally / psychologically orientated ideas identified.	refine existing categories. No new data needs to be collected
	Developing the Theory	Development of a theory, grounded in the data, which explains the phenomenon.	Two theoretical codes, each with four elements.	

Alongside the challenge of choosing the right GT analysis, the researcher also faces a choice of process frameworks. I chose to follow the original four step process advocated by Glaser (1965) in his original paper. This a more simple format than some and as such seems to allow the novice GT researcher to focus on the data and not to get too bogged down by the subtle differences in the stages of the process.

Glaser's (1965) four stages are: 1) comparing incident applicable to each category, 2) integrating categories and their properties, 3) delimiting the theory and 4) writing the theory.

I will now explain in more detail how I approached each of these stages and illustrate with examples from my analysis. Whilst the stages are covered here in turn, it is important to acknowledge that in practice it was not (and nor should it have been) quite as linear; as Christiansen suggests, (2007) the stages should occur 'simultaneously or serendipitously' (p.49). The onset of each stage of my analysis took place in this chronological order, but the earlier stages remained in operation throughout the process of analysis.

1. **Comparing incidents applicable to each category**

Much of the writing about GT processes describes the stages in terms of 'coding'. Christiansen (2007) describes two procedural stages called 'open coding' and 'selective coding'. Open coding is the process used during this first of Glaser's stages. Selective coding is used during Glaser's third stage, of delimiting the theory which I discuss below.

The starting point for the analysis is to code every 'incident', or comment, in as many ways as can be conceived. The coding can be accomplished, physically, in different ways. I made use of wide margins and tracked changes 'comments' to keep track of my ideas. The codes I generated were my interpretations of the underlying meaning of the features the participants

described: the features were symbols, and the coding articulated the things they symbolised.

The information which allowed me to identify the codes came from two sources: my own responses and explicit comments made by the participants: 'those which he [the researcher] had constructed himself; and those that have been abstracted from the research situation.' (Glaser, 1965, p 438). For example, one participant described her prototype of a clinical psychologist as wearing Birkenstocks, and said explicitly that these were 'unconventional': Birkenstocks were thus coded as 'unconventional'. The same participant suggested that this clinical psychologist would drink red wine with meat and white wine with fish. She offered no explicit explanation of what this behaviour might symbolised, but I proposed in my coding that this might symbolise someone with a high status, possibly educational status or cultural status: someone who knows what colour wine 'ought' to go with certain foods.

For the most part, the explicit links made by participants chimed with my own responses, and the categories were therefore developed through a partnership between the participants and me. On occasions, however, the features raised by the participants had no particular symbolic meaning for me. Jagerbombs, for example, were proposed by one participant as the drink of choice for her prototypical occupational psychologist, but were altogether new to me, so I had no resources of my own to draw on to help identify the underlying meaning.

Constant comparisons

The GT researcher should engage in constant comparisons during the coding process. This, Glaser describes as the first rule of GT. Glaser explains (1965) 'while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incident in the same and different groups coded in the same category' (p. 440). So as I coded 'dungarees' in my line by line analysis, I considered it in the light of other fashion items (such as a sharp suit, or Birkenstocks), other items which might be symbols of fun (such as enjoying karaoke) or other items which might be (stereotypically) symbols of a serious character (such as watching documentaries), to work out what fitted together, and to identify features which they have in common and those which distinguish them from each other.

It was during this process of constant comparison that the properties of the theory began to take shape. As I considered the different features and the characteristics of the features it became clear that there were certain underlying elements which they shared. For example watching comedy programmes, having a laugh with mates, wearing bright colours, all emerged

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as symbols of fun.

Memos

Throughout the process of analysis I wrote memos. These memos often took the form of mind maps or post-it notes, and I carried a notebook with me at all times to allow me to jot down ideas as they occurred to me. This is Glaser's (1965) second rule of GT: 'stop coding and record a memo on your idea' (p.441). Memos were introduced earlier as an aid to reflexivity, but they fulfil other functions too. First a memo allows the researcher to capitalise on their first thoughts and reactions: it is designed to 'tap the initial freshness of the analyst's theoretical notions' (p.441). Researchers are advised to write memos down as soon as they can after the idea has emerged and this makes sure that even the vaguest of notions, fluttering through the consciousness is recorded. Christiansen (2007, p.46) highlights that 'ideas are fragile' and therefore need to be captured on paper before they dissipate. Second, the memo allows the researcher to draw a mental line in the sand underneath a particular train of thought, to put it to one side, and then to re-direct their focus back to the data (Glaser, 1965). This helps to ensure that the theory is well and truly grounded in the data. Finally (Christiansen, 2007) memos are a useful thinking aid. The process of translating a thought into words allows the researcher to crystalise their thinking (Roth, 2009). I found that the act of creating a memo enabled me to better understand what I myself meant (see Appendix D3 for an example).

2. Integrating categories and their properties

This process builds on the constant comparisons described above but changes the items to be compared from one feature with another feature, to comparisons between features and elements of categories. Individual features are compared to an aggregated list of all the things that have been learnt about that category. So 'dungarees' are compared not with wwoofing holidays, karaoke bars and watching comedy programmes, but with all the things I have learned about 'fun' – its playful, good humoured and lively nature. This serves to bring the key aspects of the category into sharper relief.

The categories also start to become integrated with each other: fun with warm, intellectual with cultured; and it becomes clear the ways in which categories differ and are similar to each other. 'The theory develops as different categories and their properties tend to become integrated through constant comparisons that force the analyst to make some theoretical sense of each comparison' (Glaser, 1965 p. 142). As I compared one category with another, I

was forced to identify the features of each category which were similar or different. This analytical process leads inevitably to the development of a theory as linking themes emerge.

3. Delimiting the theory

The GT analysis can be an overwhelming process for the analyst (Christiansen, 2007). As the items merge into categories and the categories into a theory, the confusion dissipates and a clarity emerges. One process which helps to speed this up is delimiting the theory. Delimiting can take place at a theoretical and a categorical level. During this part of the process, the number of categories within the theory is reduced as the researcher starts to identify concepts which are similar, underlying units or elements which are not relevant. The theory then comes together based on a smaller set of higher level concepts. Early in the process of analysis for Study 3, I had identified a wide range of categories including control and an interest in fashion and image consciousness (see Appendix C3). During the process of delimiting, it became clear that these were subsets of a higher level construct (warm / cold). A decision was therefore made to stop looking for new categories, and instead to focus on examples which would allow me to refine the existing categories.

A further opportunity for delimitation comes through theoretical saturation. As the theory emerges and gets refined, the analyst continues to look at new data items, using the constant comparison method to distil the categories and theory. There comes a point where the new data cease to add new elements to the theory and simply constitute new examples which illustrate the theory as it stands. There is at this juncture an acknowledgement that further data could yet generate new ideas, but Glaser's assessment (1965) is that 'what has been missed will probably have little modifying effect on the theory' (p. 143). The researcher can then make a decision to stop the data collection process.

Theoretical sampling is a key aspect of grounded theory. This approach to identifying participants aims to ensure that the theory which emerges is robust, as the participants chosen are those who are most likely to be able to offer data which can contribute to theory development. As the identification of participants for this study was conducted as part of the content analysis of Study 1, the process of theoretical sampling was not used. This aspect of grounded theory research will be described in more depth in Chapter 7.

4. Writing the theory

The fourth and final stage in Glaser's original conception (Glaser, 1965) is writing the theory. Glaser suggests that this should be started only when the researcher is convinced that the framework of theoretical codes and their elements gives a 'reasonably accurate' (p.443) account of the phenomenon under scrutiny. The writing process is an exercise in collating the memos which have been collected throughout the process of analysis. The constant comparison is evident even at this stage, as the researcher will continue to compare the theory with the data, looking for evidence of theoretical gaps and seeking examples from the data which illustrate the elements of the theory.

The principle of academic rigour runs through the academic literature on the method. In addition to the methodological thoroughness of the study, the validity of a grounded theory can be ensured by assessing the final theory against four criteria, set out by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which are i) fit, ii) work, iii) relevance and iv) modifiability. The nature of a grounded theory, and its position as a theory grounded in the data and unencumbered by other influences means that applying the evaluation criteria which have been developed to assess the fruits of other methodologies would not be appropriate (Charmaz, 1994). Thulesius (2003, cited in Holton, 2008) stresses that 'a grounded theory is neither right nor wrong, it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability' (p.27). A grounded theory should be based on a close fit between the data and the codes, with limited influence from existing theories or preconceived codes; it should work as a tool to explain the phenomenon and predict future behaviour; the theory should clearly relate to the area under examination; and it needs to be modifiable - flexible enough to change should future data lead to the emergence of new codes, categories or elements of the theory (Holton, 2008).

6.4. Findings: A Grounded Theory of Occupational Prototypes

The theory consists of eight constructs which are divided between two theoretical categories: 'interpsychic' and 'intrapsychic'. Table 6.1. summarises the overall theory.

The grounded theory analysis conceptualises the features of the prototypes described in the focus groups as symbols, and provides a theory which helps to explain the underlying constructs which were symbolised. I stated above that my original design incorporated a single content analysis in this study, but that the richness of the data led to a desire to do more than describe the prototypes but to provide an explanation of the information provided. It was the

realisation that the prototype features were symbols of something underneath which led me to see that there was more to uncover.

Table 6.2. Overall Grounded Theory Framework

Intrapsychic constructs			*Interpsychic dimensions*	
Warm	Cold		Low intellectual status	High intellectual status
High energy	Low energy		Low culture	High culture
Conventional	Unconventional		Low objective success	High objective success
Serious	Fun		Low social class	High social class

Symbols, as defined within symbolic interactionism are social objects (Charon, 2010), are used to represent something both to ourselves and to others. They are created socially and understood and used intentionally to communicate.

The realisation that the features described as part of the prototypes in the focus group discussions came from two avenues. First, as highlighted above, the evidence of the features as symbols appeared explicitly in the data. Participants frequently described the underlying construct alongside the feature, for example suggesting that Stoke Newington was *'somewhere where it's definitely middle and uppers only' (FG2,L275)* indicated that the feature of living in Stoke Newington was linked to the underlying construct of high socio-economic status and one participant talked about accessories in this way: *'maybe with a more unconventional..., so for instance a big shawl' (FG2,L93),* indicating that the feature of a big shawl was linked to the underlying construct of unconventionality.

The second clue lay in the coherence of the narratives. Participants painted fluent and detailed pictures of their prototypes. As a listener, the narratives hung together coherently: it made sense to me that someone with a messy home would wear comfortable shoes, and cook hearty one pot casseroles to share with friends.

The theory which emerged from the grounded theory data analysis provided an explanation of perceptions of the social identity of occupations through a framework of occupational prototypes. The theory does not provide a description or explanation of a common prototype for the four occupations under scrutiny. Instead it provides a framework of constructs against

which prototypes may be assessed. The theory proposes that the social identity of a particular occupation will be understood through mapping their occupational prototype for that particular profession on a range of interpsychic and intrapsychic constructs: I will understand the social identity of a social worker by assessing how my occupational prototype of a social worker maps onto these interpsychic and intrapsychic constructs.

The categories which are described were developed from the data through the detailed constant comparison method, but the interpretation is mine. The data frequently made explicit links between symbols and characteristics, but the final analysis was mine.

The theory that was developed highlights a number of constructs that the prototypes display. The categories were initially labelled as 'personality' and 'status'. Grounded theory (Glaser, 1965) acknowledges that researchers bring existing experience and knowledge to the process of analysis, but suggests that immersion in the literature before analysis can bias the process and lead to the researcher trying to fit the data into pre-existing themes. It was thought that avoiding such well known terms as personality and status, might allow for a more creative analytic process and a theory more closely grounded in the data.

The core theoretical categories were then re-named as intrapsychic (within the individual) or interpsychic (between individuals) constructs. The intrapsychic constructs describe the characteristics of an individual. The interpsychic constructs describe where an individual is located within the social stratifications of their society (or how an individual interacts with their society).

The intrapsychic constructs describe characteristics or elements of the individual which relate to their personality or character and which are internally created and located. They are aspects of the individual which are linked to their behaviour but are driven internally: they are associated with the way a person interacts with the world, but their starting point is within the individual. The intrapsychic constructs are individually constructed although the symbols which represent them are co-created with society. For example, the construct of warmth may be present in an individual regardless of their culture, but whether that warmth is expressed through (or symbolised by) a handshake, a hug, one, two, three or four kisses on the cheek will be influenced by the context. The symbol is a culturally specific manifestation of an element of the individual's intrapsychic character.

The interpsychic constructs in contrast are grounded in the interplay between the individual and their society. These constructs identify where the individual is located within the complex web of their society. The symbol is a culturally specific manifestation of the relationship the individual has with their society: reading the Booker prize winning novel is described in this theory as a symbol of high intellectual status. In some cultures, intellectual status would be better symbolised by a different choice of reading matter, and furthermore, there are cultures which may not set great store by intellectual status and in which it is not a core pillar of social stratification, so may not really exist as a construct to any meaningful degree. The interpsychic construct itself is culturally specific and culturally constructed.

For both sets of constructs, the symbols are culturally created and constructed through interactions with society. But where the symbols of interpsychic constructs represent culturally created constructs, based on the interaction between the individual and society, the symbols of intrapsychic constructs represent constructs residing within the individual.

Four interpsychic constructs and four intrapsychic constructs were identified and these were developed into bi-polar dimensions by identify labels for each end of a scale. The first intrapsychic dimension was warm / cold. The three elements of this dimension were a focus on close relationships, the need for control and image consciousness. The second, high energy / low energy brought together the substantive codes of the amount of effort an individual expends on activities, and the variety of activities engaged with. Serious / dull, the third intrapsychic construct, involved behaviour which could be considered 'improving' and the avoidance of frivolity. The final intrapsychic construct was unconventional / conventional, which incorporates individualistic choices and the avoidance of the classic, or standard option. The interpsychic constructs could be seen as measures of status and items are coded as having either high or low levels of each kind of status. The intrapsychic constructs which emerged were: class, culture, success, and intellect. These constructs were also presented as bi-polar dimensions, but where the data which informed the interpsychic constructs led to different terms at each end of the dimension (such as warm and cold, unconventional and conventional), the data which informed the interpsychic constructs indicated that the prototypes were conceptualised as high and low version of the construct (high intellect and low intellect).

Some individual items highlighted below are symbols of more than one category. Casual

clothing, for example, is a symbol of both a warm construct and low objective success, and European city breaks symbolise both high culture and conventionality.

I will now move on to describe and illustrate each of the dimensions.

6.4.1. Intrapsychic Constructs

Warm / Cold

This is perhaps the most complex of the constructs, and encompassed three elements emphasising control, authenticity, and a focus on others. The prototypes whom I have categorised as *warm* were reported to set considerable store by their close relationships, did not feel the need to have high levels of control and were not interested in projecting a particular image of themselves. The prototypes categorised as *cold* were described as detached and independent, image conscious and controlled. A warm prototype was described explicitly by participants as 'warm', 'compassionate' and 'kind', and the cold prototypes were described as more distant 'there's some distance there, so detached, there's a feeling around that kind of separation...detached' (FG4, L 84-5) and 'it would take a lot for him to really let his hair down' (FG4, L481). Types of items which symbolised a warm / cold personality included relationships, personal appearance, homes and lifestyle.

A warm prototype put their family at the heart of their life, focusing on their children *'mine just has her arms full of kids' (FG1, L127)* and spending time with their families *'mine is more into family, family activities, barbeques and parks with the kids' (FG3, L1100).* A cold prototype is more likely to live alone *'I picture her going home to nobody' (FG1283),* or have a relationship which is not emotionally close *'There might be a relationship but if there is it's not very emotional, it's more kind of functional' (FG1, 266-7).*

Personal appearance reveals the warm or cold personalities, in terms of the degree to which the individual is focused on image and is polished. A warm prototype would lead to a more scruffy and casual look *'Very casual - there is no element of smartness',* and one that feels more authentic: *'That's just his look' (FG3, L963).* A cold prototype might be shown in someone who constructs their image carefully, *'image is very important' (FG3,L394),* chooses high fashion items *'very sharp, very polished, very professional, I don't know suits so I'm not sure where they would get them but very high end' (FG3, L590)* and spends time on their personal grooming *'sophisticated, she's very well dressed head to toe – everything is immaculately done,*

dressed up' (FG3,L48).

Well-ordered and big houses with few possessions were likely to be owned by the cold prototypes: *'her house is fairly big but there's not much in it, it's quite cold, not very warm, not literally as in temperature, but there's not much in it' (FG1, L347-8), 'desk is organised, kitchen is organised, the remote is almost OCD next to the corners' (FG1, L325-6).*

Warm orientated prototypes were more likely to be badly designed and chaotic *'it's quite chaotic inside, quite messy, things falling out of the cupboards' (FG2, L27-8), 'there's lots of people and lots of busy-ness so it's kind of like there are many different elements and it's homely, it's warm, it's kind of full but it doesn't necessarily all fit together in a whole design kind of sense' (FG1, L148-9).* Furniture in the homes of warm-orientated prototypes was depicted as a bit worn and scruffy, *'like old furniture, like old sofas and stuff, bit used, a bit worn, a bit comfy leather, well loved' (FG2, L771-3)* and not thought of as particularly important.

Figure 6.1. Examples of the features of warm and cold prototypes

Examples of Warm Prototype Features   **Examples of Cold Prototype Features**

Examples of Warm Prototype Features	Examples of Cold Prototype Features
Focus on family Lots of kids Family activities Messy, chaotic home Old, well-loved sofa Casual or scruffy appearance Authentic image	Living alone Independent relationships Image conscious Polished appearance High end fashion Well-designed home Well-organised home

High energy / low energy

The second of the intrapsychic constructs I described in terms of energy, with participants portraying some of their prototypes as individuals with high levels of energy and some as individuals with low energy. There were three elements to this category, the amount of effort a prototypical individual expends on their hobbies and in their daily life, the variety of different activities they may be involved with and the degree of their sociability.

Prototypes with high energy were likely to be highly engaged with a wide number of active

hobbies and were portrayed as having a wide social circle. Those with low energy were more likely to be reported as being less involved, engaging with fewer activities and with fewer people, and tending to choose activities which were likely to be less physically energetic.

The high energy orientated prototypes were characterised by their sociability '*I also see that they do quite a lot of socialising' (FG4,L503), 'they have lots of friends' (FG3,L658),* the variety of their activities *'I think there's lots of variety, lots of different places, different things to experience, different cultures, different people' (FG4, L552-3),* and the physical effort required for their hobbies *'cycle to the South of France...skiing...rock climbing' (FG2, L707).* In contrast, those with low energy would be more likely to spend time on their own *'they're all a bit introverted maybe and might read quietly or pet their cat' (FG3,L232)* and relaxing holidays *'somewhere relaxing' (FG1,L6)* and pastimes *'I'm just picturing sitting on the sofa sort of watching telly, having some dinner, just relaxing' (FG1, L64-5).*

The amount of effort an individual expends in a range of tasks could be an indication of their energy. In particular, high energy orientated individuals make some effort with their appearance, *'there are some teachers who would have like a good experience with the kids, they probably have more time to be like, ok try a little bit today, put a little bit of effort in today to impress them' (FG3, L121-3)* and low energy orientated prototypes are thought to '*just get dressed in the dark' (FG3, L652),* ending up *'nicely dressed but more in an absent minded way' (FG3,L111).*

The third tranche of items indicating a low or high energy are those which illustrate how engaged the individual is in their various activities. Prototypes categorised as having high energy were likely to engage in politics *'more engaged into local, no politics in general at a national level [...] they would go on demonstrations' (FG2,L738)* whereas the low energy oriented prototypes might show less commitment *'she's not like very interested' (F3,L762)'.* Other indicators of low engagement include the prototype who *'has a gym membership but doesn't ever go' (FG2, L322)* and high levels of engagement could be indicated by of work commitment *'mine is also quite work orientated reading a lot, keeping pace with the field' (FG2, L409-10).*

Figure 6.2. Examples of the features of high and low energy prototypes

Examples of high energy prototype features

Sociable
Variety of activities
Physically active hobbies
Puts effort into appearance
Engaged with politics

Examples of low energy prototype features

Introverted personality
Enjoys low energy and solitary activities
such as reading, sitting in a park
No effort made in appearance
No interest in politics

Serious / Fun

The third of the categories within the group of intrapsychic constructs which emerged from the data I termed as serious and fun. The two substantive codes which were integrated to form this category were behaviour which could be considered 'improving' rather than frivolous, and the desire for meaning over pleasure.

Those with a fun personality were described as *'crazy and fun' (FG2,L420)* or *'quite cheeky, quite happy go lucky, quite optimistic, quite fun to be around' (FG2,830)* and those who were more serious were thought of as *'kind of boring-nice' (FG3,L479)* and *'always learning and reading' FG2,L414-5).*

A serious / fun orientation was illustrated through the clothes that the individual prototype might choose. A suit and tie were illustrative of a serious personality, whereas some dungarees were thought to be a symbol of fun *'quite informal, quite colourful, quite fun, like splodges of paint on the dungarees from helping the kids' (FG2,L596-7).* This quotation highlights the colours that were chosen, and these too were seen as symbols of the serious / fun construct, with dull, neutrals and browns the serious colours *'others just have the dull, like brown dull colours' (FG3,L69)* whereas the fun prototypes were seen in brighter hues, *'I imagine something colourful, different colours, like shiny colours' (FG3,L64-5).*

Leisure time provided some examples of serious and fun symbols. Serious prototypes might watch factual or news programmes *'what came up was documentaries'(FG1,L97)* where those orientated to fun are more likely to watch comedy programmes, or choose to make the television watching experience a fun one *'maybe they'd watch something like Made in Chelsea with their house mates and laugh about it, that kind of thing, something a bit funny' (FG2,L725-7).* Choice of activities and holidays could be seen as symbols of serious / fun, with

'working on a farm, you know, wwoofing' (FG2,L719), karaoke (FG3,L197) or *'fun kind of activities, friends, maybe like a food market' (FG2,682-3)* illustrating the construct of fun, and city breaks *'they'd go to Athens and take themselves around and learn something, you know, they'd be having an industrious holiday, so like they're learning while they...' (FG3,L824-7)* or reading, more illustrative of the serious side of the construct.

Serious or fun personalities could also be seen in the way prototypes furnished their homes, and where they bought their furniture *'quite dull inside, probably furnished from Next' (FG3,L402)* and even in the way they manage their money, with the serious prototypes being careful and cautious with money and the fun prototypes a bit more carefree *'I could see online shopping [...] she spends quite a bit of money and wastes quite a bit of time, but it's like a little bit of an addiction, a guilty pleasure' (FG3,L732-4)*.

Figure 6.3. Examples of the features of serious and fun prototypes

Examples of serious prototype features	*Examples of fun prototype features*
Boring-nice Suit and tie Brown colours Would watch documentaries on TV City breaks Sensible attitude to money	Happy go lucky Dungarees Bright and shiny colours Comedy programmes Karaoke Wwooffing holidays

Conventional / Unconventional

The fourth and final dimension of the intrapsychic constructs I have described as conventional and unconventional. At the heart of the conventional / unconventional dimension is whether individual prototypes make tried and tested choices, or make choices which mark them out as different from others. Central to the serious / fun dimension is whether an individual prototype is thought to prioritise long term and meaningful things over in the moment or frivolous pleasures. I mentioned above my heuristic which allowed me to decide whether two categories were distinct: whether I could imagine a single individual who had one attribute but not the other. I was able to imagine a prototype who might be both conventional and serious (this might be symbolised by a feature such as listening to '*Today*' on Radio 4) and one who is

conventional and fun (who might be imaged as more of a Radio 2 listener). An unconventional and serious prototype, I could imagine, spending their weekends visiting a small museum, off the beaten track, which houses a collection of Napoleonic memorabilia. An unconventional and fun prototype might be imagined to visit a pop-up cocktail bar in Peckham.

The two substantive codes to emerge from the data analysis of the conventional / unconventional dimension were choosing the standard or classic option and making the same choices that many others make. Conventional prototypes were reported to make choices which might be considered the default: options which are classic, standard and chosen by many others. Unconventional prototypes were reported to make choices which reflected their individualism and might be thought to be unusual.

The conventional prototypes were described as *'quite bland in a way' (FG3,L470)* and the unconventional prototypes *'quite quirky' (FG2, L12).*

Clothing again emerged as fertile ground for symbols of conventional and unconventional. In particular, the inclusion of an eye-catching accessory *'maybe with a more unconventional..., so for instance a big shawl' (FG2,L93),* in particular coloured accessories *'maybe with some sort of coloured jewellery' (FG2,L44)*. This contrasts with the more conventional *'maybe black and grey, with like kind of grey tights and a black skirt' (FG2,L42).* Brands were thought to be symbols of the conventional or unconventional construct, with classic brands such as Russell and Bromley being seen as conventional and Birkenstock as a symbol of a more unconventional orientation *'also a bit unconventional as you were saying you know with the Birkenstocks' (FG2,271-2).*

The prototypes' choices of leisure activities and holidays also revealed symbols of a conventional or unconventional personality. Those with a more conventional personality might go to their local pub, or to a chain restaurant such as Pizza Express. Those more unconventional might opt for a *'middle class festival – I could see them somewhere like Hay' (FG2,L337).* Conventionally orientated prototypes might choose a package holiday or a city break, where the more unconventional *'they wouldn't do a package holiday, they would do their own thing'(FG3,L308).*

Figure 6.4. Examples of the features of conventional and unconventional prototypes

Conventional prototype features   *Unconventional prototype features*

Bland
Black, white and grey
Russell and Bromley
Package holiday

Accessories such as a big shawl
Coloured jewellery
Birkenstocks
The Hay Festival

6.4.2. Interpsychic Constructs

The interpsychic constructs will now be described. The attributes that are represented by these features are quite different from the intrapsychic attributes covered above. Where the intrapsychic constructs represent attributes to do with the prototype person, themselves, the interpsychic constructs are concerned with the perception of the place an individual occupies within society. These constructs are linked with class, values and wealth, and may indicate where these individuals are positioned within our society.

During the analysis, I found that it was much more difficult to avoid the influence of my existing cultural knowledge, as I interpreted these symbols. These symbols of class, values and wealth are well established and deeply ingrained, in our culture. They appear to me to be more widely understood, more explicit and more consciously applied than the features which symbolised the intrapsychic constructs: a sports car is a more accessible symbol of success than a brightly coloured shawl is of a quirky character.

The analysis was thus a more straightforward process. The coding and constant comparison threw up fewer dilemmas, and there was less uncertainty over how to interpret and where to place the codes.

The interpsychic constructs are all different shades of status. The four areas which emerged are cultural status, objective success, intellectual status and class. The relationship between these four is not perhaps straightforward as the categories are interconnected. This perhaps reflect the overlaps in society, such as between wealth and class. As explained above, my heuristic which helped decide these categories was whether I, drawing on my own experience, could visualise a prototype of my own who could be high status on one of these dimensions

but low status on another – could I, for example, envisage an individual who was successful but not middle class, or one who was highly intellectual but not cultured?

The interpsychic dimensions are described in terms of high and low levels of each construct, in contrast to the intrapsychic constructs which were defined by two meaningful terms which represented low levels of each other (i.e. warm entails low levels of cold, and cold entails low levels of warm).

Cultural Status

The first of the interpsychic constructs to consider is cultural status. Symbols of cultural status revealed whether a prototype was thought to have interests and tastes which might be described as high-brow, or whether their choices of were more indicative of middle or low-brow.

The prototypes with a high level of high culture would expose themselves to a range of cultural experiences and would enjoy learning about history, art and literature. For holidays they might enjoy a European city break *'some place with cultural heritage, you know, to discover, you know cultural' (FG2,L312),* and would watch *'good quality films'(FG3,L704)* on television and might spend their weekends *'introducing the kids to museums' (FG2,L351)*. They would choose cultural leisure activities *'maybe an art gallery' (FG2,L684)* and their choice of red or white wine *'depends whether it's fish or meat' (FG2,L260).*

Low culture prototypes were more likely to opt for more popular activities. They might choose a beach holiday *'a beach with lots of people, you know a massive holiday resort' (FG2,L319-20),* watch the soaps on television (FG1,L368), and *'go to maybe a Weatherspoons type place to watch football'(FG2,L786),* and enjoy classic pub fare *'a burger and a pint' (FG2,L787).*

Figure 6.5. Examples of the features of cultural status

Examples of high culture prototype features

| City breaks |
| Arthouse films |
| Art galleries |
| Red with meat, white with fish |

Examples of low culture prototype features

| Beach holidays |
| Soap operas |
| Weatherspoons |
| Football |
| Beer |

Objective success

Objective success is tied up with wealth and objective career success. It is a measure of how successful an individual appears to others, and does not account for their levels of job satisfaction or psychological wellbeing.

Prototypes with objective success were often symbolised by the status of their partner. A successful prototype would have a very desirable partner: good looking and well turned out *'very attractive, very trendy and smart herself' (FG4,L497),* wealthy *'her boyfriend's rich so he helps her out there' (FG3,714*) and successful at work *'a sort of intellectual with quite a high ranking post somewhere' (FG2,200-1).*

Other symbols of objective success included the formality of the prototype's clothing *'she's very well dressed, head to toe. Everything is immaculately done, dressed up' (FG3,L548)'* in contrast to *'completely casual, there is no element of smartness' (FG1, L335).*

One key subset of objective success was money and symbols of money included the holidays the prototype might choose *'I don't see them in Europe, it's LA in the States […], her boyfriend is in New York and then they meet up before they come home' (FG3,L859-864),* and the kinds of clothes they wear *'designer brands from head to toe' (FG3,L640)* and shoes which are *'high end, expensive' (FG3,L639).*

Figure 6.6. Examples of the features of objective success

Examples of high success prototype features

Desirable partner
Formal clothing
Designer brands
Expensive holidays

Examples of low success prototype features

Casual clothing
Camping holidays
High street brands

Intellectual status

The intellectual status of an individual prototype is measure not just of their intelligence, but of the way they choose to use their intelligence. It is not unrelated to the 'cultural status' explored above, but is not necessarily related to artistic interests or matters of taste. Intellectual status is measure of the way an individual prototype engages in critical thinking

and reflection. It entails intelligence, but additionally requires thoughtfulness.

Media choices seemed to provide the greatest number of symbols for construct to intellectual status.

Prototypes with high intellectual status sought out activities which allowed them to learn. They would watch educational programmes on television *'maybe science, more history, educational' (FG3,L348),* and would read informative magazines *they might read the Economist and then they'll get Time magazine' (FG4,L647-8),* or challenging fiction *'fictional, but intellectual fictional stuff – Booker prize winner kind of thing' (FG3,L739).* In contrast, the prototypes less orientated towards intellectual status would watch television for entertainment such as Made in Chelsea, or soap operas *'they watch Eastenders, and whatever other soaps' (FG3,L334)* and would read magazines (*'they'd probably get Grazia' FG3,L394)* and books (*'romantic novels, chick lit' FG1,L105)* which deal with less weighty topics. The volume of reading that a prototype might engage with also symbolises intellectual status. Those with high intellectual status might enjoy reading as a pastime and their homes would be characterised by books and bookshelves *'Lots of books in the house' (FG2,L474).*

Figure 6.7. Examples of the features of intellectual success

Examples of high intellect prototype features   ***Examples of low intellect prototype features***

Educational TV programmes The Economist or Time magazine Booker prize winning novels Lots of books at home	Made in Chelsea Soap operas Grazia Chick lit

Social Class

The last of the four interpsychic dimensions is that of social class. Perhaps more than any of the others, this construct is embedded in our culture and imbued with complex, layered and subtle meanings and symbols (Bourdieu, 1986). As a researcher I was mindful of this and tried to remain faithful to the data, whilst using my own knowledge of the culture I shared with the participants to assist my analysis.

Class, arguably, has a link with all the status constructs described above, but emerged from the

data as a category in its own right, distinct from the other constructs. The distinction between the categories of class and objective success was particularly challenging, but the data supported a division between the two. I give the example below of a prototypical occupational psychologist from a participant in Focus Group Four, who was described as enjoying skiing. A prototype who spends their leisure time skiing could well be categorised as high on both objective success and social class: skiing is an expensive pursuit, but also one which is associated with high social class. This feature was coded as a symbol for both high objective success and high social class. This prototype was also described as playing rugby, which was coded as a feature of high social class but not objective success: rugby is a middle class sport (compared to football, for example), but is not necessarily expensive to play, so does not rely on objective success. My analysis was supported by one explicit comment from a participant *'not like real expensive, but it's kind of high class' (FG3,L777)* indicating that social class and money (one of the key elements of objective success) are not always inextricably linked. The relationships between the different aspects of class are complex. The dimensions described emerged from the data, but it should be acknowledged that these constructs are linked and culturally loaded, making an objective analysis of the data difficult.

Leisure activities seemed to be one arena where choices were particularly symbolic of class, with prototypes aligned to a lower social class favouring football, where those aligned to a higher social class were more likely to engage in a different range of sports *'windsurfing, or boats, or skiing actually, or waterskiing, but I also see him at rugby' (FG4, L489-91).* Class was evident too in the neighbourhoods in which the prototypes were living. Clapham, for example, was described as full of *'middle class people who've got money but they've not got lots of money so not like Kensington FG4,L322)',* and Stoke Newington as *'somewhere where it's definitely middle and uppers only' (FG2,L275).* The middle classes might also own more than one home *'mine's got a place in the country. They go off there at weekends' (FG3,L669-70).*

Holiday choices were categorised as symbols of class, with those orientated to the lower social classes choosing package holidays to beaches and the upper classes going inland *'a villa in Tuscany' (FG3,L814)* spending their holidays *'eating, drinking, walking, going to the local village' (FG3,L819).*

Figure 6.8. Examples of the features of social class

Examples of high class prototype features

Sailing, skiing and rugby Clapham or Stoke Newington A place in the country A villa in Tuscany

Examples of low class prototype features

Football Package holidays Lying on the beach

The eight elements or themes of this grounded theory of occupational prototypes have been described. The constructs identified are put forward as distinct categories, and whilst it is relatively easy to conceptualise the intrapsychic constructs in this way, the interpsychic constructs are more problematic. My heuristic, as described above, when deciding whether two constructs were distinct, or were two variations of the same theme, was whether I, drawing on my own experiences, could conjure up prototypes in which one construct was present and another absent. I found it easy to imagine a prototype who was warm and intellectual, or conventional and interested in high culture. Whilst I could evoke a prototype who was high on culture but low on social class, these different prototypes were less salient and more complex.

This stands as a theory of occupational prototypes but grounded theories are fluid. They are put forward as ideas to consider and reflect on, but are not expected to be the last word on a topic and further evidence may lead to revisions and refinements.

6. 5. Discussion

This study produced a grounded theory of the four occupational prototypes under discussion. The model of constructs is based on the meanings that the focus group participants gave to the features they identified in their occupational prototypes. I will move on to discussing this grounded theory in the light of relevant existing theories, but first it is useful to see whether it meets Holton's (2008) criteria for a good grounded theory.

I quoted above, Thulesius's advice that 'a grounded theory is neither right nor wrong, it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability' (Thulesius, 2003, p.27, cited in Holton, 2008). This theory meets his four criteria. The theory is based on a close fit between the data and the codes, and whilst we will see below that the theory has considerable

resonance with a range of existing theoretical frameworks, the present theory was developed with limited influence from existing theories or preconceived codes but acknowledges my own bias and background knowledge. The framework generated here serves as a tool to interpret the symbols of the occupational prototypes described and could perhaps be used as a framework to help explain the social identities of other occupational prototypes. The theory is clearly related to the area under examination; and is modifiable; new codes, categories or elements could be added and current ones altered as new evidence comes to light.

Numerous academic approaches can be considered when trying to integrate these findings within the theoretical landscape. I draw here on work from personality and motivation theory, and symbolic interactionism, as these theories perhaps provide the strongest claim to helping to make sense of the findings.

This Grounded Theory analysis has generated a framework which explains and structures the meanings of the social objects described as features of the prototypical individuals. I will turn first to the intrapsychic constructs, and then to the interpsychic constructs, describing how my analysis integrates with and builds on existing literature on the subject.

6.5.1. Intrapsychic constructs

As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, the paucity of literature on occupational prototypes means that there is no existing framework or theory which describe or help us to understand prototypical occupational identity. There are however, numerous frameworks and theories which describe character traits and states, personality characteristics or preferences, values and career interests; frameworks from Holland (1973), Schein (1978) Costa and McCrae (1985), Apter (1982), Myers (1962), Bourdieu (1973) and MacKinnon and Langford (1994) were introduced earlier in the chapter. Some of these frameworks are intended as mechanisms for identifying the kind of person who might be suitable for a particular job. My theory differs in that it is a description of the kind of person my participants **imagined** might be found actually doing a particular job. Both types of framework – those describing the 'reality' of people and jobs, and this new framework which describes perceptions of people in jobs, are representations of conceptualisations of the world of work and therefore it was thought that a discussion of the grounded theory from this study, in the light of the more traditional frameworks would be of interest. The focus of the chapter will turn now to an analysis of each

of the eight constructs from my framework of occupational identities in the context of the seven existing frameworks summarised earlier in the chapter.

This section will start with the four intrapsychic dimensions (warm / cold, high / low energy, serious / fun and conventional / unconventional). Table 6.2. presents an overview of the overlaps between these four constructs and the five existing psychological frameworks with which they are compared.

Table 6.3. Inclusion of the intrapsychic dimensions from the framework of occupational identities in other established models.

	RIASEC	Career Anchors	Reversal Theory	MBTI	Five Factor Model
Warm/Cold	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
High / Low energy				✓	✓
Serious / Fun			✓		
Conventional / Unconventional			✓		

Warm / Cold

This dimension is complex and encompasses issues such as control, authenticity, a focus on others and concern about one's image. The warm prototype was seen as kind, caring and authentic, the cold prototype as detached, independent, image conscious and controlled.

This dimension maps onto every one of the other frameworks I have explored. It seems to have some resonance with Schein's service career anchor, RIASEC's social / investigative, MBTI's feeling / thinking, Five Factor's agreeableness, and within Reversal Theory with both the mastery/sympathy and alloic/autic states (the warm side of the warm/cold dimension combines the focus on care seen in sympathy and the focus on the other seen in alloic). There is some evidence that a number of these dimensions overlap: feeling (MBTI) maps onto sympathy (RT) and alloic (RT) and onto agreeableness (FF) (Tuckman & Rutledge, 2007) which

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maps onto social (RIASEC) (Nordvik, 1996).

The warm/cold dimension is already very well represented in the existing literature. The concept is not described in precisely the same way in each model, and these different conceptualisations of similar dimensions leaves us with a theoretical challenge. Are we to suppose that the differences in definitions are simply different ways to describe the same constructs: different theoretical explanations for the same phenomena? Or do the different theoretical conceptualisations point to different constructs? Schein's service anchor is described as a 'driver' – an element of personality which motivates an individual to make particular choices (Schein, 1978). Myers and Briggs's concept of 'feeling' (Myers, 1962) explains choices as a function of how an individual views a situation – whether objectively or subjectively. These are quite different theoretical perspectives, yet the constructs described correlate strongly with each other (Nordvik, 1996).

This intrapsychic construct of warm / cold identified as a construct which the participants in this study used to categorise and differentiate between occupational identities is also present in frameworks of career and personality.

High energy / low energy
High energy prototypes were likely to be actively engaged with a wide number of hobbies and people. Those with low energy were likely to be less engaged with activities, get involved with fewer activities and choose hobbies which were less physically active. This dimension seems to map onto the Five Factor and MBTI dimension of extraversion, and with RIASEC's enterprising code. These three have all been shown to correlate with each other (Nordvik, 1996; Schinka, Dye & Curtiss, 1997). The match here is not perfect. Extravert / enterprising types and those with high energy are sociable, all exhibit energy and drive and enjoy a range of different activities, but there is a quality which features in the low energy type identified in this study which is not present in a classic introvert description, which is the lack of effort or engagement. Introvert types can be passionately engaged with a hobby (although it is likely that they are engaged with just one or two hobbies rather than a range of different activities), where the low energy types in this framework tend not to be.

This construct again seems to be well represented in some personality and career models, but not in all: this construct has no obvious overlaps within Reversal Theory or Schein's anchors.

In addition to the overlaps identified with the psychological frameworks I have chosen to explore, this dimension of high and low energy may have some resonance with one of the sociological dimensions introduced earlier. The framework of occupational prestige (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994) includes the construct of 'activity', and holds that there is a link between levels of activity associated with a particular occupation and the prestige accorded to that occupation in society. The idea of 'activity' seems to resonate with the intrapsychic construct of 'high energy' identified in the framework of occupational identities. Associations between personality characteristics and status have been observed widely in the literature (for example Harms, Roberts & Wood, 2007; Hogan & Hogan, 1991) and links have been identified between personality traits and career success (Spurk, Keller & Hirshi, 2016). The link seen here, between a characteristic associated with occupational identities and a construct which determines occupational prestige suggests a closer association between perceptions of occupations and occupational identities than has previously been made explicit in the literature.

Serious / Fun

Serious prototypes were seen as a bit boring, behaving in a sensible manner and choosing long term goals over short term pleasure. Fun prototypes were seen to be positive, light hearted and focused on hedonic pleasure. This construct only resonated with one of the frameworks I looked at, mapping well onto just the serious / playful dimension from RT. Those in a serious state, according to RT are motivated by long term goals and those in the playful state are motivated by the activity itself. This has some resonance with the element of the serious / fun dimension in this grounded theory which indicates that some prototypes would choose 'improving' activities over those giving more pleasurable rewards.

RT was the only framework I explored which contained a construct which resonated with the serious / fun dimension which emerged from the data in this study. Further research could identify whether this is a construct which is widely used to conceptualise occupational identities but the findings from this study could suggest that the other personality and career models are missing a key component for occupational prototypes.

Conventional / Unconventional

Conventional prototypes were bland and predictable, where unconventional prototypes were more unusual and more likely to stand out. This construct most closely maps onto the

conforming / negativistic dimension from RT, sharing the idea that both those in a conforming state (RT) and occupational identities seen as conventional types choose to behave according to rules and conventions and strive to fit in and behave in a similar way to others. In contrast, the unconventional prototypes and those in a negativistic state would choose behaviours which set them apart from others.

The conforming / negativistic dimension was the only example in the frameworks I explored which struck a chord with the conventional / unconventional construct. As with the serious / fun construct, it seems that RT offers the only dimension of those explored with clear similarities to the conventional / unconventional construct identified in this study. This again could suggest that the existing career frameworks are not sufficiently comprehensive to cover all the aspects of an occupational prototype.

Summary of intrapsychic constructs

Each of the four intrapsychic constructs identified in this framework of occupational prototypes resonates with the dimensions, constructs or states in other, established frameworks of personality. Whilst it is the only one of the four established models used, which has not been applied to career research or practice, RT seems to provide the closest links to the intrapsychic part of the framework, with three of the four intrapsychic constructs overlapping with the RT states. RT was introduced to the literature over 30 years ago (Apter ,1982) and although some research has been published which supports the theoretical foundations of the theory (Apter & Heskin, 2001), the theory has not been well evidenced (Cramer, 2013) although the serious / playful state seems to have received more attention in the literature than the others (Apter, 2013). The findings in this study suggest that Apter's RT may be a framework which could make a valuable addition to the career discipline, and further research could usefully explore the contribution it could make to this field.

The findings of this part of the study establish that the participants were able to describe clear links between individual characteristics and the people who do particular jobs. Yet the kinds of characteristics identified differ in some ways from the existing taxonomies of job-related characteristics and personality traits examined. Three explanations could account for this difference: this current analysis is not generalizable beyond the participants in the current study, the established taxonomies are flawed (as Arnold, 2004 postulates), or the characteristics participants see in occupational prototypes are not the same as those which

exist in actual professionals.

Some support for the notion that our participants have identified different characteristics in their prototypes from those they might see in real workers comes from McCrae and Bodenhausen (2000) who describe a theory-driven process of social categorization in which people who are not motivated or equipped to make careful assessments of others rely heavily on stereotyped characteristics. These categorizations have been shown to be based to a disproportionate degree on information and cues which are most visually salient (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), with individuals giving more weight to characteristics such as talkativeness and self-confidence, which can be more easily discerned than less-visible characteristics such as anxiety or introversion. This approach results in inaccurate and biased perceptions of these individuals (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). It is conceivable that this theory-driven cognitive process, based on stereotypes and giving more weight to certain types of characteristics could have been used by the participants in this study, and this could have led to an incomplete or biased assessment of the prototypes. This may have been particularly significant in the prototypical descriptions of the occupational psychologists, for participants who had little conscious knowledge of the profession.

6.5.2. Interpsychic constructs

The interpsychic constructs considered the occupational prototypes within a social hierarchy. Four distinct constructs emerged: culture, objective success, intellectual status and social class.

As highlighted above, the existing literature does not offer a framework or theory to account for occupational prototypes. Other bodies of literature thus need to be sought which might help to explain the findings of this current study. There are two frameworks, described earlier in the chapter, which seem to have great relevance here. The first is Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital and the second is occupational prestige (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994). Bourdieu's theory looks at different symbols of power: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. MacKinnon and Langford (1994) link occupational prestige with occupational identity and identify five antecedents of occupational prestige: pre-requisite education, income, activity, power and moral worthiness. Table 6.3 presents an overview of the overlaps between these four constructs and the two existing sociological frameworks with which they are compared.

Table 6.4. Inclusion of the interpsychic dimensions from the framework of occupational identities in other established models.

	Bourdieu's capitals	Occupational Prestige
Cultural status	✓	
Objective success	✓	✓
Intellectual status	✓	✓
Social Class	✓	

High / Low Culture

Prototypes with an orientation to high culture are seen to expose themselves to a range of cultural experiences and enjoy learning about history, art and literature and going on city breaks to cultural centres. Those more aligned with low culture would prefer a beach holiday, might watch soaps on television and would spend the evening drinking beer and watching football at the pub.

This construct resonates with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, although there are differences. The occupational prototype construct to culture relates to interests which might be termed 'high art' – literature, music and visual arts. Bourdieu's concept is also associated with how one should behave within a particular context. It could be about knowing who won this year's Turner or Booker prize, but is also broader and more context-specific – what language is acceptable and what one should wear in a particular environment.

High / Low objective success

Prototypes with high objective success status were identifiably rich and had desirable partners (good looking, in good jobs and well paid). This is probably most closely linked with the occupational prestige marker of high income, and Bourdieu's economic capital. Objective success, as defined in this framework of occupational identities is conceptualised more broadly. The prototypical identities who were categorised as having high levels of success were not only wealthy, they also showed their success through the trappings of wealth, showing

that success is linked to features such as the desirability of partners, and the impression that designer brands may give. The symbol of partner desirability as a marker of objective success is interesting. It is a cliché in our society that wealthy men attract beautiful women (Autioa, Katilab, Stranda, & Kylkilahtia, 2013), and the evidence from the data from this study recalls Hakim's (2006) research on career preferences of women, which suggests that women orientated to home life specifically look for rich partners.

High / Low intellectual status

Those with high intellectual status seek opportunities to learn. This is the one construct identified which does not seem to be directly linked to any of Bourdieu's capitals, although it may have an indirect link with cultural capital. It does however resonate with the education aspect of occupational prestige (MacKinnon & Longford, 1994). Although intellectual status and a high degree of education are not quite the same concept, education could be seen as both a predictor and an outcome of intellectual status: those with high intellect are defined as those who seek out educational opportunities, and education systems encourage an intellectual approach.

High / Low Social Class

This construct proved most challenging to define, perhaps because it is the most instinctive to understand, both for the participants providing the data and for me as the researcher conducting the analysis. Participants described symbols of class explicitly ('middles and uppers only') but did not provide any particular examples of what they meant by class. Although linked to some of the constructs above, I identified this as a category in its own right. Aspects of the data spoke to class but did not seem to resonate with any of the particular elements of the occupational prestige or Bourdieu's frameworks. According to Bourdieu, social class is an overarching concept which is a function of the distribution of power in capital. Yet in the data of this study, class seemed to constitute an independent construct. Participants referred explicitly to class in some instances, and in others to features which are indirect but widely acknowledged symbols of class (such as the distinction between football and rugby, Warde, 2006) without reference to the other types of capital. Occupational prestige is considered in itself to be an indicator of social class (Nakao & Treas, 1992), which is consistent with the emergence of social class as a construct in this study.

Summary of the interpsychic constructs

Bourdieu's (1986) notion of 'capital' has been used as a tool to examine career choice addressing issues such as a lack of social, economic and cultural capital limiting individuals' chances of securing high status jobs (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; Gazley et al., 2014). It has also been used as a tool to examine career aspirations – exploring the way that those with low levels of the different kinds of capital are more likely to have lower career aspirations (Connolly, Allen-Collinson & Evans, 2016). This study, however, suggests that Bourdieu's capital could constitute a framework which represents the way that individuals conceptualise, categorise and discriminate between occupational identities. The call for career theories to be developed which incorporate both sociological and psychological variables is not new. Gottfredson (1981) criticised the academic community for failing to devise theories which acknowledge the influence of both individual attributes and societal factors in career choice and career development. Career theories have tended to be on the boundary between psychology and sociology, and often draw from one or other tradition, sometimes acknowledging the other approach, (for example, Super, 1980, whose psychological theory incorporates some gesture to sociological variables) but rarely placing both approaches in centre stage (Vilhjálmsdóttir, & Arnkelsson, 2003). More recent theories (notably Social Cognitive Career Choice Theory – Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994, and Patton & McMahon's Systems Theory, 2006) have been more holistic, acknowledging the role of sociological factors such as social class and parental values, as well as the psychological factors of personality and talents. The present study suggests that issues of status could be fundamental in our conceptualisation of career identities and offers a theoretical starting point for an approach which incorporates both sociological and psychological variables at its core.

6.6. Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the characteristics symbolised by the features of the prototypical occupational identities. In doing so, the analysis generated a new theory of the perceptions of occupational social identities through a taxonomy of occupational prototypes. Table 6.4. presents an overview of the overlaps between these eight constructs and the seven existing frameworks with which they have been compared.

The grounded theory puts forward two theoretical categories: intrapsychic and interpsychic, which comprise eight separate constructs. These elements have some resonance with a

number of taxonomies used in career development theory and practice: RIASEC, MBTI, Career Anchors, Five Factor Model, Bourdieu's capital and occupational prestige. An additional framework, Apter's Reversal Theory was found to have significant overlaps with the current theory, but this has not as yet been applied to career decision making in this way. The framework makes a number of innovative contributions to the literature. First, it is, as far as I can ascertain, the only framework of the perceptions of occupational identities which has been published. Second, the framework integrates both intrapsychic and interpsychic dimensions, acknowledging the importance of both psychological and sociological influences. Finally, the framework incorporates the constructs of fun and conventionality which are not included in the frameworks used in mainstream career practice in the UK.

Table 6.5. Inclusion of the eight dimensions from the grounded theory of occupational identities in seven established models.

	RIASEC	Anchors	RT	MBTI	FF	Bourdieu's capitals	Occupational Prestige
Warm/cold	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
High / low energy				✓	✓		
Serious / fun			✓				
Conventional / unconventional			✓				
Cultural status						✓	
Objective success						✓	✓
Intellectual status						✓	✓
Social Class						✓	

It is well established that occupational identities are a significant aspect of social identity, and that perceptions of occupational identities, in the form of prototypes, have some influence on

career decisions. This new framework offers a classification of the characteristics which these participants appear to use to understand and discriminate between occupational identities and it is conceivable that this framework may be of value within career practice. In the final study of this doctoral programme, I examined the contribution it may make within career practice, introducing the framework to experienced career practitioners and exploring their responses to it.

Chapter 7: Study 4. Prototypical occupational identities: A grounded theory study exploring career practitioners' responses to a new framework

7.1. Introduction

This final study examined the fourth of the research questions set out in Chapter 2 exploring how prototypical occupational identities could be used in career conversations.

In Study 3 I produced a grounded theory of prototypical occupational identities, which are depictions of the perceptions of a typical member of an occupational group. The participants from the focus groups in Study 1 described in detail their prototypes of members of 4 professions (social worker, primary teacher, clinical psychologist and occupational psychologist). The features described, symbolised particular attributes and the grounded theory analysis conducted in Study 3 led to a framework of characteristics which reflected the ways that the participants conceptualised and discriminated between the different prototypical occupational identities. The framework incorporated 8 constructs. These were categorised as 4 intrapsychic constructs *(warm/cold, high / low energy, serious / fun* and

conventional / unconventional) and 4 interpsychic constructs *(culture, success, intellect* and *class)*. The discussion in Chapter 6 explains the ways in which aspects of this framework overlap with a number of existing frameworks which represent other conceptualisations of the world of work and which are commonly used in career discussions. This framework is broader than others, combining constructs situated within the individual, with constructs which emanate from the relationship between the individual and society. The framework also includes two constructs *(serious / fun* and *conventional / unconventional)* which are not incorporated in the frameworks most often used in career practice.

Conceptually, this framework differs from existing frameworks in that it represents perceptions of identities. Other frameworks are based on the nature of the role itself, focusing on what people in particular jobs **do**, rather than the identity-based idea of who people in particular jobs **are**, and existing models aim to identify the 'reality' of the world of work rather than focusing on perceptions.

The ease, fluency, breadth and depth of the focus group discussions indicated that these prototypical occupational identities were already in existence in the participants' cognitive stores, although the participants were not always consciously aware that they had this knowledge until their attention was drawn to it. I was curious to find out how career practitioners might respond to the framework and whether it could facilitate insightful and useful discussions about career choices. In this final study I explore these aspects of the framework with experienced career practitioners.

The chapter will begin with a brief overview of some of the most relevant aspects of literature, and will then turn to the methods used for the study. This was a grounded theory study, and as this methodology, both conceptually and procedurally, was introduced in some depth in the previous chapter (6.3), the methods section of this chapter (7.3) will focus on the procedure and participants for this study. The findings of the analysis will be presented (7.4) and a discussion will situate these findings within the context of the wider body of literature (7.5). The chapter will finish with a discussion of the reconfiguration of the framework of occupational identities in the light of the data from this study (7.6).

7.2. Brief overview of the literature

This study explores prototypical occupational identities from the perspective of practitioners,

and in this brief overview I will cover two areas of literature which are particularly pertinent to this study. The literature around stereotypes has been addressed previously in this thesis, but here I will consider occupational stereotypes from the perspective of the practitioner, reviewing the literature which sheds light on career professionals' reactions to occupational stereotypes. This final study explores whether this framework could be used by practitioners to explore identities with their clients and in the second part of this section of the chapter, I will summarise the literature on practical approaches to identity work in careers.

7.2.1. Occupational stereotypes in career practice

The literature which examines stereotypes, prototypes and occupational prototypes has been reviewed earlier in the thesis. More pertinent to this chapter, however, is an overview of the way that career practitioners understand and respond to stereotypes.

Career research and practice have engaged extensively with occupational stereotypes which are linked to particular demographic features such as class (Springate, Atkinson, Straw, Lamont & Grayson, 2008), race (Carlone & Johnson, 2007) and, most frequently, gender (Archer et al., 2010). There is significant evidence that gender-role occupational stereotypes have an impact on career choices, in that children are drawn to occupations and academic subjects which are stereotypically associated with their own gender (Lightbody & Durndell, 1996). The impact of this can be seen at a young age and is pervasive (Gottfredson, 1981), and it is problematic in that it limits individuals' perceptions of the career options which they believe are open to them (Gadassi & Gati, 2009). Beyond the implications for individuals, there are societal implications. A diverse membership of any occupational group is likely to confer benefits on the organisation (Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002) and for society as a whole, there are economic and ethical implications. McKinsey Global Institute, in a 2015 report, suggest that enabling women to fulfil their full potential at work could add $28 trillion to GDP by 2025, and limiting the range of occupations which women believe are open to them serves to perpetuate an unequal society (Bimrose, McMahon & Watson, 2016). The evidence is clear then that gender-role occupational stereotypes have a detrimental impact on society and on individuals.

As a result of this and other such evidence, stereotypes, within the career profession, are not held in high regard. The impetus to eradicate stereotyping can be seen in policy guidelines, academic research and practical initiatives, within the UK and beyond. The Career Development Institute for example, in their National Occupational Standards (CDI, 2014) both

shapes and reflects the industry view of stereotypes, stating that all practitioners should 'challenge any prejudice, use of stereotypes, discrimination and unethical oppressive behaviour' (p.2). Within the academic literature, recommendations derived from empirical research encourage career practitioners to spend time combating stereotype thinking in themselves, employers and clients (Herr, 2008; Nauta, Saucier & Woodard, 2000; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). In practice too, numerous initiatives aimed at challenging gender stereotypes can be identified. A career related learning project for primary schools (Wade et al., 2010) aimed 'to reduce gender-specific career / role stereotypes'; Careers North East focused on gender stereotypes in their project 'Challenging Occupational Stereotyping through Careers Guidance' (2014) and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2017) launched a recent campaign called 'Gender-ed: combatting gender stereotyping in education and career guidance'.

Aside from the negative position stereotypes hold within the profession, it is notable that guidelines for practitioners rarely question their accuracy. Jussim, Cain, Crawford, Harber and Cohen (2009) provide a theoretical explanation for this, arguing that the social ills which have been the result of stereotyping have led to a general perception that stereotypes must be factually inaccurate. Yet their review of the empirical evidence highlights 'impressive and surprising evidence of the accuracy of stereotypes' (p.212), and they report correlations between stereotype views and reality ranging from .34 to .93 in the studies which they reviewed. Stereotypes about gender (Williams, Satterwhite & Best, 1999) and age (Jussim, 2012) in particular, have been shown to provide a reasonable match to actual differences. In the case of the gender-role occupational stereotypes, so pertinent to career practice, the evidence indicates that they are frequently grounded in reality – often more than just the *kernel of truth* that Judd and Park (1993) describe. Stereotypes of engineers, for example, are male (Powell, Dainty, & Bagilhole, 2012) but this reflects the reality that only 6% of registered engineers and technicians in the UK are women (Engineering UK, 2015). However, despite the evidence of their accuracy, an assumption of the fallacy of stereotypes can be discerned in advice to practitioners in career literature. Watson, Nota and McMahon (2015), for example, advise practitioners to reject stereotypes in favour of 'accurate occupational knowledge' (p. 176) assuming and establishing a polarity between stereotypes and accurate knowledge.

The evidence paints a complicated picture. Stereotypes can perpetuate social injustice, and

striving for social justice is a core value for the career profession (Hooley & Sultana, 2016). Discussions about occupational stereotypes are thus important to the profession. It seems, however, that the distinction between *perpetuating* and *reflecting* social justice have become blurred. Gender role stereotypes reflect an unjust world which career practitioners might want to change, but they are often accurate.

The focus within the career profession, is on stereotypes which focus on demographic features, most often gender. Occupational stereotypes, however, are complex and multidimensional and yet guidelines for practice often seem to treat all aspects of stereotypes in the same way, applying the distaste for gender stereotypes to stereotypes more broadly. There is a dearth of research which explores career practitioners' opinions and practice with regards to these holistic stereotypical occupational identities, and this study aims to address this gap. In this study I explore career practitioners' responses of career practitioners to a framework which was developed from stereotypes and I elicit their views on the value of an approach to practice which acknowledges the existence of prototypical occupational identities within clients' existing cognitive stores.

7.2.2. An identity approach to career practice

In Study 4, participants were asked to participate in and reflect on the value of an identity approach to practice which makes use of a particular framework and which focuses on occupational identities and possible selves. As discussed in Chapter 2, identity is now incorporated into the heart of much career theory and the literature offers some recommendations for identity-based approaches to practice.

The most widely documented approach to incorporating other variants of identity in career practice is through a narrative approach (Brott, 2017). In narrative career counselling, clients are invited to tell their career stories and then are supported as they re-author them to create better stories, and to link the past, present and future (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). The links between stories and identity are explored and established in a range of literature. Stories are explained as the mechanism through which we make sense of our lives and experiences (Grant & Johnson, 2006) and Hartung (2013) highlights that our very existence is tied up with stories, claiming that we live narrative lives. McIlveen and Patton (2007) suggest that 'identities are

constructed through narrative' (p. 239) and Savickas (2015b) submits that it is through the process of narrative career counselling that people can 'envision a revised identity story' (p.9). Narrative career counselling is a relatively new approach to career practice and as such does not yet have a substantial body of evidence to support or explain its efficacy (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). Some promising studies provide support for this as a valuable tool for career practice (Hartung & Santilli, 2017; Meijers, Poell, Geijsel & Post, 2016; Maree & Pollard, 2009; McIlveen, Ford & Dun, 2005; McMahon, 2017; McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005; McMahon & Watson, 2015; Reid & West, 2011) but further research is needed.

Savickas et al. (2009) propose the new concept of a Life Design approach to career practice, advocating the use of a range of constructivist approaches informed by social constructionism. One particular narrative approach proposed, the Career Story Interview (Savickas, 2015b) offers five key questions for practitioners to pose to clients which are aimed at identifying their pre-occupations and life themes. Supporting evidence of the value of a Career Story intervention is limited (Cardoso, Silva, Goncalves & Duarte, 2014) but growing and some is offered through single case study reports (Rehfuss, Del Corso, Glavin, & Wykes, 2011) and within group contexts (DiFabio & Maree, 2012). Further evidence which both explains and demonstrates the impact of other Life Design interventions is offered through an increasing number of case study and small scale studies (Cardoso et al., 2016; Maree & Symington, 2015; Pouyaud et al., 2016; Taylor & Savickas, 2016).

This programme of research has explored two particular variants of career identity: possible selves and occupational prototypes. Whilst empirically derived and tested practical tools for using occupational prototypes in career practice are hard to find, practitioners looking for support in using possible selves in their work have more to draw from. Guidance for conducting a possible selves intervention comes from Plimmer and Schmidt (2007) who provide a five step approach to using possible selves with adults in career transitions. In their first step, clients are supported to identify their possible selves. The practitioner then provides information and guidance about the options under consideration. In the third step, the practitioner supports the client as they 'find the fit' – matching their possible self with the options in question. In the final step, the client is then encouraged to focus on strengths to develop positive pathways, identifying specific action points. Plimmer (2012) provides some empirical evidence that this approach has a positive impact on career decidedness and levels

of comfort. Ibarra (1999; 2005) writes about provisional selves as an approach to working with adult career changers, suggesting that clients should be encouraged to 'try on' new occupational identities as part of the process of career choice. Empirical support for this approach is offered in the form of a range of case studies.

The notion of identity is now established as an important construct in career development scholarship, but further empirical research which supports its use in practice is needed and practical tools which can be used to explore prototypical occupational identities are particularly scarce. In this final study, a framework of occupational identities is presented to practitioners. Their responses to this as a tool to aid identity-based career conversations is explored and their perceptions of how this might add value to their practice is examined.

The first three studies in this thesis explored the key themes of occupational identities and possible selves from the perspective of those making career decisions. In this final study the focus turns to the perspective of career practitioners. This brief review has summarised the literature around stereotypes and identity from the perspective of those in the careers profession. The review has identified a number of problems to be solved. The literature suggests that guidelines for practitioners assume that stereotypes are inaccurate and insidious but there is scant literature which explores how practitioners feel about broader occupational stereotypes, beyond those associated with demographic features, or which provides guidelines to inform how they could be addressed in career conversations. In terms of practical approaches to identity within career conversations, the growing empirical evidence base supporting an identity approach to career practice is promising, but further evidence could usefully establish the value that particular approaches to identity-based career practice could add.

In this final study then, practitioners' responses to the framework of prototypical occupational identities which was developed in Study 3 were explored. Practitioners were asked about how they use prototypes in career practice, how they felt about career conversations which centre around occupational identities and what impact they felt an identity-based approach to career conversations could have within their practice.

In the next section, an overview of the methods used in the study will be provided. The findings will be presented in the section which follows and these will then be incorporated with the literature outlined above.

7.3. Methods

In the previous chapter, I introduced classic grounded theory (GCT) (Glaser, 1992) as the qualitative methodology which would be used in the third and fourth studies of this programme of research. Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1972) is a process of rigorous data analysis that aims to generate an inductive theory which is closely based on the data. It is considered particularly valuable for topics where there is little existing theory to explain the phenomenon (Crooks, 2001) and as such was considered a suitable choice for this current study which explores career practitioners' responses to a new framework of occupational identities. CGT offers a flexible approach to data analysis, which allows the researcher creativity and closely adheres to the original principles of a strong link between the data and the theory (Glaser, 1992). Researchers are advised to choose the version of grounded theory which most closely aligns with their preferred way of working (Charon, 2010) and I was drawn to this more creative analytic process together with the emphasis on the development of a theory which is comprehensively grounded in the data.

The conceptual and procedural aspects of CGT were described in some depth in the previous chapter, so here I will focus on the participants and aspects of procedure which are particularly pertinent to this study. One aspect of CGT which was not explored in Chapter 6 is theoretical sampling. This is a particular approach to identifying participants which is used in grounded theory to ensure that the data collected is going to be the most likely to contribute to the development of a useful theory (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009). In Study 3 the data had been generated for an earlier study, and therefore the selection of participants was not conducted with grounded theory in mind. In Study 4, however, theoretical sampling was used to identify the most suitable participants and as such will now be described in some detail.

7.3.1. Participants

Theoretical sampling is a core pillar of grounded theory methodology. This process ensures that the researcher gathers data which are most likely to contribute to the development of a robust theory, one which explains rather than describes the phenomenon. The data collection is finished when the core category is sufficiently well conceived and dense, and when new data collection generates no further leads (Glaser, 1992). This is the point of theoretical saturation. Breckenridge and Jones (2009) make a useful distinction between the aim of theoretical

saturation within CGT and the aim within other kinds of qualitative data collection, highlighting that in CGT it relates to saturation at a conceptual, not just a descriptive level. This means that the CGT researcher does not need to feel that they know everything that is to be known about the particular phenomenon or research question, but does need to feel confident that the categories identified provide enough explanatory power. The question in CGT is 'Will this new data help to make the theory stronger?' rather than 'Will this new data help me to describe the issue better?'. The focus in CGT is to aim for a theory which can account for as much variation in the data as possible, one which looks as though it will withstand changing circumstances and one which is generalizable, rather than one which is focused on 'in-the-moment accuracy' (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009, p.121). The point at which theoretical saturation is reached in CGT is therefore determined by the strength of the developing theory and not the number of participants.

Breckenridge and Jones (2009) highlight the distinction between purposeful sampling, in which the researcher identifies participants who are most likely to provide data which is relevant to the overall research question (Sandelowski, 1995), and theoretical sampling, in which the researcher identifies participants who are most likely to provide data which is relevant to the current stage of theory development (Glaser, 1978). Breckenridge and Jones (2009) explain that theoretical sampling 'progressively and systematically tailors data collection to serve the emergent theory' (p.188). The grounded theory researcher will start data collection by identifying participants who seem likely to provide relevant data, but will keep an open mind about where the data might lead next (Coyne, 1997). Once that first tranche of data is transcribed and analysed and memos are written, the researcher will consider the emerging theory and identify any gaps within the categories. The researcher then chooses the next participants with a view to collecting data which will lead to a more complete theory.

The discussions about theoretical sampling raise questions about the role of deductive logic in CGT. In CGT, the theory emerges inductively from the data, but the process of theoretical sampling entails a degree of deductive logic, as the researcher makes a decision about where next to gather data on the basis of assumptions about the theory as it stands. Glaser (1978) refers to this process as 'conceptual elaboration' but it is difficult to argue that it does not overlap with deductive logic. Dey (2007) coins a useful phrase to help reconcile the emphasis in CGT on inductive reasoning with this more deductive approach to identifying participants,

warning researchers not to confuse 'an open mind with an empty head' (p.176), highlighting the need for a pragmatic, real-world understanding of the research process.

Theoretical sampling is core to all branches of GT, but the sampling process in CGT differs from that described in later versions of the approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As described above, Glaser (1978) suggests that the researcher conducts the initial data collection and analysis, and identifies gaps in the categories. It is these gaps which indicate the next aspect of the theory to be explored and therefore where the most relevant data is likely to be found. The researcher continues with data collection, analysis and memo writing, trying to saturate each category until a core category emerges (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). At this stage the researcher focuses on the data which is related to the core category and engages with theoretical sampling with the aim of gathering enough of the right kind of data to give the core category the depth and breadth of codes needed. The process described is open and leaves much to the discretion of the researcher, and deliberately so. Strauss and Corbin (1998) in their version of GT give more detailed, step by step process of theoretical sampling which can be helpful for the researcher, but at the heart of CGT is the creativity and freedom of the researcher and the research process, and Glaser (2002) argues that without this, the theoretical conceptualisation will be limited. Boychuk-Duchscher and Morgan (2004) point out that if a researcher is too wedded to the process, then the theory which emerges is likely to be grounded in the process rather than in the data and 'The true nature of the data may be lost' (p.611).

Morse (2009) identifies one final challenge for a researcher, which is how the methodological complexities of theoretical sampling should be described within the formal structure of an academic paper. Barbour (2001) suggests that the description of the process of theoretical sampling should be integrated within the findings of the study, so that the data collection choices can be explained alongside the development of the theory. This is the approach adopted here, and the participants are therefore introduced chronologically, within the findings section below.

7.3.2. Procedure and ethics

Before data collection began, ethical approval from the University ethics committee was granted (see Appendix D1). The career practitioners were invited to participate initially by email and a participant information sheet was sent before the participants were asked for their consent. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face, two in my office

and one in the participant's workplace, and one interview was conducted using Skype. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were discussed and the participants were told what would happen to the data after the interviews and reassured that they would be able to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any point until the data were incorporated into the theory.

During the semi-structured interviews, I introduced the framework and explained its origins. I asked the participants to conjure up a prototype of a particular occupation in their mind's eye and then asked them to describe the prototype in terms of the constructs within the framework *('Is your prototypical social worker warm or cold? High energy or low energy?'*). The first occupation discussed was chosen by the participant from the four which were discussed by the participants in the first study. Subsequently, the participants were asked to suggest an occupation of their choice to discuss - the only qualifications being that it needed to be an occupation they themselves were not closely linked to. Participants chose a nurse, a quantity surveyor, a detective, and a quality manager. The participants were asked to comment on the process and whether they had found it easy to identify a prototype and to define it in terms of the constructs. This process was repeated with one other prototypical occupational identity. The participants were then asked to consider their own desired future identities in terms of the constructs ('W*ould you like to be seen as a warm or a cold person?')* and were asked to think about how the comparison between their own desired identity and the prototypical occupational identities discussed might have a bearing on their career ideas. Finally the participants were asked whether they had any comments on the framework itself and how they could imagine it might bring value to their clients.

The conversations were recorded and the data were transcribed verbatim. In accordance with CGT guidelines (Glaser, 1992), each interview was transcribed and the data analysed before the next participant was chosen and interviewed.

7.3.3. Data analysis

The process of CGT analysis was described in detail in the previous chapter and in this study, the four step process (Glaser, 1965) was followed: i) comparing incidents applicable to each category, ii) integrating categories and their properties, iii) delimiting the theory and iv) writing the theory. Alongside these steps, and throughout the process of analysis, I wrote memos, recording my thoughts about the data and reflections on my own responses, developed

numerous mind maps to help identify possible relationships between categories (see Appendices D3 and D4) and engaged in constant comparison.

7.4 Findings

The analysis of the data from each participant is presented in turn. The categories which were developed through the analysis of each participant were then synthesised into an overall grounded theory which is described in section 7.4.5.

7.4.1. Participant 1: Jaqueline

The aim of this study was to test the grounded theory of prototypical occupational identities generated by the focus group data from study 1. For data collection, I sought career practitioners who had experience of working with clients making their career choices, and who were familiar with a range of other career frameworks and tools. Jacqueline is a freelance career coach who specialises in working with adult career changers. She works with clients from a range of backgrounds but has a focus within the creative industries and with entrepreneur clients. Table 7.1 presents an overview of the categories and codes identified during the analysis of Jacqueline's data.

Table 7.1. Categories and codes from the data from participant 1.

Categories	Codes	Examples
The constructivist nature of career	Interpretation of the constructs is individual	'it depends on what conventional means'
		'to me unconventional is a freak in the corner painting'
		'low energy isn't negative to you and me but it might be to someone else'.
	Conceptualisation of occupational prototypes is influenced by individual experiences	'I know too many teachers I think'
Discussing the framework highlights the complexity of career	Decision making is not just about matching	'I labelled them as conventional yet I'd be comfortable taking a job there if I was quirky'

	Career choice goes beyond personal identities	Jobs, organisations, clients, colleagues
	The labour market is nuanced	The qualities seen in an A&E nurse might be different from those seen in a paediatric nurse.
Binary constructs are problematic	Scales would be easier	'I'm not sure what I think of low'

Constructivist nature of career

The first category which was developed from the data from the interview with Jacqueline was the constructivist nature of career. The codes which were identified here were that i) interpretations of the constructs are individual, and that ii) conceptualisations of different occupational identities will be influenced by individual experiences.

Jacqueline found the language of the constructs in the framework problematic, and the analysis of the data showed that both what a word means and how the construct is enacted will vary from one person to another. The first challenge with the language for Jacqueline was that the terms were not specifically defined: *'it depends on what conventional means, doesn't it?' (P2L9).* Then, although examples were given (taken from the focus group data), the examples did not consistently conform to Jacqueline's definitions of the term in question. When discussing the construct of 'intellectual status', for example, Jacqueline pointed to the examples given, which includes 'reads chick lit' and 'visits museums' and commented '*but this* [the examples provided] *is about the type of things they read and the type of things they do, where to me it's, I was thinking about how super-smart are they' (P2L38-39).* On other occasions although she could see that the examples did illustrate her definition of the construct, they still did not resonate *'I would say I'm unconventional but […] I'm not wearing Birkenstocks and going to festivals.' (P5L31-32).* The yardstick against which an individual might assess the strength of each construct is personal, and the exact nuance of what might constitute 'quirky' or 'high intellect' will vary from one individual to another, as Jacqueline commented *'quirky to me is not a primary school teacher it's a freak in a corner painting' (P2L17-18).* Relative values too will differ. The discussion highlighted that not all clients would share the same value system *'so "low energy" isn't negative to you and me but it might be to someone else, "calm" might be the perfect word for someone else' (P8L21-22).* This suggests that the meaning accorded to the framework may be quite different for different individuals

and that interpretations will depend on people's own values, their understanding of the words used as labels, and the behavioural symbols which they associate with each construct.

Jacqueline's data highlighted the impact that one's own experience might have on the interpretation of the framework. Jacqueline found that having personal experience or knowledge of a particular occupation made it more tricky to imagine a single prototype *'I know too many teachers I think' (P1L20)* and suggested that the prototypical identities which clients might conjure up are not as likely to be grounded in reality as those which they have encountered in their personal experience which she described as *'much more solid and more nuanced and realistic than the one in your head for the people you're imagining' (P4L17-18).*

Jacqueline's data illustrates a constructivist approach to the development of an understanding of the world of work and highlights the impact that each person's unique set of experiences will have on their knowledge of different occupations. Jacqueline does not suggest a linear relationship between the amount of personal contact with an occupation and the amount of knowledge, rather she makes a connection between personal contact and the accuracy and complexity of the knowledge. It is interesting to reflect on the impact these associations may have on career decision making. Complex decisions are more challenging, and Jacqueline's comments suggest that additional information about particular career options may serve to make the career decision making process more difficult.

Discussing the framework highlights the complexity of career

The second category to emerge was the complexity of career. The codes, illustrated with examples, are presented in Table 7.1.

Jacqueline indicated that career choice is a more complex process than one in which an individual simply opts for a particular occupation because their prototype of its occupational identity resonates with their self-concept. An example Jacqueline gave was that although she described primary teachers as 'conventional' and herself as 'quirky', this would not necessarily preclude her from considering this occupation: *'what's interesting is that I labelled most of them as conventional in my head yet I'd be comfortable to take a job there if I was quirky' (P4L24-25).* Jacqueline's data also seemed to indicate that client choices might change depending on whether they rated themselves as having moderate or extreme levels of the

constructs:

> '*if I'm not conventional, […] and if I thought* [a particular occupation] *was over here* [high conventional] *then I'm not even going; but if it was a kind of middling, I'm way over here on one spectrum I'm still going to happily apply for that that career which is middling because I know it's acceptable to be on the outside edge of a spectrum.'* (P4L33-36).

Jacqueline highlighted that the framework could be used more broadly than I had anticipated. In addition to consideration of the degree of match between her self concept and her ideas about prototypical occupational identities, Jacqueline also used the framework to contemplate possible colleagues *'Would I want to be around other people that I consider to be more, more serious and low energy? Probably not.' (P5L19-20)* work cultures *'I can't work for the NHS, it's too conventional and I feel trapped' (P5L31-32)* and clients *'it's the clients. The clients are low culture, low status, low intellect, low class, err, I don't want to hang out with them' (P9L31-33).*

Jacqueline illustrates here that a quest for a straightforward match between the individual and job is not necessarily the most useful approach to career decision making. Here Jacqueline highlights that even though she clearly sees herself as an unconventional character, this does not mean that she needs, or even wants to be in a profession which she classes as unconventional. She also indicates that even if she were to seek a match, it may not be a match with the occupational identity which is most important to her but a match with colleagues, clients or the organisation.

The world of work is enormous and complex, and the framework appeared to encourage Jacqueline to conceptualise the world of work with some sophistication and nuance. Jacqueline used the discussions of the framework to develop her mind map of the nursing profession, pointing out that whilst a warm low energy (or calm) personality might suit some specialisms within nursing, such as working with children, a more efficient (or cold) and high energy person might be better suited to working in A&E.

Jacqueline would have found it easier to engage with the framework had the constructs been presented on a continuum (from warm to cold) rather than as binary constructs (warm or

cold), saying *'a lot of them for me a scale would be useful' (P2L35).* In part this seemed to be linked to a feeling that she was uncomfortable ascribing people to the low status categories *'I'm not sure what I think of "low"* [intellectual status]*' (P2L29).*

The theory based on the data from the interview with Jacqueline comprised two categories. The first concerned her feelings about the discussions generated in response to the framework and the second which concerned the nature of the framework itself. My second participant, Anne, was chosen with the expectation that she might provide data which complemented Jacqueline's but might further aid the development of the theory.

7.4.2. Participant 2: Anne

Anne's client base is similar to Jacqueline's in that both work predominately with adult career changers, although Anne's typical clients are more likely to be corporate than Anne's. Anne was a suitable choice for two reasons: Anne's clients come from a broader range of backgrounds, so it would be useful to see whether the emerging theory would be generalisable to this context; the second reason is that Anne is a practitioner / academic, combining her career coaching practice with a teaching and supervisory role at a university. I was interested to see whether her particular knowledge of career theories might allow for data which would challenge the emerging theory from a theoretical perspective. In Table 7.2, I present a summary of the categories and codes which was developed from the data from the interview with Anne.

Table 7.2: Categories and codes from the data from participant 2.

Categories	Codes	Examples
Discomfort	Discomfort at assigning occupational identities to negative categories	'like I was accusing all detectives of having no cultural sensitivity whatsoever' A scale would 'liberate me'
	Discomfort in the decision making process	'no-one in their right minds would make a decision like this'
		'it's like one of those evolutionary stuck things'
		'not thinking'

	Raises awareness of faulty thinking	'let's think about how preconceptions get in the way'
Complexity of career development	Psychological and sociological	'both of them are going to be in there'
	Constructionist and constructivist	'everyone is going to bring their social construction of the world or work as well as having their own internal version'
	Holistic identities	'people don't just go to work, they are something'
	Career choice goes beyond matching	'I'd want to be a cold detective'

Discomfort

For Anne, one of the dominant categories to emerge was that of discomfort. Anne felt that the information processing and decision making mechanisms exposed in discussions within the framework were flawed approaches to career development. Anne seemed uncomfortable acknowledging the existence of these processes and seeing them in herself. The codes which were developed in this category were a) the discomfort associated with assigning negative characteristics to occupational groups and b) discomfort in the decision making process which the framework might suggest. She felt that the best application of the framework with clients was to raise awareness of faulty thinking and bring these mechanisms into clients' conscious awareness in order to expose and reject them.

Anne found that ascribing an occupational prototype to the low end of any of the interpsychic dimensions made her feel uncomfortable as it made her feel that she was making a *value judgement' (P3L35)* and making sweeping generalisations about all members of an occupation *'like I was accusing all detectives of having no cultural sensitivity whatsoever, all beer-swilling, football chanting you know watching soap operas.' (P3L34-35).* She indicated that using a scale may had made her feel able to give a more moderate response and suggested that this would *'liberate'* her *(P3L5).*

Anne saw this approach to decision making (which incorporates prototypes and preconscious reasoning) as a poor way to make a career choice suggesting that *'no one in their right mind would make a decision like this' (P12l31)* and that it is *'a serious unhelpful way to make a*

decision' (P13L27) and she judged this kind of cognitive response to be *'absolutely pointless'(P12 L15).*

Anne felt further discomfort from the dual realisation that whilst she thought this to be a very poor way to make a career decision, she acknowledge that *'we're all doing it all the time' (P11, L21)* and that these kinds of prototypes are *'very available, very accessible' (P4L40).* She herself found that she engaged very readily with the process and found the ease with which she got involved uncomfortable, describing it as *'upsettingly easy' (P2L14).*

Anne's explanation for the existence of such a poor approach to making decisions was that it had evolved in a different context *'it's like one of those evolutionary stuck things '(P11 L11)* . She suggested that whilst it may have been a useful career decision making approach in an era when choices were less complex *'it works fine if all you've got to do is: shall I be a blacksmith, or shall I go and pick those…' (P11 L33- 34)* it was no longer useful, particularly in the context of the complexities of career choices *'If you said to somebody, would you like to be a web designer, or would you be far better off um search engine optimisation, or actually there are 40,000 jobs that have just popped up in Bangladesh, you'd be quite good at those, this is not helpful, is it?' (p11 L40–43).*

Anne described the process using a range of terms which all seemed to indicate processing below the level of consciousness, using terms such as an *'auto-reflex' (P2L9), 'amygdala response' (P15L24), 'random auto-decision making' (P12L32), 'tacit knowledge' (P17L22), 'the auto-response' (P8L32), 'unconscious' (P14L16)* and went so far as to suggest that people engaged in these processes are *'not thinking' (P14L17).*

Anne suggested that the most valuable application of this framework would be to expose the faulty thinking to clients *'before we get anywhere near looking at job ads for argument's sake, or researching jobs or something, let's think about how preconceptions get in the way'.* *(P12L18),* raising their awareness of their preconscious thoughts: *'their automatic responses and their assumptions and judgements and stereotypes' (P12L20-21)* and *'to bring that into the conscious bit of the brain so that they can think "Is this a good way to make a job choice or isn't it?"' (P12L22-23).*

Anne clearly felt that the concepts underpinning this framework illustrate a flawed decision making mechanism. Her personal response to the questions asked revealed to her that she too was at the mercy of this faulty system of generalisations, stereotypes and non-conscious processes, and she seemed almost passionately convinced that her role as a career coach was to help clients to eradicate this damaging approach. The clarity and strength of her responses suggested that she was quite convinced that there was no value in these cognitive processes in the current labour market.

Complexity of career development

The second category to emerge from the data from Anne's interview was the complexity of career and career decisions brought to light through the discussions stemming from the framework. The codes are presented and illustrated in Table 7.2.

Anne observed the combination of *'psychological and sociological; individual, society' (P15L1)* in the framework and suggested that this is one way in which the framework reflects current definitions of career *'your whole project is a bit like "career" to some extent' (P15L1).* She stressed that both aspects *'are equally important' (P15L18)* and that both are intrinsic and inevitable elements of career thinking '*both of them are going to be there' (P15L19).*

Anne reflected on the development of an individual mind map of the world of work. She discussed the idea that people's conceptions of occupations and occupational identities are drawn from their individual and their shared experiences, explaining that *'everyone is going to bring their social construction of the world of work as well as having their own internal version' (P14L34-35)* and stressing the constructivist belief that there is no one fixed reality.
Anne was struck by the idea that this framework illustrates that the new definition of career, now becoming widely accepted in career research, is one which people understand quite intuitively '*people intrinsically understand […] the new definition of career.' (P10L10-14).* This new definition of career (discussed in Chapter 2) adopts the notion that careers are identities *'people don't just go to work, they are something' (P10L15–16)* and that career decisions are holistic *'the person is a whole person and not just a worker' (P10L11).*

I had been keen to interview Anne in part because I knew her to have a strong interest in

career theories. Here she made some clear links between the framework and some of the ideas which underpin the contemporary career theories discussed in Chapter 2. Core to the new paradigm of career theories is the understanding that career choices are choices about identity, conceived holistically, and that the meaning of career is individually constructed. Anne pointed out that the participants in Study 1, whose data led to the development of the framework, seemed instinctively to define career in this way. This sympathy between the participants' personal understanding of career and the definitions currently accepted within the literature, provide some support for the current theoretical position, and perhaps indicate that the use of this framework as a tool which can apply the career theories in practice, should be explored further.

Anne suggested that discussions and further thinking get you *'beyond the auto-response' (P8L32)* and our discussion of the framework revealed a more nuanced response than that I had initially elicited from her in our discussion. The binary nature of the representation of the constructs led me to asking Anne 'either / or' questions, and she responded to this indicating that she would be liked to be seen as a 'warm' person and wouldn't want to be in a 'cold' job. During the discussions, however, Anne's responses to the constructs became more nuanced as she realised that rather than simply judging the constructs as being good or bad, or similar or different, the value she placed on the constructs was context-dependent: she would want to be a warm social worker, but a cold detective: *'it's not good or bad as such but in that circumstance you need that category of person to be that kind of person otherwise they won't be much good to you' (P5L26-28).* Although she did comment that if she were going against her natural inclination in order to better fit the context, she would want to avoid the extremes *'if I was colder I would probably want a scale' (P7L38).* Anne suggested that our discussion made her refine her first instinct both in terms of how she saw herself *'if I thought about it longer than that then I would need to go across the scale' (P8L18)* and in her response to particular jobs *'once I start thinking about what a social worker would do I started thinking "dear god no!"' (P8L15).*

The category of the complexity of career was beginning to take shape at this stage, with both Jacqueline and Anne highlighting different examples of the complex web of experiences and influences which feed into the conceptualisations of career, but a new category, discomfort,

had developed through the analysis of Anne's data. I wanted to explore this category in more depth and so chose to interview Vicky, a career practitioner from a more traditional career guidance background, whose work with vulnerable young people may have led to a heightened sensitivity to the ethical implications of practitioner tools.

7.4.3. Participant 3: Vicky

Table 7.3 presents a summary of the categories and codes which was developed from the interview with Vicky.

Table 7.3: Categories and codes from the data from participant 3.

Categories	Codes	Examples
Discomfort	A poor way to make a decision	'dangerous'
		'that may not be right' 'you could be a lawyer who loves Made in Chelsea'
	Anxiety about own response Does not align with professional values	Scales 'might feel better rather than the extreme' 'judgemental so more uncomfortable'
		'ooh that's worrying isn't it?'
		'so much of my professional life has been about how do you break these things down' 'you want that not to be a reality'
	Could encourage faulty thinking	'does that actually limit the thinking?' / 'is it going on before you ask?'
Complexity of career development	Application of the framework could raise awareness of complexities	'looking at other images and why that was and what sort of criteria. That could be really interesting'.
	Innovative constructs	'no-one asks young people what jobs do they think they'd get fun from'

Discomfort

The most striking thing about the interview with Vicky was her evident discomfort with the framework. This was developed as the first category, illustrated by three codes which described how Vicky felt that the framework represented a poor way to make a career decision, her anxiety with her own response to the framework, and that using the framework

with clients could encourage faulty thinking.

Vicky felt that the framework represented a poor way to make a career decision *'they ought to know what the things that they fill their days with and what skills they need more than what they wear.' (P12L9-10).* Vicky's strength of feeling was evident in her description of the decision making mechanism as '*dangerous',* and references to discomfort were woven through the data: *'I'm uncomfortable with the concept' (P4L33); 'I find that a bit uncomfortable' (P4L41-42), 'it worries me' (P7L43).* Throughout the conversation, Vicky repeatedly raised concerns about the accuracy of the views she herself was voicing: *'that may not be right' (P2L21).* Vicky reported that she was uncomfortable with the stereotype thinking which underpinned the prototypical occupational identities explaining that *'by being asked to come up with an image, you're probably putting the ingredients of a stereotype together' (P2L9 – 10)* and she was keen to point out too that there would always be exceptions *'Cos you could be a lawyer who loves Made in Chelsea' (P4L35); 'there will be warm empathic people in quality management' (P9L16), 'there would be exceptions even in that* [academia]' *(P11L32).*

Vicky suggested that scales might have be easier than the binary constructs because they would allow her to be more moderate about how she conceptualised people with reference to the constructs which *'might feel better rather than the extreme' (P4L15)* . She seemed clear that the value of scale was not that it allowed her to **reflect** a more nuanced view, it was that it allowed her to **express** a more nuanced view which although it wouldn't necessarily represent her honest opinion, made her feel more comfortable *'So I don't know, even on a scale, I'd still be putting it on a 4 or 5 rather than a 2 or a 1' (P4L22-23).* The discomfort which was based on her fears of being judgemental was particularly keen for Vicky when she was thinking about the interpsychic constructs. She explained that with the intrapsychic constructs, both sides of the binary division could be seen as complimentary *'both felt more positive' (P3L30)* whereas with the interpsychic constructs it seemed clearer that one side ('high') was more attractive than the other ('low') *'these sound…making a judgement on somebody's intellectual abilities…*[…] *and I don't know, more judgemental, so more uncomfortable' (P3L30-33).*

In using the framework to analyse her reaction to other professions, Vicky found that she could be quite critical, for example she suggested that her prototype of a social worker was

'pretending to be high culture' (P1L37) and seemed uncomfortable about her own comments *'That's terrible!' (P1L38).* The prototypes which Vicky described seemed to be easy for her to access and she answered my questions swiftly and fluently. This seemed to be a cause for concern for her *'ooh, that's worrying, isn't it?' (P2L2).*

Vicky seemed to struggle to align the 'reality' which she felt the framework reflected and exposed, with her professional values as a career practitioner explaining that *'we're also so keen to offset that through the work that we do, as because of the whole thing about social inclusion' (P4L30-31).* Vicky was uncomfortable with the idea that the framework seemed to be putting people in boxes, which again seemed to conflict with her professional goals: *'and it worries me […] so much of my professional life has been about how do you break those things down' (P7L43-44).* Some of Vicky's discomfort seemed to stem from not wanting the world to be this way *'you want that not to be a reality' (P4L31).*

Vicky seemed concerned that using a framework such as this would narrow clients' thinking rather than broadening it *'does that actually limit the thinking?' (P8L1-2),* and went so far as to speculate *'is that a really dangerous thing to encourage?' (P12L8).* Her dilemma seemed to be grounded in the question of whether these kinds of thoughts pre-existed for the clients, or whether they were generated by a question about them from a practitioner, wondering *'Is it going on before you ask?' (P13L15).* Her tentative conclusion was that *'yes it is' (P13L15)* based in part on her reflections of her own response to the framework *'I didn't self-edit at all, yeah, so it was there.' (P13L18).*

The language Vicky used in her responses was measured, but her conviction was clear through her tone and through the frequency with which she returned to her point. It seemed that the issues which were raised in the discussion were close to the heart of Vicky's professional values. She believed that the discussions hinted at or revealed cognitive processes which were not likely to lead to good career decisions, and beyond that, there was a strength of feeling which indicated that for Vicky, this was an ethical issue, and one which stirred up emotions. I wondered whether her distaste for stereotypes and non conscious thought processes influenced her reality. She seemed reluctant to admit that she herself held stereotypes or made use of instinctive judgements, and seemed to feel that acknowledging these processes in herself, or in her clients, might make them a reality. This reluctance to address the world as it

is has interesting implications for career practice here which will be revisited in the discussion below and in the final chapter of the thesis.

Complexity of career development

From Vicky's data a second category was developed: the complexity of career development. Vicky felt that the framework included some important constructs which are not usually covered in career conversations, most prominently, the construct of fun. She discussed one young person and said that *'his dream job would be to be a YouTuber because they just have so much fun' (P5L9),* but observed that *'no-one asks young people what jobs do they think they'd get fun from' (P12L23).*Vicky indicated that having that construct included in a framework such as this would allow clients to acknowledge this important aspect of their choice *'I was just going to say something about permission as well, because if you're in a very traditional school, say, then your view of work might be quite narrow and you might not feel you've got the permission to look at jobs which are fun' (P6L15-17).*

Despite her discomfort, Vicky did see some value in raising clients' awareness of their preconscious thoughts and stereotypes, and felt that the framework could be an effective vehicle for these conversations. She thought that highlighting clients' instinctive responses to jobs could be useful *'if you could see the rationale for it' (P8L33)* and that exposing stereotype thinking could be important *'looking at other images and why that was and what sort of criteria, then that would be really interesting'.*

The data collected from the interview with Vicky expanded my understanding of the discomfort which discussions of the framework engendered. The definition of the category of discomfort had shifted in my mind from practitioners' discomfort at the framework to the idea that the framework made them confront unpalatable realities. I wanted to explore this further. The second area to explore was the category of 'complexity of career'. The complex antecedents of the conceptualisation of career had been voiced by Jacqueline and Anne but I felt that the code which addressed the complex and nuanced way that career choices are made could be strengthened were I to explore it in more depth. Finally, by this stage, the data from the first three participants had encouraged me to change the way the framework was presented. The changes are outlined in more depth below but, in brief, the discussions

indicated that it might be more valuable to present the constructs on scales (warm to cold) rather than as binary constructs (warm or cold) and that some of the terms used to describe the scales were pejorative. As a result 'cold' was changed to 'self-contained' and 'low energy' to 'calm'.

To elicit feedback on the newly configured framework I again sought an experienced career practitioner and Laura, my fourth participant, had worked in HE careers services for over ten years. In addition, her position as a practitioner who took the traditional guidance qualification but who chose to position herself outside the mainstream of the profession might bring insights to the category of discomfort. Her particular interest in career theories could yield valuable data to feed into my understanding of the career decision making aspect of the 'complexity' category.

7.4.4. Participant 4: Laura

Table 7.4 summarises the categories and codes which was developed from the discussion with Laura.

Table 7.4. Categories and codes from the data from participant 4.

Categories	Codes	Examples
The complexities of career development	Complex antecedents to our conceptualisations of occupations	'it's a mishmash of other people's stuff and your own stuff'
	Career choice is beyond matching Incorporates emotions	'I would be a wonderfully unconventional primary school teacher' 'being conventional fills me with sadness'
	Choices incorporate the notion of holistic identity	'broader than just people at work' 'who do I want to come across as / who do I really think I am / who I believe I'm capable of being'
Discomfort with unpalatable realities	Discomfort at the idea of negative stereotypes	'all social workers are controlling' Need a scale to make negatives more palatable 'to disguise the fact that some of the ideas we have about jobs are pejorative'

	We want the world to be different	'trying to pretend the world isn't as messy as it is' 'we owe it to our clients to acknowledge that these stereotypes exist'
Careers are individually constructed	Language as a construct	'what does intellectual mean to me?'
	Enactment of constructs is individual	'they're not cool like my primary teacher was cool'
	Influenced by individuals' contexts Conceptualisations of career and self are fluid	'it's who you look to, who your reference points are' 'if we'd had this conversation last year…'
	Relative values	'the word unconventional is such a loaded term for me in a positive way'

The complexity of career development

The complexity of career was developed as the first theoretical category from the data from the interview with Laura. The codes are presented and illustrated with examples in Table 7.4. The discussion with Laura highlighted the complexities of the sources of our occupational knowledge. Laura used a number of metaphors to illustrate this, referring to the '*kaleidoscope of a social worker*' (P11L15) and the '*patchwork of interactions'* (P1L11), and summed it up stating that one's conceptualisation of a particular occupational identity is a *'mish mash of other people's stuff and your own stuff'* (P11L23-4). She discussed a range of influences on career thinking including the context *'in terms of the Cornish labour market...'* (P4L34), responses to media representations *'is it a reaction to a broader stereotype?'* (P2L8), and specific incidents, describing a time she met a social worker who took a second job as a taxi driver: *'I once got a cab to King's Cross station […] but so yeah, thinking about it, that conversation must be somewhere in my interpretation of a social worker in my head'* (P1L30, 37-8). Laura's comments were a colourful illustration of the different influences which inform our understanding of occupations. Our knowledge of any job is built up over time and is informed by a wide range of experiences, direct and indirect. Laura suggested that each individual experience would make a contribution to an understanding of the job in question, although indicated that the specific contribution of different influences might not always be obvious, as they may be subtly and unconsciously incorporated into a prototype.

Laura revealed that being, and being seen as, 'unconventional' was an important part of her identity, but the interview demonstrated that this did not necessarily mean that she would be drawn to an occupation whose prototypical identity she saw as unconventional. She suggested that if she were a primary teacher (which she considered to have a conventional prototypical identity) she *'would be a wonderfully unconventional primary teacher'* (P8L33), showing that a mismatch between her self-concept and her prototypical occupational identity would not, in this case, preclude this job choice. She did however point out that she would not consider working with quantity surveyors, another occupation whose prototypical identity for Laura was conventional, indicating that whilst the match may have an influence on job choice, the realities of the decision are more complex.

The data from the interview with Laura emphasised that career decisions are based on a broader range of issues than the job itself *'broader than just people at work'* (P11L38), and identified the multi-faceted nature of identities *'who I am capable of becoming?' (P5L6), 'who do I want to come across as?' (P5L22)* and *'who do I really think I am?' (P5L22).*

As with the data from Jacqueline, the discussion with Laura provides further evidence that whilst individuals may be keen to find an environment, job or identity which suits them, they may not be looking for a match. It was important to Laura to find an environment in which she could be unconventional, but that didn't mean that she necessarily wanted to work in an unconventional environment. As with Jacqueline, this seemed to be an issue of degree. Laura warmed to the idea of working with colleagues who were somewhat conventional, so that she might stand out as *the quirky one*, but was resistant to the idea of working in a highly conventional environment as she would feel too out of place, and felt that she might not be valued by those kinds of colleagues.

Emotions were clearly a key part of Laura's interpretations of occupational identities and career decision making. She talked about emotions in terms of career choices *'it's about how vulnerable you want to be'* (P9L1), in terms of her own identity *'being conventional […] fills me […] with sadness' (P5L33-4)* and in terms of her responses to jobs *'jobs I'm averse to, there's an element of fear'* (P10L2). The strength of the emotions that Laura described is a useful reminder of the importance of making good career choices, and could indicate that an identity approach to career practice might be meaningful and therefore of real value to clients.

Discomfort with unpalatable realities

The second category which was developed was a sense of discomfort as Laura found that engaging with the framework forced her to confront some unpalatable realities. There were two codes associated with this category: first, the sense of discomfort revealing the negative stereotypes of particular occupational groups, and second the desire for the world to be different.

Laura felt a tension between the reality as illustrated by her responses to the framework and her professional values. Laura was aware that the framework encouraged her to *'delve into my inner stereotypes'* (P1L19-20) and felt a little uncomfortable at the idea of making sweeping, negative generalisations such as *'all social workers are controlling'* (P12L35). She could see that the language used to describe some of the constructs could be seen as negative and felt that it was important that *'you wouldn't want to have pejoratives'* (P3L24). She did comment that more positive language and the use of scales might allow participants *'to disguise the fact that some of the ideas we have about are pejorative'* (P3L23-4). She commented that *'we've spent so much of our professional career trying to help people navigate around the stereotypes'* (P1L17-8) but was clear that as practitioners it is important that we overcome this discomfort *'we owe it to our clients to acknowledge that these stereotypes exist'* (P12L29-30) and that any other approach is inauthentic, *'trying to pretend that world isn't as messy as it is'* (P12:35-6).

It seemed that Laura understood some of the tensions that were uncovered in the interview with Vicky, and showed some sympathy with the idea that stereotypes were associated with poor career decisions or an unappealing world. Whilst Vicky was struggling to work out whether acknowledging the existence of stereotypes was useful or detrimental to clients, Laura seemed to have resolved this tension. I wondered if this difference in approach might be linked to the different environments in which the two practitioners worked. Laura has spent much of her professional career supporting the career decisions of students at Russell Group universities. Vicky's clients are more often vulnerable young people. It could be that Vicky's professional experience has led to (or perhaps is driven by) a heightened sense of the importance of social justice, whereas working with Laura's clients, who are in general, in a more privileged position in society, it may be easier to make peace with society as it is.

Careers are individually constructed

The final category which was developed from the analysis identified that conceptualisations of career are individually constructed. The codes highlight the individualist nature of the language used, the enactment of the constructs, the values accorded to different constructs and the individual contexts which shaped people's conceptualisations of career.

The analysis of Laura's data revealed that the interpretations of the words chosen to represent the different constructs were subjective. She wondered to herself *'what does intellectual mean to me?'* (P11L36) and *'successful, in terms of what?'* (P4L6), and debated the way the terms chosen related to each other *'to me the opposite of energetic is lethargic'* (P3L8). The data also revealed the idea that the constructs discussed could present differently, both in terms of how Laura herself might enact the particular construct *'how I express that articulation to people'* (P7L34) and how she might identify it in others *'they're not cool in the sense that my primary school teacher was cool'* (P4L28-9).

Laura highlighted on a number of occasions how her particular experience has had an impact on her conceptualisation of careers, thinking about her current experience as a mother, dropping her child off at school each day *'I'm seeing a primary teacher regularly',* her childhood influences *'it's who you look to, who are your reference points'* (P7L8-9) and her geographical context *'in terms of the Cornish labour market'* (P4L34). She acknowledged that conceptualisations of career or identity are fluid *'how do you re-frame yourself?'* (P6L35) and may change as the context changes *'if we'd had this conversation last year…'* (P6L33-4).

The final code identified within this category was that of relative values. Within the constructs of the framework, there were clearly some which mattered to Laura more than others *'the word unconventional is such a loaded term for me in a positive sense'* (P9L30-1) or *'the idea of cool has always been one that's of interest to me'* (P6L20-1). I asked Laura whether there were any important qualities missing. She offered one but highlighted that she was not sure this could be generalised *'this is just personally for me'* (P8L4).

These codes together show that the meaning given to this framework of occupational

identities could very in a number of ways from one person to another. Echoing the comments from Jacqueline which were described earlier, Laura's comments showed that the labels might mean different things to different people, the way the constructs are symbolised in behaviour and the relative importance each construct might vary from one person to another. Laura also highlights that the interpretations might change within an individual person over time, and suggests that whilst the constructs presented within the framework may chime with a wide range of people, there may be other constructs which would need to be added to make it more relevant for some people. I was struck by how individual people's interpretations of careers are in so many ways, and this would be useful to remember when thinking about how the model might be used with clients.

With the analysis of the data from Laura's interview, the categories were thought to be well conceived and sufficiently dense, and the data from this interview did not take the theory in any new directions. As discussed above, theoretical saturation is reached when the theoretical categories are well conceived and dense and when the data collection results in no new leads. With this final interview, the two categories were thought to provide sufficient explanatory power of the practitioner response to the framework.

7.4.5. Prototypical occupational identities and career practitioners: overall findings

This final study explored experienced career practitioners' responses to the framework of prototypical occupational identities which had been developed in Study 3. The study aimed to discern the participants' views of using occupational prototypes in career conversations and to find out whether they felt that this approach would add value to their career practice. In this section the overall grounded theory is presented. The overall grounded theory from these interviews is made up of two themes: discomfort at unpalatable realities and the complexities of career. Table 7.5 presents a summary of the overall grounded theory based on these four interviews, and a description of the categories and codes follows.

Table 7.5. Summary of the categories and codes of the overall grounded theory of the application of the framework of prototypical occupational identities

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Core categories	Codes	Examples
Discomfort at unpalatable realities	Uncomfortable at my own response	Worryingly easy for me
		Discomfort at revealing my own negative stereotypes
		Not aligned with my professional values
	Poor decision making process	Stereotypes are not always accurate
		Gut instinct ('not thinking')
		Multidimensional qualities shouldn't be important
	Application	Could reinforce faulty thinking
		We owe it to our clients not to ignore it
Complexities of career development	Conceptualisation of occupational identities is complex	Constructivist and constructionist
		Interpretation of language and enactment of constructs varies
		Based on multidimensional identities
		Values are relative
	Process of career decision making is complex	Below the level of consciousness
		Compatibility rather than fit

Discomfort at unpalatable realities

Overall, the participants' discomfort seemed to stem from the fact that they did not want the world to be this way. Laura suggested that practitioners who reject the premise of the framework might be '*trying to pretend that the world isn't as messy as it is*' and Vicky

described her own view that '*you want the world not to be that way'.*

Uncomfortable at my own response

The first code within this category is the participants' discomfort with their own responses to the framework. The participants found it easy to bring to mind their own prototypes of various occupational groups and to assign different characteristics to them, swiftly and confidently. They found the ease with which they did this disturbing, causing Anne to say that this was '*upsettingly easy'* (P2L14) and Vicky to reflect '*Ooh that's worrying isn't it?*' (P2L2). Three of the participants commented that they were troubled with ascribing negative characteristics to occupational groups, with Anne expressing concern that it might sound as though she was accusing all detectives of having '*no cultural sensitivity whatsoeve*r' (P3L34) and Vicky exclaiming '*that's terrible!*'(P1L38), as she reflected on her own prototype of social workers. The last code within this category is the idea, explicit in the data from two participants, that the stereotypical thinking exposed seems to be at odds with their professional values. Laura commented that ' *We've spent so much of our professional career trying to help people navigate around the stereotypes'* (P1L17-8) ' and Vicky echoed this with *'so much of my professional life has been about how do you break these things down?'* (P7L44).

A poor decision making process

The second category within the theme of discomfort was the conviction that the decision making mechanism revealed by the discussions was a poor way to make a decision, Anne asserted that '*no-one in their right minds would make a decision this way*' (P12L31) and Vicky described it as *'dangerous'* (P8L13). Participants were concerned that the prototypes revealed may not be accurate, with Vicky keen to stress that there are always exceptions to every stereotype. The cognitive processing systems revealed through discussions of the framework were described as being below the level of consciousness '*it was a bit gut'* (Vicky, P2L23) and this was seen as a precursor to an inadequate choice. Anne even went so far as to describe the process as '*not thinking'* (P14L17). The framework revealed the multidimensionality of the occupational prototypes of the participants, Laura, for example described the clothing choices of her prototypical primary teacher (Seasalt-esq dresses and patterned tights), and for one participant, Vicky, this was another illustration of the poor quality of thinking '*they ought to know what things they fill their days with and what skills they need more than what they wear'* (P12L9-10).

Application of the framework

The final category within this theme of discomfort concerned the application of the framework. Participants all agreed that the framework could be used as an effective way to encourage clients to think about their decision making processes, Jacqueline suggesting that *'it's a self-analysis tool'* (P9L1), but where Anne felt that it could be a positive mechanism for allowing people to bring their preconscious thoughts into their conscious awareness in order to confront and analyse them, Vicky was concerned that this process might serve to encourage their faulty thinking *'does that actually limit the thinking?' (P8L1-2).* It is interesting to reflect that the discussions which stemmed from the framework left the practitioners feeling uncomfortable, yet they were still able to see value in the application of the framework with clients.

Complexities of Career Development

The second category of the grounded theory concerned the complexity of career. The discussions generated by the framework highlighted, in a number of ways, how complex career thinking was for the participants. Two codes were developed: the complexities of people's conceptualisations of occupational identities, and the complexities of career decisions.

Complexities of conceptualisations of occupational identities

The first code within this category identified that the participants' conceptualisations of occupational identities were both constructionist, (grounded in shared societal perceptions), and constructivist, (based on the particular experiences and interpretations of each individual participant). This was neatly articulated by Anne who explained *'everyone is going to bring their social construction of the world or work as well as having their own internal version'* (P14L34-35).

When describing their prototypical occupational identities, participants reported drawing from a wide range of personal sources: their networks (*'I know too many teachers, I think'*, Jacqueline P1L20), their particular geographical context (*'In terms of the Cornish labour market'*, Laura P4L34) and their particular experiences (*'I once got a cab to King's Cross station…'*, Laura, P1L30). The data showed that the language used to present the constructs in the framework was individually interpreted: *'what does intellectual mean to me?'* (Laura, P11L36). The ways the participants imagined these constructs enacted varied, with each participant having their own set of behaviours which they associated with the constructs.

Jacqueline saw an unconventional person as '*wearing a fez*' or '*a freak in the corner painting*' (P2L18), where Laura described unconventional as an '*amazing radical lesbian*' (P4L19) and '*wearing clashing colours and pink hair*' (P5L36-7). Values too were shown to vary, with Laura commenting that '*unconventional is such a loaded word […] for me*' (P9L30) and Jacqueline saying that '*low energy is not negative for you and me but it would be for others*' (P8L21-22). The final example within this code reflects the idea that the participants conceptualised their prototypical occupational identities in a multidimensional way, commenting on their accessories '*Natural Shoe Store shoes*' (Laura, P1L36), '*wearing a fez*' (Jacqueline P2L24), their clothes '*they're wearing colourful tights and you know, nice patterned Sea Salt esq dresses*' (Laura, P4L27-8) and their leisure activities '*watching Poldark*' (Laura, P6L32) and '*painting*' (Jacqueline, P2L18).

Taken together this highlights how complex and how individual conceptualisations of career are. This individualised understanding can be seen in the provenance of the career related information, what it means, how it is symbolised and how it might be used in participants' career decisions.

Complexity of career decisions

The second code within this category was the complexity of career decisions. Within this code the examples reflected that much of the processing seemed to happen below the level of conscious awareness, and that the participants were more concerned with the idea of compatibility rather than fit.

Three of the four participants commented that much of the knowledge unearthed during the interviews had, before the conversations, been beyond their conscious awareness. Anne described this in a number of ways using terms such as an '*auto-reflex*' (P2L9), '*amygdala response*' (P15L24), '*random auto-decision making*' (P12L32), '*tacit knowledge*' (P17L22), '*the auto-response*' (P8L32), '*unconscious*' (P14L16). Vicky commented that '*it was a bit gut*' (P2L23) and reflected that although she had not been aware that she had had these thoughts previously, '*I didn't self-edit at all, so yeah, it was all in there*' (P13L18), and Jacqueline suggested that the framework could be used as a '*self-awareness tool*' (P9L1) highlighting its role in bringing cognitive processes into conscious awareness. This preconscious knowledge may constitute another source of information feeding into decision making, making the

decision making process more complex and making the process of understanding and scrutinising career decisions more challenging because the information is not immediately in the conscious awareness.

The second example within this code, shows that for the participants, a simple process of matching was not sufficiently nuanced to reflect their decision making processes. For Laura, the idea of being unconventional was very important. She didn't necessarily need to be in a role which she perceived as being typically occupied by unconventional people, but did need to feel that she herself could be unconventional within that role. She could imagine being drawn to primary teaching, and being an unconventional primary teacher surrounded by conventional colleagues, but could not imagine enjoying her unconventionality as a quantity surveyor. A core part of Anne's social identity was her conceptualisation of herself as a warm person, but she acknowledged that if she were to be a detective, she would want to be a cold (although not a very cold) detective because she could imagine playing the part more effectively in that persona. Jacqueline warmed to the idea of working with social workers whom she saw as having a similar value system as hers, but found that seeing herself as very different from the clients with whom she would be working rendered this an unappealing career choice. It seems that the idea of 'fit' – with its connotations of being the right shape and size for the particular role (and its implications that there is a right shape and size for each role) feels less relevant here than the idea of 'compatibility' which has more of a focus on being able to coexist without conflict. This is a less prescriptive way to think about the relationship between the individual and the role, and allows for more nuanced conceptualisation.

This then concludes the overview of the grounded theory of the application of the framework of occupational identities. In the next section of the chapter, the new grounded theory will be integrated within the context of the current literature.

7.5. Discussion

From the analysis of the data a grounded theory was developed which was made up of two core categories: discomfort at unpalatable realities and the complexities of career

development. The first category explains the participants' responses to the worldview exposed through the interviews, and includes three codes which reflect: participants' discomfort at the revelations about themselves, participants' opinions of the decision making processes inferred, and their views about how the framework could be used in practice. The second category concerns the complexities of career development. The first code within this category accounts for the wide range of sources that participants drew on to conceptualise their occupational identities and the second highlights some of the complexities of their career decisions.

In the first part of this section (7.5.1), I will present a discussion of the findings as they relate to the participants' responses to the discussions and in the second part (7.5.2), I will discuss the implications for the framework itself.

7.5.1. The grounded theory in the context of career development literature

Discomfort at unpalatable realities

The discomfort the participants experienced did not stem from the framework itself, but from the discussions and thoughts which emanated from the discussions about prototypes. The challenge for the participants came from observing how easy it was for them to conjure up their own occupational prototypes, and the implications they saw for their clients' decision making processes. Their concern was that the occupational identities they evoked were stereotypes: generalisations, which were not necessarily accurate, and could be quite negative. Participants were further suspicious of their own views because they were 'instinctive' opinions. The participants felt that together the combination of stereotypes and instincts constituted a poor way to make a career decision.

The practitioners were surprised at how detailed and accessible these prototypical occupational identities were. Their surprise may provide some evidence that the prototypes were not within their conscious awareness, perhaps indicating that participants did not know that they had such clear cognitive mind maps. Information which is not immediately accessible within our conscious awareness has been described in a number of ways in the literature. The terms the participants in this study used included 'gut instinct', 'unconscious knowledge' and 'tacit knowledge'. The psychological construct which seems to most closely align to the

participants' reported and observed experiences is that of the 'preconscious'. This is a term which stems from the psychodynamic work of Freud. Freud's conceptualisation of the preconscious is a place where information is stored below the level of consciousness. Information can fairly easily transfer from the preconscious to the conscious with the addition of attention and words (Freud, 1915, cited in Zepf, 2011). The link between thought and language plays a key part in Freud's definition of the preconscious. He describes conscious awareness as a combination of the presentation of the thing (which is memory based and might be presented as an image) and the presentation of the word. This resonates with Vygotsky's (1986) description of the relationship between thought and language encapsulated by the idea that thoughts are made concrete only through the process of putting them into words. The idea of the preconscious is one which can help to elucidate the experiences of the participants: they had pre-existing cognitive schemas of the occupational prototypes, but they were unaware of the depth, breadth, detail and even the existence of these schemas until their attention was drawn to them and they were invited to use language to describe them. Freud's suggestion that a phenomenon in the preconscious may be presented as an image (Freud, 1915) further supports this explanation, as the participants were asked first to visualise their occupational prototype before putting it into words. The term 'preconscious' will therefore be used to denote knowledge which participants may not be aware they have, but which can fairly easily be brought into conscious awareness when participants are asked to direct their attention to it, visualise and describe it verbally.

The notion that work symbols tap into knowledge stored below the level of consciousness has been mooted before. Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce (1980) made a similar claim in their assessment of the symbols within organisations, suggesting that they are visible signs of unconscious thoughts and feelings, and Kocoglu et al. (2016) describe symbols as 'the means for tacit knowledge transmission' (p.300) for social identities within organisations, indicating that their role is to make explicit 'hidden if not unconscious' information about the identities within the organisation (p.301).

In addition to the discomfort which stemmed from the participants' reactions to their own responses to the framework, the participants reported their beliefs that the information could contribute to sub-optimal career decisions. Their conviction was grounded in the assumptions

that the information is located below the level of consciousness and that, because it is based on stereotype thinking and generalisations, it is not necessarily accurate. Turning first to the value of non-conscious decision making processes, this is a topic which although widely acknowledged as important, has been somewhat neglected in the career literature (Redekopp, 2016; Yates, 2015). Career literature has tended to advocate conscious reasoning over other kinds of processing (Krieshok et al., 2009) but decision making literature seems to imply that non-conscious processing is not only inevitable (Phillips, 1997), but actually desirable (Dijksterhuis, Aarts & Smith, 2005; Hastie & Dawes, 2010). Given this suggestion of inevitability and the potential for a positive contribution, it would seem useful for career practitioners to acknowledge the preconscious, and raise clients' awareness of the cognitive processes at play.

The position that stereotype thinking holds in the career profession was discussed earlier in this chapter, and it was suggested that the negative impact that is associated with occupational gender role stereotypes may have led to an assumption on the part of career practitioners that stereotypes are generally inaccurate and should be challenged and eradicated (Jussim et al. 2009). The findings within this study lend some support to this position. The career practitioners in this study indicated that they felt that the occupational prototypes they evoked were likely to be inaccurate, and showed manifest discomfort with the idea that they might be making sweeping generalisations about occupational groups. The negative associations with stereotypes led them to feel that allowing occupational prototypes to influence career decisions leads to a sub-optimal decision making process and that these stereotypes should either be ignored, or exposed and challenged.

The response of the practitioners to stereotypes can be further elucidated with reference to the two theoretical approaches to stereotypes which were summarised in Chapter 2 (Bordalo et al., 2016). In the sociological approach (Adorno et al., 1950) stereotypes are considered to be inaccurate and pejorative. They reveal underlying prejudices in those who hold stereotypical views and they serve to maintain an unequal society. In the second approach, rooted in social psychology, stereotypes are conceived as cognitive shortcuts which help people to make sense of information and can be accurate (Schneider et al., 1979). This first, sociological interpretation seems to align most closely with the guidelines offered to practitioners within the career guidance profession (Watson et al., 2015), and with the views

of the participants in this study, and this can offer an explanation for the distrust and distaste which the participants seemed to afford their own occupational stereotypes. The second interpretation of stereotypes, however seems to provide a stronger link to previous empirical evidence which suggests that stereotypes can be accurate (Jussim et al. 2009) and that stereotyping can constitute a helpful way for individuals to make sense of complex information (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996).

It seems then that there may be an inconsistency between the practitioners' clear and negative reactions to their own and their clients' stereotypes, and the empirical evidence which suggests that stereotypes are inevitable (Martin & McCrae, 2007) and often accurate (Jussim et al., 2009). The data from this study indicate that the stereotypes on which the participants based their prototypical occupational identities were cognitive schemas: mental frameworks based on memory objects (Derry, 1996). When encouraged, participants could often pinpoint the source of their knowledge, which was usually grounded in their personal connections with members of the particular profession, lending support for the idea that the prototypes were based on experience and grounded in reality. This is a more benign interpretation, which acknowledges the inevitability of stereotypes and conceptualises stereotype thinking as a valuable cognitive shortcut which could help clients to navigate the vast swathes of career related information which they need to grasp in order to make well informed career decisions. Yet the participants' professional values may cause them to distrust stereotype thinking, seeing it as a mechanism for maintaining social inequality. This cuts to the heart of the professional values of the practitioners who have a deeply held commitment to social justice (Sultana, 2014).

Adopting this alternative and more benign interpretation of stereotypes could lead to an approach to practice that acknowledges the existence of stereotypes and looks for the benefits this thinking might confer, alongside a more critical view of their accuracy and influence. This wider interpretation of occupational stereotypes could accept them as a valuable starting point for career discussions, allowing clients to scrutinise the accuracy and challenge the value of their existing information and allowing them to integrate new information with old (Michael, 2006).

Complexity of conceptualisations of prototypical occupational identities

This grounded theory explains the complex web of sources of careers information which participants drew on to shape their mental frameworks of different occupational identities. The theory highlights that the participants' conceptualisations of occupational prototypes were both constructionist (Gergen, 2001) and constructivist (Bruner, 1990).

Constructionist and constructivist approaches are both well established in the career arena, but although there is confusion in the literature about the difference between these two terms (Young & Collin, 2004), they are quite distinct. Both acknowledge multiple realities and that meaning is constructed, but where constructionism suggests that meaning is socially constructed, constructivism holds that meaning is constructed through individual, cognitive processes. They both challenge the traditional ideas in career theory that stages and ages and traits and jobs are stable and predictable, and both see human development as dynamic, fluid, individual and unpredictable (Mahoney, 2003). The contributions of both constructionism and constructivism to career development are acknowledged in the literature (McMahon, 2016), but where constructionism dominates in the literature around career development, leading towards a better understanding of the impact that social norms and expectations have on career choice, constructivism has gained more ground in the literature which concerns practice, with its links to narrative approaches to career practice helping individuals to construct their own career stories (Cochran, 1997).

In this study, participants clearly illustrated that their understanding of occupational prototypes was influenced by their own personal interpretations of their experiences (such as a chance meeting with a social worker in a taxi) and their exposure to assumptions which were constructed within their social environments (for example, a character in a television programme). These themes chime with the current focus on both constructivism and constructionism in career scholarship, and suggest that there may be value in further exploration of each approach in both theory and practice.

Career decisions

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 outlined some of the debates around the notion of matching approaches to career choices. The findings of Study 4 could suggest that looking for a

similarity between an individual and a career option is too simplistic. The participants in this study were aware of the degree of similarity between themselves (their self-concept, their social identity or their possible selves) and prototypical occupational identities, but did not appear to be seeking a match. Rather they were considering whether they could manage to reconcile their self-concept with their potential occupational identity: whether they could 'be themselves'. The participants explored this from different angles and found a range of different solutions: Anne contemplated the idea of changing from a warm to a cold person to allow her to be an effective detective; Jacqueline focused on the personality of the clients more than the profession itself and Laura identified that she could envisage herself as an unconventional teacher, even though she pictured a prototypical teacher as conventional. Rather than seeking a match between their identity and the occupational identity, they were looking for a sense of compatibility: a perfect fit in a rigid or prescribed sense, did not seem to be their goal, but the two identities (their own and the occupational identity) did seem to need to work together harmoniously.

This adds to the weight of evidence, summarised in Chapter 2, that a matching approach to career decisions may not reflect real world processes (Rounds & Tracey, 2009). The findings here suggest that even the more recent reinterpretations of matching theories which aim to link personal identities with occupational identities (Hannover & Kessels, 2004) or values (Perdue et al., 2007) are not sufficiently nuanced to reflect the decision making processes described in this study. The participants in this study found the discussions about the degree of match were valuable, but often led towards the conclusion that a match did not matter. This reflects the advice from Sampson (2009) that matching can be a useful start to a career conversation but should not be seen as the end of a discussion. I cited Tinsley (2000) in Chapter 2 and his suggestion that it was not so much the concept of a match per se which is problematic, but the nature of what is matched. The findings of this study provide some support for this argument too, but illustrate that identifying the aspects of fit which are important is individually constructed, and varies from one individual to another.

The findings of Study 4 thus add to the weight of evidence which demonstrates that the idea of matching is, as Sharf suggests, deceptively simple (Sharf, 1992). The participants acknowledged the possibility that a match between their self-concept and an occupational prototype would

have an influence on their career choice, but highlighted that finding a compatibility was more pivotal, and identified a wide range of additional factors which were influential.

7.5.2. The grounded theory framework as a tool for practice

As part of the semi-structured interviews, participants were invited to reflect on the value this framework could bring to career conversations within their practice. In this section I discuss the implications for the use of the framework as a tool for an identity approach to career conversations, and the changes I made to the framework in response to their comments and reactions.

Identities as an approach to elicit insights

The evidence for an identity approach to career practice was outlined in the introduction to this chapter. It was noted that narrative approaches have been proposed as the most appropriate mechanism for an identity approach to career practice (Savickas, 2011). The framework used in this study provides an additional and alternative approach for a practical intervention to explore identities, and provides some evidence that conversations about occupational identities as well as personal identities can be valuable. The participants were asked to consider their own identities and their prototypical identities of a number of occupations in the light of the eight constructs of the framework. They reported that they found this process led to insightful and valuable conversations. In particular, the conversations served as an effective mechanism for propelling preconscious knowledge into the participants' conscious awareness. The grounded theory identified that the participants experienced a degree of discomfort when considering occupations and occupational choices in this way, yet reported both that they found the conversations insightful for themselves, and that they could see value in using an approach such as this with their clients. The literature cited in the introduction to this chapter provides evidence that possible selves and narrative approaches can be used effectively in career practice (for example McIlveen & Patton, 2007; Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007) but there is limited evidence to support the use of a wider range of practical approaches for using occupational identities in career practice. The findings of this study provide some support for an approach to using occupational identities in career conversations.

7.5.3. Changes to the framework

In this final section of the discussion, I outline some changes to the framework that I made in the light of the interviews with the participants in this study. I made three changes; substituting more positive terms for some of the labels for constructs I used, replacing the binary constructs with scales, and reconfiguring the interpsychic constructs. The original and the reconfigured frameworks are presented in Tables 7.6 and 7.7.

Neutral language

As identified above, it was clear from the discussions that that the words used had different meanings for each participant, yet the data suggested that some of the terms had negative connotations for all participants. If these negative connotations are shared widely within society, they could skew clients' responses to the framework, as clients may try to resist ascribing either themselves or occupations to the more negative terms. In particular 'low energy' and 'cold' were mentioned by different participants as being pejorative. The decision was therefore taken to change 'high' and 'low energy' to 'energetic' and 'calm', and to replace 'cold' with 'self-contained'. The new terms were not entirely synonymous with the initial labels used but nonetheless did resonate with the data analysed in Study 3. Finding a single label to represent a complex category is inevitably challenging, and aiming for precision is difficult, given the symbolic nature of language (Blumer, 1969) and, as illustrated by the data from the interviews with Jacqueline and Laura in this study, that meanings of words are individually constructed. The framework was proposed as a starting point for a conversation about work related identities, rather than as an objective, definitive reflection of reality. As a consequence, I felt that finding terms which would encourage an open and positive discussion was more important than finding a label which precisely reflected my interpretation of the data.

Scales

The participants identified two problems associated with the use of the binary constructs and as a result suggested that a scale would be easier to use and therefore of more value. First they reported that a scale would better allow them to represent what was in their minds. I identified above that conceptualisations of careers are nuanced, and decision making processes complex and subtle. It seems convincing to argue that a scale would be a better tool

for helping individuals to represent and navigate these complexities. The second problem with the binary constructs identified was linked to the theme of discomfort discussed above. Participants found that they felt uncomfortable assigning what they considered to be negative characteristics to occupational groups, and indicated that a scale would allow them to voice a more moderate and therefore more palatable version of their thoughts. This reason for including scales seems more of a moot point. A change from a binary representation of the constructs to a scale on the grounds that clients do not like assigning negative characteristics to occupational groups would enable people to voice opinions which they consider to be more socially acceptable, but which may be a less accurate reflection of their perceptions. Whilst the resulting framework might have less impact in raising awareness of preconscious opinions it would have the advantage of making clients feel more comfortable with the process. I decided to change the binary constructs to scales as, on balance, it seemed to improve the usefulness of the framework.

Reconfigured dimensions

The third change to the framework which was suggested by the data was to change the configuration of the interpsychic dimensions. In Chapter 6, I described the challenge I faced in discriminating between the different facets of 'capital'. I concluded that 'social class' as a broad category would be useful in addition to three specific aspects of class: intellectual, cultural and successful. The term 'cool' can be seen in the focus group data a number of times. At some points during data analysis, I had identified 'cool' as a separate dimension, but at a late stage I made the decision that this should be subsumed under the 'warm' / 'cold' dimension. The feedback from the participants in this study convinced me to make some changes. I decided to add the construct of 'cool'. Applying my own criterion (as discussed in Chapter 6) of whether I could visualise an individual who was both warm and cool, I found that I could. The second change instigated was to remove the overall category of 'social class'. The discussions with Jacqueline and Anne, in particular, highlighted that this term is so widely used and understood in society that it is difficult to make it meaningful in this kind of framework.

7.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings of the final study in this programme of doctoral research have

been presented. This grounded theory study analysed the framework of occupational identities which was identified in Study 3, with four career practitioners to explore its potential value as a tool to bring insights to the process of career understanding.

The grounded theory from this study indicates that when considering career options, participants made use of an approach to information processing and decision making which appears to be at odds with that generally endorsed by career writers and practitioners. The data here indicate that the participants use stereotype thinking and preconscious processing and that they conceptualise careers (at least in part) in terms of occupational identities which are holistic and multidimensional, incorporating aspects of personality and social status. In contrast, practitioners are advised to advocate conscious decision making processes and to ignore or combat stereotype thinking.

The evidence from this current study does not provide any information about whether these cognitive processes have a positive or negative impact, or indeed any impact at all, on career development and career outcomes. The argument put forward, however, is that if people are engaged with this kind of career thinking then it is valuable to bring the information into their conscious awareness to allow them to scrutinise the information and challenge the quality of their thinking, and to allow them to integrate a range of information.

In terms of practice, the study suggests that this framework of occupational identities may constitute an approach to practice which can be used to bring preconscious cognitive schemas about occupations into the consciousness and can allow individuals to reflect on some of their information processing and decision making mechanisms. Using identities (both prototypical occupational identities and possible selves) may constitute an effective mechanism to propel existing cognitive schemas into their conscious awareness and to uncover some of the complexities of individuals' career thinking.

Table 7.6. Original Framework

Psychological			*Sociological*	
Warm	Cold		Low intellectual status	High intellectual status
High energy	Low energy		Low culture	High culture
Conventional	Unconventional		Low objective success	High objective success
Serious	Fun		Low social class	High social class

Table 7.7. Reconfigured Framework

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Warm									**Self-contained**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Energetic									**Calm**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Serious									**Fun**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Classic									**Unconventional**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not so high brow									**Very high brow**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not so successful									**Very successful**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not so cool									**Very cool**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not so intellectual									**Very intellectual**

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Overview

8.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, the contribution to new knowledge generated by the programme of research is summarised, with the findings of the four studies presented in sequence and an account of the way the findings of each integrate with the others offered. A short discussion illustrates how the findings link with the literature and key implications and recommendations for practice are outlined. The chapter concludes with a section highlighting the limitations and directions for future research.

8.1.1. Summary of the main findings

Contemporary career theories acknowledge the important role which identity plays in career decisions, but the empirical basis supporting these approaches has not been universally robust. This programme of doctoral research explored a number of aspects of identity in career, contributing towards a strengthened empirical evidence base of the processes involved, and to a more robust basis for career practice.

The research examined the following questions:

- What is the nature of prototypical occupational identities and what is their role in career decision making?

- What impact do possible selves have within career decision making and how does this

integrate conceptually with current theoretical approaches?

- How can an identity approach to career practice add value to career practice?

The findings of this programme of research provide evidence that participants have clear, detailed and multidimensional cognitive schemata of prototypical occupational identities which may be stored below the level of consciousness. These schemata include a wide variety of details which symbolise four psychological or intrapsychic characteristics (warm, energetic, serious, conventional) and four social or interpsychic characteristics (highbrow, successful, cool, intellectual), and which are used to discriminate between occupational identities. These conceptualisations of occupational identities are predicated on both shared and individual meaning making processes. The match between the features imagined in an individual's possible self, and the features imagined in the prototypical identity of their chosen occupation, have an association with their levels of job search behaviour, although no evidence was found of a link with career decidedness. The salience of possible selves was shown to have a significant moderate positive association with career goals and motivation. Identity-based career conversations, which focus on the identity (current or future) of the client and a prototypical occupational identity can reveal the multifaceted nature of individuals' conceptualisations of careers, and highlight that career decisions are complex. The priority for the participants was shown to be less focused on finding an environment which matches or reflects their identity, but more on identifying one in which they imagine that they can be themselves.

The findings indicate the presence of a range of processes which are not fully acknowledged and integrated within the career practice. The studies indicate that stereotypes, preconscious cognitive processing, multidimensional occupational identities and social status all play a part in participants' conceptualisations of careers. The findings also indicate that some guidelines for career practice may be based on normative approaches which risk providing idealised notions of good practice in career decision making: occupational information tends to be based on the information which is thought to lead to good career decisions; and stereotype and preconscious processes may be ignored because they are not thought to contribute to sub-optimal career decisions (Krieshok et al., 2009).

8.1.2. Summary of the studies

Study 1: What are the features of prototypical occupational identities?

The aim of this study was twofold. The first goal was to generate a list of items which would be suitable for the development of a new measure to use in Study 2. A secondary goal was to explore the nature of prototypical occupational identities.

Method: Data were gathered from 24 psychology students at UEL through a series of four focus groups. Four occupations were chosen, based on the most common first destinations of graduates from the previous year: social worker, clinical psychologist, occupational psychologist and primary teacher. Participants were asked to visualise and describe a typical member of each occupational group, and were encouraged to describe a range of features including appearance, lifestyle and personality.

Key findings: The prototypical occupational identities described by the participants contained a high level of detail. The descriptions of the prototypes focused on the prototypical identity as a whole rather than just their work-based identity and no limit was found as to the minutiae participants were able to describe. As well as being detailed, the images were nuanced: participants did not just describe shoes as flat, but differentiated between flat boots, comfortable shoes and ballet pumps.

The level of detail did not seem to be constrained by the participants' conscious knowledge and understanding of the occupations in question. Prototypes varied. They tended to have significant shared elements, and some individuals could evoke more than one prototype for a single occupation. This reflects that the prototypes are both socially and individually constructed.

Study 2: What are the links between possible selves, the features of prototypical occupational identities, and career goals and motivation?

The aim of the second study was to identify the degree of match between participants' possible selves and the prototypical occupational identity of their chosen occupation, and to explore the associations between this match, possible selves, and career goals and career motivation. In order to examine this, a self-report measure was developed to assess the degree of match between participants' possible selves and their occupational prototype of their preferred job option (PS to OP Match). The design of this scale was based on those

developed in other similar studies and used a range of the features from the data gathered in Study 1 as items.

Method: This study gathered quantitative data from 87 female psychology students at UEL. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed via SurveyGizmo. The measure for the first key independent variable (PS to OP Match) was devised using the data generated from the focus groups in the first study. The second key independent variable was possible self salience, which is a measure of how clear and accessible the possible self is to the individual. In addition to these key variables, five other independent variables were included for comparison (neuroticism, conscientiousness, career decision making self efficacy, social support satisfaction and self-clarity). These were chosen because strong correlations have been established between them and the two dependent variables in previous research. The dependent variables were career decidedness (a measure of career goals), job search activity and proactive career behaviour (two measures of career motivation).

Key findings: The psychometric properties of the new scale (PS to OP Match) were examined and factor analysis indicated that the construct is unidimensional and best articulated through items which were about leisure activities which could be associated with a high level of cultural capital. A significant but weak association was found between PS to OP Match and levels of job search activity ($r=.23$, $p<0.05$). No significant correlation was found between PS to OP Match and career decidedness. Possible self salience was found to have a significant moderate association with career decidedness ($r=.59$, $p<0.001$) and proactive career behaviour ($r=.41$, $p<0.001$). These associations were stronger than those identified between the independent variables and the comparator dependent variables (Chapter 5, Table 5.4, p.120).

Study 3: What do the features of prototypical occupational identities symbolise?

One plausible explanation for the lack of significant association found between the PS to OP match and career decidedness in Study 2 was that the features which were used as items on the scale were individually constructed by each focus group participant in Study 1 and therefore may not have resonated with all participants from Study 2. The focus group data generated by participants in Study 1 indicated that the features described by participants symbolised particular characteristics (one focus group participant, for example, indicated that a colourful shawl, in her mind, symbolised an unconventional character). It was proposed that the characteristics symbolised by the features might be more pertinent to career decisions

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than the features themselves. In Study 3 the data from Study 1 were therefore analysed a second time to develop a theory which could explain this, and to identify the characteristics which were symbolised by the features described in Study 1.

Method: The data from the focus groups from Study 1 were analysed using a grounded theory analysis.

Key findings: A grounded theory emerged which provides a framework to explain how the participants categorise and discriminate between occupational identities. The theory consists of eight dimensions, four interpsychic dimensions which explore aspects of status within society and four intraspsychic dimensions which describe personal characteristics. The intrapsychic dimensions identified were: warm/cold, high energy / low energy, fun/serious, quirky / conventional; the interpsychic attributes were described as high and low levels of intellect, success, culture and class. The model was mapped onto and compared with a range of existing frameworks which are commonly used in career practice. The novel contributions of this model were identified in the combination of both intrapsychic and interpsychic attributes. The inclusion of the construct of 'fun / serious' as one of the intrapsychic constructs within this framework provides a further novel contribution to the career literature. Another distinctive, and perhaps unique feature is that this model accounts for the perceptions of occupational identities rather than making a claim to provide an objective analysis of those working in particular occupational groups.

Study 4: How could this framework of occupational identities be used in career conversations?

In the final study of this programme of research, the grounded theory model produced in Study 3 was tested with career practitioners, to explore their reactions to the model and their views about whether and how it could be used in career practice.

Method: This was a grounded theory study, and data were gathered from four participants, through semi-structured interviews. Participants were invited to use the framework to stimulate a conversation about their own career choices, and were then asked to reflect on the personal insights the model engendered and the potential value of the model for work with clients.

Key Findings: The grounded theory which emerged from the data of this final study consisted of two categories. The first category highlighted the discomfort which the participants felt

when reflecting on their own responses to the model. The discussions revealed their own stereotypes, which participants reported to find disturbing, and indicated that some career thinking takes place in the preconscious, at a level of which we are not aware, moment to moment (see Chapter 6, p.221). Taken together the participants felt that these factors would not make a positive contribution to optimal career decisions. The second category was the complexity of career which the discussions highlighted. Participants' conceptualisations of occupational identities were shown to be influenced by a wide range of factors including personal experiences and shared norms, and career decisions were shown to take into account a range of subtle and nuanced factors. The findings also led to a number of changes in the presentation of the model.

8.1.3. Integration of results

The programme of research was mixed in its methodology, making use of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. As highlighted in the discussion about methodology in Chapter 3, a key advantage of mixed methods research is that the phenomenon in question can be better understood by combining the knowledge gained from both perspectives. Figure 8.1. illustrates the way the studies within the programme of research influenced each other, both in terms of the structure of the studies and in terms of the interpretation of the findings. The design of each study was predicated on the findings of the previous studies and in line with a pragmatist philosophy, the specific method used for each study being chosen as that which was considered most appropriate for the research question. An additional benefit to be gained from a mixed methodology is that the findings of each study can deepen our understanding of the others: the studies can be interpreted together, rather than sequentially, providing a richer understanding.

The results of Study 2 provided no evidence of a link between the features of prototypical occupational identities and career decidedness. The results may have been a reflection of the phenomenon and it maybe that a match between the possible self and the occupational prototype has no bearing on levels of career decidedness. An alternative explanation is that this lack of evidence could be a function of a Type 2 error, a false negative, as a result of a scale which was not sufficiently valid. The findings from the Study 4, which tested the grounded theory model of occupational identities with career practitioners was able to offer an

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explanation for each of these possibilities.

The data from Study 4 indicate that whilst the characteristics which were symbolised by the prototypical features described in Study 1, seemed to resonate with all participants, the way these characteristics were enacted (i.e. the specific features described) were particular to each individual. For example, a number of the prototypical identities were conceptualised as *warm*, but whilst for one participant, this characteristic was best exemplified by comfortable shoes, for another it was better illustrated by a chaotic household and a well-loved sofa. This could provide a plausible explanation for the possibility that the measure used in Study 2, which assumed a shared vision of the features, may have failed to provide an accurate reflection of the match between possible selves and occupational prototypes.

The complexities of career decisions which were elaborated in Study 4 could provide a further explanation. In Study 4 the discussions around career decisions demonstrated that the idea of a match between the identities of the individual and of their prototypical occupation was not sufficiently nuanced to reflect the career thinking of the participants. Whilst the match seemed to have some bearing on their thoughts, the data also showed the importance of a range of other factors including the identities of clients and organisations, and the more subtle notion of compatibility, in which individuals strive to find an environment in which they can be themselves, which may not require an exact match between the individual and their environment. The design of the questionnaire in Study 2 assumed that a straightforward match would lead to higher levels of career decidedness, and did not explore the other factors which the findings of Study 4 indicate could have an influence.

The factor analysis of the new self-report measure devised for Study 2 suggested that this was a unidimensional construct and identified eight items from the original list of features which best articulated this construct. Items included 'enjoys outdoor activities', 'watches documentaries' and 'goes on city breaks'. The grounded theory which emerged from Study 3 identified eight constructs which participants used to categorise and differentiate between occupational identities. These categories included the intrapsychic construct of 'energetic' and the interpsychic construct of 'highbrow' and these two categories resonated with the way in which the PS to OP construct had been operationalised.

In Study 1, the participants revealed detailed, multidimensional prototypical occupational identities. In Study 3, the data from Study 1 were analysed for a second time, and the

grounded theory that emerged provides a theoretical framework which can be used to understand the nature of the features (their status as symbols of inter- and intra-psychic characteristics) and to allow the categorisation of the features: we can see, for example, that comfortable shoes, a worn but well-loved sofa and a hearty stew are all different symbols of a warm character. In Study 1, some of the features described and characteristics symbolised were shared across participants: the prototypical social workers were all considered to be warm people, and most were pictured with casual or comfortable clothing. Some prototypical occupational identities, however, varied considerably, with prototypical primary teachers, for example, being described variously as warm and self-contained, energetic and calm. This can be explained by the finding which emerged in Study 4, that these prototypical occupational identities are built up both from participants' personal experiences and shared norms.

Figure 8.1. The Integration of the Four Studies
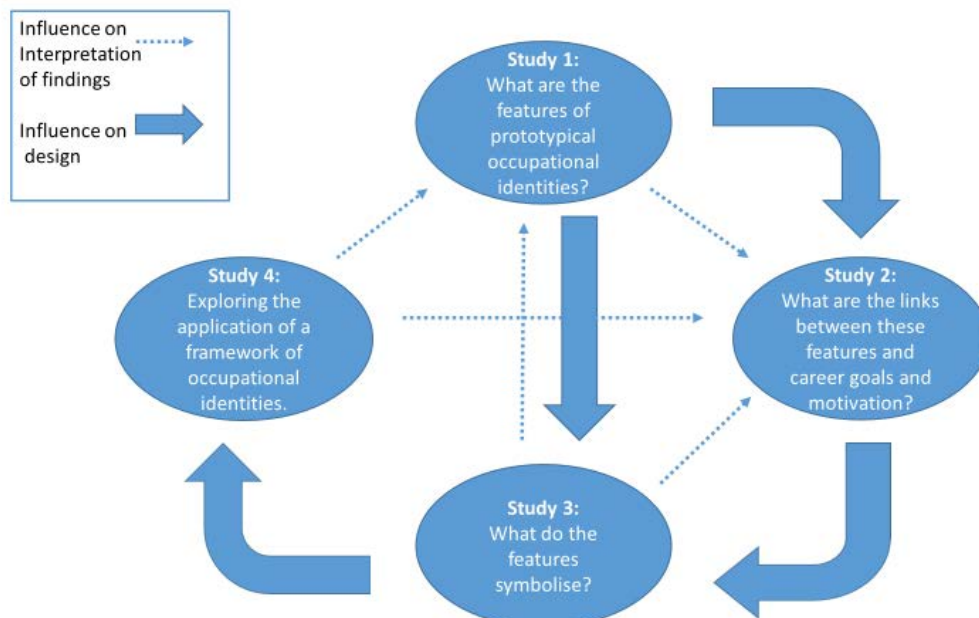
8.2. A discussion of key findings in the context of the existing literature

Considering the programme of research as a whole, the findings and results within this thesis provide a contribution both to career development theory and to theories of career practice.

8.2.1. Contributions to career development theory

Perceptions of occupations from outside the professions

The studies provide insights into the way that occupations are seen by others – those in the outgroup. This in itself is of interest. Career and organisational research has explored careers and occupations from the perspective of those already inside the occupations, but research on the perceptions of occupations from the outside is more limited. The broader literature, for example, may furnish us with a good understanding of the characteristics of nurses (Zhang, Luk, Arthur, & Wong, 2001), the career development of nurses (Donner & Wheeler, 2001) and the motivations (Moody & Pesut, 2006) and job satisfaction (Blegen, 1993) of nurses, but provides fewer insights into how those considering a career in nursing, conceptualise it. A focus on the perceptions of particular occupational groups has prompted the interest of professions which are concerned about their ability to attract a wide range of potential applicants. Within the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and maths) perceptions have been explored in more depth, often with a view to identifying why girls do not choose to study subjects such as physics or computer science (for example, Papastergiou, 2008) but the scope and depth of this body of literature is limited, in that the studies tend to confine themselves to personality characteristics and to features which are directly relevant to the job itself. It is of course important and interesting to have an understanding of the world from within, but it is also of value to develop a clear and detailed understanding of the perceptions that outsiders have, because it is these perceptions which will inform career choices. A broader and more accurate understanding of these perceptions can help career practitioners to find ways to ensure that those who opt for a particular career path do so on the basis of the most appropriate information. This programme of research has begun to address this, exploring the perceptions that participants have of the kind of person who typically works in a particular field.

Conceptualisation of career through holistic occupational identities

The research which does look at occupational groups from the outside has tended to focus on

stereotypes (characteristics) rather than prototypes (identities) (Peters et al., 2014) and the studies in this arena which have been conducted into occupational identities have concentrated on the work-related aspects of the occupational identity in question. With a few notable exceptions (for example, Cheryan et al., 2013; Hannover & Kessels, 2004, who touch on this aspect) studies have not explored the features of prototypical occupational identities beyond those directly related to the workplace. The studies in this doctoral programme of research are the first which provide a wide-ranging description and analysis of the holistic identities of the prototypical members of particular occupational groups. The studies here show that participants can describe an array of detailed prototypical features going far beyond those which might be considered directly relevant to the job itself. Given that occupational prototypes have been shown to play a part in career decisions (Ryan, 2014), a full understanding of the nature of these prototypes may be useful in designing effective career support. These rich findings indicate that this is a strand of research which makes a novel contribution to the existing literature and is worth exploring further.

Occupational identities as a part of identity-based career theory

These multi-dimensional prototypical occupational identities are interesting to consider in the light of the new definitions of 'career' which emphasise the holistic, identity-based nature of career decisions (Savickas, 2015a). The definitions which have emerged in the literature in the last decade, acknowledge that when an individual makes a career choice, they consider who they are and who they want to be (their identity) and not just what they want to do (Ibarra, 2005). As a consequence career decisions are seen to accommodate the individual's life style, commitments, relationships, dreams and restrictions outside work as well as within. Whilst the literature may acknowledge that career decisions are choices about social identity, the nature of formal career related information, however, has not kept pace with these theoretical developments.

The findings of this programme of research indicate that it may also be useful to apply this broad definition of 'career' to the way occupations are explored, incorporating ideas about occupational identities as well as more traditional aspects of occupational information such as job duties. This would then bring an internal consistency to the process. Career practice has engaged more with making links between individuals who are acknowledged as multi-

dimensional and holistic, and occupations which are defined through not much more than a job description (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2016). Incorporating holistic and multidimensional occupational identities in career information and education might make a valuable contribution to understanding an identity driven approach to career decisions.

Conceptual integration

A recurring theme throughout the discussions within this thesis is that of integration. The findings draw attention to the importance of integration within career research, specifically the integration of constructs, disciplines and epistemology.

A wealth of research attests to the associations between career constructs and individual characteristics. In Study 2, some of these associations were compared with each other, and possible selves emerged as having a stronger association with career goals (career decidedness) and career motivation (proactive career behaviour) than some of the more well-examined career constructs such as career decision making self-efficacy, and social support satisfaction. As well as making a contribution to the quest for a better understanding of career development, integration of this sort is of great value to an applied discipline such as this. A goal of career research is to provide knowledge which informs practice and a clear understanding of the relative impact of constructs will help practitioners to make empirically-based professional decisions.

The framework of prototypical occupational identities which was generated through the grounded analysis in Study 3 of this programme of research overlaps conceptually with a number of other career related models examined, including Holland's RIASEC framework (1997) and Schein's career anchors (1996). One notable difference between the new model and the others is that the framework developed here incorporates both intrapsychic and interpsychic characteristics. Career development is complex. It is well documented that career lies at the intersection of a number of different disciples (McMahon, 2016), and that career decisions are influenced both by individual characteristics (Holland, 1997) and societal and demographic characteristics (Roberts, 2009). Yet notwithstanding some valuable exceptions (for example Patton & McMahon's Systems Theory Framework, 2006), the career scholarship has not tended to approach the topic in a multi-disciplinary way (Arthur, 2008). One outcome

of the devolved and complex nature of this academic research is that theories and frameworks have tended to draw most heavily from one academic sphere or another. The body of career research, taken as a whole, acknowledges a wide range of career influences, but individual frameworks tend to be limited to one particular approach. The reality of people's career development draws together these disparate strands, but whilst it can be expedient and advantageous to examine each of these strands individually, there must be a process to bring the different strands back together, to facilitate an understanding of it as a single whole. One methodological advantage in the grounded theory analysis undertaken in Studies 3 and 4 is that it is data-driven. The perspective adopted for the framework which emerged from the data is that of the participants. Whilst it is no surprise that the framework which the participant data generated incorporates both intrapsychic and interpsychic aspects, the integrated nature of this framework makes an interesting contribution to the literature, drawing together constructs from a range of disciplines and working towards a more complete representation of the participants' conceptualisations of career.

The findings in this thesis draw attention to the epistemological complexities of career related research. The data from these studies indicate that participants amassed their knowledge and understanding of the world of work through both constructionist and constructivist approaches. Conceptualisations of prototypical occupational identities were built up by drawing on the shared norms within their society and their interpretations of their own experiences. In contrast, the formal career information which clients are presented with, or encouraged to research themselves, is of a more positivistic nature, with an assumption, explicit and implicit that there is a knowable truth about the reality of a given job. Indeed, career policy often assumes that informal sources of information are used only when there is limited access to formal sources. The OECD report aimed at improving occupational information acknowledges that clients draw from 'reputation and rumour', but states explicitly that this occurs simply because clients do not have access to better quality (i.e. more objective) information (Tricot, 2002, p.148). Taken to the extreme, this might indicate that an aim of policy in this sphere is to develop formal career information to the point where those making career decisions stop taking notice of informal sources altogether. The assumption behind this aim, however, is at odds with other research which indicates that people are more likely to trust information they have gleaned from informal sources than formal ones (Ball,

2003; Ball & Vincent, 1998; Greenbank & Hepworth, 2008). An argument could be made that encouraging an integrated epistemological approach to career research – with researchers, practitioners and individuals incorporating the constructivist meanings from experiences within the objective data from more formal sources, could be an approach which helps clients to develop a richer understanding of the occupations they are considering.

Symbolic interactionism

In Chapter 3, symbolic interactionism (SI) was introduced as the theoretical lens through which the programme of research would operate. The theory has been used throughout to help interpret the findings of the studies, but the thesis overall shows that this theory may be of value in helping to elucidate career development. SI stresses the importance of social identity, of symbols and of a socially defined reality (Blumer, 1969). These three tenets of SI help to explain how and why the findings of this programme of research matter to career development.

SI considers social identity to be core to individuals, and this assumption supports the idea put forward in this thesis and elsewhere (for example, Archer et al., 2010; Ibarra, 2005) that decisions about career are decisions about social identities. The thesis has social identity at its centre, both the social identities of the individual participants and their perceptions of the social identities of occupational groups. The findings of Study 4 provide some evidence that these identities play a part in participants' career thinking and can stimulate insightful career conversations. The findings of Study 2 provide some evidence that identities have an association with career constructs which are known to contribute to positive career outcomes: possible selves were positively associated with career decidedness and proactive career behaviour. The empirical data thus support the idea that identities are core to career decisions and SI provides a theoretical underpinning to explain the importance of social identities within career development.

Symbols, as theorised in SI, serve as tools for communication. Individuals make choices about particular objects on the basis of the messages that they wish to communicate, and reciprocally, individuals interpret objects as symbols. The studies in this thesis focus on objects (the features of the occupational prototypes), and the findings of Studies 1 and 3 indicate that

these objects are symbols. The links between the features and the characteristics they symbolise are created and learned through the interplay between the individual and society and this accounts for the existence of both shared and individual aspects of the prototypes. SI submits that symbols create our reality by allowing us to make sense of the world, as they are used to categorise and discriminate (Blumer, 1969). This reflects the findings of these studies which identify features as symbols and provide a framework of the symbolised characteristics which are used to categorise and discriminate between occupational identities.

Finally, the ontological positions of SI is consistent with aspects of this thesis. Symbolic interactionism acknowledges the existence of an objective reality, but deems that a socially defined reality is more important (Charon, 2010). Much of the research conducted on occupational groups elsewhere has aimed to identify the reality of those within the group. This thesis addresses instead the perceptions of participants, examining the 'reality' of occupations from the perspective of those outside the group – from the perspective of others within society. In keeping with a symbolic interactionist philosophy, the thesis assumes that whilst it might be possible to identify some objective 'facts' about jobs, or occupational identities, it is **the perception that individuals hold about an occupation** which is most relevant to their career thinking.

8.2.2. Contribution to theories of career practice

In this section two ideas for the theories which underpin career practice will be proposed, based on the findings and discussions from the empirical chapters of the thesis. The first proposal develops existing identity based career practice, and the second considers the relationship between normative and descriptive approaches to career practice.

Identity based career practice
This thesis provides some support for an identity approach to career practice, both the identities of those engaged in making career decisions, in terms of possible selves, and the prototypical identities of different occupational groups.

Alongside the theoretical contribution which research on possible selves may make, the impact

this approach could have within career practice should be considered. Previous research provides evidence that possible selves interventions have an impact on a range of outcomes, including goal setting, motivation, persistence and academic success (Hock et al., 2007; Lee & Oyserman, 2009; Robinson et al., 2003). The interventions increase the salience of the participants' possible selves, thus making them clearer about their goals and more able (through greater motivation and a raised awareness of the possible strategies) to put their plans into action. Given this previous research and the results of Study 2 which identify a link between salient possible selves and useful career constructs (career decidedness and proactive job search behaviour), it is reasonable to propose that a possible selves intervention might have a significant positive impact on participants' career goal setting and motivation. The strength and significance of the results, in comparison to the results found for the other more mainstream career constructs, indicate that a possible selves approach could provide a valuable addition to evidence based career practice, and that this approach should be explored further, to identify the nature and impact of an intervention.

The second indication that an identity based approach to practice may add value to practitioners and clients, can be inferred from the findings of Study 4. In this study, the participants used identities (both their own possible selves and their perceptions of occupational identities) as the basis for a career conversation with the researcher. The conversations proved insightful and appeared to allow participants to bring preconscious thoughts into their conscious awareness. Emerging empirical evidence indicates that significant career thinking takes place below the level of consciousness (Krieshok et al., 2009), but this cognitive system is at the mercy of numerous biases (Kahneman, 2011). An intervention that allows individuals to bring their preconscious thoughts into their conscious awareness would provide an opportunity for them to scrutinise this thinking and assess its merit. This has the potential to be a valuable approach to career practice, although, again, more research is needed to ascertain whether these conversations could have value with other populations, and whether they make an additional contribution to career conversations over and above those which are grounded in other approaches.

Attention will now turn to the second suggestion for the theoretical basis for career practice, namely the relationship between normative and descriptive approaches to practice.

Normative and descriptive theories.

Distinctions have been made in the literature between normative, descriptive and prescriptive theories (Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 1988). Normative theories aim to provide a conceptual basis for advice on the best approach in a given context, offering guidelines for how an individual should approach a situation to ensure that they get the best outcome. Descriptive theories are concerned with how people in real situations actually perform and so they describe behaviour. The limitation typically associated with normative theories is that they may fail to take into account the real world conditions, and may be so far removed from people's typical conduct that they advocate unachievable standards of behaviour. A reliance on descriptive theories however cannot hope to change or improve behaviour. A third approach, that of prescriptive theory, provides an expedient synthesis (McFall, 2015). Prescriptive theories offer guidelines for good practice which are based on an understanding of the behaviour which is most likely to lead to the best outcomes (i.e. normative theories) but are grounded in an understanding of the limitations of normal behaviour. Thus they provide suggestions for behaviour which will improve existing norms but take into account real world issues and are therefore more likely to be implemented than the more idealised normative approaches.

Two aspects of career thinking highlighted in the findings of this thesis suggest that there may be a gulf between the approaches advocated in career practice (based on normative theories) and the experience of participants (as identified through descriptive theories). The first is the area of career related information.

In the previous section, it was noted that career policy tends to adopt a positivistic approach to occupational information, assuming that there exists an objective and knowable truth about jobs. The argument was put forward that a more integrated approach, combining objective and subjective sources of career related information could be of value to clients. This point is relevant here again, in the discussion of normative and descriptive theories. From a descriptive point of view, it is well documented that people rely heavily on subjective career information and trust information they have gleaned from informal sources more than that garnered from formal ones (Ball, 2003; Ball & Vincent, 1998; Greenbank & Hepworth, 2008). Yet policy is focused on developing and enhancing formal sources, without significant acknowledgement of

the informal sources, or much support for clients trying to integrate the two (CDI, 2014; IAEVG, 1997). The normative assumption underpinning these policy choices is that objective information is more likely to lead to good career decisions (Tricot, 2002) but the descriptive evidence suggests that a reliance on informal sources is inevitable and may add value (Greenbank, 2014; Law, 1981). A prescriptive theory of occupational information which acknowledges the role of informal sources of career information could result in policy which helps individuals to integrate the two sources of intelligence and allows them to scrutinize both to assess their value.

The second area concerns cognitive processes. The findings of this programme of research indicate that the participants may have considerable career related information stored in their preconscious, some in the form of prototypes. Guidelines for career practice advocate an emphasis on the use of conscious rational decision making processes (Hodkinson, 2008; Holland, 1997; Redekopp, 2016) and pay limited attention to stereotypical thinking, beyond the push to eradicate stereotypes which may lead to discrimination or limit the opportunities of particular demographic groups (Herr, 2008; Watson, Nota & McMahon, 2015). The findings of Study 4 suggest that practitioners choose to avoid addressing or even acknowledging these two cognitive approaches (preconscious and stereotypical thinking) in their practice because they consider them to be poor approaches to making career decisions. Again, a gulf between the normative approach to practice and the descriptive findings from this research can be seen, as practitioners concentrate on the cognitive processes which they believe will lead to good career decision making, and pay little attention to those which may be widespread but are not as well regarded. A prescriptive synthesis which provides guidance on the cognitive approaches which are most likely to lead to the best career decisions but acknowledges the inevitability and even the potential value of the less frequently advocated cognitive processes, could be of interest to career practitioners and of value to clients.

8.3. Implications for practice

The section above situates the findings of this thesis within the theories and research on career practice, but as well as a contribution to this literature, the findings suggest some more

immediate implications for career practice.

The findings from this thesis indicate that the participants have a wealth of existing knowledge about a range of careers. This knowledge is broad ranging, but may or may not be either accurate or helpful to their understanding of careers or to their career development. The information seems to be difficult to solicit, perhaps because it may be stored below the level of consciousness, but can be readily accessed if participants are encouraged to pay attention to it and use visualisation and language to identify and articulate the knowledge. Learning theories tell us that people learn best when they are encouraged to integrate new information with existing knowledge (Michael, 2006) and it is common practice for career practitioners to explore their clients' existing knowledge of a given occupation prior to giving information. Yet, as highlighted above, conventional career information is biased towards a positivistic understanding and focuses on a limited number of aspects of work, such as the skills and qualifications required, job duties, pay and career prospects (NCS, 2017). The conversations which aim to identify the existing occupational knowledge of a client are likely to cover questions such as 'What do you know about what social workers do?' and 'What kinds of personal qualities do you think would make a good teacher?' rather than the questions which might follow from the analyses of the data in this thesis. The findings of these studies might suggest that a full exploration of clients' understanding of a particular role could incorporate questions such as 'How do you imagine social workers might spend their leisure time?', and 'Where could you imagine a primary teacher might live?'. It is conceivable that once this more in depth level of knowledge is unearthed, the information can then be scrutinised to assess its value and relevance, and can be used as a starting point from which clients can integrate new, or more relevant information.

The second practical recommendation stems from the findings of Study 4. In this study, career identities were used as the basis for career conversations and, using both the participant's own identity and their perceptions of occupational identity, the career conversations which followed were revealing and insightful and appeared to generate new thinking from the participants. Career practitioners already have at their disposal a range of useful approaches, questions and techniques to stimulate conversations, and the findings from this thesis indicate that identity based conversations could constitute a valuable addition to the practitioners'

toolkit. A client contemplating teaching, for example, could be invited to discuss their idea of a typical teacher, and to consider the degree to which they consider themselves, or would like to consider themselves, as a similar kind of person, living a similar lifestyle. This could lead to a discussion about where they believe their image of a prototypical teacher came from, and whether it is likely to be accurate, or could allow them to reflect on the degree to which it may be important to them to be in a profession where they are similar to (or different from) their colleagues.

One further point for reflection is the need for a stronger reciprocal relationship between research and practice. The association between research and practice within the discipline was discussed earlier in this thesis (Chapter 1), and calls for closer links between the two were noted. The cry for closer links often focuses on closer links in one particular direction, implying that career practice should be based more closely on career theory: numerous publications highlight that current career practice is, too often, grounded in outdated theories, at the expense of more contemporary and relevant theories (Bimrose, Barnes, Hughes, & Orton, 2004; McDaniels & Gysbers 1992; McMahon & Patton, 2006; Yates, 2016). The findings and discussions here however stress the need for a stronger reciprocal relationship between practice and research.

Echoing laments in the existing literature, the inferences from the interviews with practitioners in Study 4 indicate that the information strand of career work, and the practitioner approach to career decision making, are not always informed by the latest career research. But the links between research and practice are arguably limited in both directions. Career practitioners looking for an evidence base to underpin career related information, for example, might struggle to find relevant research. The literature does not offer a theory (normative, descriptive or prescriptive) which can give a comprehensive analysis of how individuals conceptualise occupations, the information on which people make decisions, or the information on which good career decisions are based. In the absence of these kinds of data and frameworks, practitioners' only recourse may be to rely on their own professional instincts. As well as reiterating the call for a stronger emphasis on research in practice which can be heard elsewhere, the findings of this thesis then indicate a need for research which can meet the immediate needs of practitioners.

8.4. Limitations and future directions

8.4.1. Limitations

The focus groups used in Study 1 which explored the occupational prototypes, examined only four occupations, and looked at the prototypes imagined by one specific population: female psychology students at UEL. Further research could explore whether the findings might be generalizable to other occupations, and other populations, and could try to examine the scope of participants' imagined prototypes in more depth. The aim of the study was to explore the features of the prototypical occupational identities of participants, but whilst the discussions were flexible and broad ranging, the questions on the semi-structured interview schedule inevitably directed the conversation. Further studies could ensure that the direction of the discussions were participant-led.

Study 2 focused again on the same population, but with just 87 participants this was small for a quantitative study. A larger sample could have ensured more robust statistical analyses. One of the strengths of this study was in the way it compared the performance of the key independent variable with that of other constructs more widely examined in the career literature. This integration is interesting and valuable, but further research could build on this, exploring a wider range of career outcomes and key constructs. This study made use of an online questionnaire to gather data and it may be that this was not the most appropriate way to gather data which may be located below the level of participants' consciousness. With hindsight it seems likely that a qualitative design may have been more successful in bringing the preconscious ideas into the conscious awareness of the participants.

Study 3 re-analysed the data from Study 1. The findings of Studies 1 and 2 took the programme of research in an unexpected direction and the decision was made that a GT approach would offer the most appropriate re-analysis of the data. In Study 3 therefore, a GT analysis of the data was combined with an approach to data collection which had anticipated a content analysis of the data. A study in which data collection as well as analysis were designed using a

GT methodology may have led to a more compelling theory.

Aside from these particular issues raised, there are limitations typically associated with each of the methodologies: qualitative studies have small numbers of participants; quantitative studies tend not to provide nuanced answers; correlation studies do not give information about causality; and researcher bias could arguably be noted throughout. However, one could argue that these should not be considered as limitations of the approaches and that they are perhaps better conceptualised as defining features. Any method of data collection or analysis will have objectives it can and cannot meet, and a mixed approach to research has helped to provide a richer and more integrated set of results than any one methodology could deliver.

8.4.2. Ideas for future research

A number of ideas for future research have been identified earlier in this chapter. In addition to these, it is useful to address some broader directions which might be beneficial to explore further.

This thesis provides some indication that participants have multidimensional occupational prototypes stored below the level of consciousness, and that people may discriminate between occupational identities based on a collection of inter- and intra-psychic constructs. Two potentially fertile directions of research arise from these ideas. The findings here give some indication that participants are not always aware of their own stores of career information, perhaps because the information is stored below the level of consciousness. More robust evidence for this could be gathered through experimental studies which could examine this in more depth. The second area for further research is the relationship between these prototypical occupational identities and career decisions. It is possible to conjecture that these mental models are likely to have an impact on career decisions, but further research could establish with more certainty whether they have a role to play in career decisions, and whether decisions based on information of this sort are linked to good career outcomes.

Study 2 identified a moderate association between possible selves and valuable career constructs, but the study provided no information about causality. An intervention aimed at increasing the salience of participants' possible selves, could examine whether this leads to an

increase in the career goals and motivations of the participants, and a longitudinal study could then examine whether these effects persist and translate into positive action. It would be particularly valuable to design research which compared the impact of different interventions to identify whether, for example, an intervention designed to increase self-efficacy is more or less effective than one aimed at enhancing the salience of possible selves.

The findings of Study 4 suggest that the model of occupational prototypes developed could be of use in career practice. This study explored the nature of career conversations prompted by the model and demonstrated that the model could be used to initiate identity-based career conversations which appeared to generate new thinking or increased self-awareness in the participants. This, in itself, is of value, but there is a considerable amount of other research which could inform this debate. Further studies could aim to find out whether an identity approach to career conversations leads to insights for a wide range of clients, and to explore the nature and scope of the impact of conversations of this nature.

8.5. Conclusion

Career scholarship acknowledges the central role that identity plays in career choice, but the writing in this arena is not consistent, well evidenced, well theorised or integrated with other strands of relevant research. This thesis has responded to these limitations, examining the decision making mechanism of self to prototype matching and appraising the two aspects of self: possible selves and prototypes. Self to prototype decision making takes the traditional concept of matching, but reinvents it in the light of the contemporary focus on identity. The two aspects of identity within this approach both emanate from social identity theory. The findings here suggest that people make sense of the world of work by classifying occupations in terms of their perceptions of occupational identities. These occupational identities are categorised on the basis of a number of constructs both inter- and intra-psychic. Individuals have detailed and multidimensional information about occupational prototypes stored in their preconscious, access to which is facilitated through conversation. The information is developed through a range of personal and social experiences. Conversations about possible selves and occupational identities may be of value in career practice.

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The programme of research has made a theoretical, empirical and practical contribution to the field. Theoretically, the conclusions drawn from the findings have extended the conceptual understanding of the nature of perceptions of occupational identities, enriching our appreciation of the ways that people conceptualise and differentiate between occupational identities. This is important, because it is the perception of occupations which will impact on career decisions, and this research offers a fresh theoretical perspective on this issue. Empirically, the key contribution is the results which reveal the correlations between the salience of possible selves, and both career goals and motivation. The moderate correlations revealed suggest a promising avenue for further research. Finally, in terms of practical tools, the framework of occupational identities seems to offer an approach to practice which encourages clients to bring some of the preconscious stores of occupational knowledge and self-awareness stored into their conscious awareness.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study 1

A1. Ethical approval Study 1

A2. Extract from the transcript from Focus Group 1

Appendix B: Study 2

B1. Ethical approval for Study 2

B2. Items used for the possible self to occupational prototype match (PS to OP Match) measure

B3. Survey for Study 2

B4. Histogram showing distribution of scores for the PS to OP Match measure

B5. Scatterplot from the linear regression of PCB and the independent variables of possible self salience, self clarity, conscientiouness and CDMSE.

B6. Scatterplot of residuals for the linear regression of PCB and the independent variables of possible self salience, self clarity, conscientiouness and CDMSE.

Appendix C: Study 3

C1. Extract from the transcript and initial coding from Focus Group 2

C2. Mind map from Study 3

C3. Development of Themes Study 3

Appendix D: Study 4

D1. Ethical approval for study 4

D2. Extract from the transcript and analysis from Study 4

D3. Memo post Jacqueline's interview

D4. Mind maps from Study 4

Appendix A: Study 1

A1. Ethical approval for Study 1

14 March 2014

Dear Julia,

Project Title:	What are the key characteristics of the occupational prototypes of the most popular destinations of leavers from the BSc Psychology at UEL?
Researcher(s):	Julia Yates
Principal Investigator:	Julia Yates

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 5th March 2014.**

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
University of East London	Julia Yates

Approved Documents
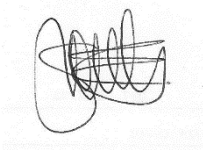
The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	*Version*	*Date*
UREC Application Form	1.0	17 February 2014
Participant Information Sheet	1.0	17 February 2014
Consent Form	1.0	17 February 2014
Interview topic guide	1.0	14 March 2014 2014

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Good Practice in Research is adhered to.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Fieulleteau

Ethics Integrity Manager

University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**

A2 Extract from transcript from Focus Group 3

Study 1 Focus Group 3

Primary Teacher

J: you can choose whether we start with occupational psychologist or primary school teacher

General: primary school teacher

J: you see that's interesting in itself! Why is that easier?

General: it's easier to picture; you know more of them

J: you know more of them

E: I think you've encountered them more than an occupational therapist

General: yes

J: I think that probably makes a real difference, doesn't it? I don't know what that will do – we'll just see how it comes out I don't know what that does to your stereotypes – oh I don't know let's just find out.

B: we've all known primary school teachers from our schoolings, that's what I'm going to start thinking about

General; Yeah

J: introduction blurb. So let's start with, are they male or female?

General: female

J: oh, universally female, ok, and what age, what sort of age are they?

F: 28

D: yeah mine was late twenties

B, C, E: early twenties

A: mine was older 40, mid 40s or older

J: OK and tell me a little bit about their social class, how would you describe their social class?

General: middle

C: educated

E: somewhat educated

B: yeah I was... yeah perhaps upper, lower middle, somewhere like that, degree educated, you have to be

J: **because you have to be. OK so now I want you to think about what they are wearing, in this picture in your mind**

C: very average

E: I don't picture them wearing come to impress, they're wearing, just coming to teach, yeah

A: yeah just a basic top, jeans,

E: maybe pants, maybe pants

A: are we thinking about them on the job or

J: **well I don't know, I'd be interested in both really, what do you think's in your mind at the moment? Is it them going to work? Let's start with that and then we'll think about them at the weekends in a bit. Is that image them going to work [to E]**

E: I think it's the same for me, both

J: **same, week days and weekend?**

E; yeah. Cos they, I'm sorry [laugher] cos I feel that what they are wearing wasn't really much different from what they would wear outside. So it's like they would have easily transitioned, just taken off their teacher hat and just

J: **so jeans, tshirt, somebody else said something…**

B: I was thinking non threatening

J: **non threatening?**

A: practical

D: smart casual

A: a little bit dressed up, just like they've put in a little bit of effort, but not too much, they look good but not done up

C: I was thinking something more pretty, like a cardigan or a scarf, like a, but more like quite a conservative

F: I imagine something colourful, different colours, like shiny colours, yeah shiny colours, I don't know

J: **making a bit of an impact**

E: some more than others. I feel there are some people who really wear their personality when they come to teach, where others just have the dull, like the brown dull colours, you know what's going to happen that day when you see them

Laughter

315

J: that's really interesting. So you've got two little, you've got two stereotypes side by side there, there's a sort of dull, neutral, predictable, and then you've got the slightly more flamboyant

E: the fun teacher, when you know it's going to be a good day when you have that teacher, I had those two teachers growing up, and then which one do you see?

J: it's hard having to make a decision., So where do you think your teachers would buy their clothes? What sort of shops do you think they would choose?

D: Marks and Spencer

General laughter and agreement

E: I was going to say the same thing

B: I think they would go for the younger stores – you know they're trying to engage the younger generation so some of them at least will be looking to wear, not perhaps trendy but

J: slightly more on the trendy side, So?

B: again coming in with the non threatening side to

J: trying to make a link with the students

B: exactly

D: Dorothy Perkins

E: but I think that., my problem is that when you see primary and secondary, I know we're supposed to focus on primary is that you see that as they go up they try harder to impress, whereas when they are a bit lower, because they probably think the students don't really care what I wear, they're lucky to pay attention to me or listen to me, then clothes is not a factor, but as you get older, as you get older, as you get higher, then you are trying to impress because people are picking you up, people are more critical, whereas kids are just not as critical.

A; it's interesting because I think that little kids actually notice a lot, like little details like I don't know, something about a button, something like that, I think that little kids would notice, older kids wouldn't notice that stuff

J: that's quite interesting and do you think that the teachers would think about that when they were getting dressed? Is that when cos you were saying?

C: I think less about the fashion and more about the splash of colour, or something about the colour, cute

F: attracted to the colour, the energy

D: no mine just gets dressed in the dark

Laughter

E: you always hear rumours about how horrible they are, how mean. I don't think they go home thinking, I know how to impress them, put on a little brooch to get their attention, I don't think they think that

D; I don't think they have time

C: I had a nice primary teacher

J: but you've got two teachers in there? It sounded like you had good cop and bad cop

E: yeah cos there are some teachers who would have like a good experience with the kids, they probably have more time to be like, ok, try a little bit today, put a little bit of effort in today to impress them, whereas the teachers that have no respect from the kids at all, they just get dressed in the dark

B: don't you think that as a teacher, you're standing infront of a group of kids, however old or young they are, you are aware of your own appearance, at least in my experience, standing up in front of a group of people and there is some thought in the morning to what you are going to wear, just because you are going to be on display

E: yeah but that doesn't necessarily mean that that's going to work even though you do have a sense of how you look it's not really, how you look and how you speak and how you connect with people, it's not the same thing. I think that certain teachers, I remember I had a, he was not a teacher, he dressed like it was poor, like he had a rugged shirt that, but he was one of the best teachers, he interacted the best out of all of us, every time he came to our class everyone was on time, the worst behaved kids actually stayed and listened because he just knew how to capture their attention so I don't really necessarily think it's about what they put on it's how they come across

B: No i, yeah I agree with you, I'm just saying that I don't think people who stand up in front and teach are totally unaware – he might have been aware that he wasn't dressing up, if you see what i mean, I don't know

C or D: maybe he did it deliberately

J: OK se tell me about what they would wear at the weekends because in your image, same during the week as the weekends, what about the rest of you, what would your image wear on a Saturday?

A: very similar but just a little bit dressed down.

C: yeah. Or just the fact that they look, you could pick that they were a primary school teacher the whole week round. Its' one of those occupations where it is their whole persona

A: it's like a lifestyle, And maybe their friends, their friends are all the same

J: oh that's interesting, so they might socialise with other teachers

A: yeah, and they've similar interests

J: OK I'm going to come back to that because Id love to know about their friends and

interests, but I just need to ask about the shoes, So what shoes are they wearing to work?

General: flats / ballet flats / yeah

F: definitely ballet flats

J: Ballet flats

E: maybe 2 inch heels. Chunky think heel, black, it's a closed toe – never a peep toe, Can't do that you know...

Appendix B: Study 2

B1. Ethical approval for Study 2

25 November 2014

Dear Julia,

Project Title:	Is *'possible selves-to-occupational prototype matching'* a career decision making mechanism that is associated with greater career decidedness and proactive job search behaviours.
Researcher(s):	Julia Yates
Principal Investigator:	Professor Mark McDermott
Reference Number:	UREC_1415_32

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 12th November 2014**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

The Committee recommends that you debrief participants after the study, clarifying that actors were used to imitate accents.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
Online survey	Professor Mark McDermott

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
UREC Application Form	1.0	22 October 2014
Participant Information Sheet	2.0	25 November 2014
Consent Form	1.0	22 October 2014
Draft recruitment email	1.0	22 October 2014
Survey	1.0	22 October 2014

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Good Practice in Research is adhered to.

Please ensure you retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Fieulleteau

Ethics Integrity Manager

University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**

B2. Items used for the possible self to occupational prototype match (PS to OP Match) measure

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which their possible self and their prototype of their chosen occupation were associated with the attributes below.

In their 20s	Wears smart casual clothing	Enjoys glamping
In their 30s	Wears casual clothes	Enjoys outdoor activities
In their 40s	Wears a sharp suit	Watches comedy shows on TV
Wears high heels	Wears accessories	Watches soap operas
Wears comfortable shoes	Is fashion conscious	Reads chick lit
Wears Birkenstocks	Likes a girls' night out	Watches documentaries
Has a cat	Enjoys karaoke	Enjoys gardening
Enjoys activity holidays	Enjoys a barbeque with friends	Watches Scandinavian dramas
Enjoys city breaks	Goes to a trendy cocktail bar	Lives in a neat home
Has a dog	Enjoys camping	Has no interest in politics
Supports the Labour party	Supports the Conservative party	Supports the Green party

B2 The online survey

Making Career Decisions

Thank you for participating in this survey. I really appreciate it.

1. I am doing my PhD at the University of East London and I am trying to find out more about the way that psychology students make their career decisions. The survey is entirely anonymous - I have no way of finding out who you are! The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Completing the survey is entirely voluntary, and you can decide not to answer any particular question, or abandon the survey altogether at any point. If you have any questions or concerns at all about the study please contact me at j.c.yates@uel.ac.uk or if you are uncomfortable about any aspect of how the study is being handled, please contact, researchethics@uel.ac.uk By answering the question below, you are agreeing to participate in the survey and giving consent to your data being used in any future publications. *

○ I agree to participating in this survey

2. Have you decided on an occupation? Think about it for a moment and then tick the answer that best describes your current thinking.

	strongly disagree	mostly disagree	moderately disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	moderately agree	mostly agree	strongly agree
I have decided on the occupational area I want to enter (for example, education, performing arts, psychology)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have decided on the occupation I want (for example, teacher, actor, clinical psychologist)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Thinking about your future. For these questions, I want you to mentally travel into the future and imagine the future work self you hope to become.

	strongly disagree	somewhat disgree	neutral	somewhat agree	strongly agree
I can easily imagine my future work self	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The mental picture of this future is very clear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This future is very easy for me to imagine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am very clear about who and what I want to become in my future work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
What type of future I want in relationship to my work is very clear in my mind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. New Multiple Choice

○ Option 1

○ Option 2

5. To what extent do the following statements describe you?

	not at all descriptive of me	somewhat descriptive of me	descriptive of me	moderately descriptive of me	very descriptive of me
My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I seldom experience conflict between the different elements of my personality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sometimes I think I know other people better that I know myself	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Even if I wanted to, I don't think I would tell someone what I'm really like	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	neutral	somewhat agree	strongly agree
I am planning what I want to do in the next few years of my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am thinking ahead to the next few years and plan what I need to do for my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I engage in career path planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have recently begun to think more about what I would like to accomplish in my work during the next year or two	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I develop skills which may not be needed so much now, but in future positions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I gain experience in a variety of areas to increase my knowledge and skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I develop knowledge and skill in tasks critical to my future work life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I seek advice from my supervisor(s) or colleagues about additional training or experience I need in order to improve my future work prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I initiate talks with my supervisor about training or work assignments I need to develop skills that will help my future work chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I make my supervisor aware of my work aspirations and goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am building a network of contacts or friendships with colleagues to obtaininformation about how to do my work or to determine what is expected of me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am building a network of contacts or friendships to provide me with help or advice that will further my work chances.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am building a network of colleagues I can call on for support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. How often have you done this in the last month?

	Never	Once or twice	A few times	Quite often	Very often
Looked at job vacancies on websites	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Signed up on a job website or recruitment agency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written or updated your CV	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sent your CV to potential employers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Filled out a job application form	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Read a webpage, book or article about getting a job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Had an interview with a prospective employer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Talked with friends or relatives about possible job leads	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Contacted a recruitment agency or Job Centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spoke with previous employers or business acquaintances about their knowing of job leads	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Telephoned or emailed a prospective employer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Posted your CV on job recruitment websites	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. To what extent are the following statements true for you:

	very untrue	untrue	somewhat untrue	neutral	somewhat true	true	very true
I get chores done right away	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often forget to put things back in their proper place	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I like order	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I make a mess of things	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I get upset easily	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I seldom feel blue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have frequent mood swings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am relaxed most of the time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. List all the people you know, excluding yourself, whom you can count on for help or support in the matter described. You may either give the person's initials (eg JY) or their relationship to you (eg mum, friend, colleague).

Whom can you really count on to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress? _____

Whom can you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense? _____

Whom can you count on to console you when you are very upset? _____

Whom can you really count on to help you feel better when you are feeling generally down in the dumps? _____

Whom can you really count on to care about you, regardless of what is happening to you? _____

Who accepts you totally, including both your worst and your best points? _____

10. Rate how satisfied you are with the overall level of support you have. If you have no support for a question, still rate your level of satisfaction.

	very dissatisfied	moderately dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	moderately satisfied	very satisfied
Whom can you really count on to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whom can you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whom can you count on to console you when you are very upset?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whom can you really count on to help you feel better when you are feeling generally down in the dumps?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whom can you really count on to care about you, regardless of what is happening to you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Who accepts you totally, including both your worst and your best points?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. How much confidence do you have that you could accomplish each of these tasks:

	No confidence at all	Very little confidence	Moderate confidence	Much confidence	Complete confidence
Use the internet to find information about occupations that interest you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make a plan of your goals for the next five years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Determine the steps to take if you are having academic trouble with an aspect of your course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accurately assess your abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Select one from a list of potential occupations you are considering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Determine the steps you need to take to successfully complete your degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Persistently work at your degree or career goal even when you get frustrated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Determine what your ideal job would be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Find out about the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make a career decision and then not worry whether it was right or wrong	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Change occupations if you are not satisfied with the one you enter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Talk with a person already employed in a field you are interested in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Choose a career that will fit your interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Identify employers, firms and institutions relevant to your career possibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Find information about post graduate courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Successfully manage the job interview process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Identify some reasonable career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. For the next set of questions, I need you to have a particular occupation in mind. Please write here the name of the job you most wan to get when you leave UEL.

13. Try to imagine a typical member of the occupation you have named above (for example, if you have written 'accountant', think about typical accountant). To what extent do you associate the following words and phrases with the sort of person you would find in the occupation you have named?

	not at all associated	slightly associated	somewhat associated	moderately associated	extremely associated
in their 20s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
in their 30s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
in their 40s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears high heels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears comfortable shoes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears Birkenstocks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
has a cat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys activity holidays	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys city breaks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
has a dog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears smart casual clothes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears casual clothes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears a sharp suit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears accessories	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
is fashion conscious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
is not fashion conscious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
likes a girls'/lads' night out	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

likes a girls'/lads' night out	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys karaoke	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys a barbeque with friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
goes to a trendy cocktail bar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys camping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys glamping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys outdoor activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches comedy shows on TV	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches soap operas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
reads chick lit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches documentaries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys gardening	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches Scandinavian dramas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
lives in a neat home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
has no interest in politics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
supports the Labour party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
supports the Conservative party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
supports the Green party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
is male	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
is female	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Try to imagine yourself in ten years' time. To what extent do you associate the following words and phrases with the sort of person you hope to be in ten years' time?

	not at all associated	slightly associated	somewhat associated	moderately associated	extremely associated
in their 20s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
in their 30s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
in their 40s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears high heels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears comfortable shoes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears Birkenstocks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
has a cat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys activity holidays	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys city breaks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
has a dog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears smart casual clothes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears casual clothes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears a sharp suit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
wears accessories	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
is fashion conscious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
is not fashion conscious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
likes a girls'/lads' night out	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys karaoke	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys a barbeque with friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
goes to a trendy cocktail bar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys camping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys glamping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys outdoor activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches comedy shows on TV	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches soap operas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
reads chick lit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches documentaries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
enjoys gardening	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
watches Scandinavian dramas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
lives in a neat home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
has no interest in politics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
supports the Labour party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
supports the Conservative party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
supports the Green party	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(untitled)

15. What is your age?

[   ]

16. What is the highest educational qualification you've got so far?

no qualifications
GCSEs or equivalent
A levels or equivalent
OND / HNDs
BA / BSc
PG Cert or Dip
MA / MSc
MPhil / PhD

17. How would you describe your ethnicity

White British
Other White
Mixed race
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Chinese
Other Asian
Black African
Black Carribean
Other Black
Arab
Other

18. What is your sex?

○ Male

○ Female

B4. A histogram showing the distribution of scores for the PS to OP Match Measure
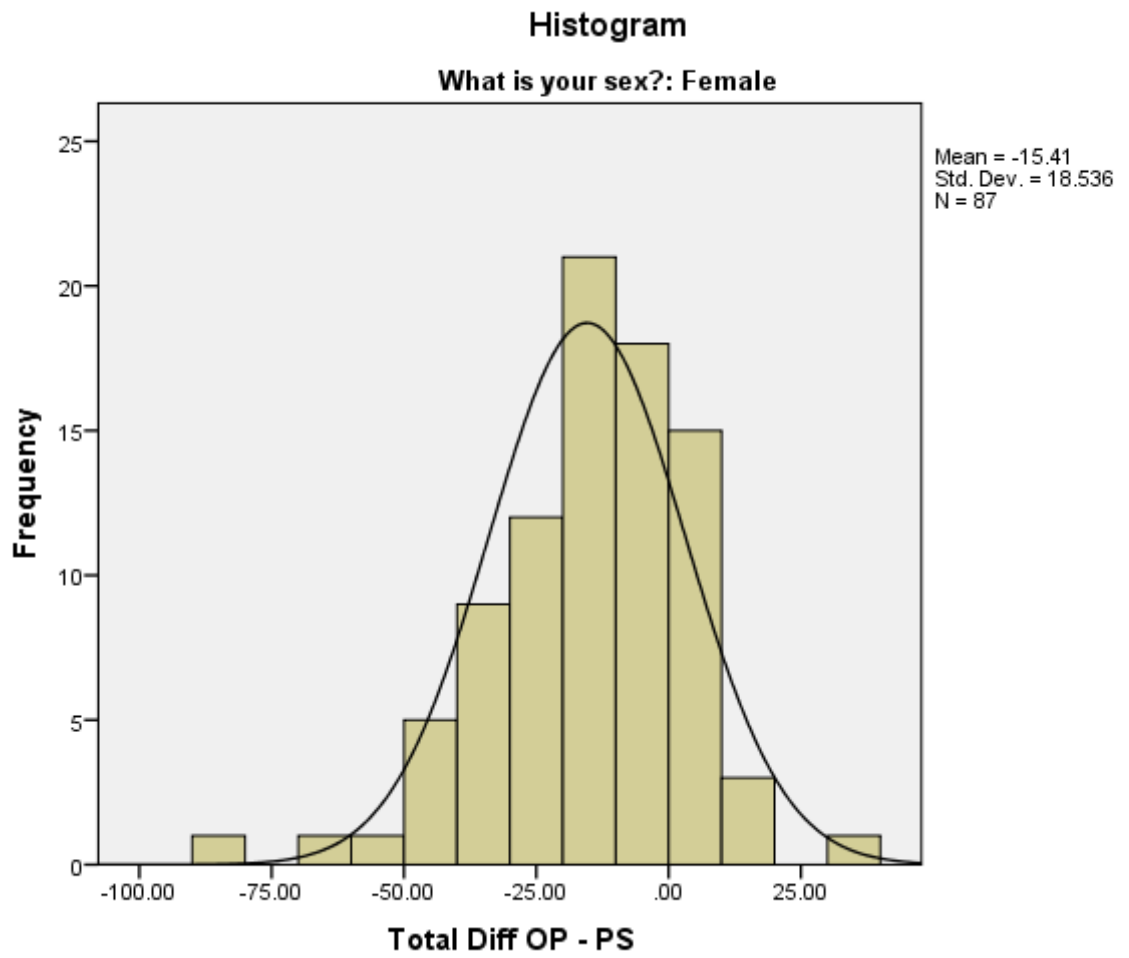
Histogram

What is your sex?: Female

Mean = -15.41
Std. Dev. = 18.536
N = 87

Total Diff OP - PS

B5. Scatterplot from the linear regression of PCB and the independent variables of possible self salience, self clarity, conscientiouness and CDMSE.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Total Recoded Proactive Career Behaviour
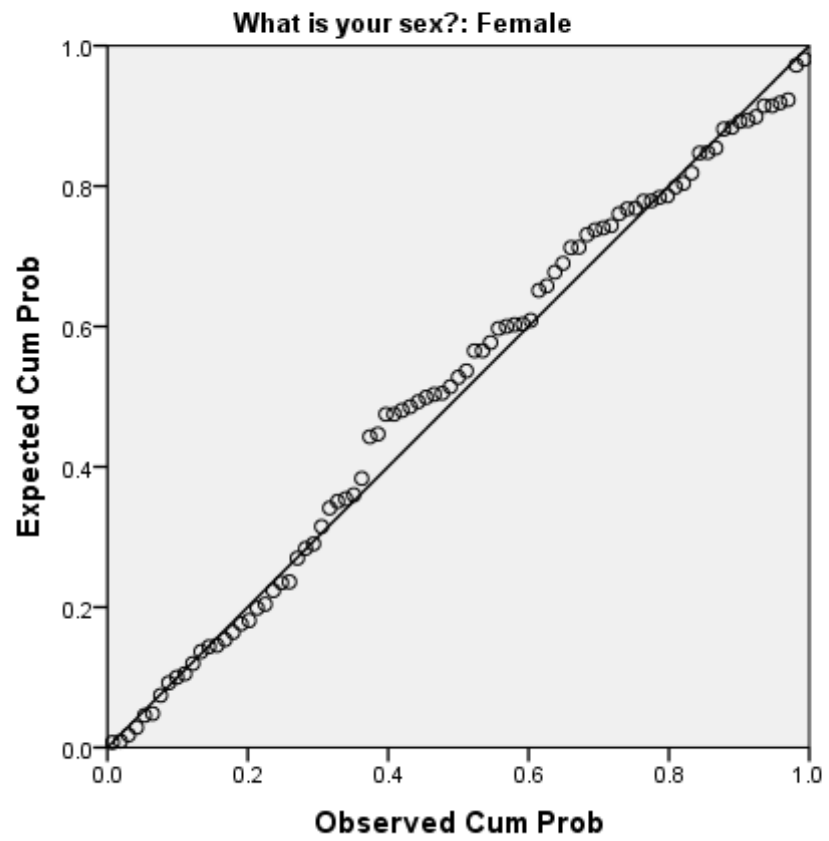
B6. Scatterplot of residuals for the linear regression of PCB and the independent variables of possible self salience, self clarity, conscientiouness and CDMSE.

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: Total Recoded Proactive Career Behaviour

What is your sex?: Female
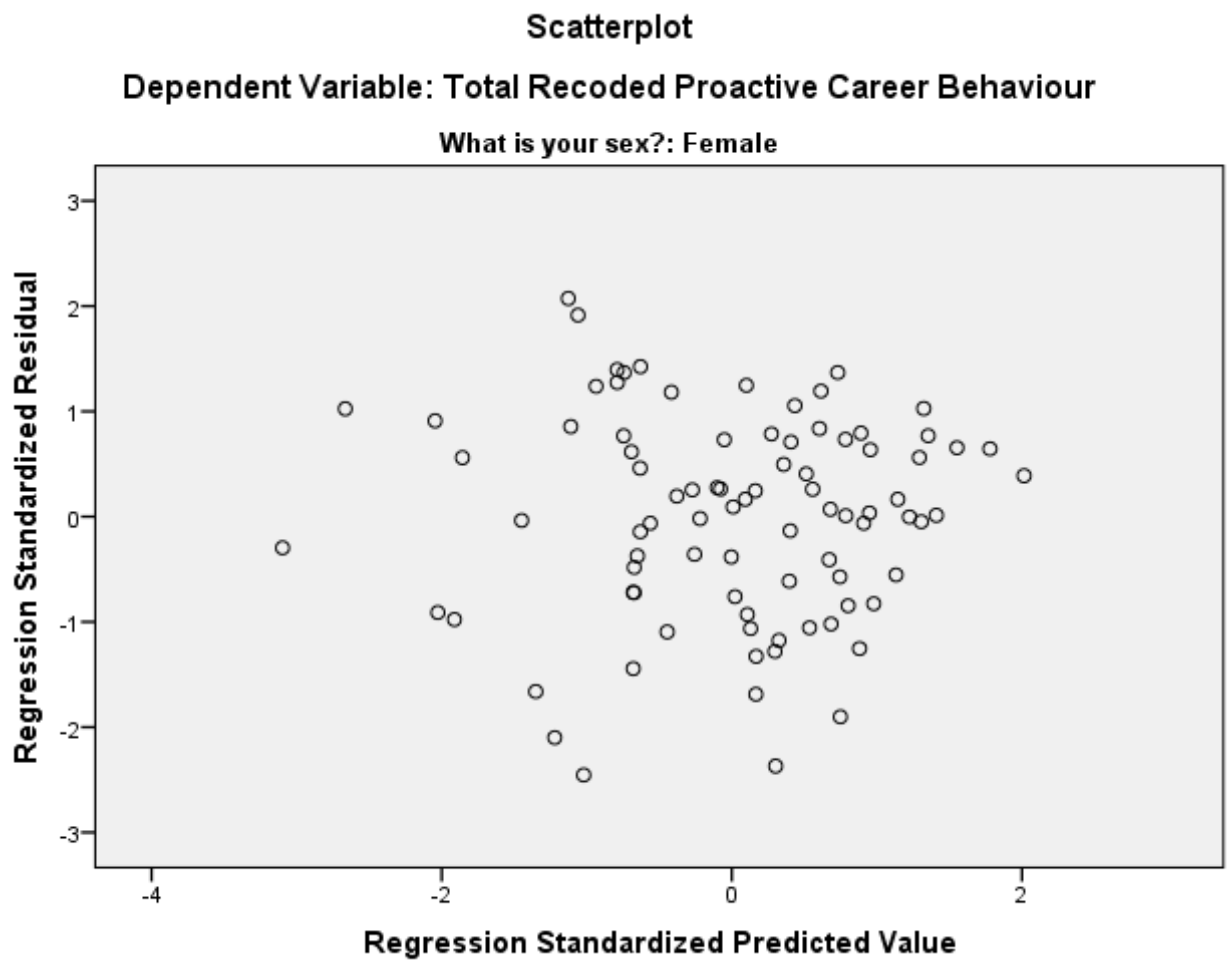
Appendix C: Study 3

C1. Extract from Focus Group 2 with initial coding for Study 3

1   A: yeah like a coloured scarf something that makes it personal like
2   she's put a touch
3   B: I think so I see somebody who has dressed quite neutral not
4   flashy not look at me not kind of drawing attention to her but with
5   personality yeah so something um yeah maybe nice earrings or
6   bangles or a nice necklace
7   E: can I say something? I think that it would be for me, now that
8   you're saying all that it would be very different the kind of setting
9   that he is, like for me I'm thinking of someone who is in a hospital
10   like clinical mental health so it's more neutral whereas maybe if you
11   were in a private practice and you have private clients you know
12   middle class because you would have money to pay for your
13   possessions and so it would be more like personality and the colours
14   like you were saying maybe some little touch.
15   J: but you're all talking quite smart and not, not bland? But quite
16   professional? Is that right
17   GM: yeah
18   J: what would they wear of a weekend if you imagine this person
19   then at home on Saturday
20   A: Do you know the shop Whistles? I kind of imagine them buying
21   clothes from Whistles It's like a shop in the UK which sells like kind
22   of smart kind of nice clothes for women
23   E: Yes!
24   A: but yes kind of nice material sort of pattern fabrics
25   D:Actually because they're quite old, they would still wear quite
26   smart to be jeans, heels and a normal top
27   J: how old, you're was late 20s, so they would be wearing jeans,
28   heels and a nice top
29   D: and I would wear that myself
30   J: ooh ok
31   C: it's actually difficult for me to imagine my person out of context
32   J: so you can see them very clearly in the workplace but you just
33   can't imagine what.. well that's interesting.. what would your guy
34   wear?
35   E: he will wear denim but not like it's crabby or anything a little bit
36   more like Ralph Lauren or proper jeans and like a shirt but a more
37   informal shirt like a polo tshirt
38   C: he sounds like my perfect man
39   J: yeah so he sounds again he sounds quite smart like these are
40   definitely not work clothes they are leisure clothes but quite
41   E: yeah leisurly [??[clothes
42   J: and what about yours what do you think..,
43   B: feminine she would look feminine, kind of um relaxed, relaxed
44   outfits, but I see somebody also with a lot of personality who is a bit

Commented [P13]: Colours on top of the black and white. Colours make it personal (not such a uniform?)

Commented [P14]: Making an effort?

Commented [P15]: Not showy

Commented [P16]: Jewellery making it personal – not so bland? Not so dictated by outsiders?

Commented [P17]: Basic classic, unostentatious look but with something quirky

Commented [P18]: Not a single prototype for each occupation – different ones in different specialisms

Commented [P19]: Interesting links here between money and class, and between money and colourful accessories

Commented [P20]: Class?

Commented [P21]: Quirky personality

Commented [P22]: High status shop – middle class, quite expensive and stylish

Commented [P23]: Age and status of clothing

Commented [P24]: Link between prototypes and incidivuduals

Commented [P25]: Not always easy to generate details

Commented [P26]: Status – fashion, money

Commented [P27]: Is this about gender, or is this a personality feature?

Commented [P28]: Is this a bit quirky?

2

1	extravaganza as well, somebody with a strong kind of character,
2	personality, so maybe somebody with a more unconventional
3	J: could you give me a for instance?
4	B: so for instance a big shawl, or a funny know you hippie dress
5	D: she's quite old, you did say she was quite old, 40s like so I could
6	imagine that
7	B: because I met one like that and she was quite unconventional and
8	she was very hippie like, flash
9	[participant F joins discussion]
10	J: could you do their shoes for me?
11	A: Russell and Bromley, basically, again another shoe shop
12	C: heels but quite low heels, closed up? Not closed up? Yeah closed
13	up toes just black
14	J: were yours black?
15	A: almost brown actually, but they could be black, no heel or a small
16	heel. Quite fashionable but yeah not too kind of showy
17	B: yeah same, no heel, maybe because you need to be walking
18	around a bit
19	D: yeah walking around no to be honest sat down, I think mostly sat
20	down
21	E: nice leather traditional shoes like Charge or one of these brands
22	two or three hundred pounds
23	J: oh blimey, I'm liking the sound of your psychologist. And what's
24	your guy – quite similar?
25	C: yeah the same
26	J: so quite expensive, quite classy,
27	C: yeah leather
28	J: classic, is that a word? I don't want to lead you…
29	A: I think a bit more trendy
30	J: a bit more trendy than classic
31	F: yeah I've got quite a strong image in my mind of quite a few
32	psychologists that I've worked with. I think a flat leather boot, yeah
33	J: ooh
34	F: yeah and I guess that a lot of the psychologists that I work with
35	shop in The White Stuff or kind of Fat Face or kind of places like that
36	and those would be the kind of places 30 something psychologists
37	would shop in
38	J: and so what shoes do they wear at home? At the weekend
39	F: boots
40	D: dolly shoes
41	J: dolly shoes?
42	A: do you mean kind of with a rounded toe
43	D: yeah dolly shoes – they're called Dolly shoes where I come from
44	J: they're probably called that here, I just haven't hear of them
45	D: boots, flat boots

3

Comments:

Commented [P29]: Quirky?

Commented [P30]: Unconventional personality

Commented [P31]: Accessories signifying unconventional personality

Commented [P32]: Prototype based on expericne

Commented [P33]: Showy clothes, unconventional

Commented [P34]: Middle class, expensive, conventional

Commented [P35]: High status, conventional

Commented [P36]: Black – conventional, professional, high status

Commented [P37]: Colour – black = professional

Commented [P38]: Classy – high status, professional, middle class

Commented [P39]: Not ostentatious

Commented [P40]: Details dependent on the practicalities of the job

Commented [P41]: Leather = classy but not high fashion

Commented [P42]: Status – wealth and class

Commented [P43]: Based on personal experience

Commented [P44]: Mid range in terms of cost, not quite high street, a bit fashionable, a bit quirky

Commented [P45]: Rounded toe – quite fashionable, but not particularly high status

1   A: could be the same actually,
2   B: I agree, the same as during the week, not specifically different
3   E: I'm thinking like trainers, but you know like leather trainers, you
4   know kind of smartish, like trainers or you know nautic style shoes.
5   They are comfy. He is good looking
6   J: he's good looking is he? He's kept himself quite trim?
7   D (?): I really can't imagine what he would wear at the weekend
8   J: that's interesting, because you were struggling a bit with that
9   earlier, weren't you? So what do think your person might wear?
10 F: Birkenstocks in the summer and an A line skirt just above the knee
11 and maybe from Cos and I think probably just a t0shirt.
12 J: that's a little bit different actually? ..No, no that's absolutely fine
13 isn't it? But here there is a little bit of a consensus about quite
14 smart, isn't it? and Birkenstocks to me are a bit let's focus on the
15 comfort and the practicality, whereas Russell and Bromley are a bit
16 more, let's make sure it looks neat.
17 AL yeah yours seem quite kind of a bit what's the word,
18 comfortable, practical and outdoorsy
19 E: can I just say something? The image that you have of the clinical
20 psychology is exactly the same that I have of the social worker
21 J: that's interesting. So for you, the Birkenstock is the social worker
22 shoe?
23 A: me too actually,
24 E: Fat Face, White stuff, boots, comfy
25 B: I should be a social worker then because that's just what I am
26 always in
27 D: the ones that I know usually just wear like normal clothes. I've
28 met so many of them, so many and they just wear like jeans and a
29 top
30 C: just like casual clothes
31 J: are you talking about clinical psychologists or social workers
32 D: no, social workers, they just wear jeans, a top and a cardigan and
33 yeah like normal shoes like shoes
34 J: normal shoes?
35 D: yeah like boots, dolly shoes
36 J: right I'm going to steer it away from social workers but that was
37 really interesting to think about those comparisons, but I'm going to
38 get us back to the clinical psychologists. Right so let's think about –
39 see how you get on with this. When they leave work, what's their
40 mode of transport?
41 C: oh [laugher] care like a beetle car
42 B, A: underground
43 F: definitely a bike
44 E: a bike? A car
45 D; a car

4

Commented [P46]: Ideas around identity – wearing the same at weekends as during the week.

Commented [P47]: Classic and casual at the same time – high status expensive

Commented [P48]: High status –

Commented [P49]: Not always easy to generate details

Commented [P50]: A bit quirky – still high street, but a bit trendy and a bit unconventaionl

Commented [P51]: Not high status fashion wise

Commented [P52]: Different prototypes for different jobs and different people

Commented [P53]: quirky

Commented [P54]: public sector values? Environmental? Low status?

Commented [P55]: Quirky? Exercise?

1	C: a car
2	J: oh so you've got them out of the office and into the car? So and
3	then they get home and who is at home waiting for them?
4	C: no
5	B: the nanny
6	J: the nanny? No-one's at home
7	C: no, no-one's at home. They are a single person, they do socialise
8	occasionally, but for the most they keep themselves to themselves.
9	They are their own person, they just focus on work. It's really work,
10	there is nothing much to their lives except for work
11	J: right so yours comes back home to the nanny
12	B: yeah comes back home quite late from work and they have
13	children and then yeah the partner is coming back home at the
14	same time from work and then the nanny, picking the children from
15	the nursery back home and fed the kids and then everything then
16	just an hour so with the kids before
17	J: so this partner? Husband? Partner?
18	B: ah husband
19	J: so this husband, what does he do?
20	B: ooh good question I'm not sure what profession but what I think
21	is the person would be a sort of intellectual with a quite high ranking
22	post somewhere
23	J: so what's he wearing as he comes into the house?
24	B: I think he's trendy but also chic
25	J: so is he in a suit?
26	B: yes with a suit but no tie, just open here and then ah yeah maybe
27	blue costume with a white shirt
28	J: very nice.
29	B; yeah a nice looking guy
30	J: In fact I think your psychologist is married to your psychologist
31	Laughter
32	J: right, so who would yours come home to?
33	A: I really don't know. I think a partner but it wouldn't have to be
34	male or female actually thinking about it. Yeah it wouldn't
35	necessarily be that conventional
36	D: yeah that's what I was thinking, that she would come back home
37	to a woman. But she doesn't really she works, but her work isn't.. so
38	she'd come back home but her wife would be at home with the kids
39	that they've adopted
40	J: oh the adopted kids?
41	D: because she obviously can't have kids – weird
42	J: and your comes home to a partner, could be male or female
43	A; yeah could be a man or could be a woman, any maybe like a cat
44	or a dog in the house
45	J: any kids?

Comments (right margin):

- **Commented [P56]:** High status? Money? Professional?
- **Commented [P57]:** Status – money, class
- **Commented [P58]:** Independent? Lonely? Cold?
- **Commented [P59]:** Identity – not much beyond the job
- **Commented [P60]:** Is this high status? Professional?
- **Commented [P61]:** Very middle class, high status professionals. Not very warm
- **Commented [P62]:** High status partner – successful and intellectual
- **Commented [P63]:** High fashion – class and money
- **Commented [P64]:** High status – successful, but no tie = a bit trendy and unconventional
- **Commented [P65]:** Colours - attractive
- **Commented [P66]:** Homosexuality as unconventional
- **Commented [P67]:** Sexuality
- **Commented [P68]:** Adopted kids – warmth? Social values?
- **Commented [P69]:** Sexuality – quirky?
- **Commented [P70]:** Pets – warm personality?

5

1	A; no, no, although I think she wants kids, possibly	**Commented [P71]:** Kids. Warm?
2	J; Ooh, so that's interesting	
3	A; but I could imagine her still having like quite a good social life	**Commented [P72]:** Social life – dynamic? Extravert? Sociable?
4	J; so kids are coming later	
5	A; yeah kids are possibly coming later maybe	
6	JL and do you know what her partner does for a living?	
7	A; mm, er, um, something in the kind of caring profession like social	
8	work or just psychology or a teacher	**Commented [P73]:** Public sector values in partner
9	J: something public sector	
10	A: yeah	
11	E; Well, I think mine might be married to yours because honest I'm	
12	thinking of someone like a man like in their early 40s ….so like the	
13	kids are maybe 8 – 10 years old and the wife because these two are	
14	traditional, and the wife is a sort of like a professional probably but	**Commented [P74]:** conventiaonl **Commented [P75]:** high status partner
15	from a completely different field like I like to think of IT or media or	
16	like something different or some professional so they would get	
17	home at sort of the same time and then kind of like divide the days	**Commented [P76]:** Equality
18	because on certain days they have to go an pick up the kids… after	**Commented [P77]:** sharing childcare – values? Equality and feminism? Personality – warmth and empathy?
19	school activities	
20	J: and what does yours, yours is a lady right? Who does she come	
21	home to	
22	F: I agree not sure whether it could be a woman or a man and his	**Commented [P78]:** sexuality
23	profession would be yeah public sector, either teaching or	**Commented [P79]:** Public sector values
24	something creative like erm I don't know no maybe architecture,	
25	that's a bit creative um or maybe a writer or journalist perhaps. I	**Commented [P80]:** Creative – a bit quirky?
26	think they'd be living in a middle class, um, maybe middle class but	
27	kind of left wing are like Stoke Newington	**Commented [P81]:** Middle class but left wing. Left wing values? Quirky personality?
28	A: Stoke Newington	
29	F: or like Victoria Park area	
30	J; hilarity	
31	F: and then they'd both be cycling back to meet each other there	**Commented [P82]:** Environmental values? Quirky personality? Exercise?
32	might be children but probably a small family they are but a good	**Commented [P83]:** Children – caring personality?
33	social life and they like wine	**Commented [P84]:** Dynamic? Sociable? Extrvert?
34	J: what colour wine?	**Commented [P85]:** Middle class
35	A: white wine	
36	F: depends whether it's fish or meat – summer or winter	**Commented [P86]:** High status – tasteful, cultured
37	J: so your people live in SN. What about the rest of you, where do	
38	your people live?	
39	E: well I didn't think about the neighbourhood but like you know like	
40	a big house kind of like near parks	**Commented [P87]:** Status – successful, rich
41	A: not in central London	**Commented [P88]:** ? outdoorsy or is this a symbol of status?
42	E: with parks nearby – maybe in zones 2 or 3	
43	B; the thing is they are quite kind of conventional on the one side	
44	but they have this kind of leftie, unconventional side about them,	**Commented [P89]:** Left wing = unconventional
45	you know, trying you know to think deeper about life than maybe	**Commented [P90]:** Conventional with a twist

6

C2. Mind map for Sudy 3

Personality

1. **Warm/cold**
   a. **What kind of family do they have?**
      i. Lots of children *'mine just has her arms full of kids' (SW)*
      ii. Adopted children *'her wife would be at home with the kids that they've adopted' (CP)*
      iii. *Emotional bond with family* 'if *she does have a partner he's not that important – I don't see him as with her all the time, he might come and go – they might live separate'* (SW); *'for me there is no kids. There might be a relationship but if there is it's not very emotional , it's more kind of functional'* (PT)*'I picture her going home to nobody' (PT)*
      iv. They spend time with family:*'I still think he would do the family run and still go to either his or his partner's parents for dinner with the kids' (PT); 'mine is more into family , family activities, barbeques and parks with the kids' (CP)*
   b. **What is their home like?**
      i. How well ordered is their home?
      'inside it feels very warm...big kitchen, you know entertaining and socialising with friends, big lounge with like comfy sofas as well that you can lay down on' (CP), 'it's chaotic, messy but warm and very lively' (SW), 'a bit chaotic, with two small children, so there are toys everywhere, a bit of paint on the walls that shouldn't be there' (PT)

      'I imagine like big windows and white furniture, everything clean' (OP)

      'A lot of noise so there is a tv on in the background and maybe even music playing and kitchen noises and everybody is running around' (SW)

      'the house is quite messy' (SW) 'there's lots of pople and lots of busyness so it's kind of like there are many different elements and it's homely, it's warm, it's kind of full but it doesn't necessarily all fit together in a whole design kind of sense' (SW) 'the grass is always cut and it's like really neat' (SW), 'lots of things that don't necessarily fit together, useful, warm' (SW). 'desk is organised, kitchen is organised, the remote is almost OCD next to the corners' (PT)

      ii. How do they feel about their possessions?
       'J: If the house caught fire what would she save? [...] C: not necessarily things that she might need but thing that are like maybe not even her phone or that but just something meaningful' (SW)
      iii. *How big is their home?*

> *'Just very kind big sort of house but quiet, sort of cold' (PT), 'her house is fairly big but there's not much in it, it's quite cold, not very warm, not literally as in temperature but there's not much in it' (PT)*

c. **What kind of food would they eat?**
   i. Hearty vs healthy
   > *'I'm seeing a big meal with their family'* (SW)

d. **What sort of clothes do they wear?**
   i. Sharp vs paint on clothes
   ii. Ballet flats vs pointy heels
   iii. Are they approachable or professional?
   > *'you have to be casual because you know the people that you deal with is basically lower income and in a lower position you know financially economically so you need to be approachable you know and but wearing sort of sort of not like, not scruffy jeans or ripped jeans, you would wear like a code.' (SW)*
   > *'definitely business like... for me it's a dark, smart outfit'*
   > *'still sort of professional but with a bit of softening to it, so it's doesn't come over as...again it's non-threatening' (CP)*
   iv. How well polished are they?
   > *'Sophisticated. She's very well dressed head to toe. Everything is immaculately done, dressed up' (OP), 'very sharp, very polished, very professional, I don't really know suits so I'm not sure where they would get them, but very high end' (OP) 'relaxed outfits' (CP)* (<mark>not sure if this is warm or not controlled</mark>?)

e. *Do they have any pets?*
   > *'maybe like a cat or dog in the house' (CP) 'they really like the dog, like they spend time with the dog' (PT)*

f. **How would their personality be described?**
   i. Detached vs connected*: 'there's some distance there, so, detached, there's a feeling around that kind of separation...detached' (OP) 'mine is very engaged and very connected [...] very very connected' (OP), 'kind' (CP), 'compassionate' (CP), 'warm' (CP)*

g. **What are their interactions with other people like?**
   i. *'I just get the feeling that also he might be a bit of a provocateur and cause debates and actually generate the debate whether it was really his theory or not, he would like to have a debate about it' (OP) 'they'll be looking to wear, not perhaps trendy but again coming in with the non-threatening side' (PT)*
   <mark>ii.</mark> *'quite a bubbly character, the sort of person you imagine to be to work with kids anyway, and just be like really over the top but in a nice kind of way' (PT) 'he'd be the one that all the children would feel that they want to play with' (PT)* <mark>or is this high energy?</mark>

2. Dull / fun

a. What kind of clothes do they wear?

   i. ==Suit and tie== vs dungarees '*dungarees...quite informal quite colourful, quite fun, like splodges of pain on the dungarees from helping the kids*' *(PT)*

   ii. ==M&S vs Fat Face / Cos==

b. What programmes would they watch on television?

   i. '*What came up was documentaries*' *(SW)* '*maybe they'd watch something like Made in Chelsea with their house mates and laugh about it, that kind of thing, like something a bit funny*' *(PT)*

c. What would they do in their spare time?

'*fun kind of activities, friends, maybe like a food market*' *(PT)*; '*maybe some karaoke*' *(PT)*

d. What colours would they choose?

   i. Neutral vs bright colours
   '*I imagine something colourful, different colours, like shiny colours*' *(PT)* '*others just have the dull, like brown dull colours, you know what's going to happen that day when you see them*' *(PT)* '*there might be a bit of purple splashed over it – or more of a plum, not too crazy – very inoffensive*' *(PT)*

e. How would their personality be described?

: '*quite cheeky, quite happy go lucky, quite optimistic. Quite fun to be around*' *(PT)*, '*funny*' *(PT)* '*I'm thinking kind of boring-nice*' *(PT)*

f. What is their home like?

   i. '*Quite dull inside*' *(PT)*

g. Where would they shop?

   i. '*quite dull, probably furnished from Next*' *(PT)*, ==Something about M&S==

h. Attitude to money

   i. '*doesn't overspend, ever, very careful, very safe, a bit boring*' ==*Focus Group 3 thing about the online spender*==

3. Conventional/quirky

a. How would they spend their leisure time?

   i. Beer festival '*Pizza Express...it's less expensive, but it's still kind of half nice, it's not going to mess them around*' *(PT)*

b. What kind of holidays would they go on?

   i. Package holiday / city break vs rock climbing / wwoofing
   '*So they can possibly go camping or maybe have alternative holidays.*'*(CP)*, '*they wouldn't do a package holiday, they would do their own thing*' *(PT)*

c. What would they wear?

       i. Russell & Bromley vs Birkenstocks *'Russell and Bromley...quite fashionable but yeah not too kind of showy' / 'also a bit unconventional as you were saying you know with the Birkenstocks'*

      ii. Black and white vs bright colours *'maybe with some sort of coloured jewellery' / 'like a coloured scarf or something that make sit personal' (CP)*

     iii. Accessories *'I see somebody also with a lot of personality who is a bit extravagant as well, somebody with a strong kind of character, personality so maybe somebody with a more unconventional...so for instance a big shawl, or a funny you know hippie dress' (CP)*

     iv. Designed vs bland*: 'no design, not so much personality' (OP)*

     v. *'he's wearing a suit, but it's not a formal suit, so it's a collarless shirt' (OP)*

  d. What is their sexuality?

       i. Straight vs gay *'A partner but it wouldn't have to be male or female actually, thinking about it. Yeah it wouldn't necessarily be that conventional'.*

  e. How would their personality be described?

       i. *'she's quite bland in a way'* (PT), *'kind of boring nice'* (PT), *'C: is she kind of quirky?' B: she's a bit quirky'* (CP)

  f. What colours would they choose?

       i. *I think mine was quite smartly dressed as well maybe black and gret with like kind of great tights and a black skirt, but maybe with some sort of coloured jewellery'* (CP)

4. High energy / low energy

  a. What would they do on holiday?

    'somewhere hot, somewhere expensive, somewhere relaxing' 'cycle to the South of France...skiing... or rock climbing... or wwoofing' (PT) 'outdoorsy, yeah, fresh air, mountains, with friends' (PT) , 'she might live it up in Spain, let her hair down' (PT), 'mine's more like kind of relaxing, get away, like nature' (OP), 'the Lake District to get away from people' (CP)

  b. What would they choose to wear?

      i. How much effort would they put in to their appearance?

      'he would come in wearing a suit ... he's obviously putting effort into this' (OP) 'Mine just gets dressed in the dark' (PT) 'yeah cos there are some teachers who would have like a good experience with the kids, they probably have more time to be like, ok try a little bit today, put a little bit of effort in today to impress them, whereas the teachers that have no respect from the kids at all, they just get dressed in the dark' ({PT) 'nicely dressed but more in an absent minded way' (OP),

What colours would they choose to wear? '*really casual, maybe a little stylish, but not massively, not bothered with colours either*'

c. **How would they choose to spend their time?**

    i. Active / out doorsy vs relaxing '*just casual dancing, nothing crazy*' (PT) '*I think weekends, some sport, sports club. Not quite sure which sport*' (OP), '*they're quite out-doors-y, quite sporty, they might go climbing – whatever out-doorsy things people do*' (CP), '*I'm just picturing sitting on the sofa sort of watching telly, having some dinner, just relaxing*' (SW)

d. **What kind of life style do they have?**

    i. '*Superwoman here has got you know a good life going on for her*' (OP), '*he's more than happy to make time to make it fun for them rather than sitting down with the adults*' (PT)

e. **How would they choose to spend their leisure time?**

'*A big night out ... some beers with friends*'(PT) vs '*so you get home and maybe you unwind with your husband*' (SW)'*I imagine them being quite tired at the end of the week*' '*nice restaurants, quite lively, when they're with a group it seems to be quite lively and restaurants, erm sort of themed type things you know sort of activities going on, sort of music type thing*' (OP), '*I'm thinking of a big window where there are cushions and they sit there and read*' (PT), '*maybe sitting on a couch reading a book*' (SW)

    ii. amount of activity '*last summer he went cycling in Istria, with a group of strangers, yeah he took some time to write a book, yeah, on career change ... he likes football and tennis*'

    iii. Variety "*I think there's lots of variety, lots of different places, different things to experience, different cultures, different people, so to me it's about changing and different places*'.

f. **How sociable are they?**

    i. '*I also see that they do quite a lot of socialising, quite a lot of socialising*' (OP)'*mine's engaging*'(OP), '*they're all a bit introverted maybe and might read quietly or pet their cat*' (PT), '*they have lots of friends, lots of birthdays to go to or different events to go to on the weekend*' (OP)

g. **What colours would they choose?**

    i. '*attracted to the colour, the energy*' (PT)

h. **How engaged are they with things?**

    i. '*she's slightly more left wing, but doesn't really care*' (PT) '*left wing, Labour, passionate about education*' (PT), '*she would vote as her parents voted*' (PT)

5. **Control**

a. **What is their attitude to their health?**

i. *'Maybe a gym membership that she doesn't use?'* (PT) <mark>(is this right? Or low energy?)</mark> *'he sometimes cycles to work...I think it's health, it's running, it's a value, so for instance he sometimes runs' (OP)*

ii. Diets

b. How would they choose to spend their leisure time?

'and the evening, sort of like a neighbourhood thing like maybe the neighbours pop in for a glass of wine, but it's not really something that's planned, it's just an open an open sort of plan so they come over and then they have some wine and then maybe they barbeque they bring the kids over so everyone's playing and it's a just kind of a casual...' (CP)

c. What is their home like?

i. Tidy

'quite chaotic inside, quite messy, things falling out of the cupboards' (PT) <mark>(does this feel more like warm? Is controlled a sub-theme of cold?)</mark>

ii. Coordinated

d. What direct debits would they have?

i. *'everything he needed so that he doesn't have to worry about anything, so I mean he definitely sets it up so that he wouldn't possibly miss a deadline.'*

e. What is their appearance like?

i. Well-groomed *'he was in the garden.., he hasn't quite dressed appropriately for the task...I think he doesn't completely want to get his hands dirty' (OP)*

ii. *'shirt tucked in and kind of neat, orderly' (PT)*

f. How would their personality be described?

: *'it would take a lot for him to really let his hair down J: controlled? A: yeah controlled, I like that, there's always a sense of control about that' (OP)*

Values

1. **Superficial / Authentic**

   a. How do they construct their image?

   i. Constructed image vs authentic *'it's a suit because that's the image that he projects, that he needs to project in the business that he's in'* (OP) *'you need to dress the part to be taken seriously. There's an unwritten code, a uniform' (OP). 'That's just his look – it's very like "I'm here to give you what you need, I'm not herer to impress you" kind of look' (CP), 'he's just not into fashion like that, he's just into getting dressed and doing his job' (CP),*

   ii. Designer labels *'designer brands from head to toe, could be jeans, could be some Ugg boots, maybe a sweater, like a DKNY sweater, really casual, lots of labels that, you know, don't mess around' (OP)*

   iii. Showy vs subtle *'well they look very expensive'* (OP) *'they're very nice –
     you'd notice them'* (OP) *'a suit, a smart suit, not ostentatious so it's not
     a branded, or at least it doesn't show that it is a branded suit'* (OP) *'her
     work shoes are from Clarks, so I think that her work shoes are, she
     doesn't want attention, you know about what her shoes are like – she's
     not the sort of person when people say "oh I love your shoes" and
     that's fine for her...yeah nothing showy, plain'* (OP), *'quite fashionable
     but yeah not too kind of showy'* (CP)

  b. What is their home like?

    *'like old furniture, like old sofas and stuff, been used, a bit worn, a bit
    comfy leather, well loved, carpets, worn.'* (PT) *'not attached to objects
    or possessions'* (SW) *'just average – nothing special with the
    decoration...they don't see the point'*

  c. How concerned are they with the image that they project?

    i. *'image consciousness was coming up for me, she has to look good'*
     (OP) *'She wants to know and look like she knows what she's doing'*
     (OP) *'image is very important'* (OP) *'when she's at the Spa, getting her
     toes done'* (OP) *'he doesn't care about what he looks like but he wears
     a suit because he feels like he should, to be.. yeah it's his kind of
     uniform'* (CP) *'she is worried about what other people think of her so
     she wants to come off quite straight and by the book and professional'*
     (CP)

  d. How would they spend their leisure time?

    i. *'I think that's probably where she unleashes the true person'* (PT)

  e. How would their personality be described?

    i. *People still get attracted to his personality despite his awkwardness
     [...] because he's honest, he doesn't hide things'* (CP), *'honest, straight
     talking'* (CP)

2. Fashionability

  a. What would they choose to wear?

    i. Labels

    ii. *'he's in trousers, like these brown trousers, and then he has this flannel
     kind of shirt on, like the black belt and like those brown kind of old
     looking shoes'* (CP)

    iii. *Fashion over comfort 'comfortable shoes, she wears comfortable shoes
     when she's at work.'* (SW)

  b. Where would they go out to eat?

    i. *'they like the cool places in town so they find out the new places in
     town and...they yeah meet their friends there'* (OP), *'not in a pub, up
     from a pub, so trendy perhaps'* (OP) *'mine's not as trendy, not as,
     mine's just going to normal pubs'* (OP)

  c. What would they drink?

i. Jagerbombs vs beer

d. Where would they live?

   i. Clapham vs suburbs

e. What would they read?

'J: Magazines? E: yeah mine does, just to keep up on the latest fashions. Probably like Vogue, just to brush up on things she doesn't know' (OP)

f. What would their home be like?

   i. *A flat in the East end in one of those renovated warehouses with the really big ceilings and the big windows and the ultra trendy sort of environment'* (OP)

g. What colours would they choose?

   i. *'These like brown trousers [...] and like those brown kind of old looking shoes'* (CP)

3. Other orientated

a. Public sector orientation

   i. Choice of job

   ii. Partner's choice of job *'something in the kind of caring profession, like social work or just psychology or a teacher' / 'his profession would be yeah public sector' (CP)*

   iii. Choice of transport

b. Do they want to help?

   i. Charities *'maybe a kids' charity overseas, like an international kids' charity' (PT), 'I'm seeing her visiting the old folks' (SW), 'she might have a direct debit set up to a charity, more than likely a children's charity' (SW)*

   ii. Pets

   iii. Kids esp adopting kids

   iv. Work motivation

   v. Garden *'with a garden, yeah into flowers and gardening and growing some tomatoes I imagine' (SW)*

   vi. Friends *'very helpful, he helps everyone out, his is nice' (OP) 'if you were in a pickle they'd be kind of really reliable and you'd get their view on it and they be thou, they'd really think about it and be thoughtful', 'a good friend' (PT)*

c. What's their approach to politics?

   i. Party politics *'In Germany it would be the Green party, they are kind of they have values like the environment want to make a positive difference – they would be in line with the social worker work' (SW)*

   ii. Engagement with politics

'more engaged into local, no politics in general with politics at a national level...there have been a lot of demonstrations lately so they would go to demonstrations' (PT) 'she's slightly more left wing but

> doesn't really care' (PT)'J: would he vote? B: depended on the day and
> how he felt' (OP)
>
>   iii. Choice of paper

Status

1. **Culture**
   a. **What kind of holidays do they choose?**
      i. Beach vs European city breaks
      'I think some place with cultural heritage you know to discover, you know, cultural' (CP), 'I also see European somewhere, city, just the two of them – they like a little bit of culture' (OP)
   b. **What would they watch on television?**
      i. Soaps vs Scandi dramas
      'You know those Scandinavian, you know The Bridge or The Killing' (CP) 'cultural things' (OP)
   c. **What would they do with their leisure time?**
      i. *'go to maybe a Weatherspoons type place watch football and have a burger and a pint at the same time' (PT), 'they might go to a Weatherspoons' (PT)*
      'maybe an art gallery, or ...sit in a park and read' (PT)
   d. **What would they drink?**
      "what colour wine? : depends whether it's fish or meat' (CP)

2. **Objective success**
   a. **What's their partner like?**
      i. Mid ranking office vs high ranking professional *'[the husband] would be a sort of intellectual with quite a high ranking post somewhere' (CP)*
      ii. Good looks *'a nice looking guy' (CP) 'very attractive, very trendy and smart herself' (OP)*
      iii. Clothes *'I think he's trendy and chic',*
      iv. Wealth: *'her boyfriend's rich, so he helps her out there' (OP)*
   b. **What do they wear?**
      i. Formality *'Complete casual, there is no element of smartness' (SW)*
   c. **How and where do they shop?**
      i. Online vs pushing the trolley *'I can't see the clinical psychologist going shopping with the trolley' (SW)*
      ii. Ralph Lauren vs M&S
   d. **What kind of holidays do they go on?**
      i. *'I don't see them in Europe, it's LA in the States [...] her boyfriend is in New York and then they meet up before they come home'* (OP)

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3. **Intellect**
   a. **What would they watch on television?**
      i. Soaps vs documentaries *' they watch Eastenders and whatever other soaps'* (PT) *'maybe science, more history, educational'* (PT) *'documentaries'* (OP)
   b. **What would they read?**
      i. *'they might read the Economist and then they'll get Time magazine' (OP)* vs *'they'd probably get Grazia'* (PT), *'the Independent'* (OP)Take a Break
      ii. Chick lit vs Booker winners *'fictional, but intellectual fictional stuff – Booker prize winner kind of thing, yeah'* (OP), *'romantic novels, chick lit'* (SW), *'I was thinking documentary type novels' (SW)*
   c. Holidays more?
      i. Relaxing vs learning
   d. **What is their home like?**
      'Shelves of books" (CP)
   e. **What kinds of conversations would they have?**
      i. *'a sophisticated discussion [about politics]' (OP)* or is this class?

4. **Class**
   a. **What are their leisure activities?**
      i. Football vs museums
      ii. *'I sort of see him on the water doing things...yeah windsurfing or boats or skiing actually, waterskiing...but I also see him at rugby'* (OP)
      iii. *'mine holds dinner parties'* (CP)
   b. **Where do they live?**
      i. Stoke Newington *'Somewhere where it's definitely middle and uppers only' (CP)*
      ii. *'mine's got a place in the country. They go off there at weekends'*
   c. Clothes
      i. Chic
   d. **What kind of pets do they have?**
      i. *'I also see him with a dog, a big fluffy dog'* (OP)
   e. **Who do they associate with?**
      i. *'she's got friends that are politicians...yeah she is well connected'* (OP) find that quote about teachers from FG2
   f. **What kind of holidays?**
      i. *'a villa in Tuscany'* (OP)

5. **Money**
   a. **What kind of holidays do they have?**
      i. Camping in Dorset vs luxury yacht *'They also, like, they stay in a really nice hotel, with a pool – a bit of luxury'* (OP)
   b. **Where would they shop?**

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        i. Primark vs DKNY
- **c. What kind of childcare would they have?**
  - i. Nanny could find the teacher who took a career break (FG3?)
- **d. How do they dress?**
  - i. Shoes *'well they look very expensive'* (OP)
- **e. Where do they live?**
  - i. *'They live in Clapham, so middle class people who've got money but they've not got lots of money, so not like Kensington,'*

6. Fashion

- a. Clothes
  - i. Trendy
- b. Leisure
  - i. Fancy restaurants vs Pizza Express
  - ii. Drinks *'yeah definitely, he does Jagerbombs' (OP)*
- c. Home
  - i. Big. Owned
  - ii. Designed
- d. Shops
  - i. LK Bennett

Questions

Food: vegetarian / bulgur wheat – is this controlled? Caring?

Cleaning? *'I think she spends a lot of time cleaning and then goes to the supermarket and does the weekly shop' (SW)*

Description of garden *'it's nothing major but it matters to her'* and *'she has a good garden and she takes a lot of pride in her garden' (SW)*

Fashion: is this a value or a symbol of status?

Appendix D: Study 4

D1. Ethical approval for Study 4

31st March 2016

Dear Julia,

Project Title:	What are the key characteristics of the occupational prototypes of the most popular destinations of leavers from the BSc Psychology at UEL?
Researcher(s):	Julia Yates
Principal Investigator:	Professor Mark McDermott
Amendment Number:	AMD 1516 18

I am writing to confirm that the application for an amendment to the aforementioned research study has now received ethical approval on behalf of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

Should you wish to make any further changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
Locations agreed with participants	Professor Mark McDermott

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Date
Participant Information Sheet	15 March 2016
Consent Form	15 March 2016
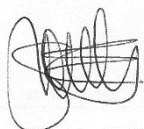
Summary of Amendments
Interviews with new participant group exploring theory developed in initial part of study

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Good Practice in Research is adhered to.

Please ensure you retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Fieulleteau

Ethics Integrity Manager

University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**

D2 Extract from transcription with Anne and initial coding

1   know if I link it to what you're busy with, it would absolutely make sense that if you're just doing
2   this categorization, process, because that's what we need to do, there isn't any thought going on
3   or in fact there's not much thought going on, there's a kind of amygdalla response but there's
4   probably little else going on and that my frontal cortex isn't required for this, and that's not a
5   good situation to be in
6   JY not it's not is it
7   P2: I shall use my frontal cortex when I'm a social worker that I mistakenly chose so that's what
8   I'm kind of intrigued with I think um yeah, cos you do a lot of work don't you around decision
9   making faulty and intuitive, don't you so it does feel like the Blink thing - it feels very much like
10 that
11 JY the sort of the unconscious instantaneous process that is quite powerful
12 P2: well that's totally necessary, well it was totally necessary when you happened to be in the
13 jungle but not altogether useful when making career decisions
14 JY so ok so actually before I go on to, do you think there is some stuff missing in this? you know
15 if you think about, you must have come across stuff like this a lot, are there any constructs that
16 you think that's a really obvious one
17 P2: I suppose, you described it as, hang on, you described it an occupational prototype
18 personality, is that what you said?
19 JY yeah these are occupational prototypes
20 P2: and then did you say personality.
21 JY no, cos this, I start using terms like personality and I get myself a little bit confused by what
22 exactly do I mean by personality um I suppose I think of these on the left as being a little bit
23 personality and those on the right as being about how that individual interacts with the world so I
24 think that is your inter and intra psychic isn't it?
25 P2: probably yeah. sorry I'm just reeling back for a second. The dimensions these dimensions,
26 we'll start with that one then, they are definitely ways in which we discriminate between people
27 isn't it, or types of people, that's what we're saying, personality, so they are they're about people
28 rather than jobs
29 JY these are all about people though, sorry to interrupt your thought train, but I think that's quite
30 important, that these are all about people and I think they're not really about the jobs at all,
31 there's nothing on that piece of paper which is anything about jobs is there
32 P2: no there might be under every single thing, but I'm assuming
33 JY so carry on if you can get back to what you were thinking about there
34 P2: no that's right I think it's really important because somewhere in my head I'm just trying to
35 make the switch from occupational prototypes - are we actually saying that we have prototypes
36 of people rather than occupations?
37 JY the people that do the occupations
38 P2: the people that do the occupations, so that's it, so the people that do the occupations. I
39 suppose that is, I'm not entirely clear what personality actually is you know how we describe
40 personality, it's sort of like saying the personality, te occupational personality of a social worker
41 is this, that's what we're saying that's what people are saying is it?
42 JY the personality of the people that do the occupation
43 P2: which is kind of like the Holland story, isn't it?

Commented [uu66]: Faulty and intuitive way to make a decision

Commented [uu67]: Evolved process

Commented [uu68]: Not a good way to make decisions,

Commented [uu69]: Ways to discriminate between people

Commented [uu70]: People not jobs

Commented [uu71]: Prototypes of people not occupations

Commented [uu72]: Occupational personality

Commented [uu73]: Traditional trait and factor?

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1 JY yeah except the difference is, two differences, first of all Holland found out what real social
2 workers did, so I think that's really key
3 P2: yes that's true
4 JY and the other thing is that Holland found out about their personalities of them as they're
5 working and this of them at the weekend, so it's a much more rounded version of them as a
6 person not the worker
7 P2: that's the point, isn't it?
8 Jy I think so
9 P2: that's the point, so it's about the person in totality, it's the whole person which I think, I'll just
10 say it I'm sure we've gone off task here, but there's something really important about that
11 because if you think about career I mean a theoretically driven comment here but if you're
12 thinking about career as being you know more than a job, obviously, then what we're saying, it
13 feels like what we;re saying is that people intrinsically understand that - intrinsically understand
14 that the person is a whole person and not just a worker, yes, at any rate these professions, we
15 can't talk for everything, but these professions, we're saying that people can ascribe a whole
16 person and a lifestyle to a person and also apparently a set of a way of being in the world, which
17 is I suppose what the new definition of career is, isn't it? because that's quite handy, that's quite
18 important, isn't it? That would validate the idea that people don't just go to work they are
19 something
20 JY they don't do something, they are something
21 P2: cos that's what everyone apparently knows about these people. so this becomes about
22 defining people, in which case in which case it's not really a question of about whether I as a
23 career coach would think there is something missing from this list, it's about whether people in
24 general would think there was something missing from this list about people in general
25 JY yes that's true
26 P2: so these are dimensions by which we discriminate amongst about people
27 JY exactly. i really like that's exactly what I've been thinking but that's a really nice way to put it
28 P2: mmm
29 JY and my guess is that they way that people discriminate between people that they meet they
30 also discriminate between the prototypes in their minds of different jobs and it's the same
31 process
32 P2: I assume it must be the same process and discriminate is actually rather a helpful world
33 because of course it actually just means discriminate between one thing and another , it's ended
34 up discriminating, which is a different idea
35 JY but it's putting people in different groups
36 JSto ease the process of making sense
37 JY so you're right. Do you know Kelly's' construct theory? And I sometimes think about is this
38 are these my filters, are these my constructs? Um but maybe your point that it's not really about
39 you as a career coach it's about people in general, and maybe lots of people have their own
40 constructs
41 P2: well I suppose that's what's happened, in terms of doing your grounded grounded theory
42 you asked a group of people and they said this is the way we would divide the world up if we're
43 thinking about people we divide them up like this

10

Commented [uu74]: Holistic personality of the occupational prototype

Commented [uu75]: People intuitively understand that career is about far more than the job itself - career is holistic

Commented [uu76]: New career theories are holistic – this provides support for the new paradigm

Commented [uu77]: It's not what you do it's who you are

Commented [uu78]: Implicit knowledge – participants know this instinctively

Commented [uu79]: Defining people

Commented [uu80]: Not relevant whether the coach sees something missing

Commented [uu81]: Dimensions are how we discriminate between people

Commented [uu82]: People treat prototypes the same way they treat real people

Commented [uu83]: Put people in different groups to ease the process? What process?

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1 JY and our shorthand for that is these social identity dramas. Like watching Scandi dramas,
2 somehow, watching Scandi dramas is an easier thing for people to hook onto than the qualities
3 that represented
4 P2: that's the marker
5 JY that's the point, isn't it?
6 P2: well this comes back to career again, we do things in the world if you turn it round the other
7 way, we do things in the world one of which is go to work the other which is watch television so
8 in asking the question can you divide up the world in some way we look at anything because
9 that's what we know

Commented [uu84]: We use social identity markers because that's what we can see.

10 JY we look at what people do because we can see them
11 P2: because that's what we know - we don't actually know what people actually think, do we?

Commented [uu85]: We use behaviour because we can't see what people are thinking

12 JY lovely, and then somewhere in our brains we think ok we've got a series of behaviours how
13 can we make sense of that and somewhere unconsciously we put them into these groups - we
14 cluster them in some kind of a way
15 P2: which I think is helpful according to my limited understanding of how we do this
16 categorisation thing, is we just look for as many things as we can that make a pattern so social

Commented [uu86]: Need to identify patterns

17 workers must have casseroles and they must wear flat shoes and they must watch whatever-
18 that all makes sense to me, please don't start disrupting it, because the last thing anyone's

Commented [uu87]: We're comfortable when the world works the way we expect it to.

19 going to say in the process of this, ooh let me think for a moment, an occupational psychologist
20 would they wear flat sandals? No.. no because obviously they could just as easily wear flat
21 sandals
22 JY well yeah quite
23 P2: we need to very very quickly to be sure about something don't we
24 JY to feel confident and safe
25 P2: so so we're all doing it all the time. The problem I guess at the end of all of this is yeah but

Commented [uu88]: We all do it all the time

26 we don't want to be doing it
27 JY no
28 P2: I know what it is, it's like one of these evolutionary stuck things, you know like we eat shed

Commented [uu89]: We have evolved to see the world like this but it's not very helpful now

29 loads of salt and sugar and fat because when we were in the tundra we were stuck if we went
30 without it for four months. so it's a bit the same, isn't it? So when you've got to make simple
31 choices am I going to stab that lion or not, that's a really helpful way of thinking. If you're in a
32 society where there are endless occupations that you know nothing about whatsoever, and
33 you've got to make really really fine tuned decisions and you've got to keep changing them
34 because the world of work is changing, You don't use some fucking system which says right or
35 wrong, do you? No Heels! I like the idea that it's an evolutionary outdated model
36 JY yeah
37 P2: it works fine if all you've got to do is: am I going to be a blacksmith or shall I go and pick
38 those

Commented [uu90]: This instinctive way to discriminate is useful if choices are limited.

39 JY well though, there's another thing; if you only had two choices, you wouldn't need any of
40 these cognitive shortcuts
41 P2: well that's it so if you worked on a farm, and somebody said, it's a bit like Holland, isnt' it?

Commented [uu91]: Trait and factor

42 you've gotta work in the army so we need people like could you fix an engine, could you fix a
43 tank, or would you be better off would you be better off shooting somebody, well let's have a go,
44 oh no you can't shoot people, well that's going to come in handy, isn't it? If you said to

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1 somebody, would you like to be a web designer, or would you be far better off um search engine
2 optimisation, or actually there are 40,000 jobs that have just popped up in Bangladesh, you'd be
3 quite good at those, this is not helpful, is it?
4 JY no. OK so
5 P2: I've gone off on one, sorry
6 JY no, this is good. So leading on from that, if I mean is there a way you could imagine clients
7 engaging with this?
8 P2: right let's see. Um. Sorry I'm just busy thinking at the minute about at what point in the
9 process when you're working with somebody it might be helpful for them thinking in an either
10 orry kind of way or a more or lessy kind of way
11 JY or beyond the job kind of ways - or I suppose that's possible selves isn't it? how broad you
12 want the possible self to be. what could you or even something about engaging with this in order
13 to dismiss it
14 P2: right, I know where I would think of it, right, so let's just say, not that I would be actively
15 doing this but say for example before somebody said ;what do you mean a funeral director,
16 don't be ridiculous', I think I would want the person I was working with to understand how they
17 would be dismissing their autoresponse. That's where I would want, that's what I would want to
18 do with it. If I gave people a list of jobs, before anything happened, I would want them to
19 understand that they would be responding pointlessly and that if we thought beforehand about I
20 mean how do we categorise jobs, what are your preconceptions about these things, so before
21 we get anywhere near looking at job ads for argument's sake, or researching jobs or something,
22 let's think about how preconceptions get in the way. That's what I would want to do with it.
23 JY so as a mechanism for kind of getting people to realise or getting people to engage with their
24 sort of tacit knowledge and their automatic responses and their assumptions and judgements
25 and stereotypes. And to bring that into the conscious bit of their brains so that they can think ' is
26 this a good way to make a job choice or isnt it?'
27 P2: so I'm, this is obviously something you specialise in, but there's something incredibly
28 important about helping people understand how they make decisions, so I always spend time
29 with people on the 'how' and whoever they are I go back to 'how have you made decisions in the
30 past?' and all that, no not all that 'how do you make decisions?' and are you aware of decisions
31 you're happy about taking and aware of other decisions taking- working all that out. So if, if, and
32 I always try to hold people back from the idea of thinking about jobs until they've understood
33 themselves, so if they could think about 'what is my response?' 'how did i make decisions
34 before?' then and you can bet your bottom dollar they didn't make decisions like this, because
35 no-one in their right mind would make decisions like this, but everybody does, so if they could
36 understand the difference between these random auto decision making and their own sense of
37 possible selves and the time it takes to actually understand, I would find that very helpful.
38 JY yeah yeah as a mechanism for getting them to understand themselves and how they've
39 made decisions in the past, and then they can stop and think about, yeah. do you think there's
40 any of this that would constitute a good way to make a decision, or a helpful way to make a
41 decision, or is it all for you about this is not sensible
42 P2: no I think I'd come back from that a bit about this idea that if they've got two things to make
43 a choice between it would be helpful to understand the rule of thumb that i was applying to it, so
44 for instance when we had the conversation about warm social workers, cold detectives, actually

Commented [uu92]: Limited value in today's complex job market

Commented [uu93]: Useful for clients to understand their auto response so that they can dismiss it.

Commented [uu94]: Useful before discussing particular jobs.

Commented [uu95]: Auto response pointless

Commented [uu96]: Categorising jobs

Commented [uu97]: Preconceptions – assumption that it's not grounded in reality

Commented [uu98]: Before we look at jobs we need to see how these preconceptions might stop us from making good choices.

Commented [uu99]: Raising self awareness

Commented [uu100]: Making implicit assumptions explicit

Commented [uu101]: Raising awareness of stereotypes

Commented [uu102]: Raising awareness of decision making styles

Commented [uu103]: Raising awareness of decision making styles

Commented [uu104]: Poor decision making approach

Commented [uu105]: Pervasive

Commented [uu106]: Poor way to make a decision

Commented [uu107]: Useful for clients to get to grips with it

Commented [uu108]:

1   that was a really interesting thought that actually it would help me like like Kelly's personal
2   construct thing, if I could understand the basis on which I would be making a decision on one
3   thing or another thing, that would be helpful, that would be helpful, yeah, so what is the
4   framework which sits underneath my decision making, what are the ways in which I discriminate
5   between these
6   JY what are the things, yeah. I was going to take it one stage further which is to say, what are
7   the things which are important to me, but maybe that's not quite right. this is just how it is, not
8   what matters
9   P2: I think the really important bit in it all is how do I see myself or how do I perceive some job
10   over there, it's the 'how do I' bit of it that's important
11   JY ah lovely, yes that's exactly right. And that's why this is interesting in a different way from
12   Holland, because Holland is not about 'how do I perceive a job?' Holland is about how the job is
13   P2: how the job actually is according to all these numbers, what the job actually is and people
14   who do it are like that so yeah, it's the phenomenological component I'm actually interested in
15   JY which is 'how do I perceive the job?' what's the police off..detective in my head actually like
16   cos that's what I'm making the decision about
17
18
19   P2: cos that's the only thing that's that I'm apparently basing this decision on and what I'm also
20   basing it on my own version of myself
21   JY, yeah, me in my head
22   P2: me in my head, and again me in my head is all we have, so the me in my head the me in my
23   head is in there and the social worker in my head is in here, so I've already done a Holland in
24   my head
25   JY yeah absolutely there's a bit of matching going on, but it's based on things like you know,
26   occupational psychologists wear high heels and me in my head doesn't wear high heels, so that
27   wouldn't work
28   P2: yeah
29   JY which is not a good basis to make your decision on
30   P2: which is a serious unhelpful way to make decisions
31   JY but probably has, I think, probably has quite an impact? I don't know how you'd find out, but
32   my guess is that it would have quite an impact
33   P2: so do you mean in a research way or in a practice way
34   JY I don't know how you'd find out in a research way what impact it has
35   P2: how would you find out what impact it has struggling to think how you would capture it
36   JY no, I wouldn't know how to do that
37   P2: I suppose that's sort of where you are I mean, this is where you are at the moment?
38   JY what I'm finding out here I suppose is that people do have fully formed prototypes in their
39   heads. I haven't done anything to find out what impact these fully formed prototypes have, it's
40   not a massive leap to think they probably have a big impact but I've got no, I'm not capturing
41   any evidence for that. Right is there anything else, any other thoughts you've had about it, in
42   any way, either as a research project, or as a practitioner, or as somebody who makes career
43   decisions

Commented [uu109]: Useful to understand the basis for my decisions

Commented [uu110]: Framework with underpins decisions

Commented [uu111]: The categorization I use to understand differences between things

Commented [uu112]: My personal constructs of myself and of other jobs

Commented [uu113]: Important thing is to focus on 'how do I?' a personal construct

Commented [uu114]: Phenomenological component – what I do make of it

Commented [uu115]: Basing my decision on the job in my head

Commented [uu116]: My own construct of myself

Commented [uu117]: I do the matching in my head

Commented [uu118]: Not a good way to make decisions

Commented [uu119]: This project is finding out whether this has an impact on decision making?

1 P2: I suppose the bit, you know as I said to you earlier, have I got permission to talk about my
2 psychodynamic head, so there is this whole idea which is around in my mind, which is a bit the
3 idea of the organisation in the mind which is David Armstrong's idea which is part of the systems
4 psychodynamic stuff which I like
5 JY OK I don't know anything about this
6 P2: so it's a bit over there, it's got nothing to do with this at all but it just reminded me
7 JY yeah so go on
8 P2: it just reminded me so this idea of the organisation in the mind which is if you like the idea of
9 a prototype and in that sense they use it or he uses it in terms of making sense of an
10 organisation of which we are part and his position would be that we all walk about with our you
11 know NICEC, I've got my nicec in my mind and your nicec in your mind, or your UEL in your
12 mind is going to be different from you colleagues' but that's what our reality is
13 JY so it's a prototype of an organisation as in a formal organisation, as in, like a
14 P2: yeah, they use it as an organisational consultancy tool, in that sense it's talking about an
15 organisation but you could apply it to anything. So I guess I was making a bit of a leap that
16 these are organisational prototypes in the mind, so that idea that we all have a very definitely
17 entirely accessible version of a construction of something in our heads I guess is part of the
18 cognitive psychology literature but it's also part of this idea of um the unconscious, this is
19 tapping into our unconscious, so when you say to , when you ask the students, tell me about a
20 social worker, they've gone to their unconsiious, and that's why it's there so quickly and that's
21 why it's so complete, I mean, they're not thinking, they're just saying stuff, so I'm assuming it's
22 tapping into their unconscious models they have in their heads like the idea of, so it's like the
23 social worker in the mind, so our minds are obviously hugely complex and our minds are
24 constructed out of everything we've ever known, said done, been, so there must be there's our
25 own individual occupation in our minds but what I think is equally or importantly interesting is
26 that thing, but then this side of the thing there must be because people said the same things,
27 there has to be a social constructivist version of this as well,
28 JY so the social constructivist version is me constructing this in parallel, no you tell me, what do
29 you mean by that
30 P2: so I think, if I understand social constructivism, well I do understand it, but I'm never very
31 good at defining it, but it's that everything we do is shaped by some sort of shared social
32 understanding of the society of which we are part, which is going to be quite implicit, but that we
33 can't make sense of things entirely in isolation, we are making sense of things within a social,
34 within a society, which says that there is a thing called class, or there is a thing called high
35 social status, those are, I guess, meta I guess meta constructs, and if you were in England, if
36 these were people in England you were talking to
37 JY yes they were mostly
38 P2: so everyone is going to bring their social construction of the world of work as well as having
39 their own internal version which I think is your thing
40 JY yes it is exactly yeah
41 P2: so they are ways of organising our responses to things and because careers sits
42 JY it does, yeah, right in the middle
43 P2: no wonder you'd have
44 JY both

Commented [uu120]: We have a prototype of our organisation in our minds

Commented [uu121]: Our reality is our own mind map

Commented [uu122]: Clear and accessible version

Commented [uu123]: Our visions are quick and complete – so must be already in our unconscious

Commented [uu124]: Prototypes are not the product of thought – they're just there

Commented [uu125]: Shared experiences lead to shared elements of the prototype

Commented [uu126]: Shared experiences and individual experiences

14

D3. Memo written after Jacqueline's interview

Language

- Language seems to be very important. What I meant by one of the terms might be quite different from what a client might think, and then even if we conceptualise it in the same way, we might associate it with a different set of values
- The words I've chosen might have some negative connotations. Cold, in particular, but possibly low energy too. One option is to ask the clients if any of those words have negative connotations and then offer some alternatives, but I wonder if this might be confused with values – maybe cold is negative to me because it is a negative word, or because I personally don't value it. Alternatives for cold could be 'logical', 'detached', 'independent', 'objective' or the scale could be 'values people' to 'values truth'. Maybe I need to ask the next participant what they think the opposite of 'warm' is.
- Jacqueline reckons that unconventional is better than quirky
- Low and high objective success seemed difficult for Jacqueline. She appeared embarrassed at not having achieved high objective success. Is this too laden? Or is it actually important to keep in, perhaps even because it's difficult? It's probably not something which we talk about much – particularly in career conversations, because we don't want to offend.
- I also wondered if objective success was a tricky one to understand. Would money be better? It's a bit reductive. Or maybe I just need to include money in the short description.
- The examples were quite useful – I think the headings need more explanation but I'm not sure about the specific examples because they are so individual. I assumed that part of the reason the PS to OP matching thing didn't work was because everyone has different specific examples. Maybe something to try out next time – which is more helpful, examples or a short description? MBTI uses both a description and some examples and makes it clear that the examples might not work for everyone

The model itself

- Values aren't particularly represented in the model. There are some around objective success – which might (although might not) be linked to valuing money; and warm is about valuing people. I'm not sure whether other values are included. Jacqueline said it didn't matter – values would be a whole other thing which doesn't render this model any less helpful. I'm interested in why values didn't come up in the focus groups. I asked about direct debits which hint at values, but I think I then abstracted that to higher order dimensions
- Scales would be better – certainly for the status ones, but also maybe for the personality ones. I don't see why binary is helpful

- Some qualities matter more than others – some are deal breakers and some really aren't. Is this about how extreme you as an individual are? If I'm very warm but quite serious, is warm likely to be a deal breaker, and serious not so much?
- An exact match might not be needed between me and the job but this might depend on where on the scale I put myself and the job. An extreme fun person might not want an extreme serious job, but if you're middling, you can probably cope. This links with the evidence that incongruity has more of an impact on job satisfaction than congruity.
- Conventional, by definition covers most people. That might make me think the word isn't very useful, but I guess it depends whether most people would see themselves as conventional (I would guess not), and whether, even if it's not particularly valuable for most people, perhaps it's really valuable for some. Jacqueline, for example, seemed to find warm/cold and conventional/quirky the most revealing ones.
- Where you put yourself on the scale is dependent on your own experiences – if everyone you hang out with is super-fun, you're going to see yourself as relatively more serious

Setting it up

- I wondered about asking about 'what are most primary teachers like' rather than to picture a single prototype, but actually, I think the thing about the single prototype is that you visualise it – this then taps into tacit knowledge more effectively. Jacqueline also came up with answers which surprised her when she pictured someone – presumably this is tapping into her tacit knowledge
- Giving people the time to picture something vividly is important I think
- Harder to use this with jobs you're very familiar with - if you already know a number of people who do the job it's harder to identify a single prototype. More solid and nuanced if you know something about the job.

How it could be useful

- The model can be used to think about job choices from a number of different angles. I was expecting it would be most valuable to consider how an individual wants to be seen (the social identity of their possible self) but this wasn't how Jacqueline saw it. This might be particular to her, as someone who is unusually unconcerned with others' opinions of her, or might be shared more widely – need to check this in the next interview. Or maybe this explains why the PS to OP matching didn't work in my study 2 – it just isn't how people work. It could be used for
  - How I want to be seen by others
  - How I want to be seen by myself
  - What I want my colleagues / clients to be like
  - What kind of environment or culture would I like to be in
- Great starting point for a conversation

- Would it be interesting to ask the next person how it might compare to conversations around MBTI and RIASEC. RIASEC has very specific examples of jobs – based on data. MBTI is used for self-awareness more than anything but doesn't necessarily link this to jobs.
- Useful for narrowing down options. I can see that but actually I think it's useful for unearthing tacit knowledge about jobs and self-awareness
- Could therefore be useful with people who have huge experience of the world of work – if they don't know people in particular jobs, they could find this a really useful way to identify the tacit knowledge they have about jobs

Next time

- Spend more time ensuring that they picture a prototype in their mind's eye
- Ask them to think specifically about how they would feel about being seen like this, but also getting them to think about how they would feel about having colleagues like this
- Change the language – perhaps give a couple of alternatives and a short description
- Put each dimension on a scale – or perhaps present both models and ask them to say which would be more user-friendly

What's good about it

- I love that it combines psychological and sociological
- It's new and different
- The key thing about this approach is that it links your assessment about you to your assessment about jobs. I think this is really important and is new.

Thoughts during coding:

It seems to be easier to generate prototypes when you don't know many people who do that job. Is it therefore going to be more likely that young people will use this approach?

Is this how we fill in the blanks – if we know about a profession, we run with that knowledge, but if we don't, we fill in the gaps. So does this mean that this would be quite easy to do with YP as an exercise? It only works when it needs to work?

Not matching the job isn't necessarily a deal breaker – Janet was keen on the idea of creating different PSs depending on the qualities which were important for that job – ie being a cold detective was better than being a warm detective for her, even though she wanted to be seen as warm. Jacqueline talked about enjoying the idea of being the quirky one in a school of conventional teachers – but only because she saw this as an environment which was open to or accepting of quirky. Maybe the way to use this is to get people thinking – eg how would it feel to be cold, how would it feel to be the maverick? How would it feel to be surrounded by

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cold colleagues? In a cold culture?

Jacqueline finds serious and fun quite laden as words and Claire finds them quite neutral. What do we do about that? Do we assume that people will see value judgements in the ones which are important to them?

Jacqueline suggests offering some synonyms? Or getting people to choose their own terms? I wouldn't want people to get sidetracked by the language. Maybe all that matters is that people have their own interpretations? Perhaps people would interpret the words simply as the qualities which matter most to them, so that works fine?

Definitely not to be used as a tool for matching, but as a framework to help people understand how they see jobs. We've got plenty of frameworks which help people to see how they see themselves (RIASEC, MBTI, Schein etc) but nothing which helps them see how they view the world of work – we've always assumed it is fact, but LMI needs to wake up to the fact that our view of jobs is a construction and not fact.

A way to get them to analyse their instinctive response. I think that is genuinely useful – it makes it more discriminating – beyond just I like it or I don't like it. Is this a particularly useful framework to use? Yes because it is based on the characteristics associated with preconscious occupational prototypes.

What's missing? Blood, for nurses, touching people, for nurses, what you think about clients and colleagues, organisations, values? Cool or not cool?

Jacqueline reckons most jobs are conventional, so quirky isn't a relevant construct? I'm not sure I agree – might be to do with where Jacqueline's yardstick is.

What are values? I think they're the things which matter, but are the often used to mean do-goody values. Where would 'making the world a better place' fit into my model? IS 'warm' more about being other-orientated? And cold about being self-orientated? Are the words 'value' and 'valuable' confused sometimes? Jacqueline suggests that this isn't about values, but it's still useful. Are there many ways in which we can conceptualise jobs? Literature talks about career interests, values and personalities. Maybe this is clearly about the people not the jobs and as such is bound to be limited?

My participants were quite resistant to think about how they wanted to be seen. Is that

because it's less of a big deal to some than to others? Or because it's a bit at odds with the CA mentality?

D4. Mind maps from Study 4

doesn't fit with CA mentality — discomfort

- don't want to be the reality
- might increase stereotype thinking
- keep coming back to the job / void to stick to / prototype
- putting people in boxes
- judgemental
- generates
- comfortable
- ing
- anxiety about idea that stereotype might not be accurate
- a way
- decisions
- non-optimal — might encourage stereotype thinking / links your assessment / bad ways of jobs to you / make / assessment of
- distracting
- Trained to avoid — judgement — stereotyped / generalisations / labels
- socio inter

novel — addresses things which are important but aren't discussed eg pregnancy fun

model itself — language / binary? / incomplete / geeky / other things eg blood for uses

could ask client to give their own — not helpful
examples — misleading

peter has need for prototype
Influence of experience — experience changes welsh / what i knowledge

cognitive voices — ing individual / shared experience

Constructivist flexible
would you — need explicit / not matching but imagining / assessing / evaluating
to learn how you make decisions / judgements
allows you to explore PSs
addressing stereotypes / to analyse things
self, job, organisation, colleague, culture, client