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THE CONSTRUCTION OF SITUATED IDENTITIES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS:
A DISCURSIVE APPROACH

VOLUME I

By

Karin Christina Rade

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SITUATED IDENTITIES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS:
A DISCURSIVE APPROACH

By

Karin Christina Rade

A large number of department chairs experience role conflict and role ambiguity due to their linking pin position between the faculty and administration. In addition, due to long-term socialization as faculty members, chairs often do not sufficiently "identify" as chair and see the chair job as a temporary assignment at best or a temporary nuisance at worst. The results of this situation are problematic and often costly for the chair, the department, and the institution.

The chair literature has shown that chairs go through multiple difficult transitions from faculty member to chairperson and that very few chairs make the complete transition. However, the literature has not addressed how chairs learn to *be* a chair, in other words, how they develop their role identity. This Ph.D. dissertation filled this gap by looking at the ways that department chairs construct multiple situated identities in practice to find out how chairpersons understand their job in terms of role identity. The objective was to understand how academic middle managers handle role conflict and role ambiguity.

Grounded in the knowledge that chairs learn predominantly in practice, by trial and error, this study used a social practice framework. In this theoretical perspective, learning is viewed as changing one's participation and understanding in social and cultural practice. In this view, chairs negotiate, situationally, their role identities by participating in practice.

The focus of study was the discursive practice of chairs in constructing identities. As a methodology discourse analysis or discursive psychology was used, which has theoretical foundations in ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and postmodern thought. Data collection consisted of multiple open-ended interview sessions with 4 participants. Multiple coding cycles and detailed textual analysis led to the formulation of eight rhetorical topics.

This dissertation (1) shows the need to adopt a new conceptualization of knowledge and learning for chairs; and, (2) evidences the creativity with which chairs seem to circumvent the limited and dichotomized repertoire of available "labels" (*faculty member, chair, administrator*) to express their identity by widening the meaning of the underlying concepts.

One of the study's conclusions is that chairpersons do different sorts of "work," using different constructions of reality in order to create identities that temporarily manage their role conflict. This dissertation presents a discourse and practice-based "working model" of chairs' identity processes.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction of the Problem

Researchers who focus on department chairs agree that the majority of important decisions concerning teaching, research, and service --the main domains for institutions of higher education-- are made in the departments (e.g., Bennett, 1983; Roach, 1976; Tucker, 1992). The department chair, who manages and leads a department, therefore has an enormous influence on "the ultimate success of the institution" in terms of effectively realizing appropriate goals at the department level (Bennett & Figuli, 1990, p. xi).

In the last 50 years, numerous changes in the demographic, economic, political, public, social, global, and technological domains have challenged institutions of higher education. These challenges demand reactive and proactive changes not just from institutions of higher education as a whole, but in particular from the academic departments in which the main changes need to be implemented (see Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999, pp. 9, 14). For example, new forms of partnerships between institutions, government, and private business "may require new managerial roles and approaches to engage in more entrepreneurial or political development activity" (Peterson & Dill, 1997, p. 18). As for these challenges, the chair "must be concerned with how department faculty cope with these changes both at the individual and collective levels" (Hecht et al., 1999, p. 14). Thus, debate, experiments, and solutions all need to take place at the local level in the department. As the chair is the person who initiates, guides or controls a large part of these activities, over the years this has led to an ever-expanding

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list of duties, responsibilities, and roles the chair has to fulfill (see Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1992).

Since the early 1990s, institutions slowly have started to realize the importance of chairs as local leaders of change. Evidence of this is the increase in institutional as well as national and disciplinary workshops for chairs (for example, the American Council on Education's Departmental Leadership Institute and The Association of Departments of English). Nonetheless, despite a growing number of opportunities for preparation, training, and education of chairs, scholars, institutions, and chairs themselves generally agree that it is difficult for chairs to effectively fulfill their important role. As such, the development opportunities are considered inadequate, irrelevant, or insufficient, and the results of this situation are problematic and often costly for the chair, the department, and the institution.

Purpose and Research Questions

The scholarly literature has indicated that two of the main problems that chairs experience and have to deal with in their jobs, are role conflict and ambiguity (e.g., Bennett, 1983; Gmelch, 1995; Gmelch & Burns, 1994; Gmelch & Gates, 1995; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989). Role conflict and role ambiguity are related to the chair's "Janus" position in the organization (Gamble, 1988), the linking pin position between the faculty and administration. The previous chair literature has treated this concept predominantly as an organizational-structural place in the institution. In my view, however, it is also a socio-psychological identity construct. The chair not only is positioned in between the faculty and administration but also leads a double life as

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scholar as well as administrator and peforms two roles, which are characterized by different values, methods, and goals. Not surprisingly, chairs often experience role conflict and role ambiguity (e.g., Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989).

However, it is not known *how* chairs actually handle role conflict and ambiguity in practice. Merely knowing that it might occur does not in itself solve the problem. In fact, experienced/long-time chairs continue to manage role conflict and ambiguity. In this study, I assume that handling role conflict and role ambiguity is a major part of learning how to be a chair over time. I define here learning to be a chair as changing one's understanding of chair identity (Lave, 1993). In my view, we need to know more about the chair's identity and its development as it drives the chair's behavior by changing his or her participation in practice. After all, seeing oneself primarily as a faculty member who does the chair job on the side results in different behavior than choosing to devote one's time and energy to this job, even if only for a couple years. If we want to better understand how chair identity influences how chairs handle role conflict and role ambiguity, we need to investigate the following related research questions, which have been the focus of this dissertation:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?

How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?

Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

Identity: A Conceptual Orientation

Identity is a complex concept that is being studied in multiple disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, and biology) and as part of various theoretical traditions (e.g.,

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cognition and culture). Two of the major theories that are relevant for this study are identity theory (e.g., Burke, 1980; Stryker, 1980, 1987) and social identity theory (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). In identity theory we assume identity to be represented by (a) role(-s), and therefore it is also sometimes called role identity theory. According to identity theorists, we identify with a role by naming and labelling our selves. A particular role includes "acting to fulfill the expectations of the role, coordinating and negotiating interaction with role partners, and manipulating the environment to control the resources for which the role has responsibility" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 226).

In social identity theory we assume identity to be represented by membership in specific categories or groups. According to social identity theorists, we categorize our selves in relationship to others in the group and outside the group. Therefore, social identity can "exist only in relation to other contrasting categories" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225).

The two theories have different starting points, but we cannot have one without the other. Thus, being a chair infers both a role (role identity) and membership in a group (social identity). Both role identity and social identity influence our "perception, affect, and behavior" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 228), including our linguistical actions and discourses (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The starting point of this discourse study was predominantly role identity because of the focus of previous chair studies on role conflict and role ambiguity.

The concepts of identity and role are differently developed and defined in various disciplines such as the psychological strand of social psychology and the sociological

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strand of social psychology. In this dissertation I used a definition of identity as described by identity theorists from the sociological strand of social psychology. Identity is a part of a self that is "not an autonomous psychological entity but . . . a multifaceted social construct that emerges from people's roles in society" (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995, p. 256), which "mediates the relationship between social structure and individual behavior" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 255).

In addition, as I will explain below in greater detail, in this study I used a discourse analysis methodology in the social psychological tradition (e.g., Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Discourse analysts asssume that we construct and reconstruct our identities in interactions, in particular discursive interactions (language, rhetoric, and discourses) and that these interactions are not just descriptive but performative (Austin, 1962; Potter, 1997), that is, talk is a form of action and practice. One of the consequences of this perspective is that identity is less about "who you are" or "what you have" than about "what you do in interaction" (Willig, 2003, p. 163).

Because of its multifaceted nature, we can look at numerous parts of our identity, including racial and gender identity. In this research on department chairs, I followed the tradition in identity theory, which "focus[es] on the self-defining roles that people occupy in society, rather than on the wider range of different social attributes that can be ascribed to self" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 257:). I limited myself to looking at role identity, that is, that part of the chair's professional, not personal or private, identity that has to do with the roles he or she constructs and takes on.

In this study, a role is viewed as a "set of expectations prescribing behavior that is considered appropriate by others" (Simon, 1992). In general terms, a role can be viewed

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and described as something one plays or something that one takes on and off, like a cloak. One can choose this role, take it, and discard or take it off again after use, that is, "use-if/as-needed". Indeed, chairs sometimes do take on certain roles that are only temporary, such as conflict manager in the department: there is a conflict and the chair needs to manage it to bring it to a good or at least satisfying end. The role is very much linked to the task at hand. Thus, it can indeed be said that the chair "takes on" this role. Nonetheless, if the chair merely takes on the role, he or she interprets what it means to be a conflict manager. However, because of its temporal character it will probably have only a limited effect on the chair's identity as a whole. These roles were of less interest in this study.

On the other hand, there are roles, that have a deeper and more lasting effect on the identity of a chair. Once again, I am talking about the roles of being a scholar/faculty member, an administrator, and a chair. These are the overarching roles of a chair, especially the scholar/faculty role to which the chair has been socialized since graduate school (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). Therefore, I assumed that being a faculty member is not the kind of role one can take on and easily discard again; over the years, it has become a deeper and more lasting role and is a main part of one's professional identity. In this study, the main focus with regard to identity was on the roles of faculty, administrator, and chair, the most interesting parts of which are the intersections of these roles and the dilemmas of role identity.

Framework: Social Practice

From practice and research we know that chairs learn their job predominantly in practice, by trial and error, by experience, on the job (e.g., Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987; Tucker, 1992). Oftentimes, chairs-learning-in-practice is presented as a well-known fact, not worth discussing, let alone an issue for further study. Moreover, it is suggested that this kind of learning, namely in practice, is merely a necessity. The assumption is that chairs have to learn that way as long as there is no better way to learn the job.

Furthermore, scholars do not agree on whether chairs-learning-in-practice is caused by a lack of training or whether this learning is independent of training being offered or not. For example, Gmelch (2004) believed that "even if we had systematic skill development opportunities available, if you asked managers where they learned their leadership abilities, most would cite their job experiences" (p. 75). Because chairs *do* learn in practice, it is necessary to investigate *how* chairs handle role conflict and role ambiguity by coping with identity problems *in situ*, that is, by participating "in the culturally designed settings of everyday life" (Lave, 1993, pp. 5-6).

This qualitative study was based on a practice perspective in a social and societal/historical setting (Chaiklin, 1993). This perspective is the foundation of research being conducted by representatives from multiple theoretical traditions, such as critical psychology, ecological psychology, sociocultural psychology, cognitive anthropology, activity theory, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology (Chaiklin, 1993; Lave, 1993). Numerous key terms and models have been associated with this perspective, for example, social practice, situated activity, situated learning, situated experience, and cultural

learning. This perspective looks at "situated everyday practice" and claims that "persons acting and the social world of activity cannot be separated" (Lave, 1993, pp. 4-5); moreover, "relations among person, activity, and situation, as they are given in social practice, [are themselves] viewed as a single encompassing theoretical entity" (Lave, 1993, p. 7). Figure 1 is a basic model of the three elements of social practice -- agent, activity and context/situation -- and their interrelationship. I also include a few other names/labels, which are sometimes used in various traditions to express similar elements (for more information, see Chapter 3, section 2, on the basic elements of social practice).

AGENT

*Person, actor, self, individual, subject

CONTEXT/SITUATION

*System, structures, social forces

ACTIVITY

*Practice, praxis, action, interaction, experience,
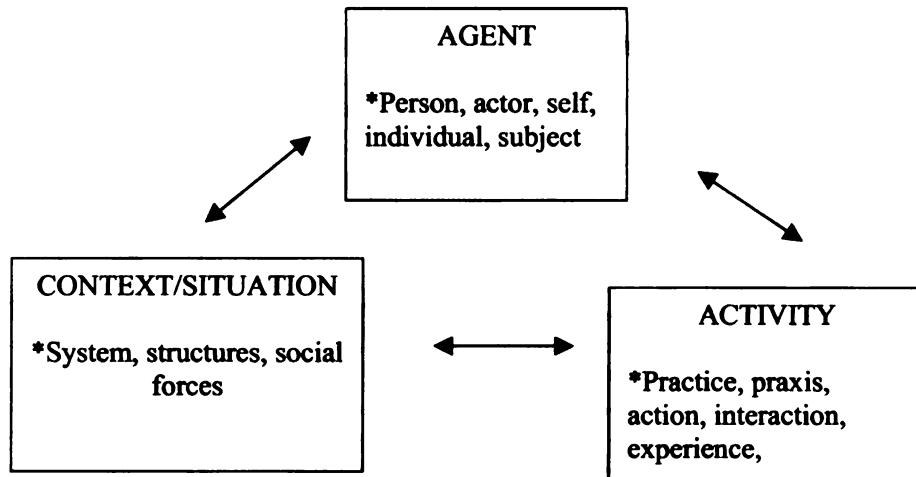
FIGURE 1: Basic Model of Social Practice

One of the main ideas in this perspective is that learning is considered an aspect of everyday life and work (Lave, 1993, p. 8). According to this perspective, the situation or context in which the person acts and the activities of daily life are in flux; they are continuously changing (see Lave, 1993, p. 5). As the focus is on participation of the person in practice, it is argued that changing participation is a form of learning. The

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conclusion is that "learning is ubiquitous in ongoing activity, though often unrecognized

as such" (Lave, 1993, p. 5). As Lave phrased it:

> We have come to the conclusion … that there is no such thing as "learning" sui
> generis, but only changing participation in the culturally designed settings of
> everyday life. Or, to put it the other way around, participation in everyday life
> may be thought of as a process of changing understanding in practice, that is, as
> learning. (pp. 5-6)

From a more foundational perspective, knowledge and learning are assumed to be

accumulative, static, individual, abstract, rational, transferable, and to have an end-goal.

Learning is viewed as mastering a skill, an attitude, or pieces of knowledge, with the goal

to use, better said, to reproduce and repeat, when necessary in coping with similar issues.

But these assumptions are problematic for comprehending how chairs understand and

change their understanding of their job in terms of role identity.

Social practice theories, on the other hand, recognize that the nature of learning is

ongoing, improvisational, multifocal, open-ended, situated, and conflictual (Lave, 1993,

p. 9). These theories assume knowledge to be "dynamic, concrete, and relational", thus

the term *knowledge* is replaced by the more active term *knowing* (Cook & Brown, 1999,

p. 387). Therefore, the focus is not on reproducing and repeating whatever is the same,

but on producing that which is different. In this perspective, role conflict and role

ambiguity are seen as occasions of learning for chairs; they are understood as problems

that need to be solved, at least temporarily.

Rationale for Employing this Framework

The perspective of social practice fits well with my research. This perspective

incorporates the various elements of the research questions. It represents an existing

framework for looking at practice and learning and offers a view of how these elements are related and how they interact (see Chapter 3). In this section, I show how the perspective of social practice can be related to the main elements of my research questions.

First of all, as we have seen, researchers have found that chairs learn their jobs mainly in practice. Therefore, the everyday practice of chairs should be our first point of attention. Second, as I am interested in *how* chairs handle identity challenges by looking at the strategies, methods, and resources they use, it was appropriate to use a theory (a) that understands being active in practice to be learning, and (b) that focuses on "processes of improvisation with the social, material, and experiential resources" (Lave, 1993, p. 13) as ways to invent new knowledge.

Third, as I am interested in how chairs handle role identity *in situ/practice*, the contextual and situational differences that play a role in the solution a chair arrives at need to be acknowledged. Differences in economic, political, demographic, and cultural characteristics of the institution, college, department, and academic discipline sometimes demand solutions and actions that are context-specific to the situation and the department (Seagren et al., 1993). In other words, we need to "acknowledge the fundamental imprint of interested parties, multiple activities, and different goals and circumstances, on what constitutes 'knowing' on a given occasion or across a multitude of interrelated events" (Lave, 1993, p. 13). This, in particular, is a major element of social practice.

Fourth, I believe that chairs have to cope with identity challenges, whether on a smaller or larger scale, every day. Thus, it is relevant to look at a theory that claims that learning is "an aspect of everyday practice" (Lave, 1993, p. 8).

Fifth, chairs in the practice of doing their work need diverse skills and types of knowledge. Theories of social practice are useful as a perspective for this study because they acknowledge the diversity of knowledge. Moreover, they assume that knowledge is dynamic, not static, meaning that what is considered knowledge is changeable over time and depends on the situation and context.

Finally, it is likely that chairs also need a variety of strategies and methods to acquire the diverse skills and types of knowledge required for their work. In contrast to the more foundational theories about learning, which make the epistemological assumption that learning needs to take place in particular settings and in reserved periods of time, "theories of situated practice do not dichotomize between learning and human activity" (Lave, 1993, p. 12). This statement implies that people learn all day long by being active, whether that is by reading books, going to training sessions, networking, or merely participating in conversations. Therefore, to study chairs' practice and learning how to handle identity problems, this perspective will be helpful because it can broaden the researcher's perspective on possible strategies and resources for acquiring knowledge that traditionally would not be considered learning.

In addition, I believe that this perspective is one of the few that posits that learning *in* practice, that is, learning *as* practice, is as valid a viewpoint as the more traditional learning theories that decontextualize learning (Chaiklin, 1993; Lave, 1993). Our focus, then, shifts away from the lack of formal learning to the wealth of improvisational and informal learning that provides chairs with sufficient and relevant knowledge not only to survive but, in quite a few cases, to prosper.

Methodology

In this study I used a discourse analysis methodology in the social psychological tradition of Potter and Wetherell (1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) to analyze how chair identity and role conflict are constructed in social interaction -- in this case, as part of interviews. I held multiple open-ended interviews with two department chairs and two directors of professional schools from one research university. In discourse analysis, interviews have a different structure and function than in other forms of qualitative research. Interviews are seen as naturalistic conversational exchanges (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 123), in which both the interviewer and the respondent contribute to the meaning-making process in action. For example, the respondent might interpret a seemingly neutral question as asking for justification of a certain action, something that is reflected by a certain kind of answer. In turn, the researcher reacts to this flow and direction of the interview dialogue by a particular probe, and so on. Because the interviewer is actively involved in the interview conversation, it should not be a surprise that the full data also include the interviewer's linguistical actions, that is, his or her questions and comments, as they are an important part of the co-construction of meaning. Thus, for this study, I transcribed the raw data of both interview questions and answers.

The interview texts are seen as narratives through which the chairs describe and understand their world of what it means to be a chair. The labels, concepts, and descriptions that chairs use (for example, the words *administrator* and *researcher*), do not have a straightforward or a fixed meaning. Specific constructions and uses of labels like *research* have specific functions, that is, they can "do different sorts of work" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90).

Discourse analysis is known for being a labor-intensive process. After careful and detailed transcriptions, initial open coding to identify ideas and concerns, and many rereadings of the transcripts, the main part of the analyses, with a focus on language and discourses, still needs to be done. Coding in discourse analysis functions as a preliminary sorting of relevant data into specific themes, which can later be used for fine-grained analysis. As such coding is a more pragmatic than analytic research activity (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 167).

In the discursive part of the analysis, what the researcher is looking for is not so much consistency, which in other kinds of research is assumed to reflect the accuracy of descriptions and validity of findings, as variation because the focus is on what talk can achieve in different situations and for different purposes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 164). The idea is to identify patterns of variations and commonalities, as well as nuances and contradictions, by "detailed and repeated reading of the discourse against the background of the discourse-analytic perspective" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 95). The focus is not only on analyzing consecutive pieces of text, but also on comparing and contrasting excerpts that are far apart. Furthermore, analysis is done both within cases (or interviews or subjects) and across them. As such, there are multiple units and levels of analysis, and because the researcher needs to read, reread, and cross-read, he or she can start the analysis at any point in the text. There is no standard method or even order of analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 96). In this methodology, analysis is really a deconstruction (Willig, 2003, p. 170).

Chapter Summary

The department chair who manages and leads a department has a major influence on "the ultimate success of the institution" in terms of realizing appropriate goals at the department level (Bennett & Figuli, 1990, p. xi). As the chair is the person who initiates, guides or controls a large part of activities and changes, over the years this has led to an ever-expanding list of duties, responsibilities, and roles the chair must fulfill (see Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1992). Even though institutions slowly have begun to realize the importance of chairs as local leaders of change, development opportunities for chairs still are considered inadequate, irrelevant, or insufficient.

Two of the main problems that chairs experience in their jobs, role conflict and role ambiguity, are related to the chair's "Janus" position in the organization (Gamble, 1988), which is not just an organizational-structural place in the institution but also a socio-psychological identity construct. The question *how* chairs actually handle role conflict and role ambiguity in practice has not yet been addressed. The present study on the practice of chairs is intended to fill this gap by focusing on the following research questions:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?

How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?

Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

Chairs have not just one identity but multiple identities; in particular, they are faculty members as well as administrators. These identities are not permanent or internal/personal but variable and social. That is, they are constructed in social interactions, and because these interactions are always different, the outcome of identity

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is variable. In this study, I looked at that part of the chair's professional, not personal or private, identity that has to do with the roles he or she constructs and takes on/participates in -- particularly the roles of faculty, administrator, and chair.

From practice and research, we know that chairs learn their job predominantly in practice, by trial and error, the value of which has been largely ignored in the literature. The literature is generally prescriptive but does not specifically address *how* a chair can be effective and efficient without sufficient preparation, training, and support. We need to know how chairs handle problems and challenges that arise while on the job. Because chairs *do* learn in practice, it is necessary to investigate *how* chairs handle role conflict and role ambiguity by coping with identity problems *in situ*, that is, by participating "in the culturally designed settings of everyday life" (Lave, 1993, pp. 5-6).

The framework for this study is social practice, which assumes that learning is considered an aspect of everyday life and work (Lave, 1993, p. 8). Learning takes place as part of the process of participating in practice, which is continuous. By participating in chair practice, a chairperson socially negotiates and reinterprets what it means to be a chair; in other words, he or she learns. The knowledge is "dynamic, concrete, and relational," so it is better to speak of knowing, which is more active than knowledge (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387). According to this perspective, role conflict and role ambiguity are seen as occasions of learning for chairs because they represent situations in which the chairs need to negotiate and reinterpret. As such, role conflict and role ambiguity are understood as dilemmas of identity, thus as problems, needing to be solved, at least temporarily.

To address the research questions about role identity, role conflict, and role ambiguity, I chose to use discourse analysis, particularly the tradition of Potter and Wetherell (1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). In my view, discourse analysis is best able to show how people "do" identity as part of social discourse; after all, in discourse analysis, identity constructions are considered specific versions of reality that are given preference above other alternatives. As such, these constructions solve dilemmas of identity.

Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I review the chair literature pertinent to this study. Topics of interest are chairs' everyday life and practice, chairs' problems and challenges, the process and content of learning, and cultures. Chapter 3 provides a theoretical and conceptual overview of the framework that is used for this study, namely, social practice. Chapter 4 contains a comprehensive explanation of the discourse analysis methodology employed. Chapter 5 presents the results of the study's data analysis and answers to the research questions.

Before I discuss the study's findings, I provide an overview of the previous chapters in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 contains discussions on the study's findings, its implications for action, its limitations, and ideas for future research. In addition, I also include a description of a newly developed discourse and practice-based "working model" of chair's identity process. Finally, the appendix is a copy of the study's interview protocol.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS:

EVERYDAY LIFE, PROBLEMS, LEARNING, AND CULTURES

Introduction

The following research questions were posed to guide the collection of data for this study:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?

How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?

Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

To address these research questions, regarding chairs' role identities and the resources chairs use, it is necessary to understand the chairs' social practice, that is, their daily life and practice, and the contexts in which they function.

In Chapter 2, I first provide a general overview of research on chairs to date. Then, I discuss chairs' everyday life and practice in terms of tasks, roles, role conflict and role ambiguity, and power. I show that previous researchers have not sufficiently realized the contingent, contextual, and situated nature of chair roles, which is an important aspect of chair identity and chair behavior.

Next, I address the problems and challenges that chairs encounter, and discuss the process and content of chairs' learning. Finally, I look at the multiple and often conflicting cultures in which chairs are situated and that influence their work, namely, the

departmental, academic professional, institutional, organizational, and disciplinary

cultures.

An Overview of Trends in Research on Department Chairs

After the occasional paper or dissertation on chairs and departments appeared in the

1960s (for example, Patton, 1961), the research on departmental leaders increased in the

1970s. In this period there were three dominant types of research. First, numerous

doctoral students investigated chairs' roles, often using a purposeful sample focusing on a

specific geographical location (limited to a particular state) and/or type of institution (for

example, private higher education, two-year colleges, continuing education). A second

type of study concerned the relationship between the disciplinary characterization of the

department (using Biglan's (1973a) three-dimensional knowledge classification of

hard/soft, pure/applied, and life/nonlife systems) and departmental management's goal

orientation (Smart & Elton, 1975), goal priorities (Smart & McLaughlin, 1974), the

chair's training needs (Creswell, Seagren, & Henry, 1980), and the chair's role behaviors

(Smart & Elton, 1976). Third, originating from an organizational perspective on

institutions of higher education, scholars focused on issues like power, decision-making,

governance, leadership, and behavior. Especially in this last type of research, the

department chair was viewed less as an individual than as an element or subject in a

bureaucratic, political, or open-system organization.

Fitting with the still dominant quantitative paradigm in higher education in the

late 1970s and 1980s, large, thorough, often national studies were set up that focused on

roles (as perceived by the chair, the faculty or the dean) (Kremer-Hayon & Avi-Itzhak,

1986; Smart & Elton, 1976), responsibilities, needed skills or competencies (Jennerich, 1981), effectiveness (Knight & Holen, 1985), leadership (Mitchell, 1987) and leadership attributes, and links between tenure time and departmental paradigm, size, and demography (Pfeffer & Moore, 1980). In essence, in these studies scholars were looking for commonalities among chairs in order to make generalizations possible. Some of the statistical (survey) studies functioned as initial data-gathering devices, providing basic information about the size of the department, length of term, background of professors, average salary, compensation benefits (e.g., Shreeve et al., 1987), or how chairs spent their time (McLaughlin, Montgomery, & Malpass, 1975).

The 1980s were also the decade when institutions slowly started to realize the importance of chairs as leaders, as evidenced by the occasional national or disciplinary workshop for chairs (for example, The American Council on Education's Departmental Leadership Institute and The Association of Departments of English). Chairs were considered to have a major influence on how things were run at the front-line of teaching and research. This trend was mirrored in the research literature with studies focusing on the needs for training and professional development of chairs, and authors offering policy suggestions for the institutional and national levels (Booth, 1982; Creswell et al., 1980).

As part of the attention on training, more experience-based and/or anecdotal essays and other kinds of literature were published especially for chairs, beginners as well as "masters." This literature ranged from books offering case studies on general problems chairs needed to deal with (e.g., Bennett, 1983; Higgerson, 1996; Higgerson & Rehwaldt, 1993) to newsletters such as *The Department Advisor* (compiled version, Bennett & Figuli, 1990), *The Department Chair, Academic Leader, and CSDC Newsletter*

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(1990/1992). More often than not, the authors were chairs themselves. In terms of validity, this kind of literature is considered limited because it describes individual situations, personal opinions, and suggestions/techniques for improvement that come out of a department's own practice (for example, "best practices" of faculty evaluation techniques). As such, the generalizibility of this information is considered problematic. On the other hand, this literature addressed numerous topics of importance to practicing chairs that until now have not been addressed through empirical research, for example, the relationship between the chair and nonfaculty staff members (DeRosa & Wilson, 1990) or the dynamic of the chair's leadership strategies and the department's mission and vision (see Part Five in Bennett & Figuli, 1990). Because the present study is concerned with the practice of a chair's work, we cannot ignore the valuable information that this literature provides.

The handbooks for chairs are especially worth mentioning. These handbooks are often a mix of empirical research and essays focusing on a broad range of topics, such as the role of the chair, his or her responsibilities, skills, and leadership (Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1992). This literature often is prescriptive in nature telling the chair what sorts of problems in the areas of faculty evaluations, curriculum development, and finance he or she might encounter and how these can be handled. Some of these books try to standardize a chair's work, providing to-do lists, whereas others give a thorough overview of the range of a chair's practice. Not surprisingly, the latter are considered the seminal works on chairs (e.g., Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1992) and are the books most often referenced in other scholarly work.

During the 1980s the almost exclusive focus on roles and skills gave way to a trend of looking at chairs not just as members of the higher education organization but as individuals with needs and expectations, experiencing challenges, role conflict/ambiguity and stress. This literature showed evidence of a less functionalistic and more humanistic approach to the subject of chairs.

A theme in the literature that fits both the more humanistic approach and the development trend is the role socialization of chairs (Bennett, 1982; Bragg, 1980; Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987), a line of inquiry continued in the 1990s (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Seedorf, 1990, 1992). Fitting with the topic, authors of these studies used a qualitative or mixed-methods methodology, including interviews and observations.

In the 1990s the large national survey studies continued, in particular the ones by the Center for the Study of the Department Chairs (CSDC) at Washington State University (1990/1992/1995-6). These national studies had a broad and diversified purpose. In general, articles, papers, and books continued the line of inquiry of earlier work on role clarification and role types, albeit creating new categorizations that better fit the changing departmental work (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992a, 1992b; Seagren et al., 1993). The new studies on leadership transition (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999), time spent (Seedorf & Gmelch, 1989), job pressures and demands (Gmelch, 1991), job satisfaction and commitment, and stress also more closely fit the changing nature of departmental work (Gmelch & Burns, 1993, 1994).

What is most striking about the literature of the 1990s and beyond is that chairs were no longer viewed as individuals who lead and manage the department but as team leaders involved in creating a department that functions as a collective, team-sharing its

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responsibility for teaching and research (Eckel, 1998; Gmelch, 1994; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Hecht et al., 1999; Lucas, 1994; Lucas & Associates, 2000; Zemsky, 1996). It was no longer considered sufficient for the chair to handle on his or her own the numerous challenges that arise in/for the department, but it was thought necessary for chairs to "facilitate the collaboration of faculty in the achievement of institutional goals" (Lucas & Associates, 2000, p. xii). This view was apparent in books focusing on communication skills for chairs (Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Higgerson, 1996), transformational or change leadership (Knight & Trowler, 2001; Lucas, 1994; Lucas & Associates, 2000), and change strategies for academic departments (Walvoord et al., 2000).

In conclusion, the last 30 years have brought a shift in perspective on what scholars of chairs study, and how and why. In particular, the shift from a functional organizational perspective to a more humanistic and change-oriented perspective on chairs clearly shows a paradigmatic development so that by now there is a specific body of knowledge and a general body of concepts on chairs (Kremer-Hayon & Avi-Itzhak, 1986, p. 106).

Chairs' Everyday Life and Practice

Tasks and Roles

An important part of a chair's "everyday life" comprises the main tasks and roles he or she performs. The roles and responsibilities of the chair are the topics that scholars have studied most often. Out of this extensive research have emerged numerous "classifications and typologies from different perspectives: anecdotal accounts from institutional perspectives, thoughts from participants in workshops, in-depth case studies,

and empirical analyses" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 5). Even though these classifications and typologies differ, most authors on chairs agree that the list of duties, responsibilities, and roles a chair has to fulfill has increased over the years and is continuously expanding.

Tasks are activities that are part of and inherent in the function of the chair. Often these tasks are created by or given to the chair from a person higher in the hierarchy, for example, a dean or provost, which makes these tasks mandatory/obligatory: the chair is expected to carry out these tasks. One of the characteristics of tasks is that they are relatively objective because one can check whether a task is fulfilled or not. In addition, tasks are rather independent of the person who is to carry them out. In contrast, roles are socially constructed. They are learned by interacting with others and possess content ("what to do") and stylistic ("how to do") dimensions. Roles are composed of elements not necessarily specified in the job description. According to Katz and Kahn (1966), roles are "at once the building block of social systems and the summation of the requirements with which the system confronts the individual member" (p. 171).

As an example of a chair task classification, I mention Tucker 's (1992) typology because his longitudinal work on chairs is considered authoritative in the field. Tucker mentioned dozens of responsibilities or tasks for chairs, divided into eight categories: department governance; instruction; faculty affairs; student affairs; external communication; budget and resources; office management; and professional development. The content of these activities and the rules and regulations involved are changing continuously, and new tasks have been added. One category that has been growing in prominence in the last 30 years is legal issues (Bennett & Figuli, 1990; Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1992). Issues of gender and race discrimination, new faculty

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appointment contracts (e.g., part-time, nontenured), graduate and nontenured faculty unions, collaborations with industry and community, patents, faculty grievances, copyright or intellectual property of digital data/courses, and sexual harassment all have become part of the chair's world. Even though some of these issues need not be handled by the chair personally or individually, the chair needs to be aware of current developments and be far more conscious of his or her interactions with institutional peers, subordinates, and superiors, as well as with numerous external stakeholders such as accrediting agencies than in the past (Hecht et al., 1999, p. 212).

The number and variety of roles a chair is expected to take on has increased as well. Tucker (1992), for example, mentioned 28 roles that chairs perceive as being part of their job, varying from personal roles (for example, teacher, peer-colleague, and researcher) to departmental roles (for example, leader, manager, motivator, facilitator, entrepreneur, advocator, conflict manager, and communicator). In general, these roles can be categorized into academic, administrative, and leadership roles (McLaughlin et al., 1975). It is not surprising, considering the chair's socialization as a faculty member, that chairs enjoyed most and felt most comfortable with the academic role (activities related to teaching, advising, curriculum, research, and faculty development), and less with the administrative or leadership role, with which the chair most likely has not had much previous experience. This factor of comfortableness is also reflected in the amount of time chairs spend fulfilling these roles; chairs used half of their time on their academic role.

The research results indicate a shift in how chairs spend their time in the last 15 years. Carroll and Gmelch (1992a) found in their research that chairs considered the

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following four roles, listed in perceived order of importance, to be their most important responsibilities: being a faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar. However, the amount of time spent on these roles did not reflect the chairs' prioritization as the chairs spent more than half of their time managing their departments (an administrative role), even though this often felt like a burden (McLaughlin et al., 1975). How exactly this contradiction is to be accounted for is not clear, but chairs claimed that managing resources and budgets had become critical (Gmelch & Miskin, 1995a, p. 9). One of the roles that is relatively new, and not yet specifically mentioned by Tucker (1992), is that of the chairperson as team builder within the department (Eckel, 1998; Gmelch, 1994; Hecht et al., 1999; Lucas, 1994) and also in interdepartmental and interdisciplinary ways (Lucas & Associates, 2000).

Even though much research on chairs has focused on their tasks and roles, the research into these topics is never "done" because new developments (for example, the role of team builder and a growing focus on managerial aspects) continuously change what the institution and department expect of chairs and what chairs deem important. Most important, however, in relation to my own research questions, is how chairs in daily practice, *in situ*, construct and act on their constructions and perceptions of their (changing) roles, tasks, and priorities.

Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, and Power

A second main theme in the chair literature is role conflict and role ambiguity. As I will show below, these two topics are also closely related to issues of power.

Role conflict occurs when several roles that one is playing simultaneously contradict one another. One of the reasons why role conflict occurs is that the chair takes on different roles for specific tasks that need to be performed but whose value systems and assumptions (seem to) contradict one another (Gmelch & Gates, 1995). Examples of these different roles for specific tasks are the role of manager of day-to-day affairs, the role of academic scholar, the role of collegial member of the department, the role of intervener in a faculty conflict, and the role of department advocate when arguing for extra resources from the dean. Another reason is that the chair needs to serve multiple constituencies, such as faculty, staff, students, the dean, and external agencies. Finally, the chair might also experience conflict of a more personal and private nature resulting from the tension between a demanding job as chair and the pressure and/or wish to be a family member and social being in his or her private life (Lucas, 1994, p. 250), something that plays a role especially for women in academe.

Role ambiguity "relates to the degree to which we have sufficient information to perform the task or to ambiguous and problematic work requirements and performance expectations" (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999, p. 82). As Lucas (1994) phrased it, the fact of role ambiguity is manifested in the scarcity of "adequate job descriptions," and even when descriptions exist, as part of collective-bargaining agreements in unionized institutions, "chairs within the same university may interpret those responsibilities differently" (p. 249). Role ambiguity makes it therefore also difficult to measure whether chairs have been effective and/or have achieved their goals (Moses & Roe, 1990, p. 10).

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According to Bennett (1983), the ambiguity that the chair experiences can be divided into psychological and political dimensions. Psychologically, the chair stands with one foot in the department and one foot in the administration, something that scholars characterize as a "Janus job" (e.g., Gamble, 1988). The chair, who once was seen as a colleague faculty member and who took a stand on certain issues, has suddenly become a leader and manager of the department, someone who, according to the faculty, is no longer "one of us." As a consequence of this role ambiguity, the chair feels as though he or she does not belong anywhere anymore, something with which he or she needs to struggle personally. As a result, role ambiguity positions the chair in different personal and professional relationships with the faculty (Bennett, 1983, p. 8). Politically, the chair sometimes creates alliances with other constituencies besides the faculty, just to get things done or to do that which offers him or her a chance to balance the mission of the department with that of the institution as a whole.

Closely related to role ambiguity is the issue of the chair's power. In general, the chair can make use of two types of power, namely, positional and personal power. Positional power, also called authority or office power, originates from the official position/function of being a chair and is "sanctioned by the organization" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 31). Positional power implies "obedience by subordinates, with the degree of authority *circumscribed by the formal position statement*" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 31). Positional power defines the mandates a chair has and which he or she is expected to use to fulfill his or her responsibilities. Use of positional power can vary from coercion and information gathering to manipulation (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 31). However, as Seagren et al. argued, the institution's culture and structure often define or limit the way chairs

use positional power. This kind of power, especially, might sometimes increase role ambiguity as it has underlying assumptions of hierarchy, supervision, and control, which seem to stand in contrast with the collegial values of the department (Seagren et al., 1993).

Personal power is informal and is used to influence all kinds of constituencies within and outside the department. "Influence is derived from a number of factors, including personality, expertise, possession of knowledge, and a capacity to control opportunities for exploitation" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 31).

As seen above, the chair has multiple and rather ambiguous roles. The position of the chair, in between faculty and administration, and the faculty culture, based on collegiality and autonomy, means that the chair does not have a strict hierarchical relationship with the faculty. The chair, therefore, has limited positional power and because of the ambiguity he or she will need sufficient and legitimate personal power "to get things done." This demands a way of interacting with and responding to the faculty mainly through negotiation, persuasion, collaboration, intervention, and facilitation (Seagren et al., 1993, pp. 37-43).

Deetz (1992) distinguished further between "direct power" and "invisible power" (p. 7-8); the use of neither kind of power is limited to the chair but can be used by all members in the department for or against the chair. Direct power is power that is visibly displayed, for example, in a meeting when a chair takes a stand on an issue and dominates the discussion or decision-making, or when a faculty member delays decision-making on an issue by "forgetting" important documents.

Invisible power can arise from four sources (Deetz, 1992, pp. 8-10). One source is the power of the chair to dominate the sense-making process. For example, the chair's assessment of the budget as a crisis situation is one form of reality creation that a chair/faculty member can apply to influence others in "seeing it his/her way." A second source of power is the "enactment of values" (p. 9). Deetz gave an example of the distinguishing value/assessment of different kinds of scholarship: how much value is given to a textbook compared to a scholarly book in the tenure process? A chair might exercise a value judgment between these two choices. A third power source is the power to influence who is invited to participate in a discussion or decision. One example of this is the exclusion of part-time and nontenured faculty from certain committees. Finally, a fourth source of power, which is linked to the previous one, is the power that arises from using particular kinds of operating or decision-making procedures and regulations. As Deetz argued, "procedures always maintain certain biases and value preferences that come from certain groups" (p. 10), namely, those groups that designed the procedures even if that was a long time ago. Although this form of power is structural and often very subtle and hidden, it is nonetheless of great importance in knowing how a department works.

Commonality, Contingency, Contextuality, and Situatedness of Chair Roles in the Literature

Previous researchers have not sufficiently realized the contingent, contextual, and situated nature of chair roles, which is an important aspect of chair identity and chair behavior. Because a chair has multiple roles and responsibilities, there is no such thing as *the* role of a chair. As seen above, roles and responsibilities are the topics that scholars

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focusing on chairs probably have studied most often. They have predominantly looked at the commonalities in what chairs actually do. Out of this research on roles and responsibilities have emerged numerous "classifications and typologies from different perspectives" (Seagren et al, 1993, p. 5). Tucker (1992), for example, mentioned 28 roles that chairs perceive as being part of their job, varying from personal roles (for example, teacher, peer-colleague, and researcher) to departmental roles (for example, leader, manager, motivator, facilitator, entrepreneur, advocator, conflict manager, and communicator). In general, these roles can be categorized into academic, administrative, and leadership roles (McLaughlin et al., 1975). Other researchers, such as Carroll and Gmelch (1992a), found that chairs considered the following four roles, listed in perceived order of importance, to be their most important responsibilities: being a faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar. Thus, we know from the chair literature that chairs have multiple roles.

In general, chairs take on different roles, at different times, with different priorities. This can be a result of external expectations and demands or internal motivations. The choice of roles is contingent in nature: It changes from day to day (Is there a management crisis?), from semester to semester (Is it budget time?), and from year to year (What is the development of department/university?). For example, if there is a conflict between a faculty member and others in the department, the chair might take on a mediator or conflict-manager role. The prominence of one role as compared to another role depends on the idiosyncratic circumstances of time and place. For example, the role of chair as team leader or entrepreneur is relatively new, dating from the early 1990s. Furthermore, not all institutions value and expect the same roles of their chairs. For

example, the role of entrepreneur is, in general, more important and expected at research universities than at liberal arts colleges. Therefore, roles are not stable and static but variable as they are contingent on the context and situation at hand.

Furthermore, there can be a dominance of a particular role, which can be linked, among other things, to the personality and (pre)disposition of each chair and/or the duration of his or her tenure as chair. Some chairs are more focused on and occupied with their scholarly role, whereas others have changed their priorities and are more focused on their leadership and administrative role. The former is especially the case with chairs who, in professional terms, have not really chosen to do this job but who are part of a (departmental) context in which "somebody has to do the job," for example, due to a rotating system. In addition, the former is also more the case with beginning chairs who just accepted their chairship and who are still in the dominant scholar mode.

Another important feature of chair roles is role conflict and role ambiguity. We know from the literature that beginning chairs often are not provided with adequate job descriptions, nor do the majority of them have realistic job expectations. Therefore, the majority of chairs begin their job without a clear idea of what it means to be a chair (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Spicer & Staton, 1992; Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987). This often leads to feelings of role ambiguity and role conflict. Scholars have recognized the existence of these problems and advised chairs to deal with them. However, they have not inquired as to how chairs in fact cope or might cope with these problems. Merely knowing that role conflict is part of the job does not, in itself, solve the problem. Furthermore, also experienced chairs (need to) continue to manage role conflict.

In sum, it is clear that chairs have roles in common. However, as described above, chairs are part of different contexts (for example, department, faculty, resources), have to deal with different problems, have different priorities, have different attitudes toward the chair job, and have different personalities and professional identities. Therefore, I argue that generic typologies, classifications, and professional advice are of limited value. We need to realize the contingent, contextual, and situated nature of chair roles, something that can help us better understand chair identity, which drives chair behavior.

A Chair's Problems and Challenges

In this section, I first look at the various kinds of problems and challenges with which a chair might have to deal and for which learning and training are considered the solution. It is necessary to distinguish between different kinds of problems and challenges, something the chair literature has not made explicit. Thus, by using the categorization that follows, I try to give an overview of the chair's challenges and problems that clarifies what is known and what is considered important, even if the boundaries are not always clear and categories are not mutually exclusive.

The chair literature addresses the following challenges and problems:

1.   Personal challenges which originate in the transition between being a faculty member and a chair and have to do with lack of time and role conflict (personal/professional lives, and scholar/administrator).

2.   Daily tasks a chair has to perform and that could be a problem for beginning as well as more experienced chairs, either because of lack of knowledge or skills or because these are generally known as "problem areas".

3.   Macro demographic, societal, economic, global, and technological challenges that

are influencing institutions of higher education in general and chairs as well.

All of the above can lead to stress, which in itself can be a problem or challenge. I have

not focused on stress as a separate issue because it has only limited relevance for this

study. For more information on chairs and stress, see Gmelch (1991, 1993), Gmelch and

Burnes (1993, 1994), Gmelch and Gates (1995), and Wolverton et al. (1999).

Personal Challenges

Gmelch (2002) summarized the chair's personal challenges, which are addressed

in the literature as lack of leadership training, lack of administrative experience, lack of

understanding of role conflict and ambiguity, lack of recognition of metamorphic changes

from faculty member to chair, and lack of recognition of costs to scholarship and

personal life. Almost all scholars recognize lack of leadership training, especially at the

beginning of a chair's job if the person has had no previous administrative experience, as

problematic, and often costly, for both the chair and the department and institution. How

role conflict and role ambiguity contribute to the challenges for the chair was described in

detail above.

Metamorphic changes from faculty member to chair (see Gmelch & Parkay, 1999;

Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989) refer to the major transitions a beginning chair has to make.

The first study to identify specific transitions was conducted by Gmelch and Seedorf

(1989), building on Bennett (1982), and elaborated on in a paper by Gmelch and Parkay

(1999). Gmelch and Parkay characterized the faculty member before the transition as

predominantly working solitarily, focused on one task at a time, autonomous, elaborately

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working on papers and books, working in private, conveying information ("professing"), relatively stable and fixed within the discipline, being a client of the institution, and perceiving financial rewards as austere. When assimilating into the role of chair, the faculty member is required to become more socially oriented (working with faculty, administrators, students, and external stakeholders); has to get used to a fast-changing work culture; needs to be accountable; must work quickly on persuasive and political memos; is expected to have an "open door" policy; is continuously balancing multiple interests; needs to be "mobile, visible, and political" (p. 41); is responsible for allocating money; and, although not affluent, feels more in control of resources. Gmelch and Parkay (1999, p. 6) concluded that that not only does this metamorphosis take time, but that only a few chairs make the complete transition.

Part of the transition from faculty to chair involves also the usual change in time spent on tasks for scholarship and personal life. During the "encounter" stage, the first stage of the socialization process, chairs must get used to shifting time from academic tasks such as teaching, writing, and research to administrative and leadership tasks and yet still try to maintain their scholarly position. Sometimes this shift is realized by doing research in one's private time, thus decreasing time for leisure (Seedorf, 1991). It is therefore not unusual that chairs' perception of not having enough time to remain current in their discipline is the greatest stressor for chairs (Gmelch, 1994; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989). Even more for chairs than for faculty, it is therefore important to find a balance (Gmelch, 1991; Gmelch & Gates, 1995) by making the right "trade-offs" between leadership and personal interests (Gmelch, 2002; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995a).

Daily Tasks

Some of the important daily tasks of chairs were addressed in the section on tasks and roles. Besides the evolution of the content of the tasks/activities and the rules/regulations, new tasks are continuously being added. In addition, the number and variety of roles the chair is expected to take on have increased as well. The increasing numbers of tasks and roles affect the number and quality of the chair's interactions with institutional peers, subordinates, and superiors, as well as with numerous external stakeholders such as accrediting agencies (Hecht et al., 1999, p. 212). As research has shown, chairs, like other managers, spend most of their time communicating with others (Dill, 1984/2000). In fact, some scholars (Eble, 1990; Hickson & Stacks, 1992) as well as chairs, when asked (Jennerich, 1981), have claimed that communicating is "the single most important skill necessary to being an outstanding chairperson" (Eble, 1990, p. 23). However, effective communication is difficult to achieve (Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Higgerson, 1996).

Aside from the global task of communication that plays a part in almost everything a chair does, there are more specific activities. Gmelch and Miskin (1995a, p. 121) categorized the chair's daily challenges into three categories: strategic issues (planning, mission, vision, prioritizing of programs, power, etc.), resource issues (management and allocation of money, increasing external funding, decreasing costs, etc.), and faculty issues (attracting, rewarding, and evaluating diverse faculty while maintaining a good work climate, especially faculty morale).

In particular, chairs indicated they needed training assistance with the following 12 tasks (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993, p. 184): evaluating faculty performance; maintaining a

conducive work climate; obtaining and managing external funds; preparing and proposing budgets; developing and initiating long-range departmental goals; managing department resources; encouraging professional development activities of faculty; managing nonacademic staff; planning and evaluating curriculum development; providing informal faculty leadership; ensuring the maintenance of accurate departmental records; and recruiting and selecting faculty. As the authors commented in a different book the items on this list are "almost identical" (Gmelch & Miskin, 1995a, p. 7) to the items on a list of top 12 tasks that chairs need to do (see Gmelch, Burns, Carroll, Harris, & Wentz, 1992). The conclusion is that chairs feel unprepared for almost everything they need to do (Gmelch & Miskin, 1995a,.p. 7).

One task or responsibility that chairs often have to cope with and feel unprepared for is conflict within academe. Researchers (e.g. Gmelch, Carroll, Seedorf, & Wentz, 1990) have found that "chairs suffer from more interpersonal conflict among their colleagues than with their deans or students" (Gmelch, 1995, p. 38). Gmelch and Carroll (1991) argued in their essay that interpersonal conflicts between chair and faculty are a normal part of the structure of higher education. They mentioned 10 role and organizational characteristics that can contribute to the rise of conflict: an increase in numbers of administrative-organizational levels in the hierarchy; the combination of administrative rules and regulations, and faculty autonomy; a high degree of specialization; a stable staff composition (due to tenure); close supervision; a high level of participation in decision-making; a strong power level of the faculty; rewards and recognition geared toward competition instead of collaboration; high interdependence; and role conflict (pp. 110-114). Gmelch and Carroll used the Thomas and Kilman (1974)

approach to see how chairs respond to this conflict. They identified five responses: avoiding, competing, collaborating, accommodating, and compromising; the last was considered the most ideal response (p. 115). In reality, however, the authors argued that chairs "use a blend of all five response styles" (p. 115), thus using a contingency approach of choosing the best style to fit the conflict.

Creswell et al. (1980) looked specifically at management tasks. Using Biglan's (1973a) three-dimensional knowledge classification of hard/soft, pure/applied, and life/nonlife systems, Creswell et al. showed a relationship between the disciplinary characterization of the department and differences in training needs of the chair (pp. 232-235). Among the most significant results the researchers mentioned is that chairs in the hard, applied, and life areas perceived a greater need for development in assessing relationships among department personnel than did chairs in the soft, nonapplied, and nonlife areas. In contrast, chairs in the soft, pure, nonlife areas saw a greater need for development in surveying community needs and interests concerning curriculum and service than did chairs in the hard, applied, and life areas. In addition, chairs in the soft areas recognized a greater need for development in soliciting grants and outside funds for the department than did chairs in the hard areas. Finally, chairs in the applied areas had the idea that they needed more professional development in analyzing salary and benefit expenditures for nonacademic staff than did chairs in the pure areas.

However, in my opinion the study is not very convincing. The authors used a rather vague scale (that is, none, some, and considerable) to have respondents answer the question concerning the management tasks on which they thought they most needed training. The top four results as presented by the authors were: (a) preparing and

monitoring a system for all departmental management (14.4%), (b) utilizing computer services for departmental management (25.5 %), (c) soliciting grants and outside funds for the department (25.9%), and (d) motivating faculty and staff (28.1%). The authors focused only on these results, they ignored the original statistics, which indicated that 45% or more of the respondents saw no need for professional development in the 14 tasks included in the survey. This is a substantial percentage that should have been addressed in the results section of the study. There could be several reasons for this outcome. First of all, survey respondents might have been more experienced chairs who knew how to perform these management tasks. Second, chairs might struggle with many management tasks, just not with the ones that were mentioned in the survey. The researchers might not have chosen the most important tasks. Or third, chairs might struggle with these management tasks but not feel the need or willingness to participate in professional development programs. Furthermore, the authors did not define the term *professional development*; chairs could have interpreted this term in many ways, ranging from specific formal training in a class format to one-on-one informal mentoring. Therefore, their interpretation could have influenced the outcome of the study because chairs are inclined to be more positive or negative toward particular forms of professional development. That is not to say that I believe that needs do not differ, but I agree with Seagren et al. (1993), who pointed out that there is "a need for more systematic research into how chairs from different disciplines perceive the challenges of their position" (p. 69).

In conclusion, the word *professional development* often is used indeterminately in the literature focusing on learning needs of chairs. Researchers have claimed that chairs need professional development, without specifying what they actually mean by the term.

Without being specific, it is not possible to verify what it is that chairs think they need in terms of learning or training and in what form they would like to see it offered. Thus, we need to know more specifically what kinds of knowledge a chair needs and what kind of knowledge he or she uses. As several scholars (e.g., Gmelch & Miskin, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) have argued that chairs need to learn through training, we need a clearer picture of whether training is the most effective way of transferring or learning the knowledge and skills expected of chairs.

Macro Demographic, Societal, Economic, Global,
and Technological Challenges

In older books (e.g., Bennett, 1983; Bennett & Figuli, 1990; Booth, 1982; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1992), macro demographic, societal, economic, and global challenges were not discussed at all, presumably because the environment of the chair was still considered stable. As a beginning chair, one was expected to learn how to work on, for example, budget and faculty issues -- tasks that, apart from some changes in institutional policy, fluctuated only minimally. As such, the skills a chair needed were static as well; once one learned the "chair repertoire," it was mostly a matter of "doing the job."

In most recent books (e.g., Hecht et al., 1999) there has been a shift in focus. Although the macro challenges are reviewed only briefly if at all, often in the introduction sections to justify the rationale of studying chairs, scholars have realized that the department and thus the chair's roles are changing (Lucas, 1994; Lucas & Associates, 2000; Walvoord et al., 2000). The environment no longer is viewed as a static entity, nor is it an option not to deal with external changes and developments. The department is

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involved in a dynamic relationship with the environment. The conclusion is clear: Chairs play a pivotal role in change. However, seldom is a direct and clear link made between these external challenges and the chair's practice. The implications of these challenges for the chair's activities and development and that of the department are not explained. An exception to this is Lucas (1994; Lucas & Associates, 2000) who focused in her books on "the key role that department chairs must play in shaping the future of higher education" (Lucas & Associates, 2000, p. xi). In the 2000 book, the authors took the macro developments, in particular the shift from teaching to (student) learning in terms of curriculum and teaching, as a starting point for changing the traditional department-chair role to a team-leader role focused on collaborative change. In general, however, no studies have focused on how chairs cope with some of these macro challenges, that is, how these changes are reflected in how chairs act on and react to a given situation (of these challenges), especially over time. In addition, it would be helpful to know what resources the chair uses to handle macro challenges in his or her day-to-day life.

The Process and Content of Learning

The chair literature has shown repeatedly that chairs start their careers without sufficient administrative experience and preparation and then continue to perform their jobs without adequate follow-up training. According to the literature, institutions do not offer sufficient training, mentoring, or continuing leadership development programs (Gmelch, 2002), although some authors also have argued that the information that is offered through training often is not and cannot be put to use by the chairs (Booth, 1982, p. 29; Shtogren, 1978). Rapid changes in the demographic, economic, political, public,

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social, global, and technological domain have exacerbated the situation as chairs have had to fulfill an ever-expanding list of duties, responsibilities, and roles and have had to balance a growing number of stakeholders and interests (see Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1992). Therefore, it is surprising that the situation of what is considered insufficient and inadequate training for chairs has not changed dramatically over the years. Scholars and chairs agree that there is no effective preparation, training and education for chairs, and scholars have been calling for a radical new approach to leadership development for at least 20 years (e.g., Booth, 1982; Gmelch, 2002). So, why is it that nothing has changed? In reality, we know that chairs do handle new problems and cope with new challenges; thus, we have to assume that in some way they learn how to do this. But what is actually known about what and how chairs learn? How do they learn their job if not through training?

The general answer that the literature provides is that chairs learn on the job, through experience and by trial and error. One of the main frameworks that is being used to study new chairs is socialization theory. Chair socialization research has focused on the socialization process chairs experience. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) defined socialization as "the process by which one is taught and learns 'the ropes of a particular organizational role' in a specific work setting" (p. 211).

According to Bragg's (1980) study of 39 department chairs, the socialization needs of chairs varied considerably. Some chairs needed help in learning the political system of the university, whereas others wanted help in learning how best to handle interpersonal relations or in coping with management functions. So, how did the chairs learn what they needed to learn? Most chairs responded that they received assistance

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from the dean or the staff of the dean. Also, chairs considered the department secretary very helpful. In addition, one fourth of the new chairs regularly consulted with their predecessor. Only 25% did not receive any help at all.

Using Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) six tactical dimensions, Staton-Spicer and Spicer (1987) showed that the majority of the chair's socialization process is characterized as individual, informal, random, disjunctive, variable, and involving investiture processes (p. 46; see also Spicer & Staton, 1992). New chairs:

- receive individual socialization; "they are processed singly as opposed to a group" (Spicer & Staton, 1992, xvi).

- learn informally by trial and error, by doing it; they are not segregated from incumbents during a learning phase. "There is very little, if any, training required or offered to the new chair. The chair learns the role through on-the-job training, much of which is communication-oriented" (p. xvi).

- receive random socialization; that is, there are no clearly defined and sequenced steps that, when accomplished, lead to role competence; steps are unknown, ambiguous, or continually changing (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 241).

- "face a variable time period of learning; there is no fixed period of time after which the chair is considered to be socialized" (Spicer & Staton, 1992, p. xvii).

- are not often introduced to the job by the chair-in-place. Every chair needs to find out for him or herself what needs to be done.

- "are generally proclaimed to be positively useful to the university and are invested into their position" (Spicer & Staton, 1992, p. xvii). This way they receive positive reinforcement of their skills, values, and attitudes.

Staton-Spicer and Spicer (1987) looked at the communication strategies chairs used in the early stages of the organizational socialization process. The findings from this query are fourfold. The first strategy is informative communication focusing on task learning. Activities in this function include information seeking, information giving, eavesdropping, and using strategies for task accomplishment such as seeding, persevering, avoiding, and waiting. Another function is integrative communication focusing on interpersonal relations. Activities in this function include establishing new relationships, changing existing relationships, repairing relationships, receiving personal and private information, receiving excuses and accounts, displaying humor, and distancing. A third function is regulative communication focusing on assessing one's authority and power. Activities in this third function include muscle flexing, exerting role authority, delegating, presenting self-as-focal, and increasing credibility. The final function, innovative communication, includes activities that set the current chair apart from the previous chair, for example, in terms of initiating innovative projects or finding creative solutions/reactions.

The preceding study is one of the few that have shown which strategies chairs use in the learning process. In this case, chairs learned the culture of the organization and the chair's role through a socialization process. The presumed goal of this process is to smooth the relationship between the newcomer and the organization, and thus to create shared values and to embed recurrent practices (Knight & Trowler, 2001, p. 58). Like Staton-Spicer and Spicer, most scholars of socialization research have limited their studies to the entry or encounter stage and the adaptation stage. Seldom have researchers focused on what newcomers do after they are considered socialized, even though the

more recent dialectical view of socialization assumes that socialization is an ongoing process in which continuous negotiated interactions occur between newcomer and organization (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). In the present study, I looked at chairs who had at least one year of experience.

In another study, which I addressed in detail in the section on Challenges and Problems, Gmelch and Seedorf (1989) looked at the nine transitions new chairs need to make in the process from being a faculty member to becoming a chair. However, neither that study nor the follow-up study (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999) provided adequate information on *how* the chair is supposed to make these transitions. The main information these studies provided is that chairs need to be aware of these transitions and the fact that they are difficult to make. Furthermore, only a few chairs make the complete transition (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999, p. 6). But what are the costs for the chair involved, what mind-set is needed, and what personal and institutional strategies are helpful in making these transitions? Gmelch and Parkay offered some brief suggestions for how to support chairs in this transition when they addressed leadership training, skill development, mentoring, and time and stress management, but in general they did not give the "how" question the attention it deserves.

Booth's (1982) book is one of the few that has focused in detail on chair development. Booth addressed research studies on the learning and development of chairs and discussed programs used in practice. According to Booth, institutional orientation and development programs for chairs should be built on clarifying the four main role orientations of chairs (i.e., faculty, external, program, and management orientation) to diminish role conflict and ambiguity (p. 25-26). Another main goal of orientation and

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development programs is "to introduce chairs to a network of colleagues" (p. 26), thus

creating social capital.

Booth argued that one of the best strategies for educating chairs is to use the

experience of more experienced chairs, for example, by doing case studies of dilemmas

that new chairs have to struggle with. The program itself could consist of a variety of

strategies and resources such as reading materials, short meetings with experienced

chairs, formal and informal work with consultants and experienced chairs, extensive

"training" in technical and leadership skills, or continuing developmental work, a choice

that is contingent on the needs of the chairs (pp. 3, 41). In addition, meetings between

chairs and administrators could be helpful in clarifying and assessing institutional and

departmental missions. In general, in Booth's opinion, institutional and internal peer

learning has at least two advantages to offer. First, as the chairs and/or the administration

define the agenda and the goal of the program, there is a greater likelihood of addressing

the specific needs of the people present, taking into account institutional, departmental,

and disciplinary characteristics. Second, institutional peer learning often is less costly

than external (off-campus) programs or programs that require external consultants.

On the other hand, external programs, especially programs focused on disciplinary

chair training, can be very helpful. The Association of Departments of English (ADE),

for example, organizes summer institutes that deal with daily management issues.

Research has indicated that a department's disciplinary affiliation (Biglan, 1973a) is

correlated to its chair's training needs (Creswell et al., 1980) and role behavior (Smart &

Elton, 1976). Programs that take into account the specific problems, dilemmas, and

priorities of department chairs in particular disciplines have been proven effective

(Booth, 1982). The benefits of other external programs such as the Department Chair Program of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) and the American Council on Education's Leadership Institute still need to be assessed. In any case, as Booth (1982) argued, "chairs and faculty remain suspicious of external attempts to provide education or training" because they dislike and distrust standard management systems (p. 29).

In conclusion, one of the best training methods for department chairs involves having chairs work together in group settings, using resources that will be accepted because they have been adapted to the culture of chairs, all geared toward collaboration instead of instruction (in Booth, 1982, p. 29; Shtogren, 1978, p. 193). However, even though the design of a training and development program can be well thought through, Booth warned that the program "may not have an immediate payoff in changed [chair] behavior, but it does give chairs a new sense that they are recognized as important to the institution and that others have similar problems. This in itself is a significant outcome" (p. 41). One of the major findings of Booth's research, which has largely been ignored in later studies, is that chairs lack role models in terms of successful contacts with faculty or administrators and of developing a successful professional identity as chair and scholar.

The conclusion we can draw from this review of literature on chair learning is that, apart from studies on the socialization process, no significant research has been conducted on how chairs actually learn and which strategies and resources they use to handle problems in daily life, such as identity dilemmas, not taking into account specific training settings. More specifically, except for Booth (1982), few scholars have directly related the development and learning of chairs to changes in their professional identity.

As Lave and Wenger (1993) argued, "learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon" (p. 115). After all, becoming and being a chair, which has been described as making metamorphic changes from faculty member to chair (see Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989), is more than just taking on a temporary role or doing temporary tasks; it is life-changing.

In addition, socialization researchers have not specifically looked at why chairs act as they do, nor how they act on and react to *specific* challenges. Finally, although the chair literature has acknowledged that relationships with peers, mentors, and networks at work are important resources that chairs can mobilize for learning, no attention has been given to the specific situation or context of how and when a person mobilizes these relational resources.

Cultures

Introduction

Chairs do not live or act in a vacuum. They are co-creators of and participants in several cultures, namely, the general culture of an educational organization, the culture of a particular (type of) institution, the culture of the academic profession, the disciplinary culture, and the departmental culture.

For the chair these cultures are not discrete entities but part of a kaleidoscopic pattern in which the elements are complex and variable. Cultures have been described, defined, and constructed by many authors (e.g., Bergquist, 1992; Peterson & Spencer, 1990/2000; Tierney, 1988, 1990). Even though their definitions have differed in many ways, most of the authors have agreed that culture is not a simple -- that is, singular --

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construct but refers to multiple elements. For example, Tierney (1988) included environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership as the essential concepts in the construct of culture. Other scholars have focused their definitions of culture on norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions (e.g., Kuh & Whitt, 1988/2000).

Furthermore, not all cultures are equally relevant to or influential on chairs. A distinction needs to be made between more durable and remote cultures (such as the macro organizational culture and [inter-] national disciplinary culture) and the more local culture of a specific department. A chair can be more influential on and deeply influenced by some cultures than others. However, those cultures over which the chair has less influence can have a profound influence on him or her (for example, the professional culture).

If we understand the cultures in which the chair acts and learns, we should be better able to understand the meaning of a chair's identities and his or her use of resources *in situ*. Therefore, in the following pages, I discuss the current knowledge about the various cultures in which the chair is embedded and that, thus influence his or her work. I start with the departmental culture because this is the most local culture for the chair; next, I discuss the professional, institutional, organizational, and disciplinary cultures.

Departmental Culture

The departmental culture is especially relevant to the chair. It is the culture with which the chair interacts most directly. But what is the culture of a department?

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Departmental culture is a multi-dimensional construct. Departments are the locations where institutional, organizational, disciplinary, and professional cultures intersect (Austin, 1994, p. 51; 1996, p. 60), meaning, that essential elements of these four cultures are part of and influence the departmental culture. Each department, however, has its own interpretation and use of these cultures, co-creating departmental values, norms, and beliefs.

The culture of a department, moreover, possesses elements that are specific to that particular department because they are based on the department's characteristics. The department can be characterized in terms of organizational-structural uniqueness and personal-relational uniqueness. Elements of organizational-structural uniqueness are the department's size, stability, mission (research, teaching, service), disciplinary typology (for example, soft or hard), history, governance structure, management culture, rules/regulations/policies, physical environment, and funding sources (Austin, 1994, 1996; Seedorf, 1990, p. 60). The department's personal-relational uniqueness refers to the characteristics of faculty and students, the department's relationship to other units, and the leadership style of the chairperson (Austin, 1994, 1996). Again, these characteristics influence departmental values, norms, and beliefs, which evolve over the years.

In sum, the departmental culture is made up of the department's unique characteristics on the one hand, and the department as an intersection of institutional, organizational, disciplinary and professional cultures on the other. As has been found in research on college presidents (Cohen & March, 1974), places of ambiguity, such as at the boundaries of an organization, are particularly important for sense-making (Weick, 1995). Therefore, chairs, who are situated at the boundaries of the department (linking the

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department with the rest of the institution and with external constituencies), are in a suitable position to create meaning for themselves and for others. Sense-making, which is an aspect of learning in and of itself, influences what chairs experience as an identity problem and how they solve it by taking specific actions.

Academic Professional Culture

Most academics agree that the academic professional culture comprises at least the following five main values: collegiality, autonomy, academic freedom, specialization, and reason as the basis for knowledge construction (e.g., Kuh & Whitt, 2000; Walvoord et al., 2000). In addition, some scholars include the values of service and mentoring (Walvoord et al., 2000) and research as the top priority of higher education as shared values in academe. The academic professional culture crosses over departmental, institutional, and disciplinary boundaries. I will not go into detail here about the meaning of these various concepts. It is important to note, however, that there are differences in interpretations of these concepts, representing different value systems and influencing behavior accordingly. These differences often lead to conflict among faculty; although there is no research on this topic, we can safely assume that chairs also experience such conflict.

Institutional Culture

The culture of an institution can be said to have two dimensions (Austin, 1990, p. 67). One dimension concerns the commonality of certain types of institutions. The various types of institutions, varying from a community college, research university,

liberal arts college, comprehensive institution, or for-profit university to a land-grant university, often have different missions and priorities when it comes to teaching, research, service and outreach. In addition, the type of institution also influences the level of influence different (sub)cultures may have within the institution. For example, in a research university the various disciplinary (sub)cultures often overrule the institutional culture's influence (Austin, 1996, p. 60). This might have consequences for faculty members' commitment to the institution, such as the willingness of a faculty member to become chair, but also for the chair's authority within the department.

The second dimension concerns the difference between institutions and focuses on individual characteristics. Elements of an institutional culture are its mission, governance system, organizational structure, curricular structure, leadership style of main administrators (provost and president), physical environment, size, location, history, student body, student-faculty relations, and faculty characteristics (Austin, 1990, 1994, 1996). The pattern that these variables create gives the institution its unique culture. Of these elements the institutional mission is of foremost importance as it informs policy issues around "recruitment processes, socialization of new faculty, tasks faculty must fulfill, and performance standards" (Austin, 1990, p. 66). How a chair "translates" the institutional mission into departmental policies, values, priorities and (tacit) expectations is partly to his or her choosing because he or she is both subject to and co-creator of the institutional culture.

Both dimensions of an institutional culture affect the chair (Seagren et al., 1993). First of all, the characteristics of an institution influence how departments are structured (Murray, 1964; Seagren et al., 1993, p. 62) and therefore what is expected of chairs

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(Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993, p. 63). For example, as community colleges are often more bureaucratically managed than prestigious research universities, chairs in community colleges are expected to be more problem-focused; less value is placed on collegial decision-making. Second, chairs in various types of institutions need different training and development as they have diverse needs because of different expectations. Training and development programs should reflect "both core attributes and conditions specific to institutions" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 66). For example, especially chairs in competitive research-intensive institutions need to learn how to handle, juggle, and acquire (multiple) sources of outside funding (grants, development, industry contracts), whereas chairs in community colleges often are involved in linking students to employers in the region by, among other things, creating a fitting curriculum.

As the present study was limited to one institution, typological commonalities of an institutional culture were less relevant than the individual characteristics of the particular institution in this study, University X. Relevant characteristics will be described as part of the analysis and the introduction to the chairs and their context in Chapter 5.

Organizational Cultures

Institutions of higher education can be described in various ways, depending on the framework one uses. Because they are part of the institution, this is equally true for the departments. A framework is a perspective of how educational units work; it helps one to make sense of the world and in this way to inform actions in practice.

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The frameworks that have dominated discussions of culture are the collegial culture (predominantly used to describe the traditional faculty culture), the bureaucratic and managerial culture (predominantly used to describe the administrative culture within academe), the political culture, and the educational organization as an "organized anarchy." The traditional collegial culture, stemming from a mix of British and German models of higher education (Bergquist, 1992, p. 18), values support for colleagues, peer evaluations (for example, in tenure decisions), diversity of perspectives, faculty governance, autonomy of work, academic freedom, interdependence, and collaboration. The collegial culture is part of a normative organizational structure that "rel[ies] on referent and expert power . . . that produces committed participants," whose intrinsic motivation for autonomy and shared values is often more important than the extrinsic motivation of financial rewards (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 14). Even within this one culture, some concepts might conflict with one another, for example autonomy and collaboration. It is therefore no surprise that research has indicated that few pure collegial departments exist (Massy, Wilger, & Colbeck, 1994).

A second culture, often described as the opposite of the collegial culture, is the bureaucratic and managerial culture. This culture, originating from the classical management theory of, for example Fayol (see Morgan, 1997, p. 18), values central authority, clear power and authority lines, rational decision-making, an independent reward system, standardized procedures, and division of tasks; it is focused on control.

A culture that seems to describe a middle road between collegial and bureaucratic/managerial cultures is the professional bureaucracy or, in the case of universities, academic bureaucracy. On the one hand, the professional or academic

bureaucracy resembles a bureaucratic model, for example, in its standardized procedures for day-to-day operations, its formal policies and regulations, and its bureaucratic and linear authority relations (for example, chair, dean, and provost). On the other hand, professional bureaucracies often have a flat and decentralized structure (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 66), with the bottom layer, that is, the operating core or faculty in the departments, being the place where the majority of the decisions are made. The power from the hierarchical (role) structure, although present, is relatively weak. This assertion is reinforced by the fact that professional authority is granted on the basis of specialized expertise (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 52). In reality, therefore, the sources of authority within the professional bureaucracy differ to the extent that there are actually two hierarchies: "*one democratic and bottom up for the professionals, and a second machine bureaucratic and top down for the support staff*" (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 57).

Due to the duality in structure, hierarchy, values, and power dynamic, conflict is a normal part of the professional bureaucracy. In general, conflict is aimed at achieving an appropriate balance between multiple forces. However, more and stronger external forces, such as federal and state governments demanding increased accountability for faculty work, quality of undergraduate education, and compliance with regulations, have been pushing institutions of higher education in the direction of bureaucratic and oftentimes entrepreneurial values.

In general, the collegial culture (predominantly used to describe the traditional faculty culture) and the bureaucratic/managerial culture (predominantly used to describe the administrative culture within academe) are the cultures that most strongly influence

chairs. After all, the chair's Janus position forces him or her to lead a double life as scholar as well as administrator. Nonetheless, other organizational frameworks might be relevant as well.

Besides describing departments in terms of a bureaucratic and collegial culture, we can view departments as political systems (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977)[1]. It is assumed that politics exist because "organizational actors have multiple conflicting values and objectives that are determined primarily by their self-interests" (Chaffee, 1983, p. 18). This diversity or dissensus, in interests/agendas, ideas, and opinions "creates a tension that needs to be resolved through political means" (Morgan, 1997, p. 160). Examples of political means or strategies are "push" strategies, such as delaying and withdrawing; "pull" strategies, such as rewarding, creating alliances, and forming interest groups; strategies of prevention, negotiation, and persuasion; and strategies for impression management, agenda setting, and networking (Seagren et al., 1993, pp. 37-43). These political means are especially relevant for professional bureaucracies because of their multiple and ambiguous power dynamics (see above). Because chairs are at the center of diverging opinions, between administrators and faculty as well as between the institution and external agencies, successful chairs need to understand "the workings of political processes" and be "skilled in their use" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 43).

Finally, the academic organization can be viewed as an "organized anarchy" (Cohen & March, 1974). Cohen and March (1986) have argued that an organized anarchy is founded on ambiguity of purpose and ambiguity of power. Institutions of higher education often have multiple and competing goals or missions. In addition, goals are

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[1] For a detailed discussion of departments as political entities, see Seagren, Creswell and Wheeler (1993, pp. 29-44).

unclear; for example, the mission of providing quality undergraduate education can have one meaning for an enrollment officer, but another meaning for a part-time faculty member. Power is distributed throughout the organization and is made up of different constellations of formal (role) power and informal (symbolic and professional) power. Therefore, it is difficult to say who actually is "in charge" and, thus, who decides. As Birnbaum (1989) described it, "an organized anarchy is a loosely coupled system in which individuals and subunits within the organization make essentially autonomous decisions. Institutional outcomes are a result of these only modestly interdependent activities and are often neither planned nor predictable" (p. 241).

Leadership in such an environment is very different from that in a collegial or bureaucratic setting (Baldridge et al., 1977, p. 8), especially in terms of decision-making. In a collegial setting decisions are made by consensus; in a bureaucratic setting, they are made through a rationally structured process eliminating alternatives. In an organized anarchy, on the other hand, decisions seem to "happen" rather than "being made" (Baldridge et al., 1977, p. 8), a way of decision-making that is referred to as garbage-can decision-making. Thus, an organized anarchy can be viewed as "sets of procedures through which organizational participants arrive at an interpretation of what they are doing and what they have done while doing it" (Cohen & March, 1974, p. 81). Although Cohen and March's original concept of an organized anarchy was described in their book on president leadership (1974), the ideas of ambiguity of purpose and power, and garbage-can decision-making, are also relevant in explaining the identity, functioning, and behavior of academic chairpersons.

It is probably not surprising that, in practice, departments and chairs do not think or act in one single frame or culture (Booth, 1982, p. 7; Toombs & Escala, 1987). As Walvoord et al. (2000), agreeing with Bolman and Deal (1997, pp. 115-116) and Hobbs (1971), argued "groups may require different forms of structure for different tasks or phases of a task. For example, curricular decisions may be made in the collegial mode, while tenure decisions are made by the oligarchy" (p. 49). Moreover, multiple frames can be at work simultaneously. As Knight and Trowler (2001) argued, the conflicts and clashes that arise out of this multitude of values, practices, and assumptions "are inevitable and can be a source of dynamism and learning within the system . . . and so should not be considered aberrant and dysfunctional, as functional theory would have it" (p. 58). In social practice theory, conflict and clashes between the public and durable culture on the one hand, and the personal and malleable situation on the other are not only considered normal but also a phenomenon that takes place every day. This tension is resolved, at least temporarily, by the "person-acting," until changes in the context demand new resolutions.

Knight and Trowler (2001) went on to say that the "multiplicity of discourses with plurivocal meanings" (p. 59), an assumed characteristic of universities, implies that leaders "do not have an unchallenged privileged position in meaning construction and organizational learning" (p. 59). Nonetheless, "local leaders have potential advantages over institutional leaders deriving from their intimate connection to ground-level, meaning-creation systems" (p. 59). Chairs, who can be said to be the local leaders, therefore, seem to be most suited for learning in social practice as they are in the midst of

conflicting constituencies, interests, and values and are situated in the center of the "web of localized meaning" (Knight & Trowler, 2001, p. 59).

Disciplinary culture

Another important factor that influences the behavior of a chair is the culture of the chair's discipline, which usually coincides with the main discipline of the department or school. Chairs have been socialized into a discipline, beginning from graduate school and continuing through their faculty careers; often, they have had 16 years of socialization before becoming chairs (Gmelch, 2002, p. 8). Socialization into a particular discipline involves learning the shared and accepted values, research questions, research paradigm (what is considered knowledge), codes of conduct, and methodologies (how one is expected to acquire that knowledge).

Disciplines are the cornerstones of academic departments and academic life, providing a sense of professional identity and membership (Clark, 1987) on the basis of specialization (Walvoord et al., 2000, p. 25). In addition, the discipline is one of the most important bridges between the department and the external world. On the one hand, the discipline is a specific local culture because there is only one department representing this discipline within a single institution. On the other hand, the discipline has a national and international nature due to specialized associations, conferences, and publications.

One of the often-referenced categorizations of disciplines is that of Biglan (1973a), who divided disciplinary affiliation into eight categories on the basis of three dimensions: hard versus soft (based on paradigmatic consensus), pure versus applied (based on practical applicability for concrete problems), and life versus nonlife systems

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(based on focus on organic systems). As Biglan concluded, this categorization confirms a connection between academic fields and cognitive and perceptual processes (p. 202). In practice, this means that faculty members and chairs from different disciplines pay differential attention to certain aspects of their jobs, like teaching and learning (Biglan, 1973b), but also that they differ in their approaches to acquiring new knowledge in these areas. One can hypothesize that this is also true with regard to attention to and the learning of management tasks. It is likely that a chair can more easily deal with those problems that have similarities or are connected to aspects of his or her disciplinary or cognitive processes. For example, one can expect a chair in economics to have some basic understanding of the yearly changes in departmental budgets. Also, a social science chair who specializes in group dynamics and has relevant experience as a consultant in this area can be expected to handle interpersonal conflict within the department more easily than someone, say, from mathematics. I was interested in how chairs understand their job in terms of role identity, and I thought that the disciplinary affiliation of the chair might be a major variable in the process (style) and content of learning to be a chair. Therefore, I included chairs from various disciplines in my sample. Two of the interviewees for this study were chairs of departments, whereas the other two were directors of professional schools. The professional schools' connection with the community (professionals, clients) and accrediting bodies, and the schools' multiple (outreach) programs that require academic staff and leadership, probably influence how the directors construct their role identities and their world.

Biglan's categorization has been used as the basis for further research on the relationship between the chair's discipline and the department's goal orientation (Smart

& Elton, 1975), goal priorities (Smart & McLaughlin, 1974), the chair's training needs (Creswell et al., 1980), and the chair's administrative role behaviors (Smart & Elton, 1976). These studies on chairs have confirmed the results from Biglan's study, among other things, on the relationship between the discipline dimension of faculty and their social connectedness and their commitment to teaching, research, and service (Biglan, 1973b). For example, Smart and Elton (1976) found that chairs in so-called "hard" departments spend more time in their role as researcher than do chairs in departments labeled "soft." In contrast, chairs in "soft" departments spend more time in their instructional role. Furthermore, chairs from "pure" departments spend more time in their faculty role and less time in their role of coordinator. Chairs in "life systems" departments spend more time in role of researcher than those in nonlife systems. These differences generally have been attributed to different socialization processes of faculty (Biglan, 1973b; Smart & Elton, 1976), and similar outcomes have been observed when looking at departmental goals in various disciplines (Smart & Elton, 1975). Although I am not claiming that these results are invalid, I still question Smart and Elton's (1976) choice of categories for chairs' roles. They distinguished four categories of chairs' work, namely, faculty role, coordinator role, research role, and instructional role. In looking at the descriptions of each of these roles, we see that teaching (one's own students) is part of the instructional role, whereas (own) research is not part of the research role or of any other role mentioned. Including all four roles as part of the "administrative" role, with the sole exception of the chair's own research, is somewhat confusing. Does this mean that research is or should not be part of the administrative role, or does it mean that chairs do not have time left to spend on research? Or is the term *administrative role* badly chosen?

In each case, later researchers (e.g., Gmelch & Miskin, 1995a, 1995b) more clearly distinguished among the four main roles of the chair, namely, the role of scholar (teaching and research of the chair in his or her faculty position), faculty developer, manager, and leader; the last three roles are specific to the chair's job.

This necessity for a clear distinction among chairs' roles is relevant because it casts a different light on arguments for chairs' training needs (e.g., Creswell et al., 1980). One of the suggestions emerging from Smart and Elton's (1976) research is that chairs should receive training "in those responsibilities on which participants spend a disproportionately large amount of time" (p. 57). They gave the example of chairs of soft disciplines, who, as Smart and Elton found, spend more time in their instructional role and, thus, should be given training in teaching and advising activities. In contrast, chairs in hard departments, the authors argued, should be given training in obtaining grants, something with which they have experience already due to their socialization from graduate school onwards. Smart and Elton's reasoning behind their advice was that training should match the distinctive demands and roles of specific disciplines. In my opinion, providing chairs who already spend a large amount of time on soliciting grants with training in this subject will only increase the time spent on this aspect of their job. It will certainly not improve their performance of tasks they do not do so well.

So, a contrary approach would be to offer chairs training in those areas that are problematic for them. This notion was confirmed in the study by Creswell et al. (1980), who found a relationship between the disciplinary characterization of the department and the chair's training needs (for a brief description of the results of this study, see the section on Chairs' Daily Tasks in this chapter). In their study, chairs claimed a need for

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training on those aspects of their job that were not part of the chairs' disciplinary socialization in graduate education (Creswell et al., 1980, p. 236). For example, in contrast to what Smart and Elton (1976) reasoned, chairs in the soft area perceived a greater need for development in soliciting grants and outside funds for the department than did chairs in the hard area (Creswell et al., 1980). However, we do not know whether chairs also actually do something about their need for training in these areas, in terms of time spent on doing certain special or extra learning activities. It would, therefore, be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study to determine whether and how chairs follow up on their need for training and learning.

In summary, it was important to include disciplinary culture in this study because differences in learning might exist between chairs from different disciplines. The disciplinary culture has an important effect on the general behavior and beliefs of chairs because (a) it is the culture of which the faculty has been a member for a long time (longer than the institutional or professional culture), and (b) it is a culture that has a long history in and of itself. Therefore, its values and traditions translated into behavior and beliefs (for example, the importance of and commitment to certain aspects of the job of chair) change only slowly.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the knowledge of chairs as gleaned from empirical studies and experience-based or anecdotal essays. In particular, I looked critically at chairs' everyday life and practice in terms of tasks, roles, role conflict and ambiguity, and power. As we have seen, chairs' roles and tasks change frequently as a reflection of developments and trends in higher education. Issues of role conflict, role ambiguity, and

power are part of chairs' experience. Scholars have recognized the existence of role problems and have adviced chairs to deal with them. However, they have not inquired into how chairs do, in fact, cope or might cope with these problems. Merely knowing that role conflict is part of the job does not solve the problem in itself, which is why experienced chairs also must continue to manage role conflict.

In this section, I also argued that generic typologies, classifications, and professional advice are of limited value for learning how to be a chair and developing a chair identity. Chairs are part of different contexts (for example, department, faculty, resources), have to deal with different problems, have different priorities, have different attitudes toward the chair job, and have different personalities and professional identities. We need to realize the contingent, contextual, and situated nature of chair roles, something that can help us better understand chairs' identity and behavior.

In principle, all the elements of chairs' practice are relevant in this study to the extent that the way chairs construct their roles, tasks, and priorities, and how they experience role conflict, ambiguity, and power, might influence how they understand their job in terms of role identity and how they act on new problems.

Furthermore, I looked at the chairs' problems in terms of personal socialization challenges, problems that originate in daily tasks, and macro challenges that affect institutions of higher education in general. The literature has shown repeatedly that new chairs must cope with numerous professional and personal challenges that originate in the differences in work cultures between that of the faculty member and that of the department chair. In this study, I did not focus specifically on the socialization process. However, by including both newcomers and more experienced chairs in my sample, it

could be seen whether the chair's socialization process played a role in how the individual approached a problem and its solution. Based on the research (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999), I presume that the completeness or phase of the chair's transition will influence his or her "openness" to other problems and how to handle them.

We do know quite a lot about the kinds of problems chairs have to deal with that originate from daily tasks. We also know that chairs often feel unprepared for almost all aspects of their daily job (Gmelch & Miskin, 1995a, p. 7). On the other hand, few studies have focused on the implications of macro developments in higher education for the chair's activities and those of the department.

I also reviewed the literature on the process and content of chairs' learning. I concluded that, apart from that on the socialization process, no significant research has been conducted on how chairs actually learn to be chairs and which strategies and resources they use to handle dilemmas of identity in daily life. More specifically, except for Booth (1982), few scholars have directly related the development and learning of chairs with changes in their professional identity. As Lave and Wenger (1993) argued, "learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon" (p. 115). After all, becoming and being a chair, which has been described as making metamorphic changes from faculty member to chair (see Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989), is more than just taking on a temporary role or doing temporary tasks; it is life-changing.

Although the chair literature acknowledges that relationships with peers, mentors, and networks at work are important resources that chairs can mobilize for learning, no attention has been paid to the specific situation or context of how and when a person

mobilizes these relational resources. In addition, studies on professional development of chairs have had ambiguous results because neither researchers nor chairs have clarified what kind of knowledge chairs actually use, the kind of knowledge they need, and how learning or transfer of this knowledge and these skills needs to take place.

Finally, I focused on the cultures in which chairs are situated and that influence their work. As we have seen, chairs, as members of the academic organization, are co-creators of and participants in several cultures, namely, the general culture of an educational organization, the culture of a particular (type of) institution, the culture of the academic profession, the disciplinary culture, and the departmental culture. However, not all cultures are equally relevant to or equally influential on chairs. Furthermore, an individual chair can have a major influence on the local department culture but has less effect on the disciplinary culture. Nonetheless, the latter has a profound influence on the chair and how he or she constructs the academic world. Therefore, I included chairs from various disciplines in my sample. If we understand the cultures in which the chair acts and learns, we should be better able to understand the meaning of a chair's identity constructions and his or her use of resources *in situ*.

Finally, the collegial culture and the bureaucratic/managerial culture, which are most often linked to the traditional faculty culture and the administrative culture respectively, might be the cultures that heavily influence chairs' identity dilemmas. After all, the chair's Janus position forces him or her to lead a double life as scholar as well as administrator.

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CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK: AN EXPLANATION

OF THE MAIN CONCEPTS FOR THIS STUDY

Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the framework for this study was based on a research

perspective focused on individual practice in a social and societal/historical setting. I also

mentioned that representatives from multiple theoretical traditions, such as critical

psychology, ecological psychology, cognitive anthropology, sociocultural psychology,

activity theory, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology (Chaiklin, 1993; Lave, 1993)

have used this perspective. Numerous key terms and models have been associated with

this perspective, one of which is *social practice*. Other theoretical models that are

associated with a practice perspective are situated activity or action, situated learning,

situated experience, community of practice, community of learners, cognition in practice,

cultural learning, distributed cognition, and some forms of organizational learning, such

as knowledge management and knowledge creation. Furthermore, within the various

traditions, different key terms are used for similar concepts such as agent or subject.

How can we make sense of all this diversity? To let the reader know more

precisely how this perspective informed my study, I go into a bit more detail about what

is meant by the term *social practice*. In particular, I look at the three basic elements the

various theories mentioned above have in common, as well as how they differ. I show

that the literature using a research perspective focused on individual practice in a social

and societal/historical setting, due to its situated nature, is too diverse and unique to make

easy generalizations possible. In particular, the results or outcomes of empirical studies were too context-specific to use to direct my own research. However, the framework for this study has the basic model of social practice (Figure 1) in common with other models and theories.

In addition, I discuss a taxonomy of this literature to better understand what is and what is not still part of the social practice perspective, and how this influences the diversity in terminology. Finally, I end this chapter by providing my working model of social practice (Figure 2), which is a schematic overview of the relevant elements for the practice of chairs from Chapters 2 and 3. The working model guided the collection and analysis of data in this study.

What Do We Mean by the Term Social Practice?

I chose to use the term *social practice* in this study because it best reflects the interdependent relationship among the elements of agent, society, culture, practice, action, structure, and everyday life (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 50). Nonetheless, the theories and models of social practice differ in at least three respects.

Even though the theories and models all include elements like agent, practice, and context, scholars have defined or constructed the individual elements differently. For example, some theories define an agent as a single person, whereas other theories view nonhuman elements as agents as well (in the next section I discuss my own conceptualization of an agent). In addition, the interrelationships between and among these elements differ in various theories and frameworks. In activity theory, for example, single actions always are embedded in larger structures of activity and history

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(Engeström, 1987, 1993). Finally, it can be said that different scholars have placed a major focus on different elements or their relationships. As such, some models show a greater focus on, for example, agent, activity, culture, or history. This is not to say that they do not focus on the other elements at all; they do, just to a lesser extent or on a different level. For example, in Wertsch, Del Rio, and Alvarez's (1995) perspective of sociocultural psychology, historical developments are less determinative for socio-cultural mediated action than in other perspectives, such as Engeström's (1987, 1993) activity theory. In conclusion, it is no surprise that, due to the various differences in meaning, the terminology scholars have used differs as well. For example, instead of the term *agent*, the words *person, actor, individual,* and *subject* also are used; instead of the term *practice,* the words *activity, praxis, action, interaction,* and *experience* also are used; and instead of the term *context,* the words *situation, system, structure, world,* and *social forces* also are used (Ortner, 1984, pp. 144, 151-152).

Realizing that I cannot do justice to all the various viewpoints, in the following paragraphs I try, nonetheless, to convey to the reader what can be considered the most basic concepts, namely, agent, practice, and context, and show some of their complexity and variation.

The term *social practice* is not a fantasy name; it is an existing theoretical tradition. Social practice, especially the nature of social practice, is an existing point of debate within practice theory, with "roots in the work of Marx, Bourdieu (1977), Sahlins (e.g., 1981), and Giddens (1979)" (Lave, 1988, p. 15), which "seek to explain relations between human action and the social or cultural system at the level of everyday activities in culturally organized settings" (Lave, 1988, p. 14).

I also chose to use the term *social practice* out of convenience. In practice, as one might imagine, it is impossible to keep referring to "a research perspective focused on individual practice in a social and societal/historical setting." I needed a simple term, in order to cut through the numerous theories, models, and terminologies that, in one way or another, could be described as studying similar elements.

Basic Elements of Social Practice and Their Interrelationship

Introduction

In this section I focus on the meanings of the basic elements in the social practice framework, namely, agent, practice, and context (see Figure 1). At the same time, I show how these elements are interrelated.

It is difficult to discuss the three elements of social practice in a neat and orderly fashion, as if they were separate entities. It is not that we cannot distinguish between the elements. Indeed, it is necessary to do so as such an analysis forms one of the main foundations on which this perspective is built. However, one of the main assumptions underlying this perspective and that forms the base of Giddens's (1979) structuration theory is that "structure is both input to and output of human actions" (Wenger, 1998b, p. 281). Therefore, structure, person, and activity constitute one another (Bauman, 1973; Bourdieu, 1977; Lave, 1993, p. 7; Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 50; Ortner, 1984).

In addition, I discuss the main effect of the interdependent relationship among agent, practice, and context, namely, the transformation or change of the identities of agents (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 47).

Agent/Actor

The agent or actor is the "acting unit" (Ortner, 1984, p. 149) participating in practice, whether that is an actual individual or representatives of a particular type (for example, sailors) (Ortner, 1984, p. 149). To reinforce the notion that an actor exists and acts as part of a social world, researchers in general have not referred merely to "a person" as the unit of analysis but to a "person-in-action" or a "person-acting" (Lave, 1988). In this study, the four chairs were the persons-acting in their chair-practice.

To be a member or representative of a particular group or type, one does not necessarily have to be experienced in the activity or profession, that is, an "expert." Participants in practice also include newcomers, often described as apprentices (see, e.g., Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989, p. 32), which was also the case in this study.

Activity /Practice

Activity or practice is that in which agents (that is, representatives of a particular group, profession, or vocation) take part. Taking a dialectical viewpoint, we can say that, by participating in practice, we are part of a practice and co-create the practice. As Wenger (1998b) phrases it, "The concept of practice connotes doing, but not just doing in and of itself. It is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. In this sense, practice is always social practice" (p. 47). Because the actors or agents take part in practice, they are, therefore, called practitioners.

As stated before (see Framework in Chapter 1), for scholars of social practice, participation of an agent/actor in an activity or practice is a form of learning (e.g., Lave, 1993, pp. 5-6, 8). To distinguish this kind of learning from learning in a school or training setting, Brown et al. (1989) defined it as *authentic* activity because it is always "situated

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in the cultures in which they [the practitioners] work, within which they negotiate

meanings and construct understanding" (p. 35). Therefore, some scholars have

considered practitioners belonging to the same group or type to be part of a community-

of-practice (for example, Lave [1991] and Wenger [1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2002]).[2]

So, what sort of practice or action is meant when one is studying practice (Ortner,

1984, p. 149)? In general, practice could include all actions people take, but it is possible

to distinguish between two categories. One kind of study, which originated in Marxist

traditions, focuses more on practice in relationship to the product of the constraints and

burdens put forward by culture, context, and structure. Culture here is seen as a limiting

factor that "restricts and inhibits them [actors] from seeing, feeling, and doing" (Ortner,

1984, p. 152). Other studies have focused on practice in terms of a cooperative,

reciprocal, or exchange-based relationship between actor and social world. Culture and

structure here are seen as enhancing factors (Engeström & Cole, 1997, p. 308; Ortner,

1984, pp. 147, 149, 157). However, as several scholars correctly have pointed out, we

should not forget that a practice refers not only to what members of that practice *share* as

to "historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual

engagement in action" (Wenger, 1998b, p. 5), but also to that in which they *diverge*,

namely, the variations in interpreting, sense-making and attributing meaning to actions,

artifacts, and so on, which often lead to power struggles and conflict (Gherardi, Nicolini,

& Odella, 1998, p. 278).

Another point that needs to be clarified is the time period that is the focus of the

study of practice. Ortner (1984, p. 150) distinguished between "ad hoc decision making"

or "relatively short-term 'moves'" and more long-range "projects." However, I argue that

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[2] For a critique of this concept, see Conty and Willmott (2000) and Knight and Trowler (2001, p. 64).

practice can also be interpreted as discursive practice. In this study I focused on role-identity problems and solutions as constructed in the interviews. In addition, I looked at the cultural stories or interpretive resources "that people can draw upon to warrant or explain their activities and the activities of others" (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999, p. 226).

A final point I make in my attempt to give meaning to the element of action in this framework concerns the kinds of action that are most crucial in a study of practice. Ortner (1984) argued that studies of practice generally have "a view of action largely in terms of pragmatic choice and decision making, and/or active calculating and strategizing" (p. 150). In other words, actors are considered to behave as they do because of rational, pragmatic, self-interested motives (p. 151). However, Ortner claimed that "highly patterned and routinized behavior," characterized by little reflection, should also be part of the action that is being studied (p. 150), mainly because it implies unconscious behavior that is crucial in the continuation or reproduction of a certain practice. I agree with Ortner on this point but for a different reason. In a discourse study, the distinction between calculated, routinized, and unconscious linguistical actions is difficult, if not impossible, to make. But more important, the distinction is not relevant because the focus is on what people do with their text and talk, that is, the action orientation, and the significance and consequences of these constructions of reality.

Context /Situation

Context is the third element of the basic social practice model that is a point of fierce debate among scholars of social practice. In general terms, context is the historical,

social, economic, and political stage on and through which activity takes place. Context

must be conceived as a "product which is co-produced together with the activities it

supports: agents, objects, activities, and material and symbolical artifacts all constitute a

heterogeneous system that evolves over time" (Gherardi et al., 1998, p. 275).

Discussing how context "comes to be," Lave (1993) referred to a division in

standpoints in various research traditions, taking as a starting point either the macro

(historical/societal) structures or the more micro (relational) interactions. Activity theory

uses as a starting point the macro historical structures. In this tradition,

> any particular action is socially constituted, given meaning by its location in
> societally, historically generated systems of activity. Meaning is not created
> through individual intentions; it is mutually constituted in relations between
> activity systems and persons acting, and has a relational character. (Lave, 1993, p.
> 18)

Proponents of activity theory claim that "objective social structures exist" (p. 20).

From a phenomenological perspective, on the other hand, researchers start from micro

relational interactions. In this tradition, the ontological premise is that "situations are

constructed as people organize themselves to attend and give meaning to figural concerns

against the ground of ongoing social interaction" (Lave, 1993, p. 19). Proponents of the

phenomenological perspective claim that social structures exist only in "social-

interactional construction in situ" (p. 20).

However, the macro-micro dichotomy is not the only point of debate with regard

to the concept of context. Lave furthermore classified context into arena and setting.

Arena refers to "an identifiable durable framework of activity, with properties that

transcend the experience of individuals, exist prior to them, and are entirely beyond their

control" (Lave, 1986, p. 98). It is a public entity, which is economically, politically, and

socially organized (Lave, 1988, p. 151). On the other hand, setting is a "personally

ordered and edited version" of arena, as "context is experienced differently by different

individuals" (Lave, 1988, p. 151). Setting has everything to do with perception.

Engeström (1993) agreed with Lave that "arenas of our everyday life are usually

not *directly and visibly* molded by our actions. But they are constructed by humans, not

superhuman agents" (p. 66). He concluded that "context beyond our influence is fiction, a

fetish" (p. 66). I agree with Engeström, but my conclusion differs from his. I do believe

that arenas are constructed by humans. For example, laws and national policies (e.g., on

health care and education) have been developed by humans. These laws and policies play

a role in how people act; but in contrast, people have little direct influence on them. So,

we should distinguish between context that we can influence more directly through our

actions (setting) and context that we influence only indirectly (arena), for example, by

voting for a particular representative. I argue that arena and setting are points on a

continuum.

What does this philosophical discussion about context mean for the study of

department chairs? In this study, I limited my discussion of context to a focus on

organizational, disciplinary, professional, and institutional culture, practices, and

discourses. These four forms include particular historical (e.g., values and traditions),

social (e.g., behavior and dynamics), and political (e.g., governance and policy) aspects

that are considered relevant for an analysis of departments. More macro economic,

political, cultural, and social dimensions, such as national systems, were outside the

scope of this study.

It was not part of this study to answer definitively what context is, how and by whom it is constructed, or whether it exists outside of people. Nonetheless, I hope that the preceding discussion on the points of debate around context has made it clear that scholars using a social and societal/historical perspective on practice vary considerably in their conceptualization of context. There is no shared tradition that newcomers in this field can follow. It is up to the researcher to select a context appropriate for his or her study. In addition, the discussion again illustrates the inseparability of agent, activity, and context.

Identity

The main effect of the interdependent relationship among agent, practice, and context that is important for this study is the transformation or change in the identities of agents (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 47). Let me reiterate the conceptual definition of identity that I used in this study, as mentioned in Chapter 1, which is a definition used by identity theorists from the sociological strand of social psychology. Identity is a part of a self that is "not an autonomous psychological entity but . . . a multifaceted social construct that emerges from people's roles in society" (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995, p. 256), which "mediates the relationship between social structure and individual behavior" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 255).

This definition assumes that there is no longer one true nature of identity but multiple identities. Furthermore, this position does not assume that we can "discover" the identities. Instead, we construct and reconstruct our identities in interactions, including language interactions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 102). People claim certain versions of reality, the world, and their identity, which should be given preference above the

alternatives. But these constructions also depend on the requirements and conventions of the situation, context, culture, and time.

As such, identity is not an internal construct, belonging to one person, but a social construct based on interactions with communities, practices, and discourses. Nor is identity static; rather, it is continuously altered as we develop, change, and learn by being active and participating in daily life.

In social practice theories, changing one's "participation in settings of everyday life" (Lave, 1993, pp. 5-6) is viewed as learning. People learn by (re) negotiating and thus constructing the meaning of what they do and know. How chairs experience their job, how they interpret their position, what they understand about what they do and know, what they don't (want to) know or do—in other words, who they are— "all of these are neither simply individual choices nor simply the result of belonging to the social category" of chairs. Identity is "negotiated in the course of doing the job" (Wenger, 1998, p. 146). This also means that knowledge, experience, skills, and understanding "are in constant interaction" (Lave & Wenger, 1993, pp. 51-52).

Finally, the focus of this dissertation is on identity as represented by roles (e.g., Burke, 1980; Stryker, 1980; 1987), such as chair, administrator, faculty member. No role identity exists without a community and practice to which it is related. At the same time, the community and practice of chairs also are developing due to the transformations of the collective of individual chairs. As such, identity is a reproduction of the chair community and practice, while at the same time it co-produces or develops the community and practice.

How Do These Theories Differ? Differences in Agents or Subjects

Although the various theories have a basic theoretical model in common, they

have been used in studies in which diverse subjects or agents were investigated. Scholars

using a social practice framework have focused on a variety of subjects, such as

flutemakers (Cook & Yanow, 1993), midwives (Jordan, 1989), technicians (Barley &

Orr, 1997; Orr, 1990), participants in a Weight Watchers class (Lave, 1986, 1988),

shoppers (Lave, 1988), physicians (Engeström, 1990, 1993), laboratory scientists (Latour

& Woolgar, 1979), navy quartermasters (Hutchins, 1995), administrative employees

(Klimecki & Lassleben, 1998), and construction-site managers (Gherardi et al., 1998).

Thus, subjects were people at work (craftspeople, technicians, professionals,

administrators) and private people with a certain condition. In addition, scholars have

looked at how children develop and learn when growing up and in the classroom (Rogoff,

1990).

As can be expected, by using a social practice framework to study situated and

local experiences, the personal and/or professional characteristics of the agents; the kinds

of practice in which they participate; the social, cultural, and historical context in which

they function; and the problems they have to cope with vary enormously.

In conclusion, I argue that the generalizability of results and observations on the

work, action, and context of the agents in various studies (for example, the practice of

midwives, Jordan, 1989) to a study of the practice of chairs is severely limited and

debatable. However, it is not meant to be either.

Taxonomy of Social Practice Literature: Boundaries and Terminology

The literature on individual practice in a social and societal/historical setting, or social practice, as I have called it , is diverse, complex, fragmented, and ambiguous. Thus, it was necessary to create a personal taxonomy of the literature reviewed for this study that would make sense as a way to help me select relevant studies (boundaries) and facilitate the analysis of those studies.

I created two broad generalizing divisions in the writings on social practice that were not made explicit in the literature but, as the reader will see, are relevant in distinguishing ontological and epistemological differences in what it is that researchers of social practice actually study. This helped me decide what I would study and how (interview questions).

The first division is based on the theoretical traditions that form the background of this literature. Originally, this perspective grew out of developments in sociology/ anthropology and social psychology, which focus on social theory, and was used particularly by scholars interested in practice[3] (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Jordan, 1989; Lave, 1986, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Sahlins, 1981; Suchman, 1987). On the other hand, scholars of organizational learning also have used this perspective, with the goal to understand, and often the wish to improve, learning in organizations (e.g., Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Schön, 1974; Brown et al., 1989; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Cook & Brown, 1999; Cook & Yanow, 1993; Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Schön, 1983; Senge, 1990). In contrast to the second group, the first group looked at agents in all

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[3]For a detailed description of the disciplinary and historical background of this perspective, see Chaiklin (1993), Lave (1993), and Ortner (1984), as well as Lorenz (2001, pp. 314-319).

aspects of life (e.g., shoppers, Lave, 1988), not necessarily restricted to organizations.[4]

This division is important because it explains why scholars of organizational learning generally have used the term *learning*, whereas scholars of social theory have used the terms *practice, understanding,* and *participation* (Lave, 1993, p. 9) when referring to a similar notion, namely, how actors cope with new situations, new challenges, problems that arise, and so on, and how and what they learn in the process of doing so. Using a different terminology, scholars of organizational learning have tended to define learning in terms of the product of this process (the *knowledge*), whereas scholars of social theory have defined learning in terms of the process itself, that is, the practice of learning or *knowing*. However, lately, the two traditions have been growing closer together. This is due mainly to the bridging effect of the theories of knowledge management and, in particular, knowledge creation. Recently, this literature has been shifting its focus away from "performative or managerial issues," as was the case in mainstream knowledge literature, to "knowledge in action" (Lanzara & Patriotta, 2001, p. 966). In addition, in this shift the ontological question "What is knowledge?" and the epistemological question "How is knowledge constructed?" are being answered in the tradition of social practice theory; namely, knowledge is a "dynamic, heterogeneous 'assemblage' characterized by ongoing transformations and reconfigurations" (Lanzara & Patriotta, 2001, p. 943), which is "situated within social and politicized systems of meaning and generalizations" (Swan & Scarborough, 2001, p. 921).

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[4]Engeström is one of the few scholars who have bridged the division between scholars of social theory in sociology/psychology and scholars of organizational learning. Engeström is a scholar in the field of sociohistorical psychology, applying its theory, which is generally referred to as activity theory, to organizational settings, for example health care centers. He also used the term *(expansive) learning* (e.g., Engeström, 1993, 1995; Engeström, Engeström, & Saarelma, 1988).

In the present study, I followed the sociological/anthropological tradition (for example, Lave, 1988, 1993), which considers learning to be an aspect of everyday life and work, that is, of the practice of *knowing*. As quoted before:

> We have come to the conclusion . . . that there is no such thing as "learning" sui generis, but only changing participation in the culturally designed settings of everyday life. Or, to put it the other way around, participation in everyday life may be thought of as a process of changing understanding in practice, that is, as learning. (Lave, 1993, pp. 5-6)

The focus in social practice, as stated in the preceding quotation, is better described as "understanding" and "participation" rather than "learning" because learning often is conceptualized as something that is different from work, namely, in class or training settings. In this study, I assumed that chairs developed and negotiated their understanding of their job and work by participating in practice.

A second division in the literature, closely related to the first, is that between studies focusing on newcomers or beginners, also called apprentices, in a particular situation, group, or profession (e.g., Gherardi et al., 1998; Jordan, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and studies focusing on participants in daily life or practice, tacitly ignoring the duration of their participation in a group or practice, although in reality the authors have focused exclusively on more experienced participants, the masters (e.g., Engeström, 1993; Lave, 1993; Orr, 1990; Schön, 1983). Even though this dichotomy is clearly present in the literature, it is not a point of discussion, which is remarkable as it defines what kind of knowledge and learning is the topic of study. In general, studies on newcomers have focused on people's interpersonal socialization and learning of the job by managing basic and more advanced tasks, using and learning both explicit and tacit knowledge, following what Gherardi et al. (1998) called a situated curriculum.

Authors of the second kind of study did not explicitly mention the fact that they did *not* focus on newcomers. However, when reading what sort of learning they did focus on, it is clear that they focused on the method, strategies, and resources that subjects such as shoppers, technicians, physicians, or architects use to handle problems that arise in everyday life, whether these are minor unexpected issues or large problems that deeply challenge the subjects.

My own study resembles the second kind of investigation because the subjects in this study had completed at least one full academic year of chair experience. I do not want to ignore the fact that more experienced chairs are in some ways more knowledgeable than beginners. A chair who has had a few years of experience has developed routines that a newcomer still needs to acquire. In general, this gives the masters an advantage, although this is not always the case because experience can also turn into the rigid and fixed use of "standard" or routinized techniques to handle contingencies, something Mintzberg (1979) called the "pigeonholing process" (p. 53). However, experience might influence what kinds of problems or challenges the chair addresses or "sees" (an important issue when I asked the chairs which challenges they had had to deal with over the course of the last six months). Furthermore, regardless of their experience, chairs have to deal with new problems or challenges, such as identity dilemmas, and act on new situations. Especially, in a continuously changing world, there is no such thing as an end/final goal of understanding (learning) or knowing as the knower is continuously challenged by circumstances. This was the topic of my study. Lave (1993) characterized this open-ended kind of learning or practice thus:

> Knowledgeability is routinely in a state of change rather than stasis, in the medium of socially, culturally, and historically ongoing systems of activity,

involving people who are related in multiple and heterogeneous ways, whose social locations, interests, reasons, and subjective possibilities are different, and who improvise struggles in situated ways with each other over the value of particular definitions of the situation, in both immediate and comprehensive terms. (p. 17)

In conclusion, I argue that my choice for the concept of "learning" in the sociological/ anthropological tradition, namely as "understanding" and "participation in practice," and the focus on masters as subjects best conceptualizes/recognizes the ongoing, improvisational, heterogeneous, open-ended, recursive, located/situated, and conflictual nature of the practice (Lave, 1993, p. 9) of chairs. This strongly contrasts with the more conventional view of learning as mastering a skill or an attitude, or pieces of knowledge with the goal to use them (better said, to reproduce and repeat them), when considered necessary, in coping with similar issues. The latter view of learning assumes knowledge to be static, accumulative, repetitive, and above all homogeneous as the main focus is on *what is the same*. In contrast, social practice theory assumes knowledge to be "dynamic, concrete, and relational," thus replacing the term *knowledge* with the more active term *knowing* (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387), with the focus on that *which is different*.

Summary

This study was based on a research perspective focused on individual practice in a social and societal/historical setting, which I refer to as social practice. Very broadly, social practice "seek[s] to explain relations between human action and the social or cultural system at the level of everyday activities in culturally organized settings" (Lave, 1988, p. 14). The main elements are agent, practice, and context. The interdependence of

these elements results in the transformation or change of the identities of the agents (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 47).

The agent or actor is the "acting unit" (Ortner, 1984, p. 149). Because the actor cannot be defined without the social world, we also use the phrase "person-in-action" or a "person-acting" (Lave, 1988). In this study, the four chairs were the persons-acting in their chair-practice.

Practice is that which we do. However, practice refers not just to activities, tasks, or projects. "It is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. In this sense, practice is always social practice" (Wenger, 1998b, p. 47). This participation-in-practice consists in negotiating meaning and constructing understanding (Brown et al., 1989, p. 35), and as such it can be described as a form of learning. The sort of practice in this study, linguistical practice, refers not only to what members of that practice *share* in terms of "historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives" (Wenger, 1998b, p. 5), but also to the areas in which they *diverge*, namely, the variations in interpreting, sense-making and attributing meaning to actions (Gherardi et al., 1998, p. 278).

In general terms, context, the third basic element of social practice, is the historical, social, economic, and political stage on and through which activity takes place. Within social practice, there are continuous debates about the importance of specific dimensions of context. Some scholars have chosen for their starting point of analysis the macro (historical/societal) structures, whereas others have chosen the more micro (relational) interactions. In my view, it is more important to distinguish between context that we can influence directly through our actions (for example, the chair directly

influences the departmental culture) and context that we influence only indirectly (for example, the chair has only indirect influence over the state budget). I limited my discussion of context to a focus on organizational, disciplinary, professional, and institutional culture, practices, and discourses. These four forms include particular historical (e.g., values and traditions), social (e.g., behavior and dynamics), and political (e.g., governance and policy) aspects that are considered relevant for an analysis of department chairs. More macro economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions, such as national systems, fall outside the scope of this study.

The main effect of the recursive relationships among agent, practice, and context that is important for this study is the transformation or change of the identities of agents (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 47). On the basis of one of the main assumptions undergirding social constructivism, there is no longer one true nature of identity but multiple identities. Furthermore, we cannot "discover" the identities as we construct and reconstruct our identities in interactions, including language interactions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 102). As such, identities are "negotiated in the course of doing the job" (Wenger, 1998, p. 146). This also means that knowledge, experience, skills, and understanding "are in constant interaction" (Lave and Wenger, 1993, pp. 51-52).

In this study, I chose to follow the sociological/anthropological tradition (for example, Lave, 1988, 1993), in which learning is considered to be an aspect of everyday life and work. As learning often is conceptualized as something that happens in class or training settings, not at work as is predominantly the case with chairs, I preferred to use the words *understanding* and *participation* rather than *learning* (Lave, 1993, p. 9). Thus,

in this study, I assumed that chairs developed and negotiated their understanding of their job and work through participation in practice.

Finally, social practice theories recognize that the nature of learning is ongoing, improvisational, multifocal, open-ended, situated, and conflictual (Lave, 1993, p. 9). Knowledge is assumed to be "dynamic, concrete, and relational"; thus, the term *knowledge* is replaced by the more active term *knowing* (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387). Therefore, the focus is not on reproducing and repeating (that is, the same), but on doing that which is different. In this perspective, role conflict and role ambiguity are seen as occasions of learning for chairs; they are understood as problems needing to be solved, at least temporarily.

On the basis of the elements of the basic social practice model, agent, activity, and context (see Figure 1, Chapter 1), I created a new model, Figure 2, which includes the main aspects from the chair literature of Chapter 2. The transformation or change in the identities of chairs, in the center of the model, is the result of the recursive relationships among agent, practice, and context.
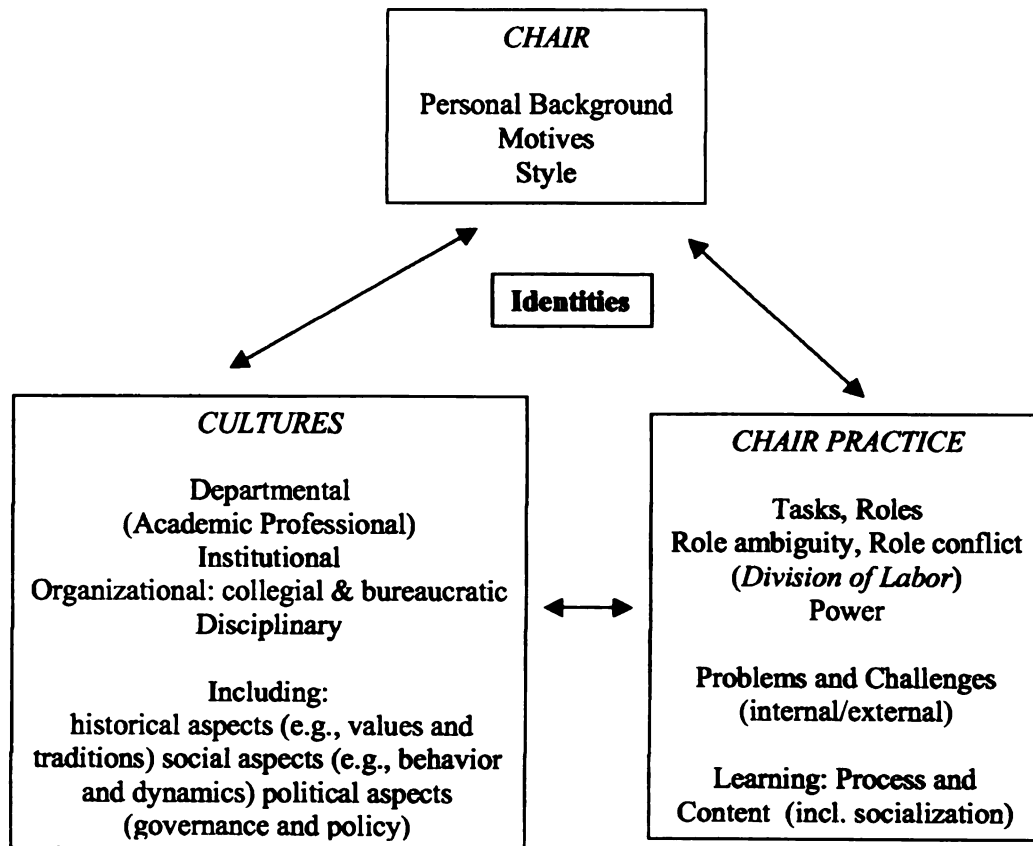
Figure 2: Conceptual Social Practice Model for Chairs

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on the main five aspects or phases of the research design of this study. First, I discuss my choice for a qualitative paradigm and social constructivist perspective. Then, I address the strategy of inquiry for this study, namely, discourse analysis. Consecutively, I explain the general assumptions underlying discourse analysis as a field; introduce the specific form of discourse analysis that undergirded this study, namely, discursive psychology; and describe the 10 steps of discourse analysis. Following this, I explain how to read data in constructivist thought, and my choice for the conceptual definition of role identity. Finally, I address criteria for evaluation, limitations and weaknesses of discourse analysis, and reflexivity (my relationship, as researcher, to the subjects).

As the reader will notice, I, as the researcher, believe strongly in an interpretive and constructivist world. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that I agree with Denzin and Lincoln (2003) that the "biographically situated researcher" is the architect behind and subject of each of the five phases. To show the complex and recursive network of influences,

> This individual [the researcher] enters the research process from inside an interpretive community. This community has its own historical research traditions, which constitute a distinct point of view. This perspective leads the researcher to adopt particular views of the "other" who is studied. At the same time, the politics and the ethics of research must also be considered, for these concerns permeate every phase of the research process. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 30)

We should not forget, though, that, apart from the "biographically situated researcher," another criterion should drive the design of a study, namely, the specific research questions. Let me thus start the discussion of the research design by restating the research questions. They are:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?

How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?

Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

Paradigm of This Study: Social Constructivism

This research was founded on a qualitative or interpretivist research paradigm. Although there is no clear definition of these terms, as there are multiple forms of qualitative work (e.g., functionalism, critical theory, constructivism, pragmatism), this paradigm has some defining characteristics. As Crowson (1993) argued, "to work 'in the style' of qualitative research is to seek from one's data an understanding of the phenomena observed rather than some generalizable knowledge or explanation, prediction and control" (p. 169). In practice, this means that the researcher seeks an emic (insider) perspective of the interpretations, perceptions, experiences, and meanings of people by allowing himself or herself a "childlike curiosity" about observed behaviors (p. 171). Furthermore, to be able to understand (*Verstehen*), it is necessary that the researcher be present, close to the subjects, immersed in the real or natural actions and culture (natural setting), not just as observer but as participant (participant observation). This makes it possible to create or generate a deep and broad understanding of the subjects and events, which the researcher conveys to readers by means of thick description (Geertz,

1973). Following this immersion, the researcher builds his or her knowledge or understanding from the ground up (inductively) from the observed data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As this knowledge is grounded in the cases, the knowledge is contextual and not intended to be generalized. Finally, the qualitative researcher acknowledges and works with the value-ladenness of research as it is colored by the researcher's personality, background and culture, theoretical and disciplinary assumptions, and the setting itself (Crowson, 1993), a process which is referred to as reflexivity.

After this succinct description of the general characteristics of qualitative research, I now focus on one of the frameworks within qualitative research, namely, social constructivism, as this is the framework that undergirded this study. One of the common ways to describe the characteristics of a framework uses its epistemological and ontological assumptions on reality and knowledge. Ontology asks, "What is the form and nature of reality and therefore, what is there that can be known about it?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 201). Within constructivism, relativism takes the place of realism (p. 203). It is not that there is no reality at all, but rather, "realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature [...], and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the construction" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 206).

Epistemology, which is closely linked to ontology especially within constructivism, asks, "What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower, and what can be known?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 201). In constructivist thought, knowledge (that is, the data/findings of the research) is literally

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created in the research process between researcher and subject. As such, the researcher is an active participant in the dialectical process, the aim of which is to gain an understanding of people's construction and reconstruction of meaning, leading to a temporary and flexible consensus (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 211).

Social constructivism, with a heritage in phenomenology (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1967), was developed by, among others, Gergen (1985, 1991), Searle (1995), and Von Glaserfeld (1991). Phenomenology focuses on descriptions of situations, events, and actions as experienced by subjects (Polkinghorne, 1989). Social constructivists extend this focus on experience by claiming that the meanings attributed to these experiences are constructed in social interactions. Social constructivists assume that knowledge and meaning are constructed in social interactions through historical, political, cultural, and linguistic practices, conventions, and discourses, "not in the meaning-making activity of the individual mind" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 240) that operates in individuals' lives (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Although purists have claimed that there is "no unique 'real world' that preexists and is independent of human mental activity and human symbolic language" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 236), I would not go that far. Similar to Lincoln and Guba, I believe that reality is created in the mind, while at the same time the reality constructions are related to ontologically "tangible entities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 83-87). Nonetheless, as a result of this creative process, knowledge consists of pluralistic, multiple, constructed, and holistic realities.

I do believe that this paradigm fits very well with my study, as the epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying this paradigm and those underlying the framework I used (social practice) are similar. Social practice assumes

that knowing and doing "are open-ended processes of improvisation with the social, material, and experiential resources at hand" (p. 13). Moreover, social practice claims that "persons acting and the social world of activity cannot be separated" (Lave, 1993, pp. 4-5). Thus, it is not the individual who makes meaning and acts on this meaning-making (which in this framework is equal to learning) but the person-in-activity. As social practice theorists believe that acting/learning varies depending on the agent and context, it follows that multiple realities exist, at the intersection of which stands the person-in-activity (Lave, 1988, pp. 97-98).

Strategy of Inquiry: Social Constructivist Discourse Analysis as a Field

Aside from the more philosophic-theoretical foundation of research with its ontological and epistemological assumptions, it is clear that in order to do the actual research, the researcher needs a more practical idea of how he or she is going to collect and analyze data: a strategy of inquiry is needed. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) expressed this, "A strategy of inquiry comprises a bundle of skills, assumptions, and practices that the researcher employs as he or she moves from paradigm to the empirical world." (p. 36).

Described in this way, it is clear that strategies of inquiry all have their own "preferred ways for putting the strategy into motion" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 36). As such, the strategy of inquiry's embeddedness in an interpretive community, with its own historical research traditions and distinct points of view, can help the researcher make informed and valid choices for specific methods. This is especially the case in the strategy of inquiry for this study, which is discourse analysis based on social

constructivism. Other versions of discourse analysis are based not on social constructivism but cognitive realism. In the following paragraphs, I briefly introduce the world of discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis is both a theoretical and a methodological approach that has been used in multiple areas of social science, varying from linguistics, cognitive psychology, and literary theory to social psychology (Potter, 2004b, p. 2). In these disciplines, discourse analysis is used to study different issues, from different philosophical frameworks, and with different levels and styles of analyses. Despite all the differences, which I will not discuss in detail here, there are several commonalities among the models that I will explain below (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 8). But let me start at the beginning.

The concept of discourse itself has multiple meanings. "Indeed, it is very difficult to speak of 'discourse' or even 'discourse analysis' as a single unitary entity" (Burman & Parker, 1993, p. 3). Nonetheless, to give a general indication of this concept, I provide the following common-sense description: "Language [is] structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1).

All models of discourse analysis are based on the idea that language and texts (that is, discourse) are seen as ways, stories, or narratives through which people describe and understand their worlds (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.1; Silverman, 2003, p. 343). Epistemologically, it is assumed that the meaning of life, experience, identity, mental state, and the social and psychological world is not (exclusively) located within people's cognitive minds, but that it is constructed in social and linguistic interactions. As the

interactions themselves and the goals of these interactions always are different, the meanings of words and phrases are situation-dependent, and thus temporary and variable.

However, there are also important differences among varying approaches to discourse analysis. One of the most important differences has to do with the micro-macro debate about which aspects "regulate" how we can and do present ourselves through language. Some scholars have focused on individuals' linguistical actions to claim versions of the world in specific contexts. This interactionist version draws on ethnomethodology (predominantly Garfinkel, 1967, and Sacks, 1992) and conversation analysis (e.g., Drew, 1995; Silverman, 2003) and concentrates on "the analysis of action orientation of text and talk in social interaction" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 105). Other scholars have focused more broadly on the larger historical, social, cultural, and ideological dimensions that structure how we "can" think about the world we inhabit in the first place. This poststructuralist or postmodern version (predominantly Foucault) draws on critical theory and concentrates on "how people's understandings of the world and identities are created and changed in specific discourses and on the social consequences of these discursive constructions" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 105).

Another difference has more to do with ontology. Some approaches are dialectical in nature in the sense that one's identity, reality, and the world are considered products/ subjects of discourse, thus constructed of or constituted by discourses, while at the same time they are producers or constitutive of discourse. On the other hand, there are approaches and scholars that tend "to view individuals solely as subjects of discourse" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 7, 19-20).

The version of discourse analysis underlying this study synthesizes the interactionist and the poststructuralist approaches. In that sense, it combines the best of both worlds by bridging the micro-macro debate (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 105 ff; Potter, 1997; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Furthermore, this approach is dialectical in nature. I explain this in greater detail below, after I have addressed the concept of identity from a discourse perspective.

Identity and Discourse

Traditionally, the identity or self of a person was predominantly looked at from either a trait theory perspective, a role theory perspective, or a humanistic theory perspective (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, pp. 96-99). All these theories have advantages but also disadvantages, one of which is their exclusive way of looking at the self. An alternative way of looking at the self is offered by the social-constructivist approach (e.g., Gergen, 1985; Gergen & Davis, 1985). This theoretical viewpoint no longer assumes "the self-as-entity" but claims that we construct our own selves in language interactions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 102).

> With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.9)

Furthermore, this position does not assume that there is only one true nature of self that we can "discover." Instead, there are "a multitude of selves" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 102) as we construct and reconstruct our selves, depending on the requirements and conventions of the situation, context, culture, and time. Thus, the selves

are "found in the different kinds of linguistic practices articulated now, in the past, historically and crossculturally." (p. 102).

But what would be the goal of our idiosyncratic constructions of self in language interactions? Why do we discriminatorily construct different selves, depending on the situation? From a social psychology perspective, Gergen (1989, pp. 74-6) claimed that people construct those versions of self that provide the most power (of convincing others); they claim versions of reality and the world that should be given preference over alternatives. However, these claims are not undisputed. They are often challenged and, in turn, warrants are developed in defense. This has consequences for the multiple selves we show because "a vital part of warranting one's actions, making them appear reasonable and justifiable, is being able to present different kinds of self appropriately" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 108).

However, presenting selves through language is not "regulated" only by the individual's linguistical actions to claim his or her version of the world. We also need to take into account the larger historical, social, cultural, and ideological dimensions that structure how we can think about the world we inhabit in the first place. Thus, there is another tradition for looking at discourse, a more poststructuralist or postmodern perspective, built predominantly on Foucault (e.g., 1970), which assumes that "the use of a particular discourse which contains a particular organization of the self not only allows one to warrant and justify one's actions in Gergen's sense, it also maintains power relations and patterns of domination and subordination." (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 109). This means that we are provided with certain linguistic constructions of self, whereas others are excluded. Often without knowing this, we can become "stuck" in a

discursive repertoire that does not allow for alternative constructions, and in this way we reproduce particular kinds of selves, relations, knowledge, rules, habits, and traditions that might not (or no longer) fit.

One of the well-known ways of looking at both the linguistical actions and the discursive resources people use in these practices is discourse analysis. In my own analysis of the research data, I focused predominantly on the discourse analysis methodology in the social psychology tradition, as developed by Wetherell and Potter (1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987, 1995); I will discuss this next.

Discourse Analysis or Discursive Psychology as Method for Data Analysis

Now that I have described the general nature and assumptions underlying discourse analysis, I will focus on the variant of discourse analysis that informed this study. This variant, also called discursive psychology, was developed as a critique on cognitivism in sociology and communication, but predominantly in social psychology in Britain from the end of the 1980s (Billig et al., 1988; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 2004b, p. 3; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). [5]

Discursive psychology builds on three theoretical resources. One resource is Austin's (1962) speech act philosophy, which claims that language is not just descriptive but active: It does something. The second resource is Berger and Luckmann's (1966) sociology of knowledge, which argues that there is no objective world, only a world that is socially constructed. However, the most direct and important theoretical resource is

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[5] From this point on, the term *discourse analysis* will refer to the discourse analysis methodology in the social psychological tradition (e.g., Potter and Wetherell; 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), also

Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) sociology of *scientific* knowledge, "which treated scientists' activities as procedures to be explained rather than as merely discovering and representing reality" (Parker, 2002, p. 127).

In discourse analysis, it is assumed that the interviewer and the interviewee socially construct the story of the world, reality, and identity. Both interviewer and interviewee are part of, and participants in, several different cultures; thus, their talk and text reflect the culturally available resources in the form of narratives and discourses/interpretative repertoires (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). To be able to understand authentically, from an emic perspective, "what people do", it is necessary to examine the rhetorical organization of discourse, as people "deploy these narratives to make their actions explainable and understandable to those who otherwise may not understand" (Miller & Glasner, as cited in Silverman, 2003, p. 345).

A critical assumption underlying discourse analysis is that accounts, stories, descriptions, and arguments are not always consistent. Linguistic variability is not only condoned but expected because every rhetorical unit is constructed to perform a function. After all, "people use language, ..., functionally and thus variably as the discursive context changes" (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, p. 174). However, function does not necessarily assume intention, planning, or deliberation; people do "what 'seems right' for the situation" (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, p. 171). As such, the goal of discourse analysis is

> not to be better able to say that some claim or description is true or false. Instead, it is focused on the way people *themselves* manage and understand descriptions and their facticity. ... The aim is to produce an account of how people themselves

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know as *discursive psychology*. In the rest of the dissertation, I use *discourse analysis* and *discursive psychology* interchangeably.

undermine descriptions through invoking interests, and how, in turn, they design descriptions to attend to such undermining. (Potter, 1997, pp. 123-124)

Below, I attempt to describe discursive psychology, although it is difficult to portray it as a single strand because it is continuously being developed by various authors (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987), to work out the weaknesses that other scholars have identified over the years.

In general, there are three main analytic foci in discursive psychology. One focus is on "the way discourse is oriented to action" (Potter, 2004b, p. 3): What do people do in their text and talk (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 105), and what is the rhetorical task? Because this approach comes out of psychology, it deals with psychological phenomena of actions, such as disclaiming, excusing, justifying, persuading, pleading, naming, blaming, categorizing, attributing, and rationalizing (Willig, 2003, pp. 162-163). These actions, or discursive practices, are ways "in which participants manage their interests ... in order to achieve social and interpersonal objectives" (Willig, 2003, p. 163). As such, in discourse analysis, text is not a window into the psyche, for example, a person's attitude or motivation. Text is, in fact, used as a way to actively construct the world. Because this study was focused on identity *creation* of chairs, identity refers to what chairs "*do*" rather than what they "*have*" (Willig, 2003, p. 163) or who they "*are.*" I especially looked at everyday talk *in situ*.

The second analytic focus is the resources people use to perform the action. These discursive resources, strategies, techniques, or devices are linguistic, that is, grammatical and rhetorical in nature, and are used to constitute events, settings, and identities. There are numerous "devices to construct descriptions as factual" (Potter, 1997, p. 150), but they can be grouped into two categories. One group of devices is intended to increase the

credibility of the agent who produces the descriptions by reworking his or her identity. Examples of these devices are the management of stake, interest, and accountability; category entitlement; and footing. The second group of devices is intended to increase the credibility of the description by drawing "emphasis away from the nature or identity of the producer" (Potter, 1997, p. 150). Examples of these devices are grammatical impersonality; fact agency; constructing consensus and corroboration; witnessing; and active voicing or quoted speech (Willig, 2003, p. 163).

Another device is the use of categorization to create "an action, object, event, person or group as having a specific and distinctive character suitable for some action" (Potter, 1997, p. 176). In these terms, being part of a group of chairs, administrators, faculty, or researchers, by thinking in terms of these categories or assigning people to categories, is not a coincidence. "It is a complex and subtle *social accomplishment*" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, pp. 116, 119).

Apart from the different functions of the devices, in all situations one should pay attention to variation, contradiction, and detail (Potter, 2004a, p. 616). The discursive resources that were relevant for to this study will be discussed as part of the analysis (for more in-depth information, see Potter, 1997).

Finally, a third point of analysis is focused on the presence of cultural stories or discourses, also called interpretative resources (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), in the text that are based on "larger societal structures." Discourses or interpretative repertoires are "broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images. ... They are available resources for making

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evaluations, constructing factual versions and performing particular actions" (Potter & Wetherell, 1995, p. 89).

Examples of these discourses in the academic world are the "faculty versus administration" discourse, the management discourse, the entrepreneurial discourse, the "one-among-equals" discourse, and the academic-freedom discourse. People use or transform these discourses in situated discursive practice to perform different rhetorical tasks (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 20; Potter, 2004a, pp. 619-20). In turn, when used, these discourses have social consequences. For example, the use of an academic-freedom discourse allows for specific arguments or descriptions because the discourse consists of a range or cluster of opinions and terms. Conversely, other possible descriptions might no longer be viable/possible (see Chapter 5, Analysis, Topic 2).

As such, even though people might not agree on what academic freedom is, it is difficult from a faculty standpoint to use the phrase *academic freedom* in an argument in a negative rather than a positive way. However, from a leadership point of view, faculty's professional autonomy can be used to describe the difficulty of having control over the unit. Even as I write this, it is difficult to use the phrase *academic freedom* without evoking a discourse. Also, because the rhetorical tasks are variable, people are not and cannot be consistent in their talk and texts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 108).

Linked to the discourses above, there is a final analytical concept that needs to be addressed here, which is not necessarily part of Potter and Wetherell's form of discourse analysis but is nonetheless an important issue when studying role identity. The concept is that of subject positions, originally introduced by Althusser (1971) and further developed by Davies and Harré (1990, 1999). The concept of subject position is part of the

methodology of Foucauldian discourse analysis and represents "positions within networks of meaning which speakers can take up" (Willig, 2003, p. 174). By using a particular discourse, we take on a particular position; in other words, we are subjected to the discourse by the way the discourse offers "discursive locations from which to speak and act" (Willig, 2003, p. 174). As such, being in a particular position offers certain rights and duties that fit that position (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 35; Harré, 2001, p. 697).

In practice, not all analyses focus equally on each of the four analytical aspects, as this depends on the kind of text and on what is "done" in the text. Nonetheless, these analytical aspects function as the basis of any discourse analysis in this tradition. In that sense, this form of discourse analysis can be treated as a "toolbox, providing a set of concepts and methods to select your data and to illuminate your analysis" (Silverman, 2003, p. 353). For this study of how chairs constructed their identity in interactional talk and text (between interviewer and interviewee), these four analytical foci helped me interpret how the text was organized in order that "a particular reality appear[ed] solid, factual and stable" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 95). In this case, the reality I was looking for was the reality of being a chair and how this was constructed in relationship to others, particularly faculty and administrators. For example, I paid attention to the role of evidence in supporting claims and building plausible descriptions about chairs, faculty, and administrators (Potter, 2004a, p. 609).

In conclusion, discourse-analytic research based on social constructivism was, in my opinion, a fitting strategy of inquiry for this study. To study how chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity, one needs to realize that chairs lead a double life. As stated before, the literature has shown repeatedly that the chair's

position is a Janus position (Gamble, 1988), that is, an organizational-structural place in the institution, positioned in between the faculty and administration, and therefore serving multiple groups. What we have not fully realized, however, is that the Janus position also represents a socio-psychological identity construct. The chair leads a double life as both scholar and administrator and thus feels in the middle, torn between two groups and identities, suffering from role conflict and role ambiguity. At the same time, the labels *scholar* and *administrator* are not private, mental categories but categories that are historically, culturally, and socially constructed (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 105). Therefore, it is interesting to see how chairs manage role conflict by appropriately using specific labels.

Because I viewed the chair's Janus job as a socio-psychological identity construct, a methodology used and developed in social psychology was an appropriate choice for addressing the research questions. One of the best ways to study chairs' role identity is to focus on how chairs "do" identity in practice. Rather than carrying out observations, it was important to study how chairs talked about their world and their position in it, which in discursive psychology is equivalent to constructing the world. Discourse analysis and discursive psychology are useful instruments to study this practice and its results.

Steps of Discourse Analysis

In this section, I discuss the various steps that are part of a general discourse analysis. The 10 steps as described by Potter and Wetherell (1987, pp. 160-175) are (1) formulating the research questions, (2) selecting the sample, (3) collecting records and documents, (4) conducting interviews, (5) transcribing interview responses, (6) coding

the data, (7) analyzing the data, (8) determining the validity of the data, (9) reporting the findings, and (10) applying the results and findings. In addition to describing the steps as they were discussed in the literature, I will show how I implemented these steps in the present study.

1. Step one concerns the appropriateness of the research questions posed in the study, a criterion that I think was satisfied. In this study I wanted to answer the questions regarding how chairs view the nature of their role identity and how they understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity. Here, the focus was on the way people construct realities and identities in discursive practice.

2. Step two concerns sample selection and sample size (see also Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 76). Discourse analysis is known for being labor-intensive (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 161). After careful and detailed transcriptions are made and initial coding is done, the analysis has barely started; many rereadings of the transcripts still need to be done. Because the process is so labor–intensive, a small sample, in principle, will suffice.

> Because one is interested in language use rather than the people generating the language and because a large number of linguistic patterns are likely to emerge from a few people, small samples or a few interviews are generally quite adequate for investigating an interesting and practically important range of phenomena. (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 161)

As for the site, in this empirical study I focused on several chairpersons from one college in a state research university, which I called University X. The rationale for choosing University X was the advantage of my having been a relative insider in this community. This study of chairs was sensitive in nature because it concerned situations that chairs defined as problematic or challenging, perhaps critical. To secure access to this information, it was necessary to be able to demonstrate to subjects my familiarity

with and knowledge of the institution, its culture, and its politics. In addition, I had the advantage of not currently being associated with the administrative part of University X, which offered me the right balance between being an insider (emic) and an outsider (etic) in the community of study, something that has been mentioned as a criterion for evaluating the quality of interpretation of discourse analysis (Taylor, 2001, p. 321; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

Before I discuss my choice of chairs to be studied, I need to clarify that although this dissertation is focused on chair role identity, role conflict and role ambiguity, the sample I chose consisted of both chairpersons of departments and directors of professional schools. In general, in the chair literature no such distinction is specified. But, both chairpersons and directors have to cope with role identity problems related to role conflict and role ambiguity. As such I included both groups in the sample. To 'standardize' and simplify references to the research topic, I maintain the labels *chair*, *chair roles*, and *chair identity* throughout the whole dissertation.

I used a purposeful sampling method; I did not use a random sample from the University X chair population because I thought this would severely limit the outcomes of the study. Because this study involved multiple interviews with individual chairs on a difficult/sensitive topic (challenges or problems they had experienced and the ensuing actions), I above all needed chairs who were (a) willing to be interviewed extensively on this topic and (b) able to articulate and reflect on their actions and motivations in retrospect.

Furthermore, as differences in disciplines are important variables influencing the behavior of chairs (see the section on cultures in Chapter 2), the sample needed to include

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chairs from different disciplines. However, if I had chosen chairs at random, there would have been too many types of diversity to take into account, for example, racial, ethnic, and gender characteristics. Thus, to keep the diversity of the sample I had to deal with somewhat within limits, I selected only male chairs for the sample, thereby eliminating gender diversity as a complicating factor in this study.

On the other hand, as described in the literature review, chairs' duration of experience promised to be a relevant factor influencing their construction of role identity, and perhaps influencing the kinds of problems or challenges the chairs addressed, and how. Therefore, I chose to include newcomers (with at least one year of experience) as well as more experienced chairs in the sample. I contacted prospective subjects by e-mail. If they agreed to participate, I e-mailed the chairs a letter in which I informed them of the goals of this research.

For this study, I interviewed seven chairs for two to three hours each, even though I planned to use only four chairs in the study. Time constraints limited the number of chairs I could study in-depth, considering the labor-intensive process of discourse analysis. This is not a quantitative study, which often requires a large sample as its goal is to explain and predict (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). I interviewed seven chairs because I wanted to ensure that I would glean sufficient data from four of them.

Three of the seven chairs who were interviewed initially were eliminated from the study. One chair was "disqualified" early on because the data from his interviews were incomplete. Despite frequent probes and requests for explanations, this chair gave very brief responses and did not answer several of the questions I asked. The second chair did answer my questions but focused predominantly on himself. Therefore, I received little

contextual information from him, for example, about the history or financial situation of the department or the activities of and culture around the faculty. As I already explained, contextual data were indispensable to my being able to understand what kind of world the chairs were creating. Thus, because of the lack of contextual data, I excluded this chair from the sample. The third chair I decided to exclude answered my questions but constantly reiterated the same answers; in other words, I could not add to my understanding because his contribution to the study was limited (I curtailed the third interview because I had heard it all before).

3. In this form of discourse analysis, records and documents sometimes are collected for additional analysis; Potter and Wetherell (1987) described this as step three. For example, a reality described in an interview might differ from a reality as constructed in a written document (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 120). In this study, I focused exclusively on the interview data, although in two cases I received a copy of the chair's resume.

4. Before, I discuss step four, the interviews, I need to clarify that although this dissertation is focused on chair role identity, role conflict and role ambiguity, the sample I chose consisted of both chairpersons of departments and directors of professional schools. In general, in the chair literature no such distinction is specified. But, both chairpersons and directors have to cope with role identity problems related to role conflict and role ambiguity. As such I included both groups in the sample. To "standardize" and simplify references to the research topic, I maintain the labels *chair*, *chair roles*, and *chair identity* throughout the whole dissertation, except when referring to

the individual chair or director. For a description of the subjects, see Chapter 5, Introduction to the chairs and their context.

I interviewed each subject three times, within a 2- to 3-week period. I did this for three reasons. First, I expected to need several hours for the interviews. Part of the interviews consisted of having the chairs talk about their views on and experience with the chair socialization process, the practice of a chair, the departmental and institutional culture, that is, gathering a large amount of contextual information that would help me understand how the chairs constructed their world. All this takes considerable time. To reduce the fatigue of both interviewees and myself, I split the interviews into three sessions of approximately 1 hour each. Second, spreading the interviews over a 2 or 3 weeks had the added advantage of making the interviewees feel more comfortable with me and the interview process so that, when the interview focused on problems and challenges, it was not a sudden intrusion into the chair's (personal) world. In addition, limiting the interview period to a few weeks maintained the momentum of the interview, while at the same time giving the chairs time to reflect on the interviews and prepare for the next session.

Before meeting with the interviewees, I had developed a set of open-ended questions for the semi-structured interview protocol.. However, these were not the only questions that were relevant. Fitting the semi-structured nature of the interviews, I gave the subjects a chance to change the content and structure of the interview if appropriate and/or needed. In addition, I used probes to elicit examples, explanations, or more in-depth information.

In discourse analysis, interviews have a different structure and function than in other forms of qualitative research. In nondiscourse research, "the goal of traditional interviews is to obtain or measure consistency in participants' responses; consistency is valued so highly because it is taken as evidence of a corresponding set of actions or beliefs" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 163).

In discourse analysis, in contrast, consistency, which is assumed to reflect the accuracy of descriptions, is less relevant than *variation* because the focus is on what talk can achieve in different situations and for different purposes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 164). For this reason, it is not merely allowed but in fact promoted that the researcher actively and purposefully interact with the respondents and intervene in the interviews, something that stands in strong contrast to more positivistic-oriented interviews that "try to minimize the effects of social interaction between interviewer and respondent" in order to guarantee/observe reliability and validity and dismiss "leading" questions (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 123). In studies based on discourse analysis, interviews are seen as naturalistic conversational exchanges (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 165), in which both the interviewer and the respondent contribute to the meaning-making process in action. For example, the respondent might interpret the interviewer's seemingly neutral question as if in need for a justification, which is reflected by a certain kind of answer. In turn, the researcher reacts to this flow and direction of the interview dialogue with a particular probe, and so on. Because the interviewer is actively involved in the interview conversation, it should not come as a surprise that the full data also include the interviewer's linguistical actions, that is, his or her questions and comments, as they are an important part of the co-construction of meaning. Thus, in this study, I transcribed

both interview questions and answers.

5. The last sentence brings me to the next step in discourse-analysis research, namely, transcription of the raw data. A good transcription is helpful and necessary for a good analysis. But the question is, What is a good transcription, and how detailed does the researcher need to be? There are continuing debates over this question among some researchers, such as conversation analysts, who claim that a Jeffersonian system (e.g., Jefferson, 1985) should be used; this includes, in addition to speech errors, pauses, and volume, notation of intonation, speed, and breathing (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 100). In general, though, I agree with Potter and Wetherell (1987) that the detail of transcription should be appropriate for the study at hand. In this study, in which I looked broadly at the way chairs constructed role identities in discursive practice, less detailed transcriptions were satisfactory (good enough!).

6. After the transcription phase, discourse analysts start with some basic coding. Coding in discourse analysis is somewhat different than it is in, for example, traditional grounded-theory studies. Coding in discourse analysis functions as a preliminary sorting of relevant data into specific themes, which can later be used for finely tuned analysis. As such, coding is more a pragmatic than an analytic research activity (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 167). This initial sorting into categories must be highly inclusive; therefore, phrases and sections that are only vaguely linked to the categories also need to be included. In this study, I performed several cycles of coding. However, before undertaking the coding, I read through all of the interview transcripts, memos, and field notes. Then, I did open coding, line by line, to identify ideas and concerns (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 100). From this emerged more focused codes like development

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of self, research, career orientation, identification, and alignment.

7. Step seven is the actual typical discourse analysis. The idea is to identify

patterns of variation and commonalities by "detailed and repeated reading of the

discourse against the background of the discourse-analytic perspective" (Wood &

Kroger, 2000, p. 95). This is not easy to do. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) claimed,

discourse analysts cannot ignore

> the nuance, contradictions and areas of vagueness. ... The discourse analyst is
> concerned with the detail of passages of discourse, however fragmented and
> contradictory, and with what is actually said or written, not some general idea that
> seems to be intended. (p. 168; see also Wooffitt, 1992)

To make the above possible, it is necessary to first study one's own assumptions

when dealing with a text. People make all kinds of assumptions that they use to make

sense of what others are saying. Unfortunately, those assumptions are not always correct.

Therefore, we need to ask ourselves, "Why am I reading this passage in this way? What

features produce this reading?" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 168). If we know why we

read text in a certain way, the next step is to figure out what the function of the text

might be. Is this text, for example, intended to be understood as an excuse or a

justification (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 168)? To understand the function of the text,

we construct hypotheses and look for suitable evidence. If it seems that there is not

sufficient evidence, we need to revise our hypotheses. In this study, the main focus was

on the way the chairs constructed their situated identities and realities, by using specific

descriptions and arguments for events, cultures, and actions. In general, the starting point

for the analysis was the focused codes I developed, such as development of self, research,

career orientation, and alignment. From these, I developed eight topics, which I explain

under step 9.

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There is no standard method or even order of analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 96). In this methodology, analysis really is a deconstruction (Willig, 2003, p. 170). Analysts look for patterns of variation and commonalities within consecutive pieces of text; they also compare and contrast excerpts that are far apart. Furthermore, analysis is done within as well as across cases (or interviews or subjects). Thus, there are multiple units and levels of analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 96). Because the researcher needs to read, reread, and cross-read, analysis can begin at any point in the text. In any case, analysis is an iterative process of going back and forth between transcriptions, interpretations of the data, and the literature on chairs and discourse.

Finally, as mentioned before (Discourse analysis as a method for data analysis), many analytic concepts can be used in attempting to understand the text. Wood and Kroger (2000) divided these concepts into various types and levels. For example, the researcher can look at content, features, form, structure, or function. The concepts that were relevant to this study are discussed as part of the analysis in Chapter 5.

8. Step eight is the validation of results. Validation of results takes place both as part of the analysis and as part of the presentation or written report. Validation of results is discussed in detail later in this chapter and in the analysis in Chapter 5, so I will not go into it now. However, it should be clarified here that, from a relativist standpoint, the analyses and findings of this study are not the truth. That is, they are not "the only possible representation of the world but, rather, just one version which is part of the discursive struggle within the research field in question" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 116). After all, scientific knowledge is not a reflection of an existing reality waiting to be discovered; it is itself *"productive,"* that is, a way to create the world, realities, and

identities (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 116).

9. The report is step nine in the discourse-analysis process. One of the main parts of a discourse analysis report is the interpretative or analytic work, which is long and includes elaborate excerpts. The report is

> part of the confirmation and validation procedures itself. The goal is to present analysis and conclusions in such a way that the reader is able to assess the researcher's interpretations. ... A representative set of examples from the area of interest must be included along with a detailed interpretation which links analytic claims to specific parts or aspects of the extracts. In this way, the entire reasoning process from discursive data to conclusions is documented in some detail and each reader is given the possibility of evaluating the different stages of the process, and hence agreeing with the conclusions or finding grounds for disagreement. (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 172)

After an initial line-by-line open coding cycle, I developed focused codes based on concepts and statements that the chairs linked to role identity and role conflict, such as development of self, research, career orientation, identification, and alignment. During the focused coding process, I realized that the problems of creating boundaries around the categorizations of words into groups and constructing precise definitions of these codes were part of a typical discourse-analytic approach/process. Discourse analysis problematizes categorizations by showing that categories are not pre-existing or fixed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) but rather are discursive constructions. As such, the labels and arguments that are used in the interviews can be viewed as flexible resources "to be deployed as and when required" (Willig, 2003, p. 181).

Taking this into account, the focused codes led to the identification and formulation of eight rhetorical topics. These rhetorical topics represent *linguistic resources* with which these chairs constructed their identity focusing on role conflict and ambiguity. In other words, this is a collection of arguments that chairs drew upon to

express their complex and ambiguous chair position and their perception of faculty and administrative work. As such, the topics represent the answer to the main research question of this study: "How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and ambiguity".

The eight rhetorical topics are the following:

1. Future career

2. Chair work as Strategy and politics

3. Chairing as a profession or personal choice

4. Chair work as balancing and/or integrating different roles

5. Research activities

6. Individual faculty goals versus collective chair goals

7. Administration versus administrators

8. Previous conceptions of chair identity and work

As for naming the topics in Chapter 5, I used my own language, that is, the researcher's language because this better synthesized the commonalities among the excerpts of the various chairs. Furthermore, it should be noted that the topics of this study were not exhaustive. That is, other key topics might exist that were not addressed in the interviews and by these individual chairs.

For this study, I looked at several examples from the discourse-analysis literature, such as articles and dissertations, to determine the best way to report the findings of this study. In principle, "there are no strict rules about how to organize and frame the analysis section" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 182). After careful consideration, I organized the interpretative analysis of this study around 8 topics, which can be found in Chapter 5.

Once again, I read the transcripts and coded them according to the topics. I chose one or more excerpts from a chair's interview to include in the final report. I chose only one excerpt if there was only one clear key point in the chair's defining identity or if more than one was given but they were very similar. On the other hand, I chose two or more excerpts, which I linked together, if multiple fragments were crucial for understanding the argument that was being made or the story that was told. In that case, the several excerpts included relevant variations and/or contradictions in the discourse. What was difficult, though, was to set boundaries on the excerpts. How small or how large does an excerpt need to be to include the amount of detail and context necessary for the reader to understand the interpretation that follows?

10. The last step concerns the application of a discourse-analysis study. This is especially relevant because of the often-heard criticism that discourse concerns only words, nothing real (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 174). However, we should realize that "virtually the whole of anyone's understanding of the social world is mediated by discourse in the form of conversations, newspapers, novels, TV stories and so on" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 174). I will discuss this in detail in Chapter 7 (Implications for actions).

Labels and Concepts: How to Read Chair Data in Constructivist Thought

In the discussion about the commonality, contingency, and variability of chair roles in Chapter 2, we can see that the knowledge of chair roles from the literature makes use of two different structural entities, labels and concepts, without making this explicit. Labels and concepts are important entities to understand the analysis of this social-

constructivist study. Therefore, let me make this brief philosophical/critical introduction/detour.

Labels are words that stand for/apply to certain characteristics of a person or object. Concepts, on the other hand, are ideas or principles relating to something abstract (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). For example, the label or word *tree* is a summarizing name for a combination of several concepts. In other words, the word *tree* this stands for a combination of concepts like roots, branches, and leaves. All these concepts together make up an "idea(-1)" tree, even though we do not know what the specific characteristics of a real tree are--its size, color, whether it is (temporarily) with/without leaves;--this is highly variable.

One might suggest that labels are rather straightforward. However, labels are constructions that people create. Labels do not represent something in the "outside world." Nonetheless, we often forget this, and so we reify labels, that is, "turn something abstract into a material thing" (Potter, 1997, p. 107). As such, labels become objects that take on a life of their own. For example, think of the racial classifications in the U.S. census, employing human-made labels, that are used to develop specific policies and that are highly contested because a particular classification favors certain groups and works over other groups.

In this study, chair roles also need to be viewed as labels for various concepts. The assumption is that a role is a label people construct for a specific combination of tasks and responsibilities, and possibly reflecting certain values. We cannot know precisely what chairs mean when they say, "I am a chair." We do not know which

multiple concepts exactly make up the label *chair*, is it faculty, administrator and/or something else, or perhaps any or all of the 28 categories Tucker (1992) devised?

Reinforced by role ambiguity, chairs have to "fill in" their role(s), what it means to be chair. Therefore, we can argue that they construct their own job. One can imagine that when chairs use the label *leader*, this can have multiple meanings. At the same time, chairs might use different labels to describe activities that are similar or identical. The following is an example of how chairs understand their administrative role in different ways.

Some chairs, when asked about their administrative role, refer only to the paperwork that needs to be done, whereas others define their administrative role as the daily management of the department. We can see that a different conceptualization of the label *administrative role* provides the chair with a divergent meaning, which in turn can be used to create different arguments. In the first example, administrative work might be considered useless, boring, and time-consuming. As a consequence, this type of administrative work is considered to be taking time away from that which matters, such as teaching and research, and thus it conflicts with the chair's scholarly work. In the second example of administrative work as service, it becomes important for the day-to-day operations so that the department runs smoothly and faculty can do their work of research and teaching without needing to worry about other things. This work of serving the faculty's well-being creates less conflict with the chair's scholarly work because it can be seen as equally important for the chair. In other words, role conflict and role ambiguity are not obviously "out there" but are co-constructed in discourse by using

discursive resources. Therefore, some chairs (seem to) suffer less from role conflict and role ambiguity than others.

Because labels, and the roles they are supposed to represent, have multiple meanings, they need to be interpreted to be understood. As we know from communication theory, interpretations are not created by the chair alone, nor is it only a cognitive process. Meaning-making happens between people, in social interactions. As such, it is based on the idea of indexicality, that is, "the meaning of a word or utterance is dependent on its context of use" (Potter, 1997, p. 43). As a consequence, the meaning of a label such as chair or faculty member, or entrepreneurial chair, is never fixed but is always changing, depending on the context and need of use. This was clearly reflected in the interviews with two of the more experienced chairs, who had 7 and 8 years of official leadership experience, respectively. These chairs argued that the chair work is complex and variable, and has many layers and dimensions. In general, more experienced chairs are capable of more nuanced statements about administration because they have been in that position for a longer time. They have seen that there is no such thing as one administrative role but that there are many tasks within one role and that every situation is different. Of course, they might prefer one task over another, but they have a more complex picture than less experienced chairs. On the other hand, chairs with less than one term of experience often use the label *chair* in a way that suggests that it is a fixed, almost single entity. These chairs do not spend time describing the role in detail, and there are no nuances; they give almost a black-and-white version. This technique of simplification strengthens their argument and makes it possible to treat being a chair as something negative, something they would rather not be, because if one were to split

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being a chair into 30 roles, some of those concepts might be not so bad, which would weaken the argument.

I want to repeat that, according to the paradigm of this dissertation, social constructivism, labels and their meaning are not merely a matter of people being in direct interaction with one another. From a postmodern viewpoint, the roles and the identities we create are structured by larger societal, cultural, economic, and political forces and discourses that guide and define, but also can limit, the discursive resources, e.g., labels and concepts, that are available when we think and talk about ourselves. As such, the construction of identities is also "part of a collective domain of negotiation, debate, and argumentative and ideological struggle" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 77).

Criteria for Evaluation of Discourse Analysis

In contrast to quantitative work with its rigorous verification of sampling, reliability, validity, and hypothesis construction, discourse analysis relies on other criteria for gaining credibility. According to Potter and Wetherell (1987, pp. 169-172), four main analytic techniques can be used to determine the validity of discourse analysis:

1. Coherence: "Analytical claims are supposed to form a coherent discourse" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 125). One way of testing coherence is by looking for apparent exceptions or negative instances, also called deviant cases, in a pattern or theme (Taylor, 2001, p. 320). Studying these apparent exceptions leads to clarifying the original pattern or theme in even more detail. This means that either the apparent exception is indeed an exception or that it is not an exception, so that the pattern or theme needs to be reformulated. This increases rigor and confirms "the explanatory scope" (Potter &

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Wetherell, 1987, p.170) of the pattern or theme. Furthermore, the analysis should cover "both the broad pattern, and account for many of the micro-sequences" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 170). In this study, I undertook an elaborate process to compare and contrast excerpts and to change the boundaries of the excerpts to verify the best fit of excerpts in specific themes.

2. Detail: Another way to provide rigorous analysis is by presenting rich detail in data and in analysis, which is important for validating the findings (Taylor, 2001, pp. 321-323). For this study, I transcribed the original interview texts in a way that guaranteed the information that was needed for a good understanding of the interviewees' meaning. To do this, I transcribed the words of both interviewee and interviewer in their entirety to ensure that the dialogic conversation, which included sequential turn-taking (an important aspect of conversation analysis), reacting to one another, made sense. After all, discourse analysis is not just about the interviewee but about the social interaction between people.

3. Participants' orientation: Discourse analysts focus on the meaning the subjects make themselves, not on an abstract meaning or on the researcher's meaning. In other words, how a subject treats a particular question or comment from the conversation-partner is the main guideline and justification for the researcher's own interpretation (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 170). In this study, my main focus was on the chairs' variable meaning of certain labels and concepts, such as *research* and *administrator*. However, in naming the topics in Chapter 5, I used my own language, that is, the researcher's language because this better summarized the commonalities among the excerpts of the various chairs.

4. Fruitfulness: A discourse analysis has greater validity if it allows for new and meaningful explanations (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 171) and generates new theories and hypotheses (Taylor, 2001, p. 323). By reading the answers to the research questions (Chapter 5), as well as the findings and implications (Chapter 7) of this study, I hope the reader can see the relevance of this study --for better understanding how chairs deal with role conflict and role ambiguity through constructing specific situated role identities-- by offering a relatively new methodology, discourse analysis, to study how people cope with problems. In this study I was less concerned with advancing the discourse methodology as such, even though I criticized discourse analysis for not including the personal contextual information of the interviewees. This information was included (see next section, Limitations and Weaknesses of Discourse analysis) in the present study.

Other criteria for validity that sometimes are mentioned are:

5. Location of research in previous discourse-analytic work (Taylor, 2001, p. 320), for example, by using or at least acknowledging conversation analysis theory and methods (for example, the concept of turn-taking) or other discursive devices (see Potter, 1997). As the reader will see, this study is located in previous work in terms of its methodology. However, regarding the topic of this study, no examples in discourse analysis were available.

6. Elaborate analysis in the report: A report is not just a way to present the findings; it is part of constructing the findings. Thus, as part of the discourse analysis process, the researcher presents the

> analysis and conclusions in such a way that the reader is able to assess the researcher's interpretations. ... A representative set of examples from the area of interest must be included along with a detailed interpretation which links analytic claims to specific parts or aspects of the extracts. In this way, the entire reasoning

process from discursive data to conclusions is documented in some detail and each reader is given the possibility of evaluating the different stages of the process, and hence agreeing with the conclusions or finding grounds for disagreement. (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 172)

Providing the reader with the verbatim interview transcriptions, along with their analysis, is a way to increase credibility of the study findings by producing "accountable knowledge," which involves, among other things, "making the intellectual *processes* involved in producing knowledge-claims, and not just the end-*product* of these in the form of conclusions or 'findings,' fully transparent and available for scrutiny by others" (Stanley, 2004, p. 8).

7. Another step in the research process that helps to build credibility is memo writing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Memo-writing is intended for the researcher to (a) intermediately reflect on specific coding and comparing and on possible conflicts in thinking, and (b) spontaneously make initial analyses by using data examples (see also Charmaz, 2003, p. 261; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 224). As part of the analysis for this study, I wrote several memos, which helped me clear my thinking and start linking analytic ideas together. This was especially relevant when developing the themes.

Finally, I must repeat that, from a relativist standpoint, the analyses and findings of this study are not the truth. They are not "the only possible representation of the world but, rather, just one version which is part of the discursive struggle within the research field in question" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 116). After all, scientific knowledge is not a reflection of an existing reality waiting to be discovered; the knowledge itself is *"productive,"* that is, a way to create the world, realities, and identities (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 116).

Limitations and Weaknesses of Discourse Analysis

In this section, I discuss the limitations and weaknesses of discourse analysis.

First of all, discursive psychology, the version of discourse analysis that is used in this study, is "concerned with public discourse, and it does not provide any guidance as to how we may study internalized, or private, manifestations of discourse such as thought or self-awareness" (Willig, 2001, p. 101). It does not look at mental states or cognitive processes. Discourse analysts do not argue that these do not exist, merely that "reality or non-reality of mental entities" (p. 101; see also Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 180) is not relevant for discourse analysis.

Second, in this form of discourse analysis, discourse is seen as a form of action with which people construct realities that deal with issues of stake, interest, and accountability. As discussed in the section on Self, discourse analysist assume that people strategically use discursive devices and discourses to manage a "situation" or problem, whether that is answering an interview question about one's research productivity or dealing with a difficult faculty member during an evaluation. "The self is thus articulated in discourse in ways that will maximize one's warrant or claim to be heard. Some versions of the self will thus come to predominate in some contexts" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 108). According to Willig (2001), despite the assumption of motivation of stake, discourse analysis does not and cannot explain individual differences between people, for example, in the same situation. Why do certain individuals pursue or fail to pursue certain discursive objectives (Willig, 2001, p. 101)? I will go further with this under the next point.

Finally, as we know, discourse analysis focuses on language use in certain settings. For example, discourse analysis is used to study phone calls to emergency numbers (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990), therapy sessions (Edwards, 1995), and certain groups in specific countries, such as the Pākehā in New Zealand (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). In the last study, as in so many other studies, scholars provided a general context, but this was "to orientate readers less familiar with the outlines of British intervention and its consequences" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 106), so merely as background orientation. Realizing that 81 people were interviewed as part of that study and thus individual context would result in massive amounts of data, which it would be impossible to handle and include, nonetheless the lack of individual data is important. Why was this not included?

> The assumption is that meaning is produced through/in the text and that there is, therefore, no need to go look "outside of the text" for further information. Here what matters is the way in which speakers read one another's comments within a particular context ... rather than who they are. (Willig, 2001, p. 102)

This was also the case in other studies. In general, in this form of discourse analysis, studies focus on three levels: (a) the use of language by way of discursive resources and strategies, e.g., turn-taking (conversation analysis); (b) the larger economic and social discourses that dialectically interact with local realities and selves (postmodernism); and (c) the action-orientation of discourse (Potter, 2004b, p. 3). However, it is more difficult to understand the action-orientation of a text if one does not look at the personal contextual information of the interviewees.

Beside the con-text, that is, the meaning of the text surrounding the excerpt (which is taken from conversation analysis), there is no information on what the subjects are like, what work they do, their background/education, their gender, their race, their

marital status, and so on. In this study, I included this background context because it helped me interpret the use of the textual devices: Which reality did this person create, and why? What is his investment in this story? Including the context makes interpretations more credible and thus valid. The background information is needed; after all, each person is different, something that must be taken into account as well. As such, discourse analysts look only at the bigger, sociological picture of a group, say Pakeha (Caucasian people in New Zealand), but not at the individual's situation. Yet, the individual's situation can also partly help explain the person's interests and state of mind.

Reflexivity

Following from epistemological assumptions, it is clear that in qualitative research the inquirer has a responsibility for the research and a relationship with the subjects that differs from that in positivistic research. In positivistic research the researcher is assumed to act as a neutral observer who discovers data "out there." The researcher is not just the one who is responsible for the research; he or she is also considered the expert on the matter at hand, even when it concerns the interpretations, ideas, and actions of the subjects. The qualitative researcher, in contrast, shares responsibility for the research with the subjects as the data and the interpretation of these data are generated in interaction between researcher and subjects. This implies that the researcher cannot and should not be expected to be the expert in matters that concern the subjects' experiences and meaning-making. The researcher simply does not know. On the other hand, co-creation of data and interpretations between researcher and subjects also implies that, in the constructivist view, both parties influence this process by way of their

worldviews, experiences, expertise, and values (Greene, 2003). As a result, "different

knowers holding different ideals and values can construct different meanings, even in the

same situation" (Greene, 2003, p. 598). The qualitative researcher should not merely be

aware of this subjectivity, that is, value-ladenness (negatively referred to as "bias"), and

what it means procedurally and personally (described as "being reflexive"). The

qualitative researcher is expected to use this subjectivity as an asset in trying to achieve

the goal of understanding (*Verstehen*) how subjects construct the world in which they live

and their experiences and perceptions.

This discussion on subjectivity is intended to indicate the reflexive character of

this qualitative and constructivist study. As part of the reflexive process for this study, in

the following paragraphs I give the reader an idea of my own experience, interests, views,

and values.

The idea to study chairs in academe was initiated by my belief that middle-level

management is critical to the survival of an institution of higher education. Reading the

literature, I became aware that the majority of important decisions concerning teaching,

research, and service are made in the departments. During my experience as a graduate

assistant for a director of planning, I also had the opportunity to be part of discussions

with individual chairs or in focus groups. I was acquainted with two of the chairs whom I

interviewed for this study because of my assistantship; that is, I had met them once or

twice before but had not worked with them.

Because of what I had seen and read, my interest in chairs was aroused; I wanted

to know more about them, especially how they function, taking into account their

difficult position as linking pin between faculty and administrators. On the other hand, I

also believed that this linking-pin position could be advantageous, if well used, as it can provide access to people and information. In other words, I concluded that chairs should be in a good position to learn.

I do not have "participant" knowledge of chairs; that is, I have not been a chair and thus lack the experience and common-sense knowledge that every faculty member who has ever been a chair has gained. Nor have I been geographically close to a chair so that I would have been able to observe how a chair works (I have not been a member of a department myself, nor have any of my immediate family or friends been a chair). This will probably limit my meaning-making capabilities regarding the experiences and challenges of chairs. I hope to alleviate this problem somewhat by using a constructivist viewpoint that invites the subjects to participate actively in the construction of knowledge.

Here, I want to address the power differences between researcher and subjects in this study. As stated before, all chairs in this study were men, whereas I am a woman. Furthermore, I conducted this research as part of my Ph.D. requirements, that is, as a student, whereas the chairs were tenured academic professionals and researchers. Finally, I had worked as a graduate assistant in the administration, whose top official was the provost. Even though the provost was not my direct supervisor, faculty and also chairs sometimes interpret such a person as being from the "other side," someone to be wary of. After all, can such a person be trusted? What if she communicates what was said to her former "boss"? For the sake of confidentiality, I assured the chairs during the interviews that their responses would be treated with the utmost discretion.

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My father instilled in me the belief that people are lifelong learners. This means not only that a person learns various skills, knowledge, and trades during a lifetime, but also that one never knows from whom and in what situations one can learn something. In other words, one can obtain information about the usefulness of a specific computer program by talking to the system administrator at work or learn the basics of playing a piano by watching, listening, and asking questions of knowledgeable people. Learning entails seeing an opportunity to learn. At the same time, learning involves interaction with people, as well as with objects like books or computers. However, whether and what one has learned often is an observation or decision made in retrospect. In addition, learning or having gained knowledge also depends on what is considered to be "useful" or "valuable" knowledge in a specific situation or community.

When I read studies using the social practice framework, particularly Lave's interpretation (Lave, 1993, in press), I recognized the same basic ideas as in my own view of learning. One of the ideas is that proponents of the social practice framework believe in the situatedness of learning and knowledge (Lave, 1993, pp. 12, 15). But what spoke to me most was that, as Lave phrased it, "learning is ubiquitous in ongoing activity, though often unrecognized as such" (p. 5). This statement offers a liberating view of traditionally narrowly defined concepts of learning and thus of knowledge.

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF SITUATED IDENTITIES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS:
A DISCURSIVE APPROACH

VOLUME II

By

Karin Christina Rade

A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE DATA ANALYSES

Introduction

In Chapter 5, the main focus is on the outcomes of the in-depth and extensive analyses, which resulted in eight rhetorical topics. Furthermore, I will answer the research questions that guided this study. In answering these questions, I discuss several topics: the nature of chairs' role identity, the discursive resources or strategies that are used to construct role identity, the reproduced identities, the places of identity creation, the types of chair discourses and practices, the dialectical nature of identities, and the time factor involved in the development of chairs' role identities.

Before reporting the results of the data analyses, I will introduce the participants in this study: Chair Shaw, Director Agrisini, Chair Delaney, and Director Maynard.

Introduction to the Chairs and Their Context

Before I introduce the subjects who participated in this study, I need to clarify that although this dissertation is focused on chair role identity, role conflict and role ambiguity, the sample I chose consisted of both chairpersons of departments and directors of professional schools. In general, in the chair literature no such distinction is specified. But, both chairpersons and directors have to cope with role identity problems related to role conflict and role ambiguity. As such I included both groups in the sample. To "standardize" and simplify references to the research topic, I maintain the labels *chair, chair roles*, and *chair identity* throughout the whole dissertation, except when referring to the individual chair or director.

Below, I describe each chair's background, his socialization in this role, the chair's work, and his general strategy. Also included are succinct descriptions of the history of previous chairs in the department, and the department's history (if chairs provided these data). It is relevant to be aware of these contexts, in order to be able to situate the chairs and their constructions of the world and reality, and to better understand their multiple and conflicting identities.

The descriptions in this section are based on the interviews I had with the chairs and the curricula vitae they shared with me. I did not use any other material, except the departmental and school web pages. To obscure the chairs' identities, I have omitted and altered some minor details of their background. At this point, I would like to remind readers that, in discourse analysis, the truth and reality of what is being said are irrelevant because it is assumed that truth and reality do not exist "out there." Words, phrases, yes, language and discourse, are used to *construct* realities. As Wetherell and Potter (1992) argued, "We do not want to now suggest that 'what happened,' the social context 'surrounding' discourse, can be described in any simple or neutral way as a convenient frame for our analyses" (p. 105). Everything that is being said, including "facts" about the department (for example, numbers), needs to be interpreted as a way of reality construction on the part of the chair/director. Of course, we also need to realize that my own selection, paraphrasing, and interpretation of the interview text are forms of reality construction.

Concerning the more general institutional context for these chairs, such as the cultural, historical, social, and public characteristics, I did not particularly focus on these

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aspects in this summary section. In principle, all of the chairs were part of the same environment, and they themselves did not address these characteristics as such. Nonetheless, we need to realize that, despite sharing the same external circumstances, the chairs interpreted the same "data" individually and locally. When relevant, the information that is necessary for interpretation is included as part of the analysis section.

The only part of the institutional context that I think is relevant to mention now, because all chairs addressed this issue and because it deeply influences what a chair can do, is today's financially stringent times. The institution at which the chairs were employed is a public institution that is highly dependent on state support for its functioning. Due to the financial decline since 2000/2001, institutions, including University X, have received less funding. Therefore, all of the chairs in this study were dealing with difficult budget issues. They had a vision for growth in certain areas and improvements in other areas, but with fewer financial resources, this posed many challenges. Nonetheless, as will be seen in this section and in the analyses that follow, some departments and schools were in a healthier financial situation to start with and/or were developing new ways to increase independent funding.

Chair Shaw

Background. Chair Shaw was in the 60-64 age group. At the time of the study, he had been at University X for more than two decades and was in his fifth year as chair for a department in the social sciences. He was seriously considering a second term but was willing to continue as chair only if the department received some additional financial resources in return. Before becoming a chair, Shaw had not had much administrative experience (for example, as interim chair).

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Socialization as chair. Shaw's socialization as chair took place primarily in his

first two years in the position. One of the major problems in the first year as chair was his

unfamiliarity with the annual institutional and collegial requests for reports/information,

which were made in an untimely fashion.

As part of this process, Shaw consulted with his predecessor daily for the first few

months. At the time of the study, he was an enthusiastic member of the regional

leadership development program and attended its institutional follow-up meetings. These

meetings provided him with important background information on certain issues, such as

institutional and statewide policies. The basis of his learning was consulting people

around him.

Work. Beside the chair work, Shaw taught one class per year, and he was active in

research (He is a principal investigator on at least one grant).

General strategy to work effectively as chair. Shaw's general strategy for getting

things done in the department was to be proactive in terms of knowing what the faculty

wanted/did not want and what their general attitude was.

History of chairs in the department. In general, chairs in this department stay in

their leadership position as long as they wish. For example, the previous chair was in that

position for more than a decade. The previous chair was considered a good one; during

his tenure, the faculty left a great deal of the departmental work to him. At the same time,

the faculty did not believe they had a sufficiently strong voice in departmental matters.

The department. Shaw was chair of a large social science department, which had

a major focus on research. The department comprised six interest groups, some of which

were the top programs in the nation. The interest groups worked fairly autonomously.

In terms of climate, this was a pleasant department, and its members were fairly congenial. People were not easily angered and were not easily split up, but they also were fairly independent: The interest groups did not engage with one another very much. There was a good work ethic in the department, and people were very productive. The chair was happy about the internal climate and dynamics in the department, although he did not talk about it a lot. In general, the department was academically strong, financially sound, and had a strong identity.

Director Agrisini

Background. Director Agrisini was in the 50 to 54 age group. The director of a professional school in the social sciences, he was in his second term. He was an external candidate for this position; he had accepted the offer because it gave him a chance to move into a senior administrative role. When he was still a faculty member, he served on several committees in the school, so he had some idea what administration entailed.

In general, as a faculty member, Agrisini was conscious of the strengths and weaknesses of people in leadership positions around him. However, his interest in administrative work did not originate from observing others.

Socialization as director. For Agrisini, the transitions between the various increasingly administrative positions he assumed were mild and incremental. This was also the case for his move to become the director of the professional school at University X, although the financial issues were more complicated because so many programs were involved. In his first year as a director, at a previous institution, he was fairly oblivious to the complexity and demands of the job as director.

Adding to his previous experience, Agrisini learned a lot about the unique process at University X by participating in Chair Introduction Seminar and faculty development sessions, which were offered regularly during the year. These meetings provided him with a professional and social network of chairs and directors. In addition, he had an informal network of colleagues with whom he could talk about the challenges of the job; this network provided support as well as mentor relationships.

Finally, Agrisini was a board member of a national association of chairs and directors in his particular discipline. Through this association he was connected to many colleagues, enabling him to advance his knowledge, skills, and insight into the work and identity of director. In general, he believed he continuously was making transitions, and he realized that he still needed to relinquish certain practices from when he was a faculty member.

Work. Besides the director work, Agrisini was actively engaged in research (PI on at least one grant); he taught infrequently. He viewed his work as having many layers and dimensions of problems and opportunities. He changed his roles and their mix, depending on internal and external circumstances.

General strategy to work effectively as director. Being an advocate for the school included Agrisini's keeping informed, lobbying, and creating alliances to position the school the best he could. The task involved promoting the school and defending its internal and external position and quality. Furthermore, Agrisini saw connections between people, systems, and the activities in which he participated.

History of directors in the school. The previous directors of the school already had set the tone for a collaborative, supportive, and open culture. They also had started healthy and fruitful programs, such as distance education.

This was achieved despite a high turnover in leadership. There were many short-term and interim directors, due to which the school felt a lack of leadership and continuity. Agrisini was one of the longest serving directors of the school. He signed up for another term so that the school would benefit from stability.

Agrisini's predecessor had done a good and sometimes extraordinary job but also made some enemies, a situation that Agrisini had had to mend. His perception was that it was fairly easy to take over the leadership of the school because he had the advantage of being an outsider.

The school and its history. In general, there was no single development that defined the school or changed and shaped it. Instead, many little things had formed the professional school, resulting in a characteristic culture that was different from that in other, nonprofessional, departments. Because of the department's discipline, the social connections among and between people, whether students, faculty, agencies, or community, were very important, as were research, teaching, and service. Agrisini tried to deepen these values and commitments.

The faculty of this professional school work, administer, and lead in many different (outreach, community) programs, projects, and settings, but at the same time the school represents a close unit (for example they organize in-house faculty development). What is valued is less individualism and more collaboration.

The school has many primary administrative positions but also faculty leaders such as associate directors; a rather hierarchical "business" organization is used to manage all the work. About two thirds of the faculty have some type of administrative assignment. There are also many advisory boards, for example for field education, who work autonomously; Agrisini only becomes involved when there is a problem.

Chair Delaney

Background. Chair Delaney was in the 45 to 49 age group. He had been at University X for more than a decade and was starting his second year as chair of a department in the natural sciences. Before becoming a chair, he had some administrative experience as a member of the advisory board. He also wrote a position/vision paper about the future of the department at University X before becoming chair.

Becoming chair. The situation of the department was an important factor in Delaney's decision to become chair. There was a sense of improving things for the department, a way to protect the department from closing. Delaney's agreement with the dean was that he would serve as chair for three years, long enough to position the department for an external chair. As such, Delaney was not intrinsically motivated to become chair. Nonetheless, he did not exclude being a chair at some point later in his career, perhaps at another institution.

Socialization as chair. Part of Delaney's socialization as chair began while he was just a faculty member. A previous chair of the department, who was a role model when Delaney was still a faculty member, at some point was no longer active in research but spent his time predominantly doing administrative work. This development influenced

Delaney strongly and negatively shaped his views of chairs. For example, one view is that many chairs experience burn-out.

One of the skills that Delaney was still developing was dealing with the individual differences of faculty and staff. Furthermore, he was not a micromanager; he believed that day-to-day affairs needed to be handled by a business manager and other support staff.

Delaney worked closely with his predecessor and some administrators to solve one of the problems he had inherited. Concerning the regional leadership development program, Delaney went once but asserted that it took time away from teaching, research, and his family.

Work. Besides doing the chair work, Delaney still taught and was actively involved in research (he was PI on at least one grant).

General strategy to work effectively as chair. One of Delaney's strategies was to create involvement and trust in an open and transparent decision-making process. Another strategy was delegating tasks to responsible persons.

History of chairs in the department. In general, chairs in this department remained in their leadership position as long as they wished. The chair immediately before Delaney was an interim chair who, due to the limited time-frame, had difficulties getting things done. At the time, the department asked for an external search to fill the position of chair, but that request was denied. The chair before that had been chair for more than one term but slowly burned out. Nevertheless, another of the previous chairs had been a role model for Delaney (see above).

In general, the chairs in this department created a culture of closed, verbal, and one-on-one decision-making that sometimes led to problems. They did not use the departmental advisory board very often.

The department and its history. The department had unique demographic characteristics: There were many young assistant professors and many tenured faculty who were going to retire soon, but few faculty in their middle years.

When Delaney assumed the chair position, he stepped into a department that was in crisis mode. There was a danger that the department would be closed down. The previous interim chair had a hard time getting things done due to the limited time frame. In addition, half of the available fte (full-time-equivalent faculty) left within a year, and there was no strategy to replace them, only ad hoc plans. The department drifted and was in chaos.

In the current departmental climate, faculty barely assisted the chair with his work. In general, faculty morale was low, and Delaney was working to improve the situation by sharing the decision-making process. The department did not have long-term organizational experience being involved in departmental issues, such as the budget.

The department consisted of four interest groups. In principle, the groups were not competitive; it was the individuals within the groups who competed for resources. In addition, the department was not characterized by strong cohesiveness.

Director Maynard

Background. Director Maynard, who was in the 45 to 49 age group, had been a director of a professional school in the social sciences at University X for several years. At the time of this study, he was open to the possibility of accepting a second five-year

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term. Maynard had had some supervisory and managerial experience in graduate school, working as a project coordinator. In general, he was conscious of the strengths and weaknesses of people in leadership positions around him, whether as a student or a faculty member.

Before coming to University X, Maynard had held leadership positions at other institutions. When he was an assistant professor, he became director of graduate studies at University Z. Then, Maynard was a chair for four years at that institution, a department in which the chair position was a rotating one. In addition, for a few years in between Universities Z and X, he had major administrative responsibilities in developing a new graduate school at a third institution.

Socialization as director. A large part of Maynard's socialization as director had already taken place at his previous institution (see above). In that sense, he brought experience, knowledge, and awareness with him to University X. Building on his previous experience, Maynard learned a lot about the unique process at University X by participating in Chair introduction seminar and the faculty development sessions, which were organized regularly during the year. These meetings had provided him with a professional and social network of chairs and directors. He also participated in the regional leadership development program.

Work. Besides his work as director, Maynard was actively involved in research (he was PI on at least one grant). He did most of the research work when traveling, which he did regularly, or on weekends. Maynard taught one class every other year.

Maynard viewed entrepreneurial activities as an important part of his work. He described himself as a manager, as well.

General strategy to work effectively as director. One of Maynard's strategies was to create a collective vision that contributed to the missions of the school. A second strategy was to work with faculty on an individual basis, for example, tailoring opportunities to match faculty members' needs and preferences.

History of directors in the school. In general, directors stayed in their leadership positions as long as they wished. Maynard's predecessors had been directors for multiple terms, which resulted in stable leadership. A few of those predecessors excelled in their field, but that field was not strongly tied to the main discipline of the school. Maynard's scholarship was more at the emerging center of the school's discipline.

The school and its history. Maynard was the director of a professional school. A professional school has strong relationships with its professional practitioner community and is part of a larger system of service organizations, with which it has much collaboration. There are many outreach programs for the benefit of the general community, which contributes to the complexity of the director's job in terms of finance and budget. This professional school offered many programs, one of which was considered the oldest and one of the best of its kind in the nation.

The school comprised two major interest groups and a large outreach unit, which was self-supporting. In the 1990s, a trend was started to have this school focus more on research and traditional scholarship, sometimes to the detriment of professional work and relationships. Therefore, Maynard's mandate was to strengthen the link with the professional world anew, which resulted in hiring academic/professional faculty. This trend was started with the overall consent of the faculty and was continuing to shift the nature of their work, albeit slowly. In general, the school was in development and was

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working on a new vision. At the same time, the shift coincided with general budget cuts and thus demanded prioritization.

The trend to focus more on research and traditional scholarship was reinforced by another environmental development in the discipline (both academic and in practice). In recent years, the discipline has undergone major developments that have led to increased interdisciplinary collaborations, financial opportunities, and many new prospects for employment. This last aspect of the development of the discipline indicates that the demand side is larger than the supply side, which led to the loss of many faculty members the preceding year, mostly due to the recruitment efforts of other institutions. The school successfully retained a few faculty members who intended to leave by matching or surpassing another institution's offer or convincing them of the school's advantages. It was a challenging time for the school.

In general, the climate in the school is healthy; faculty help the director when needed. In addition, due to the large number of programs, the director is assisted by a number of associate directors.

Rhetorical Topics of Analysis

Introduction

Discourse analysis is recognized as a labor-intensive process. After careful and detailed transcriptions, initial open coding to identify ideas and concerns, and many rereadings of the transcripts, the main part of the analyses, with a focus on language and discourses, still needs to be done. Coding in discourse analysis functions as a preliminary sorting of relevant data into specific themes, which can later be used for finely tuned

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analysis. As such, coding is a more pragmatic than an analytic research activity (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 167).

In the discursive part of the analysis, what the researcher is looking for is not so much consistency, which in other kinds of research is assumed to reflect the accuracy of descriptions and validity of findings, as variation because the focus is on what talk can achieve in different situations and for different purposes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 164). The idea is to identify patterns of variation and commonalities, as well as nuances and contradictions, by "detailed and repeated reading of the discourse against the background of the discourse-analytic perspective" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 195). The focus is not only on analyzing consecutive pieces of text but also on comparing and contrasting excerpts that are far apart. Furthermore, analyses are carried out both within cases (or interviews or subjects) and across them. Thus, there are multiple units and levels of analysis, and because the researcher needs to read, reread, and cross-read, the analysis can be started at any point in the text. There is no standard method or even order of analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 96). In this methodology, analysis is really a deconstruction (Willig, 2003, p. 170).

I chose the particular topics for inclusion in this chapter as follows. After an initial line-by-line open coding cycle, I developed focused codes based on concepts and statements that the chairs linked to role identity and role conflict, such as development of self, research, career orientation, identification, and alignment. During the focused coding process, I realized that the problems of creating boundaries around the categorizations of words into groups and creating precise definitions of these codes was part of a typical discourse-analytic approach/process. Discourse analysis problematizes categorizations by

showing that categories are not pre-existent or fixed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), but rather discursive constructions. As such, the labels and arguments used in the interviews can be viewed as flexible resources "to be deployed as and when required" (Willig, 2003, p. 195).

Taking this into account, the focused codes led to the identification and formulation of eight rhetorical topics. These rhetorical topics represent *linguistic resources* with which these chairs constructed their identity focusing on role conflict and ambiguity. In other words, this is the repertoire of arguments that chairs drew upon to express their complex and ambiguous chair position and their perception of faculty and administrative work. The eight rhetorical topics are the following:

1. Future career

2. Chair work as strategy and politics

3. Chairing as a profession status or personal choice

4. Chair work as balancing and/or integrating different roles

5. Research activities

6. Individual faculty goals versus collective chair goals

7. Administration versus administrators

8. Previous conceptualization of chair identity and work

As for creating the names of the topics in this chapter, I used my own, that is, the researcher's language because this better summarized the commonalities among the excerpts from the various chairs and directors. Furthermore, it should be noted that the topics of this study are not exhaustive. That is, other key topics might exist that were not addressed in the interviews and by these individual chairs.

Before beginning the analysis, I shall repeat one of the basic assumptions in the discourse-analysis perspective—that talk is not "*about* experiences, identities and mental states," but that identities are "constituted in and through language and that their meanings are inseparable from the ways they are described within the interactional context" (Widdicombe, 1993, p. 96).

The main focus of this study was on role identity and especially the role conflict and role ambiguity of chairs. From the literature, we know that chairs experience role conflict because of the nature of their job--in between the faculty and administration. As such, role conflict is a problem that needs to be solved, whether in actual practice or in discourse. To define role identity as a conflict to be solved fits well with one of the ways to look at text in discourse analysis. In this form, we "regard the ways things are said as a solution to a problem [Paul Drew, 1987]. The analyst's task is therefore to identify the problem and how what is said constitutes a solution" (Widdicombe, 1993, p. 97).

In the ensuing analysis, I provide long excerpts from the interview transcriptions to show the chairs' full responses concerning particular issues. In discourse analysis, it is "important that participants should discuss in full their ideas and understandings of the issue of concern. If this is allowed, then variation will emerge both due to the complexity of the issues explored and due to the functions of the discourse" (Marshall & Raabe, 1993, p. 36). Providing readers with the actual long interview transcriptions, along with their analysis, is a way to increase the credibility of the findings of a study by producing "accountable knowledge," which involves, among other things, "making the intellectual *processes* involved in producing knowledge-claims, and not just the end-*product* of these in the form of conclusions or 'findings,' fully transparent and available for scrutiny by

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others" (Stanley, 2004, p.8). (For more information, see Chapter 4, Criteria for Evaluation, and, Chapter 7, Limitations of This Study).

When displaying the interview texts (questions and answers/comments) and the analysis, I used the following conventions:

(1)   **Bold**—indicates my focus on a particular word; it does not reflect the chair's vocal accent (either in duration, strength, force, or intonation).

(2)   [   ] --my words/questions/comments inserted into the interview dialogue

Typical for discourse analysis, we assume that language 'acts' (Austin, 1962; Potter & Wetherell, 1987); it is not just descriptive, it is performative. At the same time, in discourse analysis, the intention of the agent is not relevant. This has consequences for how language is used to formulate a discourse study's analyses and report. The two main consequences are the following:

1. Frequent use of passive voice: the focus is not so much on the person who makes a statement or claim as on *how* a statement or claim is 'treated' as part of the dialogic conversation. For example, the focus is less on "Agrisini *(who) created* a link between the now and the future" and more on "a link that *is created* between the now and the future." The change of active to passive voice results also in a change of verb tenses.

2. Frequent use of anthropomorphisms (e.g., "the text does, discounts, infers ..."). For example, "this rhetoric is a way to manage a dilemma of stake; it discounts the idea that ... ."

In general, in the introductory text at the beginning of each topic and in the summarizing text at the end of each topic I use the past tense.

Topic 1: Future Career

The first topic concerns the statement that chairs do not want to become deans or to stay on as administrators in other positions. This topic--that these chairs do not want to become deans, nor do they want to remain administrators--concerns the future career of these chairs, but it encompasses even more. We could take this statement at face value and conclude that chairs, in general, will never become deans or further pursue an administrative career. But from real academic life, we know that some chairs do become deans or stay on as chairs for the rest of their work lives. Therefore, the statement is also a description of the chair's current attitude toward a life as an administrator. In that sense, it can be used to facilitate the construction of a chair who sees his current job as a temporary one before he returns to his exclusive faculty role.

We can see clearly how the future career is used as a criterion in constructing current identity. How can this be explained? In particular, how can chairs "make" this future career possible without saying so too directly, that is, without relinquishing the ideal faculty career/values? As we will see, the chairs in this study did so in diverse ways. Let me first show you examples of straightforward answers when chairs were asked about their future careers:

Excerpt 1: Delaney, I, p. 2
My goal and election to chair is to bring the department somewhat stability after the interim period and bad times. I do not intend to do this chair job longer than 3 years, just enough to position the department sufficiently for an external chair.

Excerpt 2: Shaw, II, p.1
I do not want to go somewhere else, I do not want to become dean. I am not stressed, I am also happy to go back to the faculty. This gives me a lot of independence.

Read like this, as loose statements, the matter of a future career as dean or continuing chair is out of the question. However, when we add the rest of the answer to excerpt 1, we can start to interpret it differently. For example:

Excerpt 3: Delaney, I, p.2
> My goal and election to chair is to bring the department somewhat stability after the interim period and bad times. I do not intend to do this chair job longer than 3 years, just enough to position the department sufficiently for an external chair.
> ... I expected that I would be good as chair, even though I did not want this job. At least I never wanted to do this job at this point in my career, later perhaps. Anyway, not here at University X, but in a different setting, like a small liberal arts college.

In the longer excerpt, Delaney claims that he does not want to continue this chair position after a period of three years. This is a rather short period because the general term at this university is five years. However, the period of three years is constructed as a "relatively long" period, as it is used in the argument of Delaney's bringing "the department somewhat stability." In contrast, Agrisini and Maynard, who have been directors at two different institutions already, construct "stability" and continuity differently, that is, by using it to indicate periods of two terms (10 years).

We also see that a link is created between the now and the future: "this job" versus "later perhaps." The statement "I did not want this job" is weakened by "at least ... not at this point in my career," and further by "anyway, not here" [so, it is not "and" but "or" for criteria]. In other words, the weakening of "I did not want this job" by providing timing and location reasons creates an opening for the possibility that this chair might go on and be a chair in the future, particularly at another institution. In other words, this chair made a future as dean or staying-on chair possible without saying so directly, that is, without letting go of the ideal faculty career/values. Another point to make here is that this linguistic construction offers an opportunity to define "who I am,"

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my role identity, based on what I will be in the future, or at least what I state/think about

the future. In that sense, it is not relevant that I am a chair now; that is only a temporary

state, and it will pass.

In the next excerpt, we can see the link between the chair's current identity and

his ideas about a future career. In other words, his future career is a criterion that is used

in constructing his current identity.

Excerpt 4: Agrisini, III, pp. 2/3:

> There is only a very few areas that I can do something in and that is a much smaller area than before. So I kind of have replaced my expert knowledge in a research field with a set of general skills and knowledge about administrative leadership and education. That transition, I think, is still going on. Now, in part, I think that transition will never end because I know that someday I will go back to the ranks of the faculty.

Interviewer: [Okay]

> Unlike other administrators, my goal is not to be an administrator the rest of my life. My goal is also not to move to higher levels of administration within the university. I am right where I want to be, and in a few years I want to step down and be a professor again. So, I do not want to completely give up some identity as a faculty member because some day I want to be able to resume that again.

[That also answered one of my next questions about your future career as administrator.]

> That doesn't mean that if the right position came along in a university administration, I might [sic: not] be interested, but I do not think so. I think the more I look at administration above my level the less interesting it looks, because you spend more time in meetings, and you are further away from the things that I take great satisfaction in, which is getting to know students and working with faculty, and having time to work in the community. And all those things are very compromised right now, but I think that they would disappear if I would move up any further on the administrative ladder.

[Yeah, I heard from one of your colleagues, well two of them, who said, "Probably the chair or director position is the last place where you can still do the research. If you are a dean it is really impossible."]

> That is exactly right. So I think in many ways I am right where I am. Plus I have a lot of passion for my discipline but not a lot of passion for general administrative educational leadership. So I can be a great advocate for [the discipline], but I am not so sure that I can be a great advocate for other areas that do not interest me quite as much.

[Okay]

> So I think I am in the right spot for now.

Analysis. This excerpt is exemplary for the same reality construction being done in other chairs' interviews. Chairs claimed that they did not want to stay in the chair position, that they wanted to go back to the faculty ranks, and that they did not want to become deans. However, as we will see below, the situation is more complex than it appears.

Let me start with the third paragraph of this excerpt, which includes a rhetorically interesting construction of "I think the more I look at administration above my level the less interesting it looks, because ... you are further away from the things that I take great satisfaction in." The use of descriptions of higher administration that are "less interesting" (meetings) and the use of those descriptions of being a director in which Agrisini "great satisfaction" (students, faculty, community) clearly is constructed from a faculty viewpoint. It is also a very personal description because of the use of words of feeling: "the things that *I* take great **satisfaction** in." Feelings cannot easily be discounted. In addition, the things that Agrisini mentions as aspects of satisfaction were people--students, faculty, community--which are also not easily discounted. However, Agrisini did not mention research, until I brought it up, as this might be construed as professional gain and thus as a less valid argument.

Furthermore, this argument also receives credibility and hence increased factuality through use of the device, "the more I look at, ... the less ..." This statement implies that Agrisini had spent some time considering this option, comparing the two alternatives, and coming to a critical conclusion. This is a form of stake inoculation (Potter, 1997, p. 125), that is, a rhetorical construction that helps to counter the ease with which an argument can be undermined (Potter, 2004b, p. 19).

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Now let us look at Excerpt 4 as a whole. I focus here on the following sentences:

- I **know** that someday I **will** go back to the ranks of the faculty.

- My goal is **not** to be an administrator the rest of my life.

- My goal is also **not** to move to higher levels of administration within the university.

- I **am** right where I want to be.

- I **want to** step down and be a professor again.

- That doesn't mean that if the right position came along in a university administration I might [sic: not] be interested, but I do not think so.

- I think that they [things that Agrisini took great satisfaction in doing as a director] would disappear **if** I would move up.

- So I **think in many ways** I am right where I am.

- So I **think** I am in the right spot **for now.**

Several degrees of certainty can be observed in the foregoing statements, varying from "I know" to "I think." We see stronger and weaker degrees whose status, respectively, is more solid, literal, and unproblematic or more provisional, partial, interested, and defective (Potter, 1997, p. 113). The order of certainty in this case would then be:

- I am (stronger) versus. I think I am (weaker) / I know that (stronger) versus I think that (weaker).

- I want to.

- If.

The sentences with "I want to" and "if" are the weakest. The "I want to" construction is a reaffirmation of the previous sentence, "My goal is (also) not to." Both function as a device for showing intention, which is not the same as actually acting on this intention. It already creates room for nonintentional events that might occur or happen outside of the actor, and as a consequence of which Agrisini might feel prompted to change his mind. This is exactly what happens in the next sentence. The "if" construction that is used twice in the following sentences ("if the right position came along" and "if I would move up") "blurs the distinction between what is actual and what hypothetical" (Potter, 1997, p. 199). It manages the balance between possibility and improbability of Agrisini's taking another job in the administration.

The order in which this happens in the text is as follows: strong claim as fact ("I know that"), negative reaffirmation of the opposite ("my goal is not"), strong claim as fact ("I am"). Then I considered Agrisini's answers as a clear indication that he did not want to step up the career ladder as administrator. As a reaction, there are hypothetical "if"constructions ("if the right position came along" and "if I would move up") that treat the original strong claim as provisional (Potter, 1997, pp. 112, 199). Finally, the factuality of the original strong claim is weakly restored ("I think I am"), but only partially ("in many ways" and "for now").

The question remains what the description above was constructed to accomplish, something that Potter (1997) called "the action orientation" of accounts (pp. 108, 176). In other words, what are these rhetorical devices meant to do, in terms of action? With regard to this excerpt, I think the answer can be found in the faculty values and faculty culture. The general idea of this analysis is that chairs have a problem in terms of shifting

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their identity, in regard to their faculty-role and in regard to a possible dean-role. This fragment of text displaces attention from a problematic situation, namely, the fact that chairs or directors are not supposed to aspire to a deanship because it is assumed, from a faculty perspective, that they then would lose their faculty identity completely and permanently.

Even though this is not always the case, it is nonetheless part of the chair narrative and it is considered almost a virtue. Thus, chairs will only reluctantly and with much apprehension admit that they would choose a higher administrative position. Compared to the other chairs I interviewed, Agrisini was already so socialized as an administrator (he was in his second term; see his frequent positive use of the word *administrator* in the rest of the interview) that he is able to carefully manage the idea of staying on or moving up in the administration. In his view, things are not black and white, but nonetheless he is hesitant about openly and directly articulating the alternative of an administrative career (for example, see Condor, 2000, p. 193).

The following excerpt, about a possible administrative career in the future, is part of a larger dialogue between interviewer and interviewee about Maynard's changing role identity over the years, something I will discuss as a whole and in greater detail separately under Topic 3 ("Chairing as a profession or not"). In contrast to Excerpt 4 of Agrisini, in this excerpt the focus is on research as professional fulfillment and as a criterion for going back to being a traditional faculty member.

Excerpt 5: Maynard, III, p. 3
I was recruited as director of the school.
[Can I then address you as a *professional director*? Or is it not done to distinguish it like this?]

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... You kind of hold those out as the kind of two extremes; then this problem I guess where I find myself is of a mixed role where I do intend ... I mean ... I don't really aspire to something like a dean or kind of a permanent administrative position and anticipate that at some point I will go back to the traditional faculty role. I still remain very active in my own research project, and I think part of this is that I get professional fulfillment out of that. It is also I don't want to have this period in my professional career where I was no longer involved in research. And particularly with the thought of going back at some point as a faculty member I would rather have, even if I can't devote the same amount of time to my research, that I do want to stay active in the field so I can do that. Having said that, I think one of the differences again between the university role and ..... and again, it may be just specific to my school, but.... Next year I'll go through a review process in terms of my having been director looking at the possibility of being reappointed for another term. And have kind of .. I don't know ... making a decision may be too strong, but in my mind I am thinking that if my faculty colleagues here remain supportive of me continuing in this role, that I would likely stay on for another term as director. And of course if the dean agrees with that. I kind of think both of those things will happen, unless I am just missing something. That I would have the support of my colleagues and dean to continue.

At the start of this excerpt, the rhetoric to construct a secure future returning to being a regular faculty member is careful, but it becomes less and less secure as the text goes on. For example, the word *really* in "I don't really aspire" weakens the idea that Maynard is absolutely not going to take a permanent administrative position. Moreover, saying that he does not "aspire" to this future is different from asserting that he will not actually do it, eventually. Durational vagueness in phrases like "I anticipate that at some point" and "the thought of going back at some point" reinforces the ambiguity of the time when that would occur. It creates an opening for an ultimate administrative career being merely not so likely, rather than impossible.

This opening is needed for the next argument, in which Maynard, surprisingly, claims that he would likely stay on as director for another five years. Even so, this other future is countered by the statement "And have kind of .. I don't know ... making a decision may be too strong, but in my mind. . . ." Its fragmented, unclear, doubtful ("I

don't know") nature suggests that if he did stay on as director, this could not be construed as a premeditated choice/decision. In addition, he gives no specific reason for staying on as director, although the reference to the supportiveness of faculty colleagues and the dean implies that it was not the director's wish to stay on but his colleagues' desire. In other words, there is a lack of personal agency here on the part of the director, and the agency that is accomplished is that of the colleagues.

In summary, we see a contrast between the initially suggested unlikelihood of an administrative career, because that would mean no longer being involved in research, and the actual positive concepts-in-use in his particular situation at the school. This makes an administrative career in practice possible without letting go of the ideal faculty values. As such, it manages the chair's current dilemma-filled identity.

Topic 2: Chair work as Strategy and Politics

The second topic focuses on the rhetorical use of strategy and politics as important factors in defining what it means to be a chair. Looking at the transcriptions, we see how differently Delaney and Agrisini constructed their ideas about what it means to be a chair by focusing on strategy and politics and how they created their arguments of positive or less positive images of chair work. In discourse analysis, "the sense of texts or talk is not seen as derived from their abstract meaning or organization but from their situated use" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90). The same topic was being constructed differently by each chair, and as such it could be used for different arguments. In turn, each version or account had a certain significance and social consequences (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 105).

Excerpt 6: Delaney, I, p. 1:

[What gets you up in the morning about being a chair?]
I hate the job. This is the worst job ever. ...
... As a chair, in contrast, you are not a free agent. You are heavily constrained (e.g., budget is a major constraint). A chair who likes administration and institutional politics probably still can achieve good things in a tight budget situation. But the chair's job is a challenge. For example, how to work the administration and how to *cajole* the faculty to work the case, that is, benefiting the department. This involves a set of skills. But there are many constraints and frustrations. This is so different than being a faculty member. As a chair you try to manage a bunch of free agents.

In his version of what it means to be a chair, we see that Delaney used such descriptions as "you are not a free agent," "you are heavily constrained," "the chair's job is a challenge," and "there are many constraints and frustrations." Words like *constrained, challenge,* and *frustrations* refer to difficult, if not negative, aspects of the environment in which a chair is required to work. This idea is strengthened or reinforced by particular constructions of the chair's job, namely, "to work the administration" and "to cajole the faculty." To cajole means to make somebody, in this case the faculty, do something by cleverly persuading or flattering them (Oxford Dictionary). In other words, to cajole has a dishonest, "dirty," and unfair connotation. It is a game of strategy and politics, which is used to construe the work of chair as something less positive than it might be. In addition, administration and politics are mentioned in one sentence, thereby suggesting that they are one-of-a-kind entities.

One possible interpretation of this strategy and politics story is that, as a chair, you must like institutional politics in order to be successful: The more clever you are, or the better you are at this game, the more successful you will be. Moreover, whether you like something or not is a matter of personality. Furthermore, to play strategy and politics, you need a certain kind of skill. Because of the negative construction of strategy and politics, the right personality and skills to perform this job of chair are, in fact, the

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negative kind. The strong suggestion that Delaney does not possess this negative

personality and skill set, therefore, is a positive thing.

This discourse of chairing as strategy and politics was positioned within the wider

discourse of academic freedom. As we will see in the next excerpt, Delaney positioned

himself on the faculty side: The faculty role is a positive role; administration and thus

chairing is considered negative. Moreover, a chair is not only constrained in his own

work, but a part of the chair's work is actually having to constrain the faculty in their

work.

Let us look at Excerpt 7, which is a full version of Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 7: Delaney, I, p. 1:
[What gets you up in the morning about being a chair?]
> I hate the job. This is worst job ever. Chairs burn out a lot; others, in contrast,
> thrive on it. Chairing takes you away from the business that really matters to a
> faculty member: freedom, and teaching and research.
> As a faculty you are a free agent: You set yourself questions, you take the
> resources you need, you advise students. There is lots of latitude and choice in
> your philosophy, especially concerning graduate students. You have a free hand in
> teaching and research. There are many realms of freedom; it is only limited by
> your own ambition and courses.
> As a chair, in contrast, you are not a free agent. You are heavily constrained (e.g.,
> budget is a major constraint). A chair who likes administration and institutional
> politics probably still can achieve good things in a tight budget situation. But the
> chair's job is a challenge. For example, how to work the administration and how
> to *cajole* the faculty to work the case, that is, benefiting the department. This
> involves a set of skills. But there are many constraints and frustrations. This is so
> different than being a faculty member. As a chair you try to manage a bunch of
> free agents.

Analysis. The main argument that is provided in Excerpt 7 concerns (academic)

freedom and autonomy, highly valued characteristics of what it means to be a faculty

member. A significant aspect of the freedom-and-autonomy discourse is that faculty are

equal and practice shared governance (decision-making). As I will argue below, being a

chair is a danger to the ideas and values of freedom and autonomy.

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In one way, in this excerpt a simple binary device (Horton-Salway, 2001, p. 168) is used to contrast what it means to be a faculty member and what it means to be a chair: the nature of the job in terms of freedom versus nonfreedom. However, it is not only a binary device; it is presented almost as a before-and-after story (Horton-Salway, 2001, p. 164): When I was only a faculty member, I had complete freedom; now that I am a chair, this has been taken away and I experience many constraints to my freedom. In addition, as evidence for the claim that chairs are not free agents, the talk is predominantly about playing politics and strategic manipulations (institutional politics, work the administration, cajole the faculty). Presented in these terms of freedom and nonfreedom, sufficient tension is created that it becomes natural for the listener to define being a faculty member as something positive (freedom) and being a chair as something negative (constraints and political games). Thus, the claim "I hate this job" is provided with credibility, and the listener's understanding for this position is enhanced.

To make more credible the claim that "Chairing takes you away ...: freedom, and teaching and research," and thus to undermine discounting this particular version of the reality of what it means to be a faculty member and a chair, Delaney used a particular rhetoric, namely, "as a faculty you are" and "as a chair you are." This makes Delaney part of a group of faculty and part of a group of chairs, all of whom possess similar characteristics, feel the same about what they do, and act in the same way. Thus, he becomes a representative of the category of faculty and category of chairs, not an individual with idiosyncratic, self-constructed ideas about faculty and chairs. It helps to establish the factuality of his claim.

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A third point is the different structure Delaney used to describe faculty and chairs. When describing faculty, a repetitive message is used of containing the words and concepts of freedom, teaching and research--literal in the first paragraph, and twice in second paragraph (including once descriptive: "setting questions" [research] and "advising students" [teaching]). Because of the straightforwardness of the message, reinforced by the use of active verbs (you set, you take, you advise), there is no doubt that Delaney is a faculty member who knows what he is talking about and who is good at what he does. On the other hand, when describing chairs, his message was more complex and ambiguous. First of all, being a chair is described in two ways: in terms of personality ("a chair who *likes* administration and institutional politics") and in terms of skills ("how to work the administration and how to cajole the faculty to work the case"). Second, it is suggested that Delaney does not possess this personality and these skills. As this personality and skill set are worked up as something less positive anyway (see above), in that sense it cannot be considered an important deficiency on the chair's part. Nonetheless, as described here, a chair needs these skills. So by talking in an ambiguous way about being a chair, the rhetoric obscures how important these skills might be and what might be achieved with them.

Let us now look at Agrisini's construction of what it means to be a chair by focusing on strategy and politics.

Excerpt 8, Agrisini, I, pp. 3-5
[Your main activities in the last six months?]
        For example, at this University we are going through reorganizations, structural
        reorganizations of the colleges and departments. So I spent in the last year, I spent
        a lot of time studying proposals for how to reorganize different academic units
        and to reorganize the university. Analyzing those to see how those changes will
        have an impact on the school of [discipline]. Trying to figure out ...
[Sorry, are you then on an institutional committee or something like that or ...?]

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No, just a ... mostly as a position where every so often I try to figure out, there are certainly committees that are in charge with figuring this out. But as a director I have an interest in how this all turns out even though I am not on those committees. I think that this is again one of those things that are unique to the position that if you are on that committee, for you to be interested in how this turns out is, of course, important. But as a director I cannot just wait and find out what is going to happen at the end. As it will be whatever that is recommended can have a very negative impact on my school or it could have a positive impact, and so partly I want to keep informed about what the committees are thinking about. And then I have to figure out whether or not I need to try to have an impact on the direction the committees are moving. One of the frustrations is that I am just one person and one small unit on campus. But I know that these decisions will affect our overall happiness in the future.

[I am just wondering, can you tell me a bit more in detail how do you proceed with that?]
Over the last few weeks, people who are on those committees, people call me, email me, they tell me what is being considered, what the options are. We consult on what these options are like and what the impact of those will be. I email somebody today who's on a committee to say what my position was. And asking them to take a certain position on behalf on our school. So it is a lot of keeping informed, consulting with people who are on these committees, feedback to those people and feedback to the committees, and sometimes feedback to other administrators. So as the decisions are made how to structure the university I am informed and give feedback and hopefully ... I hope obviously that a bit of that feedback will help influence the outcomes so that these options that I think are best for my school will be considered. This is all part of kind of an advocating [role] for my school. . . .

[Alliances?]
It happens, not as frequently as I would like it to, but I know that it should and I do some of that. So, for example, this morning I sent an email to a faculty member on a committee asking for her support and telling her why I oppose a certain position. But I sent that email to her knowing that she is going to that committee meeting tomorrow. I also copied that email to two other directors because I wanted them to know what our position was and that I had informed this faculty member to take a stand on our behalf. So typically there are two or three allies in things. So I am always kind of talking to other chairs and directors to find out what is going on, what do you think about this, and then to see if there are a couple others who will join me in certain kinds of actions at different points in time. ...
... So I had to figure out what those options were, try to understand them, analyze them, and formulate a position. Let some people know that and let some of my colleagues know my concerns as well. ...

[Is this a major concern among . . .?]
Yes, it is all across campus, particularly for the last 12 months. And part of that, there is a lot of questions of how the university could be reorganized. And one of the options is to not reorganize at all. So, partly you don't know whether to get all worried about it or not because in some ways things could change very

dramatically, but maybe they won't change at all. So it is kind of hard to know whether to be energized and worried or whether to just sit back because there is really nothing that is going to be all that different. It kind of adds to the difficulty of it as not knowing how it will all turn out and not knowing whether there is anything really to worry about or not. I could spend many, many hours on that, and it might be completely inefficient and ineffective. So trying to figure out how much time to put into advocacy activities in an environment in where there is a lot of uncertainty. And one of those things that I am uncertain about is how useful it is to be advocating for a certain position. But in part, though, I don't think that I can keep quiet because I think I would be failing as a director if I did not speak up on issues that could potentially hurt my school. On the other hand, I am not sure whether speaking makes a difference. So that adds to the confusion. It is part of the environment, one of anything.

[Outside of social science? Timeline]

I think in the next two to three years. ... But you are right; the timeline is uncertain as well. So there are moments when I feel like if I do not write a memo today I am going to miss my chance to say something. But I could spend a whole day writing a memo, only to have it sit for many years. So there are one of those things that as a director I think I have to be involved and to speak up and do things. But I have to be careful about how much time and energy I devote to this because I need that time and energy for lots of other things.

Agrisini's version of what it means to be a chair in terms of strategy and politics strongly differs from Delaney's version. Delaney used a specific description of strategy and politics to construct a negative image of a chair (as hindering the faculty). In contrast, as I explain below, Agrisini used another description of strategy and politics in order to construct a positive image of a chair who helps the department by being politically active.

Agrisini described the chair as being the person in the department who keeps on top of things that are going on in the university and tries to influence/control the direction in which the department is moving; in other words, the chair has a strategic and political role. Agrisini is described as a strategist; he has a goal, namely, to direct the future of the department, and he has a plan and process in place to do so. In addition, Agrisini is a politician; he is busy acquiring or exercising power on certain matters and decisions within a group or organization (Oxford Dictionary) in order to achieve that goal. Agrisini

used many active verbs to construct this picture: studying proposals, analyzing, trying to figure out, consulting people on options and impact, influencing the outcomes, using/creating alliances, formulating a position.

The text is constructed in a way that suggests that the use of politics is for the good of the department, not about personal gain. Phrases like "but as a director I have an interest in" and "but as a director I cannot just wait and find out what is going to happen at the end" suggest that this is an important part of a chair's role. After all, isn't every chair interested in the future well-being of his or her department? It thus becomes the chair's duty, which is reflected in the sentence, "I think I would be failing as a director if I did not speak up on issues that could potentially hurt my school." The phrase "could potentially hurt my school" reinforces and justifies the need to do one's job by participating in strategic and political activities. A consequence of this rhetoric is that a chair who neglects to do this cannot be considered a real chair; in fact, the person would be an ineffective chair.

Furthermore, this rhetoric reflects a specific construction of the world in which there is a need and a possibility to change the course of developments. In this world, actors are able to shape the world around them, even though there might be political, organizational, and cultural limits to what they are able to do. When one adheres to this view of reality, it is not only normal to act, but there is real pressure to act ("I think I would be failing as a director ...") because otherwise something negative might happen. This means that every change in the environment might be crucial: "So, partly you don't know whether to get all worried about it or not. Because in some ways things could change very dramatically, but maybe they won't change at all."

One of the consequences of this construction of the chair's world is that it gives an impression of a chair's being very important, relevant, and thus indispensable to the department. In other words, this construction works up the role of chair; it in fact creates the chair's own role.

Another consequence of Agrisini's rhetoric is that it provides a valid reason to spend considerable time on strategic and political activities, even if one is not so sure of their outcome. After all, the world that is constructed here is rather complex; there are many things to do, and there is much uncertainty and confusion. In that sense, there is no one right way to do things because it is not apparent what is best. Again, the complexity of the world reinforces the fact that chairing is not a well-structured "accountant" job. As a consequence, this is not the kind of job that one can do on the side, as some chairs who are still predominantly scholars might think. Therefore, the multiple statements of insecurity (e.g., direct: "you don't know," "hard to know," "not knowing," "a lot of uncertainty," "I am uncertain," "I am not sure," "adds to the confusion," "have to be careful") underscore the complexity of a chair's job. This is especially true if, as suggested in this case, the insecurity that is being felt stems from the environment, not from a personal lack of insight or confidence. This is even more strengthened by referring to the need to balance time spent on these strategic and political activities and time spent on other activities ("trying to figure out how much time to put in"). This provides insight into the complex work life of a chair.

In sum, Agrisini's description of strategy and politics as part of the chair's role gave a positive image of "how chairs understand their job." The role of strategy and politics in a complex world is important, as evidenced by the many repetitions of this

message. Furthermore, the discourse suggests that this chair likes his job; in general, Agrisini used no words, or descriptions of strategic work in particular, that might be interpreted as negative. In addition, in this excerpt, no binary device was used to contrast faculty work with chair work, as was done in Excerpt 7. This means that it is not necessary to create contrasts in order to show the importance of chair work. Chair work has a standard of its own.

Finally, I want to focus briefly on the discourse from which this construction of a chair as a strategist and politician originated. We can locate this construction in a political-organizational framework. This framework, as described by Baldridge (1977), Chaffee (1983), and Birnbaum (1988), among others, gives a perspective of how an organization works, and what that means for leadership in this type of an organization: "Under the political model the leader is a mediator or negotiator between power blocs" (Baldridge, 1977, p. 135). Leadership in this organization means assembling, leading, facilitating, and using people's expertise and information, all of which were evident in this interview. In that sense, the chair is an "academic statesman," not a "bureaucratic hero" (Baldridge, 1977, p. 141), which brings with it certain responsibilities and has its own limitations.

Topic 3: Chairing as a Profession or Personal Choice

This topic concerns the validity of the professional status of chairs—that is, as a separate profession and group. The chairmanship's being accorded professional status might have certain consequences, such as the increased importance of the job, the growing boundaries between a chair and others, and the development of its own system

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of values and code of conduct. In terms of a professional career, one can no longer regard being a chair as something that one can do "on the side."

This topic was addressed by Agrisini and Maynard in diverse ways, as a profession and as a personal/indivdual choice, respectively. As we will see below, Agrisini did not use the specific word *profession* or *professional,* but he nonetheless described a professional world of chairs. In contrast, Maynard described becoming and being a chair as a personal and individual issue. He went to great length, often in contradictory ways, to draw a picture of being a chair that did not imply a professional career and status. This topic is related to Topic 1, "Future career," but it is not the same. Yes, these excerpts indicate something about the future career ideas of these chairs. But they can also be interpreted as focusing on the role identities of Agrisini and Maynard themselves. Agrisini openly and clearly aligns himself with "the world of chairs," whereas Maynard in complicated maneuvers tries to circumvent a statement about being a professional chair by focusing on a dichotomy within the category of chairs. The extensive excerpts provided below support this analysis.

Agrisini, I, p. 1:
[What does your day look like?]
> The day for me always begins by looking at emails. And there are probably maybe 80 emails to look at. So I spend the first hour or so reading emails and sending emails to people. So that is pretty much everyday, Secondly, there is usually two or three, between two and five meetings a day. So I'll hit some early morning meetings, usually a meeting at lunchtime, and several more in the afternoon. And then those are ... and there is also some unexpected or informal conversations outside of meetings. So someone will come see me with a problem or I go and see somebody, or working on a project, something like that. The day usually ends with a few returning phone calls and things like that and responding to mail that came in during the day. And then trying to get some work done on ongoing projects, in between the meetings, between the emails and in between the phone calls. . . .

Agrisini, I, p. 1:

As you just can see from the day I described, the ability to get very much work done that requires any continuity or a block of time is just almost impossible in a daily calendar. So one of the challenges that I am facing is how to do my ongoing research, and writing, and program development if the day is full of emails, phone calls, correspondence and meetings. . . .

Agrisini, I, p. 2:

... So most I .. I am a board member for the national association of deans and directors in [discipline]. So two times a year I go to these meetings because I have responsibilities there, and that is when we talk about the broader issues facing schools of [discipline], for example. And I go to one or two other meetings where we meet new faculty. ...[national meeting? Topics: talk to new chairs?] Good, there are two sorts of things happen at those meetings. One is talking about issues that affect education in general or the discipline in particular. But the second thing really does have to do with a training/mentoring kind of role. So there is, at these national meetings, there are meetings for veteran deans, people who have been deans or directors for a number of years. There are meetings for new deans and directors. There are discussions on a whole set of issues about challenges that deans and directors face. And certainly a good deal of the informal conversation is about how to manage our work and certain dilemmas or difficulties that come up. It is a very big part of it. But when we get to the discussion about how I did figure out how to be a director, one of the answers has to do with this professional network, national network for directors across the countries.

Agrisini, I, p. 2:
[What do you enjoy least?]

What I [am] thinking is ... probably that there is kind of too much to do, so I can't get things done; that makes me unhappy at times. There is just too many things to do, and I don't have time to do them. Probably every so often there are aspects of a bureaucracy that are frustrating, that make it harder to get things done. I think these are mostly it.

Agrisini, I, p. 3:
[Balance? Do you have a balance between administrative and scholarly work?]

And a personal life. I have a family that I dearly love and that is more important to me than my work. So if I could just work all day and all night and all weekend, then it might not be such a problem. But the balance is more so with my personal life rather than my scholarly life. Scholarly stuff, I can get eventually to it and I am not quite so frustrated, mostly how do I have time to be with my family and do things outside of work that matter to me.
[If you read the chair literature, you might find about 40 roles for chairs ...]

If you have a list of 40 things, probably I do all 40 of those.

Analysis. This excerpt, which was the beginning of the first interview, contains

numerous issues and characteristics that were identified and conceptualized in a similar

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way in the chair literature. Agrisini describes a typical workday by referring to similar concepts, such as interrupted work, too much work, complaints about bureaucracy, balance between work life and personal life, training/mentoring, and socialization. The interview questions did not refer to these concepts. Agrisini mentions them of his own accord. In contrast, the dominant use of these "chair concepts" from the literature was not evident in the interviews with the other chairs.

This can be explained partly by the fact that Agrisini is a board member of a national association of chairs and directors in his particular discipline. (Later in the interview, he said that one automatically becomes a member of this association when accepting a position as director or dean at any university. However, automatically becoming a member does not guarantee that one participates in these meetings, let alone becomes a leader in this professional community.) This association organizes sessions for training and mentoring of newcomers, sessions for veterans, and general sessions about challenges that directors or deans face. They also discuss how to manage the work of chair/director. This might have made Agrisini more conscious and reflective about what he was doing as director. Due to this network, he probably also has access to, and maybe even read, some of the chair literature.

Over the course of the first two pages of his interview, Agrisini's membership in a category of directors is worked up (Potter, 1997, p. 133). In other words, a link is established between this particular agent or person and the occupation of director/chair. What this does is create a description of a "generic" or "model" chair-- that is, a description of what can be expected from a chair. In turn, this can be treated as a warrant

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for Agrisini's "knowledge of a specific domain" (Potter, 1997, p. 133) ["I know what I am talking about."]

This idea is reinforced by Agrisini's statement about the roles he assumed: "If you have a list of 40 things, probably I do all 40 of those." This implies that whatever a chair in the literature has been described as doing, Agrisini did as well. As such, this is worked up so strongly and confidently that no question is asked about what these roles are/might be before claiming the statement's validity. Again, this "extreme-case" formulation (Pomerants, 1986) reinforces Agrisini's claim to be a real/genuine chair (Potter, 1997, p. 187).

But this excerpt does more. Through his network of chairs and directors, Agrisini showes that he has "access to a set of narratives" (Whetherell & Potter, 1995, p. 79) of what it means to be a chair in this particular discipline. We should keep this in mind when further analyzing and interpreting his texts.

In sum, this excerpt describes chairing as a profession/real chair/director even though the label is not used. One of the characteristic features of Agrisini's chair life is being actively involved in the national association of deans and directors in his discipline, that is, a professional community. Members of this community talk about how to manage the job and the external challenges they face. In other words, as part of this community, Agrisini helps others define what it means to be a director; chair identities are co-constructed. We also see that the program of the association is set up in a career-minded way, with a beginning and continuation; there are workshops for beginners as well as veterans. A "model" chair is constructed as part of professional socialization. Learning as

part of a community, with its own rules, norms, values, and standards, contributes to the creation of a specific identity, which might be (partly) shared by others.

One of the consequences of the construction of being a chair as a profession is that the chair cannot do the job as if it were merely a "temporary nuisance" that requires minimal input. On the contrary, the chair is accountable for his actions and needs to take responsibility (see the statement, "I do all 40 roles"). Furthermore, there is pressure to be successful, whether that pressure is exerted by the faculty, deans, or other chairs. On the positive side, being part of a professional community becomes something to be proud of.

This construction of chairing as a profession was used in a discussion of "What does your day look like?" In this way, it is a discussion of a normal day, a normal part of a chair's life, which makes chairing as a profession something normal, as well. This is especially relevant because the excerpt was from the beginning of the first interview and thus set a specific tone for the rest of the interview.

Finally, we can locate the idea of "chair as a profession" in the discourse regarding specialization and new managerialism in higher education. In that sense, a chair is seen as an entity distinct from faculty and purely administrative staff. In addition, it reflects the rise of the "professional" chair--that is, chairs hired externally from other institutions, where they have already worked as chairs before.

Chairing as a personal choice. In the extensive excerpt from Maynard's interview, which is included below, Maynard describes becoming and being a chair as a personal and individual issue. He goes to great length, often in contradictory ways, to describe a chair in a way that did not imply a professional career. In complicated maneuvers, he

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tries to circumvent a statement about being a professional chair by focusing on a

dichotomy within the category of chairs.

Maynard, III, p. 3

>I was recruited as director of the school
>
>[Can I then address you as a "professional" director/chair? Or is it not done to distinguish it like this?]

>>I think it is ... at least in the departments I have been at, it is not explicitly done or formally done, and I think it ... I guess I view it as more of kind of a personal decision on the part of someone in the role of chair or director: where in terms of kind of how they define their professional role. And I think .. there are some chairs and directors who very much see it as a kind of a temporary assignment to ... "for the next three, four, or five years I will serve in this administrative role, but I view myself first and foremost as a professor and anticipate going back to the faculty." At the other extreme are individuals who either when they make these... take the position of director or chair ... or probably more normal, well I don't know if it is more normal, not more than that to me, but maybe you will discover it. But I think ... again at the other extreme are people who probably in the course of an administrative assignment decide that they like it and they kind of view the, that administrative role as ... you know.... They are either permanent or for the foreseeable future, role, dominant role, within the university. And I think what you sometimes will see are people that may become less research-active and more focused on the role of being an administrator and may aspire to future administrative positions, associate dean or a dean, chair or director of another department, or, you know, a whole variety of administrative positions. But you kind of hold those out as the kind of two extremes; then this problem I guess where I find myself is of a mixed role where I do intend ...
>>I mean ... I don't really aspire to something like a dean or kind of a permanent administrative position and anticipate that at some point I will go back to the traditional faculty role. . . . Next year I'll go through a review process in terms of my having been director, looking at the possibility of being reappointed for another five-year term. And have kind of .. I don't know ... making a decision maybe is too strong, but in my mind I am thinking that if my faculty colleagues here remain supportive of me continuing in this role, that I would likely stay on for another five years as director. And of course if the dean agrees with that, I kind of think both of those things will happen, unless I am just missing something. That I would have the support of my colleagues and dean to continue. But you know it is one of those decision points where .... You know there is a part of me that would .. that sometimes thinks that I am too busy and just go back and be a regular faculty member again is somewhat appealing. On the other hand, I also feel like you haven't accomplished all the things that I would like to accomplish in this role. And I think there is some ... one of the problems of the rotating role that you see, and I felt that when I was at University Z, and I think it has been magnified in my experience here, is that when you do the kind of short rotation, it almost seemed like that at the time that I felt that I was understanding

the role and the job it was time to pass it on to somebody else who then kind of starts from scratch. And I think there is some benefit to continuity where hopefully I am learning to ... this experience would be more in the role should I stay on for another term.

Maynard, III, p. 10
[I have a question here, but partly you already answered it, talking about your experiences in the beginning in University Z and talking about the rotation of the chair. For example: Did your ideas about what it means to be a chair or director change over time. ... what actually chairs understand their job should be and what that means for their identity?]

I think it probably does relate to what I was .. Remember when I was talking about the two extremes of how I think chairs look at themselves professionally as the temporary assignment: being one model of going in "I'll do my three or four years" and trying not to foul things up, but I primarily view myself as a faculty member and that is what I aspire to earning to, versus the more "I have made a commitment to the administrative role and I am going to put all my time and energy into that role."

[But has this been sort of shifting and moving with you ...?]

It has been shifting, I think. I originally, particularly in University Z, it was much more that first role of "Well, let me go in and do this for three or four years." I think, like I was saying earlier, the department is poised to kind of move forward in a significant way in terms of becoming a leader in criminal justice. But viewing that really is kind of a short-term commitment, and so put a lot of energy into this for the next three or four years and put some things in place and then go back into the faculty and hopefully reap some of the benefits of those accomplishments and let somebody else then handle the administrative stuff. I think .. that was clearly my outlook from when I initially took that chair position in University Z. I think in my current position, and when I made the decision to move up to University X, while I haven't gone to that other extreme of thinking of myself as .. in my future, in administrative roles, either this one or some other kind of administrative role, but .. so still thinking myself primarily as a faculty member or a scholar. But that .. but also recognition that this is .. in order to kind of effectively do the job with all its demands here, that have to be more attentive to that administrative role. That, again, permanent, but it is almost .. like defining ... I don't know if that makes sense, but earlier it was clearly faculty scholar first, administrator second. And I think that in my current role it is kind of administrator first, who is trying to hang on to his research [he laughs] and scholarly agenda as well. ...I do not know if that answers your question, but I do think that there is a shift along those lines as .. particularly moving here. I don't know how much I was .. I had a sense that this was a larger administrative role when I took the position. But I think that it has become clear that it is even.. it has exceeded my expectations in the .. that it really could be effective here, that it does take pretty significant commitment to being involved in administrative .. in that administrative role.

[Would you say then, okay it has developed over the years, but I spoke last week with another director, and said, it would be more like the balancing of these two roles has become, it is still a balancing act, but it has become much more a continuously challenging thing that does not change. Does that make sense somehow?]

Yeah, it does.

[It is incorporated within you, the tension is never resolved.]

Yes, I think I would agree with that. I think the ... I have this image, but I can't think of a .. I think there are parallels in that I have read in some organizational or managerial theory, but it is almost like that you can .. you could simplify in some ways and push to one of those two extremes that I described, and I think that by really staying primarily in the kind of faculty, traditional scholarly role, I guess I would feel in this position that I probably wasn't doing the role of director justice, that I was too focused on my own research, scholarly agenda. And that probably ... while understandable, probably not fair to the school. And the other approach is to go to that other extreme, that just kind of says ... and I think some people do this is... "I just don't have the time to be involved in my own scholarship and so I am just going to put that to the side, and I want to focus exclusively on this role." And that is also, I guess, an understandable choice, and I think that where the dilemma comes in is for those folks that kind of want both, want to keep that scholarly role active but .. and maybe the more you are in the role, understanding the demands. I mean, I . . . one of the tensions that I feel is that I think there is enough to do on the administrative side that I . . . it would be a reasonable choice, not a personally satisfying choice, but it would be a reasonable choice for me to go to that other extreme and just say, 'Okay, for the next five years I am going to just purely play this administrative role." In some respects, I think probably more effective. I mean, I think I should spend more face time with my faculty colleagues and meet with them more regularly and hear their concerns. And meet . . . spend more time meeting with students.

Analysis. In this excerpt, a dichotomy is created between two groups of chairs. One construction is of chairs who decided to do the job for a few years before returning to their real passion—being a scholar ("For the next three, four, or five years I will serve in this administrative role, but I view myself first and foremost as a professor and anticipate going back to the faculty.") The other group of chairs is described as liking to be administrators and wanting to pursue an administrative career. I want to point out that Maynard uses the word *extreme*. These *extremes* are constructed so that he can position himself in the middle, between the *extremes*. ("You kind of hold those out as the kind of two *extremes*; then this problem, I guess, where I find myself is of a mixed role.") This

statement seems straightforward, but when we look more closely at the second extreme, it appears that this is not one, single category. Many variable criteria are used to describe this second "extreme." As a result, each time this chair might be held accountable for fitting into this second extreme, thus having the identity of someone who actually likes being an administrator and wants to pursue an administrative career (thereby having a "real" administrative identity), a new or modified criterion is introduced. In that sense, a false dichotomy is created, which makes the middle ground, and therefore Maynard's position, unclear. I will explain this in detail below.

The first extreme--of chairs who see their current job as temporary and who still predominantly identify themselves as faculty members--is repeated almost verbatim on page 10 of the transcript. This description does not change; it was fixed. The description creates a clear distinction between who was and who was not a faculty member. After all, you are a faculty member or you or not.

The other extreme, however, is not formulated as a single construction, but shows varieties of constructions, especially when one compares page 3 to pages 10/11. The relevant part of page 3 is quoted once again as a whole, before making the comparison:

> Individuals who either when they make these… take the position of director or chair … or probably more normal, well I don't know if it is more normal, not more than that to me … But I think … people who probably in the course of an administrative assignment decide that they like it and they kind of view the, that administrative role as … you know…. They are either permanent or for the foreseeable future, role, dominant role, within the university. And I think what you sometimes will see are people that may become less research-active and more focused on the role of being an administrator and may aspire to future administrative positions, associate dean or a dean, chair or director of another department or, you know, a whole variety of administrative positions but…

What we see here is that there are several variations in the construction of the second category. There is a:

1. Starting point—variation in the extreme: there is a difference between deciding that one likes the administrative role when one takes the position of director/chair (at the beginning) or during the course of an administrative job. The latter option is described as more normal. ("Individuals who either **when they make these... take the position of director or chair ... or** probably more normal, well I don't know if it is more normal, not more than that to me ... But I think ... people who probably **in the course of an administrative assignment decide** that they like it" (p. 3.)

2. Duration point—variation in the extreme: permanent or for the foreseeable future ("They are either **permanent or for the foreseeable future**").

3. Single or multiple roles—variation in the extreme: dominant role ("They are either permanent or for the foreseeable future, role, **dominant role,** within the university" (p. 3) and, later on the single role of administrator ("I am going to put **all my time and energy into that role,",** "and I want to focus **exclusively** on this role," and "Okay, for the next five years I am going to just **purely** play this administrative role" [p. 10]).

In addition, there are other variations in the second extreme:

4. Aspirations of future career (see also Topic 1): there are differences between staying on as chair and becoming dean, between short-term and long-term/permanent administrative positions, between being active in research or not, between being very active or less active in research.

> I do intend ... I mean .. I don't really aspire to something like a dean or kind of a permanent administrative position and anticipate that at some point I will go back to the traditional faculty role. I still remain very active in my own research project, and I think part of this is that I get professional fulfillment out of that. It is also I don't want to have this period in my professional career where I was no longer involved in research. And particularly with the thought of going back at

some point as a faculty member I would rather have, even if I can't devote the same amount of time to my research, that I do want to stay active in the field so I can do that. Having said that, I ... [p. 3]

This chair had served as a chair for four years at another institution. Furthermore, he indicated that it was likely he would stay on another five years as chair (so in total four + five + five prospective years). Thus, this chair/director had been in this type of position at two institutions already, yet he did not describe himself as a professional chair or as somebody who was doing this job only for the foreseeable future, which is one of the variations used to indicate the second extreme.

5. Consequence versus choice regarding not doing research: There is a difference between putting scholarship aside because one has no time for it but rather must focus exclusively on the administrative role ("I just don't have the time to be involved in my own scholarship, and so I am just going to put that to the side, and I want to focus exclusively on this role" [p. 10]), and choosing to focus exclusively on the administrative role ("I have made a commitment to the administrative role, and I am going to put all my time and energy into that role" [p. 10]).

6. Active liking–passive duty–variation in the extreme: There is a difference between people who decide to become less research-active and more administrative-focused because they like administration ("At the other extreme are people who probably in the course of an administrative assignment decide that they like it and they kind of view the, that administrative role as ..." [p. 3]) versus people who do not have time to do research because of administrative work overload, so it "just happens" ("I just don't have the time to be involved in my own scholarship, and so I am just going to put that to the side, and I want to focus exclusively on this role" [p. 10]).

7. Furthermore, in another paragraph we see that the "administrative" category is also

   constructed in a way that differentiates among several kinds of administrative roles.

   Maynard described the administrative role at University X as "a larger administrative

   role" than at Maynard's previous institution: "I had a sense that this was a larger

   administrative role when I took the position. But I think that it has become clear that

   it is even, it has exceeded my expectations ..., that it does take pretty significant

   commitment to being involved in administrative .. in that administrative role" (p. 10).

   We can conclude that there are a variety of administrative roles, depending on the

   expectations and demands of the various institutions.

Despite the false dichotomy that is created between two extremes of rationales for

being chair and the ambiguity of Maynard's position as middle ground, we still can see

that his perspective changed over time, although the description is rather vague. For

analyzing how his perspective changed, we need to look at the second part of this

excerpt. At the start, Maynard argues that the first time he was chair/director at another

institution, his outlook was as follows:

> It has been shifting, I think I originally, particularly in X, it was much more that
> first role of "Well, let me go in and do this for three or four years ... short-term
> commitment ... and then go back to the faculty ... let somebody else handle the
> administrative stuff." I think ... that was clearly my outlook from when I initially
> took that chair position in University Z.

Maynard states, in hindsight, that he has seen his first position as chair as a short-

term commitment before going back to the faculty. This statement works convincingly

due to several devices. First of all, the word *stuff* implies a negative view of what

administrative work is; it suggests something unimportant, mundane, and it is not worth

specifying what it precisely is. Also, in the affirmative statement "That was clearly my

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outlook," the word *clearly* shows that no doubt or ambiguity existed at that time. The

idea that administrative work did not matter "at the time" is a way to manage a dilemma

of stake: It discounts the idea that Maynard might have been positively positioned toward

chair work from the start (stake inoculation).

In the next paragraph, Maynard talked of a shift from his first perspective on chair

work (temporary, not so important or relevant) to a different perspective:

> I think in my current position, and when I made the decision to move up to
> University X, while I haven't gone to that other extreme of thinking of myself as
> ... in my future, in administrative roles, either this one or some other kind of
> administrative role, but .. so still thinking myself primarily as a faculty member or
> a scholar. But that ... but also recognition that this is ... in order to kind of
> effectively do the job with all its demands here, that have to be more attentive to
> that administrative role.

This paragraph shows Maynard's lack of clarity when he was still thinking of

himself primarily as a faculty member. Was this when Maynard decided to accept this

position a few years ago, or is this still the case? . "In my current position" is a vague

temporal expression, as he suggests that he probably will continue to do this job for at

least another term. This ambiguity has the advantage of Maynard's still not needing to

admit that being a chair-administrator was a choice. But at the same time, there was the

recognition of what this job really entailed. After years of obliviousness, he realized that

he should pay more attention to the administrative role. This shift in viewpoint can also

be seen in his next statement

> And I think that in my current role it is kind of administrator first, who is trying to
> hang on to his research and scholarly agenda as well... I don't know how much I
> was .. I had a sense that this was a larger administrative role when I took the
> position. But I think that it has become clear that it is even.. it has exceeded my
> expectations in the .. that it really could be effective here, that it does take pretty
> significant commitment to being involved in an administrative ... in that
> administrative role.

So, in this paragraph, Maynard acknowledges that he was an administrator first and a scholar second, although he does not use the word *second*. The use of the phrase "trying to hang on" implies attempts to keep up with his research, and thus to remain firm and determined in difficult circumstances. In what follows, Maynard further works up the point that it is not his choice to let administrative work supersede scholarly work. The phrase "I had a sense that" suggests that it was not a conscious knowing of the size and depth of the administrative role--that is, how much of the available time and energy the role would consume. The other phrases ("It has become clear that it is even," "It has exceeded my expectations," and "It does take") suggest that this role was way more than the chair bargained for. Once again, it is a way to "avoid endorsing a particular story about responsibility" (Potter, 1997, p. 182). As such, it obscures agency. Furthermore, we see in this paragraph that the "administrative" category is constructed differently. "This was a larger administrative role" and "that administrative role" imply that there are several different forms of administrative roles; there is variety, depending on the expectations and demands of the various institutions.

So, what is the function of this long excerpt? Throughout the entire excerpt, Maynard claimed that he found himself "in a mixed role," hence not one of the two extremes. However, as noted above, there was not really a single construction of the second extreme. Furthermore, Maynard said he would "likely stay on another term as director," after having already been a chair for two terms at two institutions. In that sense, he does aspire to do a future period of administrative work, even if it is in the same position (something that might fit as a criterion for the second extreme). Nonetheless, ideas of agency, choice, and decision are obscured.

This is seen in Maynard's constructions of reality; he depicted being a chair, not as a professional career but merely something one might choose to take on as a temporary role. When Maynard was asked whether the term *professional chair* could be used to refer to someone who was recruited and hired as chair, he responded, "I guess I view it more as on the part of someone in the role of chair or director: ... how they define their professional role" (p. 3). By focusing on personal choice, Maynard suggested that becoming and staying on as chair was not a normal and formal career step but something that depended on the goodwill of the chair. Because the choice is personal, this suggests that there can be various reasons for accepting this position. The consequence of this construction of doing chair work as something personal is that it requires showing respect and makes it more difficult to criticize.

Furthermore, even though it is a personal choice to become a chair, Maynard did not describe staying on as chair as an active decision or as a career step:

> Next year I'll go through a review process in terms of my having been director looking at the possibility of being reappointed for another term. And have kind of .. I don't know ... making a decision may be too strong, but in my mind I am thinking that if my faculty colleagues here remain supportive of me continuing in this role, that I would likely stay on for another five years as director. And of course if the dean agrees with that. I kind of think both of those things will happen, unless I am just missing something. That I would have the support of my colleagues and dean to continue.

In this excerpt, proactive agency seems to be lacking. Maynard suggeststhat he has not yet decided to stay on as director; he is waiting on others to make the initial decision to have him stay on as director or not, as is the formal norm in most departments/schools. Nonetheless, he asserts that he will stay on as chair if others allowed him to do so. This description makes it possible for Maynard not to have to say publicly that he actually might want to do this work. Thus, it counters the idea that it is

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Maynard's plan to do this chair work for such a long time (four plus five years, and possibly continuing for five more years).

A consequence of this construction of being a chair as a personal temporary choice but not as a professional career decision is that it can be considered merely as a role one takes on and takes off again when it is no longer needed. As such, it does not require major shifts in one's identity. In that sense, it is more like a variation on a faculty career, which we can locate in the discourse of faculty academic freedom: "As part of my academic freedom, I choose to do this."

Topic 4: Chair Work as Balancing and/or Integrating Different Roles

The fourth topic focuses on the complexity of the chair job and the difficulty or even impossibility of doing all of the things one must, should, and/or is expected to do. The chairs in this study found various linguistic "solutions" to this problem by constructing differently the chair's status of role balance. These solutions ranged from being always out of balance (Delaney) and the perpetual need to balance (Maynard), to integration of roles (Agrisini). In Delaney's case, he argued that achieving balance was not possible, at least not at his institution. Agrisini balanced the role in a different way, namely, by seeing different roles integrated as part of a single task or project. Finally, for Maynard, balance was an ongoing issue that he sometimes resolved successfully but sometimes not.

Remarkably, in terms of content analysis Shaw did not address balance or imbalance issues at all, not even when talking about the constraints or negative aspects of the chair job. But it seems that Shaw did find a solution for managing the complexity of

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the chair job. He was the only chair who frequently switched his identification between faculty and chairs, thus variably identifying with the faculty as a group or with the chairs as a group.

Let us start with Delaney. For him, being a chair was synonymous with being out of balance. A chair is someone who needs to push to one of the extremes of either the department or the administration. Arguing that there are only extremes makes it impossible to find a middle ground. Notice especially the negative words *burn-out* and *superhumans*.

Delaney, III, p.1:
> The previous chairs of the department were not very well liked, they did not give a lot of confidence.

[What advice would you give to other beginning department chairs or people considering to become chair?]
> Do not do this [job of chair]. Learn to trust others to do their job and delegate successfully. ... Create a balance in your life, not just professionally but also personally. ...
> I developed this advice and strategies in reaction to other chairs' not doing their job well. I also learned from parenting: you have to take responsibilities and need to nurture, take care. Previous ideas are based on ideas at University Y. For example, the chair of my dissertation committee had been a chair for 17 years and had run and built the department very well. He also wrote four books in that time. So, I did see other chairs balancing professional and private lives. I actually thought of them as superhumans. Or it could also have to do with the right sort of institutional culture. The culture at University X is not supportive of a balanced work life. For example, the previous chairs in the department were not able to balance; one actually burnt out. Most chairs express stressfulness due to balance needs. You either have a commitment to your department or to the administration. This was also noticeable at the regional leadership development program meeting. This imbalance was also at other institutions, but University X was pretty bad.

Analysis. This excerpt contains a description of how Delaney has been influenced by role models, both positive and negative, something I will discuss in greater detail in another section. Delaney describes the positive role models in a way that made it difficult to achieve a state of success and balance. He says, "So, I did see other chairs balancing

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professional and private lives. I actually thought of them as superhumans." The word

superhumans suggests personal capabilities, constitution, and traits that are out of the

ordinary. Expressed this way, the balance between professional and private life, and

being fully invested as a researcher, is achievable only with extraordinary powers and

effort, as if a mere mortal would not be able to do this. Constructing balance in this way

makes success seem improbable; therefore, if one does not succeed, failure is less likely

to be related to the structural nature of the job. But one needs to realize that Delaney

made this assessment of chairs as superhumans during graduate school, which he has

attended a long time ago. It is part of his memory, and therefore might not be accurate. In

any case, the memory probably is tinted and only partial. It is the perspective of a Ph.D.

student, not of a faculty member. Furthermore, it is questionable whether a Ph.D. student

would have sufficient knowledge of the chair's private life to be able to claim that he

balanced his professional with his private life. Finally, Delaney does not use many words

or provide details to describe the balance. He gives only positive descriptions (of the

success of building the department and as researcher/author, four books), and they are

mentioned succinctly. All in all, this results in a rather one-sided view.

The next sentences refer to the institutional culture at University X: "The culture

at University X is not supportive of a balanced work life. For example, the previous

chairs in the department were not able to balance; one actually burned out." Delaney is

suggesting that it is the institutional culture that is the cause of burnout, but we need to

remember that a couple of sentences earlier, he described the previous chairs in the

department as "not very well liked." This last assessment problematizes the previously

suggested correlation between the institutional culture and burnout by adding to it the

chairs' problematic individual abilities and characters. Nonetheless, the use of descriptions of the institutional cultural perspective and the personal trait perspective of superhumans make it possible not to have to take responsibility for being unable to achieve a balanced life.

In the case of negative role models, credibility of Delaney's viewpoints is established over the course of several excerpts. Although not included in this excerpt, first there was mainly talk of Delaney's close colleague, F.P. (I will discuss his role in more detail under Topic 5). Following this, Delaney refers to some of the previous chairs of the department as dysfunctional and one that had suffered from burnout. Then Delaney "enlarges" the chair population by referring to "most chairs" in the sentence "Most chairs express stressfulness due to balance needs." Finally, he mentions the regional leadership development program meetings, at which chairs from various institutions meet. So, the increase in the number and range of chairs, from Delaney's departmental colleagues to institutional colleagues and those from other institutions, who also were said to suffer from imbalance, accomplishes increased credibility. There is no need merely to take this chair's word about the situation; there is corroboration from and consensus among many chairs.

In contrast to Delaney, who argued that a balanced work life was not possible for a chair, Agrisini sees different roles integrated into a single task or project. As such, chair roles and faculty roles are all integrated in his mind.

Agrisini, II, pp.8-9:
[Last time, you talked about the possible revisions of the structure of the colleges. What other projects are you working on, besides all the work you put in that aspect?]
> In that aspect it kind of occupies my thinking, but it is not overly too much time. Mostly I am working on some grants that I am running. I am working on some publications that I am writing. Working as a, just kind of some curriculum

changes that we are paying attention to. Building some new partnerships with some agencies.

[I want to ask a question about that. I heard that last time, too; you sort of mix the things you do ... I presume the grants and applications are .. you would do that with one, two, three, four other people in the school?]

Usually.

[But this is still part of your, your faculty/scholarly role, isn't it?]

Correct. I may do that, I don't know if I do that more or less than other directors. It is a big part of what I do because it helps accomplish different things for the school as well. So, for example, one of the things that ... for fundraising it helps when I bring in grant money. For community relations it helps if I am involved in projects in the community. So then on top of that I am supposed to be a faculty member as well as an administrator, so some of this ...

[And when you say, because I heard that from another director the same thing. How in particular does it help fundraising that I get a grant myself? Is it like a signal, a symbolic thing, or is it really...?]

That is a good question. It does a couple things. One thing is that there is kind of a role modeling aspect to it which shows that you can get grants, and how to get grants, and stuff like that. But the other part is that when I bring in grants, that money helps my school. So it is very concrete. It is not something symbolic at all. The grant funds support my school, in different ways. ... But also, I guess, the kind of the picture that I think is..., kind of confusing maybe, but also what I like, I think is that I probably do 20 different things, and those 20 different things change in terms of how prominent they are at any given day or month or year. So sometimes if you were to look at me .... I look like I am a fundraiser, at other times I am a writer, at other times I am working with faculty, at other times I am working with students. So, there is just .. the big picture is that there are so many different roles and then the mix of those is always changing, depending on internal or external circumstances.

[But what I actually also meant is that... when I hear you talk, you don't make a division between .. for example the grant that you write and the fundraising, and changing the curriculum. So, to me that is ... it is just a big part of your job. It is not that you say, well this part is for my individual, scholarly, entrepreneurial thing, and this is for ...]

You are exactly right; I do not divide between them at all. In fact, I see them always ... it is a very good observation. They are all integrated in my own mind. Because when I am working on a grant that connects me to the community, then I know better about what our students need to know and there are implications for the curriculum. And I can help students find employment and I can also do things with our alumni. So, I see everything as connected. They are all kind of part of the same thing.

[Because this is the first time that I have heard this, that is why I am asking so much about it.]

No, but I think you are on the right track because all these things can be .. work together to accomplish the same kind of goals. So when I write something now, I always try to have a faculty member write with me; when I do a grant I try to bring a faculty member into the grant. Or if I write a grant I try to have it

accomplish something in the community, as well as make money for the school. [quickly added]: The other thing is that almost everything has to accomplish more than one thing. So it is efficient.

[Okay. So, I presume that this is something that is ..has to do with your own character?] [immediate reaction] Right.

[But also maybe even the discipline, is it possible to have more connections between these?]

Yes, I think that is exactly right. I think both of those points are correct. So yes, that is why I meet with students all the time. When I can find out what they are thinking, it helps me to understand what we need to be teaching, I think about what kind of jobs they need. I get feedback about what is going on in the community; everything is connected and everything accomplishes multiple things for me.

Analysis. In this section, we mainly see descriptions that are used to balance the work that the director does for himself (his own goals) versus what he does for the school. How is this worked up? I will go through this step by step below.

The first question-and-answer exchange refers to what Agrisini was doing: "Mostly I am working on some grants that I am running. I am working on some publications that I am writing. Working as a, just kind of some curriculum changes that we are paying attention to. Building some new partnerships with some agencies." The work on grants and publications is described with a focus on Agrisini himself ("I am working ... that I am running"; "I am working .... I am writing") and without mentioning the school, suggesting that this work is not directly part of work for the school, that is, the work of a director. As a result, the rhetorical construction works in a way that the text could be considered to be referring to faculty work, that is, Agrisini in the role of scholar. On the other hand, because we know that this person is the director of a school, it could be assumed that the work is part of the director's job. However, neither interpretation is clarified; in fact, it is treated as if an explanation is not really necessary; the interviewer should know what the director is talking about. Furthermore, the work for the school that is mentioned in the next lines ("working as a ... Building some new ..") does not have a

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subject; there is no I or we who does the work. Leaving the subject of who is doing the work and for whom—that is, in what capacity/role (scholar or director)--unclear manages concerns of stake and accountability (Potter, 1997, pp. 150, 166). As a committed director, Agrisini is expected to work for the school, instead of for personal, professional gain. On the other hand, he identifies with the role of scholar as well, a role that is not merely accepted but highly valued, and which gives him increased recognition and enhances his reputation as an academic to claim that he is working on grants and publications on his own. As he said in another part of the interview, "Universities are highly individualistic; we value a sole-authored article, did you write it by yourself ...".

To clarify what he meant, I asked whether he wrote grant applications in collaboration with others ("I want to ask ... you would do that with one, two, three, four other people in the school?"), and he answered, "Usually." Thus, he succinctly agrees with the question but provides no details or explanations. However, the word he used is not "yes" or "yes, usually" but "usually." In this analysis, I am not questioning the answer's validity. But what it does is invoke a sense of reluctance to go into a point that contradicts the impression of the highly valued individual scholar working on his own. Hence I probed further.

When I asked Agrisini for clarification about the role in which he did grant writing, and whether grant writing was part of his "faculty/scholarly" role, the answer again managed stake and accountability: "Correct, I may do that; I don't know if I do that more or less than other directors. It is a big part of what I do because it helps accomplish different things for the school as well." The answer indicates agreement, but it was followed by the word *may*, which resists "normalization" or "routinization" (Potter, 1997,

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p. 196). Furthermore, the comparison of this director with other directors in terms of frequency of grant writing conveys the idea that this was a common aspect of directors' work. The question of comparison was answered by the claim that "it is a big part of what I do," which again seems to focus on individual work but was followed by the explanation that the goal of the work is to help the school: "because it helps accomplish different things for the school *as well.*" As such, this seems to be a justification for why Agrisini spends quite some time on grant writing: As a director, he is being accountable for work for the school, and at the same time he has a stake in being recognized as a researcher.

In the next question and answer, the focus was still on the director as an individual (many "I" constructions were used: "I look like I am a fundraiser; at other times I am a writer") (see Shotter, 1989). There was also an "ownership" claim, which functioned as a way to link the personal-professional interests and the school's interests ("When I bring in grants that money helps my school").

In addition, I attempted to clarify how Agrisini saw the interaction of his roles and tasks., Unfortunately, I used a leading hypothesis statement, which sounded like an assessment ("So, to me that is … it is just a big part of your job"). It is thus not surprising that his answer was more than just positive; he used extreme-case description (Potter, 1997) ("You are **exactly right**; I do not divide between them **at all**. In fact, I see them **always** …") to emphasize that this was indeed the case, even though, as we saw above, the capacity or role (scholar or director) in which this action took place was sometimes ambiguous. Furthermore, the credibility and facticity of this claim are worked up by referring back to my hypothesis statement as a "very good observation." Agrisini's use of

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the word *observation* claims a higher order of facticity and objectivity by constructing corroboration and consensus. This, in turn, servs as a warrant for a "truthful" description of "reality" (Potter, 1997, pp. 116, 159). In addition, it is an example of stake inoculation (Potter, 1997, pp. 125-126) because it makes undermining of the statement problematic.

Following this, the director referred repeatedly (three times) to the unity of his job, in terms of work as researcher/scholar and work as director for the school. The repetition was used in a fact-construction process "of attempting to reify descriptions as solid and literal" (Potter, 1997, p. 112), as the last sentence in each answer:

a. So, I **see everything** as connected. They are all **kind of** part of the same thing;

b. The other thing is that **almost everything has to** accomplish more than one thing. So it is efficient;

c. **Everything** is connected and **everything** accomplishes multiple things for me.

We see that (a) and (b) are weaker than (c), the status of which is more solid and unproblematic (Potter, 1997, pp. 112-113). Compare "I *see* everything as connected" to "Everything *is* connected," in which "to see" is weaker than "to be." Also, compare "Almost everything *has to accomplish*" to "Everything *accomplishes,*" in which "almost everything" is weaker than "everything," and "has to" is weaker than the active verb "accomplishes" (see Potter, 1997).

In this section, we have seen descriptions used to balance the work that the director did for himself (his own goals) versus what he did for the school. The discursive balancing act and ambiguity were especially prominent in terms of grant writing and applications. What was unambiguous, however, was the claim of ownership and leadership of who was doing the work in the school. Almost every description used

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multiple "I" constructions and active verbs, even if the talk was about collaboration with others (for example, "So, when *I write* something now, *I always try* to have a faculty member write with me; when *I do* a grant *I try* to bring a faculty member into the grant"). Furthermore, there was talk about the various roles Agrisini played when the situation required it, such as fundraiser and writer. And at the same time, the activities that were part of these roles were said to be connected and to accomplish multiple things.

In general, in this excerpt, several discourses are being played out. One is the leadership discourse. As discussed in the preceding paragraph, Agrisini clearly took a leading role in the actions of the department. Another is the discourse of unity in diversity and connectedness ("I see everything as connected. They are all kind of part of the same thing"). The origins of this discourse can be traced back to the specific professional discipline of this director's school. Finding commonalities and creating connections between communities and practices are the basis of this discipline. Finally, a business discourse is visible in the need for efficiency and multi-tasking: "The other thing is that almost everything has to accomplish more than one thing. So it is efficient."

The business discourse of efficiency is in direct contrast with the discourse of politics and political strategies (such as lobbying and creating alliances) in Topic 2 (Agrisini, I, pp. 3-5), which is used to describe work whose outcome was very uncertain. After all, a main part of the chair's role there is to figure out how much time to spend on these activities because the environment was so complex and volatile.

In the case of Maynard, we saw in Topic 3 (Chairing as a profession or personal choice) that there was a continuous tension, made explicit in the ambiguous description of how Maynard viewed his current role, between predominantly being a scholar/faculty

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member or more an administrator. The long excerpt of Topic 3 is evidence of the need to

balance by the many attempts that Maynard made in vacillating between his main identity

of scholar or administrator. This continued in the next excerpt, which shows that balance

was an ongoing issue that Maynard sometimes resolved successfully but sometimes not.

Maynard, III, p. 11:
[As part of talk about continuous balancing ...]

> ... I guess the way I try to justify in my mind, is I think there are benefits to the school that come from a couple of these large funded research projects that I am involved in. That .. creating opportunities for students, faculty collaborators and make the school visible. And lead to publications etc., etc. And so, .. that is kind of the .. I guess the balance of the way that I reconcile the times I feel guilty for not spending enough time on .. the kind of the pure administrative role, and I justify it because I think there are these other benefits. But to get back to your point, when you make that decision you are going to try to balance these roles, it is just a perpetual conflict. You are always going to have these forced choices where you feel .. and I think the negative moments come when you feel like you aren't doing anything as well as you could be or should be .. Your scholarship is suffering and your role as administrator is suffering. And then ... of course .. you also ... you know ... balance that with reality that good things are happening too. And so .. it is not a .. but ... I just think you really hit it on the head with .... And I suppose there are probably similar tensions when you make .. if you stay on the .. your real emphasis on your own personal scholarship. I think that probably something is going to suffer in terms of the needs of the school. And on the other hand, if you make that choice to become a pure administrator, I am sure that there is a tension there in terms of do you .. have you really given up, what brought me into this profession in the first place: teaching and research. So, it strikes me that there are these inherent tensions and conflicts that are just ... I think it is probably inevitable. So, the question then becomes, how do you manage that in a way that both meets the needs of the role and is .. hopefully somewhat professionally satisfying.

Analysis. In this excerpt, Maynard comes across as a chair who has not integrated

his different roles of faculty and administrator but always balances those roles. As such,

there is not a permanent balance or equilibrium; it is a matter of perpetually, actively

balancing; in other words, balance is not a state but a process and action (verb). Maynard

asserts that there are always tensions, even when one chose one's main identity as scholar

or administrator; something is going to suffer, whether one stays mainly in a scholarship

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role or mainly in an administrative role. In contrast, Delaney strives for a state of balance (see phrases like "create a balance in your life," and "a balanced work life," III, p.1).

Because Maynard and Delaney view balance in different ways, they have different ideas about how to achieve balance, if at all. Delaney presented balance as something that is seldom achievable. He presented a black-and-white situation by saying, "You either have a commitment to your department or to the administration." In other words, you are going to suffer if you do not make a choice. Maynard, on the other hand, also makes a choice; he decides to actually keep balancing. "When you make that decision you are going to try to balance these roles, it is just a perpetual conflict." It is clear that he feels relatively comfortable with enduring ambiguity and conflict. The "decision ... to try to balance these roles" sounds very rational, as if he knows what he is getting into. He takes responsibility; choosing is an act, and balance is not just an outcome of what one does.

On the other hand, the statement "I guess the way I try to justify in my mind" shows a conscious feeling that there is a need for justifying the time spent on research. In addition, feelings of guilt ("I feel guilty for not spending enough time on ...") and suffering ("your scholarship is suffering and your role as administrator is suffering") are the costs of this way of balancing. This was the first time that aspects of guilt and suffering were mentioned. When we compare these feelings to Agrisini's idea of integration, Agrisini did not indicate a need to justify what he did in terms of research, although his statement that "it helps to accomplish different things for the school as well" (II, pp. 8-9) in fact worked as a justification.

For Maynard, all of these issues of choice, decision, suffer, tensions and conflicts, and feelings of guilt and justification suggest that balancing is a personal, internal process that is part of chair life. There is no (permanent) solution. This viewpoint is reflected in the question Maynard posed himself: "So, the question then becomes, how do you manage that in a way that both meets the needs of the role and is .. hopefully somewhat professionally satisfying?"--a question that must remain unanswered because it can only be answered situationally and individually.

A final example of Topic 4 concerns the identification as faculty member or as chair, and the switch from one to the other, to construct a rhetoric that fits best with the situation at hand. Chair Shaw was the one who most directly (openly) and most frequently switched his identification from faculty member to chair and vice versa; that is, he identified variably with the faculty as a group or with chairs as group. As we have seen, Delaney also positioned himself often as faculty member and most of the time described faculty only in a positive way. On the other hand, when Shaw identifies with the faculty, he identifies predominantly with the positive characteristics of being a faculty member, namely, faculty's freedom and autonomy. The following are examples of sections in which Shaw takes the position/viewpoint of a faculty member:

1. "A current concern is the departmental webpage. I **have to** harass faculty to put things on it." (I,1)

2. **"We** left the previous chair to do things; there was not much faculty involvement. Faculty, in general, **do not react unless** it is about a faculty position that they claim was given to the wrong interest group." (I, 2)

3. "They [interest groups] work pretty autonomously. The same was always true for me: I can also **decide** what I want to teach and what sort of research to do." (I, 2)

4. **"The** faculty in this meeting [consisting of chairs and directors, including him] said no, but the dean did not take their advice. **Faculty** do not want to take up the slack." (I, 3)

5. "If **you as faculty member** do not want to teach a particular course, somebody else will." (I, 3)

The general idea that Shaw conveys is that he understands the faculty culture and values and does not want to "bother" the faculty. For example, in excerpt 1, "I have to harass" indicates that Shaw feels he continually needs to annoy the faculty as part of his job. "**Have** to harass" shows that he is reluctant to do so. At the same time, this statement says something about the faculty, namely, that they do not have/take time or are reluctant to provide information so that the webpage can be updated. Combining these two interpretations, the chair is seen to have an understanding of the faculty and their views and (non)actions.

In the next phrase, 2, Shaw directly links himself to the faculty by using the pronoun *we* in combination with *faculty*. Again, Shaw evidences understanding of the faculty because he has shown the same attitude as a faculty member. This identifying with the faculty is repeated in excerpts 3, 4, and 5.

But there are also places in the interviews in which Shaw identifies himself as chair. He identifies with being a chair predominantly when he mentions the chair's job and activities as part of a binary contrast to the nature and attitudes of the faculty, which he describs as hindering the chair in doing his job. As such, Shaw positions himself as chair (when he had to) in order to deal with the less positive or indeed negative nature of

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faculty, such as the consequences of faculty's freedom and autonomy. Here are some examples of when Shaw seems to assume the position/viewpoint of chair:

1. [Talk about presence and use of departmental committees] "You need departmental consensus or approval, you learn this rather quickly, you have to figure out faculty's opinions." (I, 2)

2. [Question: What are the constraints of doing this job?] "Constraints of doing this job are time and money. Also, you do **not** have control **about anything**. Of course, you as a chair you can push things through, but you do that only once, because when you anger people, you lose the **little power** you have." (I, 2)

   [About learning opportunities for a chair] "Biggest constraint is own faculty; you need to be convincing. They are independent. ... You have **some power** as chair; you need to pressure them at the right places. For example, people who do less research, I gave them a higher teaching load, and that was not a problem." (I, 4)

3. [What are your general strategies to handle problems?] "My strategy is to show that there is a need; that it is in their [faculty] best interest to do this, certainly it would be disadvantageous not to do it." (II, 2)

   "It needs to be clear what the problem is, and you have to have an idea of what the solution is: so, faculty get motivated to do something, otherwise not. As the chair you have to come to the table with an idea and be able to show the need for departmental advantages (should not be altruistic motives for individual faculty members). Because faculty get interested when it has good consequences for them personally or if it brings benefits to the graduate program." (II, 3)

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4. [Talk about a new possible direction in the department, and Shaw is explaining]

   "However, these faculty do not have a vision about this new area; sometimes they are totally disconnected. If they cannot get this going, I am not going to pump more money into this. These tenured faculty members need to commit themselves. But they always ask, 'What is in it for me?' They always say that there should be more quantitative expertise. Well, this is one way to get this." (II, 4)

In excerpt 1, the pronoun *you* clearly positions Shaw as a chair who is making this statement; the chair is the one who has "learned" not to go ahead without faculty's consensus or approval. The "you" of chair Shaw is put in a binary contrast to the faculty. As such, Shaw is positioned as chair in order to deal with faculty's "intractable" nature, which can make his work life difficult and perhaps hinder him in doing his job.

In excerpt 2, talk is about constraints to doing the chair job, which is linked to the limited amount of power a chair had. This predominantly plays a role in the relationship to the faculty. We also see that the amount of power is variable in this excerpt; it ranges from no "control about anything" and "little power" to "some power." As we know from discourse analysis, different constructions have different functions in the text. It is likely that this is also the case in this variable construction of power. One possible interpretation of "no control about anything" and "little power" is that statements concerning constraints of the chair job are made from the position of a chair who complains about the negative aspects of the job. On the other hand, the statement of "some power" is made as a reaction to learning opportunities for a chair, indicating a positive progressive process that has the chair feeling more in control of the situation.

We see here again that the amount of power a chair believes he has is dependent on the topic of conversation (constraints -> no or little power; learning -> some power). These two different constructions put the chair in two different subject positions; if he has no or little power, the chair is in a difficult situation as he is very much dependent on the goodwill of the faculty and therefore has to treat them with care. In contrast, having some power by being able to "pressure faculty at the right places" positions Shaw as an active (and manipulative) agent who can control and direct the faculty.

Excerpt 3 contains clear examples of how a chair's actions and behavior are guided by the nature of faculty. As a chair, you have to have an idea of what the solution is, have to come to the table with an idea, and show that there is a need; otherwise faculty are not motivated to do something, do not see the advantage of it, or are merely not interested.

Conclusion. Shaw was the only chair who switched his identification between faculty and chairs; that is, he identified variably with the faculty as a group or with chairs as group. Especially interesting was Shaw's positioning as chair vis-à-vis the faculty member. As such, identification concerned the question "How do *I* come to know who I am in relation to *you*?" (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998, p. 171). It is about a relationship between the "I" and the "other." Therefore, it is not surprising that statements in the form of "as chair, you have/need to/be" (see excerpt 1-4) are almost always contrasted with, and thus linked (perhaps even correlated) to, faculty's characteristics, that is, what faculty do, what they are like, what they value. These binary oppositions lend themselves to the situated work of making comparisons and contrasts (Horton-Salway, 2001, p. 168). So, the links between chair's work and faculty characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- As chair you need consensus and need to be able to understand faculty's opinions -> faculty's intractable nature

- As chair you need to be convincing -> they (faculty) are independent

- As chair you need to pressure them (faculty) at right places –> faculty are difficult to convince

- As chair you need to make problems clear, you have to have an idea, need to show departmental advantages –> otherwise faculty are not easily motivated or interested

The phrase "you need/have (to)" works in two ways. One, it refers to something general; it is not specific for this chair, but for all chairs (see Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 131). It concerns the power relationship between faculty and chair as produced by the nature of the chair job, the academic governance system, and the culture/values of the faculty (e.g., autonomy) that make this a "need/have to." It is not his choice to do this, he doesn't necessarily like it, but it is part of the role and it is thus necessary. It is used to describe a pretty strong requirement to be able to do this job, something like 'a man's got to do what he has to do'; in fact, he does not want to bother the faculty (see above: harass). It is a strategy to get things done.

Furthermore, when we compare "you as chair have to/need to" (excerpt 1-4), a distance is created between the individual chair and the role he is playing. In this way, there is no need to take complete "ownership" of these views regarding the *power* relationship between faculty and chair; it is merely part of an institutional-organizational script of how one should behave.

Thus, there is "social accountability, the fact that we *must* talk only in certain already established ways, in order to meet the demands placed upon us by our need to

sustain our status as responsible members of our society–where the 'must' involved is a moral must" (Shotter, 1989, pp. 140-141). So, as this demandmust was something that was placed upon him, it allowed Shaw's "real" faculty identity to remain more or less intact under the surface of his official role identity (Shotter, 1989, p. 141-143).

· Second, the statement "as chair you need/ have to" do certain things because faculty have certain characteristics indicates that the chair knew what he was talking about. Repeated statements (see excerpts 1-5) show that Shaw understood the attitudes of faculty because he had been and still was a faculty member himself. This increased the facticity and credibility of what one had to do and be when a chair.

Finally, for our interpretation of this text, we need to remember that Shaw was in his fifth year as chair and was in the process of deciding whether he would take on a second term. As was made clear in other segments of the interview, he was willing to do this if the dean agreed to give the department a substantial sum in return, something that the dean, according to Shaw, seemed to be willing to do. It is not unlikely that Shaw over time had been more or less identifying himself predominantly as faculty or predominantly as chair, depending on the situation. We see this reflected in these excerpts of Topic 4. After all, "Identification plays an important role in breaking 'old' identifications and creating 'new' identifications" (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998, p.180), a process that plays an important role in the socialization and creation of identities of chairs. The fact that Shaw was seriously considering a second term and shared this information in the interview shows an exceptional attitude, and is a good example of an identity in process.

Topic 5: Research Activities

This topic concerns the rhetoric that being research-active and being a researcher is an important part of the chair's identity. Moreover, it was not merely described as an important part but as a distinctive and exceptional part, a quality with which these chairs tried to distinguish themselves from other chairs. As such, Delaney, Agrisini, and Maynard, the three chairs who used this rhetoric, emphasized their individuality. The message that they conveyed was that other chairs were not as research-active as they themselves were, or that other chairs no longer participated in research activities at all; in other words, "I do more research than others." Fitting with discourse theory, however, the three chairs who used this topic constructed this message in different ways and for different purposes.

Chair Shaw did not compare his own and others' research activities. Nonetheless, in the interview dialogue, his multiple references to research (for example, the department's high priority on research, the departmental research activities, and the decisions about research) might be interpreted as indicating Shaw's agreement with this topic.

Delaney uses the topic of "doing research defines me as chair" in a way that makes it possible to blame the institutional culture if chairs no longer participate in research. To ensure that this will not happen to him, it is critical and urgent for him not to "surrender" to what he perceives the institution expecting from him, that is, to spend more time on administrative work regardless of the cost to research.

Delaney, I, p.1:
> I knew in advance that it would be a difficult job. I have seen this job and what it entails from up close with a close colleague, F.P.. He was a good, enthusiastic teacher and a dynamic scholar. He was a couple years younger than me and a role

model for me. Then F.P. became an administrator and after a few weeks he did not work in research anymore and over the years lost touch with what was going on in the field, all because he was pressured to do more administrative work.

... At University X it is difficult to keep up with your research; teaching still happens, but not research. There are incentives to disengage from research; for example, immediate deadlines disrupt research. I am still teaching and keep my research going.. F.P. pulled back from research and ceased to be a scholar. I feel saddened by this, it is a loss. I did not want this to happen to me in the same way.

Delaney, I, p. 2:

... I have seen it differently work out at other universities. For example, at University P, where I got my Ph.D., the chair of Y did still both teaching and research. He protected his time and commitments and priorities. Another person is the Vice-President for Research, he still publishes. Also, the Dean of Science at University M.

Administration is divorced from research and publications. At University X, people are pressed or feel pressured to give it up. The problem why this happens, this pressure to give it up, is not clear; maybe there is not enough money for support staff . For example, it would be great if a department would also have someone with an MBA or business degree to take care of financial aspects, day-to-day management.

Delaney, I, pp. 4-5:

[What sort of resources do you use? For example, do you go to national chair meetings?]

I only go to national meetings for research purposes. Well, I went to the regional leadership development program once. ...

Analysis. What we read here in the first excerpt is the story of F.P., which is built up as a simple, straightforward, short, and unambiguous story about the loss of F.P. as a researcher because he became an administrator. A sentence like "He was a good, enthusiastic teacher and a dynamic scholar" provides a positive description of a faculty member. Thus, the next sentence referring to F.P.'s being a role model for Delaney is not so surprising. Then the story takes a negative turn: "Then he became an administrator and ...". We should note that there is no description or explanation of the label or category "administrator;" thus conveying the suggestion that the word does not need an explanation because it is straightforward and clear to anyone. Furthermore, it is presented as if no agency or choice were involved. The phrase "Then he became an administrator

...," suggests that F.P. had taken on the new identity of chair overnight, as if he were transformed in an instant. This is strengthened by "and after a few weeks he did not work in research anymore and over the years lost touch with what was going on in the field." This first temporal/durational description ("after a few weeks") functions as an *extremization* to make the case, that is the story, stronger. Finally, the *extremization* is reinforced by providing just a single reason for F.P.'s loss as a researcher and creating a causal relationship: "all because he was pressured to do more administrative work." The use of passive voice ("was pressured") places somebody or some entity (probably the administration, an active agent who pressures) opposite the passive "victims"—chairs—who are being pressured (see also Topic 7, Delaney: "Administration is a cult, but I like the people"). The situation is described in a way that implies that F.P. is not responsible for the outcome, that it was not a conscious decision or choice to stop doing research. F.P.'s own rationale and motivation are not taken into account. On the other hand, Delaney's description suggests that the pressuring entity, most likely the administration, has great power if it is indeed able to pressure chairs into acting in a certain way.

In the next sentences, Delaney asserts that, at his current university, "teaching still happens, but not research" due to the university's culture and structure. The story of F.P. provides evidence for this statement. However, in contrast to the construction of F.P.'s passiveness in the previous sentences, now there is a need to work up the more active and accountable nature of no longer working in research ("F.P. pulled back from research and ceased to ..." = passive). After all, this needs to be worded in strong contrast to Delaney's commitment to stay research-active. This then needs to be considered an exception to the rule ("At University X research does not happen"), which makes

Delaney an extraordinary chair. However, from reality we know that other chairs, including all of my research subjects, are still research-active.

Furthermore, Delaney relates F.P.'s story as having an unhappy ending: F.P. "ceased to be a scholar. I feel saddened by this, it is a loss." Working this story up as final and negative makes Delaney's ensuing statement that he did "not want this to happen to me in the same way" more credible and understandable. However, there is no reason to assume this would happen to him, except if all the argumentative pieces were true, namely, that becoming a chair is like becoming a victim, which in general is negative and final. As such, the reality that is constructed by working with and choosing from discursive resources and practices makes becoming and being an administrator difficult to view as something positive.

In sum, in this excerpt, there was a conflict between the importance of the individual-professional versus the institutional nature of the job in terms of making it possible to still do research while being a chair. This was reflected in the argument about the agency of the chair in the matter of remaining research-active ("I am still teaching and keep my research going" versus "F.P. pulled back from research and ceased to be a scholar," and "I did not want this to happen to me in the same way" versus "F.P. became an administrator and ... lost touch, all because he was pressured to do more administrative work"). In conclusion, we can say that the main message that is conveyed here is, "I am a chair and **despite** this I still do research." As I said before, the function of this message is that it describes Delaney's work as extraordinary and resisting administrative tendencies. As a consequence, if Delaney were not able to do this extraordinary work and could not resist administrative tendencies any longer, who would

blame him? In other words, it eliminates the possibility of criticism in the future for

having had administrative tendencies in the first place.

In contrast, Agrisini constructs "doing research defines me as chair" very

differently. In this case, work for the school does not so much take time and effort away

from scholarly work, as it did in Delaney's world. For Agrisini, there is a direct

connection between research interests and school interests.

Agrisini, I, p.1
[Do you have ongoing research projects of your own?]
> Yes I have. I am the principal investigator on two grants. I have got some writing
> projects that I am doing, and we are trying to design some new programs. So
> really, kind of all these things really I do on an ongoing basis.

Agrisini, II, p. 8
[Besides thinking about the possible revisions of the university structure, what other
projects are you working on?]
> Mostly I am working on some grants that I am running, working on some
> publications that I am writing ...
[This is still part of your, your faculty/scholarly role, isn't it?]
> Correct, I may do that; I don't know if I do that more or less than other directors.
> It is a big part of what I do because it helps accomplish different things for the
> school as well. So, for example, one of the things that ... for fundraising it helps
> when I bring in grant money. For community relations it helps if I am involved in
> projects in the community. So then on top of that I am supposed to be a faculty
> member as well as an administrator, so some of this ...
[And when you say, because I heard that from another director, the same thing. How in
particular does it help fundraising that I get a grant myself? Is it like a signal, a symbolic
thing, or is it really...?]
> That is a good question; it does a couple things. One thing is that there is kind of a
> role modeling aspect to it, which shows that you can get grants, and how to get
> grants, and stuff like that. But the other part is that when I bring in grants, that
> money helps my school. So it is very concrete. It is not something symbolic at all.
> The grant funds support my school, in different ways. ...

Analysis. This excerpt starts with a straightforward answer, in which Agrisini

states that he is involved in research on an ongoing basis and that working on grants and

publications is a major part of his current work. When I asked for clarification about the

role in which he did grant writing, whether grant writing was part of his faculty/scholarly

role, the answer manages stake and accountability: "Correct, I may do that; I don't know if I do that more or less than other directors. It is a big part of what I do because it helps accomplish different things for the school as well." The answer indicates agreement ("correct"), but he then says *may,* a word that resists normalization or routinization; that is, there is doubt (Potter, 1997, p. 196). Furthermore, the comparison of this director with other directors in terms of frequency of grant writing conveys the idea that this is a common aspect of directors' work. The "question of comparison" is answered by the claim that "it is a big part of what I do," which seems to focus on individual work. On the other hand, Agrisini follows this claim with the explanation that the goal of the work was the school: "because it helps accomplish different things for the school as well." This is Agrisini's justification for why he spends quite some time on grant writing; as a director he is held accountable for work for the school, and at the same time he has a stake in being recognized as a researcher.

In sum, Agrisini constructed "doing research defines me as chair" in a way that linked his personal-professional research interests with the school's interests. Moreover, he described doing research as part of the work for the school. As such, the message was, "I am a director, and thus a big part of what I do is research." This message was also reflected in Topic 4 ("As a chair you balance and/or integrate different roles"), which showed that Agrisini constructed a balanced world in which various roles were integrated as part of a single task or project.

In this topic, Maynard is situated somewhere in the middle between Delaney and Agrisini. On the one hand, he manages stake (as researcher) and accountability (as chair) like Agrisini does. On the other hand, he is very much aware that spending more time on

scholarly research brings costs to his work as director; in other words, doing research is not constructed as part of the work for the school.

Maynard, II, p. 8:

> I am probably more, this may not be true, but I am thinking about my colleagues within the college, I probably have a somewhat more ambitious kind of personal research agenda that partly has been responding to these opportunities [= reference to current grant and research opportunities in the field]. I mean ... for my own sanity and home life, I probably wouldn't be doing all this. There have been in particular two major grant opportunities where I am the PI, that absorb more time than should be devoted by a chair or director. So when that happened I recognized that I really needed help.

Analysis. In this text, several things are constituted. Again, as in the excerpts from Delaney and Agrisini, the message that Maynard conveys is that other chairs are not as research-active as he was. Maynard claims, "I probably have a somewhat more ambitious personal research agenda" as compared to other chairs in the college. We should remember, however, that Maynard himself makes the comparison for the purpose of convincing us: We have to believe him; there are no facts, just opinion. Just in case we doubted his assessment, he uses "stake inoculation" (Potter, 1997, pp. 125-126); that is, he confesses that it "may not be true," which, ironically, gives the statement more credibility.

Furthermore, the word *ambitious* in "having a more ambitious kind of personal research agenda" is promoted here as something positive, some aspect to be proud of. In that sense, it defines Maynard as still a proper researcher, as he is still involved in those things that are assumed to be valued by faculty in this kind of university, namely, research. Next, the words *sanity* and *home life* function as a claim that he does not do this research just for his own personal benefit and pleasure (as perhaps a faculty member would), even though in the sentence before that he referred to a "**personal** research agenda." In general, Maynard does not mention specifically that he spends relatively

much time on research for the sake of the department, but a link between his research agenda and the current flow of research opportunities in the discipline nonetheless suggests this.

Furthermore, Maynard refers to a standard of what is normal time for a chair to spend on research by using the phrase "*should* be devoted". Finally, implying that he is devoting more time to research than he should be, this is something that does not have an agency; the phrase that is used is "when that happened." It is not his work or even his "fault" that he is spending too much time on research; it just happens. Thus, in this excerpt, Maynard is carefully managing his accountability as chair (someone who should be involved in research, but not too much) with his stake (his own research agenda as faculty member and his personal life).

Conclusion of this topic. The message conveyed in this topic was that other chairs were not as research-active as the chair who was speaking, or that other chairs no longer participated in research activities at all. However, as we have seen, the three chairs constructed this topic in different ways and for different purposes. Delaney's construction of this topic helped to convey the message, "I am a chair, and **despite** this I still do research." Agrisini's message was, "I am a director, and thus a big part of what I do is research." And Maynard's message was, "I am a director who sees the need to balance time spent on research and on the school's work."

The general idea of "I do more research than others" is, in my view, embedded in the current competitive, individual-research discourse (see Agrisini). Especially nowadays, in financially tight times, departments at University X are being asked to increase external funding to compensate for the loss of financial support from state and

federal governments. They are subtly and not so subtly encouraged to increase the department's financial health by acquiring grants, endowments, sponsors, patents, contracts for community work, and consultancy. Furthermore, the Provost has asked departments to compete internally for some small amounts of discretionary money, money that might determine a department's survival.

Topic 6: Individual Faculty Goals versus Collective Chair Goals

Topic 6 focuses on the "reality" that faculty members work as individuals, whereas the chair works for the collective of the department or school. Agrisini and Maynard both constructed this reality, in different ways and for different purposes, in fitting with the variability in discourse-analysis theory. But the result was the same: a strong contrast between chairs and faculty in terms of different goals for their job, different methods to do their job, and different values to which they adhere.

Delaney did not address this topic, which is not surprising. Looking back at his interview and the analyses of the previous topics, we know that Delaney was starting his second year as chair but still positioned himself very much as a faculty member. He mainly valued faculty's academic freedom to do what they like. From that perspective, a faculty member would not likely agree with the statement of Topic 6, which might be interpreted as a complaint about faculty attitude.

As for Shaw, he did not address this topic as such. In that sense, he did not agree or disagree with the statement. The only time that Shaw focused on the chair's work for the collective was when he referred to his proactive method of working. This means not just waiting until something needs to be done but anticipating a problem and solving it.

I will analyze the two relevant excerpts from Agrisini's and Maynard's interviews

below, starting with Agrisini.

Agrisini, I, p.1:
[Do you go to conferences?]
>There is a couple things. It is not so much scholarly anymore as what I am
>expected to go to as the director of the school. So there are national meetings for
>chairs and directors for schools of [discipline]. There are national professional
>meetings where we interview people for positions. So most of the conferences I
>go to, I am going there because of administrative business that I can accomplish.
>Very little has anything to do with scholarship. It is almost all related to being a
>chair.

[Can you be a bit more specific?]
>There are two different types of meetings. And that is about it. So most I .. I am a
>board member for the national association of deans and directors in [discipline].
>So twice a year I go to these meetings because I have responsibilities there, and
>that is when we talk about the broader issues facing schools of [discipline], for
>example. And I go to one or two other meetings where we meet new faculty, or
>where I need to show up for some political purpose. What I don't do is go to a
>conference to present a paper or hearing colleagues presenting papers. That is
>totally gone. I go somewhere because I absolutely have to for a strategic
>administrative purpose.

Analysis. In this excerpt, Agrisini tells us that he no longer participates in

scholarly conferences as a researcher. Instead, he goes to conferences in order to do

administrative work. Thus, he defines himself not as a regular faculty member as he no

longer participates in activities that faculty share as a common part of their job--that is, to

present at research conferences. As Wenger (1998) reminds us, both participation and

nonparticipation contribute to our understanding of who we are: "We not only produce

our identities through practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through

practices we do not engage in. Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but

also by what we are not. . . . In other words, non-participation is, in a reverse kind of

fashion, as much a source of identity as participation" (p. 164).

We know that chairs are held accountable by faculty, by administrators (for example, their dean), and by themselves both for what they do and what they do not do. Participating in conferences as a researcher is no exception to that, especially as it is considered such a crucial part of leading a scholarly life. Most of the time, faculty at research universities literally and symbolically rank each other in terms of research productivity, as well as fame and presence in the field. Therefore, using these criteria/terms, one might discount a chair who no longer attends research conferences as having forsaken his scholarly life. Thus, it is highly likely that, in this excerpt, Agrisini is discounting the idea that he might no longer be interested in and/or capable of (in terms of research quality) being part of research conferences. To account for not attending scholarly conferences and to discount it as a negative aspect of being a chair/administrator, going to scholarly research conferences is suggested to be a luxury that chairs no longer have (compare this with Delaney, I, p. 4, in Topic 5, who declare that he goes to national meetings only for research purposes, something that he suggested as the only sensible thing to do). This position is constructed by way of focusing on the opposite, namely the pressure, commitments, responsibility, and time constraints of being a chair. The following excerpts contribute to this reading:

- What I am expected to go to as the director of the school;

- Administrative business that I can accomplish;

- For some political purpose;

- I go somewhere because I absolutely have to for a strategic administrative purpose

Agrisini uses the phrase "what I am **expected to** go to as the director of the school" to signal external pressure. In other words, it is not his choice not to participate in

research conferences. At the same time, "what I am expected to go to as **the director of the school**" constructs a leadership and management perspective of being head of the school, which includes aspects like administrative business, political purpose, and strategic work. Both of these readings are reinforced in the last sentence of this excerpt ("I absolutely have to") by referring to the chair's major responsibility at conferences: administration, not research.

Furthermore, Agrisini's activities as chair are displayed as "rational, sensible and justifiable" (Potter, 2004, p. 617) by using the words "business," "accomplish," "political," "purpose," and "strategic," as descriptions of the chair's activities. Furthermore, we see here that "political" and "strategic" are not constructed as something contemptible (despicable), ugly and negative, but as a plain necessity to do one's job ("have to" and "need to show up for"). Thus, "It is as it is"; it is merely part of the job. In the text, there is no use explaining it, debating about it, or complaining about it.

Finally, more indirect but still visible is the suggestion of the chair's lack of time to perform the various tasks that are part of the job (something that was made clear in the previous text; see Topic 3, Agrisini, I, p. 1). The argument concerning lack of time is not being made as a valid reason for not going to conferences for research purposes. Because "too much work" cannot easily be discounted (after all, this is a general complaint among most people), there is no need for Agrisini to say it outloud. Not mentioning or complaining about lack of time, in turn, strengthens the idea of hard work and conscientiousness.

In conclusion, we know from the rest of the text (see Topics 2 and 3) that Agrisini takes chairing seriously as a job, so it should come as no surprise that, in this excerpt, the

focus is more on the accountability of the director to the department (indicated by words like "expected," "business," and "purpose") than on the possible regret of losing the opportunity to participate as a researcher in conferences, something that is not made explicit in this fragment (he doesn't say that he misses it or that it is a pity). Thus, what the text does is to manage Agrisini's stake in being portrayed as a hard-working and conscientious director who goes to conferences only for his job and work as director.

One of the consequences of this rhetorical construction of the work of a chair is that it creates a stronger distinction between chairs and faculty, even though nothing has actually been said about faculty per se. Nonetheless, the suggested contrast between chair and faculty is evident. Chairs and faculty do not have the same goals. Yet when it is said that the chair works for the benefit of the whole, this suggests that faculty work for their own individual research. Furthermore, chairs and faculty do not have the same methods of doing their jobs. It is being said that the chair offers (or feels expected to offer) his scholarly work to benefit the administration/strategy work, whereas faculty have academic and professional freedom to choose whatever they want to do, both in teaching and research. Finally, chairs and faculty do not have the same values; a chair is supposed to be rational, efficient, and businesslike, whereas faculty are not (think back, for example, to the idea of the luxury of going to research conferences).

This construction of chairing can be located in at least two contrasting frameworks. One is a leadership framework, in which the chair is a mover and shaker, the single person in the school who makes things happen (think of the words *purpose* and *accomplish*). The other discourse is that of the chair's being part of a larger whole, a tiny wheel in the system. There are multiple references to internal and external pressure

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("expected," "need to," and "have to"), which are forces that co-define what a chair needs

to do (for example, "where I need to show up for some political purpose") but also what

not to do (going to research conferences). These pressures of being part of a system are in

direct contrast to ideas of (academic) freedom.

Maynard also claims that faculty work as individuals, whereas the chair works for

the collective. But compared to Agrisini, Maynard openly and clearly contrasts chair

work with faculty work.

> Maynard, I: p. 1
> [Talk about roles ... On the top of your mind, what are some of these roles?]
> Well, it is a little bit of all of that. ... And I think a part of what I see as my role, because I think the faculty members are involved in their own research and teaching activities, you know, they tend to be fairly individualized into their own areas of scholarship. And so I see the role of the chair as being the person that works, in a leadership sense, to try to bring together the various strengths of the faculty to.. into more of an overall strategic vision and direction for the school. And represent those strengths externally. ...
>
> p. 3 [Talk about personal power and authority]
> ... I think where it is done effectively is where you can create some sense of a shared culture and a shared mission, so that people, your colleagues, will contribute to collective goals as well as to their own individual goals. ...
>
> p. 3 [What do you see as the opportunities of being a chair?]
> ... I think one of the satisfying opportunities, if I were doing this as an individual faculty member, it would be more specific to either a course I was teaching or my own personal research agenda, whereas in the role of chair it includes that but it goes beyond that [to] represent the strengths of the department and our outreach activities, our externally focused education activities.
>
> p. 4 [What gets you up in the morning? What is your motivation to do this job?]
> I think I believe in the school, what we are doing ... and so if you are feeling that way about the school, that is, I think if it is satisfying, that is to try to work in ways that ultimately support those various missions. Whether that is working with my colleagues to make appropriate revisions to the curriculum so that we are staying up to date or we're adding a new program needs of the world around us or building a multidisciplinary either research project or new courses that helps to keep us on the cutting-edge in terms of research and education, that is important. Or if it is just a ...collection of mundane but necessary administrative tasks that by doing that allows our faculty to focus on their own research and education. That all comes back ultimately to meeting the needs or addressing and enhancing the mission of the school.
>
> pp. 4-5 [Most important, is not the same as what you enjoy most ...]

I think it is probably not one thing, I think what it needs, or the most important role, is somebody who on a daily basis is thinking of the challenges or opportunities for the school as a collective and trying to figure out what needs to be done to address these challenges and take advantage of these opportunities. Again, I think the very nature of academia is that it is a collective of individuals where you know when it works right the individual, the work of those individuals all contribute to the collective but not in a kind of coordinated way that happens in other fields, outside of academia where there is more coordinated clear-cut tasks and divisions of responsibility and here it is much more a group of highly individualistic professionals whose best work comes out of that individualistic orientation. But by its very nature, if nobody is paying attention to how those individual pieces contribute to the overall whole, you can stray from the mission of the school or not pay attention to the cornerstones of what makes the collective able to operate effectively. ... I wouldn't take any one of those things and say if this doesn't happen the whole thing falls apart, but is more somebody looking at the various components of the organization from a kind of a step removed and thinking of the collective. ... And here, our outcomes are somewhat more ambiguous and there isn't a clear connection between the activities of all the individual components, and therefore it becomes more important for somebody to have that collective vision and orientation to their daily work.

Analysis. As stated before, the excerpts from Maynard's interviews contrast chair work with faculty work in an open and direct way. The idea here is that faculty members mainly work individually, and are focused primarily on their own teaching and research. On the other hand, the chair represents the whole, creates opportunities for faculty, sets a direction, and brings together the strengths of faculty.

Two aspects of this excerpt deserve attention. One is that, as part of the talk about motivation to do this job, Maynard refers to the "mundane but necessary administrative tasks" (p. 4) that he does, which "allows our faculty to focus on their own research and education" (p. 4). In this way, these "mundane but necessary administrative tasks" are elevated in importance in terms of what otherwise might be boring administrative paperwork. After all, it is all part of "meeting the needs or addressing and enhancing the mission of the school" (p. 4), and in this way it becomes "noble" work.

In addition, the use of the phrase "allows our faculty" suggests that there is a willingness to serve on the part of the chair, which makes it possible for faculty to do their job. Not only that, the work of the chair/director provides individual faculty with academic freedom, as a result of which they create their "best work" (pp. 4-5). This rhetoric makes it possible to view this chair, not as a person who let it happen that he now has to do boring work but as somebody who chose to do this work for the benefit of all. The word "allow" indicates that this it is up to him; he offers this to the faculty. In that sense, the phrase provides agency and creates a power dynamic between chair and faculty. As such, this excerpt is situated in the position of chair. A faculty member might find the word *allowing* problematic because it could be considered the person's right to focus on his or her own research and teaching.

The power issue is part of a general idea underlying this excerpt. In contrast to Agrisini's case, in which there is a strong undertone of internal and external expectations that co-define what a chair needs to do and should not do, in this excerpt the dominant idea is of choice and authority. For example, the phrase "And so I see the role of the chair as ..." (p.1) suggests a sense of ownership of ideas; it is "I," not somebody else, who defines this role.

Finally, a possible consequence of this construction of the work of chair as a willing and voluntary offer to the faculty is that the faculty should be grateful and respectful to the chair for doing this job. In addition, it might imply that faculty do not accept accountability/responsibility for more than their own teaching and research. From this viewpoint, the chair becomes crucial to the survival of the unit.

Topic 7: Administration Versus Administrators

This topic concerns the distinction between the administration as an entity and the

people of the administration. Delaney is the chair who most explicitly distinguishes

between the administration as an entity and the people of the administration. Delaney

constructs an argument in which the administration can be "blamed" for why chairs stop

or at least decrease the amount of research they do. Because it is not realistic, and might

be offensive, to blame every person in the administration for this situation, a distinction

needs to be made between administration as a system of cultural values and policies, and

administration as a collection of individuals.

Delaney, I, p. 1:
> ... Administration is a cult here at University X. At University X it is difficult to keep up with your research; teaching still happens, but not research. There are incentives to disengage from research; for example, immediate deadlines disrupt research. ...

Delaney, I, p. 2:
> Administration as a cult, I say on cynical days. The pre-training for chairs was good, also the institutional faculty development sessions give good information. After a couple months of being chair, I was invited to participate in the regional leadership development program. I went once to headquarters; S. had done that too in the past. This program offers the chairs travel money to visit other universities and do other stuff, everything beside your job as researcher and teacher. I did not like this concept of taking even more time away from teaching, research, and family. There are inducements to have chairs take time to do not important stuff. It is one thing to build skills this way, another is to take time away. I do not want to lose perspective. Here at University X, I do not want to get sucked into this as it leads to a clean break with being a scholar.

Delaney, I, pp. 4-5:
[What sort of resources do you use? For example, do you go to national chair meetings?]
> I only go to national meetings for research purposes. Well, I went to the regional leadership development program once. This was helpful. At that meeting they used a good model for problem solving: in 20 minutes: 5 minutes explanation, 5 minutes asking questions, 13 minutes problem solving. It was cool to take on different roles. At University X it is different: the initial chair training was good. It was useful to build networks for advice; sometimes I still use people to bounce

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ideas off, many informal connections across the university. Also, sometimes the institutional faculty development sessions are great.

Delaney, I, p. 5:
Despite the cynicism about administration, I like most of the people. They are no idiots, they are smart. But as I said before, the culture alienates the faculty from the administration, which leads to problems at University X.

Analysis. What we see here is that Delaney uses the concepts of administration and administrator to express different viewpoints. The word "administration" is clearly used in a negative sense: "administration as a cult" (p. 2), "I do not want to get sucked into this" (p. 2), and "cynicism about administration" (p. 5). Important here is the metaphor of "administration as a cult." A cult is a system of worship expressed in rituals in a closed community. You have to give up (often important and personal) aspects of your daily life (in this case, research) to become a member, and it is also very difficult to leave this closed community. As such groups have their own radical and often dangerous rituals, values, and customs, it is often difficult for outsiders to understand the meaning of aspects of this group. By using this metaphor, administration is constructed, perhaps not as a threatening entity (although it supposedly "threatens" research), but at least as a negative one.

In addition, administration is used to convey a single entity (see, for example, the singular in "administration is/as *a* cult." Moreover, administration is used as if it were a depersonalized, unidentifiable, and nonhuman entity. The sentences concerning the administration do not contain pronouns (such as they and them); in other words, there are no people in the sentences. The construction that is used is "there are," such as in "There are incentives to disengage from research" (p. 1) and "There are inducements to have chairs take time to do not important stuff" (p. 2). Nonetheless, despite the depersonalized

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entity, it is clearly suggested that the administration is an active agent, something I will discuss below.

To counter all of the above, the concept of administrator is used. The word *administrator* is not used per se, but there is still a reference to the people side of the administration enterprise, namely, the administrators. An example is the following sentence: "Despite the cynicism about administration, I like most of the people. They are no idiots, they are smart.". This phrase refers to individual people Delaney knows personally and with whom he has a positive relationship ("I like most of the people"). The quantifier "most" shows that people are treated and assessed in an individual manner.

Furthermore, it is suggested that this is a surprise, as if Delaney as part of his experience as chair has developed a more balanced assessment of administrators. As Potter (1997) claims "People construct themselves as having had particular views or expectations, and they do so as needed and in a way that is closely fitted to the current interaction" (p. 129). This change of mind is intended to increase the credibility of Delaney's assessment. However, by using the extreme and binary (Horton-Salway, 2001, p. 168) nonacademic choice of words ("idiot" versus "smart"), it again undermines the seriousness of the claim.

Thus, distinguishing between administration and administrators and using the concepts as described above provides credibility and acceptability that Delaney relates differently to administrators and to administration. As Delaney implies, he likes the people side of the administration (that is, administrators) but not the administrative culture, job roles, and values. As we can see, it is possible to employ these two different aspects simultaneously, and have them both be true. This is especially relevant for

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people, like chairs, who have to deal with multiple, competing, and ambiguous roles. Labeling can help to construct different versions of reality, so it helps to manage multiple identities: as faculty, as chair, and as administrator and his relationship with others in these categories.

In addition to the description of the administration as a depersonalized, nonhuman entity, we see that the administration is treated as a product of interest or stake. Phrases like "there are **incentives** to disengage from research," "I did not like this concept of **taking** even more time away," and "There are inducements **to have** chairs take time to do not important stuff" suggest that the administration is an active agent, albeit a nonhuman entity, that keeps chairs from doing faculty work in terms of teaching and research by using incentives. Especially noticeable are the "intention-promoting verbs" (Potter, 1997, p. 182) "to pressure" (p.1) and "to take" ("taking," "have chairs take," "to take time," p. 2). This makes it possible to treat the chairs themselves as (unwilling) "victims" who need not, indeed cannot, take responsibility for not doing (sufficient) research. Blaming "something out there" (that is, the administration) draws "attention away from the producer's stake in the description and their accountability, or responsibility, for it" (Potter, 1997, p. 150).

This section also makes use of extreme-case formulations (Potter, 1997, p. 187) in order to justify the conclusion that the regional leadership development prorgram program takes time away from those things that really matter to a faculty member, namely, teaching and research. In this case, the faculty work is described in full (teaching, research), to which are added family matters. In contrast, chairs' traveling to other institutions is part of the reference to "not important stuff," whereby the word

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"stuff" functions as a rhetorical device and thus can indeed be treated as unimportant. It works to counter (Potter, 1997) the alternative notion that building skills by way of the regional leadership development program is valuable and should not be neglected.

In conclusion, in this excerpt, a distinction was created between the administration as an entity and the people in the administration. With this construction, the administration as a system could be blamed for why chairs stopped or at least cut back on doing research, whereas the collection of individual administrators was free of blame. Delaney's construction (topic) and his points of view were important factors in defining his role identity as chair. In general, in this excerpt, Delaney's subject position was that of a faculty member; that is, he spoke not as a chair but as a member of the faculty, somebody who suffered from the administration but had had positive experiences with administrators. The latter construction is a first step in the direction of viewing the work of administrators (which can also include that of an academic administrator such as chair) as positive, or at least less negative.

Topic 8: Previous Conceptualization of Chair identity and Work

I end this analysis section with a topic that consists of a single sentence of one particular chair, Shaw, but I think it is sufficiently relevant for inclusion here as it seems to concisely capture the shifts in a chair's complex construction of identity over time.

To be able to interpret this single-sentence excerpt, I want to remind the reader that Shaw has been at University X for more than two decades and is in his fifth year as chair of a department in the social sciences. He is seriously considering a second term but is willing to do this only if the department receives additional financial resources in return. Before becoming chair, Shaw did not have much administrative experience.

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Shaw's department does not have a culture of rotating chairs; his predecessor had

been chair for more than a decade. The department is rather large and has a major focus

on research; some of its programs are considered the top programs in the nation. In terms

of climate, this is an easy department; people are congenial and work fairly

independently. The chair is happy about the internal climate and dynamics in the

department. In general, the department is academically strong, financially sound, and has

a strong identity.

The single-sentence excerpt that follows indicates the way Shaw viewed his future

identity as chair when he was still a regular faculty member. It includes his expectations

of what the role was going to be like and the possible consequences of taking on that role

(for example, less time to do research, and as a consequence, his loss of status as a

scholar in the research community and in the department). The single-sentence excerpt is

as follows:

Shaw, I, p.1:
[What is it like to be a department chair?]
> I have been at University X for ... years. In that time I was proud not to have been
> sucked into being an administrator.

Analysis. The sentence that, in my view, most clearly shows Shaw's expectations

for and consequences of doing a chair job is the following: "I was proud not to have been

sucked into being an administrator." Shaw said this at the beginning of the very first

interview, providing an initial impression of the dramatic transitions that need to take

place when one becomes a chair. The statement positions Shaw as chair, reflecting his

current views, and at the same time as faculty member, reflecting his views in the past.

The phrase "proud not to have been sucked into being an administrator" is

intended to define "being an administrator" as something negative. As the word "proud"

is used to refer to the fact that the chair stayed out of administration, it is suggested that the opposite of proud, namely something to be ashamed of, might be used for the situation in which he would have chosen to be an administrator. The implication of something shameful is thus linked to being an administrator.

Furthermore, by choosing the word *administrator* instead of *chair*, Shaw signaled that a chair is, in fact, an administrator. This view was not reinforced in the rest of the interview, where the labels *chair* and *administrator* were treated as fundamentally different concepts.

In addition to this negative view of administrators, the verb "sucked into" also suggests that "being an administrator" might just happen, without the chair noticing or actively choosing to act on this. It also suggests a position that one can no longer escape, if one has become an administrator. It is a matter of surrendering to a situation to come.

However, there is also a different interpretation of this sentence. The past tense "*was* proud" might suggest that Shaw is no longer proud. Because we know that Shaw has become a chair, it is more likely that this sentence is an initial indication that he has changed his opinion of "what it means to be an administrator." In that sense, it might be that his view of administrators became less negative. It is not surprising that this might be the case as he indicated in the interview that he was considering staying on for a second term as chair. On the other hand, it could also be that he reframed his work as doing chair work, not doing administrator work (see discussion above).

The idea of changing viewpoints over time is reinforced if we note the place in the text of this sentence. In terms of discourse analysis, we can interpret this excerpt as "stake inoculation" (Potter, 1997, p. 125). This means that a predominantly controversial

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or debatable account is constructed in such a way that it is intended to counter a possible

presumption of the listener. Because Shaw spoke this sentence at the very beginning of

the interview, and later on he made more positive comments about what he enjoys about

being a chair and the activities he performs as part of his job, it counters the

impression/suggestion that he might have had (a) a previous positive idea about being a

chair/administrator; or (b) a personal interest in becoming a chair/administrator.

Furthermore, it counters the impression that he is capable of actually enjoying being a

chair/administrator, and that he has voluntarily chosen to do this job (Horton-Salway,

2001, p. 156).

Answers to Research Questions

In this section, I will discuss the preliminary answers to the research questions

that guided this study. The research questions were:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?

How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?

Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

The answers consist of several aspects. First, I focus on the nature of chairs' role

identity. One of the major characteristics is its situated and contextual nature, which is a

crucial factor in the development, preparation, education, and training of chairs. There are

two reasons for this. The first reason has to do with the nature of the chair socialization

process; the second reason has to do with the need for sense-making.

Then, I focus once again on role identity as a socio-psychological construct,

something that largely has been ignored in the chair literature. In this study, I looked at

role identity and how chairs "do" identity in linguistic practice. I argue that the socio-psychological identity conflict is an important factor influencing role identity and that we need to study this in more depth if we want to better understand why chairs are hindered in their learning process of becoming and being a chair.

Furthermore, I describe some of the discursive techniques and strategies that are used to construct role identity and how in this way chairs "do different sorts of work" using different constructions of reality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90) in order to create a situated identity that temporarily manages or solves the problem/situation at hand.

Subsequently, I introduce the term *reproduced identity* as a concept in order to understand the influence of the imbeddedness of individual chairs in larger structures, communities, practices, and discourses. As part of this introduction, I focus on possible loci of identity creation, the types of discourses and practices that chairs might "inherit," and the dialectical nature of identities. Finally, I hypothesize about time as a factor involved in understanding role identities of beginning/first-term and more experienced/second-term chairs.

All of the aforementioned issues and factors are part of a discourse and practice-based working model that I developed for understanding the chair's identity process. This model is explained in Chapter 7 as part of the findings of this study.

As a last comment, I would like to remind the reader that the sample for this dissertation consisted of only 2 department chairs and 2 school directors. The size and choice of the sample has consequences for the generalizability of the study's answers and findings to other subject groups and settings (see also the section on Limitations in Chapter 7).

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The Nature of Chairs' Role Identity

In this chapter, I have focused on how chairs understand their job in terms of role identity from a constructivist perspective and using discourse analysis as a method for analysis. At the time of the interviews-dialogues, it became apparent that chairs were constructing, often in complex, ambiguous, and contradictory descriptions, narratives about "what it means to be a chair." In my analysis, I followed this up by looking at how chairs constructed their role identity.

The scholarly literature has indicated that chairs need to, and indeed do, deal with role conflict and ambiguity. Surveys and self-reports have proven this. However, it was not yet known *how* chairs actually cope with identity dilemmas in practice. In this study, which is the first phase in a multi-stage research process, I looked at linguistic practice in the form of interview texts. It appears that the chairs in this study understood their role identity as complex, problematic, variable, multiple, social, situated, and contextual.

Complex. In general, chairs understand their job in terms of role identity in ways that are more complex than the chair literature has indicated so far. A chair has a complex work life because he or she needs to play, take on, and fulfill multiple roles, sometimes more than one role at the same time (see also Chapter 1: role identity; Chapter 2: commonality, contingency of roles). Some roles are more temporal, for example the role of conflict manager, which is used/taken on only when needed. In addition, the chair has many different constituencies (dean, faculty, students, community, discipline) whom he or she needs to attend to and who often have different needs and expectations.

Furthermore, the chair is in a Janus position (Gamble, 1988), which requires him or her to lead a double life as scholar as well as administrator.

These roles are more long-term and have a deep effect on the identity of the chair, especially the faculty identity. Chairs have been socialized into a discipline starting in graduate school and through their faculty careers; often, they have had 16 years of socialization before becoming chair (Gmelch, 2002, p. 8). As we know from the literature (e.g., Wolverton, 2004), the majority of chairs do not completely give up their faculty identity while they are chair because of the professional loss when returning to their faculty job. This role, therefore, is more than just a role that one takes on when needed; it has become part of the chair's identity. The other role that also can have a deep and more lasting influence on the chair is the administrative role. Because the faculty and the administrative roles can conflict in terms of tasks, responsibilities, and values, the overall issue of role identity is that of an identity dilemma, especially in the form of role conflict and role ambiguity.

Problematic. Not surprisingly, this situation often leads to role-identity conflict. Chairs experience and understand particular situations (in this case, the interview questions) as problematic and therefore treat them as a problem that needs to be solved or managed. One way to manage the identity dilemma resulting from such a problem is by shifting between faculty identity (being a scholar) and administrator/leadership identity (being a chair), that is, aligning oneself with the category of faculty or administrators.

Variable. The shift between identities is variable and does not happen at random. Depending on the situation, in this case a specific interview question, but presumably also in behavioral actions, a chair constructs a specific identity, an identity that seems to

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be most appropriate for the situation at hand. For example, questions regarding the department's financial and cultural situation and those regarding the faculty's willingness to participate in governance/departmental service are not considered neutral questions. By way of interpretation, they receive a particular meaning; in this case, one might interpret such questions as asking for a nonjudgmental and objective perspective on the department and faculty by a leader, someone with a 40,000-foot view. In that case, it seems less suitable to present oneself, one's identity, as "merely" a faculty member of the department. These questions are more easily answered from a chair/administrative subject position.

On the other hand, questions about the research activities of chairs are in principle answered from a faculty subject position. Again, these are not neutral questions; they are often interpreted as a form of accountability of how much/little research one does and therefore to what extent the chair still is considered a proper researcher. As the latter is viewed as preferable because it provides standing in the research community, questions regarding research activities often are answered from a faculty/scholarly standpoint.

However, we should not assume that the choice of either of these two different standpoints is consistent when addressing related situations or topics. For example, regarding the last example of describing a chair's research activities from a faculty standpoint, we have also seen other positions and constructions. Agrisini, for example, took a chair/administrative subject position when talking about going to conferences. Presenting one's research at conferences was portrayed as a luxury activity that faculty have but chairs do not (no longer). As such, it was not constructed as being an important aspect of faculty work. In this case, Agrisini's construction of research conferences

accounted for the fact that he no longer participated in research conferences and discounted that this should be perceived as negative, that is, as losing/having lost one's status and standing, from a scholarly perspective. Thus, we see that chairs vary their role identity depending on the situation.

Multiple. To state the obvious, from a constructivist perspective there are multiple identities. As described above, this not only indicates shifts between identities so that one has multiple identities consecutively. It also means that we have multiple identities concurrently. After all, in principle, a chair does not stop being a faculty member when he or she becomes a chair, just as a mother does not stop being a mom when she is at work or when she jogs. However, sometimes one identity is placed in the foreground while other identities take a background position.

Social. As we saw above and in the analyses, role identity and role-identity dilemmas are not concepts referring solely to individuals; they exist as part of a social group, community, and/or organization (see Chapter 1: role identity). Our identities are constructed through participation and nonparticipation in social practice (Wenger, 1998). Chairs define themselves as administrators and as scholars by participating in several communities that, as we saw above, have different expectations of the chair. In that sense, these communities help create various "constructions" of the identity of a chair. To be able to function, chairs continuously need to negotiate their identities within these communities in practice. They negotiate, for example, about their status of membership in the community, perceived competence, and trustworthiness.

Situated. Chairs experience and understand particular situations (in this case, the interview questions) as problematic and therefore treat these as problems that need to be

solved or managed. As such, chairs' identities are locally and situationally constructed, contingent on the (linguistic) situation at hand. This means that identities are far from stable and static. Furthermore, it means that learning "to be a chair" is continuous.

Contextual. Every individual chair fills in the role and identity, "what it means to be a chair," differently because this depends on all kinds of factors: his or her personal character and style; the history, position, and power of the department; the chair's unique socialization process and experiences; the discipline; the unique needs and expectations of faculty, staff, students, and, dean; and so on. For example, a chair might enjoy more power because he or she is seen as the "savior" of the unit when it was in need. But a departmental climate might also be distrustful of, for instance, outside chairs due to past activities that made the department lose faculty lines in favor of another department.

In conclusion, chairs "do different sorts of work" using different constructions of reality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90) in order to create an identity that temporarily manages or solves the problem/situation at hand. I define this identity as a situated identity.

The situated and contextual nature of the chair job is a crucial factor for the development, preparation, education, and training of chairs. There are two reasons for this. The first reason has to do with the nature of the chair socialization process, and the second has to do with the need for sense-making. I will discuss these below.

The nature of the chair socialization process. From the socialization literature, we know that chairs are socialized into this job by means of an individual, random, informal,

disjunctive, and variable process (Spicer & Staton, 1992; Staton-Spicer and Spicer, 1987). This means, among other things, that:

1. Chairs are socialized individually, in their own department/school, with its own characteristic culture, history, finances, demographics, and so on.. In other words, chairs are socialized in a unique situation.

2. Chairs do not learn systematically or in a planned manner, but predominantly when necessary or at random. For example, when a problem arises that needs to be dealt with, chairs try to find or create a solution that is appropriate for the situation at hand.

3. Chairs' roles or job descriptions are either nonexistent or extremely vague. As such, chairs do not have much formal guidance in how to fulfill their job, while at the same time they have much freedom to construct their job. Thus, they are able to pick and choose from the many roles and tasks that the literature has indicated chairs might take on (see, for example, the dozens of responsibilities mentioned by Tucker, 1992). For example, some chairs include an entrepreneurial or fund-raising role as part of their job, whereas others do not participate in these activities or not frequently. More generally, some chairs will solve problems when they arise, whereas other chairs are more proactive in recognizing possible departmental problems and trying to solve them.

4. Very few chairs are introduced to the job by their predecessor in the department or school, something that is relevant for role identity, as I have shown in this study. Nor are chairs often mentored by other faculty members or chairs.

In addition, we know that the socialization into this new profession is not just a transition from one physical office to another, having different tasks than previously. It is a transition to a whole new world, from one cultural and professional world (faculty) into

another cultural and professional world (administration). As we know from the change

literature, a transition always includes leaving something behind (Bridges, 2003). This

translates into hesitation and sometimes fear, even resistance, to enter this new world, not

just during the first year but much longer. Therefore, as Gmelch and Parkay (1999)

showed, not everybody makes a full transition.

In conclusion, the nature of the chair socialization process results in a specific

way of learning for chairs. As such, the characteristics of the socialization process of

chairs are neither negative nor positive. They are merely typical for this kind of position

in this professional, individually oriented organization. It means that chairs usually are on

their own, reinventing the wheel. The outcome is highly contingent on the context and

situation in which they find themselves. As these factors are different for each chair, it

means that, as the result of such an individual process, chairs are idiosyncratic. None is

like another.

    <u>Sensemaking of expectations.</u> The second reason why the contextual and situated

nature of the chair job is a crucial factor in the development, preparation, education, and

training of chairs has to do with the need for sense-making. Chairs are confronted with

the expectations of the dean, faculty, and other constituents (e.g., professional

community), which are not only vague and ambiguous in themselves, but often in conflict

with one another (Wolverton, 2004).

Due to the complexity and ambiguity of the expectations, what is needed in terms

of knowledge, skills, and information is sense-making. Chairs need to make sense of

what is expected of them, how they can act on it, what they themselves feel they need and want to do.

As indicated by the many chair studies, as a consequence of this complexity and ambiguity, it is unclear, and sometimes even contradictory, which tasks and roles chairs take on, the abstract importance of these tasks and roles for the department, what chairs prefer to do, and how much time they actually spend doing a particular task. We see this lack of clarity reflected in the fact that scholars do not agree whether chairs spend much time on a task due to its importance, their lack of sufficient skills (it just takes longer), or because they prefer to do it (e.g., Bennett, 1982; Creswell, 2003).

What is expected of chairs has been addressed in the literature in very general terms (for example, Gmelch & Miskin, 1993, 1995): They need to be good managers and good leaders, have good skills in budget matters, and so on. But what is a good leader, or a good manager? In whose eyes? Chairs have so many constituencies, all of whom want something different. In practice, chair work is very contextual and situated; it is contingent on the needs of the department; the wishes of the faculty, dean, external communities/professionals, and students; and the culture and type of the university. How *can* they make sense out of this? Hence, in this study, I claim that it is the chair's role identities that in large part define what a chair thinks he or she needs to do and what he or she actually does. This is reflected in the choices that chairs make. For example, the literature has shown repeatedly that chairs suffer from lack of time and time pressure. The chair's Janus position in the organization (Gamble, 1988) is an organizational-structural place in the institution that is positioned in between the faculty and administration, and therefore looks in two directions and serves multiple groups. What

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we have not fully realized, however, is that the Janus position also represents a socio-psychological identity construct. The chair leads a double life as scholar as well as administrator. He or she feels in the middle, torn between two groups and identities. The chair's Janus job of being an academic administrator as well as a scholar demands time to fulfill both, time he or she does not have. The chair cannot do everything he or she needs and wants to do, and so must prioritize. So, why should we study role identity, and how does role identity co-define what a chair actually does?

Role Identity

The socio-psychological identity construct has largely been ignored in the literature, even though researchers have established that chairs do need to handle this conflict as part of their job. In this study, I have looked at role identity and how it is constructed variably and situationally, that is, how chairs "do" identity in linguistic practice. From this study, we know that role identity co-defines how a chair thinks, what he or she says, what a chair actually does, and what he or she sees as problematic. I argue that the socio-psychological identity conflict is an important factor influencing role identity, which needs to be studied in greater depth if we want to better understand why chairs are hindered in their learning process of becoming and being a chair.

This study confirmed the findings from other studies (for example, Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Seedorf, 1990), that indicated that there is a transition from faculty member to chair. But these other studies did not look at what this transition does, how it affects the work. Furthermore, the transitions in these studies were assumed to be one-way, from faculty member to chair. What was not included in the term or label

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transition is the continuous back-and-forth shifts between chair and faculty and everything in between. For example, as we have seen in this study, a chair might describe a situation such as the faculty climate in the department (a "fact" or "reality") from a faculty perspective or subject position, whereas at other times he or she might describe another situation/event from a chair position.

We must realize that people's transitioning is related to the choices they make in terms of role identity. One of the main issues here is that, in practice, it is really impossible to be a chair and at the same time fulfill a full-time faculty/scholarly job; there is too much to do in the time available. There are choices to make of what to do and not to do. How much research and teaching can I still do? And how do I manage this? The answers to these questions are, to a large extent, influenced by how a chair perceives his or her own role identity. Am I more a faculty member than a chair/administrator, or more administrator than faculty? And what kind of chair and/or faculty member am I? As mentioned before, these choices are not just rational and academic, they have to do with loss and gain; in other words, they are also emotional. Especially the loss, or even the assumed and expected idea of loss, of faculty priorities (teaching and research) and values (for example, academic freedom) is considered important and is one of the reasons why chairs resist becoming and being a chair (see Delaney's example). In that sense, the chair's role identity defines in large part what he or she believes needs to be done and what the chair actually does and what not. Let us look at an example of Delaney.

Chair Delaney said he had taken on the chair job to "save the department," and because he was the only one who was suitable and available. Furthermore, he had seen one of his predecessors burn out and another, his friend and role model, stop doing

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research for the sake of the administrative work. For these reasons, he had constructed

chair work as follows: Chair work is dangerous and thus threatens his identity as

scholar/researcher. To decrease the threat, chair work has to be minimized, by claiming

that being able to delegate is an important part of chair work (for example, delegating to

the faculty) and by not being a micromanager (support staff should do this work). This is

an example of how a chair constructs his or her identity as a consequence of the

contextual history. Furthermore, it is an example of the possible consequences of his or

her doing something or not (for example, taking on the job, delegating). And, finally, it is

an example of the anticipated loss due to a change in his or her identity, which hinders

learning and being a chair.

Again, we see that chairs "do different sorts of work" using different

constructions of reality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90) in order to create a situated

identity that temporarily manages or solves the problem/situation at hand. So, how is this

realized?

Discursive Techniques and Strategies

In this section, I describe some of the techniques and strategies that are used to

"do different sorts of work" with different constructions of reality (Wetherell & Potter,

1992, p. 90) (see also Chapter IV, Discourse Analysis as a Method). But first let us back

up for a moment. From a constructivist perspective, people, including chairs, create

realities. In general, chairs manage problems by constructing a specific reality of, for

example, what the roles and work of a chair entail but also of the situation of the

department, their predecessor(s), and their relationships with others (for example, faculty

and dean). It is important to realize that, in this study, the validity or correctness of the

chair's realities is irrelevant; that is, the chair's realities need not necessarily be shared with others. What matters is how these realities can be used as part of a larger argument chairs are trying to make, what they are trying to achieve by way of discourse.

One way of creating a reality is by conceptualizing a word in a specific way, that is, using it as a label. For example, the label *administrative* (role), as discussed in the section on Labels and Concepts, can be used in various positive and negative ways. Furthermore, chairs can use specific words that have a connotation or particular meaning (e.g., "to cajole," Topic 2, Delaney, I, p. 1) to describe something as having a particular value or characteristic.

As I have shown in the analysis in Chapter 5, there are other discursive techniques chairs use to create a situated identity that temporarily manages or solves the problem/ situation at hand. Some of these are more obvious than others, such as the binary contrast. With the help of a strong, even extreme, contrast, it is possible to refer to one reality as better or more valuable than another. For example, this black-and-white technique is used to create a positive image of a faculty job and a negative image of an administrator job (for example, Delaney, I, p.1, Topic 2): "I hate the job [of chair]", which creates a contrast between freedom for faculty versus nonfreedom/constraints for chairs).

Another strategy is to create a distance between the chair and his or her statements, that is, to draw "emphasis away from the nature or identity of the producer" (Potter, 1997, p. 150). One of the more obvious examples, which is used by all chairs, is the use of a strategy to construct consensus: "as chair you are ...". This rhetoric works in a way that makes a particular chair part of a community whose ideas are shared by many, "rather than being unique to one" (Potter, 1997, p. 150). At the same time, membership in

a community allows the chair to speak from experience. Any argument or description thus made is provided with credibility and factuality.

A final strategy that I discuss here, and which can be used in a very subtle way, is the use of variation. We have seen this in particular in the case of Maynard (III, pp. 3, 10-11, Topic 3). In this excerpt, variation is used to introduce many new concepts/criteria to describe chairs who like administration and who know that they want to pursue an administrative career. The effect is that each time this chair might be held accountable for fitting into this category, and thus having a "real" administrative identity, a new or modified criterion is introduced. In that sense, a false dichotomy is created that makes the middle ground, and therefore Maynard's position, unclear.

In terms of strategies, the main strategies that can be used for identity constructions and learning are intertextuality and intercontextuality. Intertextuality concerns oral and written discourse, and intercontextuality concerns practices. "Members draw on past texts ... and practices ... to construct present texts and/or to implicate future ones" (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 132). In general, through intertextual and intercontextual linkages, chairs juxtapose texts and practices and in this way construct meaning and signal historical significance and social relevance.

In this study, there were numerous references to practices or statements of people whom the chairs had met during their careers and during graduate school that clearly influenced how they looked at their current role identity. Delaney made several references to the chairs during his graduate school time, his friends in the department, and previous chairs in the department. Shaw talked about his viewpoints on chairing from the time that he was still a regular faculty member. On the other hand, we also saw that

members constructed a present time by making references to the future. For example, in Topic 1, we saw that all chairs and directors in this study used statements about how they viewed their future career as a criterion in constructing a current identity. In general, through intertextual and intercontextual linkages, chairs juxtapose texts and discourses and in this way construct meaning and signal significance.

As stated above, it appears that chairs understand their role identity as complex, problematic, variable, multiple, social, situated, and contextual. However, we have seen that there are other, broader factors that play a role in constructing chairs' identities. These factors are the chairs' discourses and what I refer to as reproduced identities, which I will explain below. From this study, it is clear that these factors play a role, but it is difficult to say whether or not chairs are aware of their existence and consciously draw upon them.

Reproduced Identities

To understand the influence of the embeddedness of individual chairs in larger structures and communities, I want to introduce the term *reproduced identity* as a concept. I define reproduced identities as images that have grown over the years as possible identities. Reproduced identities are based on inherited practices and discourses from the past and present, both of which are part of an ever-changing and open-ended reservoir of possibilities. In this section, I discuss several elements of reproduced identities, namely, the places of identity creation, the types of chair discourses and practices, the dialectical nature of identities, and the time factor involved in the development of chairs' role identities.

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Loci of identity creation: Communities-of-practice and social contacts. One main source of reproduced identities is the chair's local community-of-practice, with which he or she has direct contact. The local community-of-practice represents chairs' "shared histories of learning" and socialization (Wenger, 1998, p. 86). Examples of these are the institutional chair introduction seminar (all four chairs participated in this), the regional leadership development program meetings (Shawn and Delaney), and the national disciplinary association for chairs and directors (Agrisini). These places of learning and socialization are obvious venues for inheriting identities because they are intended and planned as occasions of positive learning. In these communities, there is talk about what chairs need to do and suggestions on how to do it; that is, there are discussions about best practices. But at the same time, a language (discourse) is developed concerning what it means to be a chair, the chair's identity. Thus, identities are constructed and (re)negotiated, meanings are produced, and discourses and practices are developed, among other things, by telling stories, presenting ideas, complaining, negotiating, and so on.

There are also less obvious and less structured places of learning. For example, the chair has many personal and/or informal contacts with others through which cross-fertilization takes place. These influential people and ideas might date back to the time when the chair was still a graduate student or a faculty member (in the cases of Delaney and Maynard). These social contacts might function as role models or mentors (Agrisini) in both a positive and a negative sense.

Types of discourses and practices. Beside the chair's community-of-practice and other local contacts (formal and informal), there are more structural inherited discourses

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and practices that are part of the chair's reproduced identity. Examples of such discourses are the institutional, disciplinary, and academic culture, values, and history (see also Chapter 2: Cultures).

As stated above, specific realities are constructed that can be used as part of a larger argument chairs are trying to make, what they are trying to achieve by way of discourse. Every version, account, and narrative of reality that is constructed is socially significant and has social consequences. For example, Agrisini's construction of a chair as someone who uses politics and strategy ("pulling strings," "creating alliances") for the good of the department articulates a world whose course can be directed (manipulated) by the chair as agent. One of the consequences of this construction of the chair's world is that there is real pressure to act and thus to take the job of chair very seriously. In this sense, the chair is indispensable and crucial to the well-being and future of the department. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly address the main discourses and practices that inform the chair's reproduced identities: historical, organizational, and cultural.

Historical developments define the academic world of today. Since the end of the 19th century, faculty and administrators have developed as separate and contrasting groups/categories (Duryea, 2000). Before that time, it was mainly faculty members who, as part-time administrators, took care of the day-to-day business of the institution. After the turn of the century, and once again after WWII, the number of students increased dramatically, institutions needed to comply with many federal and state rules, and developments in the world in general became more volatile. These changes, among other things, led to the increase in the number of academic but above all nonacademic

administrators. The influence of nonacademic administrators, especially, has increased steadily ever since. Nonacademic administrators adhered to a different culture and value system than academic administrators and faculty. This led to a growing gap and dichotomy between faculty and administrators. However, following the budget cuts in the 1980s and many developments in the environment (especially research), universities have changed into a strategic business, marketing, and academic-capitalism mode. In the beginning, departments were not highly influenced by this new trend/development. But since a decade, institutional strategies, plans, and reward policies have been forcing departments, and especially department chairs, to think, work, and talk in this business and management discourse as well. Chairs in this study, for example, talked about their entrepreneurial role (Maynard), or the importance of their strategic (planning) practice (Agrisini: at work and at conferences). Others resisted this particular reality and clung to the fundamental elementary dichotomy between administration and faculty (Delaney: "administration is a cult").

The developments mentioned above are large-scale academic changes, but there also have been developments specifically related to chairs. For example, over the course of the last decade, there has been a rise in institutional and national initiatives to help chairs and deans develop professionally. This has led to the organization of chairs as a professional group or entity. These initiatives have played an important part in socializing chairs into "the world of chairs." Chairs who interact with one another in these settings share stories and in turn co-create identities. As we have seen, Agrisini was an active board member of the national association of chairs and deans of his discipline. This setting exposed him to certain discourses pertaining to what it means to be chair, and

when we reflect on the interview texts, he seemed to have endorsed a particular language, something that he used to express, for example, what his daily work as chair looked like (see Chapter 5: Topic 3). Other chairs were not part of such a setting.

Furthermore, the chair world is co-defined by organizational-political structures and discourses. Chairs, as leaders of the department, are organizationally situated between the faculty and the dean of their college. As administrators, chairs are part of a hierarchical system that provides them with some line authority (Clark, 1963; Etzioni, 2000). On the other hand, as "one among equals," that is, as part of a collegial governance system, chairs do not have much formal or positional power, so they often need to rely on personal authority to get things done (Seagren et al., 1993, pp. 31-35). Also, they use particular strategies to influence decision- and policy-making, such as lobbying and creating alliances (see Agrisini, Topic 2, Chapter 5). This discourse was clearly visible in Agrisini's texts. In general, chairs have few opportunities to control the behavior of faculty as they have rather much autonomy and they value and demand academic freedom. This discourse of faculty autonomy was used extensively by Delaney and Shaw.

Finally, the importance of cultural discourses has been discussed many times before. As we know, both administrators and faculty take part in a cultural discourse that reflects certain contrasting values, norms, and traditions (see Chapter 2 on organizational cultures, especially the collegial and bureaucratic culture).

Dialectical nature of identities: Constituted and constitutive. As I argued in the analyses, a chair's identity is constructed and regulated by the individual in social interaction. But, as seen above, we should not ignore the larger historical, organizational,

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social, and cultural practices and discourses that structure how we can and do think about the world we inhabit, and thus how chairs understand and talk about their jobs in terms of role identity. In essence, we are provided with certain (linguistic) constructions of self, whereas others are excluded or receive only a nominal position and relevance.

The chair is part of an academic community that puts conditions/boundaries (e.g., role conflict, position between faculty and dean) on his or her behavior and what it means to be a chair. When a chair participates-in-practice, it is not merely a matter of doing a task, having a conversation with someone, and so on. The activity is not a single, isolated act on the part of the chair, which when done is done. The chair both produces and reproduces social relations and their forms of power and authority as part of practice and discourse; identity construction is a dialectical process. By participating in a discursive practice *in situ*, local and temporary solutions to problems/conflicts are constructed. Over time, if repeated and influential, they can become part of the chair repertoire.

Here is an example of the constituted nature of discourse. The structural organizational position of the chair between the dean and the faculty and its aspects of power is not unique to a single chair. All chairs are part of the same hierarchical and accountability structure. This structure co-defines what a chair can do; it provides limitations as well as opportunities for the chair. For example, a limitation is the lack of formal power to control the faculty's/department's activities; an opportunity is the easiness of crossing boundaries and having fruitful collaborations within and outside the institution. As such, every chair reproduces the boundaries/dimensions/qualities of "what it means to be a chair in an academic community" by having to act within these dimensions.

On the other hand, the individual is also constitutive of his or her identity. Every individual chair fills in the role and identity, "what it means to be a chair," differently because this depends on various factors: his or her personal character and style; the history, position, and power of the department; the chair's unique socialization process and experiences; the discipline; and the unique needs and expectations of faculty, staff, students, and dean.

Here is a second example. In a seminar on how to deal with difficult faculty members, chairs are presented with a method. As such, the chairs hear a solution to this problem and how to use it, when appropriate. However, the transfer of this knowledge-in-action is not just a matter of copying/repeating what was presented in the seminar. Chairs use their insight into the situation, their knowledge of the faculty member and the department (its culture, its rules, its values--what is appropriate). With this, they decide whether something needs to be done, what needs to be done, and how it should be done. Thus, the application of knowledge-in-action is restructured by the local context and situation. In turn, what is being done locally in the department, this method/strategy, might suit the department and therefore be repeated when necessary. As such, the department has its own unique style of doing things, something that might influence other chairs, successors or chairs of other departments or other institutions. In that sense, actions, styles, and methods are reproduced. A chair "repertoire" has been developed.

In sum, because an individual chair fills in his or her role locally, in a very situated way, the chair actively contributes to changing the community of practice, thereby producing new relationships and identities.

The Time Factor: A Hypothesis

Finally, there is a time factor involved in understanding role identities of chairs. As discussed above, a chair's role identity is situated (that is, "fitting" to the situation/context) and reproduced (that is, inherited from practices and discourses that existed before his or her becoming a chair). On the other hand, though, as a result of this study, we can assume that chairs develop their role identities over time. Because this is not a longitudinal study that follows chairs over a period of time, I will describe the time factor as a hypothesis. Nonetheless, we have seen that beginning chairs, such as Delaney, are still fully embedded in the faculty/scholarly culture and values. They have been "raised" to a dichotomous reality, which manifests itself in a negative attitude toward the category *administrators* and a positive attitude toward the category *faculty*.

As for more experienced chairs, especially those who have chosen to serve a second term (who are, for example, in their fourth or fifth year and more), have been exposed to the administrative culture for some time already, and in that sense are somewhat cut loose from the traditional faculty culture and values. Their reality has become less strictly dichotomous and more subtle. Nonetheless, more experienced chairs also carry with them the faculty repertoire of what it means to be a chair. For example, it is not done to admit/say out loud that, at some time, one would like to be a dean or otherwise proceed with an administrative career. Despite this tacit rule, more experienced chairs like Maynard and Agrisini carefully managed this tension. As we saw with the rhetoric they used, they created a reality that allowed for an alternative career, something that would not have been possible from a faculty standpoint.

It is not true that more experienced chairs no longer need to manage their role identity

(administrator/chair, faculty). As we saw in this study, Maynard and Agrisini

(respectively in their 9th and 12th years as directors) sometimes still felt caught in a

balancing act of the administrative and faculty/scholarly roles. As the literature has

indicated, more experienced chairs possibly have an even harder time dealing with this

balancing act as their experience has helped them realize the quantity and complexity of

their complete work as chair, including the administrative work. This leads them to feel

frustration (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004, p. 7) because of not being able to achieve

everything they want to do (also the case for Maynard and Agrisini).

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Introduction

This chapter contains summaries of previous chapters. As part of the summaries, I repeat in consecutive order the most important aspects of the following sections: (a) problem statement, purpose, and research questions (see Chapter 1); (b) a conceptual orientation to identity (see Chapters 1, 3, and 4); (c) learning framework of social practice (see Chapter 3); (d) methodology: discourse analysis (see Chapters 1 and 4); (e) interviews in discourse analysis (see Chapters 1 and 4); and (f) the sample (see Chapter 4). This is followed by a summary of topics in Chapter 5 and answers to the research questions. In summarizing the answers to the research questions, I focus on the nature of chairs' role identity, the chair socialization process, sense-making of expectations, role identity as a socio-psychological construct, discursive techniques and strategies that are used to construct role identity, *reproduced identity*, the dialectical nature of identities, and time as a factor in understanding role identities.

Summary of the Study

Problem Statement, Purpose, and Research Questions

The department chair, who manages and leads a department, has an enormous influence on "the ultimate success of the institution" in terms of effectively realizing appropriate goals at the department level (Bennett & Figuli, 1990, p. xi). As the chair is the person who initiates, guides, or controls a large portion of activities and changes, over the years this has led to an ever-expanding list of duties, responsibilities, and roles the

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chair has to fulfill (see Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1992). Even though institutions slowly have begun to realize the importance of chairs as local leaders of change, development opportunities for chairs still are considered inadequate, irrelevant, or insufficient.

Two of the main problems that chairs experience in their jobs, role conflict and role ambiguity, are related to the chair's Janus position in the organization (Gamble, 1988). The previous chair literature has treated this concept predominantly as an organizational-structural place in the institution. In my view, however, it is also a socio-psychological identity construct. The chair not only is positioned in between the faculty and administration but also leads a double life as scholar as well as administrator and peforms two roles which are characterized by different values, methods, and goals. Not surprisingly, chairs often experience role conflict and role ambiguity (e.g., Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989).

However, it is not known *how* chairs actually handle role conflict and ambiguity in practice. In this study, I assume that handling role conflict and role ambiguity is a major part of learning how to *be* a chair, that is, developing a chair role identity. As role identity drives behavior, insight into how chairs construct their identity can help us understand how they manage role conflict and role ambiguity. The present study on the practice of chairs is intended to fill this gap by focusing on the following related research questions:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?

How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?

Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

Identity: A conceptual Orientation

Undergirding this study is a conceptualization of identity as described by identity theorists from the sociological strand of social psychology. In this perspective, identity is represented by (a) role(-s), and therefore it is also sometimes called role identity theory. Identity is a part of a self that is "not an autonomous psychological entity but . . . a multifaceted social construct that emerges from people's roles in society" (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995, p. 256), which "mediates the relationship between social structure and individual behavior" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 255).

In addition, in this study I used a discourse analysis methodology in the social psychological tradition (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Discourse analysts asssume that we construct and reconstruct our identities in interactions, in particular discursive interactions (language, rhetoric, and discourses) and that these interactions are not just descriptive but performative (Austin, 1962; Potter, 1997), that is, talk is a form of action and practice. One of the consequences of this perspective is that identity is less about "who you are" or "what you have" than about "what you do in interaction" (Willig, 2003, p. 163).

One of the main assumptions of this perspective is that chairs have not one true nature of identity but multiple identities; in particular, they are faculty members as well as administrators. Furthermore, we cannot "discover" the identities as we construct and reconstruct our identities in interactions, including language interactions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 102). Therefore, the multiple identities of chairs are not permanent or internal/personal but variable and social. That is, due to the variation in social interaction and construction, the outcome of identity is also variable. As such, identities are

"negotiated in the course of doing the job" (Wenger, 1998, p. 146). This also means that knowledge, experience, skills, and understanding "are in constant interaction" (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 51-2).

In this study, I looked at that part of the chair's professional, not personal or private, identity that has to do with the roles he or she constructs and takes on--the roles of faculty, administrator, and chair.

Learning Framework: Social Practice

From practice and research, we know that chairs learn their job predominantly in practice, by trial and error, the value of which has been largely ignored in the literature. The literature is generally prescriptive but does not specifically address *how* a chair can be effective and efficient without sufficient preparation, training, and support. We need to know how chairs handle new problems and challenges that arise while on the job. Because chairs *do* learn in practice, it is necessary to investigate *how* chairs handle role conflict and role ambiguity by coping with identity problems *in situ* (Lave, 1993, pp. 5-6).

The framework for studying role identities was social practice. Very broadly, social practice "seek[s] to explain relations between human action and the social or cultural system at the level of everyday activities in culturally organized settings" (Lave, 1988, p. 14). The main elements are agent, practice, and context. The interdependence of these elements results in the transformation or change of the identities of agents (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 47).

Social practice assumes that learning is an aspect of everyday life and work (Lave, 1993, p. 8). Learning takes place as part of the process of participating in practice, which

is continuous. By participating in chair practice, a chairperson socially negotiates and reinterprets what it means to be a chair; in other words, he or she learns. According to this perspective, role conflict and role ambiguity are seen as occasions of learning for chairs because they represent situations in which the chairs need to negotiate and reinterpret. As such, role conflict and role ambiguity are understood as dilemmas of identity, thus as problems that need to be solved, at least temporarily.

As learning often is conceptualized as something that happens in class or training settings, not at work--as is predominantly the case with chairs--I prefer to use the words *understanding* and *participation* rather than *learning* (Lave, 1993, p. 9). Thus, in this study, chairs were assumed to develop and negotiate their understanding of their job and work by participation in practice.

Finally, social practice theories recognize that the nature of learning is ongoing, improvisational, multifocal, open-ended, situated, and conflictual (Lave, 1993). These theories assume knowledge to be "dynamic, concrete, and relational"; thus, the term *knowledge* is replaced by the more active term *knowing* (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387). The focus, therefore, is not on reproducing and repeating whatever is the same, but on producing that which is different.

Methodology: Discourse Analysis

To address the research questions about role identity, role conflict and role ambiguity, I used a discourse-analysis methodology in the socio-psychological tradition of Potter and Wetherell (1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). I used this methodology to analyze how role conflict, role ambiguity, and chair identity are constructed in social interaction, in this case, the social interactions of the interview. This participation-in-

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practice consists of negotiating meaning and constructing understanding (Brown et al., 1989, p. 35), and as such can be described as a form of learning. The kind of practice of this study, the linguistic practice, not only refers to what members of that practice *share* in terms of "historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives" (Wenger, 1998b, p. 5). It also refers to that in which members *diverge*, namely, the variation in interpreting, sense-making and attributing meaning to actions (Gherardi et al., 1998). Above all, however, discourse analysis is interested in how people, in this case, chairs, "do different sorts of work," by using various constructions of reality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90). Therefore, in my view, discourse analysis is best able to show how people "do" identity as part of social discourse. After all, in discourse analysis, identity constructions are considered specific versions of reality that are given preference above other alternatives. As such, these constructions solve dilemmas of identity.

Interviews in Discourse Analysis

I held multiple open-ended interviews with four department chairs from one institution (see the Sample section). In discourse analysis, interviews have a different structure and function than in other forms of qualitative research. Interviews are seen as naturalistic conversational exchanges (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 123), in which both the interviewer and the respondent contribute to the meaning-making process in action. For example, the respondent might interpret a seemingly neutral question as asking for justification of a certain action, something that is reflected by a certain kind of answer. In turn, the researcher reacts to this flow and direction of the interview dialogue by a particular probe, and so on. Because the interviewer is actively involved in the interview conversation, it should not be a surprise that the full data also include the interviewer's

linguistic actions, that is, his or her questions and comments, as they are an important part of the co-construction of meaning. Thus, for this study, I transcribed the raw data of both interview questions and answers.

The interview texts were seen as narratives through which the chairs described and understood their world of what it means to be a chair. The labels, concepts, and descriptions that chairs used (for example, the words *administrator* and *researcher*, do not have a straightforward or a fixed meaning. Specific constructions and uses of labels like *research* have specific functions--that is, they can "do different sorts of work" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90).

Discourse analysis is known for being a labor-intensive process. After careful and detailed transcriptions, initial open coding to identify ideas and concerns, and many rereadings of the transcripts, the researcher still needs to do the main part of the analyses, with a focus on language and discourses. Coding in discourse analysis functions as a preliminary sorting of relevant data into specific themes, which can later be used for fine-grained analysis. As such, coding is a more pragmatic than analytic research activity (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 167).

In the discursive part of the analysis, what the researcher is looking for is not so much consistency, which in other kinds of research is assumed to reflect the accuracy of descriptions and validity of findings, as variation because the focus is on what talk can achieve in different situations and for different purposes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 164). The idea is to identify patterns of variations and commonalities, as well as nuances and contradictions, by "detailed and repeated reading of the discourse against the background of the discourse-analytic perspective" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 95). The

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focus is not only on analyzing consecutive pieces of text, but also on comparing and contrasting excerpts that are far apart. Furthermore, analysis is done both within cases (or interviews or subjects) and across them. As such, there are multiple units and levels of analysis, and because the researcher needs to read, reread, and cross-read, he or she can start the analysis at any point in the text. There is no standard method or even order of analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 96). In this methodology, analysis is really a deconstruction (Willig, 2003, p. 170).

The Sample

Before I discuss the sample that I chose for this study, I need to clarify that although this dissertation is focused on chair role identity, role conflict and role ambiguity, the sample consisted of both chairpersons of departments and directors of professional schools. In general, in the chair literature no such distinction is specified. But, both chairpersons and directors have to cope with role identity problems related to role conflict and role ambiguity. As such I included both groups in the sample. To "standardize" and simplify references to the research topic, I maintain the labels *chair*, *chair roles*, and *chair identity* throughout the whole dissertation, except when referring to the individual chair or director.

In this empirical study I focused on several chairpersons from one college in a state research university, which I called University X. The rationale for choosing University X was the advantage of my having been a relative insider in this community. This study of chairs was sensitive in nature because it concerned situations that chairs defined as problematic or challenging, perhaps critical. To secure access to this information, it was necessary to be able to demonstrate to subjects my familiarity with

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and knowledge of the institution, its culture, and its politics. In addition, I had the advantage of not currently being associated with the administrative part of University X, which offered me the right balance between being an insider (emic) and outsider (etic) in the community of study, something that has been mentioned as a criterion for evaluating the quality of interpretation of discourse analysis (Taylor, 2001, p. 321; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

In my choice of chairs to be studied, I used a purposeful sampling method. I did not use a random sample from the University X chair population because I thought this would severely limit the outcomes of the study. Because this study involved multiple interviews with individual chairs on a difficult/sensitive topic (challenges or problems they had experienced and the ensuing actions), I above all needed chairs who were (a) willing to be interviewed intensively on this topic and (b) able to articulate and reflect on their actions and motivations in retrospect.

Furthermore, as differences in disciplines are important variables influencing the behavior of chairs (see the section on cultures in Chapter 2), the sample needed to include chairs from different disciplines. However, if I had chosen chairs at random, there would have been too many types of diversity to take into account, for example, racial, ethnic, and gender characteristics. Thus, to keep the diversity of the sample I had to deal with somewhat within limits, I selected only male chairs for the sample, thereby eliminating gender diversity as a complicating factor in this study.

On the other hand, as described in the literature review in Chapter 2, chairs' duration of experience promised to be a relevant factor influencing their construction of role identity, and perhaps influencing the kinds of problems or challenges the chairs

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addressed, and how. Therefore, I chose to include newcomers (with at least one year of experience) as well as more experienced chairs in my sample. I contacted prospective subjects by e-mail. If they agreed to participate in the study, I e-mailed the chairs a letter in which I informed them of the goals of this research.

For this study, I interviewed seven chairs for two to three hours each, even though I planned to use only four chairs in the study. Time constraints limited the number of chairs I could study in-depth. This is not a quantitative study, which often requires a large sample as its goal is to explain and predict (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). I interviewed seven chairs because I wanted to ensure that I would glean sufficient data from four of them.

Three of the seven chairs whom I interviewed initially were eliminated from the study. One chair was already "disqualified" early on because the data from his interviews were incomplete. Despite frequent probes and requests for explanations, this chair gave very brief responses and did not answer several of the questions I asked. The second chair did answer my questions but focused primarily on himself. Therefore, I received little contextual data from him, for example, about the history or financial situation of the department or the activities of and culture around the faculty. As I already explained, contextual data were indispensable to my being able to understand what kind of world the chairs were creating. Thus, because of the lack of contextual data, I excluded this chair from the sample. The third chair I decided to exclude answered my questions but constantly reiterated the same answers; in other words, I could not add to my understanding because his contribution to the study was limited (I curtailed the third interview because I had heard it all before).

Summary of Rhetorical Topics

In this section, I provide brief summaries of the rhetorical topics. These rhetorical topics represent *linguistic resources* with which the participants of this study constructed their identity focusing on role conflict and ambiguity. In other words, this is the repertoire of arguments that chairs drew upon to express their complex and ambiguous chair position and their perception of faculty and administrative work.

Before you read on, I would like to give one word of advice. I realize that reading the full analysis takes some time. Nonetheless, I would like to ask the reader to have the patience to read the analysis section in full before turning to this summary. One of the foci of the discourse-analysis methodology is the way people linguistically construct realities. By reading this summary by itself, the techniques and methods of reality construction are not taken into account, and therefore the statements might lose part of their credibility. As stated before, providing the reader with the actual long interview transcriptions, along with their analysis, is a way to increase credibility of the findings of a study by producing "accountable knowledge," which involves, among other things, "making the intellectual *processes* involved in producing knowledge-claims, and not just the end-*product* of these in the form of conclusions or 'findings,' fully transparent and available for scrutiny by others" (Stanley, 2004).

Topic 1: Future Career

The first topic concerns the statement that chairs do not want to become deans or want to stay on as administrators in other positions. However, from academic life, we know that some chairs do become deans or stay on as chairs for the rest of their work

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lives. Therefore, it is also a description of the chair's current attitude towards a life as administrator. We see clearly how views of a future career are used as a criterion in constructing current identity.

All chairs and directors have different ways to make this future career possible without saying so too directly, that is, without letting go of the faculty career and values. All excerpts of texts under this topic, except the excerpt from Shaw, drew attention away from something problematic, namely the fact that chairs or directors are not supposed to aspire to a deanship, because it is assumed, from a faculty perspective, that they then would lose their faculty identity completely and for good. Even though this is not always the case, it is nonetheless part of the chair narrative. Thus, chairs will only reluctantly and with much hesitation openly admit that they would choose a higher administrative position, as it is almost considered virtuous not to aspire to this kind of position.

Also, sometimes we see a contradiction between the clearly negative label of an administrative career and the actual positive concepts-in-use. For example, it can be used to facilitate the construction of a chair who still sees his current job as temporary before going back to his exclusive faculty role. This makes an administrative career in practice possible without letting go of the faculty values. As such, it manages the chair's current dilemmatic identity.

Chair Delaney, who was at the start of his second year as chair of a department in the natural sciences, had reluctantly agreed to be chair, but for no longer than three years. Because the dean of the college had declined the request for an external chair search, somebody in the department had to "do the job," and as there were few valid options, due to the specific demographic make-up of the department, Delaney made the commitment.

He wanted to bring the department some stability after a volatile period of interim chairs, burned-out chairs, the loss of half of the available full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty, and the threat of closure of the department. Nonetheless, he made it clear that it was not really his choice to do chair work, at least not at that point of his career, and perhaps in a different institution. Analyzing the excerpt, we saw a link between Delaney's statements about how he currently felt about his job and his ideas about chair work as a future option, something that was not out of the question.

Director Agrisini was in his second term as director of a professional school in the social sciences. He had been in multiple administrative positions and was externally hired as a director into his current position. As such, he had experience in doing this kind of work and had developed a particular identity and professional attitude toward the job (see also Topic 3). With that in mind, a continuation of or even progress in his administrative work (on a higher level) did not seem so far-fetched. Complex reality constructions were used to make that possible. First, descriptions of emotional attachment to the human side of his current position were opposed to the less human and more formal work as a senior-level administrator. As such, Agrisini did not explicitly mention doing research or the possibility of doing more research as a reason to step down again to the ranks of the faculty, although I am not saying that this might not also be the case (see also Topic 6). However, the focus was predominantly on working with people, the community, and making connections. As we will see in Topic 4, this fits with the nature of his professional discipline, which is focused on seeing commonalities and creating collaborations and his own views of what it means to be a leader. Second, we see that a difference is constructed between his intention of not becoming a senior-level

administrator and the hypothetical situation (if) that he might want to take on such as job, which creates space for such a case.

Director Maynard was in his first term as director of a professional school in the social sciences at University X; this was the third institution where he had taken on a leadership position. In his excerpt on Topic 1, the focus was on research as professional and personal fulfillment and as a criterion for going back to being a regular faculty member. As we saw in Topic 5, he was aware that spending more time on scholarly research brought costs to his work as director; in other words, his personal research was not constructed as part of the work for the school. Furthermore, for Maynard, balance between scholarly work and director work was an ongoing issue (see Topic 4). As such, he never achieved balance or equilibrium but continually needed to work on it.

Like Agrisini, Maynard did not aspire to a dean position or a permanent administrative position. Nonetheless, he made it clear that, if his colleagues remain supportive of his continuing in this role, he "would likely stay on for another term as director." As he already had been a director at another institution, the total would then be four years, plus five years (first term), and another five prospective years. This does not imply a permanent administrative position, but it is a long time nonetheless. In that sense, one would assume that Maynard would not have done this kind of work for such a long time, if he were not fully committed to it (for a more elaborate discussion, see Topic 3).

Topic 2: Chair Work as Strategy and Politics

This second topic focuses on the rhetorical use of strategy and politics as important factors in defining what it means to be a chair. Looking at the transcriptions,

we see how differently Delaney and Agrisini created their arguments to construct positive or less positive images of chair work. As we know, in discourse analysis, "the sense of texts or talk is not seen as derived from their abstract meaning or organization but from their situated use" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90).

Delaney, who was at the start of his second year as chair of a department in the natural sciences, constructed the chair's job as less positive. As we saw in Topic 1, he claimed that he did not want to do this job, at least not at this point in his career (middle-career), and perhaps at another institution. This stance also seemed to be influenced by Delaney's view that one of his chair successors in the department, a close friend and role model, had been lost as a researcher because he was caught up in his work in administration (see also Topic 5). As said in Topic 1, Delaney reluctantly agreed to be chair, but for no longer than three years. As such, it is not surprising that Delaney at the start of the interview said that he hated the job because you lose the freedom to "do the work you love, namely teaching and research."

With this in mind, we can better situate the binary contrast of chair versus administrator. The binary device was used to describe being a chair as being constrained, by the nature of the job but also by dependency on scarce resources, and having to constrain others, the faculty. Being a faculty member was described as being autonomous and free. To make the point stronger, Delaney used reality constructions that described chairing as a game of strategy and politics. This stands in contrast to the discourse of academic freedom that is shared and valued by the faculty. One possible interpretation of this strategy and politics story is that you have to like institutional politics to be successful as a chair; the cleverer you are, or the better you are at this game, the more

successful you will be. Delaney suggested that he did not possess this personality and these skills. As he had worked up this personality and skill set as something less positive anyway (see above), in that sense it cannot be considered an important lack on his part.

Agrisini, who was in his second term as director of a professional school in the social sciences, used a different description of strategy and politics as part of the chair's role in order to construct a positive image of a chair who helps the department by doing politics. Agrisini described the role of a chair as being the person in the department who keeps on top of things that are going on in the university, and tries to influence/control directions; in other words, he has a strategic and political role. The consequence of this construction is that it becomes the chair's duty to use strategy and politics, so if one would not do it, one would be failing as a director. As such, a chair who fails to do this cannot be considered a real chair; in fact, he would be an ineffective chair. Furthermore, the specific constructions that Agrisini used reflect a world in which there is a need and a possibility to change the course of events. In that sense, the chair is indispensable. At the same time, though, descriptions were used that constructed the world as complex and uncertain. This only reinforces the large amount of time being spent on director work and the job's unstructured, complex, and ambiguous nature. As a consequence, director work cannot be considered as something one does on the side. We need to remember that Agrisini had been in multiple administrative positions and was externally hired as a director for his current position. As such, he had experience in doing this kind of work but also had developed a particular identity and attitude toward the job. As we will see in Topic 3, he viewed his work from a professional standpoint, which included professional and responsible/accountable behavior.

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Topic 3: Chairing as a Profession or Personal Choice

This topic concerns the validity of the professional status of chairs, that is, as a separate profession and group. A professional status of chairs might have certain consequences, such as the rise in importance of the job, the growing boundaries between a chair and others, and the development of its own system of values and code of conduct. In terms of a professional career, one can no longer regard being a chair as something that one can do on the side.

Agrisini and Maynard addressed this topic in different ways, as a profession and as a personal/individual choice, respectively. Agrisini, in his second term as director of a professional school in the social sciences, did not use the specific word *profession* or *professional* but nonetheless described a professional world of chairs. In the transcript, which describes a typical workday, we recognize numerous issues and characteristics that also have been identified and conceptualized in a similar way in the chair literature. In that sense, Agrisini used the language of chairs and thus openly and clearly aligned himself with the world of chairs. As a board member of a national association of chairs and directors, he participated in formal and informal meetings, discussions, and training sessions with other chairs and directors, for example, to discuss challenges of the job for beginning chairs but also for veterans. The latter implies a developmental path and suggests that being a chair is part of an academic career. In general, due to this network, Agrisini had access to loci where chair identities and chair narratives were constructed and negotiated, using multiple resources that were available. As a consequence a chair can be seen as an entity distinct from faculty and nonacademic administrators, which increases the professional status of the position. As such, the idea of professionalism

seems to fit well with Agrisini, who, after all, had been externally hired as a director for this position and who accepted the offer in order to be able to move into a more senior administrative role. Reading the other excerpts in Chapter 5, it seems that he clearly took his job as director seriously and felt extremely responsible for the school; one could say that he showed professional behavior (see also Topic 2).

On the other hand, Maynard, who was in his first term as director of a professional school in the social sciences at University X, described becoming and being a chair as a personal and individual issue. He went to great lengths, often in contradictory ways, to paint a picture of being a chair that did not imply a professional career and status. He did this by creating a false dichotomy within the category of chairs, which made the middle ground, and therefore his position, unclear. Nonetheless, it is still clear that his perspective of what it means to be a director had shifted over time.

A consequence of Maynard's construction of being a chair as a personal temporary choice but not as a professional career decision is that it can be considered merely as a role one takes on and takes off again when no longer needed; as such, it does not require major shifts in one's identity. In that sense, it is more like a variation on a faculty career.

We should note here that Maynard had been externally hired as a director into this position, whereas at his previous institution the chair job was in principle a rotating position (unlike Agrisini, who also had been externally hired into his previous administrative position). Maynard did not often participate in group meetings or communities-of-practice especially focused on chairs as Agrisini did as part of his national association of chairs and directors. On the other hand, Maynard did have a social

network of chairs and directors with whom he talked and consulted predominantly one on one. As such, he had less access to dominant practices and discourses that influenced the identity development of large groups of peers. In principle, he did not see his job as an entity distinct from the jobs of faculty and nonacademic administrators; he felt he was in a mixed role.

Topic 4: Chair Work as Balancing and/or Integrating Different Roles

This fourth topic focuses on the complexity of the chair job and the difficulty or even impossibility of doing all the things one must, should, and/or is expected to do. We have seen that each chair had found a different linguistic solution to this problem by constructing differently the chair's status of role balance. This ranged from being always out of balance (Delaney) or the perpetual need to balance (Maynard), to the integration of roles (Agrisini). Remarkably, in terms of content analysis Shaw did not address balance or imbalance issues at all, not even when talking about the constraints or negative aspects of the chair job. But it seems that Shaw did find a solution for managing the complexity of the chair job. He was the only chair who frequently switched his identification between faculty and chairs, thus variably identifying with the faculty as a group or with the chairs as a group.

In Delaney's case, he argued that balance was not possible, at least not at his current institution. In the excerpt presented as part of Topic 4, Delaney described how he had been influenced by both positive and negative role models. The positive role models he mentioned were mainly chairs from University Y, the university at which he attended graduate school and from which he received his Ph.D. He described these role models in

such a way that made it seem difficult for a chair to achieve success and balance because he labeled them superhumans. At the same time, the negative role models he mentioned were predominantly predecessor chairs in his own department who either lost their focus on research due to administrative responsibilities or who burned out, in both cases because the institution did not support a balanced work life. The suggestion here is that having a balanced work life is not possible. For our interpretation of this text, it is important to remember that, after receiving his Ph.D. from University Y, Delaney had mainly worked at his current institution, for more than a decade at the time of the study. This means, first of all, that Delaney's sense-making was limited to just two major sources of experience. And, second, his idea of superhumans dated back a long time, and thus was part of his reconstructed memory and sense-making. Furthermore, Delaney claimed at the start of the interview that he hated the job because you lose the freedom to "do the work you love, teaching and research"; nonetheless, he temporarily took on the job to do his duty for the department (see Topic 2).

Agrisini, who was in his second term as director of a professional school in the social sciences, balanced in a different way, namely, by seeing different roles integrated as part of a single task or project. In the excerpts, we have seen descriptions used in order to balance the work that the director did for himself (his own goals) versus what he did for the school. This was accomplished by participating in activities that were part of the role of administrator and the role of researcher. In that sense, the roles were said to be connected and to accomplish multiple things. The discursive balancing act and ambiguity were especially prominent in terms of grant writing and applications.

Balancing activities are always part of professional schools because they combine an academic and a practitioner orientation. Furthermore, in another part of the interview, Agrisini argued that his school, again due its professional nature, valued collaboration with diverse groups and communities more than individual competitiveness. In addition, it was one of his personal strengths as a leader of the school to see commonalities and create and support connections between people, systems, and activities. Finally, Agrisini personally was focused on doing his work efficiently, so viewing one activity as having more than one goal was a form of multi-tasking.

For Maynard, balance was an ongoing issue, which he sometimes resolved successfully, but sometimes did not. As such, there was no balance or equilibrium, it was a matter of perpetually actively balancing; in other words, it was not a state but a process. Maynard argued that there were always tensions, even when you chose your main identity as scholar or administrator; something was going to suffer, whether you stayed mainly in the scholarship role or the administrative role. There was no permanent solution.

Again, as in the case of Agrisini cited above, Maynard's professional discipline required balancing an academic and a practitioner orientation. Personally, Maynard was more focused on balance as a process rather than an ideal state that we can achieve; as such, he felt comfortable with ambiguity and tensions. But, like Agrisini, he had had more practice in dealing with these tensions than Delaney or Shaw because he had been involved in administrative activities besides his academic work early on in his career. Thus, their transitions to administrative (director) work had been relatively mild because they had evolved gradually.

A final example of Topic 4 concerns the identification as faculty member or as chair, and the switch from one to the other, to construct a rhetoric that fits best with the situation at hand. Chair Shaw, who was in his fifth year as chair, was the chair who most directly and most frequently switched between faculty and chairs; that is, he identified variably with the faculty as a group or with chairs as group. When Shaw identified with the faculty, he identified predominantly with the positive characteristics of being a faculty member, namely, faculty's freedom and autonomy. On the other hand, he identified with being a chair predominantly when the chair's job and activities were mentioned as part of a binary contrast to the nature and attitudes of the faculty, which he described as hindering the chair in doing his job. As such, Shaw positioned himself as chair (when he had to) in order to deal with the less positive or indeed negative nature of faculty, such as the *consequences of* faculty's freedom and autonomy.

One of the main methods that was used to create a binary contrast was the use of phrases like "you as chair have to/need to." These phrases functioned as a way to create a distance between the individual chair and the role that he was playing. In this way, there was no need to take complete ownership of these views regarding the power relationship between faculty and chair; it was merely part of an institutional-organizational script of how one should behave. In conclusion, this excerpt is a good example of a snapshot of an identity in process.

To interpret this text, it is necessary to remember that Shaw was in his fifth year as chair and was in the process of deciding whether he would take on a second term. As he made clear in other segments of the interview, he was willing to do this if the dean agreed to give the department a substantial sum of money in return, something that the

dean, according to Shaw, seemed to be willing to do. It is not unlikely that Shaw over time had been more or less identifying himself primarily as faculty or primarily as chair, depending on the situation. We see this reflected in the excerpts presented as part of Topic 4. After all, "Identification plays an important role in breaking 'old' identifications and creating 'new' identifications" (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998, p.180), a process that plays an important role in the socialization and creation of identities of chairs. Seriously considering a second term, and sharing this in the interview as Shaw did, shows an exceptional attitude compared to the other chairs. This is a good example of an identity in process.

Topic 5: Research Activities

This topic concerns the rhetoric that being a researcher is an important part of the chair's identity. Moreover, it was not merely described as an important part but as a distinctive and exceptional part of their identity, something with which the chairs tried to distinguish themselves from other chairs. In other words, they emphasized their identity. The message they conveyed was that other chairs were not as research-active as the chair in question, or that other chairs no longer participated in research activities at all; in other words, "I do more research than others." Fitting with discourse theory, however, the three chairs who addressed this topic constructed this message in different ways and for different purposes.

Delaney, who was at the start of his second year as chair of a department in the natural sciences, used the topic of "doing research defines me as chair" in a way that made it possible to blame the institutional culture if chairs no longer participated in

research. Crucial for this reality was the story of F.P., one of Delaney's predecessors as well as a friend and role model, who became caught up in administrative work and neglected his scholarly work. The story portrayed F.P. in the role of passive victim of the pressuring institution. So as not to let this happen to himself, Delaney described it as critical and urgent that he not surrender to the perceived expectation of spending more time on administrative work regardless of the cost to research. So, we see in this excerpt the anxiety of trying to steer away from the dangerous path of losing one's scholarly identity, but at the same time there was a tone of commitment and determination to stay research- active, which he suggested made him an exception to the rule. The main message he conveyed here was, "I am a chair, and despite this I still do research." This interpretation takes into account Delaney's view that a chair cannot have a balanced work life, as we saw in Topic 4. Thus, the choice is either administration or scholarly work. In addition, we need to remember that Delaney did not really choose to become chair in the first place. Due to external circumstances, he felt obliged to take on the job, if only to guarantee the continued existence of the department (see also Topic 2).

Agrisini, in his second term as director of a professional school in the social sciences, constructed the topic differently. In this case, work for the school did not so much take time and effort away from scholarly work. In fact, the argument was that there was a direct connection between his personal-professional research interests and the school interests. Moreover, he described or even justified doing research as part of the work for the school. As such, the message was, "I am a director, and thus a big part of what I do is research." These constructions are directly linked to Topic 4, where Agrisini constructed a balanced world in which various roles were integrated as part of a single

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task or project. This is probably also based on his personal strength of seeing commonalities and creating and supporting connections between people, systems, and activities, something that is advantageous for a director who needs to supervise many different programs and diverse groups of people.

Maynard's reality was situated somewhere in the middle between Delaney and Agrisini. Maynard was an external hire who was in his first term as director of a professional school in the social sciences. On the one hand, he managed stake (as researcher) and accountability (as chair) like Agrisini. On the other hand, he was aware that spending more time on scholarly research brought costs to his work as director; in other words, doing research was not constructed as part of the work for the school. In general, Maynard's message was, "I am a director who sees the need to balance time spent on research and on the school's work." As we saw in Topic 4, for Maynard, balance was an ongoing issue. As such, there was no balance or equilibrium to be achieved; balance is not a state but a process.

Topic 6: Individual Faculty Goals Versus Collective Chair Goals

Topic 6 focuses on the reality that faculty members work as individuals, whereas the chair works for the collective of the department or school. Agrisini and Maynard both constructed this reality, although in different ways. But the result was the same: a strong contrast between chairs and faculty in terms of different goals for their job, different methods to do their job, and different values to which they adhere.

Agrisini's way of addressing the topic was by saying that he no longer participated in scholarly conferences as a researcher. Instead, he went to conferences in order to do administrative work. As Wenger (1998) stated, both participation and

nonparticipation contribute to our understanding of who we are. "In other words, nonparticipation is, in a reverse kind of fashion, as much a source of identity as participation" (p. 164). To account for not going to scholarly conferences and to discount it as a negative aspect of being a chair/administrator, attending scholarly research conferences was suggested to be a luxury that chairs no longer have. This was constructed by way of focusing on the opposite, namely the pressures, commitments, responsibilities, and time constraints that characterize the job of a director. As a consequence, it discounted the idea that Agrisini might no longer be interested in and/or not capable of (in terms of research quality) being part of research conferences, and in this way did not affect his scholarly status and rank.

We need to remember that Agrisini had been in multiple administrative positions and had been externally hired as a director into this current position. As such, the interpretation of his work discussed above fits well with Agrisini's "professional" attitude toward his job and his responsibility for the success of the school (see Topic 3).

Compared to Agrisini, Maynard openly and clearly contrasted chair work with faculty work. The idea in this excerpt is that, for the most part, faculty work individually, and are focused primarily on their own teaching and research. On the other hand, the chair represents the whole, creates opportunities for faculty, sets a direction, and brings together the strengths of faculty.

One of the ways that Maynard addressed the topic was by elevating "mundane but necessary administrative tasks," something others might describe as boring administrative paperwork, in importance. It was all part of meeting the "needs or addressing and enhancing the mission of the school," and in this way it became noble work.

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In addition, Maynard's use of the phrase "allows our faculty" suggested that the chair should have a willingness to serve, which makes it possible for faculty to do their job. Not only that, the work of the chair/director provides the individual faculty with academic freedom, due to which they create their "best work."

To arrive at this interpretation, we need to realize that Maynard was an external hire with specific mandates for leading and changing the school, for example, increasing its entrepreneurial activities. Thus, it should not be surprising that Maynard felt such a responsibility for the collective, something that cannot always be expected from chairs/directors who do the job just because somebody has to do it, for example due to rotation policies.

Finally, in contrast to Agrisini's case, in which there was a strong undertone of internal and external expectations that co-define what a chair needs to do and should not do, in Maynard's excerpt the dominant idea was of choice and authority.

Topic 7: Administration Versus Administrators

This topic is about creating a distinction between the administration as an entity and the people of the administration, a practice that is common for chairs and regular faculty members alike. Delaney, who was starting his second year as chair in a department in the natural sciences, and thus the one with the least experience, was the chair who most explicitly created this distinction. We need to remember that Delaney had been a regular faculty member at University X for more than a decade. In addition, he hated the job because you lose the freedom to "do the work you love, teaching and research." He had not chosen to do this job, at least not at that point of his career (Topic 1), because he had seen the negative aspects of being in the position of chair, for

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example, burn out and limited or no research output. But there was an urgent need, due to the volatile and weak position of the department, so somebody had to do the job, and Delaney made the commitment for a maximum of three years.

In this context, we can interpret the function of the administration-versus-administrators distinction as a way to construct an argument in which the administration can be blamed for the negative aspects of being in the position of chair (for more information, see Topic 4). Because it is not realistic, and might be offensive, to blame every person in the administration, a distinction needs to be made between administration as a system of cultural values and policies, and administration as a collection of individuals. The administration is described as a depersonalized, nonhuman entity, whereas administrators are individualized.

It is possible to use these two different concepts of the administration as entity and the people of the administration at the same time, and have them both be true. This is especially relevant for people, like chairs, who have to deal with multiple, competing, and ambiguous roles. Labeling can help to construct different versions of reality, so it helps to manage multiple identities--as faculty, as chair, and as administrator--and the relationships with others in these categories. The construction of the label *administrator* is a first step in the direction of viewing the work of administrators, including that of an academic administrator such as a chair, as positive, or at least less negative.

Topic 8: Previous conceptions of chair identity and work

I ended the analysis section with a topic consisting of a single sentence stated by one particular chair, Shaw, but I think it was relevant for inclusion here because it seemed to capture the shifts in a chair's complex construction of identity over time. To be

able to interpret this single-sentence excerpt, I want to remind the reader that Shaw has been at University X for more than two decades and was in his fifth year as chair of a department in the social sciences. He was seriously considering a second term but was willing to do so only if the department received additional financial resources in return. Before becoming chair, Shaw did not have much administrative experience.

Shaw's department did not have a culture of rotating chairs; his predecessor had been chair for than a decade. The department was rather large and had a major focus on research; some of its programs were considered the best of their kind in the nation. In general, the department was academically strong, financially sound, and had a strong identity.

The single-sentence excerpt referred to the way Shaw viewed his future identity as chair when he was still a regular faculty member. It included his expectations of what the role was going to be like and the consequences of taking on that role (for example, the loss of time to do research, and hence one's loss of status as a scholar in the research community and in the department).

The sentence that in my view most clearly shows this is: "I was proud not to have been sucked into being an administrator." Shaw said this at the beginning of the first interview, providing us with a first impression of the dramatic transitions that need to take place when one becomes a chair. The statement positioned Shaw as chair, reflecting his current views, and at the same time as faculty member, reflecting his views in the past.

Because this was the first sentence of Shaw's interview, and later on he would make more positive comments about what he enjoyed about being a chair and the

activities he performed as part of his job, the statement counters the impression that he might have had (a) a previous positive idea of being a chair/administrator and (b) a personal interest in becoming a chair/administrator. Furthermore, it counters the impression that he was capable of actually enjoying being a chair and that he had voluntarily chosen to do this job.

Summary of Answers to the Research Questions

In this study, I focused on how chairs understand their job in terms of role identity from a constructivist perspective, using discourse analysis as a strategy of inquiry. Already at the time of the interviews/dialogues, it became apparent that chairs were constructing, often in complex, ambiguous, and contradictory descriptions, narratives about what it means to be a chair. In my analysis, I followed up on this observation by looking at how chairs constructed role conflict, role ambiguity, and role identity.

As a last comment, I would like to remind the reader that the sample for this dissertation consisted of only 2 department chairs and 2 school directors. The size and choice of the sample has consequences for the generalizability of the study's answers and findings to other subject groups and settings (see also the section on Limitations in this chapter).

The Nature of Chairs' Role Identity

The scholarly literature has indicated that chairs need to, and indeed do, deal with role conflict and ambiguity. Surveys and self-reports have proven this. However, it was not yet known *how* chairs actually cope with identity dilemmas in practice (or whether

there are differences between beginning chairs and more experienced chairs). In this study, which was the first phase in a multi-stage research process, I looked at linguistic practice in the form of interview texts. It appears that these chairs understand their role identity as complex, problematic, variable, multiple, social, situated, and contextual (for a more elaborate explanation, see Chapter 5).

First of all, chairs understand their job in terms of role identity in ways that are more complex than the chair literature has indicated so far. A chair has a complex work life because he or she needs to take on and fulfill multiple roles, sometimes more than one role at the same time. Because the faculty and the administrative roles, especially, can conflict in terms of tasks, responsibilities, and values, the overall issue of role identity is that of an identity dilemma, especially in the form of role conflict and role ambiguity.

Chairs experience and understand particular situations (in this case, the interview questions) as problematic and therefore treat them as problems that need to be solved or managed. One way to manage the identity dilemma resulting from such a problem is by shifting between faculty identity (being a scholar) and administrator/leadership identity (being a chair), that is, aligning oneself with the category of faculty or administrators.

This shifting between identities is variable and does not happen at random. Depending on the situation, in this case a specific interview question, but presumably also in behavioral actions, a chair constructs a specific identity, an identity that seems to be most appropriate for the situation at hand.

A constructivist perspective indicates not only shifts between identities but also multiple identities at the same time. After all, in principle, a chair does not stop being a

faculty member when he or she becomes a chair. However, sometimes one identity is being placed in the foreground while other identities take a background position.

Role identity and role-identity dilemmas are not concepts referring solely to individuals; they exist as part of a social group, community, and/or organization. Our identities are constructed through participation and nonparticipation in social practice (Wenger, 1998). Chairs define themselves as administrators and as scholars by participating in several communities that, as we have seen above, have different expectations of the chair. In that sense, these communities help create various constructions of the identity of a chair. To be able to function, chairs need to continuously negotiate their identities within these communities of practice. They negotiate, for example, about their status of membership in the community, perceived competence, and trustworthiness.

Chairs' identities are locally and situationally constructed, contingent on the (linguistic) situation at hand. This means that identities are far from stable and static. Furthermore, it means that learning to be a chair is a continuous process.

Every individual chair fills in the role and identity, what it means to be a chair, differently because this depends on all kinds of factors: his or her personal character and style; the history, position, and power of the department; the chair's unique socialization process and experiences; the discipline; and the unique needs and expectations of faculty, staff, students, and dean.

In conclusion, chairs do different sorts of work, using different constructions of reality (Wetherell and Potter, 1992, p. 90) in order to create an identity that temporarily manages or solves the problem/situation at hand. I define this identity as a situated

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identity.

The situated and contextual nature of the chair job is a crucial factor in the development, preparation, education, and training of chairs. There are two reasons for this. The first reason has to do with the nature of the chair socialization process, and the second has to do with the need for sense-making.

<u>The nature of the chair socialization process.</u> From the socialization literature, we know that chairs are socialized into this job by way of an individual, random, informal, disjunctive, and variable process (Spicer & Staton, 1992; Staton-Spicer and Spicer, 1987). This means, among other things, that chairs are socialized individually, in their own department/school, with its own characteristic culture, history, finances, demographics, and so on. In other words, chairs are socialized in a unique situation. In addition, chairs do not learn systematically or in a planned manner, but mainly when needed or at random. Furthermore, chairs' role or job descriptions are either nonexistent or vague. Hence, chairs do not have much formal guidance in how to fulfill their job, although at the same time they have much freedom to construct that job. Finally, few chairs are introduced to the job by their predecessor in the department/school, something that, as shown in this study, is relevant to role identity. Nor are chairs often mentored by other faculty members or chairs.

We know that socialization into this new profession is not just a transition from one (physical) office to another, having different tasks than previously. It is a transition to a whole new world: from one cultural and professional world (faculty) into another cultural and professional world (administration). And as we know from the change literature, a transition always includes leaving something behind (Bridges, 2003). This

translates into hesitation and sometimes fear, even resistance, to enter this new world, not just during the first year but much longer. Therefore, as Gmelch and Parkay (1999) showed, not everybody makes the full transition.

In conclusion, the nature of the chair socialization process results in a specific way of learning for chairs. As such, the characteristics of the socialization process of chairs are neither bad nor good. They are merely typical for this kind of position in this professional, individually oriented organization. It means that chairs usually are on their own, reinventing the wheel. The outcome is highly contingent on the context and situation in which they find themselves. Because these factors are different for each chair, it means that, as the result of such an individual process, chairs are idiosyncratic. None is like another.

Sensemaking of expectations. Chairs are confronted with the expectations of the dean, faculty, and other constituents (e.g., professional community), which are not only vague and ambiguous in themselves, but often in conflict with one another (Wolverton, 2004). Due to the complexity and ambiguity of the expectations, what is needed in terms of knowledge, skills, and information is sense-making. Chairs need to make sense of what is expected of them, how they can act on it, and what they themselves feel they need and want to do. The many chair studies have indicated that, as a consequence of this complexity and ambiguity, it is unclear, and sometimes even contradictory, which tasks and roles chairs take on, the abstract importance of these tasks and roles for the department, what chairs prefer to do, and how much time they actually spend doing a particular task.

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What is expected of chairs has been addressed in the literature in general terms (for example, Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; 1995): they need to be good managers and effective leaders, have good skills in budget matters, and so on. But what is a good manager, an effective leader? In whose eyes? Chairs have so many constituencies, and they all want something different. In practice, chair work is contextual and situated; it is contingent on the needs of the department; the wishes of the faculty, dean, external communities/professionals, and students; and the culture and type of the university. How *can* chairs make sense out of this? As a result of this study, I claim that it is the chair's role identities that, in large part, define what chairs believe they need to do and what they actually do. It is reflected in the choices that chairs make.

Role Identity as a Socio-Psychological Construct

The socio-psychological identity construct has largely been ignored in the literature, even though scholars have established that chairs do need to handle this conflict as part of their job. In this study, I looked at role identity and how it is constructed variably and situationally, that is, how chairs do identity in linguistic practice. I argue that the socio-psychological identity conflict is an important factor influencing role identity, which needs to be studied in greater depth, especially if we want to understand why chairs are hindered in the process of becoming and being a chair.

This study confirmed the findings from other studies (for example, Bennett, 1982; Seedorf, 1990; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999), that indicated there is a transition from faculty member to chair. But these other researchers did not investigate what this transition does, how it affects the work. Furthermore, the transitions in these studies were assumed to be

one-way, from faculty member to chair. What is not included in the term or label *transition* is the continuous back-and-forth shifts between chair and faculty and everything in between. For example, as we saw in this study, a chair might describe a situation such as the faculty climate in the department (a fact or reality) from a faculty perspective or subject position, whereas at other times he or she might describe another situation/event from a chair position.

We must realize that people's transitioning is related to the choices they make in terms of role identity. One of the main issues here is that, in practice, it is really impossible to be a chair and at the same time fulfill a full-time faculty/scholarly job; there is too much to do in the time available. There are choices to make of what to do and what not to do. How much research and teaching can I still do? And how do I manage this? The answers to these questions are influenced largely by how a chair perceives his or her own role identity. Am I more a faculty member than a chair/administrator, or more administrator than faculty? And what kind of chair and/or faculty member am I? As stated before, these choices are not just rational and academic, they have to do with loss and gain; in other words, they are also emotional. Especially the loss, or even the assumed and expected idea of loss, of faculty priorities (teaching and research) and values (for example, academic freedom) is considered important and is one of the reasons why chairs resist becoming and being chairs (see Delaney's example). In that sense, the chair's role identity defines, in large part, what he or she believes needs to be done and what the chair actually does.

Discursive Techniques and Strategies

People use various techniques and strategies to "do different sorts of work" with different constructions of reality (Wetherell and Potter, 1992, p. 90) in order to create a situated identity that temporarily manages or solves the problem/situation at hand. What matters is how discursive resources are used to accomplish this. For example, the creation of specific realities can be used as part of a larger argument chairs are trying to make, what they are trying to achieve by way of discourse. One way of creating a reality is by conceptualizing a word in a specific way, that is, using it as a label. For example, the label administrative (role), as discussed in the section on Labels and Concepts, can be used in various positive and negative ways. Furthermore, the use of strong, even extreme, contrasts might make it possible to refer to one reality as better or more valuable than another, for example, the black-and-white technique of conceptualizing being a faculty member as positive and being an administrator as negative. Another strategy is to create a distance between the chair and his or her statements, that is, to draw "emphasis away from the nature or identity of the producer" (Potter, 1997, p. 150).

The main strategies that can be used for identity construction and learning are intertextuality and intercontextuality. Intertextuality concerns oral and written discourse, whereas intercontextuality concerns practices. "Members draw on past texts . . . and practices . . . to construct present texts and/or to implicate future ones" (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 132). Chairs juxtapose texts and practices through intertextual and intercontextual linkages and in this way construct meaning and signal historical significance and social relevance.

In this study, chairs made numerous references to practices or statements of people they had met during graduate school and theirs career that clearly influenced how they looked at their current role identity. We also saw that members constructed a present time by references to the future. In general, through intertextual and intercontextual linkages, chairs juxtapose texts and discourses and in this way construct meaning and signal significance.

Reproduced Identities: Inherited Practices and Discourses

Aside from the complex, problematic, variable, multiple, social, situated, and contextual nature of the chair job, there are other, broader factors that play a role in constructing chairs' identities. These factors are the chairs' discourses, and what I refer to as *reproduced identities*. To understand the influence of the embeddedness of individual chairs in larger structures and communities, I want to introduce the term *reproduced identity* as a concept. I define reproduced identities as images that have grown over the years as possible identities. *Reproduced identities* are based on "inherited" practices and discourses from the past and present, both of which are part of an ever-changing and open-ended reservoir of possibilities. One main source of *reproduced identities* is the chair's local community-of-practice, with which he or she has direct contact. The local community-of-practice represent chairs' "shared histories of learning" and socialization (Wenger, 1998, p. 86). Examples of these are the institutional chair introduction week (all four chairs participated in this), the CIC meetings (Shawn, Delaney), and the national disciplinary association for chairs and directors (Agrisini). These places of learning and socialization are obvious places for inheriting identities.

Besides chairs' community-of-practice and other local contacts (formal and informal), there are more structural inherited discourses and practices that are part of

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chairs' *reproduced identity*. Examples of such discourses are the institutional, disciplinary, and academic culture, their values, and history (see also Chapter 2: Cultures). Specific realities are constructed that can be used as part of a larger argument chairs are trying to make, what they are trying to achieve by way of discourse. Every version, account, and narrative of reality that is constructed is socially significant and has social consequences. For example, Agrisini's construction of a chair as someone who uses politics and strategy ("pulling strings," "creating alliances") for the good of the department articulated a world whose course can be directed (manipulated) by the chair as agent. One of the consequences of this construction of the chair's world is that there is a real pressure to act and thus to take the job of chair seriously. In this sense, the chair is indispensable and crucial for the well-being and future of the department.

In conclusion, a chair's identity is constructed and regulated by the individual not only in social interaction. As seen above, we should not ignore the larger historical, organizational, social, and cultural practices and discourses that structure how we can and do think about the world we inhabit and thus how chairs understand and talk about their job in terms of role identity. In essence, we are provided with certain (linguistic) constructions of self, whereas others are excluded or receive only a nominal position and relevance.

Furthermore, when a chair participates-in-practice, it is not merely a matter of doing a task, having a conversation with someone, and so on. The activity is not a single, isolated act on the part of the chair, which when done is done. The chair both produces and reproduces social relations and their forms of power and authority as part of practice and discourse; identity construction is a dialectical process. By participating in a

discursive practice *in situ*, local and temporary solutions to problems and conflicts are constructed. Over time, if repeated and influential, they can become part of the chair repertoire.

The Time Factor: A Hypothesis

Finally, a time factor is involved in understanding chairs' role identities. As discussed above, a chair's role identity is situated (that is, fitted to the situation/context) and reproduced (that is, inherited from practices and discourses that existed before his or her becoming a chair). Chairs develop their role identity over time. In principle, beginning chairs are still fully embedded in the faculty/scholarly culture and values. They have been raised to a dichotomous reality, which manifests itself in a negative attitude toward the category administrators and a positive attitude toward the category faculty.

As for more experienced chairs, they have been exposed to the administrative culture for some time already, and in that sense are somewhat cut loose from the traditional faculty culture and values. Their reality has become less strictly dichotomous and more subtle. Nonetheless, more experienced chairs also carry with them the faculty repertoire of what it means to be a chair. For example, it is not done to admit that, at some point, one would like to be a dean or otherwise proceed with an administrative career; one tends to identify with one role only when being asked (something similar is the case for scholars at research universities, who focus mainly on their researcher role and less, or not at all, on their teacher role). Despite this tacit rule, more experienced chairs like Maynard and Agrisini carefully managed this tension.

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As the literature has indicated, more experienced chairs possibly have an even harder time dealing with lack of time because their experience has helped them realize the quantity and complexity of their complete work as chair, including the administrative tasks. This leads them to feel frustrated (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004, p. 7) because they are not able to achieve everything they want to do (also the case for Maynard and Agrisini).

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,

AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Discussion of Findings

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of this study. I position the topics and the answers to the research questions in a broader perspective by going back to the chair literature, the social practice literature, and the discourse literature.

First, I focus on the differences in paradigms between previous studies and this study, which are realism and social constructivism, respectively. I do this to show why a constructivist paradigm might shed light on the problem concerning the education, development, and training of chairs, which researchers as well as chairs still consider to be inadequate, irrelevant, or insufficient .

Next, I discuss what a constructivist perspective can bring to the learning and working problem of chairs. I show that there is a need for a conceptualization of learning and knowledge that is different from the one undergirding the previous literature and previous practices, namely, knowing instead of knowledge, and learning as an improvisational, ongoing, multifocal, conflictual, and situated practice.

In addition, I address what I see as a language game, contrasting a dichotomy of labels to a multiplicity of concepts. I describe the creative-language game chairs use that makes it possible to work with a limited number of labels but rather diverse concepts to express their identities.

Then, I present a newly developed Discourse and practice-based "working model" of chairs' identity process. Finally, I discuss this study's implications for action, limitations of this study, and suggestions for further research.

As a last comment, I would like to remind the reader that the sample for this dissertation consisted of only 2 department chairs and 2 school directors. The size and choice of the sample has consequences for the generalizability of the study's answers and findings to other subject groups and settings (see also the section on Limitations in this chapter).

Social Constructivism

In this section, I first briefly repeat what I formulated in Chapter 4 on the Paradigm of this Study and on Identity and Discourse. As stated before, the paradigm of this study is social constructivism. In this perspective, the focus is on the meaning attributed to people's experiences of situations, events, and actions (Polkinghorne, 1989). Social constructivists claim that the meaning and knowledge of these experiences are constructed in social interactions through historical, political, cultural, and linguistic practices, conventions, and discourses, "not in the meaning-making activity of the individual mind" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 240). As a result of this creative process, knowledge consists of pluralistic, constructed, and holistic realities. In principle, there is "no unique 'real world' that preexists and is independent of human mental activity and human symbolic language" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 236); our world, reality, and our identities are not "out there" but are constructed in social interaction.

When we look at the chair literature, we see that, until now, scholars have not studied chairs from a social-constructivist perspective. Most scholars have looked at

chairs from a realistic perspective, whether focusing on a functional-organizational angle (for example, quantitative studies on role perception, competencies, and leadership attributes), or a humanistic angle (for example, qualitative studies on job pressures, leadership transition, and job satisfaction). In other words, the things chairs said were taken at face value, and it was assumed that they did not need to be interpreted. Let me be clear: I am not claiming that the subjects' words cannot be trusted, but that we should look more closely and critically at how what is being said constructs a particular reality that, in turn, influences actions.

In this study, I have shown how differently chairs deal with role conflict by constructing different versions of their chair-world. One chair might construct his or her job as something that hinders his doing the work "that really matters to a faculty member: freedom, teaching, and research" (see Topic 2, Delaney), whereas another chair might construct it as working for the benefit of the whole department (see Topic 6, Agrisini and Maynard). Therefore, if we accept this paradigm, we can claim that chairs construct their world, their reality, their experiences, and their identities.

So, why is it important to study chairs from a constructivist perspective? So far, previous studies in the realist perspective have offered much-needed basic information about chairs and departments, created many classifications and typologies, and addressed relevant concepts with which to understand chair behavior, for example, the idea of the Janus job (Gamble, 1988), role conflict, stress (Gmelch & Burns, 1990), and transitions (Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989). For more than a decade, scholars, administrators, and chairs have realized that chairs' functioning well is important for the department and the institution. Thus, they have increased, at least to some extent, the

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number of chair trainings and special sessions at the national level. Nonetheless, at the same time, most chairs still start their job without much administrative, leadership, or management experience; they learn in practice, and still indicate they have a difficult and often impossible job. In other words, there is still a problem concerning chairs' development, preparation, education, training; researchers as well as chairs do not consider these provisions adequate, relevant, or sufficient

Need for a New Conceptualization of Learning and Knowledge

In this section, I address the need for a different conceptualization of learning and knowledge than that undergirding the previous literature and training practice. I discuss this here because the conceptualization of knowledge has consequences for how learning does or can take place, something I will address as part of the section on practical implications.

The assumptions of learning and knowledge seldom are mentioned or argued openly in the chair literature. Nevertheless, they clearly undergird the studies' methodology and conclusions. We can describe these assumptions as fitting the functional or foundational belief about knowledge and learning. In the functional belief of knowledge, we assume that knowledge is accumulative, static, individual, abstract, rational, transferable, and has an end-goal.

1. In a functional belief system, learning is the process through which knowledge is produced or constructed. Institutional training sessions (for example, on the budget, whom to contact regarding legal issues, and ACE sites with basic information for chairs) are based on the functional belief of knowledge. They provide chairs with "know-what"

knowledge (Brown & Duguid, 1998). This knowledge is explicit and can easily be shared.

2. In a functional belief system, knowledge that is acquired can be used repeatedly. In older books (Bennett, 1983; Bennett & Figuli, 1990; Booth, 1982; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1992), the environment of the chair was considered stable. As a beginning chair, one was expected to learn how to work on, for example, budget and faculty issues--tasks that, apart from some changes in institutional policy, fluctuated only minimally. As such, the skills a chair needed were static as well; once one learned the "chair repertoire," it was mostly a matter of "doing the job." Even more recent books (Lucas, 1994, 2000) that focus on changes in the environment, which require changing the traditional department chair role to a team-leader role, still assume and expect an end-goal of learning.

3. In a functional belief system, knowledge resides in a person's mind; therefore, the individual has to do the learning. In most studies, with some exceptions, such as Lucas (1994, 2000), who looked at chairs as being part of a team, being a chair is still considered a one-person job. As Gmelch (2004) wrote, "Leadership is an inner, and often lonely, journey" (p. 82). This puts the pressure of leading and managing the department on only one person, who then needs to be the hero.

4. In a functional belief system, knowledge is transferable and abstract. Formal training and development sessions for chairs consist mainly of taking chairs out of their institutional and departmental environment to learn. Knowledge that is thus learned is decontextual, removed from its environment, and abstract. For learning "know-what" knowledge, for example how to read the budget, this is suitable. This knowledge often is

transferable and therefore can be used in most situations. But for learning "'know-how--the particular ability to put know-what into practice" (Brown & Duguid, 1998, p. 91), it becomes problematic to learn something in one setting and then transfer it to another setting. After all, the focus of putting "know-what into practice" is on practice, that is, the individual chair's participation in chair practice.

5. In a functional belief system, know-how and know-what knowledge consists of a collection or sum of various separate aspects of knowledge. Researchers studying chairs have been focusing on chairs' roles, tasks, problems, and the nature of the job (for example, Janus position, role conflict, and role ambiguity). In training programs, the focus has been on the teaching and learning of information (for example, where to find this form), knowledge (for example, what to do when a faculty member has an offer from another institution), or skills (for example, conflict management). It is assumed that chairs pick and choose the information they need to become and be a chair. But this does not explain how chairs form and develop their identity out of all these bits and pieces of information.

To account at least partially for chairs' identity development, scholars often have used a socialization perspective (Bragg, 1980; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Spicer & Staton, 1992; Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987), even though they have not used the label *identity*. The socialization perspective is helpful. As discussed before (see Chapter 2, Literature Review), Staton-Spicer and Spicer (1987) showed that the majority of the chair's socialization process is characterized as individual, informal, random, disjunctive, variable, and involving investiture. In this case, chairs learn the culture of the organization and the chair's role through a socialization process, the goal of

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which is to smooth the relationship between the newcomer and the organization, and thus to create shared values.

6. In a functional belief system, learning is always considered to be present and positive. We assume that by providing chairs with information and skills in the form of training, they will develop as chairs and make the transition from a faculty identity to a chair/administrative identity. We assume that chairs want to learn, are open to learning, and are rational about it. In this view, solving the chair problem is mainly a matter of offering leadership development.

In sum, in a functional belief system, it is assumed that knowledge is accumulative, static, individual, abstract, transferable, rational, and having an end-goal. But, as I will show below, these assumptions are problematic in understanding how chairs understand and change their understanding of their job in terms of role identity.

1. In situated-practice theories, knowledge is not a product of learning but the process of learning itself. Therefore, it is better to speak of *knowing* or *knowledge-in-action* than to use the term *knowledge* (Blackler, 1995; Cook & Seely Brown, 1999). There is no "know-what" knowledge without implementation; knowing is about the action.

2. In situated-practice theories, *knowledge-in-action* is not a fixed entity. For example, even though one might have successfully finished a training session in conflict management, this knowledge is irrelevant if it is not implemented in practice. Implementation includes changing what one has learned during the training session and adapting it to the circumstances. Therefore, we cannot claim that knowledge is a fixed product; it needs to be changed, adapted all the time, if it is to be useful. This is

especially true if we realize that the chair's environment is not as stable today as it used to be. Changes in the state budget, new disciplinary developments, and the creation of new organizational units are just a few examples of situations with which a department and thus a chair has to deal. The department is in a dynamic relationship with the environment. In addition, the chair develops over time. The chair's ideas about the nature of the relationship between faculty and administration are likely to change, as are his or her perceptions of what it means to be a chair. These changes in professional identity affect the chair's behavior in terms of new opportunities as well as arising limitations. All in all, continuous environmental/external and internal changes for the chair lead to the conclusion that there is no end-goal of learning.

3. In situated-practice theories, knowledge-in-practice is relational and distributed. If we agree that knowledge-in-practice does not exist without implementation and adaptation, there always is a dynamic interactive relationship between the chair and other people, policies, opinions, products, and cultures. Furthermore, "what actually counts as expertise is socially constituted" (Knight & Trowler, 2001, p. 51). Finally, we need to see the chair as part of his or her context, that is, as part of the general chair history, culture, and community, including the departmental predecessor(s), institutional mentors, and disciplinary colleagues. Therefore, the focus needs to be broader than just on the individual chair as leader.

4. In situated-practice theories, learning is contextual and concrete. For example, thinking in creative ways about the budget, placing one's strategies for the department in a larger world, and presenting them to the faculty is not one single and abstract activity. It is a complex process for which one not only needs know-what but know-how, thus,

information, insight, and skills regarding, for example, how to deal with the faculty of this department, the culture of the department, and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the department.

5. In situated-practice theories, we do not assume that identity is created out of the mechanistic sum of separate elements. Learning to become and be a chair is a holistic process that requires continuous reflective work to integrate fractured and contradictory parts/issues (Knight & Trowler, 2001, p. 58). It includes a substantial amount of tacit understanding. We cannot teach everything a chair needs to know to be a chair. For example, what about the tacit understanding of how "to play" the administration or faculty, read the departmental culture, or balance research and administrative activities? These skills cannot be taught or learned in a training session.

Yes, it is true that socialization perspectives account for this form of learning (Bragg, 1980; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Spicer & Staton, 1992; Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987). However, as we saw above, these perspectives assume an end-goal of learning. As is generally the case, scholars of socialization research have limited their studies to the entry or encounter stage and the adaptation stage, even though the more recent dialectical view of socialization assumes that socialization is an ongoing process in which continuous negotiated interactions occur between newcomer and organization (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). Seldom do researchers focus on chairs with more experience, whether that is chairs in their 3rd year or their 12th year. These researchers assume that, once socialized, these chairs stop learning, that is, stop negotiating their interactions with the organization. As such, this notion does not account for all the

learning that takes places after a chair is supposed to be socialized and contradicts the following statement by Wolverton (2004):

> They [more experienced chairs] are dissatisfied with both their administrative and academic careers. . . . As a consequence, they see a need for more training in how to handle their jobs effectively. Ironically, these are learned behaviors. New department chairs that have been in their position for one year or less sense none of the frustration that seasoned chairs do. . . . They do not feel that they have enough information to do their jobs properly. Interestingly, they show no need for professional development. (p. 7)

It is relevant to look at both newcomers and more experienced chairs because both groups need to and do learn on an ongoing basis. In this study, all four chairs were still learning how to be chairs; that is, they continuously were developing and changing their identities, even though they might focus on different elements of their job. In a continuously changing world, there is no end-goal of learning or knowing because the knower is constantly challenged by new circumstances. Learning and development of identity are continuous.

6. In situated-practice theories, merely offering leadership development opportunities is not the solution to the chair problem. Even if we assume that some elements of being a chair can be taught and learned in training sessions (for example, how to read and work with the budget), we forget that often chairs do not want to be chairs. Due to rotation policies and traditions or other external pressures, some chairs reluctantly consent to do the job, at least for a few years. However, just doing the job is not sufficient to be a chair, that is, to develop the identity of a chair. As stated before, few chairs are in a position to work with a mentor or are provided with a written work plan of what is expected of them and how they might execute this. Chairs construct their own job; they have to.

Especially for chairs who do not want "to do the job", perhaps because they prefer their work and role as a researcher/scholar, learning to become a chair does not always yield many positive results. In such cases, the learning process is viewed emotionally rather than rationally. Being afraid of losing one's scholarly identity and connection with the faculty hinders or even obstructs learning. These chairs are not open to learning and resist knowledge about how to change one's identity; after all, such change is rather emotional in nature.

Conclusion. Situated-practice theories recognize and best conceptualize the holistic, ongoing, improvisational, relational and distributed, open-ended, simultaneous, situated, and conflictual nature of the learning practice (Lave, 1993, p. 9) of chairs. These theories strongly contrasts with the more conventional and foundational view of learning as mastering a skill, attitude, or pieces of knowledge with the goal to use that mastery (better said, to reproduce and repeat it) when necessary in coping with similar issues. The latter view of learning assumes knowledge to be static, accumulative, repetitive, but above all homogeneous as the main focus is on what is the same. In contrast, social practice theory assumes knowledge to be "dynamic, concrete, and relational" (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387), with the focus on that which is different.

In the situated-practice conceptualization of learning, learning is a form of understanding and negotiating one's position. By participating in chair practice and community, chairs constantly negotiate with others what it means to be a chair. For example, expectations for the chair by the dean, faculty, students, professional community, and so on, regarding any given issue and decision need to be worked out by

the chair as part of a relational and interpretative process. Therefore, a chair's identity can never be a static/fixed entity but is a fluid reinterpretation.

Dichotomy of Labels Versus Multiplicity of Concepts:
A Paradox or Language Game?

The final finding of this study is that there is a limited reservoir of available labels as opposed to a multitude of concepts to express professional identity. Underlying the transcribed excerpts and following my own analytic interpretations, it seems that there is a strong binary juxtaposition/dichotomy of administrator versus faculty with which chairs (predominantly) express their identity. This seems to contradict the multiplicity visible in the answers (e.g., Topic 3) and the multiplicity we know from the practices of chairs and faculty members. Let me explain my own view on this apparent contradiction of binariness (faculty/administration) versus multiplicity by discussing its function in terms of the three analytic foci of discourse analysis (action orientation, resources or linguistic techniques, and discourses; for a description see

Chapter 5) and their consequences.

General action orientation. From a discourse-analytic standpoint, we know that juxtapositions can act in a certain way; we also have seen this in the topics. Juxtapositions facilitate specific arguments and reality constructions that chairs are trying to make; they are ways to manage interests and achieve objectives (Willig, 2003, p. 163). These actions can be, for example, convincing/persuading, taking away doubt, categorizing, clarifying, or attributing (Willig, 2003, pp. 162-163). So, how is this achieved?

Resources or linguistic techniques. One way of creating convincing arguments or statements is to construct black-and-white statements. Another method is simplifying a complex and/or problematic issue or argument so that it becomes straightforward, unproblematic, and one-dimensional. In contrast, one can problematize a rather straightforward issue or argument.

The assumption in discourse analysis is that resources do not have fixed or pre-determined actions or results. Resources can be used for any action one wants to achieve. For example, the methods mentioned above can be used to create positive arguments, for example, "It is not a problem," as well as negative arguments, for example, "It is a nonissue." Arguments to portray chairing as something negative might make use of the one-dimensional aspect to describe faculty work as something positive (for example, "It is never a problem," "It is always fun and interesting to do"). We saw in Topic 2, for example, Delaney's juxtaposition of the chair job as highly problematic and thus difficult ("This is the worst job ever. . . . You are heavily constrained") with the faculty job as easy ("As a faculty you are a free agent"). On the other hand, arguments to portray chairing as something positive might make use of one-dimensionality to describe faculty work as rather "flat," as compared to the complexity of chair work. For example, in Topic 6, we saw Maynard's juxtaposition of the chair job as something of a higher order because it involves supervision and leadership with faculty work as single-minded ("What I see as my role, because I think the faculty members are involved in their own research and teaching activities, . . . they tend to be fairly individualized into their own areas, . . . the role of chair . . . to try bring together the various strengths of the faculty").

Discourses. Beside the individual's general action orientation (e.g., categorizing) and the resources he or she uses (e.g., simple/complex technique) to make specific actions possible (e.g., to describe chairing as a simple activity), we know that chairs are influenced by the larger discourses or cultural stories that are part of their environment. In higher education, there is a discourse of dichotomizing faculty versus administration. We see this reflected in the ways we describe university organizational culture, such as Baldridge et al.'s (1977) taxonomy of institutions of higher education as collegial, bureaucratic, or political, whereby especially the collegial and bureaucratic models focus on the faculty-administration divide as it attributes to each group different and often competing goals, strategies, methods, and values. But similar to the nature of linguistic techniques, discourses do not have fixed or predetermined actions or results. People use or transform these discourses in situated discursive practice to perform different rhetorical tasks (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 20; Potter, 2004b, pp. 619-620); as such, discourses are in themselves resources that we can draw on.

Consequences. The reality that is created by combining action orientation, resources, and discourses does have specific consequences. One of the consequences of this rhetorical construction of a strong binary juxtaposition of administrator versus faculty is that it suggests that both the label faculty and the label administrator represent monolithic groups. We also see this reflected in general statements about what faculty and administrators do or not do, how they behave and so on.

But as I hope is clear, not all faculty participate in the same activities of research, teaching, and service. Faculty members' activities can differ by type of institution (research, liberal arts, community college), but also the activities at a single institution

might vary (variables can be college, discipline, department, phase of career, interests, etc.). Balancing the time and effort one is expected and/or wishes to devote to teaching, research, service, and family matters is a struggle for every faculty member. As such, a faculty member's identity is characterized by role conflict. As we know, from a social-practice and discourse perspective, these conflicts are resolved by socially negotiating appropriate, successful, and valid identities within the relevant community; the negotiating process and its outcomes can be described as learning what it means to be a faculty member. Nonetheless, throughout the interviews, research was retained as the pure or ideal activity for chairs, suggesting that it is the most fundamental activity that links the chairs to their traditional faculty role. This obviously simplifies what it means to be a faculty member. We can critique this, as I did above, but again we need to take into account that these descriptions are part of the arguments chairs are trying to make. Using the label *faculty* as a synonym for researcher can reflect the goals and values of this particular research university, but at the same time it might express the chair's sentiment about (returning to) the good old days, whether they ever existed or not.

I need to point out here that the main focus of the interviews with the chairs was on their chair identities, roles, and activities. I did not specifically address faculty roles and identities in terms of teaching, research, and service, and neither did the chairs. Thus, the scope and direction of this study and its findings were strongly influenced by the nature of the conversations/interviews, which did not include specific statements about teaching, service, and research. Faculty members continuously reframe their identities, whether this concerns research, teaching, or service, and thus faculty identity is less static and more flexible and varied than it might appear in this text.

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The same suggestion of homogeneity as mentioned for faculty also applies to chairs/administrators. Sometimes the text has suggested that the label *chair* is a fixed, almost single entity. Some chairs, especially Delaney but also Shaw, created rather brief descriptions of the particulars of their chair work. There were no details, no nuances; they provided almost a black-and-white picture (see also the section on linguistic techniques above). This technique of simplification can function to strengthen an argument that makes it possible to treat being a chair as something negative, something one would rather not be. After all, if one were to diversify the work of chairs and show many roles and activities that can be part of being a chair, some of those roles might be not so bad, and as such this would weaken the argument.

In general, the more experienced directors, Agrisini and Maynard, argued that the chair work was complex and variable, and consisted of many layers and dimensions. In general, the more experienced chairs seemed capable of making more nuanced statements about administration because they had been in that position for a longer time. They had seen that there is no such thing as one administrative role but that there are many tasks within one role and that every situation is different. Of course, they might have preferred one task over another, but they had a more complex picture of the entire role (for more details on this topic see analyses in Chapter 5, in particular Topics 4 and 6).

Labels versus concepts. Something else is occurring besides the apparent binariness; it seems that only a limited number of labels is available. The labels that chairs in this study used were limited to words like *administrator, chair, faculty member, scholar,* and *researcher*. For example, none of the chairs used a label like *professional chair* to define a chair who had chosen to take on a second or third term either at the

same institution or at another institution, even when the chair would never return to being a regular faculty member.

There are probably multiple reasons for this, but one of the most important reasons has to do with the nature of university discourses. University cultures and ideologies co-define the suitability and validity of concepts by either promoting or restricting their uses. Among other things, this has to do with the (historical) organizational structures and the conflicting cultural values within the university between faculty and administration. These structures and values are inherited by the chairs and are reproduced as part of their professional identity.

At first one might think that chairs are severely handicapped by the limited repertoire of available labels. And, yes, especially beginning chairs seem to stick to the linguistic chair-versus-administrator repertoire and thus have a more difficult time constructing new versions of reality, a reality that is more suitable for managing their conflictual and ambiguous job. In that sense, the reproduced identities might hinder them from doing their job and developing a more appropriate identity. I think this is one of the reasons why it takes so long for beginning chairs to commit to this work and "become" a chair, if they do this at all.

However, as we saw in this study, even though the chair identities appear to be based on a dichotomy (faculty member versus administrator), this study has shown that there are many variations on the continuum from faculty to administrator and many possible combinations of multiple identities. We have seen that chairs circumvent the limitations of the limited repertoire of labels and the cultural and ideological restrictions on the use of certain labels by playing around with, experimenting with, and widening the

meaning of a limited number of concepts. So, even if chairs do not use many new labels

to describe their continuously changing identities, their strategy of changing the concepts

that are linked to the labels offers them space to maneuver.

A Discourse and Practice-Based "Working Model"
of Chairs' Identity Process

In this section, I present a newly developed model, which I call the Discourse and

Practice-Based "Working Model" of Chairs' Identity Process. This model is a possible

answer to the question regarding what social practice and discourse practice helped us see

in the data of this study. For an explanation of this model, I start by repeating the main

aspects of social practice theories, the conceptual framework of this study. Subsequently,

I discuss the elements and the functioning of the model and its applications and character.

First, I will repeat the main aspects of social practice theories. In brief, social

practice theories contend that "relations among person, activity, and situation, as they are

given in social practice, [are] themselves viewed as a single encompassing theoretical

entity" (Lave, 1993, p. 7). This basic model of social practice was shown in Figure 1,

Chapter 1. Social practice theories are grounded in constructivist thought. This

perspective claims that reality, meaning, and identity are socially and situationally

constructed and embedded in historical, political, cultural, and linguistic practices,

conventions, and discourses. As a consequence, knowledge is partial, distributed,

temporary, local, and situated in practice.

In this dissertation, I have used the social practice perspective as a learning

theory. Within the framework of this theory, it is argued that learning takes place by

(changing) participating in practice, a practice that in itself is situated in everyday life and

in a specific social community; some scholars refer to this as a *community-of-practice*. We do not learn on our own, purely in our own minds, decontextualized from the environment and discourses that surround us. We do not learn who we are and are not, or who we are supposed to be--that is, our identity--in isolation. By participating in practice, members of a certain practice community, for example department chairs, negotiate, situationally, what a chair should do, needs to do, and what it means to be a chair--that is, his or her role identity.

Next, I discuss the discourse and practice-based model of chairs' identity process that I developed from analyzing the interview data, which is based on the basic model of social practice (Figure 1, Chapter 1). This model shows the major elements/resources that chairs might use--intentionally or unintentionally, strategically or not, consciously or unconsciously--in constructing their role identities moment by moment and over time (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 148) as part of their social practice. In addition, this model describes the ways (processes, strategies, techniques) in which an agent is able to position himself or herself and influence the context. From the many options and combinations this model offers, we can see the variability of the identities that result from the many dynamic interactions between the elements. Finally, the model shows the textual basis of practice, something I will discuss below.

Before I go into detail about the model, I will give a brief overview of the elements and the functioning of the model. First, I added an element to the basic model that I think makes it a more comprehensive way to understand role-identity construction of chairs in daily practice. Besides the major elements of agent, activity/practice, and context in Figure 1, I added a separate element called discourses. Most theories of social

practice focus predominantly on the links among agent, communities, and activities in terms of social relationships and structural dimensions (for example, division of labor, rules and regulations). They lack a major focus on language and texts/discourses as significant resources for or barriers to constructing and negotiating practices and memberships in communities. In this study we have seen the relevance of discursive conversation techniques and strategies, and the larger discourses as a structuring influence on the way chairs are able to solve role-identity problems by constructing particular identities. Therefore, I believe that discourse should be added to any theory of social practice.

Here I also will focus on five parameters with which all four elements of the identity-creation process can be described: time/duration, place/location, community, level, and dimension. Next is a description of the process itself. When an identity problem arises for the chair, it triggers three processes: sense-making, construction, and negotiation. These processes have a particular outcome in terms of role identity influenced by certain stimuli (topic, purpose, audience). The stimuli, in turn, function as arbiters in deciding the usefulness of the four elements and their parameters as either resources that can be used or as barriers that hinder a particular solution. I conclude by describing the strategies and techniques that chairs use to formulate and present their identities.

Main Elements

Agent. The individual chair agent has a unique personal and professional background profile and set of experiences. Each chair has a specific motivation,

commitment, (pre)disposition to do chair work, and his or her own leadership style, differences that we saw reflected in the introductions to each of the four chairs in Chapter 5.

Activity/practice. In social-practice theory it is assumed that a chair is never merely an individual, isolated in his or her own mind and world, cut off from other people's activities. A chair always participates in multiple practices. These activities can vary from ad hoc activities to long-term projects, from individual actions to collaborative work, but they are always part of larger practices that co-structure the tasks, roles, methods, priorities, traditions, and values that a chair has or takes on. This practice does not necessarily have to be openly present, visible, or being 'practiced'; it also includes narratives about what a chair does and does not.

Discourses. Discourses are the available texts (written and oral) and language that chairs draw on. As was the case with the practices described above, discourses often are linked to specific communities, specific times, and specific places. Examples are the handouts at an introduction week for the local chair community at a particular institution, the language that is used in a community of researchers in a particular discipline, or the national-political discourses on issues of academic labor rights such as tenure and academic freedom.

Situation/context. Situation describes the locale in which the chair is positioned and in which he or she can act and directly influence outcomes. Situational factors are many; examples are the culture of the department, the economic health of the department, the relationship of the chair and department to the dean of the college, the number and

mix of faculty members, and the status and ranking of the programs of the department in the nation.

Context represents the wider context, which is often more difficult or impossible to influence and control. For example, national policies on health care and education and funding for certain research programs do play a role in how people act, but in contrast, people have hardly any direct influence on them.

All four elements of the identity-creation process--agent, activity/practice, discourses, and situation/context--can be described using the following five parameters:

1. Time/duration: Identity creation takes place at a certain time. This includes real time (date) but also the duration of the creation process, and the period/phase in the life and career of a chair.

2. Place/location: Identity creation takes place at specific locales. This can be a particular conversation, a reading of a text, a meeting, or a more physical location like a particular building or institution;

3. Community: Identity creation always is embedded in several communities-of-practice, for example, a researcher community, a teacher community, an administrator community, a disciplinary community, and a chair community. These communities-of-practice do not have to exist as a group; they can be virtual or discursive.

4. Level: Identity creation takes place at many levels, varying from more local levels (departmental, institutional, organizational) to more global levels (academic, professional, and disciplinary).

5. Dimension: Identity creation can be described in terms of historical, legal, social, cultural, economical, structural, and political dimensions.

As a reminder, the relationships among the four elements are not linear or one-way. They have a dynamic relationship, which is dialectical in nature.

Identity Problems

Identity development, identity problems, and challenges that chairs experience (for example, role ambiguity and role conflict) take place at the intersections of the four elements: agent, activity/practice, discourses, and situation/context. For example, a particular professional attitude might clash with an existing discourse, practice, or situation (such as the dean's view on an issue). The clash functions as the trigger for sense-making, construction, and negotiation. In that sense, the node or intersection is the locus where changes in identity--that is, learning--"solve" the identity problem, at least temporarily.

I want to stress here that learning of identity is not synonymous with what foundational theory considers positive and progressive learning. What chairs learn can be both positive and negative (for example, "I hate the work of chair," Delaney, Topic 2); they learn what to do and what not to do (for example, "You as a chair can push things through, but you do that only once," Shaw, Topic 4). In that sense, they might learn or solve problems by adopting an attitude or viewpoint, which will become part of their role identity, but others might not always consider that learning. For example, the dean might not agree with the chair's ideas about how to be chair. But, as stated before, learning is negotiated in social interaction, and we need to assume that chairs solve the problem by creating realities and identities that work for them.

Processes: Sense-making, Construction, and Negotiation

Sense-making, construction, and negotiation are difficult to describe as separate

concepts because they are so intertwined, at least from a social-practice perspective; I

will try to do it nonetheless. According to Weick (1995), "Sensemaking is about

authoring as well as interpretation, creation as well as discovery" (p. 8). This is a

problematic definition because of its ambiguous epistemological assumptions about

reality. The term *authoring* suggests that somebody creates a specific reality, world, text,

or identity. At the same time, the term *interpretation* suggests that somebody takes in and

gives meaning to external information and narratives. So, do we create reality or does it

exist outside of our knowing, and thus can it be discovered? Despite this ambiguity, the

main point of relevance here is that sense-making indicates actions of an agent; sense

does not just happen.

In addition, as stated before, sense-making is not an individual cognitive process

but a social process. Reality, meaning, and learning (what is learned) all are constructed

in social interaction. But these processes of constructions do not represent equal, neutral,

and value-free contributions of the participants. Power differences among the

participants, their status, their voices, and their ideas play a role in the constructions. In

that sense, it may be more accurate to use the term *negotiations*. Meaning needs to be

negotiated and validated as part of social interactions and within a community. As such,

not all identity constructions are considered equally valid, relevant, appropriate, or

successful.

Finally, sense-making in terms of "meaningful lived experience" (Schutz, 1967)

might imply that sense-making (that is, reflective sense-making) always takes place in

retrospect (Weick, 1995). At the same time, sense-making is also an ongoing process as part of action (Weick, 1995). A large part of the social construction of meaning takes place at the times of the interactions and negotiations. This is especially clear when we look at turn-taking in dialogues and interviews from a discourse-analytic perspective; in this case, the real-time use of language is considered the actual way to make meaning.

Outcome

The outcome of this discourse and practice-based model of the identity-construction process is the chair's complex, problematic, multiple, variable, and social role identity (see Chapter 5, preliminary answer to research questions). The role identity comprises a combination of situated and reproduced identities (see Chapter 5) that are dialectically related.

Stimuli

As discussed above, the discourse and practice-based model of chairs' identity has four main elements: agent, activity/practice, discourses, and situation/context. These elements are not equally relevant for identity-construction-in-the-moment. There are many stimuli that influence the outcome. The stimuli function as arbiters in deciding the usefulness of the four elements and their parameters as either resources that can be used or barriers that hinder a particular solution. Examples of some of the major stimuli are the topic, the issue or problem at stake (Is the topic considered important and interesting for the chair, for the department?); the audience or dialogue partner with whom identity is constructed (for example, dean, students, faculty, sponsors, funding agencies); and the

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purpose of construction (is it, for example, strategic, political, communicative, collaborative, competitive?).

Resources and Barriers

In the data, we saw that chairs draw on many of the elements of the model: the chair's unique profile, the practices, discourses, and the specific situation and general context. All of these elements can function as resources for chairs to construct identity. I stress here the verb *can* because in certain situations resources also can function as structural limitations or barriers. For example, a particular departmental characteristic such as the independence or autonomy of faculty members can work many ways and therefore can have positive as well as negative results in specific situations. A positive result might be the self-regulating quality mechanism of professionals and the diversification of faculty work (Etzioni, 1964). A negative result of autonomy might be isolation from the rest of the department, university, or rest of the world and might signify problems of coordination, strategy, and control (Mintzberg, 1979) for the chair, who needs to lead the department.

Another barrier might be unequal access to resources, such as membership in specific communities, and therefore unequal opportunities for learning and identity development. For example, Agrisini was an active member of a national association of chairs and directors in his discipline. Through his long-term and active membership in this community-of-practice, he had access to certain practices and discourses that most likely influenced his identity as director; at the same time he and his fellow directors co-created their community-of-practice. Shaw was not part of such a community but did participate frequently in regional administrative leadership meetings. Delaney, on the

other hand, did not participate in either national chair meetings or regional administrative meetings. His access to chair communities seemed to be limited to a few institutional meetings. Perhaps due to his limited access to new-chair texts, the main discourses he used for his identity construction dated back to stories from former chairs of the department and his cultural models of chairs during his graduate school years. Maynard, in comparison, had been involved in administrative practices in one way or another since graduate school, and this involvement had grown steadily during his academic career at various institutions.

Finally, in an agency-based model, agents have the power to "take up, resist, transform, and reconstruct the social and cultural practices" (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 148). As such, even if one has access to certain resources, one might, for whatever reason, not draw upon them. To know how people take on or resist practices and discourses, we must look more closely at the main processes that are at work in the model for chair identity, namely, the processes of sense-making, construction, and negotiation, which I will discuss below. As a final note, even though agency indicates actions of an agent, it does not necessarily mean that one needs to have the intention or consciousness of resisting, transforming, reconstructing, and sense-making of discourses and practices.

Strategies and Techniques

As described in Chapter 5, there are many discursive techniques that can be used for reality and identity constructions. I will not repeat their descriptions here, but I just want to mention them for the convenience of the reader. Examples are the use of specific conceptualizations, creating a tension between dichotomy and multipleness, and creating a distance between the agent and his or her statements (text).

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In Chapter 5 I also described the main strategies that can be used for identity constructions and learning. The main strategies were the use of intertextuality, concerning oral and written discourse, and intercontextuality, concerning practices. "Members draw on past texts ... and practices ... to construct present texts and/or to implicate future ones" (Gee & Green, 1998, p. 132). In this study, chairs made numerous references to practices or statements of people whom the chairs had met during their careers and during graduate school, and that clearly influenced how they looked at their current role identity. Delaney made several references to the chairs during his graduate school time, his friends in the department, and previous chairs in the department. Shaw talked about his viewpoints on chairing from the time he was still a regular faculty member. On the other hand, we also saw that members constructed a present time by referring to the future. For example, in Topic 1, all of the chairs and directors in this study made statements about how they viewed their future career as a criterion in constructing a current identity. In general, through intertextual and intercontextual linkages, chairs juxtapose texts and discourses and in this way construct meaning and signal significance.

Applications and Character of the Model

Following the introduction of the elements and the functioning of the working model, I briefly describe the application of this model. The model can be used to identify the elements and parameters that are particularly relevant in specific identity cases. With this model one can arrive at an initial indication of the factors that contribute to one's identity at a moment in time. Furthermore, it can form the basis of a discussion of the significance and consequences of particular identity constructions. The model also can be

used to study how the four elements and their parameters can act either as resources or barriers.

I also want to note here that, due to the dynamic character of the model and the many linkages among the elements, it is not possible to isolate elements, "test the variables," and draw conclusions from it. A discourse and social practice-based model is always embedded in the context and is dialectical in nature. Therefore, this model can add more in-depth data to some of the managerial-based chair literature, which often gives generic professional advice and uses rather one-dimensional prescriptions for what an effective/successful chair should be and do. I am not saying that this literature is not relevant. It certainly can provide especially beginning chairs with an overview of what the life of a chair might look like in terms of tasks, roles, challenges, and issues. But we need to remember that one size does not fit all. Chairs are part of different contexts, must deal with different problems, have different priorities, have different attitudes toward their chair job, have different personalities and professional identities, and vary in the meanings they attribute to their experiences. I believe that this practice-based model of chairs' identity recognizes the contingent, contextual, and situated nature of chair roles, and hence can help us better understand chair identity, which drives chair behavior.

Finally, I want to stress the mutable character of this working model. To paraphrase one of the goals of grounded theory, this study has generated a middle-range model "that shows its flexibility when applied to daily practice as it allows for change in human behavior and conditions" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 237). As such, the model is never "done" because it is in "a continual process of reformulation and development" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 244) when it is applied by the person in practice. From what

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we know about social-practice theorists and constructivist-discourse analysts (see Chapters 1, 3, and 4), this belief in open-ended processes between theory and practice is something they should be able to underwrite. In this way the model best reflects the complex, problematic, local, temporary, evolving, multiple, and partial character of chair identities. Researchers and practitioners are invited to adopt and adapt the model depending on need, context, and relevance.

Implications for Action

In this section I discuss the implications for action that follow from this study. A large part of these implications were already addressed/alluded to by the chairs themselves in the interviews. However, they were not an explicit part of the excerpts in the analysis.

The main idea behind the implications is that the topics in Chapter 5 are models or examples of how people deal with role-identity conflict. As we know, chairs construct their reality, their world (including problems and conflicts), and their identities. Chairs construct these things, on the basis of their predecessors, specific contexts and situations, and stories and reproduced discourses. In the topics we see examples of other realities that are constructed, of the options these provide, and the limitations they impose.

It is important to see and study the variety of identity constructions as part of the paradigmatic changes or metamorphoses chairs (have to) undergo. It is important to study how people translate these large changes into small, incremental, and situated activities in their discourses. Therefore, in the texts, we do not see so much who those chairs are as how they "do" identity. In that sense, this study offers prospective chairs, current chairs,

deans, and other administrators with new images, stories, and alternative realities that might help them see things fresh and anew so that these transformations are made easier. It will show them that there are alternative ways to think about and construct what it means to be a chair and will open up their minds and attitudes.

Below, I discuss a number of issues that follow from this study:

1. Official, formal training sessions are not sufficient for developing a useful role identity, that is, a role identity that helps rather than hinders the chair in having a healthy and balanced work life. Although chairs can learn some aspects of their job, such as how to read a budget, in a formal training setting, role-identity development does not take place in a vacuum or a decontextualized setting. Institutions need to focus on and stimulate the whole chair as part of their professional development programs. Developing the whole chair requires a social shift within institutions, most of whose members until now have been focused mainly on teaching isolated/single skills and providing abstract data.

2. Even though identity development is about the individual, it takes place in social interaction; it is a relational process. Therefore, we cannot just "train" individuals; we need to work on and with the setting in which the chair functions. Why should the chair need to carry the burden of leading and managing the department on his or her own? The concept of what it means to be a chair should also be developed in the department as a whole. One would hope that then the transition between being a faculty member and being a chair/administrator would become somewhat less dramatic and painful.

3. From the interviews, it was clear that the most useful assistance for chairs comes from colleagues within their college, especially in small, informal settings. These colleagues have to deal with the same issues within the college and with the same dean; in other words, they have to deal with the same context. This informal exchange of information can be stimulated and reinforced by providing in-house training sessions on issues that are relevant to and interesting for the chairs in this particular college.

For chairs and directors, the group size of meetings also is critical. In principle, colleges have regular formal chair and director meetings, and chairs do appreciate contact with other chairs. However, if the size of the group is too large, meetings are not effective. Chairs do not have sufficient opportunities to exchange experiences and stories. This situation is reinforced if the dean does not provide time for such exchanges or if he or she dominates the meeting.

4. Furthermore, confirming what Booth (1982) said, the most useful help for chairs comes from their peers. As this study has shown, this is especially true for developing a chair identity. Institutions need to stimulate and promote as much contact between chairs as possible. An example is a formal, rotating mentor system for beginning chairs. We know that chairs take almost two years to learn the ropes, to know how to do at least the basic expected chores. Therefore, these two years are the most formative period, not just in terms of skills but also in terms of identity. For example, a chair might have a different mentor every half year, a person with whom he or she meets regularly. This could be one of the chair's predecessors or any other chair in the institution. Rotation of mentors will help the new chair see and experience different stories and realities of what it means to be a chair.

5. One of the issues that chairs in this study mentioned was the lack of insight into what is expected. It is crucial to have discussions about and create more informative work contracts. What is it that chairs are expected to do? Claiming that they need to provide leadership for the department is not clear or sufficient information. In addition, it makes being a chair seem like a fixed entity. So, what is considered leadership at this institution and what does it mean for beginning chairs, experienced chairs, and veteran chairs? It helps to clarify the expectations and decrease the number and effect of surprises a chair has to deal with if informal discussions about this topic are organized (Seedorf, 1992; for general socialization surprises, see also Louis, 1980)

6. One of the easier things to do in order to clarify expectations is to develop annual calendars for the university, the college, and/or the department in which standard operating issues are written down. For example, every year specific tasks return and need to be done within a certain time frame. Knowing that this is expected can increase chairs' effectiveness and might put their minds at ease. Currently, it is still the case that each chair or director must reinvent the wheel. One of the chairs in this study suggested that perhaps the outgoing chair could create an annual calendar for the incoming chair.

7. Another piece of advice is to support chairs, financially and with support staff, to attend national disciplinary meetings for chairs and directors. As we saw in the case of Agrisini, these organizations and meetings offer chairs many opportunities for informal and formal contacts, during which stories are exchanged, narratives are constructed, and realities are formed of what it means to be a chair. Furthermore, the chairs in this study claimed to have more trust in and commitment to their own disciplinary organization than generic chair or leadership meetings.

8. One of the main issues in the development of a chair identity is the loss of a faculty identity. Especially at University X, where the four chairs/directors in this study worked, this translated mainly into the loss of a researcher identity. However, looking at this situation from a discourse-analytic perspective, the meaning of the label *researcher* or *research* is equivocal. Thus, one can describe two people as researchers even though they might do completely different work and activities. For example, Agrisini said that he perceived his research as an important part of his chair work, not as something separate. He had a different conceptualization and realization of *research* and *researcher* than what other chairs understood research to be. In that sense, he constructed a specific image of the chair world, of his research, and of his identity. In turn, these images provided him with different options but also limitations in terms of action. This does not mean that he never struggled to combine many different roles as part of his director work (see, for example, Topic 3), but these constructions of the world made it possible to have a less strict dichotomy between being a faculty member and being a chair. Thus, there was less role conflict. In sum, the general point is that chairs construct either an easier or a more difficult reality of chairship, but that it is possible to change one's reality.

9. It would be helpful for chairs to have discussions about the variety of ways one can be a chair and still be a researcher. Research can represent and incorporate many different activities, for example, doing fieldwork and analysis, writing grant applications or articles, and supervising laboratory experiments (see Bourdieu, 1988). Even though it probably is difficult to initiate this type of discussion at a research university--that is, a place and culture where research is highly valued--it is important to offer chairs various scenarios of doing research because this will probably decrease prospective and

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beginning chairs' mental resistance to doing the job and facilitate a more balanced work life.

10. A final point that each chair addressed was the lack of support staff, nonacademic as well as academic. If identity development is indeed a relational process and if knowledge-in-practice is distributed, then it does not make sense to expect one person to do all the work effectively and efficiently. In addition, the sharing of responsibilities would increase people's commitment to the unit.

In conclusion, it is necessary to give chairs and faculty, some of whom are prospective chairs, examples of how people change and develop. These examples or stories would show that reality construction matters. The institution should promote this idea by initiating discussions about realistic job expectations. Yes, it is difficult to have a balanced work life, but it is possible. Balance is a process, not a product, which means work that needs to be done every day. Being honest and portraying a somewhat difficult but achievable picture of chair life is the most effective preparation for chairs.

Limitations of This Study

Like every other study, this study has limitations. Some are a result of the nature of the chosen methodology, whereas others are due to my implementation of the methodology. In this section, I discuss four of the most relevant limitations.

The first limitation has to do with the use and lack of context. As stated before (see Limitations and Weaknesses of Discourse Analysis), the discourse analyst in general does not pay attention to the individual situations and characteristics of the people who are interviewed. Apart from positioning people as part of a group or setting, for example in a particular general historic, national (for example, the Pakeha; see Wetherell & Potter,

1992), professional (doctor- or counselor-patient relationship), or subcultural setting (the Gothics; see Widdicombe, 1993), the individual characteristics of the interviewees, such as family background, gender, and race, often are not heeded, unless they are the topic of study.

In the same section, I also made it clear that, in this study, I did include some background context for the chairs, for example, the culture, climate, and history of the department, but did not include broad social categories such as gender and race. I did this because it helped me interpret the use of the textual devices: Which reality does this person create and why? What is his investment in this story? Including more context makes interpretations more credible and thus increases validity. One needs background information; after all, each person is different, and the researcher needs to take this into account, as well. The individual's situation can also help explain the person's interests and state of mind.

However, there are limits to the depth and breadth of the context I included for analysis. Beside using context as a means for interpreting the meaning of the selected texts, my focus in this study was not to get a better understanding of each individual chair, as might be the case in case studies. I saw each chair and his rhetoric as examples of how a chair might create identities, how he might view and construct the world as a reality, and how these constructions might influence what is possible in terms of actionable behavior. The chairs were merely representatives, and the topics in this study were just examples (see also Steps of Discourse Analysis). In that sense, this study did not include "thick description" (Geertz, 1973), as would have been the case in an ethnography.

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In addition, I did not triangulate the data that I collected from the interviews; even though I had a good reason for this, some scholars might argue that the study thus lacks credibility. Discourse-analysis methodology is not about verification of findings through triangulation because this assumes a fixed reality that holds up in every situation, from every angle. Discourse analysis not only assumes but expects contradictory realities from one moment/situation/question to the next. After all, the focus is on understanding what these variable realities "do" for the subject. Thus, whatever context and setting information I used for analysis, it was all part of the interview texts. As such, it represents a particular chair's reality and perception, something that might be shared by others, but not necessarily.

The second type of limitation is inherent in my choice of sample. I included in this study four chairs from the same institution. The reason for this is that I have personal knowledge about this institution because I worked as a graduate assistant in the administration. This background knowledge of culture, availability of resources, and policies would allow me to better understand the context of the chairs. However, this background knowledge might have led to my having false assumptions that influenced the analysis of what I heard in the interviews.

Furthermore, I realize that my decision to limit the sample to one institution and to these four chairs has consequences for the generalizability of the findings. Do chairs at other institutions, for example a different type of institution, also understand their job in terms of role identity as problematic, complex, variable, and situated? Which topics would they have addressed? And what about the other three chairs whom I interviewed but did not include in this study (see Steps of Discourse Analysis)?

In addition, the sample included white male chairs only. The choice to include a single gender and race was, contrary to what one might think, part of the realization that gender and race would indeed play a role in discourse analysis. Including gender diversity--that is, both women and men--in the sample and subjects from various racial groups would have been a complicating factor in this study. Thus, I chose to limit the variability in this way. Nonetheless, my being female probably influenced how the interviews with the male chairs were conducted, how they responded, and how I interpreted what they said or meant.

Finally, the disciplinary diversity of the chairs played only a minor role in this study. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Disciplinary Culture), faculty members and chairs from different disciplines pay differential attention to certain aspects of their job, like teaching and learning (Biglan, 1973b), and they also differ in their approaches to acquiring new knowledge in these areas. It is not unlikely that certain problems that arise are easier for a chair to deal with when these problems have similarities to or are connected to aspects of the chair's disciplinary knowledge or cognitive processes. Two of the interviewees for this study were chairs of departments, whereas the other two were directors of professional schools. As I briefly touched on in the analysis (Chapter 5), the professional schools' connection with the community (professionals, clients) and accrediting bodies, and the schools' multiple (outreach) programs that require academic staff and leadership probably influenced how the directors constructed their role identities and their worlds. However, the two directors also were the subjects with the longest experience as director (seven and eight years); therefore, the (positive) descriptions of their roles cannot definitely be attributed to their professional discipline.

The third limitation of this study concerns the method that was used to study the chairs. I chose to use interviews, which were constructed in an open-ended and semi-structured way. As such, my conversations with the chairs were formally set up; that is, they were constructed with a clear goal in mind: to address my questions. This data-gathering method is not unusual for most methodologies, including the discourse-analysis methodology. Nonetheless, in discourse analysis, more and more a preference is being given to data from "naturally occurring talk," even though there is considerable debate about the difficulty of distinguishing between naturally occurring talk and interviews, as the latter often are considered to be "natural-interaction-in-interview" (Potter, 2004b, p. 9). Thus, it is not unlikely that the data of this study were "affected by the formulations and assumptions of the researcher" (Potter, 2004b, p. 10), which means that we cannot know for certain whether chairs would answer, react, and construct realities in the same way in another setting. Therefore, if one wants to generalize the findings of this study, one needs to realize that the interview data were gathered in an "artificial" setting (Potter, 2004b, p. 9).

A final limitation is the temporal aspect of the data I gathered from the interviews about role identity. As shown in the chair literature, chairs transition from being a faculty member to being a chair (e.g., Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). This dissertation specified these previous findings by showing that chairs have multiple role identities, which they switch around when necessary. These findings have a temporal dimension of identity changes over time. I realize that the interviews in this study were only a snapshot of the work life of a chair (I interviewed the chairs multiple times in a time frame of one to three weeks). Despite this, I hypothesized about

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the long-term changes from beginning chair to more experienced chair in terms of identity (see Chapter 5, Conceptual Framework).

Further Research

In this section, I discuss some ideas for further research. These ideas follow partly from the limitations of the current study but also include suggestions for broadening the topic and modifying the research methodology.

One of the findings from this study is that chairs receive the most relevant information and insight to do their job and to develop their identity from their peer chairs. These include predecessors in the department, chairs from other colleges and other institutions, and chairs from other disciplines. As we saw in the case of Agrisini, national disciplinary meetings for chairs and directors offer chairs many opportunities for informal and formal contact, during which stories are exchanged, narratives are constructed, and realities are formed of what it means to be a chair. If we want to be able to understand how chairs construct their identity in natural settings (Potter, 2004b, p. 9), studying talk-as-action among and between chairs in these organizations is highly relevant.

Another suggestion is to focus on the disciplinary diversity of the chairs. As said before, this characteristic played only a minor role in this study. However, as seen above, national disciplinary associations organize meetings at which identities are constructed. In line with research by Biglan (1973), Smart and Elton (1976), and Creswell et al. (1980), studying the way disciplinary values and cultures support or hinder the development of chair identities could help in developing more focused programs for a diverse group of chairs.

Further, a study of exclusively female chairs that focused on power issues and learning and development styles would provide more insight into what female leaders can bring to the department (think of communication and connection; for example, Belenky et al., 1986; Josselson), and how best to recruit and support women in their academic careers.

In addition, we should think about including observations, not just interviews or recorded conversations, in future studies. A more ethnographic approach would result in more contextual knowledge, which would facilitate better understanding by adding an extra layer of analysis (Rogers, 2004). Adding observations would provide another dimension of chair identity, namely, possible contradictions and tensions between talk and behavior. Just as a note and reminder, observations should not be included for verifiability; this kind of triangulation is not fitting for discourse analysis.

Furthermore, as stated above, it would add to our knowledge if we studied chair discourses in natural settings because this would provide insight into how participants in the conversations collaboratively construct academic realities. Examples of natural settings are departmental meetings with the faculty, meetings between chair and dean, and collegewide meetings with the dean and all chairs and directors.

A fourth suggestion for further research is to conduct a separate study of the categories and labels that chairs use. The present study has made a start with this kind of research by looking at labels like *research, administration,* and *chair*. If I had included conversational data from several different settings (for example, dean meeting, faculty meeting), I would be able to see how specific categories and labels were used to construct different realities and how these realities limited or opened up opportunities for action.

As stated above, studies on chairs, including this study, have indicated that identity changes occur over time. Therefore, it is surprising that so far there have been no longitudinal studies of chairs. Our knowledge of chairs would certainly benefit from following chairs for a couple years, for example, starting with year one until their decision to take on a second term or, instead, to return to the faculty. Such a study would not have to be continuous. Periodic interviews and observations once every academic year would already lead to a better insight into the learning curve and identity development of chairs.

If we indeed agree that chairs develop their skills and identity over time, then it would be relevant to study the work-life story of chairs who have chosen to do a second term, either at their own institution or at a different one. Using a combination of discourse analysis and narrative methodology, we could gain some understanding of how these chairs developed and struggled with their identities over time, and how and why they became "professional" chairs. Knowledge thus created could be helpful in developing realistic job expectations in prospective chairs and offer beginning as well as experienced chairs new stories and alternative realities.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SITUATED IDENTITIES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS: A DISCURSIVE APPROACH

Note: The interview questions mentioned below are open-ended. Because of the researcher's initial limited information on the projects/challenges/problems the chairs are actually dealing with, the questions of the interview will vary according to the situation at hand. Furthermore, the wording and order of the questions in the interviews may change in order to fit the flow and dynamic of the interviews.

Interview Protocol: 05-06-2004   *UCRIHS #: 04-482*

Introduction
Goal of study: brief description of problem statement and framework

Research questions:

How do chairs view the nature of their role identity as department chair?
How do chairs understand their job in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity?
Which strategies, methods, and resources do chairs use? And, why?

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INTERVIEW I: QUESTIONS

Intro: Tell me what it is like being a department chair (the practice of a chair).
E.g.:
- What does your day look like?
- your tasks and responsibilities
- your roles
- experiences
- constraints/opportunities
- motivation (what gets you up in the morning to be a chair / to do this job)
- what you think is most important/least important
- what you enjoy most/least

Tell me a bit about your background and your career
- Age
- Discipline
- Context (location) and experiences as a grad student / as a faculty member
- How long were you a faculty member before you became chair?
- What was the motivation/rationale for becoming a chair?
- What ideas/views about chairs did you have before you became a chair yourself?
- Tell me how you see your career in the future

Socialization and learning in general (process and content)
- Tell me how you experienced your first year as chair (transitions, etc.)
- Tell me how you learned to do your job at the start of your job. What aspects did you learn?
- What did you actively do to be exposed to learning the ropes of being a chair? (in terms of looking for mentors, peers, role models, networks, internal or external meetings/workshops, readings/research)
- What sorts of problems did you feel you had most (difficulty) dealing with at the start of your job as chair?
- In hindsight, what experiences/events/people contributed to your learning the ropes of being a chair?
- What sort of resources do you use for doing or coping with your job (people, structures, departmental committees, policies, national chair meetings)?
- If you would have to give advice to a new chair or faculty considering becoming chair about what it takes to be a chair, what would you say?
- In general, what is your general strategy to find a solution for a problem?

INTERVIEW II: QUESTIONS

Work and Identity
- *Can you describe yourself as chair/leader/manager of the department?*
- *Are you still research active (grants)? Do you go to conferences? Teaching? How do you combine these?*
- *Tell me what you think when I say "balanced work life"? How do you find a balance, if at all?*
- *Do you see your job as chair as a profession? For 2nd or 3rd term chairs: Do you consider yourself a professional chair?*
- *Describe for me how, if at all, your discipline affects your view on how to be a chair.*
- *Have your ideas about what it means to be a chair changed over time? How? Why?*

The department and its culture
- *Tell me a bit about your department (mission, history, activities, stability, funding, etc.)*
- *What are the department's main plans for the future?*
- *Tell me what it is like working in this department (culture/climate)*
- *Describe the character/identity of the department*
- *Describe the main values of the department*
- *What are the most crucial developments that have formed the department?*
- *What are the department's current main problems-at-large?*
- *What is your vision of the department in, say, 5 –10 years' time?*
- *How do you think the department fits into the "larger world" (college, university, nation)?*
- *What is the departmental culture/tradition around the recruitment and selection of chairs?*
- *What do you think is the legacy of previous chairs on the culture and character of the department?*
- *What do you think/ hope your legacy as chair will be? How will that manifest itself?*
- *Tell me a bit about your relationship with the (other) faculty (-> dynamic between chair and department)*

Major activities (including projects, problems, and challenges)I
Tell me about your main activities (including projects, challenges, and problems you dealt with) in the last 6 months.
Tell me the story of one of the activities/challenges/problems: time frame, who was involved, actions, etc.

Depending on the issue, for probing use questions like:

1. *Issue/problem phrasing: Why do/did you consider it an issue/ problem?*

2. *Response and Actions:*
- *What was your response and approach?*
- *What was the response of others to it and to your actions? Why do you think that?*
- *Communication: How did you interact/communicate with others during this period concerning this issue? Why?*
- *Change: How did the issue/project/problem develop?*
- *What were the major constraints that inhibited your solving the issue?*
- *On the other hand, what facilitated the solution?*

3. *Motives and philosophy*
- *Please explain to me your motives (and/or philosophy) of your actions*
- *What do you think were the motives of others as they did?*

4. *Bigger picture*
- *How did your actions and solution fit into your other actions/responsibilities of the department? Mission, vision?*
- *How did the values behind your actions and solution match your own values and belief about what to do with the department?*

5. *Consequences*
- *What do you think the consequences are/were of your actions? For yourself and others? Why?*

6. *Alternatives*
- *Were there alternatives in the actions and solution you chose?*
- *How would those have worked out?*

7. *Learning*
- *Have you had this or a similar problem before? How did you handle that problem? Why?*
- *If you had a similar problem in the future, would your approach and actions be the same?*
- *Can you explain to me how and what you have learned from handling this problem and using this approach, if anything? How do you use what you learned?*

INTERVIEW III: QUESTIONS

Major activities (including projects, problems, and challenges) II: continued
Tell me about your main activities (including projects, challenges, and problems you dealt with) in the last 6 months.

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Tell me the story of one of the activities/challenges/problems: time frame, who was involved, actions, etc.

Depending on the issue, for probing use questions like:

1. Issue/problem phrasing: Why do/did you consider it an issue/ problem?

2. Response and Actions:
- *What was your response and approach?*
- *What was the response of others to it and to your actions? Why do you think that?*
- *Communication: How did you interact/communicate with others during this period concerning this issue? Why?*
- *Change: How did the issue/project/problem develop?*
- *What were the major constraints that inhibited your solving the issue?*
- *On the other hand, what facilitated the solution?*

3. Motives and philosophy
- *Please explain to me your motives (and/or philosophy) for your actions*
- *What do you think were the motives of others as they did?*

4. Bigger picture
- *How did your actions and solution fit into your other actions/responsibilities of the department? Mission, vision?*
- *How did the values behind your actions and solution match your own values and belief on what to do with the department?*

5. Consequences
- *What do you think the consequences are/were of your actions? For yourself and others? Why?*

6. Alternatives
- *Were there alternatives in the actions and solution you chose?*
- *How would those have worked out?*

7. Learning
- *Have you had this or a similar problem before? How did you handle that problem? Why?*
- *If you had a similar problem in the future, would your approach and actions be the same?*
- *Can you explain to me how and what you have learned handling this problem and using this approach, if anything? How do you use what you learned?*

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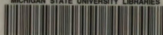
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