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**Friend or Foe: the complexities of being an academic and a doctoral student
in the same institution**

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Friend or Foe: the complexities of being an academic and a doctoral student in the same institution

A growing expectation that academic staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) will be qualified to doctoral level can mean that doctoral study must be juggled alongside administration, teaching, and academic duties. Many academics study in their own institutions. We wished to explore their perspectives on i) how the two roles, of being an academic as well as a doctoral candidate, interact or not and ii) the influences and resources at play in navigating the processes. The qualitative study explored staff experiences in two HEIs in the United Kingdom and one in New Zealand. Using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a theoretical framework, we identified the contradictions within and between academic life and doctoral candidature activity systems. However, we focus on the tools and rules that frame daily academic life and doctoral study, and suggest remodelling systems to be kinder to academic staff brave enough to engage in doctoral study.

Keywords: Cultural Historical Activity Theory; doctoral arrangements; doctoral practices; dual-status academics; academic roles

Introduction

In this article, we explore how academic staff experience their dual roles of engaging in doctoral study alongside their day-to-day activities in the same home institution. Whilst part-time doctoral study will be familiar to many academic staff, and commands a body of evidence, there is a dearth of evidence about academics who effectively study part-time, in their own institutions, who we refer to as ‘dual-status’. Denicolo (2004) considers academics juggling multiple roles and the challenges of supervisory arrangements for staff and their colleagues. She reveals several issues worthy of further research, including the growing expectation internationally that academic staff working in HEIs will hold a doctoral qualification as a mark of their authority to teach and/or to research.

There is growing worldwide interest in academics' doctoral qualifications in terms of metrics produced by national agencies, such as research funding councils and national higher education statistics agencies. In 2012-13, Universities UK recorded that 'slightly more than a half of all academic staff hold a doctorate as their highest qualification' (2014, 19). League table competitiveness results in a compulsion for staff to engage in higher level study (Dann et al. 2018) and growing pressure 'to increase the number of doctoral degrees awarded and to reduce the time-to-degree' (Bao, Kehm, and Ma 2018, 6).

Part-time study is the usual option for academic staff (Dann et al. 2018). Although some may become doctoral candidates in another HEI, staff seeking funding and institutional support for doctoral study may be encouraged to study in-house by management who see it as a means of deploying staff development funds. These staff effectively take on dual status. In this paper, we focus particularly on the little-understood influence of the context within which dual-status academics work. However, we also need to understand how personal and community rules (norms and expectations) impact on progress, as implicit, yet powerful, structural determinants of motivations and actions. When combined with increased awareness of the 'tools' or resources that staff might mobilise in fulfilling the demands of their dual-status role, these gaps in understanding provide a rationale for the current research.

We begin by contextualising the study in contemporary HE in the United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand (NZ). After reviewing the limited literature on the doctoral journey of academic candidates, we use Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to model two activity systems: undertaking a doctoral programme and carrying out an academic role. CHAT was chosen as a socio-cultural theoretical framework for its potential to uncover interaction between the individual and their environment

(Engeström 2015). Having used these activity models to inform staff interviews, we share the findings that emerged, and discuss these in the light of the scene previously set.

Background

In an international context, in which growing numbers of doctorates are being awarded (Åkerlind and McAlpine 2017; Bao, Kehm and Ma 2018; Durette, Fournier and Lafon 2016), the doctorate has dramatically diversified in form from the traditional PhD (Bao, Kehm and Ma 2018). In the context of the current study, the ‘form’ of the doctorate matters less than its purpose. The rationale for increasing the numbers of doctorates awarded which is enshrined in governmental policy, internationally, is the need to expand the innovative, knowledge economy/learning society and its available workforce (Åkerlind and McAlpine 2017; Bao, Kehm and Ma 2018; Durette, Fournier and Lafon 2016). Brew, Boud, and Namgung (2011, 52) claim that ‘despite conventional expectations that the doctorate is the main way in which academics are prepared for the academic role, doctoral and post-doctoral work, they can avoid developing these key skills.’ Pre-existing skills and intrinsic capabilities might go unacknowledged during the doctoral journey (Mowbray and Halse 2010; Sinclair, Barnacle, and Cuthbert 2014), or may be developed in contextually constrained ways which afford tensions and dilemmas (Danaher 2012). However, Durette, Fournier, and Lafon (2016) maintain that most academics will emerge from the process with new competencies and skills which can benefit both academic and non-academic roles.

Denicolo’s (2004) research featuring dual-status academics’ relationships with doctoral supervisors, highlighted both complementarities and conflicts between roles. These included issues of identity, practical issues such as time pressures, and the ambivalence of academic colleagues – ranging from constructive support to perceived

resentment of time taken out of daily commitments for study. An autoethnographic study conducted by Dann, et al. (2018), identified how doctoral experiences had enabled staff to be more effective and efficient teachers, able to relate to their students to a greater degree. Nevertheless, they highlighted how ‘gaining a doctorate whilst also employed in HE, is an area of profound struggle for staff’ (Dann et al. 2018, 14). This picture is reflected in Bosanquet, Mailey, Matthews and Lodge’s (2017) research exploring the narratives of early-career academics which portrays the pressures of doctoral study inflamed by increasing casualisation of the workforce.

The findings from these previous studies identifying both conflict and complementarity between the simultaneous roles of being a doctoral student and an academic were used to inform several aspects of the current study. Our research aimed to explore the following questions:

- (1) How is staff doctoral candidature experienced in relation to other aspects of the academic role when situated in the same institution?
- (2) What influences are at play in initiating and navigating the processes of doctoral candidature for the dual-status academic?
- (3) What resources do dual-status academics use to navigate the doctoral journey?

Theoretical Framework

CHAT provides a framework for interrogating social practices (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk 2011), and therefore offers a means of exposing the social aspects of often solitary dual-status activity implicit in our research questions. Through the work of Vygotsky, Lyont’ev, and Engeström, CHAT evolved from simply recognizing the importance of sociocultural artefacts on a *subject* and *object* to recognizing the influence of the collective community and the division of labour, and then presenting all

these elements graphically (Yamagata-Lynch 2010). For example, the activity of studying for a doctorate is mediated by *artefacts* (tools) such as language, theories and methods, on the doctoral candidate *subject* and their *object* of completing a thesis. An individual's doctoral progress is influenced by their *community* of doctoral peers or discipline-based specialists, the *division of labour* between the candidate and their supervisory team and examiners, and the doctoral-related *rules* and norms. Engeström represented interacting activity systems graphically as in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The interacting activity systems of (left) undertaking doctoral study, and (right) an academic role (adapted from Engeström, 2001, Fig. 2)

In Figure 1, we show the explicit or implicit *outcomes* of activities outside the pyramid, indicating that these activities will result in change (Engeström 2001). CHAT models encapsulate the ad hoc, imperfect, historical development of activity systems (Engeström 2001). Each arrowhead in the diagram suggests a stress-point in the activity where tensions may arise (for example, in our study, between the *subject* or *object* and the associated *tools* and *rules*). Engeström (2015) refers to these tensions between elements (and between systems) as 'contradictions', viewing them as 'sources of change and development' (137). Engeström, Engeström, and Suntio (2002) observe that an outsider may identify contradictions not evident to the subject. For example, in our research, we identify that 'Doctoral processes' themselves can function as tools for the doctoral subject by imposing regular interaction with supervisory teams and regulations. By supporting the identification of tensions within an activity system, CHAT helped us unearth the double contradictions experienced by those in dual roles. However, we recognise that each individual will experience activity systems differently, although 'the general structural characteristics' remain stable (Engeström 2001, 140). The strengths of a CHAT approach, as Hashim and Jones (2007) suggest, lie in holistically rich ways of

promoting understanding of how people operate in complex and dynamic situations to achieve their goals.

Fanghanel (2004) has argued that the PhD is too complex an activity to be represented in a single diagram. However, encouraged by Granata and Dochy (2016), who successfully model the academic and semi-industrial PhD as activity systems within a comparative case study, we used CHAT to model systems of studying and undertaking an academic role (Figure 1).

Figure 1 is intended as a generic model which captures our joint understanding of these activity systems based on the literature, and researcher insights from our roles as academics, doctoral supervisors, and indeed our own doctoral experiences. It served two purposes: firstly, highlighting ways in which we would expect the two activity systems to interact and therefore helping to generate questions providing the framework for staff interviews, and secondly providing a basis against which to analyse our subsequent findings.

Methodology

Lampert-Shepel (2008) notes that CHAT is most frequently viewed as a theoretical framework rather than a methodology but that it combines well with a case study design. CHAT discloses the ‘fundamental relationships of the phenomenon’ whilst an in-depth case study ‘captures the contextual emerging meanings’ (Lampert-Shepel 2008, 223). Similarly, Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011) and Yin (2009) emphasise the fit between CHAT and case study design, as a means of exploring the boundaries between experiences and context. Our aim was to conduct single case studies to feed into a cross-case analysis, reflecting a commonly adopted approach (Fenwick, Edwards, and Sawchuk 2011). Considering the irreducible quality of good case narratives, Flyvbjerg (2006, 223) acknowledges that whilst this tends to be seen by

critics of the case study as a drawback, in fact, it is a sign that the study has ‘uncovered a particularly rich problematic ... crucial to the development of a nuanced view of reality.’ Tight’s (2017, 36) pragmatic view of case study research is that, despite not usually claiming to achieve generalisability or prediction, it can ‘enabl[e] others to infer the relevance and applicability of findings’.

Institutional Cultural and Historical Contexts

The three HEIs in the study included a post-1992 university in the UK (1), a research intensive university, also in the UK (2), and a university of technology in New Zealand (3). While all three are located in English-speaking countries, together they provide insight into a range of international institutional settings, and potentially help to draw out issues which affect dual-status staff across dissimilar HEI contexts.

The post-1992 HEI (1) has, in recent years, leap-frogged many similar institutions to achieve a comparatively high league table position for its teaching excellence. Its ambition to advance its reputation in the research arena is promoted through an institutional research strategy and substantial resource allocation. Currently not offering a taught doctorate, dual-status staff have the option of a traditional PhD (studied part-time), or PhD by publication. The PhD programme is structured through a series of annual progress review panels similar to formal mock vivas in which candidates present and defend their work to independent subject experts. These reviews also provide opportunities for the candidate and supervisory team to identify and resolve any supervisory issues or other challenges.

University (2) is a research-intensive institution of high repute. It does not usually appoint those without a doctorate to ‘traditional’ academic roles. In recent years, in common with many UK Russell Group institutions, it has developed a Teaching Fellow (TF) pathway to maintain its strong Research Excellence Framework (REF)

rankings. Those appointed as TFs frequently come from professional backgrounds with no, or limited, research experience and do not qualify for inclusion in the REF.

Nevertheless, attaining a doctorate is a common probationary condition for newly-appointed TFs and, in theory, it is possible to move from a teaching-focused contract to a lectureship. Taught doctorate and PhD options are available in a number of subject areas, and many choose to study in their home institution.

The third HEI, (3) is the youngest university, established in 2000. As a research-based institution, it delivers teaching with a focus on work-integrated learning and applied teaching, and has strong industry and community connections. Research covers the spectrum from fundamental to applied. Doctoral study is available as a PhD (the primary doctorate in NZ) in three formats (traditional thesis; by paper publication; and ‘creative’ which includes an exegesis). Professional doctorates (with some taught papers and a thesis) are offered in Education and Health Science. Of particular relevance for staff wishing to undertake doctoral study, is the absence of a part-time enrolment option. Despite the fact that staff cannot devote time exclusively to study, like all other doctoral candidates they must enrol fulltime and are subject to confirmation, review, progress, and oral examination processes. The reality of officially having full time status, yet limited study time, understandably impacts on dual-status academics’ perceptions of the entire doctoral study experience. In 2017, 687 of 1187 academic staff (FTEs) held doctorates (Auckland University of Technology 2018).

All three institutions had broadly similar regulatory structures or rules. All employed annual review or appraisal mechanisms designed to keep candidates on track and resolve any barriers to progress. Although the selection of supervisory teams and arrangements for supervision varied slightly between individuals, in most cases, candidates had some input into the selection of supervisors and had regular supervision.

Training and research seminars were offered as a common means of drawing candidates into the doctoral community in all case study institutions. While the three contexts potentially provide a platform for analysis individually, between themselves, and in comparison with the wider literature, our interviews revealed that individual experience varied within and between HEIs. Participants' experience of – or feelings of being bound by – local policies and processes gave rise to a series of unique experiences that defied clustering or paradigmatic analysis. Instead, what emerged were a series of narratives of academics making sense of their institutional dual status.

Project Participants

Purposive sampling was used to access participants able to provide insight into the research questions. In (1) and (3) an email was sent to all doctoral candidates, via a third party, inviting participation. Respondents were sent an information sheet and consent form prior to interview. In (2), a convenience sampling approach was used: members of the research team contacted colleagues known to be either registered alongside their 'day job' in the institution, or recently completed. These people subsequently suggested others in a similar situation who they anticipated might be willing to get involved.

Given the small sample of participants in the study (ten), and the necessity to maintain anonymity, our sample of participants is described broadly. Disciplines are deliberately omitted, since these were not part of the selection criteria and interviews did not expose any disciplinary specificities. Participants ranged from those early in the doctoral journey (Year 1) to staff who had successfully completed and moved on to post-doctoral life. It included people at varied levels of seniority from an assistant lecturer to a principal lecturer. Roles included varied-levels of teaching, administration, research, and in some cases, management, and experience in HE ranging from three to thirty years. The majority of participants had followed the traditional PhD route with the

exception of one person who was completing a taught doctorate. This profile is interesting given the range of possible options for doctoral study (Bao, Kehm and Ma 2018), but may reflect the research-intensive status of (2) and the research aspirations of (1) and (3).

Institutional ethical approval was given in each of the HEIs. Importantly, since our sample is small and our focus here is on the individual experience, the sources of participant quotations have been de-identified.

Data collection and analysis

Ten current or recently completed dual-status academics shared their doctoral stories in face-to-face interviews lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and shared securely with the four members of the research team. As is common in qualitative research, the boundary between data collection and analysis was blurred. Following several interviews, it became clear that it was difficult to move beyond an individual level of analysis in PhD study, confirming the findings of Hopwood et al. (2011).

Adopting an approach advocated by Polkinghorne (1995), we looked across individual accounts to discern themes relating to the rules and tools elements of our CHAT framework (Engeström 2015) and to our sensitising concepts including time pressures, coping strategies, supervisory arrangements, and community. Each member of the research team read and analysed the whole set of transcripts individually, prior to sharing their analyses collaboratively in videoconference meetings. Agreement was eventually reached on the analyses, and a table of codes and comprehensive summaries were produced. This resulted in themes which, in some cases, breached the boundaries of the activity systems and pointed to contradictory situations for the individuals which

potentially compromised the achievement of their goals or their ability to participate in the activity.

Findings

The focus of this article is on the mediating effects of the Rules and Tools elements of the Doctoral Study and Academic Role activity systems that appeared to help and hinder dual-status academics. Rules were both formal and explicit, such as policies, regulations and standards, but also informal (and often tacit), including academic norms and expectations and departmental/local politics/culture, as well as personally imposed rules. The academic life and doctoral candidature systems were both highly prescribed with explicit and implicit rules that caused ‘contradictions’ or conflict between elements and between systems (Engeström 2015). The tools available to the dual-status academic (including thesis-related documents and processes) had positive and challenging impacts on and between activity systems. Most importantly, we identified that people and relationships could be employed as ‘tools’ to facilitate the Doctoral Study activity, while the absence of such tools served to delay or undermine its progress.

Each doctoral journey differed from the others, providing a mix of perspectives. However, the cross-case study analysis generated around rules and tools produced four themes: *Systems and processes*, *Support realities*, *Unwritten rules, expectations and ‘business as usual’*, and *Re-writing the rules and the need for self-care*.

‘Systems and processes’

All interviewees talked about negotiating systems and processes. These HEIs have formalised systems that almost distract candidates from focusing on the intellectual endeavour and encouraged a project-management approach to working within the rules. Described by one as *‘bureaucracy gone mad’*, others were more sanguine about

working with (and around) the rules. For example, one suggested:

I think it's beneficial that, like if you're a staff member ... you inherently know the process and you know the people.

Similarly, another talked about being able to shortcut some processes, saying:

If I get emails from PGR admin I just go down to the office and go "what are you on about"? I can get things a little more quickly as well. I know the librarians and can say "Can Mary help me"?

These excerpts suggest that one of the most valuable tools that gives dual-status academics leverage, is knowing the resources they can draw on: frequently the people they knew who could sort out any process-issues that arose. However, the perceived advantages of being a staff member were not always beneficial. For example, one talked about the benefits and drawbacks of knowing the system and being known by colleagues leading to a level of tolerance that was not really helpful despite short-term benefits:

The benefits actually become challenges because ... my supervisors know my workload. So if I'm kind of behind, or I'm going to a supervision without necessarily having everything done that I should've done – I can get away with it, which is not a good thing really.

Some interviewees talked about processes with a certain degree of frustration. A prime example relates how:

[the system] says you must upload your document by the 18th of July, now I only knew that because I randomly went on it, it's not what it said previously, I'd had no email instruction to say you must do this, so I – did I miss that email?

Similarly, one person shared frustrations about neglected needs that might be expected to be less of an issue for someone with insider status:

I don't think that part-time [academic doctoral students] are prioritised enough. They need a different kind of support system and they also need a different kind of workload-management system that encourages people to finish what they start, because I suspect that a lot ... are working in their own institutions doing their PhDs – I'm fairly certain that many of them think about giving up.

These comments highlight that academic staff already have many of the tools and resources to hand; they '*are not a blank slate*' but do need a different type of support, such as help in workload-management, if they are to succeed. The rules are not written for staff resulting in limitations such as '*not feeling able to fully immerse ... in being a student*'. This comment illustrates just how important engagement in the doctoral community might be for addressing feelings of isolation and demotivation. However, freeing-up opportunities to mobilise resources through new networks and collaborations available to other students, is clearly problematic for staff.

'Support realities'

Existing literature lacks evidence for the importance of management support as part of the rules of engagement for dual-status academics. Our findings suggest that such support is tenuous. Broadly in favour of the 'principle' of staff engaging in study (thereby meeting departmental targets for encouraging staff to enrol), managers seemed to be less good at following through with practical support. One interviewee reflected:

My managers have all been very supportive and have encouraged me to work and recognise the need to be able to block time out. But ... they'll pop a meeting in the middle of a research day or something like that and there's not much I can do about that.

The frustration expressed here suggests a lack of formal protective mechanisms.

Another interviewee was also in this position:

What isn't there, is the management support around workload and how that gets managed. Because once you've got a set of responsibilities, and if you're quite proactive in what you do, you gain other ones as well, and I think if you're good at what you do, you end up doing more in a way, like a safe pair of hands that can get a job done.. So that adds another kind of difficulty ... how do I extricate myself from all those other things that I do so that I can focus on doing a PhD? And although I can keep a lot of plates spinning, the plate for spinning the PhD is a different kind of plate.

Experiences of a third were similar:

My PhD meant 20% off my [day job] time and in the second year – I don't know how but [instead] I managed to get an extra 20% of hours ... other people could have taken some of my hours but they didn't, so there was no support from both directions [managers and peers].

Another offered further insight:

I don't think it's completely backstabbing but I've often said, where I work, that you can get on but if you sink you do that by yourself. I find it's a culture of individualism ... you get on with your own things and it's your responsibility to do well at them. It's your responsibility to make your own career and if you don't, I don't know that anyone bothers that much.

These and other examples portray staff with difficult decisions about either compromising their studies or appearing to lack commitment.

'Unwritten rules, expectations and "business as usual"'

One of the unwritten rules that dual-status academics had to learn very quickly was a requirement to *'keep all [of the] balls in the air'*; an expectation of 'business as usual'.

For one early-career academic, starting a doctorate was part of a probationary agreement (so not a hidden rule in itself), readily accepted:

I just like studying ... but this kind of made me a bit cynical when I started to do it – it was sort of part of your ... commodity's the wrong word, but your, er, saleability. I get the impression here that because I don't have one yet, I'm not as – not thought of as being as good as my colleagues who do have a doctorate. It's the currency – the currency that you need to be taken seriously.

For another early-career participant, the doctoral imperative emerged:

The PhD was not required when I was first employed, but I was aware of increasing pressure to demonstrate research impacts ... you're not directly asked but if you want to progress ...

The participant who *'found [themselves] teaching in higher education where everybody's got a doctorate but me, or that's the way it kind of feels'*, acknowledged commonly experienced contradictory feelings.

'Re-writing the rules and the need for self-care'

Frustration was expressed regarding a burdensome workload:

It's just been a case of getting along and trying not to worry too much about having too much to do, or not doing any of it because you've got all these different jobs.

Another interviewee portrayed a sense of calm, perhaps from experiencing *'amazing autonomy. I can manage my day how I want.'* An alternative response, illustrated a sense of personal agency: *'I kind of try and play the long game and not burn out.'*

Others seemed to try to work harder by attempting to impose rules and time-management plans, for example:

You have to have this output, that made me be more of a doer – so I have to do it; this is my deadline so I'm strict on what I have to do.

Rules that tacitly depend on the commitment of staff to getting the job done no matter

what the personal cost, resulted in some staff developing their own rules of engagement as a means of self-preservation. However, comments illustrate how self-protection is held in a tension with the potential for disapproval and complaints from colleagues:

You're thinking about what people will say ... I'm going to a seminar for the PhD and you can see people are not very happy for that, so you are thinking, "oh, maybe I shouldn't go".

Learning to negotiate contradictions within and between systems did result in a change of approach to managing dual-status for several academic staff interviewed. For example, one had begun to be more assertive, saying: *'Well, I do say "no" to work now'*, while another admitted that *'in the end, to get [the PhD] done, I had to just be selfish'*.

Another's newfound (defensive) approach to the day job meant: '

You start to grow a thick skin because you can't be everything to everyone. You have to look after yourself and your own career development and that's probably what I've started to do a bit more. I don't think I was very good at that before.

The four themes identified above capture certain 'contradictions' (Engeström 2015) within and between systems. While some of the issues might apply to any PhD candidate, we have highlighted those that we believe resonate specifically for dual-status academics.

Discussion

To date, little has been known about how regulations and processes, and resources that govern doctoral study and academic life for dual-status academics, facilitate and/or present barriers to success (Denicolo 2004). CHAT is particularly helpful in identifying and understanding structural tensions because it locates activity systems in their cultural

and historical context (Engeström 2015): for example, the institutional imperatives that drive staff to become doctorally qualified. Bao, Kehm and Ma (2018) note that some institutions already restrict certain roles to those with doctorates, while others are moving towards this standard, for example, by making doctoral study a probationary condition. In our study, the pressure to increase the numbers of staff with doctorates was felt at all levels; evident in the fact that staff who were relatively senior and had been in HE for twenty-thirty years, were completing doctorates. Our model of the dual-status academic's interacting activity systems (Figure 1) inevitably reflects this research team's extensive doctoral study and support experience, in a variety of contexts. Our interviews largely validated the Tools and Rules we had anticipated, while revealing the range of positive and negative experience they manifested for individuals (see Figure 2). Along with Flyvbjerg (2006), we would argue that this validation and extension of Figure 1 does not represent our team's subjective bias, but rather our close understanding of these activity systems. Yamagata-Lynch (2010) notes that activity theory can be criticised for over-focusing on activity and ignoring the underlying thought processes. Our interviews overcame this potential short-coming and contributed a rich understanding of the tensions within and between the two activity systems where opportunities for improvement may lie (Engeström 2001). The CHAT approach has thereby helped to 'render explicit the more tacit elements of an action' (Hashim and Jones 2007, 7) – see Figure 2. For example, we established that an individual may find themselves *Disenfranchised* or *Privileged* in relation to doctoral support resources (Artefacts), depending on their personal network of contacts, and the particular Rules that appertain. Similarly, our interviews revealed that a *Mature and effective* contact network that has been developed in the Academic Role activity, potentially functions as an additional Tool in the Doctoral activity; while a dual-role academic, whose contact

network is *Underdeveloped or ineffective* will be disadvantaged. This finding resonates with research that highlights the influence of a ‘backstage’ cast of characters that support doctoral study (Wisker, Robinson, and Bengsten 2017).

Figure 2. Dual-status academics: Manifestations of contradictions in two overlapping activity systems

Our findings highlight challenges which CHAT enables us to relate to the essential (primary) contradiction between use-value and exchange-value of commodities (Engeström 2001). In our study, we identify academics’ time as being such a socio-cultural commodity. Our interviewees talked of their lack of time to undertake their doctoral studies alongside their day job commitments (and vice versa). Similarly, interviewees mentioned the lack of time colleagues could afford to support them, the value of supervisors’ time, and the unrealistic time allowances awarded them to undertake their dual role. This emphasis on time, and its significance in an academic context, has previously been identified by Billot and King (2015), who argue that metaphors of time denote value in academic discourse. Building on Engeström (2001), Warmington (2008) argues that employers ‘appear to buy labour but what they actually purchase is labour-power, the capacity of the employee to labour’ (11). Hence, the use-value of (academic) labour-power is qualitatively allied to job functions (i.e. skills/dispositions required to undertake teaching, assessment, research, supervision etc.) its exchange-value is recognized quantitatively through an hourly or annual rate (Warmington 2008). Thus, time spent on academic activity is inherently contradictory, and this may contribute to individuals’ struggles to establish a coherent academic identity (Billot and King 2015). This contradiction is exacerbated by the failure of academic workload models to represent the scope of academic labour, resulting in serious under-estimates of the actual work-effort involved in undertaking any allocated

academic role (Papadopoulos 2017), as identified by our interviewees. Here, we recognise a secondary contradiction: between institutional needs for resources to be used efficiently today (restricting the time-allowances given to dual-role academics), and institutional desires for doctorally qualified staff in the future. We believe that our sample of ten academic staff are fairly typical in terms of their commitment to day jobs that generally make high demands of them. The onus is on individual staff to work harder and/or find shortcuts to overcome this double contradiction. They mobilise any resources accrued over time, such as relationships, to try to smooth the journey as best they can.

Thinking through our findings with CHAT also helps reveal contradictory intellectual identity work in relation to participants' colleagues. Inevitably, individuals bring their own prior history to an activity (Engeström 2015), and this will determine their attitude to tools, rules, and the way these are applied by themselves and by those with whom they interact. As we show in Figure 2, this individualism results in a continuum of different responses from negative to positive. For example, the personal rules that an individual brings to bear on their dual status may be anything from *Unrealistic or inappropriate* to *Realistic and appropriate*. Those interviewees who recognised the need to work differently – that the doctorate '*is a different kind of plate*' (Interviewee) – were able to overcome the 'double bind' (Engeström 2015) of potentially unlimited workload and their own finite availability. This also reflects Denicolo's (2004) findings concerning colleague-(dis)approbation and the pressure on dual-status academics to continue to pull their weight. Such disapproval may well be greater for staff studying in-house as their doctoral activities might be more overt and absences magnified in the consciousness of departmental colleagues without doctoral commitments. We suggest that the challenges of being an early-career, dual-status

academic might be greater than those experienced by more established staff and that this is a latent contradiction to emerge from our findings which has important consequences. Our research therefore extends insight in the literature on early-career academics (for example, Bosanquet, Mailey, Matthews, and Lodge 2017).

CHAT has provided a fruitful framework for our analysis, highlighting responses to tensions within and between the two systems which resulted in fundamental learning (Engeström 2015) for some of the participants. As Dann et al (2018) reported, dual-status staff may evidence a remarkable level of acceptance and tolerance of being pulled in many directions. In other cases, the contradictions were almost denied up to a point at which a crisis or tipping point was reached and then more readily acknowledged. This involved learning to say 'no' or passing on responsibilities to others. Whether self-preservation is a feature of staff studying in their own institution or would occur if they were studying elsewhere is unclear. It may be simply one consequence of the contemporary neoliberal discourse in higher education. Certainly, performativity was perceivable in all three HEIs alongside an instrumental perception of the purpose of the doctorate (Åkerlind and McAlpine 2017).

Limitations

Our findings are drawn from a small number of cases of dual-status academics in three HEIs, in NZ and the UK, and might serve as a stepping-off point for further research. Accessing a broader sample of doctoral candidates (on different doctoral programmes, across different policy landscapes and representing different disciplines) would further inform the research literature. Investigating more closely how early-career and mid-/late-career dual-status academics compare in terms of the Resources and Tools that they utilise would be useful with respect to responding to diverse needs.

Conclusions

Institutions serious about supporting academic staff to complete doctoral studies could do more to smooth the journey. There appear to be advantages to studying in the same institution in which academic staff are employed. Ability to access and utilise the tools available to them is what seems to make a difference, with advantage stemming from knowing the processes, and more importantly, knowing the people who are part of the processes. However, even then, the rules of engagement are often tacit and the mindset must necessarily be courageous. Dual-status is both friend *and* foe. Our findings portray a sense of having had to overcome adversity in a system where there are few concessions for academic staff with respect to institutional imperatives and policies. The traditional rules of engagement are unforgiving in favouring fulltime study, treating part-time doctoral candidates as an afterthought, and largely ignoring dual-status staff. The intention for our research was to surface the academic staff voice on holding dual roles in an institution. What we have uncovered can inform relevant institutional practices to provide a broader beneficial outcome; and so we call for a kinder, and more supportive, climate for academic staff engaged in doctoral endeavour.

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