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Being a teacher in a managerial university: Academic teacher identity

Introduction

Compared with other educational institutions, being a teacher in academia has been – and still is – quite unique, especially in universities ascribing to the Humboldtian tradition, which has remarkably influenced Finnish universities and most Western universities (Robertson 2007, 542). Being a good academic teacher is not primarily perceived as relating to pedagogical skills but rather as the result of dedication to civilisation and true collaborations with other colleagues and students (Pritchard 2004). This, more or less 'unpedagogical' tradition lasted in Finland until the 1990s when pedagogical development activities were introduced in universities and pedagogical skills were gradually required of teaching staff. This formed part of a wave of many transformations within the university and higher education policy (HE policy), which has been implemented in the context of neoliberalism and new public management (NPM), or new managerialism, deeply affecting the governance and work of academics (e.g. Cheng 2010; Henkel 2016; Leišyte and Wilkesmann 2016; Marginson 2000; Teelken 2012). Scott (2003), for example, described the completely new paradigm of academic teaching and research in the era of globalisation and neoliberalism.

Over the past decades university reforms including new managerial governance have been introduced in Finnish universities (Rinne and Jauhiainen 2012; Rinne, Jauhiainen and Kankaanpää 2014). New University Act (2009), which came in power in 2010, changed universities to resemble more (private) companies in terms of their legal position and the governance system (Rinne and Jauhiainen 2014). Since the new law, market and managerial orientation has been strengthened in the university funding model: the acquisition of external and so call strategic funding has been strongly emphasised and rewarded and numerous quantitative performance indicators are applied which influence in the amount of the core (state) funding of the universities. (Seuri and Vartiainen 2018; Ministry of Education and Culture 2017b). Furthermore, during the last decade the remarkable organisational reforms have been enforced in many Finnish universities based on the managerial models and ideas, including among others centralising the administrative activities away from department and faculty level (e.g. Scott 2017).

Due to the transformation in the policy and governance of higher education, academic identities have been challenged. A great deal of research focusing on academic work and identity in managerial universities has been recently conducted in the international context (e.g. Billot 2010; Clegg 2008; Harris 2005; Leišyte 2015; Winter 2009) and in the context of changing Finnish academia (e.g. Arvaja 2017; Kallio et al. 2016; Korhonen and Törmä 2016; Nevgi and Löfström 2015; Rinne et al. 2012; Ylijoki and Henriksson 2017; Ylijoki and Ursin 2013). Vast literature exists on academics, yet research on academic teaching continues to lag behind (see, however, Kreber 2010; McNaughton and Billot 2016; Skelton 2012, Trautwein 2018; van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset and Beishuizen 2017). In the school context, professional teacher identity has been recognised as an important factor that influences how a teacher teaches. Pifer and Baker (2013) further highlight that we must understand how academics' identities shape their goals, behaviours and outcomes. Academics with teaching tasks are a central resource of most universities and respond to policy demands for educating a highly competent workforce. In addition, academic identity is complex and

cannot be simply based upon descriptions of teaching, research or management roles (Clegg 2008). Further research is needed to better understand teaching work and academic teacher identity under the changing conditions of universities. Our article aims to address this research gap.

In this article, we examine Finnish academics' perceptions of teaching from the perspective of constructing academic teacher identity in a managerial university. We focus on a particular group of academics in one case university – those who have participated in university pedagogy courses. These kinds of teaching development programmes for academic staff are offered to support academics in developing as teachers and have become increasingly common worldwide (Nevgi and Löfström 2015).

Managed teaching work

Similar to Deem (2001) and Teelken (2012), we interpret managerialism in terms of ideologies associated with the application and actual use of values (e.g. effectiveness and excellence), techniques and practices (e.g. audits, accountability, performance standards and strong power of managers) derived from the private sector.

In the managerial university and in the context of expanding HE, teaching has become a more complex, more problematised and more managed activity. Teaching has become complex in the sense that teaching is increasingly directed at a diverse body of students in flexible learning environments. Teaching has become problematised in regard to the overall educational environment in which funding systems are changing and becoming more targeted. Finally, teaching has become more managed as a result of audits and other managerial practices that have replaced self-regulation and autonomy in teaching (Fanghanel 2007; Bennisch and Björkman 2007). Furthermore, organisational decision-making processes of universities increasingly tend to be top-down to manage increasing numbers of students (Leišyte 2015).

Within this context, teaching, including its evaluation and development, has received more visibility as part of the expanding culture of accountability (Harris 2005; Rowland 2002). Quality assurance systems have required institutions to develop teaching strategies and to invest in the management of teaching. Meanwhile, this has meant that teaching and the development of teaching have become a professional area and have converted into a separate discipline (Taylor 2007). In the context of new HE policy, the traditional core tasks of academic work – teaching and research as well as the relationship between them – gain new significance and priority.

In particular, teaching has become more significant and visible in contemporary academia. However, the meaning of research has also shifted, as greater emphasis is placed on career development and rewarding systems (Wilkesmann 2016; Leišyte, Enders and Boer 2009). In the managerial university, research and teaching seem to have grown increasingly apart (e.g. Deem 2006; Korhonen and Törmä 2016; Leišyte et al. 2009; Rowland 2002; Taylor 2007). Rowland (2002) argues that one of the 'fault lines' or 'fractures' of higher education policy and academic development is the split between research and teaching.

These changes in the working (functional) environment of the university have led academic teaching work to become even more challenging and conflicting. Accordingly, the construction of academic (teacher) identity has become more complex and contradictory.

Multi-layered academic teacher identity

Becoming an academic teacher is a question of constructing a self-concept as a teacher – teacher identity – in the social and professional context of the university. Identity as a social process means adopting and sharing the community's cultural heritage wherein individuals identify with certain values, groups and institutions. Identity as identification refers how others recognise an individual as well (Billot 2010; Kreber 2010). In their personal identity project, individuals define their relationship to action and community (Harré 1983). Taylor (1989) primarily regards identity as a moral value. Values are central to identity, and traditional academic values maintain ideals of being a teacher at university.

Academic identities are strongly associated with the membership of different communities, including discipline and research communities at international, national and local levels as well as university and department communities (e.g. Harris 2005; Henkel 2016; Kreber 2010; Taylor 1989). The identity of academics stems from their socialisation into the disciplinary community, which is an important source of values, culture and language, as well as ideas about teaching, research, knowledge and even society at large (Becher and Trowler 2001). While academic communities have transformed in response to managerial influence the importance of the discipline has changed. Billot (2010, 718) describes how academics are concerned that their identity is informed by governmental and managerial aims rather than by 'scholarly objectives'.

According to Pifer and Baker (2013) scholars appear to be moving away from the notion that disciplines and institutions are significant contexts of academic work and towards an emphasis on academic identity as informed by numerous contexts. More power is shifted from disciplines to organisations: Academics are increasingly expected to adjust their identities and work roles to the profiles and strategies of the organisations where they work (Leišyte 2015; Leišyte and Wilkesmann 2016, 8). As Leišyte and Wilkesmann (2016, 4–5) highlight, in comparison to research, teaching is always collective action and interdependence between the organisational structure and teaching is highly important. Anyway, identification in teaching work is conflicting process in which academic teacher have to struggle with different elements and perspectives (van Lankveld et al. 2017).

Socio-cultural studies of identity highlight interaction between personal and social factors in constructing identity, such as agency and structure. Identity is constructed and negotiated in social interactions forming part of everyday practices. Räsänen (2009) outlined a unique way of understanding academic work as a practical activity based on the approach of different practice theorists. The purpose of this framework was to generate and appreciate practitioners' own diverse accounts of academic work. In any practical activity, practitioners need to work out a set of basic issues: how to do it; what to accomplish and achieve by doing it; why these means and goals are valuable, or at least justifiable; and who to 'become' by doing it based on the justified means, goals and motives. When academic work is meaningful, the academic knows who he or she is as well as his or her moral motives, political goals and tactical means. The academic also respects himself or herself as a 'decent' professional. So, identity is considerably a moral issue (Taylor 1989).

In this article, we approach identity as identification on different levels of academic work (Henkel 2004; Taylor 1989). To form an identity, a person must identify with the values,

cultures and practices that he or she regards as significant, important and rewarding to himself or herself.

Context for this study: teaching in Finnish university

While internationally there is a growing trend towards research and teaching-only contracts (Henkel 2016) the Humboldtian ideal – the unity of teaching and research in academic work – is deeply rooted in Finnish academy. Currently, a heterogeneous group of experts is involved in academic teaching practice in the Finnish university. The academic posts are classified into four levels including both research-intensive and teaching-intensive posts. However, the amount of teaching duties may vary between the same titles in different universities, faculties and units. Doctoral students and research assistants are classified into the lowest category, and university teachers as well as post-doctoral researcher at the second level. University (senior) lecturers and tenure track-professors are placed at the third level. The highest level is devoted to professors. Usually most of the teaching duties is included in lecturer´s posts and especially in university teacher´s post. Teaching duties are also required for the tenure-track professorship. Furthermore, doctoral students and researchers participate to some extent in the teaching and make varying contributions that are defined by the doctoral school and at the department level. (Korhonen and Törmä 2016).

So, the career paths of academics are varied and divergent and also differ between and inside national contexts. Universities in Anglo-Saxon countries have been divided more distinctly into research-intensive and teaching-intensive universities than in Finland (see e.g. Deem 2006; Deem and Lucas, 2007). Finnish universities are more 'egalitarian', although the centre of excellence policy is also strengthening in Finland (Aittola 2011). Teaching awards and the Centre for Teaching Excellence (at University of Helsinki) have been similarly established for Finnish universities.

Increasingly, Finnish university policy has emphasised the quality of teaching as the basis of the new financing model of universities. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture regulates university funding through various criteria for intensified studies, e.g. degrees, credit units and student feedback. Three per cent of the core funding of universities is allocated based on student feedback. Attention to teaching quality is also related to the aim of generating higher education as an export product that must be marketed. In fact, the export of education export forms part of Finland's official educational strategy (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a).

Albeit managerialism has been indisputably gained a foothold in the Finnish university, it has not realised in its harshest model concerning teaching work. In the UK, nationwide teaching evaluation by the National Student Survey (NSS) is a powerful tool for instance to evaluate individual teaching performance and to use results in university ranking (Wilkesman 2016). In Finland, individual accountability has not yet been implemented in a same way as in Anglo-Saxon countries. In general, the quality assurance and evaluation culture emphasises more voluntary development than accountability and control (Hölttä, Jansson and Kivistö 2010).

In Finland, academics have been offered university pedagogical education since the 1990s. Completed studies in university pedagogy are not compulsory by law but do represent an advantage and are compulsory at some universities for academics permanently appointed to academic posts. During the 2000s, university pedagogy courses became an established practice in Finnish universities, and the variety of courses offered and extent of ECTS (European Credit System) expanded (Murtonen and Lappalainen 2013).

Data and method

In this article, we ask the following: What values and conceptions of teaching work do academics identify with? What kind of elements strengthen or constrain the teacher identity of academics in the managerial university?

The participants

Our research data consist of 14 in-depth interviews conducted in 2014 with eleven women and three men who held positions as either university teachers, doctoral students, post doc researchers (professors) or project researchers at one Finnish university. The case university is a traditional, multidisciplinary university. The interviewees took part in the university pedagogy course during the 2011–2013 academic years. The academics participated in studies based on their own interest, so they are somewhat a special group. We anticipated that they had already discussed and considered themes related to university teaching in their studies and would therefore be interested in discussing the interview themes.

The interviewees represented academics from the disciplines of humanities, law, natural sciences, social sciences and economic sciences. All interviewees worked full-time at 'shop-floor' level. They ranged in experience from novice researchers to senior academics. Eight respondents had defended their doctoral dissertation, and two of them were doctoral students. Their years of experience in university work – not necessarily in teaching – ranged from one to 17 years. Two respondents had also worked at other universities in Finland and one of them abroad. One academic had experience in teaching at a polytechnic university. Table 1 provides an overview of the conducted interviews.

Table 1. Interviewees' details.

Interview	Gender	Discipline	Title	Experience (years in university work)	Identity: teacher (T) researcher (R) both (B)
1	F	Law	University teacher	9	R
2	F	Humanities	Doctoral candidate	6	T
3	F	Economics	Post doc researcher	10	T
4	M	Economics	Researcher	15	R
5	F	Natural sciences	University teacher	11	T (+student)
6	F	Economics	Project researcher, doctoral student	1	R
7	F	Economics	Doctoral candidate	8	R
8	F	Economics	Doctoral candidate	4	B
9	M	Social sciences	University teacher	17	B
10	F	Natural sciences	University teacher	15	B
11	F	Social sciences	Teacher (paid hourly), project researcher	5	B (+psychologist)

12	F	Law	Post doc researcher, professor (fixed term)	11	B
13	F	Humanities	Doctoral candidate	3	T
14	M	Natural sciences	University teacher	6	B

The interviews

The interview themes were theoretically inspired to explore academics' perceptions and experiences of teaching and being a teacher at university. In our interview outline, we had six themes associated with specific questions to encourage further elaboration upon the theme or to confirm that participants understood the meaning of different phrases of concepts:

1. Teaching work in academics
2. Teaching-research relationship (significance, opportunities)
3. Students' role, status and expectations of teachers and teaching
4. Development of teaching and university pedagogy
5. Academic identity and being a teacher (ideas of academia and science, identification, meaningfulness and significance of teaching work)
6. New higher education policy

The in-depth interviews (53–100 minutes) were conducted in a quiet room in either the participant's office or a seminar room. A short paper outlining the issues to be discussed was given to the interviewees at the beginning of the interview. This paper formed the basis of discussion, but how closely this structure was followed differed per interview. We as researchers also have a particular position and insider knowledge of academia. Our interest in the identity construction of academics unavoidably reflects our personal positioning, to which we paid attention when analysing interviews and interpreting results.

The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed. In the first reading, the analysis was based on qualitative content analysis. We read the interviews theme by theme and sorted the material into subcategories (4–9 depending on the theme). In the second round of analysis, attention was placed on the separate but interrelated identification levels of academics, including the individual, community and organisational level as well as the more universal, ideological level outlined by academic values and national HE policy. We also emphasised different levels in the interviews: work practices at the individual level, disciplinary and department practices at the community level and university practices at the community and HE policy level. In this second reading, the analysis was guided by the following questions: What makes academics' teaching work good, meaningful and rewarding (strengthening elements)? And, conversely, what kind of problems, restrictions and tensions (constraining elements) do academics face?

Being an academic teacher: strengthening and constraining elements

Next, we will discuss interrelated elements informing academic teacher identity, including the meaning of the teaching-research relationship and students, the meaning of community and the meaning of superiors and managerial teaching practices. These elements reflect the identification process at different levels of the academic teaching work: on individual level, on level of a community and organisation and on wider ideological level. The following table

sums up our main findings on three separate but strongly interrelated levels of academic work.

Table 2. Strengthening and constraining elements informing academic teacher identity.

	Individual level - Practices, relations with students, colleagues and superiors	Community and organisational level - Culture of the department, community and discipline	Ideological level (academic ethos) - Universal academic values - Frameworks outlined by HE policy
Good, meaningful and rewarding matters in teaching work	Teaching-research nexus Students - Smart, motivated students	Sense of community - Interaction and support in teaching Manager - Support in teaching	Academic freedom and autonomy - Freedom in teaching
Problems, restrictions and tensions in teaching work	Teaching is in the shade of research Students - Short-sighted, demanding customers	Lack of communality - Development of teaching as a collective activity in the minor role Managers - Strengthening of the power of managers	Managerial governance - Need to comply with quantitative indicators - Low confidence

When invited to talk about being a teacher, interviewees mostly approached their work on the individual and the department community levels. On the ideological level, academics referenced the academic values characterising teaching. Meanwhile, the HE policy framing their teaching work was perceived as a remote and abstract matter.

The meaning of the teaching-research relationship: research over teaching

We asked the interviewees to identify themselves as teachers or researchers. Even though the answers appear to be clear (Table 1), the identification either as teacher or as researcher depended on the context. The interviewees highlighted that in some situations – for instance, when giving comments to the press – they define themselves as a researcher. Meanwhile, on other occasions, depending on the emphasis of their post (research or teaching), they might describe themselves as being a teacher. The interviewees who called themselves teachers were the most hesitant ones. They said that it was difficult to explain what they do as a living to those who were unfamiliar with academia. 'Researcher' seemed to be the title that was the simplest to use – and, maybe, the most valued one. This reflects how the construction of identity is informed by the existing work titles and roles set by department communities and the university as an organisation as well as by social situations and various contexts in which different positions can be assumed (see e.g. Harré 1999). This kind of multiplicity was present in the interviews.

The inferiority of teaching with respect to research was clear in our interview material. Even though the academics considered teaching to be personally and professionally important for the sake of their students, their relationship to teaching was generally acknowledged while emphasising the merits of research over the virtues of teaching (also see Ylijoki and Henriksson 2017). In this respect, teaching exists in the shadow of research. Also, the lack of support in everyday teaching work was strongly linked to respondents' experience of teaching as an activity that 'makes no money' and 'is invisible'. Interviewees summarised teaching at the university level as paradoxically 'essential, but still aloof' (1, female, law) and that '…publishing is the priority and teaching is just quickly taken cared of' (10, female, natural sciences).

Senior academics expressed concern about the low status of teaching in their units. They had noticed this change at both levels – at the department and the faculty levels:

'One can find that attitude there, hidden, that no matter how much you develop your teaching . . . you are taking away from research, [which] is only result of your own stupidity. And, you do it all at your own risk' (3, female, economics).

The academics had very different experiences of how they could link their own research to their teaching. Some could stay within the sphere of their own research, but others had to take responsibility to create teaching content for subject areas that they were unfamiliar with. However, overall, the interviewees found that the teaching-research nexus made 'good' teaching possible. Their own research provided them with a greater meaning, depth and knowledge base for teaching, as evidenced by one researcher, at following:

'Surely, all would teach what they study. Then, the teaching will be at your best when you are excited about the subject matter you teach and you have read the latest research results, and the students can be inspired' (7, female, economics).

Practices also varied in regard to who is allowed or obligated to teach certain courses and on which level. For instance, questions often surrounded doctoral students' role in teaching: Do they teach elementary courses? Or, do these courses obviously belong to professors' sphere of teaching? The experiences reflected differences between the disciplines and department community-specific practices. Nikunen (2013) draws a similar picture: In humanist fields, an appreciation of teaching was observed in the fact that doctoral students were not considered competent to teach. In natural sciences, however, teaching was considered involuntary, and postgraduates managed a large part of it.

A national and international scientific publication classification system was created in Finland in 2011, and it is used in the current funding model of universities as a tool for measuring and pricing the quality of research in universities and departments as well as that of individuals (Julkaisufoorumi 2013). In our data, academics across different disciplinary fields and organisational settings shared the pressure to be a decent teacher and, at the same time, comply with the publication standards. In terms of academic promotion, research merits are still considered more valuable than teaching merits when applying for research or teaching vacancies.

In the following quote, a novice teacher who was actively immersed in teaching during her doctoral studies ponders whether university is an institution she wants to identify with in the future:

'In my opinion, it's utterly impossible to devote [oneself] to both teaching and publishing in international arenas. The expectations and standards of publishing are just too high. After my dissertation, I'm planning on applying to a position. And, if it fails because of having not enough publications and too much teaching . . . , in that case, I'm not sure whether this is the kind of institution I wish to work in' (13, female, humanities).

If there is constant competition between research and teaching in combination with greater recognition for research, professional identities are at risk of being fragmented, resulting in ill-being and further controversies in academia (Arvaja 2017). The synergy and nexus of teaching and research appear to be understood on an intellectual level but not from a managerial perspective (Coate al. 2001).

The meaning of students: bright yet demanding students

Obviously, being a teacher is strongly related with students. The interviewees highlighted interaction with students as a factor that strengthens their teaching work (see also van Lankveld et. al 2017) but also as one that is problematic. Teaching manifested as varied practices: traditional lectures; group work; laboratory work; collaborations with enterprises; project work; supervising bachelor, master and doctoral theses, etc. These different practices reflected interaction with students and determined the teaching-research relationship.

Students themselves, open interaction with students, enthusiastic students, student learning and the possibility to inspire students to study the subjects being taught were mentioned as rewarding experiences in teaching work. According to one academic, at the beginning of her career, she described students as 'smart, motivated and interesting' and as busy, often with thoughts in their workplace (6, female, economics). Another interviewee described equal communication with bright students as enjoyable:

'Such situations in teaching are best when I can discuss [topics] with skilled and bright students, and it comes with a feeling that this could take place in my work life, that these are discussions with colleagues. It's certainly important to me to encourage equality . . .' (11, female, psychology).

On the other hand, some of the interviewees portrayed university students very critically. In particular, students were described as demanding special arrangements or as being superficial, short-sighted and performance orientated.

'There are demands . . . of course, they want to study flexibly. So, you should be flexible in many things. You should be able to "customise" whenever there's a trip, work, or the student lives out of town or something else. So, that kind of demands. And, they do expect things to work out if they just come and ask' (3, female, economics).

Molesworth and colleagues (2009) provocatively noted that students have become degree seekers instead of learners. In Finnish academia, unlike in the Anglo-Saxon context, this kind of student image as well as students' special demands have a different background. These are more related to students' strong labour market orientation than the consumer-oriented marketisation of universities. More than half of Finnish university students work during their studies. Furthermore, in Finland, according to the strong Nordic ethos of equality, only non-EU/EEA students, who mainly study in international degree programs, pay tuition fees.

The cooperation between teachers and students varied between the departmental communities. In some disciplines, students were self-evidently involved in research endeavours yet were not in the least involved in other fields. Overall, students were seen as mostly spending time among themselves, and the communality between teachers and students was perceived as less common than perhaps in the past.

The meaning of community: a sense of belonging

Collegiality and communality are not simple or one-dimensional phenomena. In our previous research, we identified one particular feature of university working culture: academic loneliness (Jauhiainen, Jauhiainen and Laiho 2009). This manifested as a lack of cooperation in teaching work and in the lone-working culture. Furthermore, solutions to the problems of lack of time and the teaching-research dilemma are largely presented as individualistic, not collective. In this research, the university teachers appeared as a 'loose community', but many of our interviewees also voiced a lack of communality. The academics described teaching as very independent and even lonely work that takes place 'behind the closed doors' and 'out of sight'. Interviewees were additionally frustrated about the invisibleness of teaching, as stated at following:

'The thing that has started to bother me in the recent years is that no one really knows what it is that I do in my lessons. No one knows what I teach, no one knows what kind of questions I have in my exams and what the students think of them. I ask all these things. I ask for feedback and chat with people. But, it isn't carried out in a systematic way' (2, female, humanistic).

The academics felt that too little time and resources were dedicated to the mutual and formal development of teaching in their departments. They reported problems in the flow of information in regard to event organisation, the number of new students or what goes on in the next auditorium.

However, some of the interviewees described a certain sense of community in teaching. They collaborated with colleagues in developing every-day teaching practices as well as in more formal practices (official working groups) wherein the teaching of the department was purposefully developed. They experienced this kind of collaboration and communication as rewarding. The following interviewee describes the culture of commonly developing teaching within her department:

'In our unit, it's common culture to invest in the evaluation of our teaching program, so we share experiences about courses and assess what works . . . I was surprised when other participants in the university pedagogy course said that they don't have this kind of culture . . . Feedback from students is also public, and we discuss it openly and honestly . . .' (13, female, gender studies).

According to many of our interviewees, the teacher's community appeared to be quite divided in terms of the stance towards teaching and the development of teaching. Those few who were interested in pedagogical issues described pondering and cultivating their teaching, whereas the majority seemed to not waste many thoughts on the subject. Pedagogical or didactic topics were conceived as limiting or as 'coffee table discussions', mostly by novice teachers. Developing teaching as a collective activity was in the minor role.

One academic's depiction of her colleague 'using old transparencies' can be seen as a metaphor for describing an average university teacher. Extreme freedom to carry out one's teaching was not entirely viewed as positive among the academics, especially if this freedom was exploited by those truly unconcerned about teaching:

'This one person commented on students' feedback that "the last time I've planned lectures was in 1983". The rest of us were wondering – is that something to brag about?' (2, female, humanities).

The interviewees in our research participated in university pedagogy education, which entailed a certain sense of 'pedagogical community' and gave collective meaning to academics with membership to a particular university. In addition, the interviewees – despite the various subjects and teaching cultures they represent – found solidarity with other teachers and found commonalities with those participating in academic teaching:

'Teachers are usually considered as specialists in their own specific field, and the teaching isn't really paid attention to . . . We, however, noticed that we have all developed the pedagogical aspect on our own. And, then, suddenly, in the group, we realise that hey, there's something [we have] in common after all' (1, female, law).

In their meta-analysis, Van Lankveld and colleagues (2017) also highlighted that to empower university teachers, it is important to encourage contact across departments, for example, through teaching teams or among communities of teachers with similar teaching roles, especially considering that finding like-minded colleagues in one's department is not always easy.

The meaning of academic leaders and managerial governance of teaching

The managerial ideology presumes that it is up to managers to resolve both political and moral issues (Räsänen, 2009).The Universities Act (2009) and reforms in management systems increased the influence of the upper level administrative staff in the university governance. The power was concentrated for managers at the expense of the authority of collective governing bodies: for the vice-chancellor, who is responsible for the economical, effective and profitable management of the University, for the dean, who is responsible for the management of faculty and for the head of the department, who is responsible for the management of entire unit. Albeit the leadership of the faculties and units has remained in the hands of academics, the role of the deans and the heads of units has been redefined to be more as managers than leaders and their work is now ever more steered by the universities´ strategies and performative objects (up-down model) to which they have to engage.

Our interviewees discussed about managerial governance of teaching at different levels. At the ideological level they pointed to the managerial governance more generally. The interviewees regarded academia itself, academic freedom and autonomy as important and rewarding matters in their work. The academics underlined that 'good' teaching means freedom of teaching and that one can be a teacher in his or her own personal way. This illustrates that the older layers of university – traditional academic values and ideals – have not disappeared in current academia (e.g. Henkel 2016; Ylijoki and Henriksson 2017).

At community and organisational level they referred to their superiors and to the heads of the departments. The experience of decreased collegial democracy was commonly identified among nearly all interviewees, who highlighted the strengthening power of managers. One of the interviewees described how a new professor used his power: 'The new professor [the head of the department] decided to reduce teaching resources and put these resources towards research' (4, male, economics). The interviewee in question was a senior academic, and he told that previously they had discussed and made decisions about teaching together in his department. Nowadays, it is possible that the head of the department simply decides the curriculum of the department in isolation. Another interviewee informed that if an academic wants to influence his or her work, then the personal relationship between academic and superior is more important than ever before. An individual manager has much more power than academics, for instance, in recruitment policy.

The efficiency requirements of the new HE policy also appeared in the interviewees' accounts, who described superiors' interest in 'profits' at the expense of teaching quality: 'They want to dry up the teaching programme and put the courses on hold to save time for something else. So, they are striving to generate as many Master degrees at the lowest possible cost' (3, female, economics).

The interviewees also articulated support from their superiors for teaching: 'Actually, my superior has a background in class-teacher education, so she is quite supportive concerning my teaching' (7, female, economics). Freedom of teaching guaranteed by superiors was described as a strengthening element: 'My superior gives me free rein to organise teaching work' (10, female, natural sciences). Furthermore, giving permission to participate in the university pedagogy course can be interpreted as a sign of support from superiors for academics' interest in teaching. However, not all superiors were sympathetic towards the idea to devote time to a course about pedagogy. One interviewee stated that she was denied continuing her pedagogical studies since her superior considered it would be better to focus on finishing her doctoral thesis.

Many academics indicated that, at the department level, the division of teaching tasks based on curriculum was actually only a managerial practice focused on teaching. One respondent even stated that the requirements for teaching were insufficient, and the power to set goals for teaching was undeservedly left to individual teachers. The freedom of teaching was appreciated but was also stated to have a reverse side: 'Independence and freedom in teaching is also a negative because nobody monitors [whether] teaching is carried out well or poorly' (2, female, humanities). Hence, some of our interviewees hoped for tighter frames of teaching and more managed practices and considered objectives and demands on teaching as too indefinite. We interpret that these accounts illustrates longing for collective goals and a deeper understanding and appreciation of the teaching work.

Our interviewees questioned quantitative indicators, which concentrate on measuring numbers of graduates and credit units to define 'good' teaching. One interviewee mentioned the following: 'Now, these newest changes, as if it would be high-quality teaching when we aim to maximise the amount of study points' (8, female, economics). Kallio and Kallio (2014) reported similar results. Academics very seldom felt that quantitative evaluations positively affected their work motivation and the content of their work.

Student feedback is another indicator of teaching quality. Academics frequently addressed student feedback and were told that it was in the hands of individual teachers to collect

feedback. Because of the lack of incentive to collect and take into account feedback, the activity was, in most cases, unsystematic. For example, most interviewees reported that their superiors do not read feedback nor does anything 'happen' as a result. It seems that, at least in the respondents' departments, feedback has not been used as a tool to control or punish teachers nor to reward teachers for a job well or poorly done. Even so, the respondents showed interest in students' developmental proposals and reported efforts to develop their own personal feedback procedure. Sometimes, they experienced student feedback to be bruising and unfair. However, our data underpin that student feedback is not yet used in a formalised or systematic way as a managerial practice in the case university.

Overall, our interview data gave evidence of a fundamental lack of trust and hurt feelings towards the administration and managerial practices. The following quote illustrates quite well the tone of the interviews and the low level of confidence in management experienced by the academics:

'. . . I mean, the administration doesn't even consider us experts, that we know how to do our own work. This is an appalling paradox. They come and tell us how we should do things. It's gone completely backwards . . . since we do things ourselves anyway. We take responsibility for the work ourselves. So, it would be nice if like the management would appreciate it and not make us do these completely absurd, completely insignificant, completely pointless tasks. Like, it's peculiar, since we are an expert organisation' (4, male, economics).

Discussion

In this article, we have considered the strengthening and constraining elements informing academic teacher identity in one case university. We scrutinised them on three separate but strongly interrelated levels: the individual, community and ideological level. The elements often appeared to be both empowering and constraining at the same time. Our findings might be specific to Finnish academia; however, intensifying managerialism is general trend taking place in many other contexts informed by the Humboldtian ideal of the research-teaching nexus. Hence, we believe that our findings have wider resonance for being a teacher in a contemporary university.

Academics in our research liked teaching and its associated challenges and duties. They were all morally committed to their teaching work despite being in conflict with managerial ideals (see also Tapanila, Siivonen and Filander 2018). They recognised meaningful and rewarding elements of teaching work and also pointed out problems and tensions associated with being a teacher. The interviewees' perceptions of students, teaching freedom and their relations to superiors were described as supportive of teaching but, on the other hand, also as bruising and restricting, in some cases. Interaction with bright students was one of the core elements that constructed teacher identity, although students were also seen as demanding clients. Similarly, the freedom of teaching can result in extreme loneliness. Furthermore, in our research, individual leadership manifests as a significant framework of academic teaching, with both good and bad effects. Leadership in this sense can represent both an opportunity and a threat or, in other words, either an 'enlightened' or 'unenlightened' dictatorship.

Despite the attention placed on HE policy in regard to quality and funding and the emphasis of teaching in Finnish academia informed by Humboldtian ideals, the inferiority of teaching with respect to research was very clear in our study. This lower rank of teaching work is in line with Ylijoki and Henriksson's (2017) research on the career stories of early career Finnish academics, especially the 'victim of the teaching trap' story. Being a teacher with a heavy workload and with growing publication pressures is not highly prized in academic recruitment.

Relative to an academic´s career path and wage development, publishing activity and success in acquisition research funding are still crucial – even though talking about teaching intensive positions, like a lectureship. This cannot be without having effect on the identification to be a teacher because in managerial university appreciation and the ability to obtain money are ever more interweaved. In Finland, excellence in the academic work still means above all excellence in research. Unlike in Britain, any system for evaluating teaching excellence – which is complex and in many ways problematic concept – has not been developed in Finland (see Wood and Su 2017).

A kind of misery story illustrates the polarity between the teaching-oriented good citizen and the research-oriented elite of the academic tribe (Ylijoki and Henriksson 2017). Hence, the priority of research is a challenge for constructing teacher identity in the university: Who wants to identify as a teacher if it is not appreciated (see Skelton 2012)? But, can universities really afford to lose their teachers (Arvaja 2017)? Despite the lower status of teaching work, academics find that being a teacher is crucial for their professional growth (Korhonen and Törmä 2014). Overall, the teacher as a separate and legitimate identity was not illustrated within our case university.

In particular, awareness of the lack of support and appreciation of teaching work influenced the identification process of teachers, so it was difficult for them to clearly identify as teachers. These findings might be reflected in the theory of two identity projects (personal and social) by Harré (1983). According to our data, teachers – at the disciplinary and department community level – did not have much collegial co-operation within teaching, which might indicate that the community of teachers was not as easy to identify as the community of researchers. Instead, university pedagogical studies seem to serve and strength a community that academics can identify with.

In our study, the perceptions and experiences of interviewees were strongly contextualised. Academics had different, even opposite orientations to teaching. In some department contexts, teaching was clearly more appreciated than in others. Research occurs in scientific communities beyond a single university or departmental unit; on the other hand, academic teaching takes place within the local confinements of universities (Schmid and Lauer 2016). As Kreber (2010) notes, the institutional context provides structure and affords agency for authentic, meaningful practice based on pedagogical values. Nikunen (2013) also found that Finnish teaching and research cultures differed considerably at the local level. A near, everyday working environment may be strongly bound to teaching even though the department has proclaimed to have a research orientation (Nikunen 2013). These kinds of department-specific differences were also distinctly visible in our research. What is common to academic teacher identity and culture? Obviously, this is more a local question than that of researcher identity.

The challenge for future studies of academic teacherhood is to explore the hierarchies present within teaching work and to examine tasks that are highly rewarding and appreciated versus those that are less desired. Additional pressure to productise university teaching for the global market has been one of the latest step towards the more market-oriented higher education in Finland. For that reason, the following must be considered: Are international degree programmes and educational exports, which are strongly encouraged by the state (ministry), becoming an 'elite' teaching force in which only a few academics have the possibility to participate? Who bears the responsibility for the quality of teaching of 'ordinary' undergraduate studies?

University teaching has been less examined from a managerial perspective than university research (Lee and Manathunga 2010). The question remains: What is 'good' academic teaching? And, is it at all possible to manage it and create universal criteria for teaching? Our research speaks to the importance of the department community level framing of academic teaching. Hence, standardisation of teaching as a managerial practice in the name of quality seems to contrast with the unique, community-specific traditions and diverse epistemic cultures that have informed teacher identity in the past. Managerial techniques do not capture human relations, which are essential in teaching and manifest, for instance, in interactions with students, colleagues and superiors. This dimension of teaching should never be totally subjected to managerial power under the auspices of effectiveness.

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