ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: AN EMERGING GROUNDED THEORY OF FACULTY
                          HIRING PROCESSES IN UNIONIZED
                          COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

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Growth in part-time faculty workforces in U.S. higher education since 1970 has

been remarkable. Part-time faculty growth as a percentage of the whole has occurred

most rapidly in comprehensive universities in recent years and carries with it important

implications for student instruction. Comprehensive universities are of critical importance

to the realization of higher levels of educational attainment by underserved and

nontraditional college populations. The purpose of this study is to understand

instructional faculty hiring processes in comprehensive universities. The study is derived

from an application of grounded theory research methods within and across three

university settings. Analysis shows administrators at all levels of the organizational chart

(i.e., department chair, dean, and provost) follow a cycle of activities that results in both

direct and indirect (or systemic), outcomes in faculty hiring. First, they scan the environments in which they are situated for possible risks to their work including faculty hiring. Second, they perceive risks, including risks of opportunity, from their own viewpoints. Third, and of central importance, they assert decision role changes in response to the risks they perceive. That is, they take action. Finally, they establish ownership of new decision responsibility. A visual model depicting the grounded theory is shared. Findings position faculty hiring as an outcome of rule following decisions and risk response rather than rational choice. Part-time faculty hiring is found to function as an organizational release valve, which circumvents role tension of the sort experienced among department, college, and university administrators in full-time faculty hiring. Implications for university-level faculty hiring policy and practice, as well as for future research, are discussed. One conclusion is that university decision makers should be more strategic about faculty hiring by aligning the process with desired outcomes.

AN EMERGING GROUNDED THEORY OF FACULTY HIRING PROCESSES IN

UNIONIZED COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

By

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Dedication

For my mother, my first and most devoted teacher, and for the excellent professional teachers who have guided my learning.

A number of friends and family members deserve gratitude for directly contributing to the execution this study, by offering room and board during my travels to and from research sites, by reading and discussing drafts, or by aiding me in interview transcription: my mom and dad, Rachel and Charles Lounder, my sister, Brittany Verrill, Reed Chapman, my mother-in-law, Candice Laing, my sister-in-law, Rachel Stuart Lounder, and my dear friends, Martin and Heather Greenwood.

Finally, I thank my wife, Kara Laing. Though I have faced many difficulties in graduate study, I have never done so alone. We did it!

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Chapter One: Introduction

Contingent, or contract-based employment has grown substantially in higher education over the last 40 years. Faculty employment off the tenure track now approaches 75% nationally by some estimates (American Federation of Teachers, 2009; Curtis & Thornton, 2013). Philosophical justifications of the remarkable shift from tenure track to non-tenure track (NTT) appointments have been the subject of great debate, and analytic explanations of root causes and contributing factors are plentiful from an array of disciplinary perspectives, from economics to political science to organizational studies. However, few studies have explored how, why, or in which contexts university leaders have made decisions to rely increasingly upon contingent labor.

Until recently, few studies had been conducted examining the changes in faculty appointments from a decision making perspective. Instead, most of the literature on appointment types has applied statistical methods to large databases, in order to either describe the national trend toward a prevalence of non-tenure track labor or to determine which environmental factors seem to affect the shift (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Cross and Goldenberg (2009) provide a notable exception with their book, *Off Track Profs: Nontenured Teachers in Higher Education*. From case studies of 10 American Association of Universities (AAU) campuses (elite public and private research universities), they found that information-based decision making processes were rendered impossible, primarily as a result of insufficient data and data management. In place of central, policy-oriented approaches to growth in contingent labor, Cross and Goldenberg found that hiring off the tenure track follows a decentralized, highly routinized process, which is seldom

questioned by campus leaders. They state: "The growth in non-tenure track faculty at elite research universities is not always the result of conscious policy but instead often emerges as a by-product of other initiatives" (p. 29).

Despite Cross & Goldenberg's (2009) contribution, few studies have explored the issue of NTT hiring decisions, especially with regard to comprehensive university settings[1]. Such settings ought to be of particular interest. Comprehensive universities, or what the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching terms master's colleges and universities, are known for their exceptional commitment to baccalaureate teaching, to serving first generation students and those from low-income backgrounds, undergraduate commuters, and those of nontraditional age (Lively, 1999; McCormick, 2000; McDonough, et al., 1998; McDonough, 1997). These groups, often collectively dubbed "nontraditional students," now constitute the majority of the postsecondary student population in the United States (Complete College America, 2011).

In my review of the literature I was also unable to locate any analytic model, typology, or other organizing instrument that would aid in better understanding of what Birnbaum (1988) might call a "perverse black box" of faculty hiring off the tenure track. One important element of this inquiry will be my skepticism of two assumptions common to discussion of the NTT growth phenomenon: a) individuals of authority, such as university provosts, make highly rational choices in creating NTT labor forces (see Jaschik & Lederman, 2013), or b) the generation-long upward trend in reliance on NTT faculty is deeply "arbitrary" (Street, et al., 2012). Cross & Goldenberg's (2009) study suggests that neither extreme is likely accurate, but basic questions, such as what the

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[1] The U.S. Department of Education defines comprehensive universities as "undergraduate colleges with a major emphasis on baccalaureate programs, or offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to education through the master's degree" (American Federation of Teachers, 2007, p. 27).

phases of decision making entail, who is involved, which kinds of information they use, and how they use that information, have yet to be empirically answered.

Other studies that have framed analyses in terms of decision making have examined decisions by faculty senates, department heads, central administrators, and trustees (e.g., Baldridge & Kemerer, 1976; Baldridge, et al., 1973; Bastedo, 2005; Cameron & Tschirhart, 1992; Eckel, 2000, 2002; Minor, 2001). They have examined an array of specific decision areas, such as: academic program closure (Eckel, 2000, 2002), the effects of faculty unionization and issues of faculty jurisdiction in decision making (Baldridge & Kemerer, 1976; Baldridge, et al., 1973), trustee roles (Bastedo, 2005), and resource allocation (Adams, et al., 1976; Minor, 2001). These studies have tended to focus on highly formal decisions, wherein the relevant actors can be reliably identified in advance of the decisions, and such contexts have accommodated strong case study research designs. By focusing on decisions in which the relevant parties are readily identifiable and the processes follow formal rules, however, researchers have opted not to investigate decisions with unclear processes and those in which the relevant actors (at least to some degree) have not been ascertained at the outset. One reason the research is sparse on decisions resulting in the growth of NTT appointments is that the locus of authority for such decisions is unclear or contested, and formal procedures have in many cases not been used (Cross & Goldenberg, 2009; Street et al., 2012). Indeed, the Delphi Project, which convened a meeting of more than 40 stakeholder group representatives, reported (2012) that current NTT hiring practices embrace a "triage" approach, in which stop-gap measures are undertaken without regard for long-term labor planning (p. 16).

In this study, I continue in the tradition of examining decision making in the context of a specific decision area. That is, I investigate the decision making origins of NTT hiring in comprehensive universities. However, I make a departure from many previous studies by examining a decision area for which both: a) the role of formal decision processes (e.g., executive discretion, strategic plan development, trustee instruction, committee recommendation, etc.) is unclear, and b) the relevant actors cannot be presupposed with great certainty. I employ a grounded theory research method in order to bring a highly exploratory research design to bear on the black box processes that result in growth in NTT labor.

The Increase in NTT Hiring: Background Context and Explanations

Tenure is no longer the presumptive system of university faculty employment in the United States, and it has not been for some time. The American Association of University Professors has published statistics showing a reduction in tenured and tenure track appointments (hereafter "tenure track") as a percentage of the professoriate from 56.8 percent in 1975 to 31.2 percent in 2007. This shift corresponds to an increase in non-tenure track appointments from 43.2 percent in 1975 to 68.8 percent in 2007, with about three quarters of that increase attributable to part-time non-tenure track (PTNTT) hiring. These estimates do not take into account graduate student instructors, who may or may not inhabit roles akin to other part-time course instructors according to circumstance. Schuster and Finkelstein (2006), whose work describing this shift is preeminent, summarize Leslie's (2007) TIAA-CREF report succinctly:

Between 1987 and 2004, Leslie reported a net gain of just under 10,000 tenured positions plus another 25,000 or so untenured but tenure-eligible positions. This

adds up to roughly 35,000 new tenured or tenure-eligible appointments during the

past decade and a half. But (gulp!) this number stands in stark contrast to the huge

net gain—some 285,000—in full-time non-tenure-eligible positions (p. xvi).

As for the PTNTT population, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) note: "Between 1969-70

and 2001, the number of part-timers increased by 376% , or roughly at a rate *more than*

five times as fast as the full-time faculty increased" (p. 40).

Some of the most recent and robust reporting of the data on this change comes

from the American Federation of Teachers (2009), which states that across all

institutional types tenure track appointments declined nearly six percent as a portion of

the workforce, between 1997 and 2007[2]. New full-time non-tenure track (FTNTT)

appointments increased by less than one percent in that time, whereas PTNTT (2.8

percent) and increased reliance upon graduate student workforces (2.4 percent) accounted

for the lion's share of the NTT growth. The result is a tenure track workforce that as of

2007 had fallen to 27 percent of teaching and research positions in American colleges and

universities, with no sign of stabilization.

The degree to which universities of all types are exchanging tenure track

appointments for NTT appointments is unclear at best. Schuster and Finkelstein (2006)

throw water on the erroneous notion that NTT labor growth has come directly at the

expense of tenure track jobs. One reason is that the massive growth of two-year colleges

has been a major force driving PTNTT. The authors calculate the growth of part-time

faculty in two-year colleges at 801 percent between 1969 and 1998 (p. 47). Clearly, the

two-year sector represents the largest shift away from tenure track labor to that point, and

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[2] It is important to note that the AFT (2009) report shows the number of tenure track faculty members employed in the United States grew during the 1997-2007 period by nearly 95,000. However, NTT appointments grew faster.

not by exchanging tenure track jobs for NTT but rather by growing at an extraordinary rate, with extraordinary emphasis on NTT hires. Not to be forgotten, though, is the 236 percent increase in PTNTT faculty in four-year institutions not considered research-focused or doctoral-granting[3] in the three decades ending in 1998.

More recently the most dynamic growth in part-time faculty employment has occurred in comprehensive universities. American Federation of Teachers (2009) analysis shows that between 1997 and 2007 part-time instructional labor grew in public comprehensive universities by 10.3 percent and in private comprehensives by 9.9 percent (p. 10), even holding aside graduate student instructors[4]. In fact, despite more than doubling the growth of either the public or private comprehensive university sectors in real numbers of faculty over that span (63,870 versus 29,084 and 28,154 respectively), the public two-year sector experienced a much more modest rate of growth in part-timers, at only 3.9% (p. 10). Stated another way, an American Council on Education report (Anderson, 2008) shows that while two-year public colleges accounted for the greatest proportion of part-time faculty in 1992 (62.4%) and continued to do so by 1998 (64.3%), more marked increases in part-time faculty employment came within the public and private comprehensive university sectors (34.8% to 39.4% and 51.4% to 54.5%, respectively).

There are also differences among disciplines in the growth of NTT appointments. While the picture is a bit murky, such that one cannot simply point to broad disciplinary

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[3] Schuster & Finkelstein (2006) do not differentiate baccalaureate granting colleges, such as liberal arts colleges, from comprehensive universities. Common language surrounding institutional types and comparability of typological categories across studies is often troublesome, although broad strokes agreement on findings is strongly evident.
[4] Graduate students are commonly employed by the universities they attend in part-time instructor roles supporting undergraduate curricula.

groupings as the primary drivers of change (e.g., the professions, the sciences, etc.), it is important to note the fact that change has been uneven across the academy. Anderson (2008) finds, "The largest increases among part-time faculty occurred in the fine arts, social sciences, and health sciences, while there was no significant change in education, engineering, humanities, or the natural sciences" (p. 7). He goes on to state that the largest increases in FTNTT employment came within Business and Natural Science disciplines.

There are demographic differences in the growth and representation of NTT faculty. Research shows that women represent a disproportionately large part of the part-time faculty workforce compared with their full-time representation, and in addition to part-time faculty earning drastically less compensation per hour of work from universities in general, women part-timers are paid less than their male part-time counterparts (Toutkoushian & Bellas, 2003; Trower & Chait, 2002). Faculty of color are also underrepresented in tenure track positions (Trower & Chait, 2002).

Many explain NTT hiring in terms of its relationship to the unbundling of faculty roles (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). The inclusive notion of faculty work that has come to be associated with tenured and tenure track labor includes: research, teaching, shared governance (i.e., service), and outreach[5]. Contingent labor often entails a much narrower job description such that a faculty member is hired exclusively for research or for teaching. This development can be observed by studying the dizzying myriad of faculty designations now present in many university faculty manuals (e.g., professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer, visiting professor, teaching fellow, professor of

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[5] A common colloquial metaphor is that of "the three-legged stool," which suggests that faculty work is somehow most stable when the three areas of work (legs) are integrated: research, teaching, and service (inclusive of internal service, or shared governance, as well as external service, or outreach).

practice, artist-in-residence, teaching assistant, research assistant, etc.). What the unbundling phenomenon does not explain, however, is why growth in appointments off the tenure track has occurred most rapidly in comprehensive universities in recent years. Multiple rationales contribute to existing understandings of the causes of NTT proliferation without specificity to institutional type.

A number of budget planning and human resource reasons have been proffered in relation to the growth in NTT appointments. First, many authors cite cost savings advantages, in terms of both salary and benefits, as a central rationale for NTT hiring. This is true whether comparing full-time contingent faculty with tenure track faculty (Bland et al., 2006; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006), or whether comparing part-time contingents with tenure track faculty on a per class hour basis (Curtis & Jacobe, 2006). Moody's Investors Service adopted this line of thinking recently, when it downgraded the credit rating it attributed to the entire field of American higher education (Martin, 2013). Moody's specifically advocated "elimination or reduction of tenure" as a remedy to unsustainable university spending. Additionally, fiscal explanations include the allure of budgetary flexibility inherent to renewable faculty contracts. For example, central administrators can more deftly maneuver to meet changing course enrollment needs semester by semester simply by choosing not to renew contracts in low-enrollment areas and instead creating additional positions where course demand is higher. Such noncommittal appointments can provide particular facility in academic staffing at public universities, where state subsidies continue to decrease in relation to college cost (Gappa et al., 2007; O'Meara et al., 2008; Eckel et al., 2005; Longanecker, 2005; McGuinness, 2005; National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2006). Authors also note

that contingent appointments, which typically focus on either teaching or research, can be useful in tailoring job responsibilities more closely to the desires of either hiring departments, the faculty member, or both (Gappa et al., 2007; O'Meara et al., 2008).

Politically, declining public support for tenure policies can make championing those policies a tough stance to defend for elected officials and campus leaders who answer to them (O'Meara et al., 2008). Lay perceptions of faculty as ivory tower elitists have resulted in skepticism toward tenure as a sacred cow of academic tradition that appears to confer lifelong job security in return for only a few years' work. Additionally, the implementation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), the legal demise of mandatory retirement policies in public universities in the early 1990s, has been blamed for exacerbating the amount of "dead wood" faculty members whose golden years have become unproductive (Gappa et al., 2007).

Technological changes to instruction delivery platforms in higher education have also been posited as a contributing factor behind NTT growth (Gappa et al., 2007). Academic units with a focus on distance learning often require less research, campus service, and outreach from their faculty. In just the past few years, massive online open courses (MOOCs) have threatened such sweeping change to traditional classroom instruction that even residential campuses are moving to make them a part of their offerings (Carey, 2012; Lewin & Markoff, 2013). MOOCs, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, tend not to employ local faculty on the tenure track.

Economic research suggests the plausibility of a rational labor cost calculus on the parts of budget directors. For instance, Ehrenberg and Klaff's (2003) case study of faculty labor shifts in relation to salary in the State University of New York system

demonstrated the zero-sum nature of the appointments proposition. They discovered that as tenure track salaries increased an exchange of tenure track positions for contingent positions followed closely on its heels. Such a finding suggests that labor costs directly influence appointment type (e.g., a department chair, or dean, examines a budget sheet and calculates that the financial costs of hiring a tenure track faculty member at that point in time have exceeded a threshold, and it is now preferable to hire NTT labor in order to save money).

The popular concept of the academic ratchet and administrative lattice (Massy and Zemsky, 1994) is yet another entry point for explanations of the expansion of NTT appointments. Those who support this line of thinking suggest that the changes in appointment types have occurred with the collective, tacit endorsement of tenure track faculty members. The premise of the academic ratchet supports the idea that contingent faculty have increasingly been used to replace teaching otherwise carried out by tenure track faculty. In their seminal article presenting the concept, Massy and Zemsky describe how tenure track faculty, whose greatest career rewards often come from research responsibilities, have not fought to retain their domain of expertise in non-research areas. In order to compensate, administrations have become bloated with support staff. Further, reporting by the American Federation of Teachers (2009) would appear to support the notion that growth in tenure track labor is to some degree being exchanged, not only for growth in contingent faculty labor but also for growth in administrative labor in campus budgets. It states, "The number of administrators, the majority of whom were full time, also increased by a substantial percentage. This group grew by 41 percent, to a total of about 59,000, between 1997 and 2007" (p. 6). What this one finding tells us about the

status of university missions and strategies within the diverse, decentralized system of American higher education, let alone at the campus level, is not fully clear. Research and theory are unsettled with regard to possible relationships between university priorities and growth on one side of the house versus the other (i.e., faculty versus administration) (Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000). However, it seems important to recognize the plausibility that the two are related.

Problem Statement

Research offers an abundance of plausible explanations as to why contingent faculty appointments continue to proliferate. However, the literature underlying such explanations typically relies upon logic or unempirical data, and if it analyzes empirical data it primarily provides analysis at either the national or state level. The result is a paucity of data-based understanding of the roles of organizational actors, at the university, college, and department levels, in making decisions that affect continued proliferation in contingent appointments.

Without this deeper understanding of the decision making mechanisms that control faculty hiring on campuses we are left with a cacophony of assumptions about the nature of the growth in contingent labor. Economic explanations imply but cannot confirm that people occupying positions of authority in university budget centers employ expenditure information toward a goal of cost savings in order to affect increased reliance on contingent labor. Human resource explanations imply but cannot confirm that people overseeing hiring strategy employ course enrollment information toward a goal of meeting changeable enrollment demands. Political explanations imply but cannot confirm that university presidents and provosts actively avoid participation in decisions affecting

faculty appointments policies. Cultural explanations imply but cannot confirm that decisions are so routinized as to fit the tautology that decisions occur in such a way because that is "the way we do things around here" (Schein, 1993).

But why do we care how academic staffing decisions are made? To begin with, multiple stakeholders have expressed deep concern over the results of such decisions. Empirical studies of productivity offer findings that highlight the limitations of PTNTT faculty labor in comparison to that of TT faculty (Raveling & Soto, 1998; Umbach, 2007). On the other side, anecdotal evidence fuels popular belief that tenure policies impose their own limits, by failing to sufficiently motivate faculty members (Carlin, 1999; Taylor, 2010). Over the past several decades this discourse has effectively deposited the interested parties at an impasse. The growth in NTT appointments goes on, and frustration with the tenure system maintains pace. If the discussion is to continue in a more productive manner, then it needs to shift focus. I submit that university stakeholders, as a group invested in academia as a place of reason, will be interested in important decisions being made based upon intent. Conceivably, all interested parties could agree that hiring decisions ought to be made with the purpose of yielding desirable consequences (or at least do little enough harm) in keeping with university mission and strategy. The many rationalizations of growth in NTT appointments contribute to a sense of plausibility that decisions are made purposefully, in an informed way, and in a manner intended to support university mission. There is simply very little evidence that those decisions are made in such a rational manner. Likewise, there is little evidence to conclude those decisions are made without any intent whatsoever, and this leaves those trying to understand the decision-making process in the dark.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to better understand decision making processes regarding non-tenure track instructional faculty hiring in comprehensive universities. The primary literature base informing my analysis is that of organizational decision making. Collectively, theories of decision making provide a complex analytic lens. March (1994) notes: "By far the most common portrayal of decision making is one that interprets action as rational choice" (p. 1). Bess and Dee (2008) call attention to Huber's (1986) definition of decision making as an example of the rational choice perspective: "[Decision making is] the process commonly portrayed as occurring early in 'problem-solving processes'— the sensing, exploration, and definition of problems and opportunities—as well as the generation, evaluation, and selection of solutions" (p. 589). As March (1994) concludes, though, the notion that decision making consists of a person logically concerned with consequence pursuing a sequence of steps is so self-evident as to be deceptive.

Logic, according to March (1994), can take either of two forms in decision making. A logic of consequence underlies the sequence of steps suggested above, such that decision ultimately occurs as a result of the decider's preferences for outcomes. The process for arriving at such a decision includes a gathering of information and a use of that information such that predicted decision outcomes can be compared for selection. By contrast, a logic of appropriateness guides decision makers according to accepted rules of behavior. For instance, in some circumstances an individual's identity as a proponent of conservative fiscal policy may prompt them to consistently oppose new expenditures. One can easily imagine a situation in which such an individual would prefer a smaller, impermanent investment in contingent faculty labor if that aspect of their identity plays a

prominent role. That person, then, embraces a decision grounded in their values as opposed to any sort of calculus of possible outcomes. The difference between a logic of consequence and a logic of appropriateness is the difference between asking what is best and asking what is right; it is the difference between which is the most promising among an array of courses for preferred outcomes (consequence) and, alternatively, which path most accurately reflects the principles and values most relevant to the decision maker at present (appropriateness).

Another issue is whether decisions function to produce clarity and consistency or to reduce them, according to March (1994). For instance, in decisions affecting faculty appointments in universities, characteristics of the decision process should reveal the relative degree of clarity or ambiguity of pertinent university goals. They should also say something about how consistent or inconsistent the decision process is with ongoing strategy and implementation. It may be fair to say that most readers will interpret clarity and consistency to be the universally desirable decision traits and ambiguity and inconsistency to be undesirable. In fact, evaluation is more challenging. March suggests that too much decision consistency, for instance, can become a liability. Competency traps occur when decisions become routine to the point that the underlying rules or choices become applied to superficially similar situations without due consideration of either appropriateness or consequence. They are consistent, yet they abet a new hazard as a result. Cross and Goldenberg (2009) have suggested that NTT faculty appointment decisions in some universities have become heavily routinized, which implies that they occur with great consistency yet may not be considered effective.

A third issue March (1994) discusses involves whether decision making is intended as a means to an end (a solution to a problem) or as part of the ongoing exercise of revealing the identity of an individual or an organization. For example, March states: "The dispersion of consequences over time and space is a fundamental complication in defining decision intelligence. Actions taken here and now have consequences here and now, but they also have consequences somewhere else and some time later" (p. 231). Thus, while many decision makers may more readily profess to solving problems than explicating identities, the view that their decisions only address contemporary issues is likely myopic. For instance, if a budget director adopts a preferred practice of hiring NTT labor under certain circumstances, then that practice could eventually become integrated into that unit's identity, regardless of original intent to that effect.

The final overarching issue in decision making, according to March (1994), is whether people control decisions or organizational systems do. People who work in any organization, certainly universities, experience and promulgate any of a variety of decision biases as a result of their environment. For instance, decision makers have a notion of success, which assists them in considering intentional choices or in matching a course of action with their understandings of what is appropriate. Yet, top-level decision makers are likely to display biases toward the same definitions of success, vis-à-vis similar choice patterns and rule commitments, as those that landed them in high level roles. Success becomes tautological, then; many decision makers may pass through the same role in the organization, but the decisions attributable to that role remain quite similar. This decision by system perspective is similar to Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus, the predisposition of individuals to certain behaviors based on socio-cultural

heritage (in other words, experience unwittingly constrains choice). For example, McDonough (1997) provides strong evidence of the applicability of Bourdieu's concept of habitus to the college-going decisions of high school students. McDonough explains, "Through this research, I found that individuals' cultural capital is evident in a sense of 'entitlement': students believe they are entitled to a particular kind of collegiate education based on their family's habitus or class status and organize their college searches around a range of acceptable institutions," (p. 155). In other words, the participants in McDonough's study demonstrated decision biases attributable to their social environments.

Each of the issues March (1994) raises creates challenges for evaluating decision making. Decision engineering, or improving the quality of decisions, hinges upon personal predispositions about what is desirable in a decision. Each decision characteristic (i.e., choices, rules, clarity, ambiguity, consistency, etc.) carries implications for the process and the outcome, but evaluations of those processes or outcomes depend upon the observer. In short, two observers may identify the very same decision characteristics and have completely different evaluations of the quality of that decision.

The purpose of this study is an analytic one, not a persuasive one. The goal is to better understand decision making processes regarding non-tenure track instructional faculty hiring in comprehensive universities. Therefore, my analysis does not argue as to which are the most desirable aspects of the processes I examine, or which are most troublesome. I do not produce a grand theoretical model for best decision practices. Instead, I focus on generating detailed descriptive model of the processes I investigate, or

what is known as substantive theory, as befits a grounded theory method (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2007).

Many university stakeholders have strong opinions regarding the value of traditional tenure and the continuing changes in the nature of faculty work. They may also hold strong opinions more generally about how decisions ought to be made in university settings. This study provides important insights on decision making at the campus level, via comprehensive universities, where the phenomenon of the shift in faculty appointments is currently most dynamic.

Research Questions

My primary research question is as follows: What are the decision making processes by which unionized comprehensive universities produce non-tenure track instructional staffs? Supporting questions include:

1. Who is involved in making these decisions?

    a. What constitutes involvement?

    b. What differentiates formal from informal participants?

    c. Under which circumstances do people enter or exit the process?

    d. What are the goals of the participants?

2. What information is used in making these decisions?

    a. Which empirical data are used? How are they used, and who uses them?

    b. What anecdotal, theoretical, or other information is used? How is it used, and who uses it?

3. How do the components of the decision making process fit together?

        a.   What are the elements of the decision making process?

        b.   How are the components of the process related?

Significance

        This study holds immense potential for new findings in mapping faculty hiring processes off the tenure track. A dearth of university-level research exists with regard to examination of faculty hiring practices in the milieu of massive growth in contingent faculty appointments. Instead, most of the literature on appointment types has tended to apply statistical methods to large databases, in order to either describe the national trend toward a prevalence of non-tenure track (NTT) labor or to determine which environmental factors seem to affect the shift (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). As a result, a good deal is known about faculty hiring outcomes over the past several decades, specifically describing the remarkable growth in NTT labor. Few studies of this phenomenon have taken an approach involving decision making concepts, and few have employed qualitative research methods. These research method choices allows me to examine faculty hiring processes, not just their outcomes.

        Another characteristic of this study, which sets it apart from other studies of the same phenomenon, is its focus on the comprehensive university setting. Existing research on faculty issues also favors research university settings (Rhoades, 1998; Tierney, 2008). This study contributes to a thicker literature regarding comprehensive universities. These settings play a critical role in American higher education by serving a particularly diverse student population and placing strong emphasis on baccalaureate instruction. Given the appointment types of instructors have been shown to affect student outcomes (Eagan &

Jaeger, 2009; Jaeger & Eagan, 2010; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009; Umbach, 2007), understanding decision-making about appointments in comprehensive universities has important implications for student success. Further, studying the shift in faculty appointments in comprehensive universities is important because that is the institution type where growth in part-time faculty appointments have been occurring at the greatest pace of late.

Perhaps most importantly, once stakeholders are able to pair the well-known outcomes of faculty appointment decisions with this study's extrapolation of the processes producing and perpetuating those decisions, they ought to enjoy greater facility in affecting organizational change. The shift in faculty appointment types has been well-documented over approximately four decades. Some stakeholders have been vociferous in their promotion of such change and may conceivably wish the deterioration of the traditional tenure system to occur even faster. Others have voiced caution and concern over the slippage of tenure as an important piece of the academic puzzle that produces measurable outcomes of high value. Proponents of neither position are at present well-equipped to produce change at the campus level, because decision making surrounding faculty appointments at the campus level remains a proverbial black box. By studying the shift in appointment types from a decision making perspective, and by doing so in settings where the shift is most dynamic, I help to map the black box and provide tools to stakeholders seeking change.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

      This study focuses on the question of how comprehensive universities construct non-tenure track instructional faculty labor forces. Specifically, I am interested in understanding decision making processes that produce faculty hiring outcomes. Although the study of phenomena in higher education through a decision making lens is well-established (e.g., shared governance, administrative decision making in various contexts, the work of academic senates, budgetary and allocations processes, etc.), relatively little is known empirically about the decision making that leads to faculty hiring, especially hiring off the tenure track. Due to the understudied nature of this question, much of the relevant literature is theoretical in character. A broad understanding of decision making theory, in particular, provides crucial orienting concepts for the purpose of generating new understanding through this study's exploratory design (see Chapter Three). Likewise, research on non-tenure track (NTT) and tenure track (TT) appointments provides important context regarding the consequences and content of the decision making under study.

      This chapter proceeds through three sections. The first section reviews literature on the unique value of academic work in comprehensive university settings. The second section reviews the rise in nontraditional faculty appointment types and related work outcomes. It also connects faculty work in comprehensive universities to faculty hiring in this particular sector. The third section poses the phenomenon of faculty hiring within the context of decision making; it reviews decision making theory as an area of literature that may prove useful in understanding faculty hiring.

Comprehensive Universities

The purpose of this section is to review the unique character and research interest of comprehensive universities. The U.S. Department of Education defines comprehensive universities as "undergraduate colleges with a major emphasis on baccalaureate programs, or offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to education through the master's degree" (American Federation of Teachers, 2009, p. 27). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification system simply dubs them "master's colleges and universities." The Carnegie Foundation (2010) states that of 4,364 accredited U.S. institutions of higher education in 2009, 724 of them (15.6%) were master's colleges and universities; further, the sector accounted for 4,656,600 students[6], or 22.5 percent of the national total (the largest enrollments are in community colleges—39.6%). The sector is comprised of both state ("public") and independent ("private") colleges and universities, though one key difference between the two is in many cases a difference in collective bargaining rights for faculty.

In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court declared in *National Labor Relations Board v. Yeshiva University* that full-time faculty in private colleges and universities hold governance powers of sufficient substance to preclude their adoption of important organized labor practices, like collective bargaining over salary and the inclusion of strike clauses in contracts. Full-time faculty members in state institutions, as well as part-time faculty members in either sector, were not precluded from such activities. In his review of faculty collective bargaining agreements, Rhoades (1998) notes:

> The most heavily unionized sector in higher education in terms of contracts is community colleges: 94 percent of public-sector community college faculty are

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[6] This number appears to be based on fall semester 2009 headcount.

represented by bargaining agents. Nationwide, 70 percent of all collective

bargaining agreements—and 78 percent of agreements in the public sector are in

two-year colleges. […] Yet, more faculty in four-year than in two-year

institutions (138,254, versus 103,967) are covered by collective bargaining

agreements. Why? Because large state systems of comprehensive colleges and

universities tend to be unionized (85 percent of faculty in public four-year

institutions other than research universities are unionized) (p. 12).

State law also shapes whether and how university faculties may employ union

representation, but the main point should not be lost: union contracts are frequently

important to considerations of full- and part-time faculty work in public comprehensive

institutions; and they can also be important to considerations of part-time faculty work in

private comprehensives.

Besides the special relevance of unions, one of the most well-documented aspects

of comprehensive universities is that research on them is relatively scarce (Daly & Dee,

2006; Finnegan, 1993; Henderson, 2006; Tierney, 2008; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2005;

Youn & Price, 2009). In fact, Rhoades (1998) employs this rationale to help explain the

importance of his study of faculty collective bargaining agreements:

However, I have focused on unionized faculty for more than just reasons of

numbers and convenience. The types of colleges and universities that are most

likely to be unionized often are overlooked in the higher education literature.

Higher education scholars are much more likely to focus on the more than 100

research universities in which they are employed than on the more than 3,200

other institutions that make up American higher education. There is much

literature on small, selective private colleges, but the literature on public

comprehensive state colleges, and on community colleges, is limited, particularly

in the area of faculty (pp. 11-12).

More than a decade later, Youn and Price (2009) retained the same argument: "Although

much of the expansion and change that took place in American society after World War

II substantially influenced the fates of comprehensive colleges and universities, these

institutions are among the least studied by social science researchers" (207). Scholars

continue to note a dearth of research on comprehensive universities.

Some things can be empirically stated, however, particularly with regard to

comprehensive universities' historical missions. In her multi-site case study on full-time

faculty hiring policies and practices in comprehensive universities, Finnegan (1993)

offered the observation that mission fluidity over time has contributed to a lack of

understanding about comprehensives. She explains:

The sector consists of former normal schools cum teachers colleges cum state

colleges and universities, historically black private denominational and public

land-grant colleges, technical institutes, women's colleges, and metropolitan and

regional independent and denominational colleges. Throughout this century, these

institutions increasingly have broadened their original single-purpose missions by

adopting multi-purpose objectives and an extended curriculum. […] Today, the

common characteristic across the sector is the provision of utilitarian education on

the baccalaureate and master's levels (p. 623-624).

The emphasis on broad educational goals and utilitarian outcomes is consistent with

O'Meara's (2005) assertion that comprehensive universities have been among those most

receptive toward Boyer's (1990) expanded notions of academic work (i.e., the scholarship of integration, application, and teaching). Of the two sites in her case study, Finnegan selected one private university, which had arrived at its current form by a course of accumulation. She states, "Typical of many private comprehensive universities, Merger University was established in the mid-fifties as a result of a fusion of three independent postsecondary institutions" (p. 625). One begins to understand the appropriateness of "comprehensive" as the primary descriptor of this sector, if mission accumulation and not mission focus explains their genesis.

If Finnegan's (1993) public comprehensive is indicative of its fellows, then its origins story, too, may provide helpful context. Finnegan summarily describes its formation in terms of mission expansion rather than mission acquisition, although the resulting universities appear to have similar attributes: "Regional State University was established first as a normal school in 1890 and subsequently was raised to the baccalaureate level as a teachers college. In the early sixties, the mission was broadened to include liberal arts. A decade later, professional curricula were added" (p. 625). This description seems to support Henderson's (2011) claims regarding the historical and social roles embodied in public comprehensives:

> Historically, it is the [state comprehensive universities] that have democratized higher education, providing access to underserved populations and providing service to their regions, leading some to argue that they more deserve to be known as the People's Universities than do the land grant universities. The [state comprehensive universities'] students have tended to be first-generation college students seeking vocationally-oriented degrees in a wide range of areas from

education to construction management. The missions of the state comprehensive

universities], adapted from their roots in normal schools and teacher's colleges,

branch campuses, historically black colleges, and technical schools, have

traditionally been centered on teaching and service, not research (p. 37).

In sum, state comprehensives, like independent comprehensives, have adapted to meet

the needs of diverse student bodies by incorporating a uniquely broad array of

activities—activities that previously would have been carried out in settings with much

more constrained missions.

In order to pursue broad missions and respond to this array of student background

and interest, comprehensive university settings ask a great deal of their faculty.

Comprehensive universities are known to occupy an uncomfortable middle market

segment, in which they neither enjoy the resplendent resources connoted by reputational

prestige, nor may they operate within a class of postsecondary institutions that appeal to

students primarily on cost and convenience (Zemsky et al., 1999). In her 2010 study of

underrepresented minorities' preparation for doctoral study during undergraduate careers

in the California State University (CSU) system (public comprehensive institutions),

DeAngelo conveys the stress faculty participants described in interviews over the

challenges of teaching the "wide range of students the CSU serves, some of whom would

have been accepted anywhere, and some in need of sustained remediation" (p. 29).

DeAngelo's study also reveals the mission of preparing students for graduate study

within the CSU system faces challenges. Both faculty and students demonstrate

"inferiority complexes" (p. 37) regarding the prestige of the CSU in relation to those of

research and doctoral-granting institutions. At the same time, key faculty in the study (of

their own volition), as well as state and federal programs housed on CSU campuses, recognize comprehensives as loci of opportunity for underrepresented minorities to dramatically improve their own lives and enhance national economic goals. This is one example of how the academic work of comprehensive universities is both difficult and important. Not to be missed is the related point that the economic benefit of postsecondary education is most substantial at the baccalaureate level (Baum et al., 2010); and as a sector comprehensive universities are well-positioned to confer those benefits to students and families who do not enjoy sociological, preparational, and financial means to receive them from selective and prestigious institutions.

In addition to the challenges of teaching students of vastly disparate ability and ambition, hiring and assessment criteria for comprehensive university faculty have become more stringent over time. Finnegan's (1993) study of changes in full-time faculty hiring in comprehensive universities poses each decade, the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, as a different era in faculty hiring standards. Through the 1960s, Finnegan finds a decade in which "academic boomers" were hired on extremely favorable terms in order to staff institutions at increased capacity in response to the baby boomer student influx. These favorable terms of employment included abbreviated probationary periods for tenure (three years, compared with the typical six today), as well as entirely teaching-related criteria for tenure and promotion (no publication necessary). In the next phase, as the boomer student population stabilized and departed, a "Brahmin" order of faculty emerged from a clogged PhD market. As standing faculties were able to become more selective in hiring new colleagues, they followed cues from state governments and university administrators—many of whom came from research university backgrounds—and they

added publication criteria to the hiring process. Finally, Finnegan relates that by the 1980s universities could still afford to be highly selective in hiring, but departmental cultures had become much more complex and politicized around values of teaching and research. This last group of faculty in Finnegan's study, "proteans," had to be strong in both research and teaching.

More recently, Wolf-Wendell and Ward (2005) have concurred with Finnegan's (1993) findings that tenure-track faculty life in comprehensive universities often reflects a high degree of mission tension. Wolf-Wendell and Ward studied female assistant professors with young children, in an array of public and private comprehensive university settings. While some of the universities where participants were employed were found to have affirmed their historic commitments to teaching over research, the authors discovered, "It is fair to say that these campuses, as a category (i.e., comprehensives) were grappling with who they are and where they were headed as an institution" (p. 3).

Finnegan's (1993) saga, as well as Wolf-Wendell and Ward's (2005) findings, are both consistent with Youn and Price's (2009) findings on the evolution of promotion and tenure rules in comprehensive universities in the 1980s and 1990s; they find promotion and tenure rules constituted "contagion" from research universities, which can be attributed to faculty and administrative hires from research universities in those years bringing research preferences into teaching institutions. Youn and Price use National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) data to show: a) a majority of comprehensive university faculty thought teaching ought to be the primary criterion for tenure as late as 1997; yet b) 60.5 percent of comprehensive university faculty agreed it was tough to get

tenure without publishing by 1997, whereas only 19 percent had agreed in 1969 (see pp. 215-216). More recently, as part of her qualitative study of faculty vitality in three state comprehensive universities, DeFelippo (2013) found:

> All faculty [participants] unanimously chose to work in a public comprehensive university because they wanted to spend more time teaching than doing research. They saw meaning and value in what they do, despite teaching's lack of status and prestige, as described in the literature (Henderson, 2007). Twenty-one faculty participants, or 70% said that two of the most important aspects of their work are their students and their love of teaching (p. 156-157).

Yet, DeFelippo (2013) also found her participants led busy work-lives, putting in long hours on diverse activities, including research. For nearly half of the faculty participants in DeFelippo's study, the location of the university in proximity to family, or to an alma mater where they had maintained ties, played an important role in keeping them motivated and productive.

While relatively modest in size, the literature on comprehensive universities says a good deal about the complex nature of faculty work there. What the research on comprehensive universities and faculty work in those contexts misses is referent points on the work uses of part-time and non-tenure track faculty. Part-time and non-tenure track hiring has risen dramatically in comprehensive university settings in recent years (American Federation of Teachers, 2009). Presumably, these individuals have been charged with similar student-focused work as their full-time and tenure-line colleagues, consistent with the teaching focus of the comprehensive sector. Yet, they may also be engaged in other faculty work, such as research, community engagement, and

administration of various programs and projects. It is not clear how decisions are being made that construct the academic workforces we now see in comprehensive universities.

Changing Faculty, Changing Outcomes

The purpose of this section is to review the changing character of faculty work and the effects of key changes, particularly the increasing reliance on part-time and non-tenure track faculty appointments, on undergraduate teaching. Undergraduate teaching is the focal point of this review, because it plays a central role in the academic work of comprehensive university faculty. I begin by presenting a broad view of faculty responsibilities as related to tenure-line appointments, and I conclude by narrowing focus to the responsibilities and associated outcomes related to contingent appointments.

Tenure-track responsibilities.

A good deal of scholarship contributes to understandings of how faculty produce and contribute to the many things universities do. These products, or more accurately services, start with faculty members' traditional responsibilities for the instructional and research activities of the university, plus internal service, or committee work that aids in formal university decision making. The American Association of University professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) adopted a joint statement in 1966 that describes these expectations:

> The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters

the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated

by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional

circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that

the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further

consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board

(American Association of University Professors, 2010, p. 139).

Scholars have challenged the comprehensiveness of this tripartite work structure with

arguments that it does not include a fourth area of faculty responsibility, which is external

service, or community engagement (e.g., Boyer, 1990; O'Meara, Lounder, & Sisson,

2013). Many universities' founding stories and mission statements encourage public

outreach, and that work is presumably also a faculty responsibility.

Additionally, faculty have increasingly become responsible for generating

revenue. Slaughter and Leslie's (1997) and subsequently Slaughter and Rhoades' (2004)

groundbreaking work on "academic capitalism," demonstrates how universities[7] have

come to covet externally funded research (i.e., grants from government agencies and

from charitable foundations), corporate partnerships, and patents and copyrights. In fact,

many faculty are now appointed, tenured, and promoted not only on the quality of their

research and teaching and committee work, but whether they have received grants from

certain agencies (thus showing promise for future funding), or what dollar amount they

have so far obtained via external grants. Slaughter and Leslie (1997) summarize the

implications of this reality for faculty members who perhaps find themselves

unexpectedly relied upon to generate substantial revenue for the university:

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[7] This assertion is primarily being made with regard to institutions of higher education with major research missions (i.e., research and comprehensive universities).

In terms of practical implications, we hope that the concept of academic

capitalism will enable faculty, other academic personnel, and administrators to

make sense of their daily lives. When faculty find themselves spending increasing

amounts of time in pursuit of external funds or external relationships that might

yield more students, contracts, or partnership arrangements, thus increasing unit

revenue, the concept of academic capitalism may help them put their activities in

a meaningful context (p. 210).

Whether one views such uses of faculty time as harmful, as necessary, or as an

opportunity, it is by now apparent to most who have spent time in university contexts that

a fifth major responsibility, academic fundraising, now falls under the purview of tenure-

line faculty.

In terms of faculty contracts and expectations, these five faculty responsibilities—

research, teaching, internal service, external service, revenue generation—do not apply in

equal measure, nor are they distributed evenly within individual departments, let alone

colleges, universities, or geopolitical boundaries. These responsibilities necessarily

compete for faculty attention. When institutions try to increase faculty productivity, they

often succeed in pitting these roles against one another (O'Meara, Terosky, & Neumann,

2008). The notion that faculty can be equally engaged in each of these five roles, and do

them all well, is questionable. And any perceived shortcoming in one area may ultimately

color the observer's entire opinion of a tenure-line faculty member's productivity and the

degree to which they are upholding their work responsibilities. Despite assessments that

tenure-line faculty work in "the absence of a boss" (Rosovsky, 1990[8], p. 163), the

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[8] Rosovsky limits the applicability of this viewpoint to "tenured professors at, say, America's top fifty to one hundred institutions" (p. 163).

literature on comprehensive university faculty work suggests that faculty in that sector

respond to pressure from a variety of sources to uphold the full gamut of academic

responsibilities—including steadfast commitment to undergraduate education.

Part-time and contingent faculty responsibilities.

If Finnegan's (1993) historic analysis of the development of faculty hiring criteria

had extended beyond the academic boomers, the Brahmin, and the proteans, and into the

2000s, then her analysis may have included discussion of the evolution of faculty hiring

away from full-time and tenure-line positions altogether. The multifaceted notion of

faculty work Finnegan's protean group embodied is being deconstructed, or "unbundled"

(Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). In other words, more and more university faculty

members are hired not to carry out the complex work of being a self-supporting scholar-

teacher, who is committed to both the campus community and the public; rather, they are

hired to be a teacher for a course, for the duration of one semester, or as a full-time, non-

tenure track faculty member (FTNTT) to teach several courses on an academic year

contract. In fact, AAUP analysis (Curtis & Thornton, 2013) shows part-time, non-tenure

track (PTNTT) instructional faculty numbers, by headcount, have now grown to over 60

percent of the national total[9], whereas tenure-line faculty have fallen below 25 percent.

Several scholars have studied the impacts of this shift for undergraduate teaching.

The collective results suggest that on the group level part-time—and to a lesser extent

full-time—non-tenure track faculty instruction does not serve students as well as tenure-

line faculty instruction. On measures of: student-faculty interaction time (Benjamin,

1998; Umbach, 2007), use of active and collaborative pedagogies associated with strong

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[9] This count includes graduate student instructors, which comprise nearly 20 percent of the national total.

learning outcomes (Umbach, 2007), frequency of instructor-student interactions (Umbach, 2007), retention rates (Bettinger & Long 2006; Harrington & Schibik 2004; Jaeger & Hintz, 2008), transfer rates between two- and four-year institutions (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009), and drop-out and graduation rates (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009), scholarship suggests negative effects of instruction by part-time and contingent faculty when compared to tenure-line counterparts. Determining the exact meaning of these data in terms of both costs and benefits is where the literature falls short.

Student-faculty interaction time and effective pedagogies.

Studies show that both the quantity and quality of student-faculty interaction time is lowest nationally with regard to PTNTT faculty and optimal with regard to tenure-line faculty. Benjamin's (1998) examination of U.S. Department of Education data finds that nationally declining student-faculty interaction time reflected a decrease in the ratio of tenure-line faculty relative to a growing student population (the difference being made up by contingent faculty). Umbach's (2007) analysis of Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) data finds, similarly, that part-time faculty interact less with students in and out of class. Umbach's analysis also reveals much about the quality of in-class interactions, saying: "part-time faculty use active and collaborative techniques less frequently (-.07 of a standard deviation) than tenured and tenure-track faculty and they challenge their students significantly less and spent significantly less time preparing for class than their more permanent peers" (p. 102). Part-time and non-tenure track faculty may, as a national group, disadvantage student learning by both interacting with students less and by less frequently employing the most effective pedagogies.

Retention, transfer, and graduation rates.

Studies also show that, in comparison with tenure-line faculty, the national undergraduate pipeline is leaky when instructors are employed on part-time and contingent appointments. These leaks have been shown to occur throughout the course of undergraduate education. Bettinger and Long's (2006) study of student retention in public four-year institutions in Ohio finds that "In their first semester, taking courses from full-time faculty members appears to be important for retention" (p. 68). Harrington and Schibik's (2004) quantitative case study of student retention by PTNTT faculty instruction was actually completed in a comprehensive university setting. Their findings concur with Bettinger and Long (2006) and describe the effect of heavy exposure to PTNTT teaching in the first semester as follows:

> Table 6 reveals that a student who is exposed to between 50% and 75% part-time faculty in their first semester has 1.29 times higher odds of not being retained than students whose exposure is between 0 and 25% (the reference group). Additionally, students whose exposure is between 75% and 100% part-time faculty in their first semester have 1.47 times higher odds of not being retained than the reference group (p. 5).

Jaeger and Hintz (2008) report similar findings in their study of retention between year one and year two of undergraduate study in a research university. Clearly, heavy exposure to PTNTT instructors early on in a student's undergraduate career can pose unique challenges to degree completion. These findings are particularly troubling when one considers PTNTT faculty, including graduate students, are frequently employed to teach large, introductory undergraduate courses (Eagan & Jaeger, 2008).

In terms of graduation and transfer rates, heavy exposure to PTNTT instruction may also be related to community college drop-out behavior, or otherwise reduced likelihood of 2-year students' eventual pursuit of a four-year degree. Jaeger & Eagan's (2009) study of student transcripts from 107 California community colleges finds "a significant yet modest negative effect on completing an associate's degree" (p. 186) in relation to amount of PTNTT instructional exposure. Data from the same study (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009) also reveal a significant, negative relationship between degree of exposure to PTNTT instruction and likelihood of transfer to a four-year school:

> Indeed, for every 10% increase in students' exposure to part-time faculty instruction, students tended to become almost 2% less likely to transfer. Although the strength of this association may seem small, the average student in this sample had almost 40% of his or her academic credits with part-time faculty members, which translates into being, on average, about 8% less likely to transfer compared to peers who had no exposure to part-time faculty members. Additionally, students who had all of their credits taught by part-time faculty were nearly 20% less likely to transfer than their peers who had only full-time faculty instruction (p. 180).

Comprehensive universities serve the largest portion of associate's degree holders transferring to four-year institutions, at about 50 percent (Shapiro et al., 2013). The transfer effect of PTNTT exposure on community college students suggests particular harm to transfer enrollments in comprehensive universities. More importantly (for students), to the extent that some comprehensive university contexts resemble community

college contexts in the first two years of study, comprehensive universities may also be concerned about student retention after heavy exposure to PTNTT instruction.

Jaeger and Eagan (2011) also conducted a study comparing the effects of PTNTT, FTNTT, and graduate instruction on student retention in one state system's four-year colleges and universities[10]. Among the findings, the authors note students in the comprehensive universities had the highest average exposure to PTNTT instruction. This fact serves to emphasize the importance of the study's system-level findings:

> Exposure to [part-time] contingent faculty significantly reduced students' probabilities of being retained, as a 10% increase in exposure to this type of faculty resulted in a 7% decrease in students' probability of retention. Similarly, a 10% increase in exposure to graduate student instruction and full-time, nontenure-track faculty instruction reduced students' probability of retention by 2% and 3%, respectively (p. 526).

These findings are consistent with findings in Ehrenberg and Zhang's (2006) analysis of College Board data, which elucidates differences by institutional control and Carnegie type. Ehrenberg and Zhang found that when other factors are held constant, non-tenure track instruction of both the part-time and full-time variety had negative effects on graduation rates across control and Carnegie type. In general, the effects were stronger for publicly controlled colleges and universities, and the authors singled out public comprehensives as the locus of highest magnitude effects: "Other factors held constant, a 10 percent increase in the percentage of part-time faculty is associated with a reduction in the graduation rate of 3 percent, whereas an increase in the proportion of full-time faculty not on tenure-track lines is associated with a reduction in the graduation rate of 4.4

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[10] They could only include six of them in the final analysis, due to data availability.

percent at these institutions" (p. 41). These findings offer substantial firepower for those seeking to turn back the clock on the growth in contingent appointments.

It must be said that none of the studies I have reviewed linking contingent faculty instruction to unfavorable student outcomes looks at individual instructors, or even individual programs, departments, or colleges. None of these analyses has argued that contingent faculty are unmotivated or ill-equipped to be good teachers, and none has argued that the institutions employing them cannot make better use of them. Likewise, none of these analyses has named 100 percent tenure-line staffing as being a goal to strive toward for any college or university; although several scholars (see Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; or Green, 2007) offer strong arguments that there are advantages (e.g., time of class offering, real world experience) to the use of some amount of contingent instructional labor. Additionally, while much of this scholarship agrees that negative effects of increased reliance on PTNTT and FTNTT instruction exist, discrepancies, particularly with regard to the relative value in FTNTT instruction are also present. For instance, Umbach's (2007) analysis shows that the negative effects of FTNTT instruction on student-faculty interaction and effective pedagogies are far less than those associated with PTNTT instruction. However, Ehrenberg and Zhang (2006) found that, particularly in public comprehensive universities, the negative effects of FTNTT instruction are about 50% greater than those of PTNTT instruction.

Additionally, none of the nation- or system-wide studies addressing the effects of contingent faculty instruction on student outcomes includes analysis of alternative academic staffing. In fact, a recent econometric case study of Northwestern University counters findings from larger studies by concluding, "Our findings suggest that non-

tenure track faculty at Northwestern not only induce students to take more classes in a given subject than do tenure line professors, but also lead the students to do better in subsequent coursework than do their tenure track/tenured colleagues" (Figlio et al., 2013, p. 15). An elite research university like Northwestern should not be confused with comprehensive universities, and of course the study itself acknowledges several limitations; however, the case study at Northwestern serves to illustrate the still-developing character of the literature on instructional effects of contingent faculty staffing. With several limitations understood, the research I have reviewed suggests that in many cases universities would do well to examine their academic staffing policies and practices and affirm alignment between faculty hiring and institutional goals.

Conclusion.

For the purpose of this study I am concerned with non-tenure track instructional faculty hiring processes, an understanding of which may benefit from comparison and contrast across appointment type (i.e., tenure status, part-time and full-time status)[11], and I am interested in this phenomenon specifically in those four-year university settings where faculty growth has outstripped all others over the past decade and a half— comprehensive institutions. Tenure-line faculty work is complex in nature, even in teaching-centric colleges and universities, like comprehensives. By contrast, contingent faculty work tends to be straight-forward in its teaching focus, especially in comprehensive institutions, though the character of contingent appointments also carry

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[11] It is important to recall prior to concluding that faculty effectiveness and productivity hinge on a great many more environmental and personal variables than appointment type (for example, see Bland et al.'s 2006 study of faculty productivity in research universities). However, appointment type is key among them, because it gets to the heart of faculty work expectations and because it is a variable experiencing a drastic, unidirectional change over a remarkable period of time.

risks to the instructional mission. Studies on the effects of increasing student exposure to

contingent instruction, especially in comprehensive institutions and early in

undergraduate careers, reveal negative effects on key student outcomes, such as: student-

faculty interaction time, the use of effective pedagogies, retention rates, transfer rates

between two- and four-year institutions, and drop-out and graduation rates. In this

section, I provided evidence that faculty hiring decisions carry great import with regard to

key student outcomes, with some specificity to the comprehensive university sector. In

the previous section, I explained how the contributions of this sector make it worthy of

special consideration. In the next section, I review literature on decision making in

organizations, which is uniquely useful to my examination of decision processes affecting

faculty hiring processes in unionized comprehensive universities.

Decision Making Theory

The purpose of this section is to introduce key theoretical concepts that support

the generation of analytic findings from the data. Contemporary grounded theorists will

recognize this section in terms of its contributions to sensitizing concepts (Charmaz,

2003; Denzin, 1971; Dey, 2007; Kelle, 2007). That is to say, the review of this heavily

theoretical literature is intended to reflect a breadth of preparatory understanding, many

parts of which became applicable during data analysis. However, it does not constitute a

discrete theoretical model or conceptual framework, which might support a deductive

approach to inquiry.

Decision making is a rich and complex area of theoretical literature of itself,

which derives from a broader, even more deeply established field of study typically

known as organizational behavior. While many authors have touched upon decision

making in the course of larger volumes addressing organizational behavior more comprehensively, March's (1994) *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* is uniquely helpful in that it isolates decision making theory and discusses that material as its primary interest. Thus, I order the discussion of concepts in this section roughly as March does in his book, and I strategically call upon additional authors and theorists in order to marshal a full review of relevant concepts[12]. I begin by introducing two prominent modes of individual decision making: rational choice and rule following. I then build upon the principles underlying individual decision making to discuss decisions made by multiple actors, or groups (both team-oriented and political), as well as decisions that are distinctive for the unclear intentions of those making them—ambiguous decisions. Following discussion of each type of decision making, I illustrate what such processes may look like in practice using a short vignette about a fictional department chair of archaeology, Dr. Jones[13]. Finally, I conclude the section by addressing important limitations to the application of decision making theory to the understanding of hiring decisions made in real time.

Rational choice.

The concept of rational choice is centered in a positivist world view. That is to say, decision makers who employ rational choice act consistently with a philosophy that

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[12] It is important to acknowledge much of March's (1994) writing, and indeed much of the literature on decision making overall, stems from research and observations of for-profit firms and nonprofit firms outside of higher education. In addition to punctuating many of the concepts I review with relevant literature and examples from higher education, I will seek to follow in the footsteps of other scholars of universities who have demonstrated success in translating ideas about other types of firms to become relevant to nonprofit higher education.

[13] The character of Indiana Jones, among others, is borrowed from popular film and is cited and referenced appropriately. I claim no credit for the creation of any such characters, though the vignettes I provide are my own works of fiction, which I hope will prove helpful to the illustration of academic concepts to the reader.

truth takes a singular form and is best confirmed through scientific inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Phillips & Burbules, 2000); one best answer exists in relation to any question, and perfect knowledge of all relevant information will consistently reveal that answer. March (1994) explains the central point of skepticism for this unbending philosophy in terms germane to this study: "Pure rationality strains credulity as a description of how decisions actually happen" (p. 5). A strictly rational explication of a decision process, regardless of how well-reasoned it appears to be, will always be subject to skepticism precisely because decisions are made by people. The human condition renders perfect knowledge of virtually any situation impossible. Thus, as one can observe in everyday conversation, people tend to explain their behavior in terms of alternatives and consequences (the trappings of rationality) in retrospect, but these endemic explanations are not accurate in depicting a great deal of human behavior.

Positivism is, however, still relevant today. A more sophisticated view accommodates the basic principles of the positivist perspective, but with acknowledged limitations. This more moderate corollary is known as post-positivism, with a main difference being a recognition that collection of complete information is at least impractical, perhaps even impossible (Crotty, 1998). This is often the case when examining psycho-social phenomena, such as decisions. Yet, post-positivist thinkers tend to approach problems with the mindset that relevant information can be collected, understood, and utilized at a level of approximate totality for most intents and purposes. As a result, they believe a single, best solution to virtually any problem exists and ought to represent an achievable goal.

People who employ a rational choice approach to decision making follow post-positivist principles. They gather as much relevant information as they can, they seek to understand it as well as they can, and they identify a single best decision. March (1994) explains that rational choice decisions adhere to a logic of consequence, which asks four basic questions (p. 2-3):

1. The question of *alternatives*: What actions are possible?

2. The question of *expectations*: What future consequences might follow from each alternative? How likely is each possible consequence, assuming that alternative is chosen?

3. The question of *preferences*: How valuable (to the decision maker) are the consequences associated with each of the alternatives?

4. The question of the *decision rule*: How is a choice to be made among the alternatives in terms of the values of their consequences?

Decision makers acknowledge the imperfect nature of the information underlying a rational choice approach (i.e., incomplete knowledge of possible alternatives, imperfect assessments regarding magnitude, likelihood, value, and relative value among consequences). In other words, these decision makers understand that decisions involve risk.

Risks involved in rational choice decisions point out the limited, or bounded nature of rationality, which include: 1) problems of attention, 2) problems of memory, 3) problems of comprehension, and 4) problems of communication (March, 1994). Problems of attention include the limitations imposed by too many relevant pieces of information and the challenge of synthesizing all of them into one ultimate and final

choice. Problems of memory are two-fold. First, human and organizational accumulation and maintenance (record-keeping and historical accuracy) of relevant information are limited; second, the applicability of previously relevant, previously accurate information to contemporary problems tends to become increasingly limited as time passes. Problems of comprehension include making erroneous conclusions, or alternatively failing to infer effectively, despite using relevant and accurate information. Finally, problems of communication include limitations with regard to: capacity (reduction of information for practical use), specialization (effective use and weight of information across expertise), platform (linguistic and cultural barriers), and competency (individual ability).

Methods used by rational choice decision makers to manage the risks associated with their preferred approach include: 1) editing, 2) decomposition, 3) heuristics, and 4) framing (March, 1994). Editing augments rational choice processes by simplifying and abbreviating the gathering of information, or perhaps even ruling out some possible choices prior to comparison with what the decision maker views as the most likely final options. In Eckel's (2002) study of academic program closure decisions, campus leaders engaged in editing. They circumscribed the set of acceptable outcomes in terms of university programs recommended for closure.

Decomposition allows decision makers to solve larger problems by solving component smaller problems (March, 1994). For instance, if a college faces a decline in enrollment, then decision makers may make multiple contributing decisions rather than addressing the problem comprehensively. Examples might include changing marketing strategy, reducing selectivity, and improving course offerings. These tactics would be

implemented in a loose sequence across multiple offices, rather than as a centrally orchestrated response.

Heuristics refers to abbreviations of inference processes. In the interest of time, decision makers often categorize a situation at hand as the same type of situation in which a decision has occurred before, and thus they may cut the interpretive process short in favor of selecting a similar (or different) choice as that which was selected previously. March (1994) points out a particular tendency for decision makers to employ heuristics as a crutch in projecting expected consequences, which famously elude certainty. By reflecting on the consequences of previous, similar decisions decision makers often feel more confident in such projections. "No need to reinvent the wheel" would be an apt workplace proverb that suggests the application of heuristics to a decision. Adams, Kellogg, and Schroeder (1976) found several instances of heuristics in their multi-site descriptive study of decision making on college campuses. Among them, the authors found: complex planning processes were unwanted; and data-based planning was limited not by the availability of data but by reluctance to use it. Adams et al. (1976) essentially found that decisions overused heuristics and thus undermined the exercise of rational choice in decisions that might otherwise be well-suited to a logic of consequence, such as: academic program review, faculty position allocation, institutional goal setting, faculty performance evaluation, and budgeting. However, heuristics are not necessarily undesirable as a decision tool. Decision makers may argue persuasively that accurately recognizing similarities between a situation at hand and past situations can lead to predictable (low-risk) decision consequences, while saving time.

Finally, framing a problem involves decision makers focusing attention on certain pieces of information, to which they attribute greater value, or advantaging certain choices, which they view as more sophisticated, prior to a full review. Framing can occur consciously and subconsciously. As one example of framing from the literature, Glazer, Steckel, and Winer (1992) simulated business decisions among MBA students with different amount of information. They discovered that in some circumstances too much data served to distract decision makers. Students believed the more data they incorporated into their decisions the stronger those decisions would be; however, those with the greatest amount of data became myopic about the variables for which they had data. Students with the greatest amount of data discounted the variables for which they lacked data, and thus the authors concluded the students with excess data were predisposed to provide solutions that suited the available information, not the problem itself. In this case, the authors tampered with students' abilities to frame the problem for themselves as part of the simulation design, but one can see how maintaining a strong sense of the problem might have allowed responsive solutions to be developed more efficiently.

Decision rules: maximize versus satisfice.

Decision makers often embrace tactics of risk management without thinking about them in such terms. However, an understanding of the risks involved in rational choice approaches and common risk management tactics collectively underlie the view of rationality as limited, or bounded. As such, selection of a single optimal choice as a decision objective can be seen as impractical, even by decision makers who hold a post-positivist world view. Those who temper their aspirations for ideal decision results in

favor of more practical decision processes embrace a decision rule to "satisfice" rather than maximize the results of their choices (March, 1992; March & Simon, 1958). To decide by satisfice means to "choose the first option that is good enough" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 27). Rather than accumulating as much information as possible and assessing and comparing all alternatives, consequences, and preferences, rational choice decision makers will often independently set criteria for a satisfactory choice, strive to identify a choice meeting those criteria as quickly as possible, and select the first choice that does. For example, the project director at a metropolitan community college, who is charged with seeking a location for expansion (branch campus venture within the city), may set criteria for that location along the following lines: 1) rent must cost less than X amount, 2) space must be accessible to student population Y, and 3) crime statistics for the area must fall below level Z. The unstated criterion in this example, as in many decision making situations, is that a quick decision is also desirable. Perhaps suitable locations for the branch campus are in high demand, or perhaps she feels strongly that the sooner she settles on a location, the sooner she will begin to see success (e.g., students, revenue). Maybe the project director is simply impatient to make an entrepreneurial mark on the college or the city. There are many reasons why a quick decision could be desirable. Now, let us suppose the director schedules visits to five locations, and the third location is the first of them to meet her criteria. In accordance with a satisfice approach she then ceases to search for additional locations, even canceling the final two appointments. The director is uncertain whether another location is available that performs against her criteria better, yet she forgoes an exhaustive process. A melding of

the terms satisfy and suffice, to satisfice in decision making is to intentionally aim for a sufficient choice (though potentially suboptimal) by satisfying predetermined criteria.

By contrast, consider the same example of the project director searching for a location for a community college branch campus but with slightly different criteria: 1) rent must cost as little as possible, 2) the space must be as close as possible to student population Y, and 3) the space must be within the district having the lowest crime statistics. The project director understands that these criteria are difficult to satisfy, especially when taken together, but she will not be pleased until she has researched all available options and assured herself that she has selected the very best location. As a result, her search stretches on a great deal longer than that of the project director who decided by a process of satisfice. Seeking the optimal choice by a compare and contrast process of elimination is not typically the quickest or most efficient way to make a decision, but it maximizes the value of the final determination above all other possible conclusions.

With these concepts in mind, I turn to the first vignette, in which I introduce the main characters and scene and play out the first of four plausible fictions that illustrate decision making that leads to growth in PTNTT faculty employment.

Dr. Jones makes a rational choice.

Dr. Henry Jones, Jr. is University Endowed Chair of Archaeology in a department of eight full-time faculty members, at the University of California Hollywood (UCH). He has had an exceptional career researching ancient civilizations. Several years ago he was convinced by an old friend at UCH to cut back on his expeditions, fill the open chair post, and lead the reputational elevation of UCH's bachelor's and master's programs in

Archaeology. If all goes well, perhaps someone of his stature in the field could even find a way to house a doctoral program at UCH and ultimately achieve national distinction for the department.

Dr. Jones' colleagues consist of: trusted friend and Undergraduate Program Director, Dr. Marion Ravenwood (the tenured associate professor who was instrumental in convincing him to take the department chair post); three additional male tenured professors, Drs. Spielberg (previous department chair), Lucas (Master's Program Director), and Scorsese; and three full-time, non-tenure track instructors on annual contracts that have been renewed for the better part of a decade in each case, Drs. Croft (female), Gates (male), and O'Connell (male). The department has also frequently hired a number of part-time faculty on per-course instructional contracts. Dr. Spielberg mentioned something about this being the normative way to staff introductory undergraduate courses, but Dr. Jones did not come to UCH to continue the status quo. He is committed to a deliberative, efficacious agenda of program enhancement, and he plans to leave no stone unturned in identifying opportunities to develop excellence. One component of that effort will have to involve closer look at existing instructional staffing strategies and potential alternatives.

The main problem, in short, is time. Dr. Jones only arrived at UCH in early June. It's now nearly July, and much of his time is taken up trying to organize budget information to wrap up the end of the current fiscal year and begin the next. The faculty, including part-time and full-time NTT members, have a collective bargaining agreement, which means he cannot push off contracting Archaeology 101 instructors any later than mid-July. Besides that, he's just been informed that Dr. Scorsese picked up an obscure

virus during his summer dig and faces a recovery of several months before he will be able to return to the classroom (there are no grants to fund faculty sick time, so he will have to scrape together some emergency cash somewhere). The dean is constantly in his ear about something or other, students have already begun emailing with questions about his own classes, and he has several publishing and conference submission deadlines to meet before the summer is out. He has not even had time to unpack the boxes in his office.

Dr. Jones is a rational thinker; he favors pursuing predictable outcomes in decision making, and he sees resolution to the staffing problem he faces as a mere matter of information gathering. Students often remember his advice, "Seventy percent of archaeology is done in the library" (Lucas, et al. 1989). While Dr. Jones does not have the opportunity to conduct a full literature review before rendering a decision, he does gather the following experiential insights about staffing the open courses from Dr. Spielberg:

1. Part-time instructors are one of three categorical alternatives: full-time instructors and tenure-line faculty being the other two.

2. Expectations for outcomes from the part-time faculty solution satisfy the most pressing concerns: they are the most affordable option to carry out essential teaching work; they have not performed remarkably poorly in the past; they do not require a burdensome hiring process.

3. Alternatives will require more time and expense on every level, though they would bring additional benefit to the department (e.g., research reputation, greater capacity for managing the committee service and

advising loads, and quite possibly a stronger pipeline of students continuing beyond Archaeology 101).

Dr. Jones would have been more comfortable knowing the precise costs and benefits of hiring part-timers versus each of the alternatives. However, he is out of time, and he has reasonable expectations that part-time instructors will suffice. Perhaps at some point he will revisit the problem, but at least for the coming academic year he decides to move forward with the hiring of part-time instructors for the open introductory courses.

In reaching this decision, Dr. Jones has taken a rational choice approach. He gathered what information he could, acknowledged limitations, and evaluated prospective decision outcomes stemming from three broad staffing choices. Ultimately, he has selected the option that most readily satisfied his basic criteria for a solution, although he did not know if it represented the very best option of the three; he satisificed. He remains concerned about a few potential problems related to this approach. He recognizes some, such as a problem of attention—the ability to synthesize information related to the disparate goals of affordability, performance, and ease of hiring into a single decision. He suspects others, such as problems of memory; he has no idea what sort of data his predecessor gathered, whether his analysis is sound, or whether his conclusions apply as well today as they did years ago. Yet others, such as problems of comprehension, Dr. Jones has not really considered—the notion that his conclusions are wrong, even if his information is right. He has, nonetheless, tried to make an informed decision about what is best for the department in the coming year. He has chosen a path as rationally as he can.

In sum, one of two basic approaches to decision making is known as rational choice. People who employ this approach, whether intentionally or innately, demonstrate a proclivity toward a positivist world view, which maintains that one best choice is a desirable and achievable result of the process. What follows is to one degree or another a gathering of situation-specific information, which includes an identification of alternative choices, assessment of associated consequences for each, conclusion regarding the preference of each consequence, and a final selection of the choice. Final selection of the choice concludes the decision process and can be accomplished using either of two decision rules: maximize or satisfice.

I now attend to an alternative mode of decision making: rule following.

Rule following.

The second basic approach to decision making, the complement of rational choice, is known as rule following. March (1994) describes rule following:

> When individuals and organizations fulfill identities, they follow rules or procedures that they see as appropriate to the situation in which they find themselves. Neither preferences as they are normally conceived nor expectations of future consequences enter directly into the calculus (p. 57).

One example of fulfilling an identity might be when a liberal arts college president feels she is in many ways a moral leader within the campus community and ought to demonstrate the principles her college endorses (e.g., mission, strategic plan, marketing materials, etc.). One day she is approached with a request to join the Amethyst Initiative, which is an organization of college presidents that pushes the U.S. government to reassess current alcohol safety laws and consider a new strategy of behavioral risk

reduction, in part by lowering the legal drinking age. She must make a decision. Other

college presidents have sought to weigh the alternatives and assess the likely

consequences in a rational approach to their decisions on this issue. She, however, feels

that she has little choice; she must lead by example given the situation at hand and the

role she embodies. As a result, although she knows the decision is bound to be considered

by many to be deviant, she decides to join the initiative. Her role, as she saw it in that

situation, directed her to a decision rule: do what is right, even when doing so could paint

her college as lax on substance use by minors. Ironically, the difficulty, or politically

risky nature of that decision, has actually made her more likely to pursue it. A rational

choice approach would plausibly have directed her away from such a controversial

choice. However, the situation presented an opportunity for her to fulfill her identity as a

moral leader[14], and she followed a decision making rule that capitalized on that

opportunity.

Decision makers who follow a rule-based approach to decision making embrace a

constructivist world view. Constructivism posits that multiple truths are valid and

applicable in any one situation (Creswell, 2007). Thus, identifying one objective best

choice in a decision situation is antithetical. Rather, constructivism holds that the

information a person takes in is only one piece of the decision; the interpretation of that

information to infer an appropriate way forward is subjective and depends as much upon

the individual as the information. In other words, people employing a constructivist

approach to decision making are less interested in revealing the optimal decision as

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[14] Of course, an equally viable alternative to this example could easily be conceived of a college president deciding not to join the Amethyst Initiative as the result of moral leadership. This example is not intended as an endorsement of the Amethyst Initiative, nor should it be interpreted as an assessment of the morality of its signatories.

dictated by a particular set of circumstances. Instead, they are primarily interested in determining what is expected of them given those circumstances.

Unlike the rational choice approach, which is grounded in a logic of consequence, decision makers who employ a rule following approach proceed using a logic of appropriateness (March, 1994). As such, decision makers produce a decision by virtue of answering three questions (March, 1994, p. 58):

1. The question of *recognition*: What kind of situation is this?

2. The question of *identity*: What kind of person am I? Or what kind of organization is this?

3. The question of *rules*: What does a person such as I, or an organization such as this, do in a situation such as this?

Decision makers employing a rule following approach may or may not produce overt answers applicable to each of these questions the same way a person involved in a rational choice decision might readily respond to their corollary questions (). Identity and role, at least at the level of the individual, are often tied to a person's visceral and subjective understandings of self.

People embody roles, complete with expectations (i.e., rules guiding behavior), in any number of social settings. Consider the setting-related role shifts involved when a given person goes from home to school, or from church to work. Consider the interpersonal role differences embodied by father versus brother, or management versus labor. Different people embody different roles, and they also embody multiple roles in accordance with multiple social contexts. March (1994) states:

To say that individuals and organizations follow rules and identities, however, is not to say that their behavior is always easily predicted. Rule-based behavior is freighted with uncertainty. Situations, identities, and rules can all be ambiguous. Decision makers use processes of recognition to classify situations; they use processes of self-awareness to clarify identities; they use processes of search and recall to match appropriate rules to situations and identities. The processes are easily recognized as standard instruments of intelligent human behavior. They require thought, judgment, imagination, and care. They are processes of reasoned action, but they are quite different from the processes of rational analysis (p. 61).

In other words, identity-based roles and the rules they entail can be deeply insightful for explaining behavior. However, individuals' conceptions of role primacy, or rule relevance, are subjective and changeable by situation.

One advantage to rule following as a decision approach is that it is sometimes a very efficient way to know how to act. Rule following allows a person to decide whether to put her young grandchild down for a nap in the afternoon, or whether to order dessert at a lunch meeting. If a person had to analyze data, or assemble a pro-con list for every small decision in a day, the effect on their capacity to accomplish even mundane tasks would be crippling. In university contexts, Bess & Dee (2008) discuss the concept of rule following in terms of "decisions as personality manifestations" (p. 634), which implies that decision makers can come intuitively to decisions just because of who they are. People do not always overtly try to make their personalities manifest in the decisions they make, and in fact they seek to put as little effort as possible into some decisions, and yet those decisions may still reveal something about the decision maker.

In his seminal case study of faculty and administrator roles in decision making on a liberal arts college campus, Gouldner (1957; 1958) made several important findings that may shed light on roles and rule-following in decision making. First, Gouldner coined the terms locals and cosmopolitans, those faculty most integrated into internal college referent groups and those most dedicated to external referent groups, respectively. He ultimately broke these two broad categories down further, into six sub-types: the dedicated, the true bureaucrat, the homeguard, the elders, the outsiders, and the empire builders. Among others, for instance, Gouldner found that two kinds of locals typically approached decisions from differing perspectives. The dedicated were those who deeply believed in the dominant ideology of the college, while the true bureaucrats were equally committed to the college (thus, also locals) but regulated pursuit of organizational goals through formal policy. Each referent group seemed to know how to act in most decision areas with little added effort. Social references served to improve the efficiency with which they took part in decisions, even though they often found themselves on opposite sides of an issue.

On the other hand, rule following conceivably does much less to resolve ambiguity surrounding decisions when the decision maker's most relevant role is unclear. Swenk's (1999) study of failures underlying a 15 year strategic planning process[15] provides an example of role conflict among members of a faculty committee charged with instituting a strategic plan. Analysis showed that the role of the faculty member as a professional came into conflict with the role of a committee member as an agent of the administration. The conflict remained unresolved, and it ultimately slowed the decision

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[15] Many times strategic plans do not even operate for a full decade before being revised, so 15 years of developing such a plan is remarkably excessive.

process to a standstill. The ambiguousness of role dominance inhibits the efficiency with which people adopt rules to guide their decisions (Swenk, 1999).

People deal with role, and thus rule, ambiguity in at least four ways (March, 1994, p. 70): 1) experiential learning, 2) categorization, 3) recency, and 4) the social context of others. People learn from past experiences, and they embrace roles that have produced favorable experiences in prior, similar circumstances (March, 1994). People also tend to reproduce a few favorite, or frequent identities and as a result often see the appropriateness of a certain role to a growing range of situations; they categorize situations to fit preferred roles (March, 1994). For instance, a person who has embraced the role of food nutrition expert within the context of family and among work colleagues may attempt to find a role for themselves in regard to school nutrition on their parent teacher association. People also respond to recency, which is to say if a person has spent the day questioning authority at the office, their mindset may predispose them to take an argumentative stance on a parking ticket that evening (March, 1994). Finally, social context impacts role understanding two ways. First, if one identifies positively with a particular group, then she may reasonably be expected to behave in a way commensurate with her role as a member of that group (consider style uniformity among teenagers in social cliques) (March, 1994). Second, though, she will seek a differentiated role within that group (March, 1994). For instance, consider the common case of siblings who are close in age, equally integrated into the family, and enjoy many of the same activities, but who describe their roles differently (e.g., the funny one, the quiet one, the book worm, the soccer star, etc.). Several of these methods of dealing with role ambiguity may be at play in the common case of an assistant professor (pre-tenure), for example, who is

confident in the classroom but unsure of herself in departmental evaluation and tenure preparation settings. Her decisions in each context may reflect the roles she has learned to inhabit.

Rule violation.

A number of elements can reduce the effectiveness with which identity-based rules determine decisions. Ambiguity, complexity, ignorance, and inconsistency all challenge the predictive value of rule following approaches to decision making (March, 1994). These issues collectively create a propensity for rule violation, or decisions that appear incongruent with relevant roles. March (1994) states:

> Most of the time behavior follows the rules. At the same time, it is hard to imagine a social system without violations of rules. Rules are overlooked or ignored. Decision makers do things they are not supposed to do, and they fail to do things that they are supposed to do (p. 74).

Rules are not always clear; sometimes they can be ambiguous and thus difficult to follow with consistency. For instance, say the provost of a university is interested in cutting costs and envisions college-level reorganization as an important tool in reducing expenses. The dean and department heads in a particular college may have already experienced allocation reductions from the provost in the past and may already have made difficult changes in response; many of these changes may appear to be redundant with those attributable to the reorganization the provost envisions (e.g., reducing departmental staff, stocking fewer office supplies, sharing fewer pieces of equipment, etc.). The provost remains determined to pursue the reorganization strategy. The dean and department heads now find themselves in a situation that produces some role ambiguity.

Many of them see important roles for themselves in maximizing the flow of revenue to their college and department, such as allocations from the provost. Thus, they want to please the provost. At the same time, they see important roles for themselves in maximizing the research and teaching productivity of the college and department. They know that engaging in a reorganization effort of the kind the provost envisions is likely to distract many faculty members from the primary activities on their job descriptions and do so with minimal additional cost savings in the end. Thus, the dean and department heads enter an uncomfortable dance with the provost, both acquiescing to the mandate of reorganization and protecting faculty productivity in teaching and research. Neither rule can be followed consistently, and an air of ambiguity hangs over the process throughout. At times rules are upheld, and at other times those same rules are violated.

In keeping with this example of a top-down cost-cutting initiative by a university provost, let us say this new initiative is really only one of an accumulating string of allocation reductions to colleges over many years. In the meantime, college faculty have in some cases been able to offset some of these reductions through the acquisition of external research grants. The next time a provost attempts to hold funding hostage, the dean and department heads may demonstrate a rule adjustment that reveals a role change; they may be more willing to push back against the provost and protect faculty research time. Rules can change. March (1994) states:

> The logic of appropriateness is a logic attached to an evolving conception of propriety. […] Identities endure, with individuals learning and pursuing the rules of behavior consistent with the roles, but the rules themselves change through a mixture of analysis, negotiation, learning, selection, and diffusion (p. 77).

Rule changes through experiential learning, along the lines of the example of

provostial funding allocation, can also serve to illustrate what March and Olsen (1975)

call the Experiential Learning Cycle (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *The Experiential Learning Cycle (March & Olsen, 1975)*

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┌─────────────┐         ┌─────────────┐
│    Rules    │  ◄───   │Interpretation│
└─────────────┘         └─────────────┘
      │                       ▲
      ▼                       │
┌─────────────┐         ┌─────────────┐
│   Action    │  ───►   │   Outcome   │
└─────────────┘         └─────────────┘
```
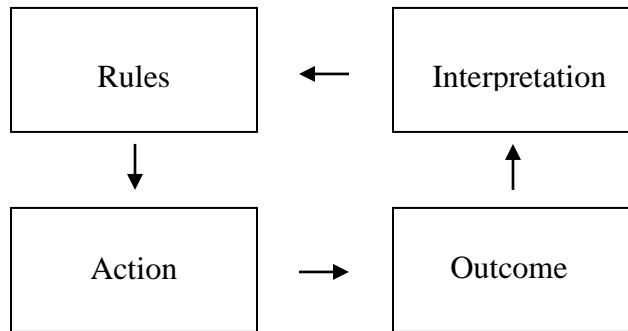
This simple model becomes far more complex when considering observed outcomes

represent only a portion of total outcomes, and total outcomes represent only a portion of

potential outcomes to a given decision. According to March (1994), this observational

limitation flows into an interpretive one, so that learning from past decisions

experientially is a "noisy" endeavor. An array of psycho-social challenges inhibits

excellent interpretation of events and the evaluation of experience. Additionally, the

experiential learning cycle does not always fully occur, and rules do not change with

every decision. As an example, perhaps these obstacles to learning by experience underlie

the observed willingness of many experienced university administrators to pursue a string

of management techniques whose names have gained successive popularity. Birnbaum

(2000) found management "fads" were cyclic in that they followed on the heels of trendy

corporate management corollaries; they were adopted swiftly with expectations of quick

resolutions to standing problems, and they were abandoned soon after, when it became

widely apparent that they were not as promised. At some point, another fad would come along to fill the vacuum, and so the cycle would continue.

A more nuanced extension of the learning cycle presents decision contexts as an ecology of learning. The interpretation of outcomes on one decision not only refines the originating decision rule but potentially multiple other rules the decision maker deems proximate. March (1994) expounds upon implications beyond the decision maker:

> For example, as a decision maker learns a new set of lessons from experience, the learning of one lesson interacts with the learning of other sets of lessons by the same decision maker. Learning in one part of an organization interacts with learning in other parts. Learning in one organization interacts with learning in other organizations (pp. 95-96).

As such decision making ecologies develop, they expose decision makers to new challenges. For instance, competency traps occur when decision makers begin to prefer decision rules as a result of repeated use with positive outcomes (and also comfort in evaluating and refining such rules). Alternatively, the lessons decision makers learn do not stem only from their own decisions but from others' as well, and the social influence of decision learning can be exceptionally powerful (March, 1994). For instance, Janis' (1971) account of the Kennedy administration's decision making in the run-up to the Bay of Pigs shows how a well-equipped group of individuals (Presidential cabinet) can perform dysfunctionally due to the norms and roles of each in relation to the others. The ecology led to groupthink, according to Janis, or a failure to question one another during decision making, which prevented key learning and portended disaster.

Dr. Jones follows identity rules.

Dr. Jones' students often recall his advice, "If you want to be a good archaeologist, you gotta get out of the library!" (Kennedy et al., 2008). This sentiment sums up Dr. Jones' approach to many problems. He really counts himself more an adventurer than an archaeologist, and many of his decisions are based much less upon hard data and scrupulous analysis than upon instinct.

As it relates to the problem of staffing Archaeology 101 classes for the coming semester, Dr. Jones does not take long in deciding how to proceed. The basic problem he faces as a new department chair is how to dispatch clerical challenges so as to allow himself the time and resources necessary to the task of raising departmental reputation. This is the charge he was given upon appointment, and frankly, no one hires a scholar of his magnitude to fuss over data related to freshman classes. His role in this department is primarily that of a reputation builder.

Conceivably, spending too little time and resources on introductory instruction could lead to a decline in reputation among UCH undergraduates, but Dr. Jones believes the greater risk lies in spending too much time and resources in such a low-risk area. External reputation among leading archaeologists is what matters, and introductory coursework has little to do with that. The comparatively larger concern for Dr. Jones is that as a close friend of Dr. Ravenwood, who helped him take the department chairmanship, he needs to support her toward success as Undergraduate Program Chair.

The potential for conflict between fulfilling his role as department chair and fulfilling his role as a close friend and colleague to Dr. Ravenwood gives Dr. Jones some pause. In the end, though, he is confident that raising the external reputation of the

department will greatly benefit all of its faculty, including Dr. Ravenwood. The most appropriate way forward is for him to delegate the hiring of part-time instructors for introductory courses to Dr. Ravenwood so that he can concentrate on supporting grant activity for more research and field work, getting the tenure-line faculty out of the classroom and writing, and getting master's students placed into prominent Ph.D. programs.

Dr. Jones has decided to do what he feels is right in using part-time faculty, based upon his self-image as a reformer. He seems potentially at risk for violating a rule related to his role of close friend to Dr. Ravenwood in the process, but his role as a reputation-enhancing department chair has taken greater salience in the decision. He is a new department chair at UCH, but he has applied some experiential learning in that he feels he has been successful enhancing the reputation of each department in which he has ever worked; this conclusion suggests he was hired with the expectation of improving reputation at UCH. Additionally, the social context of the department is such that all the full-time faculty members seem excited about his prospects for leading the reputational ascent of UCH's archaeology programs. Given these parameters, he considers his categorization of the Archaeology 101 staffing problem as a reputational distraction to be well-founded. He is confident that the decision he has made to use part-time instructors—as well as the efficiency of the decision process itself—aligns well with his role.

In sum, one way to describe the difference between rational choice decisions and rule following decisions might be to observe the basic questions each approach seeks to answer. Whereas rational choice decisions seek to determine which decision is best, rule following decisions seek to determine which decision is right. March (1994) argues that

both the logic of consequence and the logic of appropriateness "picture human beings and human institutions as having a relatively high order of reasoning" (p. 101). In fact, he asserts:

> In arguments between theorists of consequential choice and theorists of rule following, each group sees the other's perspective as a special case of its own. For theorists of consequential choice, rules are constraints derived from rational action at a higher level. For theorists of rule following, consequential choice is simply one of many possible rules that may be evoked and followed when deemed appropriate (pp. 101-102).

The most important point about rational choice decisions versus rule following decisions is not that one reliably yields better outcomes, nor that one is a subsidiary of the other, but rather that each set of theories provides a rich pool of information on attendant pitfalls and advantages. Similarly, an understanding of the two basic approaches to decision making forms the basis upon which one may examine more complex concepts in the decision making literature. I begin that discussion by addressing multiple actor, or collaborative, decision making, which encompasses two types: team decisions and political decisions.

Multiple actor decision making.

One way in which decisions are often more complex in practice than in the basic theories of choice and appropriateness is that decisions are not always made by a single person. People can make decisions cooperatively, and they can also make them through bargaining and negotiation processes.

Teams.

Teams of collaborators frequently make decisions together. Additionally, while in some cases collaborators hold quite similar preferences and identities, they may seek to downplay internal group differences for the purpose of contrasting themselves with other groups. Collaborators may settle differences among them prior to collaboration. Yet, many decision making groups cannot be easily reconciled with the same basic theories that apply to single actors (March, 1994). The primary challenge to decision making in a collaborative setting is inconsistencies within the team: different preferences or differing salient identities in relation to the situation at hand[16].

These internal inconsistencies can sometimes be removed. For instance, Tuckman's (1965) work on group development posits that immediately after a team forms, members of the group often undergo a "storming" phase. This is the point at which team members' ideas compete for selection, problems to be solved and decisions to be made are settled upon, and team members' social status in relation to one another remain unclear. Some teams never make it out of the storming phase, and as a result they produce little in the way of any decision. Teams that do succeed in moving through the storming phase will necessarily remove the inconsistencies among them that threaten their collaboration. Teams that get stuck, however, produce the alternative outcome: indecision, or nondecision. Bess and Dee (2008) assert, "[University] decision makers are powerful not only when they make a decision (e.g., invest in biology or nursing) but also when they fail to make decisions that would remedy problems encountered by the less

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[16] This concern should not be confused with the problems facing the Kennedy cabinet, as related by Janis (1972), which I have discussed. That group was consistent to a fault. A productive consistency on a decision making team allows for constructive internal disagreement, but it relies upon a strong alignment of collaborators with the other members of the team. Here I discuss internal inconsistencies in terms of threats to such alignment.

powerful […]" (p. 652-653). In their study of universities in postindustrial environments (i.e., scarce resources), Cameron and Tschirhart (1992) find that department heads and other administrators are most comfortable making routine decisions and may be reticent to expand their domains to include new decision making. This implies nondecision can become common and major problems can go unaddressed until they reach crisis stage. Thus, addressing interpersonal inconsistencies, as uncomfortable as that might be, can be formative. Yet, indecision represents a decision process and related outcomes.

It is also important to note that interpersonal inconsistencies, of the kind discussed thus far, comprise only one threat to collaborative decision making. Intrapersonal inconsistencies can be just as disruptive. For example, one challenge to collaboration occurs when a team member's perception of salient identity, or of their outcome preferences, changes in the course of collaboration. Perception can change as a result of both human error and social learning (March, 1994). One team member's souring may be the difference between a high-functioning decision making unit and one that proves unable to produce a decision at all.

March (1994) notes one way to mitigate inconsistencies in collaborative decision making environments is to make use of hierarchical organization. Hierarchies incent team members to embrace roles and accept preferences that are formative to decision processes insomuch as they position individuals for promotion. The incentive of advancement up the hierarchy can also result in the conformity of decision outcomes; those evaluating team performance often occupy positions of authority, such as authority to promote team members. Team members may often adopt the roles they perceive as most salient to such authorities, or adopt the preferences they believe the pertinent authority holds.

Collaborative decisions in hierarchical environments tend to reinforce the career ladder as a result of this conformity (March, 1994). In my discussion of Youn and Price's (2009) study of the evolution of tenure and promotion rules in comprehensive universities, earlier in this chapter, I related the authors' finding that tenure and promotion rules represented a form of organizational contagion. This is an excellent example of how even famously independent-thinking tenured faculty members can demonstrate conformity to hierarchies. In Youn and Price's study, university leaders had been hired from among successful faculty in research universities, and when they carried over their high research values the indigenous faculty members of comprehensive institutions were (on the group level) given to follow the leaders.

While hierarchies often incent conformity to the perceived desires of those in positions of authority, members of teams also attempt to distinguish themselves from fellow group members (March, 1994). Promotion opportunities are necessarily fewer as one ascends within the hierarchy, which makes promotion a zero-sum game. Thus, March (1994) notes that collaboration becomes a form of competition between the successful and the ambitious. In the context of teams, those who occupy positions of authority can either imbue team decisions with endorsements that benefit other team members, or else they can resist the decisions and as a result position other team members to appear nonconformist via contrast. Likewise, team members who are ambitious to climb the hierarchy can either join with those who can help them to do so, and thus seek to curry favor, or they can fight authority and seek to supplant those above them. In either case, open conflict is generally viewed to be abnormal and unconstructive in collaborative decisions.

Ceci, Williams, and Mueller-Johnson (2006) found that faculty on the tenure track often respond to the promotion hierarchy incentives with conformist behavior. In their study of faculty academic freedom, they discovered that attainment of tenure (usually accompanied by promotion to associate professor) did not much increase manifestations of academic freedom, such as insisting on teaching a course without changes recommended by senior faculty, or willingness to be a whistle-blower. Instead, it appears many faculty do not behave in non-conformist ways until they have achieved the highest faculty rank, of full professor. Having made a successful career of conflict avoidance in collaborative decisions, one can imagine scenarios in which collaborative decisions on faculty hiring follow the path of least resistance—one commensurate with tradition.

As all of these challenges demonstrate, an important precursor to productivity in collaborative decision making is consistency (interpersonal and intrapersonal). Consistency can be enhanced in several ways by those assembling and managing teams. In situations where hierarchical relationships and a logic of rationality provide the setting, alignment of incentives can raise consistency levels and improve the cooperative team dynamic (March, 1994). One way to do that is with threats, although coercion has limited applicability and effectiveness in many contexts (French & Raven, 1959). Contracts can be another useful mechanism, by which expectations are drawn up and fulfilled to hold team members accountable. An important limitation to the contract method of consistency enhancement regards the necessity of explicit agreements to be thorough, verifiable, and enforceable. Finally, long-term relationships among team members can be highly effective in terms of building team consistency. If a team member knows there is a good chance she will need to work with a fellow team member in the future (or even

someone from the same office or department), then she has an incentive to maintain a reputation as a constructive team member. The closer these horizontal relationships become, the more career advancement goals across team members may come into alignment and spur collaboration.

Long-term relationships among team members naturally tend to align their incentives, much as in hierarchical settings. However, the incentive calls less upon an individual's desire for career advancement and more upon the identity of the individual as a member of a collective effort. Consistency is desirable for its own sake, as a signal of buy-in to organizational culture. As Schein (1993) notes, organizational culture is a complex phenomenon of itself and tends to resist intervention. Thus, at best relationship-building is a long-term strategy for consistency development in settings with strong cultures. Some shorter-term opportunities may be available. First, to the extent the make-up of the team can be managed in order to align identities and roles, consistency can be improved; however, this tactic also creates a propensity for producing homogenous teams and thus myopic decisions. Likewise, team-building can sometimes produce similar benefits to team consistency as longer-term relationship building. Finally, to the extent team members assume leadership roles that allow them to either allocate attention in ways that reward certain identities and roles over others, or alternatively allow them to interpret the contributions of team members strategically, those individuals can aid team consistency (March, 1994).

Thus far, I have discussed collaborative decisions in terms of groups of individuals who seek to work harmoniously. Collaborative decisions are not always team-oriented, however. They can also occur as the result of conflict. These are political

decisions, and while political collaborations often produce decisions effectively they also tend to be changeable, as distinct from harmonious.

Political decisions.

Political decisions take shape as a result of force and compromise. Force models explain decisions in terms of which faction exerts the greatest power over its opponents. Exchange models, or the formation of compromises, explain decisions in terms of alliance-building and bargaining among factions. Both varieties of decision making are likely to occur within organizational settings in which politicking imbues many facets of operation and is widely accepted as normal and constructive.

In terms of rationality and rule following, force models define power as the ability to either get what the group wants or fulfill the group's identity, respectively (March, 1994). In practice, power eludes measurement. March (1994) offers at least four compelling reasons for this complexity (paraphrased from p. 143):

1. Power is both positional and behavioral; it is both static and dynamic. One can be said to occupy a position of power, to be powerful, or to have power. One can also build power, become more powerful, or come into power. Tautology becomes an impediment to evaluating it.

2. Power is domain specific. In other words, power changes in relation to setting. The President of the United States, often considered the single most powerful person involved in global politics, must sometimes bend to the power of others, for instance in spousal and parental settings.

3. Power is not exercised consistently or reliably by those who have it. Just because a person could achieve a certain outcome by sheer force does not mean they will choose to do so.

4. Power can change with use. The role of risk in force is such that power can be won or lost depending upon the outcome of applications of it. It can be accumulated or depleted, and it can change qualitatively so that it pertains to broader or more constrained settings and conditions.

Exchange models of power, by contrast, pertain to the ability of a faction to impose favorably on decisions as a result of three bargaining elements (March 1994; paraphrased from pp. 149-150):

1. Control over resources, or having what others want.

2. Control over preferences and identities, or making others want what one has.

3. Control over rules, or asserting oneself to affect modes of interactions between factions.

The give and take of power these bargaining elements facilitate is typically undertaken through processes of coalition-building, when factions combine forces to mutual benefit.

Goals of factions acting rationally and factions following rules are different in important ways. Those advocating rational choice decisions seek to build alliances that not only win against opposing factions but also maximize the winnings. For instance, a group of academic mothers seeking a new parental leave policy in a university may seek support from many other campus groups; however, they may think twice about working with academic fathers if, for example, it becomes clear they may make lesser gains if limited university resources are to be spread over more people. On the other hand, if the

same group of academic mothers was to pursue a rule-following decision, then they might be more likely to embrace a group of academic fathers. Rule followers seek distributions of political winnings, or spoils, that are normative and legitimate (March, 1994). These concepts relate to perceptions of fairness. Exchange models position coalitions in stark terms, as either rational or rule following, but in fact coalitions often outlast individual decisions and contribute to multiple gains over time. Individual decisions may reflect rationality or rule following, but the coalitions themselves consist of more complex and changeable relationships among factions.

Dr. Jones does not decide alone.

Dr. Jones is both a member of a team and a political agent. His department functions as a team, on which his role is generally that of a leader, and that is certainly the case regarding the decision to be made on staffing Archaeology 101. The hierarchy throughout the rest of the department is sometimes difficult for him to understand, but the appointment type of each faculty member has something to do with it. The FTNTT faculty tend to give even-handed opinions, generally deferring or demurring on topics other than pedagogy or course assignments. The tenured faculty speak their opinions with little restraint. This is especially true of the full professors. Dr. Spielberg, for instance, seems to be most interested in making sure Dr. Jones does not implement too much change too quickly. Dr. Spielberg put in years of service as department chair, and perhaps he believes it would reflect badly upon his leadership for the department to change course too enthusiastically. Not only does he consistently preach caution, but he has a habit of grinning and speaking slightly pedantically whenever Dr. Jones discovers a problem. He

did this recently, much to Dr. Jones' annoyance, when Dr. Jones asked the team for help in determining what to do about staffing the introductory classes.

Dr. Lucas is a long-time colleague of Dr. Spielberg. They came up through the faculty ranks together and have a good relationship. Dr. Lucas tends to be cautious about change. In his mind, the department would indeed benefit from reputational enhancement, but this is mostly a marketing proposition. To him, the department already runs quite efficiently and effectively. At the same time, he heads the master's program, a point of pride, and he engages in the staffing conversation by way of considering possible master's program opportunities. Dr. Lucas was perpetually absent from departmental meetings even prior to his illness. Dr. Ravenwood is devoted both to Dr. Jones and to her role as Undergraduate Program Chair. She advocates for herself, but she poses her opinions in the most flattering ways possible for her senior colleagues. What she would really like is for the department to hire at least one new tenure-track assistant professor, which they have not done since hiring her over eight years ago. She continues to feel junior, even as she bears an impressive amount of the department's operational burden, and she would feel fulfilled by the opportunity to mentor a new scholar. The team decision dynamics result in a consensus-building process, which in turn results in the adoption of Dr. Spielberg's "tried and true" method of staffing the introductory courses with part-time instructors. For their parts, Drs. Jones and Ravenwood express interest in revisiting the conversation in the future.

Whatever the internal disagreements on the team, the department, at least thus far, has presented a united front externally. Part of the reason for such discipline, for which faculty teams are not renowned, may actually be external. That is, disagreements among

the team pale in comparison to their agreement that the Department of Archaeology ought to receive a larger slice of college-level appropriations. After all, the dean also brought Dr. Jones on board with the imperative for reputation enhancement, and this implies some willingness to fund the work Dr. Jones was hired to do. However, the current dean comes out of a competitor department and is clearly partial to it when it comes to resource allocation. As a result of successive funding conversations, Dr. Jones now finds himself on the point of pitching a comprehensive plan for the reputational enhancement of his department. What began with an intention to circle back to the introductory course staffing next year has somehow developed into a commitment to keep instructional costs low for the foreseeable future, in order to make strategic investments in other areas. The notion that Dr. Jones is being strategic about his budget requests appeals to the dean. The department that has enjoyed favorite child status has not made such strategic efforts in the past, much to the dean's regret in allocation decisions at the university level.

Additionally, Dr. Jones' renown touches the provost at UCH, and he is hopeful that he may offer her something that will prompt her to intercede with the dean, or at least express excitement over the future of his department. She happens to be a Spanish linguist by training, and he is sure he can get some artifacts from that old Incan dig housed at UCH, if she was to support funding increases for the archaeology department.

With regard to the team aspects of the Archaeology 101 staffing decision, it is not clear that the department has grappled with its internal inconsistencies head-on. For now, the team seems content to rely on its complex hierarchy of appointment types and levels of promotion. On the political side, Dr. Jones has sought to pursue an exchange model

approach to securing a larger portion of college resources on behalf of the department. Dr. Jones seeks greater investment in archaeology on two fronts. First, he offers to strengthen the dean's position in advocating for the college. Second, he offers something he believes the provost will find personally compelling. In the course of negotiations, he has also had to adjust his interest in revisiting the part-time staffing plan in the near term. He has not sought an alliance with the competing department, and in fact he has not identified that possibility as a real option. He believes departmental funding is more or less a zero-sum game, which makes the favorite child department a political opponent. However, he does not believe he has a powerful position from which to pursue his agenda by force.

To summarize, decisions often involve multiple actors. Teams involve collections of individuals that either resolve disagreements among themselves or set them aside in order to work together. Team members seek to enact distinct roles in relation to one another, but they speak externally with one voice. Political decisions are made through either a force or an exchange proposition. They involve sizing up opponents to determine whether to use overwhelming power or negotiation tactics to achieve desired ends. Alliances can be built to enhance one's capacity for defeating the opposition. In the next section, I attend to decision making of a kind that occurs in a fundamentally different way from rational choice, rule following, and both kinds of multiple actor decision making: ambiguous decisions. This is the final conceptual mode of decision making, according to March (1994).

The role of ambiguity and ambiguous decisions.

Thus far, all of the decision models reviewed have relied on some sense of procedural order. March (1994) notes three concepts of order underlying these forms of decision making, which are often questionable in practice. These concepts are: a) reality is universal, and human behavior tends to evince agreement and consistency among multiple people; b) understandings of cause and effect guide decisions; and c) decision outcomes, or consequences, reflect the intent of decision makers. In observing decisions researchers have found exceptions to applications of these concepts in abundance. These exceptions to the rules, or elements of ambiguity, illustrate the shortcomings of ordered decision making, such as prevalent biases. They also suggest that the manner in which many decisions actually occur is much more difficult to either control or intentionally navigate than those committed to any form of logic or process would like to think.

Problems of order.

One problem with orderly concepts of decision making is that they tend to be undermined by an array of biases, especially with regard to interpretations of history. Here are several, briefly stated (paraphrased from March, 1994, pp. 180-192):

- Decision makers often interpret history not objectively but rather so as to reconcile it with pre-existing beliefs. This is especially so when looking back upon successes, for which decision makers are eager to take credit (this leads them to discount information that may contradict prior beliefs).

- Decision makers learn excessively from things that happen and not enough from those that could have happened.

- Decision makers overemphasize the role of human action, regardless of evidence of intent or mistake.

- Individuals may hold multiple, seemingly incongruent interpretations of history at the same time.

- Interpretations of behavior tend toward polar extremes, whether imbued with positive or pejorative meaning. For instance, bold decisions (positive), or foolish ones (pejorative term for the same interpretation) tend to be understood by virtue of their stark contrast to counterpart careful decisions (positive), or timid ones (pejorative). Another example would be independent/arrogant decisions versus consultative/indecisive ones. Each interpretation is made through a lens of black and white assessment of success; gray area understandings defy conclusive interpretation. This dualism limits the effectiveness of decisions based on such interpretations.

- Tautologies abound as interpretive tools, but such understandings of behavior inhibit decision making rather than enabling it. For instance, the concept of culture explains behavior in terms of its consistency with group values and traditions, but culture is typically defined by observations of group values and traditions. Tautologies have seemingly high explanatory value, but they have demonstrably low predictive value, and this poses a problem for intentional decision making.

- Assumptions that preference (i.e., rationality) and identity (i.e., roles and rules) are unambiguous fail to acknowledge their sometimes inconsistent, unstable, and imprecise nature.

A number of problems undermine the concept of decision making as an ordered process. Thus, practical analyses of these processes should take note of the proclivity of decision makers themselves toward known biases that can affect interpretation. March's (1994) discussion of these biases in consistent with Weick's (1993) well-known concept of sensemaking in organizations: "The basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs" (p. 635). In many decisions, order is an interpretive, retrospective conception.

Decision making in ambiguous environments.

Universities, particularly large ones, accommodate the pursuit of a multitude of goals by employing an array of actors in a range of roles. Certainly this statement is true when one considers the incredible variety of courses, programs, and degrees that are often offered by a single university. For this reason, Clark Kerr (2001) famously coined the turn of phrase "multiversity" to better describe the enormous number of aims and activities occurring in modern universities. Underlying the term multiversity is a suggestion that the diversity of that work is also disparate, uncoordinated, or incoherent. Occasionally, attention will be brought to disharmonious goals within the same university, as is the case when universities have been on the cutting edge of climate change research and green building technologies, even as they have continued to invest large amounts of endowment funds in profitable nonrenewable energy companies (see Kiley, 2013).

Weick (1976) calls organizations, or systems, that accommodate pursuit of unrelated or ill-coordinated goals "loosely coupled." That is, relationships among units

tend to be irregular or unpredictable. Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) attend to this relational ambiguity when they describe such settings with the oxymoron "organized anarchies." In observing these organizations, they also famously propose a conceptual model for much of the decision making that occurs there: the garbage can model.

The garbage can model of decision making (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) posits that in certain organizational environments, such as those that are loosely coupled, decisions can be made in any of three ways. In the first case, decisions can occur when a choice resolves a problem. Problem resolution as a decision path is less common in anarchical environments than in structural ones, with the difference being that the association of problems to resolution choices is not accomplished through logic but through serendipity (i.e., problem salience, choice salience, and the correct participants to attach them come together harmoniously in the garbage can). In the second case, as choices become more salient (i.e., they rise above other garbage) and are not immediately attached to problems, then those choices are adopted relatively quickly and easily as a matter of oversight. In the third and final case, as the problem and choice contents of garbage cans shift, problems can become attached to alternative choices (the authors describe the departure of problems from choices as flight). If choices become less burdened by problems, and decision makers remain interested in making such choices, then decision makers will elect to pursue those choices. It is important to note that Cohen and March (1974) wrote extensively and persuasively to the point that universities tend to be excellent case studies in organized anarchy.

The framing of decision making in anarchic contexts as serendipitous, or unintentional, is problematic for those trying to understand how individuals influence

such decisions. March (1994) explains that people can behave in any of three archetypal ways as decision makers in anarchic environments. Reformers resist the anarchy and set themselves to the task of restoring order. Pragmatists recognize the non-logical characteristics of the process, but they seek to use the garbage can path to their own ends rather than try to change it. Finally, enthusiasts embrace the garbage can as useful.

Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) describe the environments in which garbage can decision making proliferates as follows:

> The organization operates on the basis of a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences. It can be described better as a loose collection of ideas than as a coherent structure; it discovers preferences through action more than it acts on the basis of preferences. (p. 1).

March (1994) explains that decisions in these environments may not be the result of meaning-making (i.e., rationality, or rules) so much as they represent an effort to produce meaning (send messages). As a result, decisions shape and reinforce what Schein (1993) describes as organizational culture (also see Tierney, 2008 for greater explication of the role of culture in an array of universities contexts). They tell stories and provide guiding symbols for how people should behave.

Faculty senates may be one of the most important examples of decision making garbage cans in the context of universities. Birnbaum (1989) argues that senates are subject to at least three major types of criticism:

1. They function poorly as bureaucracies, because they are inefficient when considering problems and solutions, generating new rules, or implementing new processes.

2. They function poorly as political entities because they are more oligarchic than representative.

3. They function poorly as communitarian bodies because they are as likely to exacerbate conflicts as to enhance harmony.

However, among a wide array of latent, symbolic functions Birnbaum explains faculty senates can be particularly useful as a repository (i.e., garbage can) for distracting problems, solutions, and people. He argues that senates can act uniquely well in putting these decision odds and ends into an organizational "deep freeze" (p. 432) to keep them from cluttering other decisions around campus. In other words, when faculty senates take on issues they can have the positive side-effect of reducing burdens on other decision makers to deal with such issues.

Of course, Birnbaum's (1989) deep freeze intimates the nature of the garbage can as a waste receptacle, not as an instrument of production. He intimates the issues that go in may never actually be returned or resolved, and yet anecdotally we know that faculty senates periodically do complete projects and produce resolutions or recommendations. In fact, in 2013 the University of Maryland, College Park received attention for the final report of its apparently unique Task Force on Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (Schmidt, 2013). The task force, jointly charged by the faculty senate and the provost, highlighted the reliance of the university on non-tenure track faculty labor and recommended adjunct pay be better aligned with work and that greater opportunities for career advancement be provided. A matter involving thousands of stakeholders was taken up and resulted in high level action. However, as Schmidt (2013) reported (and to Birnbaum's point), neither the

senate nor the provost appears ready (immediately, at least) to aggressively pursue the recommendations in the report.

Dr. Jones makes a de facto decision.

The UCH state budget has remained steady this year, which is the same as saying it has declined. As is perpetually the case, state funding to UCH has not kept pace with inflation, while the cost of operations at UCH has outpaced inflation. Yet more of the cost of doing business must be recouped through other university ventures, and the flow of funds from the provost, through the dean, to archaeology continues to dwindle.

Dr. Jones engages with a number of other people on a variety of topics in the course of fulfilling his department chair duties. Key departmental colleague, Dr. Ravenwood is eager for the undergraduate program, which she chairs, to grow in size and scope. She has long believed this would be a positive development, and whether or not she consciously acknowledges it she has at various times prescribed growth as a solution to multiple challenges facing the department. First, she proposed to expand the faculty in order to serve a greater number of UCH undergraduates. Early in her career the department had to turn away students to abide by its policy that classes should not exceed 25 students. This problem was alleviated primarily by raising the limits on class size. Later, about the time she became program chair, she supported the department's plan to deal with state funding problems by placing greater emphasis on acquiring external grant funding. She realized this would have the positive side effect of bringing additional teaching faculty on board to backfill the courses being bought out by grant funds. The value in that proposition seemed self-evident at the time, and since others were in agreement with the prescribed move toward the pursuit of more grants, no one saw the

need to nit-pick their colleagues' motives. Finally, within the first two years of expanding part-time faculty ranks, Dr. Ravenwood realized fewer students who took classes taught by part-time faculty were continuing on to major in archaeology than those taught by full-time instructors. Naturally, she began to beat the drum for increasing full-time faculty ranks. Alas, Dr. Spielberg, who was then the department chair, instead encouraged Dr. Ravenwood to standardize introductory syllabi and assessment methods, to improve outcomes across the board while holding costs down. Dr. Jones is largely unaware of this history as Dr. Ravenwood lobbies him to expand the full-time faculty for the purpose of reputation-building.

In Dr. Jones' mind, the Department of Archaeology's usage of part-time faculty has been ad-hoc thus far, and while it does little to directly enhance the reputation of the department, it is an important part of the mix that allows the tenure-track faculty to do more reputation-enhancing research. By limiting the time spent with undergraduates in and out of the classroom, Dr. Jones is hopeful Drs. Spielberg, Lucas, Scorsese, and Ravenwood can maximize publication, presentation, and prestigious grant writing activities. Further, the dean has explicitly said he likes the idea of using part-time instruction more strategically, toward cost savings. In fact, Dr. Jones is beginning to believe increasing reliance on part-time instruction is an important part of increasing the research reputation of the department. The more he considers that idea, the more he realizes he has always felt this way. He genuinely believes that although this is not the solution Dr. Ravenwood at first envisioned to the reputation-building problem, she should logically be on board with his plan. After all, she is a close colleague, and she championed his recruitment for department chair.

This illustration demonstrates the ambiguous nature of decision making in an environment concerned with multiple goals, such as cost containment, reputation building, academic freedom, and effective pedagogy. In organized anarchies, solutions and problems exist independent of one another and often persist beyond the contexts in which they were originally raised. The participation in decisions by different players, at different times, can produce dramatically different results in terms of which problems are deemed salient and which solutions are paired with them. This is not only a non-rational process of decision making but an illogical and unordered process. It is very nearly decision by accident. To bring this point home and the vignette full circle, I suggest to the reader that it is much more plausible that Dr. Ravenwood deals with her frustrated hope for change not by angrily protesting those higher on the academic hierarchy, including a good friend, but rather that she allows herself to believe what is necessary in order to continue her work.

To summarize, decisions often involve disorder. Decision makers, or participants in decisions, come together and depart processes in ways that are not logically devised or coordinated; and they associate problems and choices in ways that not only appear illogical but shifting. Decisions in these contexts occur as the result of a mixture of intent and serendipity (resolution, oversight, or flight). These decisions have the added characteristic of being imbued with symbolism, or story, and as a result they produce meaning for the organization to a greater extent than they flow from meaning. In the final section of decision making literature review, which now follows, I discuss the challenges of prescribing approaches to making good decisions; here, we leave discussion of conceptual types of decision making and turn to practicalities.

Decision engineering.

No doubt the reader has by now identified a favorite mode of decision making—one that is particularly fascinating, or one that appeals to their sensibilities. An abiding problem with the study of decisions, though, is that they are easier to describe than they are to evaluate and improve. March (1994) explains the intentional construction of decision making as decision engineering, and he notes an array of problems facing those who seek to engineer decisions.

The first problem in discerning decision intelligence is that, depending on the evaluator or on the decision, intelligence can be defined in terms of either the decision making process or its outcome. For example, in his multi-site case study of academic program closure, Eckel (2002) examined the extent to which decision rules about which programs to close or to support revealed rational decision making processes. He found:

> Although quality, a frequently articulated decision rule, did not surface directly,
> evidence suggests that it was invoked as a filtering mechanism. For example,
> informants at [two sites] said that although the institution used a process to
> identify programs for closure, a list of possible targets were known prior to
> starting the process" (p. 254).

In other words, decision rules were formed in ways that made the selection of programs for closure concomitant with preexisting expectations. Administrators, who were primarily responsible for initiating and coordinating the program closure decisions Eckel studied, appear to have been more focused on the intelligence of decision outcomes and less so on decision processes. They had a strong idea of what a good decision would look like in terms of the list of programs to close, and they tailored decision rules to arrive at

closure lists approximating those they had already developed. March (1994) refers to this phenomenon when he describes the problem of some processes creating rather than restraining decision maker preferences and identities.

In addition to the process versus outcomes conundrum, other problems include (March, 1994): challenges of comparing decisions over time and across decision makers, tendencies to look too closely at elements of decisions and not overall decisions, and understanding adaptive inefficiencies of decisions (e.g., lag time, the sequential nature of decisions, the impact of information flow on outcomes, etc.). March (1994) also notes a series of human and structural biases and restrictions that inhibit strong understandings of either the future (projecting decision outcomes) or the past (informing logic).

In the face of these myriad problems, however, March (1994) suggests several checks decision makers can employ in pursuit of decision intelligence (paraphrased from p. 262-263):

1. Treat self as hypothesis: Decision makers can question their identity, role, preferences, and therefore decision rules.

2. Treat intuition as real: Intuition is hard to understand, but acknowledging one's intuitive preferences or roles can help inform their utility or appropriateness to a decision.

3. Treat hypocrisy as transition: Feelings of inconsistency can be uncomfortable, but interpreting them negatively as a result of that discomfort can serve to preclude intelligent processes and outcomes from consideration.

4. Treat memory as enemy: Decision makers can rely on historic records in ways that may counteract flawed memory or oversimplified interpretations of past occurrences.

5. Treat experience as a theory: Decision makers can attempt to avoid competency traps and problems related to misapplications of routine decision making by questioning the value of experience to each decision.

These tips and tricks are by no means a cure-all for the problems endemic to assessing decision intelligence, and while they are simple in theory they are challenging in practice. But they also suggest that it is not entirely impractical to examine decisions in terms of their intelligence.

Dr. Jones arrives at the same outcome.

In the course of four vignettes, we have seen Dr. Jones decide to hire part-time faculty to teach his introductory archaeology courses as a result of four very different decision making paths. For those who gauge decision intelligence by outcome, such as faculty advocates or anti-tenure crusaders, the most appealing analysis will lead to one of two stances, respectively: 1) the decision was counterproductive, and the process in each of the four vignettes was flawed; or 2) the decision was productive, and the process in each of the four vignettes worked well. On the other hand, those who gauge decision intelligence by process will have a potentially more nuanced perspective and one that likely eludes defensibility along measures other than innate personal preference.

In conclusion, I reject the presumption that faculty hiring off the tenure track and on a part-time basis is, as a rule, good or bad. I am skeptical, however, that the decision processes that have led to the revolution in academic appointments is reflective of some

of the academy's most deeply steeped principles and traditions. Thus, adjunctification, as it has come to be known, may reflect important cultural and structural inconsistency and organizational dissonance, and the confirmation or disconfirmation of that possibility carries immense import for many university functions in coming years. The runaway nature of PTNTT labor over several decades suggests that a logic of consequence—informed, reasoned choice on the basis of outcomes preferences—has not been of central importance in determining decision making processes that have yielded PTNTT growth. At the same time, the problems of disparity in instructional outcomes, the stratification of the faculty, and the reduction in capacity for faculty governance cumulatively suggest that neither has a logic of appropriateness been of central importance. Indeed, in the context of a highly diverse field of several thousand postsecondary institutions of American higher education the strong, sustained nature of PTNTT growth suggests that either similar decisions have been taking place for a very long time (i.e., have become highly routine), or these decisions have long tended to be avoided (i.e., lack order). If either the routine or the anarchic assessment is substantially evident, then university leaders who espouse values consistent with reasoned argument, excellence, or social justice (principles that are arguably of near universal appeal across the academy) would presumably be dissatisfied with the decision intelligence they have demonstrated from a decision process perspective.

Conclusion.

In this chapter, I began by reviewing literature on comprehensive colleges and universities, and in doing so I provided evidence of their importance in terms of conferring the considerable benefits of baccalaureate education on a diverse range of

students. I then reviewed the phenomenon of interest, the decades-long shift in faculty appointment types; I placed particular emphasis on instructional relationships and student outcomes attributable to faculty appointment type, because teaching is historically the primary concern of faculty in comprehensive institutions. Finally, I reviewed theories of decision making, by which I sought to evince my sensitivity to potentially useful concepts in the tradition of grounded theory research. In the next chapter, I detail the design of this study.

Chapter Three: Methods

Research Design

This chapter lays out the research design for this study of faculty hiring processes occurring in unionized comprehensive universities. I begin with comments on the epistemological underpinnings of my approach. I proceed by introducing grounded theory methodologies and situate this study within the tradition of methodologists Corbin and Strauss (2008). Finally, I discuss selected methods according to Creswell's (2009) recommended four part structure: (1) participants, (2) instruments, (3) procedures, and (4) limitations and delimitations. To review, my research question is: What are the decision making processes by which comprehensive universities produce non-tenure track instructional staffs? Supporting questions include:

1. Who is involved in making these decisions?

    a. What constitutes involvement?

    b. What differentiates formal from informal participants?

    c. Under which circumstances do people enter or exit the process?

    d. What are the goals of the participants?

2. What information is used in making these decisions?

    a. Which empirical data are used? How are they used, and who uses them?

    b. What anecdotal, theoretical, or other information is used? How is it used, and who uses it?

3. How do the components of the decision making process fit together?

    a. What are the elements of the decision making process?

b. How are the components of the process related?

Epistemological Foundations

The term epistemology refers to an orienting philosophy regarding the nature of knowledge (Schwandt, 2007). Researchers adhere to a variety of assumptive claims regarding the nature of knowledge when designing studies. In other words, they select or favor any of an array of competing philosophies (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006). These assumptions are important to acknowledge, because as Schwandt (2007) states, "Epistemologies provide much of the justification for particular methodologies (i.e., the aim, function, and assumptions of method)" (p. 88). Not all researchers examine or acknowledge their epistemological assumptions. As I will show, understanding the significance of this study is reliant upon understanding of the epistemology I employ.

In plain terms, I agree with the epistemological adage, "Perception is reality." People acquire knowledge through their personal interactions with others and within the contexts of their environments. The understandings (i.e., knowledge) that people develop are the result of unique, personal experiences, sequences, and perspectives, which give way to diverse interpretations of even shared experiences. For example, one could ask three people, "What color is the sky?" Person one may reply, "Blue, of course." Person two might look at the sunset and state, "There are several colors in it right now." The third may be color-blind and respond, "I'm told it's blue." Each of these responses is not simply categorically different but could be interpreted in several different ways. For instance, "I'm told it's blue," is a categorically different answer than, "Blue, of course;" however, making sense of the respective modifiers requires deeper interpretation. "Of course," for example, may refer to the respondent's estimation of the question as silly,

quizzical, or a waste of time. It may, alternatively, be a patronizing phrase aimed at the researcher, or it may refer to the course of events by which the sky appears blue. Understanding such data relies not only on the verity and accuracy of the source but on the researcher's capability and proclivity for interpretation. The assumptions of knowledge underlying this study include the notion that both deductively and inductively derived information are necessary for strong understanding.

This philosophy is consistent with constructivist epistemology, which "assumes people construct selves, society, and reality through interaction" (Charmaz, 2005, p. 189). That is to say, a propensity exists even among those observing and experiencing the same events to understand them differently, and those differences (even if they appear at first to be small) can be important. The understandings people construct can be important because knowledge informs behavior; different knowledge informs different behaviors.

As I have noted, existing literature discussing the change in faculty appointment types describes a robust shift very well. At the same time, data-based understandings of the hiring processes that contribute to this shift are thin. One reason for our lack of understanding may be that the explanations are complex. It seems plausible to suggest that a constructivist understanding, one that is sensitive to organization-level and person-level nuances in data, could contribute new and insightful context to knowledge on the shift in faculty appointments.

Grounded Theory Methodology

Defining grounded theory.

In *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* (2007), Schwandt defines "grounded theory methodology" as follows:

This term is often used in a nonspecific way to refer to any approach to

developing theoretical ideas (concepts, models, formal theories) that begins with

data. But grounded theory methodology is a specific, highly developed, rigorous

set of procedures for producing formal, substantive theory of social phenomena.

This approach to the analysis of qualitative data simultaneously employs

techniques of induction, deduction, and verification to develop theory. Experience

with data generates insights, hypotheses, and generative questions that are

pursued through further data generation. As tentative answers to questions are

developed and concepts are constructed, these constructions are verified through

further data collection (p. 131).

Scholars widely acknowledge the work of Glaser and Strauss, culminating in their book

The Discovery of Grounded Theory (1967) as the seminal work on the methodology

(Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Since that time

what constitutes grounded theory methodology and what should constitute it has been the

subject of much debate. In fact, Denzin (2007) posits seven different epistemological

varieties of grounded theory methodology: positivist, postpositivist, constructivist,

objectivist, postmodern, situational, and computer assisted. In delineating grounded

theory methodology, some researchers delve into claims over the methods of qualitative

data collection and analysis that traditionally embody the underlying philosophy. While

helpful in identifying grounded theory research when presented in a publication, this

effort falls short as a methodological guide to conducting original studies.

One component of the methodology that appears agreeable to most grounded

theorists, regardless of epistemological leanings, is the central concern that a priori, or

preexisting notions regarding research phenomena should be considered, or controlled, such that inductive conclusions can be made through evidence in the data. Grounded theory founders, Glazer and Strauss famously fell out with each other over how to deal with preexisting knowledge in rendering data-based analysis. Glazer preferred an approach to analysis similar to that of Husserlian phenomenology, which requires acknowledging and setting aside one's interpretive biases toward perfectly inductive analysis; whereas Strauss and his later writing partner, Corbin viewed grounded theory as a more interpretive method requiring a careful pairing of both inductive and deductive analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Methodologists Denzin and Lincoln (1971), whose approach I adopted through my examination of decision making theory in chapter two, openly advocated the application of "sensitizing information" to grounded theory analysis. That is to say, they saw little value in knowing absolutely nothing (or ignoring what one knows) about a phenomenon and substantial value in careful consideration of a researcher's existing knowledge. Charmaz (2006) has more recently become one advocate for a deeply constructivist approach to grounded theory, in which the imperfections of the researcher's interpretations of the data are both inevitable and valuable to the formation of useful theory.

My epistemological leanings toward constructivism are central to my conception of this study and the gap I have identified in the literature. Additionally, I have taken the practical step of familiarizing myself with existing literature on decision making, so that the imperfections of my analysis are not attributable to conceptual ignorance. I call heavily upon Corbin and Strauss' (2008) espoused procedures for conducting grounded theory analysis, which they argue both recognize the interpretive role of the researcher

and yet results in the generation of knowledge, or findings, that stand a good chance at being widely useful.

Perhaps equally as important to grounded theory methodology as the necessity of considering a priori information is the notion that grounded theory methodology yields theory as a result. Such agreement is complicated, though, by scholars' diverse uses of "theory," as Schwandt (2007) suggests above. As Charmaz (2006) explains:

> If you peruse articles whose authors claim allegiance to grounded theory to see how they construe a finished grounded theory, you might find such varied views as: 1) an empirical generalization, 2) a category, 3) a predisposition, 4) an explication of a process, 5) a relationship between variables, 6) an explanation, 7) an abstract understanding, and 8) a description (p. 133).

In this study, I assert that grounded theory is an explanatory methodology aimed at revealing not only analytic categories of data but the relationships among them. This definition is in keeping with Corbin and Strauss' (2008), which holds:

> If theory building is indeed the research goal, then findings should be presented as a set of interrelated concepts, not just a listing of themes. It is the overall unifying explanatory scheme that that raises findings to the level of theory. The subconcepts with all their properties and dimensions provide the detail (104).

The explanatory property of theory requires that a set of loose themes, propositions, or hypotheses be integrated within a unifying structure. Often this structure is presented as a visual accompaniment (a model) to the narrative of the theory itself (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) because the multiple properties and conditional relationships among the component concepts create complexity. The goal of the grounded theory tradition I embrace here is

not to simply describe the components of a phenomenon but to explain their interactive nature (e.g., A affects B, which affects C, D, and/or E in X, Y, and Z ways).

By Corbin and Strauss' (2008) definition of its outcomes (an integrated theory), grounded theory methodology is particularly well suited to process-oriented, or action-oriented, research phenomena (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). As a result of the methodology's amenability to the discovery of processes some types of research questions are also particularly well suited to the methodology. Creswell (2007) states:

> The research questions that the inquirer asks of participants will focus on understanding how individuals experience the process and identifying the steps in the process (What was the process? How did it unfold?). After initially exploring these issues, the researcher then returns to the participants and asks more detailed questions… such as: What was central to the process? (the core phenomenon); What influenced or caused this phenomenon to occur? (causal conditions); What strategies were employed during the process (strategies); What effect occurred? (consequences) (p. 66).

Grounded theory methodology is appropriate to my research questions because of their focus on process.

Beyond appropriateness, some may ask whether a grounded theory approach is necessary. In other words, beyond looking at grounded theory's methodological proclivity toward certain types of research questions it makes sense to ask whether the generation of new theory on a given phenomenon would contribute meaningfully to

existing scholarship. For instance, do theories on this subject exist already, and if so, how are they inadequate to the task of answering the research questions?

By way of answer, it is incumbent upon me to provide some insights as to the nature of grounded theories and the sort of outcomes grounded theorists seek to achieve with grounded theory studies. I have reviewed several theoretical rationales that have been suggested as possible formal theories that may explain aspects of the shift in faculty appointments across multiple sectors of American higher education, but none explains how faculty hiring decisions occur at local levels. Charmaz (2006) differentiates substantive theory from formal theory as follows:

> Most grounded theories are substantive theories, because they address delimited problems in specific substantive areas […]. The logic of grounded theory can reach across substantive areas and into the realm of formal theory, which means generating abstract concepts and specifying relationships between them to understand problems in multiple substantive areas (p. 8).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe three levels of theory, in order of decreasing delimitation: substantive, mid-range, and formal. These are conceptually similar to Charmaz's (2006) position on the subject. The general idea is that a single grounded theory study is best suited to the production of substantive theory. It serves well to generate integrated analytic insights at a level that is local to the phenomenon of interest. Collectively, many grounded theory studies can serve to generate higher order theory (Glaser, 2007). This study may ultimately lead to further studies, which may then contribute to higher level theory explaining faculty hiring across university type, for instance. One may even imagine such mid-level theory then contributing to formal

theories of something as comparatively esoteric as collaborative partner selection[17], for instance. However, this study will independently yield substantive theory, which is to say my highest hope for its findings are that they are deeply insightful within the delimitations I lay out toward the end of this chapter.

Inductive reasoning.

Analytically, one element of grounded theory that sets it apart from many alternative approaches to empirical research is its incorporation of inductive reasoning. Whereas most other research methodologies rely on existing theory to deduce informative questions about phenomena, grounded theorists attempt to generate original points of inquiry "from the ground up" (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the words of Glaser and Strauss (1967), conclusions emerge directly from the data. Charmaz (2006) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) point out that grounded theory also relies on deduction and abduction for certain aspects of theory generation, but the prominent role of inductive reasoning throughout the process is a hallmark of grounded theory research.

Grounded theory is an iterative process. Consider the metaphor of a block of marble to be chiseled into a statue. Like the artist's hazy early vision the researcher has an initial, exploratory question. The artist selects a piece of stone he or she believes adequate to the task of revealing the figure. So, too, does the researcher select the site and the initial participants. As the artist begins to rough out the stone and learn more about the course the grain follows, certain tools and strategies appear beneficial. Like the artist, the researcher tests the research tools, including those early analytic possibilities. Thus,

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[17] Since university faculty work is merely one of many professions in which hires are made, in part, based on the outlook for collaboration, perhaps research findings about hiring for collaboration across multiple professions could inform a higher level of theory. This is just a hypothetical example for the purpose of contrasting mid-level theory with substantive theory.

while multiple steps are required in order to analyze data in a manner consistent with grounded theory methodology, the sequence of the steps is not unidirectional.

Theoretical sampling.

Stemming from inductive data analysis, another of the distinguishing design features of grounded theory is theoretical sampling. Corbin & Strauss (2008) refer to theoretical sampling as "concept driven" (p. 145), further elaborating that, "The process for theoretical sampling are simple: the researcher follows the analytic trail" (p. 146). In other words, the researcher learns information from early data, responds to unexpected discoveries by asking more questions, seeks out additional sources to fill in gaps, and continues until the point of theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation is reached when "no new properties" of the grounded theory the researcher is producing emerges (Charmaz, 2006; Morse, 2007).

Analytic memos and constant comparison analysis.

Another procedure that is of central importance to grounded theory research design involves the writing and refinement of extensive analytic memos. Charmaz (2006) offers a brief summary of the central role memos play in data analysis:

> Memos provide ways to compare data, to explore ideas about the codes, and to direct further data gathering. As you work with your data and codes, you become progressively more analytic in how you treat them, and thus you raise certain codes to conceptual categories (p. 12).

Memo-writing is a vehicle, then, for three critical components of grounded theory data analysis. In the first place, it facilitates an iterative analytic process. Analytic "leads[18]" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 115) from early data can be made explicit through memo-writing and subsequently compared and contrasted with leads emerging from later data. In the second place, memos serve as a repository for research notes that may become more refined over time, as analysis continues and understanding accumulates about the phenomenon of interest. Finally, memos reveal as much about gaps in the analysis as they do strong points. As a result, they form an excellent tool for focusing second- and third-level data collection to strengthen findings.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) provide dozens of analytic memos from Corbin's study of Vietnam War soldiers' experiences, which illustrate the centrality of memo writing concurrent with data analysis. This is known in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lempert, 2007), as well as in qualitative research more broadly (Merriam, 1998), as a constant comparison method of analysis. In grounded theory, constant comparison procedures dovetail with the writing of analytic memos, because early leads form an important comparison point for later data analysis. As a result, leads posited in early memos will often be elaborated upon in future iterations of those memos. Lempert (2007) crystallizes this unique aspect of memo writing in the grounded theory tradition neatly: "Memos, especially early ones, are speculative, and they may lack coherence and connection to one another" (p. 247). Lempert (2007) goes on to admonish

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[18] Charmaz (2006) uses the term "lead' in a way that draws parallels to popular film and television depictions of journalists, or detectives. In the case of grounded theory analysis, a lead is a tip, or a clue. The main difference is that clues in social science research are to be found in the data, rather than in criminal evidence, or from journalistic sources. A lead is a point of analysis that that suggests further exploration could yield new insights. Thus, an analytic lead is something to be followed up on by the researcher. Charmaz (2006) poses the utility of leads as analytic footholds: "Be open to what is happening in the field and be willing to grapple with it. When you get stuck, go back and recode earlier data and see if you define new leads" (p. 115).

grounded theorists to at various times take a break from memo writing, "But then come back and re-read *all* of the memos. Treat them like data. Write memos on the memos" (p. 258). This encompassing level of analysis is meant to aid in the integration of loose concepts into a cohesive theory.

Coding.

I have discussed analytic memos from a conceptual perspective, but grounded theory research design requires a discrete progression of steps in order to produce the analysis recorded in memos. Grounded theory analysis consists of three levels of coding: open, axial, and selective (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In discussing the coding process as a sequence of steps, it is important to note that the process does not flow in a tidy fashion from one stage of coding to the next for the entire study simultaneously. As I have discussed, data collection and analysis occur concurrently in grounded theory. This portends that different points of analysis will be refined at differing paces.

Open coding.

The most basic level of coding involves line by line coding of data—in the case of this study, interview transcripts. Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) explain, "Each word, phrase, or sentence is categorized and coded as a concept. Concept names are selected to accurately reflect and describe what the data conveyed" (p. 44). The authors go on to explain that the number of codes produced through open coding depends on the number of participants and amount of data collected; however, open coding can lead to a large number of disparate codes, as the premise of this stage of analysis is to stay as close to the data as possible. Charmaz (2006) argues that when using grounded theory design to

explicate processes, researchers do well to pay special attention to the coding of gerunds (action words, which denote process; gerunds are words that have the suffix –ing). One method of remaining close to the data throughout the study, which begins in open coding, is the use of in vivo codes, which is to say employing the words of a participant in the name of a code (Charmaz, 2006). Open coding represents the lowest level of abstraction, from raw data into codes.

Axial coding.

The middle step in grounded theory coding consists of forming concepts, or categories, out of codes. Analytic memos form the basis for explaining the relationships among codes, and as more codes are produced, the memos will reflect adjustments to concepts. Charmaz (2006) offers good insight into the concurrent nature of data collection and analysis at the middle phase (p. 58):

> Some respondents or events will make explicit what was implicit in earlier statements or events. An 'Aha! Now I understand,' experience may prompt [the researcher] to study [their] earlier data afresh. Then, [the researcher] may return to earlier respondents and explore topics that had been glossed over, or that may have been too implicit to discern initially or unstated.

Thus, at the point of axial coding, grounded theorists not only engage in what other qualitative disciplines may know as pattern matching (see Yin, 2003), but they both expand their sample and return to early participants for clarification on emerging patterns. These emerging patterns constitute the analytic categories the researcher may select for inclusion in the final theory.

Selective coding.

Selective coding consists of abstracting the categories produced through axial coding into a cohesive theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Holton, 2007). Achieving the integration of all relevant categories into an encompassing analysis first requires an understanding of the analytic ties that bind the categories. Grounded theorists employ the concept of the "core category" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Holton, 2007). Holton (2007) explains the significance of the core category as follows (p. 279):

> As the researcher proceeds with constant comparison, a core category begins to emerge. This core variable can be any kind of theoretical code: a process, a typology, a continuum, a range, dimensions, conditions, consequences, and so forth. Its primary function is to integrate the theory and render it dense and saturated. In appearing to explain how the main concern is continually processed or resolved, the core becomes the focus of further selective data collection and coding efforts.

In other words, the core category is not simply a larger analytic category, under which all previous categories are subsumed; it is the emergent analytic framework for understanding the relationships among the categories. Often, the core category can be illustrated using a visual model that explains the relationships among categories (Creswell, 2007).

Summary.

I have described grounded theory methodology as a discipline of qualitative research with several distinguishing features. For example, analysis over the course of a grounded theory study takes the shape of inductive and deductive analysis feeding from

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each other, but the approach is unique from many other qualitative approaches in that it begins with, and relies upon, induction. Additionally, data collection and analysis are concurrent, not sequential, so that findings can be refined and a strong chain of evidence can be cultivated. Finally, grounded theory design requires a particular, three-level coding process that should ultimately lead to theory abstraction. As a result, grounded theory analysis goes beyond a descriptive listing of analytic categories, or themes; it provides interpretive insight as to how the various components of a phenomenon interact.

Methods

Creswell (2009) advocates the explanation of methods in the following order: (1) participants, (2) instruments, (3) procedures, and (4) limitations and delimitations. I find that organization to be instructive here.

Participant selection.

I present my participant selection strategy in the mode of Marshall and Rossman (2006), by addressing: events, settings, actors, and artifacts.

Events.

The event with which I am concerned is faculty hiring, because scholars have observed major change in faculty hiring but cannot well explain how that change has taken place using data. I have elaborated upon this rationale in chapter one.

Settings.

The settings with which I am concerned are comprehensive universities, the sector of American higher education where the shift in faculty labor is currently most dynamic; as a result of this status, comprehensive universities are also potentially data-rich

environments. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's size and setting classifications provided a good tool for ensuring the sample of settings I selected was diverse. I have located my study among three universities: two public, and one private. Because building rapport with study participants is important to the process of eliciting rich data (see the following subsection on "Actors"), I made one site visit to each university, to interview participants in person[19]. I conducted additional interviews over the phone. A sample of three universities was manageable for site visit purposes. Yet, among three universities I was also able to build elements of setting diversity into my data (e.g., control, size, and setting; see Table 1, p. 126).

Actors.

My selection of interview participants (i.e., "actors;" Marshall & Rossman, 2006) began with those with central and formal roles in faculty hiring, such as provosts, deans, and department chairs, and union leaders. I interviewed department chairs in humanities (7), sciences (6), and professional and social science fields (3) alongside twelve personnel in dean's office, provost's office, and president roles (many of whom are also situated in disciplinary backgrounds and roles). I proceeded to both expand my sample and select participants for additional interviews based on previously collected data. Over the course of the study, I identified and invited 49 potential participants. Seven of them declined to participate, three accepted initially but later failed to follow through in scheduling interviews, and eleven did not respond at all to multiple attempts at contact. This left me with a success rate of 57 percent in participant recruitment, or 28 participants. Those who declined to participate offered a variety of reasons for declining, such as: a) they were

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[19] A return visit was made to one site for an additional high-level interview.

"not the right person," or another person would be a better source of information (2); b) being too new to their role to offer insight (1); c) being too busy (1); d) unable to meet in person and unwilling to speak by phone (1); e) recently retired (1); and e) no reason (1).

Gaining access to data-rich participants can pose substantial challenges in qualitative research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) touch upon the access issue in at least two ways that influenced my approach. First, a researcher has to gain a desired level of interaction with participants. Hammersley and Atkinson encourage researchers to consider their intended position along a continuum of contact, between observer (distal, low-contact) and participant (proximal, high-contact). Not knowing how faculty hiring decisions occur in advance of this study, I was poorly situated to observe these decisions longitudinally, let alone participate in them. However, I took steps to ensure access to data-rich participants, and I interacted with them through individual interviews. I laid the groundwork for this access in two ways. Initially, I requested and received assurances of introductions to actors involved in faculty hiring from key personnel in Washington, DC membership organizations. The Director of Research and Public Policy at the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) provided introductions to private comprehensive university department chairs and union leaders; and the Vice President for Academic Leadership and Change at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) provided introductions to nine senior academic affairs staff members in public comprehensives, who independently expressed interest in participating in this study during a pilot focus group, in July, 2013.

The second important issue raised by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) is how to gain access in terms of eliciting honest and thoughtful participation. I treated my AAUP

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and AASCU connections as "gatekeepers" (p. 34) by building rapport with them and doing all I could to ensure they heartily encouraged study participation among groups of interest. I did the same with each participant throughout data collection, and in fact this process of building rapport had begun with the participants in the pilot focus group (all expressed interest in participating in the full study and in recommending additional data-rich sources). Patton (2002) refers to this ongoing selection process as "snowball or chain sampling," (p. 237) adding:

> This is an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases. The process begins by asking well-situated people: "Who knows a lot about___? Whom should I talk to?" By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (p. 237).

Chain sampling is of excellent use in grounded theory research, in which sampling occurs piecemeal over the course of data collection. Grounded theory researchers learn from data analysis and from recommendations of participants themselves as to who holds valuable information.

Artifacts.

As I have intimated, I used individual interviews of the 28 participants as my primary data collection tool. At the first level of data collection, I strove to conduct in-person interviews. At the second level, I employed telephone and email inquiry.

Key documents constituted additional data, or artifacts, for this study. Finnegan's (1993) multi-site case study of comprehensive universities suggests that histories and organizational sagas can provide important context for organizational behavior, and I

sought out these documents (many university websites provide brief historical accounts)

for context in data analysis. Policy documents, such as faculty handbooks, and union

contracts also constituted important data sources.

Instruments.

In qualitative research the researcher is the instrument. Certain mechanisms

mitigate the fallibility of a human instrument, as described below (Creswell, 2007).

Nonetheless, informed subjectivity is a central characteristic of qualitative data analysis

(Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) takes an explicitly constructivist position in arguing

informed subjectivity is a critical strength in grounded theory research, and she explains

by discussing one of her own studies (p. 17):

> My guiding interests led to bringing concepts such as self-concept, identity, and
>
> duration into the study. But that was only the start. I used those concepts as *points*
>
> *of departure* to form interview questions, to look at data, to listen to interviewees,
>
> and to think analytically about the data. Guiding interests, sensitizing concepts,
>
> and disciplinary perspectives often provide us with such points of departure for
>
> developing, not limiting, our ideas. Then we develop scientific concepts by
>
> studying the data and examining our ideas through successive levels of analysis.

In short, this study is an interpretive one, in keeping with the constructivist tradition of

grounded theory and other approaches to qualitative research.

Pinpointing at the outset which sensitizing concepts may prove most relevant to

analysis was in some ways an exercise in futility. For example, some aspect of my

identity, say hypothetically that of an American football fan, might have proven helpful

to my understanding of an interview participant's metaphor invoking the importance of

pass-blocking on third and long. While sports metaphors are somewhat common in explanatory discussions, one does not logically set out to better understand football strategy in preparation for a study of university faculty. Some elements of a researcher's sensitiveness to relevant concepts is either difficult to predict or downright serendipitous. On the other hand, Denzin and Lincoln (1971) compellingly suggest that a researcher can hope to improve her sensitivity to relevant ideas for fuller inquiry and analysis through preparatory reviews of existing literature. Within chapter two, I selected decision making literature for this very purpose. This effort did not allow me to predetermine which concepts would be most relevant to my study from within that literature; I expected to employ some of them substantially, others less so, and many of them not at all. However, my review of these sensitizing concepts mitigated the possibility of failure to build upon existing knowledge in producing findings.

Procedures.

I invited individuals for interviews based on follow-up discussions with provosts stemming from my pilot study (public). I also located one gatekeeper at a private university that met my setting criteria through a recommendation and introduction by my contact at the AAUP.

The procedure the interviews followed includes: a) conducting the initial interview (in person where possible; via telephone as necessary)[20], b) requesting follow-up interviews as analysis of initial interviews revealed the need for additional data; c) asking interview participants for recommendations of possible additional participants for invite (sometimes called "snowball or chain sampling;" see Patton, 2002); and d)

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[20] See Appendix A for initial interview protocol.

requesting key documents that impact faculty hiring processes as participants refer to them. Additional participant and follow-up interviews took place by telephone and email according to the participant's preferences.

The very first participants consisted of the gatekeepers themselves. Early participants built on their recommendations for further interview participants at the college and department levels in two ways. First, I selected at least three departments as settings for further research based upon the recommendations (disciplinary diversity being of importance), as well as several individuals within each. Second, I independently invited several individuals for participation from among those not recommended by the gatekeeper (either active or passive non-recommendation was acceptable). I sought out participants in departments within each of three academic areas: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), arts and humanities, and social sciences and professions. This structure allowed multiple comparison points within and across universities to aid analysis.

Data analysis.

The primary data for analysis was individual interview transcripts. The procedure for analyzing the transcripts followed the progressive, three phase grounded theory method presented earlier in this chapter: 1) open coding; 2) axial coding; and 3) selective coding. I employed these analytic techniques toward the goal of presenting findings in explanatory visual models. Additionally, I took steps to ensure my analysis and findings were rigorous, in keeping with the standards of strong qualitative research. I borrow three terms from Yin's (2003) discussion of rigor in case study design to frame my discussion of the steps I took: internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

Internal validity.

Yin (2003) defines internal validity as addressing the "threat" of spurious effects (p. 36). That is to say, the analytic conclusions the researcher makes (in this case, with regard to the nature of patterns, or cause and effect relationships among concepts) should be tested against alternative explanations and justified thoroughly and demonstrably. In this study, the thought process that led me from raw data to theory was meticulously documented through analytic memos (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lempert, 2007). Besides offering great facility to the writing process, these memos comprise a strong audit trail.

Further, I conducted member checks with my most information rich participants. This ensured that I understood and interpreted their statements well. Morse (2007) advocates a particularly strong method of member checking for grounded theory studies. That is, as a potential final step to analysis participants should be presented with a summary of findings. They should be charged with informing the researcher as to whether they see their own experiences in the grounded theory. If they do not, then the researcher must investigate why and potentially collect additional data to inform more thorough analysis.

Finally, I will sought to triangulate and confirm findings at every opportunity. This included verifying accounts: between participants, across interview and document data, and through follow-up with the same participant. This method of improving internal validity is consistent with Merriam's (1998) recommendations.

External validity.

Yin (2003) describes external validity as addressing "the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study." The fact that I do not position this study as a case study only emphasizes the importance of producing analysis that extends beyond the boundaries of any of my three sites. Merriam (1998) recommends improving external validity by providing "thick" contextual description of case settings that will help the reader better understand whether and to what degree findings are transferable (p. 211). My analysis comments upon the settings and environments inhabited by my participants. Additionally, the memos I generated over the course of the study provided an excellent starting point for producing thick descriptions of analytic categories. Merriam (1998) has further suggested that the purposeful nature of my sampling design, paired with the ability to test analyses across multiple settings, would also ultimately aid in improving external reliability.

Reliability.

Yin (2003) explains the importance of designing for good analytic reliability as follows: "The objective is to be sure that if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions" (p. 37). This explanation is not entirely in keeping with the constructivist notion that researcher individuality has a positive, differentiating effect on analysis. However, the point remains that, in grounded theory as well as case design, readers should be able to rely upon any researcher's findings as being accurate and thorough efforts toward backing up analytic claims with evidence. Yin (2003) goes on to crystallize the concept

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of reliability in the dictum: "The general way of approaching the reliability problem is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder" (p. 38).

I took several steps to increase the reliability of my findings, some of which were aided by virtue of grounded theory design. I present raw data within my analysis, including interview and document quotations, as well as my own raw interview notes and analytic memos. This way the reader may assess for herself whether my conclusions are logical. Additionally, by employing a constant comparative method of analysis I positioned myself to include disconfirming data in my analysis and to discuss the manner in which it shaped my conclusions over the course of the study.

The brunt of the data for analysis in this study consisted of interview transcripts. The procedure for analyzing the transcripts is prescriptive in grounded theory, and it entails moving successively from line by line coding, through construction of loose conceptual categories, into an integration of those categories into a cohesive, interpretive whole. In pursuing this end, it was incumbent upon me to do all I could to produce rigorous analysis. That is to say, I needed to make every effort to ensure the analysis would be based in data and took all data into account (internal validity), that the findings would be as useful as possible to readers (external validity), and that readers could depend on the findings as being well-justified (reliability).

Limitations and delimitations.

This study is limited, or subject to imperfections, and by design it abides by delimitations, or boundaries in the scope of the study that are helpful to the generation of useful conclusions (Creswell, 2009). I address each separately.

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Limitations.

This study relies upon subjective and interpretive methods, both for the generation of its findings on behalf of the researcher and for the transferability of its findings on behalf of its readers. Constructivists, such as Charmaz (2006), posit this is actually a strength, because different researchers bring unique insights to data analysis. Subjectivity is also a double-edged sword in qualitative research, in that it places additional responsibility on the researcher to provide evidence of findings and to acknowledge, as I now do, that researcher subjectivity also suggests elements of analysis may be missed or underdeveloped.

Additionally, many individuals and universities will not share sufficient positional or environmental context with those from which I draw participants for findings to be easily or broadly transferable to them. This is unavoidable, but with future studies this limitation may be better addressed.

Finally, this study may be limited by the contemporaneous effects of a down economy and should be confirmed in better economic times, either through repetitions of the grounded theory design or through confirmatory case studies (e.g., have these universities laid off adjuncts according to the "budgetary flexibility" rationale for their hire, have they hired more of them due to their lower cost, or do appointment types appear to be somewhat in line with pre-recession levels?). Participants may be able to offer some insight by reflecting on pre-recession experiences. However, such recollections are likely to be burdened with biases.

Delimitations.

This study is solely dedicated to developing an original substantive theory instructional faculty hiring processes within unionized comprehensive universities. Later studies may employ quantitative techniques to refine the theory; and additional qualitative approaches, such as case study, may test the applicability of the theory in different university contexts.

Conclusion

This chapter described the research design for the proposed study of non-tenure track instructional faculty hiring processes in comprehensive universities. I began with comments on the epistemological underpinnings of my approach. I proceeded by introducing key methodological concepts in the tradition of grounded theory research. Finally, I discussed my proposed methods for conducting this study. Chapter four presents the study's findings.

Chapter Four: Descriptive Findings

This chapter details the key findings of this study. It begins with an overview of the three data collection sites, and proceeds to provide descriptive analysis of faculty hiring processes (e.g., what occurs, who is involved, and how they are involved).

University Settings

This study explored instructional faculty hiring processes within three comprehensive universities. Understanding the distinct contexts of this study's three university settings will necessarily inform the reader's use of this study in other settings. Participants and participating universities have been afforded anonymity, and as part of that provision both the participants and universities have been assigned pseudonyms. The universities have been named: Little Big Town University, Industry State College, and Bright Lights University. Together they form a group that both shares important similarities and also represents key elements of difference in a field of diverse comprehensive universities.

One driver of site selection was consideration of population, both at the level of geographic location and in terms of university size. Since one straightforward element of interest in decisions around faculty hiring may be the supply of qualified instructors, consideration of local population as a proxy indicator of available labor force offered analytic value. Logically, a larger population of educated professionals may enhance the number of available people with advanced degrees for recruitment as instructors. Therefore, the local population size of each university site is notably different in this study. University size is also likely to influence the hiring structures and practices. For

example, a 20,000 student university likely hires more faculty than a 2,000 student university. This sort of difference would have made it more difficult to understand which differences in faculty hiring practices were based on scale versus other factors. For this reason, selected sites were of a similar, medium total enrollment size (at least 3,000 students and fewer than 10,000 students by U.S. Department of Education standards).

Perhaps as a consequence of selecting for similar institutional size, the form of organizational charts turned out to be normative across the three institutions. At the top was the university chief academic officer[21] (hereafter, provost) and possibly an associate provost; in the middle was a college, school, or institute dean[22] and possibly an associate dean; and at the base of the organizational chart was the department chair and possibly an associate chair. One of the sites was in the process of implementing a new dean structure for the first time during data collection. This institution had previously relied on an associate provost to play the role effected by deans in the other institutions' hiring processes, but that had changed by the time the study was completed. In each of the three universities, I studied hiring practices within four units headed by deans (hereafter, "colleges")[23].

One key difference in the hiring structures among the sites was the role of the chief executive (hereafter, president). In one of the sites, the president delegated hiring oversight responsibilities to the provost. In another, the president provided guidance to the central administration (deans and provost) as to the role of faculty hiring in pursuit of

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[21] Titles for this position varied (e.g., Chief Academic Officer, Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs)

[22] One university was partway through the process of implementing a dean system; that was a shift away from having the provost and/or the provost's designee work directly with each department chair on campus.

[23] The scope of responsibility differed among the deans according to the mission and historic college structure of each university (e.g., college of liberal arts, college of sciences, a professional school, a branch campus, etc.).

the university strategic plan. In the third, the president made a practice of personally interviewing most full-time faculty recommended for hiring by the provost, but not part-time hires.

Another key element to site selection involved an attempt to control at least one major expected structural component in faculty hiring processes: union status. All three universities in this study had faculty collective bargaining units, though none of the three sites had very similar union structures. One site had only one union representing all faculty; each of the others had multiple unions representing different faculty designations (full-time, part-time, and sometimes additional designations; at one site part-time and full-time faculty were organized by the same union and simply belonged to different collective bargaining units, whereas in the others different unions were affiliated with the different units). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), National Education Association (NEA), and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) were each affiliated with at least one of the collective bargaining units relevant to these sites.

Conceivably, faculty collective bargaining could impact faculty hiring decisions in both direct and indirect ways. For instance, as sectors of a university's faculty unionize and bargain more effectively, administrators and boards might hypothetically consider strategies to employ fewer union-eligible faculty (direct impact on hiring). Likewise, this rationale implies consideration of a strategy of greater employment of non-unionized, or comparatively weak-bargaining segments of the faculty—what is known colloquially as union busting (indirect impact on hiring). These two approaches are not mutually exclusive. In one setting participants shared historical perspectives that both union aversion and union busting had been undertaken simultaneously under a prior

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administration. Since faculty unionization, particularly among contingent faculty members, is growing (Flaherty, 2013), looking at faculty hiring practices within unionized campuses may provide substantive and lasting insights. Therefore, this study focused on three university sites that included collective bargaining with faculty.

Finally, a mix of public and independent university sites was selected in order to compare realities of faculty hiring processes in universities with different finance models and oversight structures. As with the faculty union context, I draw attention to particular areas of relevance and impact regarding control (public or independent) within the analysis. Readers will need to consider for themselves the degree to which the three universities, in whole or in part, comprise a sample that can offer insights regarding other universities' faculty hiring processes. While acknowledging this important difference, in many ways readers interested in public university contexts may also learn from analysis of independent universities and vice versa. For instance, with minor variations, all three sites shared a basic three-tiered structure of faculty employment: full-time tenure track[24] (TT); full-time non-tenure track (FTNTT); and part-time non-tenure track[25] (PTNTT).

Little Big Town University.

Little Big Town University is a public institution whose main campus is set in a city of more than 50,000 in the Eastern United States. While not even one of the 500 largest cities in the country, it is a vibrant hub within its largely rural state setting. Little Big Town draws its history back to the late 1800s, when one of its campuses was founded as a normal school. Over nearly 150 years, the state acquired, merged, and expanded the university to incorporate what are now several campuses in short driving distance under

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[24] All sites employed standard policies of a six year probationary period.
[25] None of the sites had opportunities to pursue a tenure track career as a part-time faculty member.

the same banner. The university's history branches off in myriad ways, involving junior colleges, preparatory schools, seminaries, independent colleges, state colleges, and a bevy of closings, openings, reopenings, and renamings along the way. The university is situated within a state university system that collectively answers to a governing board appointed by the governor. The university has no local board[26].

Little Big Town serves about 9,000 students[27], approximately 80 percent of whom are undergraduates. Total in-state, on-campus student expenses for 2013-2014[28] were reported as just over $24,000, with out-of-state, on-campus total expenses approximately $36,000. About 90 percent of students receive some financial aid, with just over one-third of students receiving federal Pell grants. About 40 percent of undergraduates attend on a part-time basis, and fully one-third of students are of nontraditional age[29]. The university admitted more than 80 percent of all undergraduate applicants for the 2013-2014 academic year. The university employs just under 400 total instructional faculty members, only about 15 percent of whom are reported as part-time faculty (all except two being instructional). It is important to note that the Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) relies on institutions to report part-time and full-time employment using their own definitions, so comparisons of part-time and full-time non-tenure track faculty may not be perfect across institutions. Over 100 graduate students are employed at the university, but only about 5 percent of them hold instructional positions (mostly research). Of the full-time faculty, nearly 75 percent are

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[26] Data regarding state governance structures retrieved from the Public Higher Education Boards Database of the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities (AGB) Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance: http://agb.org/ingram-center-public-trusteeship-and-governance
[27] Data cited throughout this section from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), unless otherwise stated, for consistency.
[28] IPEDS reports this number for full-time beginning undergraduate students.
[29] Reported in IPEDS as age "25 and over."

tenured or on the tenure track (TT); of TT faculty, nearly 90 percent have received tenure.

The Little Big Town University mission statement affirms the university is committed to high quality education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The mission statement specifically mentions important values of civic engagement and environmental conscientiousness. The mission statement relays the relevance of Little Big Town's work at the state, national, and world levels. Student access and affordability are listed as important priorities.

At the time of this study, Little Big Town's finances could be characterized as troubled. State appropriations had either decreased or remained flat for the previous five years, and enrollments had fallen. Tuition increases had not been an available strategy to close budget gaps, a majority of university reserve funds had been spent, and as a result a number of staff and faculty positions had been eliminated. Multiple program closures had been proposed, and the university had invested in distance learning initiatives as a potential future source of revenue. The president of the university stepped down as this study was being conducted, after only two years on the job. The previous president held the position for less than five years.

Industry State College.

Industry State College is a public institution set in a city of less than 50,000 in the Eastern United States. The local economy grew up around manufacturing and public utilities in the twentieth century and in many ways holds to that identity today. The City of Industry (another pseudonym) has a single public high school of approximately 1,000 students, which offers an array of opportunities for technical and occupational education alongside the traditional academic core. Industry is the third largest city in its county and has less than half the footprint of Little Big Town's city, in square miles. Industry State draws its history back to the opening of a state normal school in the late 1800s. Unlike Little Big Town, Industry State has never encompassed more than one campus. It expanded to embrace a mission of providing baccalaureate degrees in education in the first half of the twentieth century, and subsequently graduate programs in education, before embracing other disciplines. The campus has grown substantially over the course of more than a century without acquiring or merging with other schools, colleges, or universities. Industry State College is governed by both a local governing board and a state coordinating board, each of which is populated by gubernatorial appointment.

Industry State serves about 7,000 students, approximately 60 percent of whom are undergraduates. Total in-state, on-campus student expenses for 2013-2014 were reported as just over $20,000, with out-of-state, on-campus total expenses at approximately $27,000. About 90 percent of students receive some financial aid, with less than one-third of students receiving federal Pell grants. About 20 percent of undergraduates attend on a part-time basis, and less than 20 percent are of nontraditional age. The university admitted more than 70 percent of all undergraduate applicants for the 2013-2014

academic year. The university employs just under 400 total instructional faculty members, just over 50 percent of whom are reported as part-time faculty; no graduate labor was reported. Of the full-time faculty, more than 95 percent were tenured or on the tenure track (TT); of TT faculty, about 70 percent had received tenure.

The mission statement at Industry State University highlights instruction foremost among the university's endeavors, inclusive of traditional liberal arts coursework and professional programs. The mission also denotes a guiding value of civic responsibility, and it positions the university's services in relation to the region and the state.

At the time of this study, Industry State's finances could be characterized as moderately strong. The state had made small increases in appropriations over each of the previous five years, tuition and fees had increased two to three percent for each of the past several years, and revenue-generating evening programs were considered productive. A sense of modest optimism was in the air, as the campus was underway on highly visible new capital projects. Importantly for this study, participants widely agreed that faculty lines had been secure for a number of years; the provost's office could be counted on to fill full-time openings with full-time faculty hires in cases of faculty departure or retirement. Vacant tenured positions were subject to strategic review regarding possible movement among departments, but none of the participants could think of a recent case in which a department had not been allowed to fill a tenured opening.

Bright Lights University.

Bright Lights University is an independent institution located in the heart of one of the 25 largest cities in the U.S. Its campus consists of space in multiple tall buildings (some greater than ten stories), closely distributed among downtown office buildings,

restaurants, and entertainment venues. Bright Lights, much like Little Big Town and Industry State Universities, draws its history back to the late 1800s, when it was founded to instruct students in a specialized curriculum that would ultimately become integrated with a focus on the arts and liberal arts. The development of the university has entailed a series of mission updates and expansions and early name changes. The university also purchased and sold buildings to move and expand within the city on multiple occasions. However, the history of the university does not include mergers and acquisitions with other institutions.

Bright Lights serves about 5,000 students, approximately 80 percent of whom are undergraduates. Comprehensive expenses for 2013-2014 on-campus students exceeded $50,000. About 75 percent of students receive some financial aid, though only about 15 percent receive federal Pell grants. Only about 10 percent of undergraduates attend on a part-time basis, and less than five percent are of nontraditional age. The university is selective, admitting less than half of all undergraduate applicants for the 2013-2014 academic year. The university employs just over 400 total instructional faculty members, about 56 percent of whom are reported as part-time faculty (PTNTT); if graduate student instructors are included in the definition of part-time faculty, then the percentage of the instructional faculty represented by part-timers rises to 65 percent. Of the full-time faculty, 65 percent were tenured or on the tenure track (TT); of TT faculty, nearly 80 percent had received tenure.

The mission statement of Bright Lights University highlights its instructional role to serve both graduate and undergraduate students. It also emphasizes a guiding value of innovation. Notably, the mission statement seems to emphasize the professional areas for

which the university is known more than the liberal arts. The mission statement does not specify Bright Lights' role in relation to the region, as do the mission statements of the two public universities in this study.

At the time of this study, Bright Lights University was on the cusp of undertaking an ambitious initiative of full-time faculty expansion. The plan includes the addition of dozens of new faculty lines over the next several years. Department chairs believed the hires would include primarily, if not totally, tenure track faculty. While deans equivocated a bit on that promise, all deans shared the explicit goal of hiring more tenure track faculty. This planned growth was emblematic of financial confidence, but the particular focus on tenure-track faculty growth was also instructive of a recent historic context that positioned the initiative as a corrective measure. The previous administration had undertaken a faculty employment strategy apparently intended to be deleterious to faculty collective bargaining. Under that regime, the full-time, non-tenure track (FTNTT) faculty, which was not unionized, was expanded substantially.

Summary

Little Big Town, Industry State, and Bright Lights University constitute a diverse group of research sites, with some of their differences, such as geographic location and control intended by design. Little Big Town is a state university that is set in a small city in an otherwise rural region; Industry State is also a public university but is set in a considerably smaller population center (although one might characterize it as a suburb of a metropolitan area); and Bright Lights University, an independent university, is the epitome of an urban institution. Another important difference among the three lies in their distinct historic missions. Little Big Town is the product of frequent organizational

revision over the course of many decades and has a comparatively expansive mission statement (e.g., high quality instruction, affordability, civic and environmental conscientiousness, and service to state, national, and global needs). Industry State is the product of fewer dynamic transformations by comparison, and its mission was at least more constrained in that a heavier emphasis was placed on service to the region in its mission statement. Bright Lights University has grown into a comprehensive university while touting its longstanding reputation as a professional school from its early days, and its mission might be characterized as the most focused as a result (e.g., innovation, adherence to historic professional focus alongside the liberal arts). Finally, financial situations differed substantially. Little Big Town University is enduring particularly challenging times, having reduced faculty positions through both full-time retirements and reductions in part-time rehires (see Table 1). Industry State has maintained steady enrollments and appropriations with regular, if modest, increases in tuition and state funds. Bright Lights University is entering an ambitious enrollment growth phase, which participants linked to a major faculty expansion plan.

Despite these notable differences, each of these universities also shares important similarities. Each is committed to education at the baccalaureate and master's level, each offers a mix of liberal arts and professional curricular components, and each of the universities describes itself first and foremost in terms of its instructional mission. Therefore, while the three sites' environments are diverse in many ways, the work and the value to society each claims are not so vastly different.

Table 1.

University Site Comparison and Contrast

	Little Big Town University	Industry State University	Bright Lights University
Location	Small City	Suburban	Urban
Control	Public	Public	Independent
Total Instructional Faculty	400	400	400
Percent Part-Time (faculty)	15	50	56
Percent Full-Time (faculty)	85	50	44
Percent of FT that are TT	75	95	65
Percent of TT that hold tenure	90	70	80
Total Students	9,000	7,000	5,000
Percent Undergraduates	80	60	80
Total Expenses: On-Campus*	$24,000/$36,000	$20,000/$27,000	$50,000
Percent Receiving Aid	90	90	75
Percent Pell Recipients	33	33	15
Percent Part-Time (undergraduates)	40	20	10
Percent Nontraditional Age	33	20	5
Selectivity (percent admitted)	80	70	50
Historic Relocation?	No	No	Yes
Historic Mergers/Acquisitions?	Yes	No	No

*Reported as in-state/out-of state for public university sites.
Note: All numbers are approximate to mask university identity.

Descriptive Findings

This section begins by describing the different types of faculty appointments found among the research sites. It then proceeds to map the hiring process onto the organizational chart and describe the roles carried out by the various personnel involved in faculty hiring.

Types of faculty appointments.

Among the three study sites I found three major structural types of faculty, from a hiring perspective: part time non-tenure track (PTNTT), full time non-tenure track (FTNTT), and tenure track (TT). Part time tenure track positions were not available in any of the three settings in this study. Each of the three appointment types I found also encompassed subcategories that are important to describe.

Part time non-tenure track appointments.

One important consideration at the outset is what it means to be a part-time faculty member and how the appropriateness of that nomenclature is assessed. As noted earlier, IPEDS, the Department of Education (DOE) database that observes full-time and part-time status, leaves the parameters of that distinction entirely in the hands of the reporting institution. During the data collection phase of this study, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued guidance on how to count per-course faculty hours toward eligibility for university health plans under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (colloquially known as the Affordable Care Act, or the ACA) (Affordable Care Act alert, 2014). The IRS guidance provides a much more holistic picture of contingent faculty labor than credit-hour assessments alone. However, any future application of that guidance to DOE data remains speculative.

In the absence of more sophisticated instruction on full-time, part-time data reporting from the DOE, it is unclear exactly how the administrators responsible for collecting and reporting this data made such assessments, and the degree to which reported data on part-time status (and thus full-time status off the tenure track) is equivalent and comparable across university sites. Because the study sites are all

unionized, however, the union policies and faculty handbook policies may provide at least some insight as to what could be considered a normative application of the part-time faculty designation.

Only one of the university sites' faculty union contracts and faculty handbooks clearly distinguished part-time and full-time instructional faculty in a manner besides using those self-evident terms. The one that made such a distinction explained it solely in terms of credit hours, which is to say classroom hours. Twelve credit hours of instruction (which typically amounts to teaching four three-credit courses in a single semester) was considered full-time, whereas a courseload of between one and 11 credit hours was considered part-time. Hours spent preparing courses, preparing for class, evaluating student work, holding office hours or otherwise speaking with students outside of class, attending mandatory meetings, and other work are not counted in this estimate of time worked. In practice, all three universities reserved the term part-time for use in referencing instructors on per-course contracts.

Describing the groups in each study site to whom the part-time faculty label adheres is a problematic exercise for multiple reasons. First, the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) does not report data on either the academic disciplines in which individual institutions employ part-time faculty or the course levels they are hired to teach. Additionally, part-time faculty data, like all other IPEDS data, are reported for the fall semester only, and this snapshot may or may not provide a good indication of part-time faculty employment throughout the full academic year. Finally, in attempting to compare race and ethnicity data across institutions one may notice substantial differences in the "Race Unknown" population. In

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Little Big Town University this group represented over 20 percent of the whole, whereas in Industry State University not a single faculty member was reported with unknown race. With these caveats in mind, data on the three study sites do allow some insights as to the character of the part-time instructional faculties in the fall 2013 semester (the most recent available).

Bright Lights University's part-time instructional workforce in the fall of 2013 consisted of a roughly even 50 percent women, whereas Little Big Town (55 percent) and Industry State (57 percent) relied more heavily on women part-time instructors. Given the understanding that the reported population of White faculty is potentially understated in some cases, one can conclude that approximately 75 percent or more of part-time instructors at Little Big Town were White, with Bright Lights (85 percent or more) and Industry State (95 percent) coming in confidently higher. Challenges noted above precluded analysis of whether part-time faculty of color were overrepresented within one gender category or the other.

Three distinctions should be made within the category of PTNTT faculty appointments: non-regular, regular, and separate program part time appointments.

Non-regular versus regular part-time.

Non-regular part-time faculty, known in at least one setting as "occasional," are instructors of least status. Like other part-timers, they are hired on a per-course, per semester basis. However, they are distinct from regular part-time faculty by the lesser continuity and duration of their service. In some settings, union contracts delineate rewards for part-time faculty who have achieved seniority (e.g., retention of courses;

regular course loads; prohibitions of non-renewal if the department also appoints non-regular faculty). Joan, a department chair at Little Big Town explains the difference in her university:

> At the very bottom of this [hierarchy] are the occasional part-timers, and these are people who are hired with one, maybe two courses, if they're lucky, once in a while and depending on need. These are often either very, very young PhDs who are writing the dissertation, or very, very old scholars who are ready to retire or already retired and are trying to add a bit more [income]. Then, the level above here is the regular part-timers, and these are part-timers that are protected by the union contract. Because, if you taught as a part-timer a certain type of course, you should be given the first chance to teach the same course in the future. So, these are part-timers, generally, who teach at least one class per semester if not two. It doesn't mean they're very rich because of that, but they're guaranteed a certain amount of money pretty much every semester.

In practical terms, hiring officers across research sites, typically department chairs and assistant chairs, also expressed strong preference for renewal of part-time faculty instructors over reopening the hiring process. For example, Ted, an associate dean, explained the reward structure for part-time faculty there:

> Well, surprisingly, a lot of our part-time labor force has been here as almost like a tenure thing. We've had a lot of part-timers who've been here for a very long time and so we've had to try […] to keep hiring part-timers even when there is not necessarily in a moment need to do so […]. At this university, we're able to fund

part-timers either through a college, or we have a unit that needs online instructors. So, I'll often try to pressure a unit to put a course in an online format.

Will, a department chair at Bright Lights University made his similar preferences clear:

> There's a contract that the part-time faculty [negotiated] six years ago? Something like that. So we have some requirements: we're required to offer some faculty sections based on their length of service, the number of credits that they've taught here and whether or not they taught the previous semester. So some, I would say [20 percent of them] we're required to offer a section to in any given semester. […] Which is, from a department chair's point of view, it's fine with me, because we know them. We know that they do a great job. So we're happy to have, you know, it hasn't been a burden to have that requirement.

The notion of developing and maintaining a reliable pool of part-time faculty was especially important to department-level administrators, whose time was most heavily taxed by the part-time faculty hiring process. Faculty unions simply codified longstanding departmental practice in creating seniority clauses for part-time faculty.

Related to part-time seniority, department chairs across research sites went further in bemoaning both the lack of professional development and community building that they had been able to accomplish with their part-time faculty. For example, Will noted, "We hire 8 to 10 new adjuncts a year, I'd say, here [at Bright Lights]. So the issue is, how do you mentor them? How do you, you know, some of them don't have teaching experience. And that's what I'm really concerned with." Rob, a former associate chair shared a similar view:

At least in my unit, the burden is not only in vetting [part-time faculty], but

actually, hopefully, getting them to the point where they can be effective teachers.

You know, we typically don't have any trouble finding somebody with the

knowledge or the skill base, but they do not have the experience to—you know, if

you remember back taking classes, you obviously sat there as a student, not as a

faculty to the syllabi and the grading and the objectives. You never thought a

whole lot about them, other than the faculty member presented it. […] We need to

make sure [new part-time faculty] do not get in trouble while they're in the

middle of the course, because often the recovery becomes extraordinarily difficult

to do.

Chairs viewed the relative lack of professional development opportunities, even locally,

for part-time faculty as inhibitory factors affecting pedagogic effectiveness and stability

in part-time workforces.

Exceptions to the comparative lack of professional development and community

building for adjunct faculty typically stemmed from special initiatives and accreditation

requirements. For instance, Tony, a department chair in education at Industry State

explained:

So for instance, the special ed program just went almost all online. They worked

for two years with their adjuncts to build courses online—with the full-timers—to

implement, and their part-time people are all doing online and face-to-face. But

it's been a community. They have special professional development opportunities

for the adjuncts. So when we have [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education] or any visits like that, the adjuncts are part of us.

While accreditors in some professions may have effectively incorporated part-time instructors into their standards and trainings, others have shown explicit concern that part-timers account for too much of a given department's instruction. As Howard, a department chair in engineering at Little Big Town explained, this presents a conundrum:

We were recently quite surprised, or lucky, in finding two or three adjuncts for our Electrical Engineering program that have the necessary skills. They're all faculty from other institutions, mostly retired. And so, we have part-time adjunct support that almost doubles the number of hours that our faculty's providing. When you get this number of 50 percent last semester, last year, we were actually delivering eleven courses with adjuncts and twelve by regular faculty. When the accreditor looked at this number, he indicated that that was a grave problem for us. […] A deficiency—I think more than one deficiency are actually grounds for not granting accreditation to a program.

Chairs found themselves in a tough situation, in that they both wanted to invest more time, effort, and resources in cultivating an increasingly effective cadre of part-time instructors. However, there were clear disincentives, such as accreditation standards, for growing the part-time workforce. Part-time faculty were also not able to serve in committee, advising, and other important roles that full-time faculty could.

Alternatively, the cost of part-time faculty was widely acknowledged to be low. Joan, a department chair in the college of arts and sciences at Little Big Town explained:

And by the way part timers are not really expensive, and they always make

money for the university. Always. So, it's not even a financial reason [if the

department chair is denied a request to hire part-time faculty member]. No matter

what—whatever the dean wants to say—it's not really a financial reason.

Joan's statement says as much about the political climate as the financial one at Little Big

Town University. Even if the chair and the dean disagree about whether the benefits of

some small faculty wage savings outweighs the costs, both sides would readily

acknowledge the budgetary fact that part-time faculty compensation can be offset by the

revenue from relatively few students.

Separate program part-time.

All three of the research sites also employed part-time faculty to execute separate

educational enterprises. For example, Little Big Town University offered a year-round

online education program, which administrators viewed as both a service to degree

completion rates, as well as a smart market-based initiative (function as a revenue

center). The online program had no standing faculty, and it employed an executive

director (and a small staff; non-academic) in lieu of a dean. The executive director

coordinated with deans in order to build an approved, complementary curriculum that the

traditional academy had come to view largely as a mutually beneficial relationship.

During a time of deep budget cuts and faculty retrenchment, the online program offered a

second chance for departments and colleges that no longer had the instructional capacity

to continue providing important courses as a part of the curriculum. Ted, an associate

dean explained:

We used to allow [the full-time faculty] to teach overloads, which gives them extra money in teaching online and then in this case, units that need part-time instruction [get help] by pushing [their costs] over there. It brings more courses and makes more available courses for this [non-traditional student] population. So one of the strange things in terms of process is that [in the colleges] we have budgets but they aren't at all related to any revenue that we bring in. So, we've been cutting part-time faculty and a lot of our faculties, and why are you doing this? It's actually harming revenue. But the only thing we control really [and that our performance] can be measured upon is not revenue but only cost. In our online unit, they're actually run a little bit different. […] We're still in control academically of what they put up in our college, so they can't just go out and hire part-time faculty on their own. They have to ask us if it's okay to put these classes up in the college and then also work with the departmental units, but they have a little bit more flexibility over their budget, in part because they are responsible not only for their cost but their revenue. And so, we get budget cuts; they get revenue targets. It's a little bit different in terms of what the incentive structure is, but we work pretty collaboratively with them.

At Industry State University, both a commitment to public service (e.g., teacher training, nursing, etc.) and the market-based pursuit of revenue contributed to robust evening and off-site programs. Unlike the online program at Little Big Town, Industry State's nontraditional programs were largely overseen by the standing faculty, although they were rarely staffed by them (i.e., mostly part-time faculty). At least part of the reasoning behind the integration of the evening programs under the auspices of the

standing faculty was also regulatory. The disciplinary accrediting bodies for these professional programs enforced strict standards. As a result of this regulation, administrators at multiple levels valued the service of the standing faculty to evening programs. The distance to instruction sites, such as schools and health centers, as well as the challenges of reconciling schedules were inhibiting factors for standing faculty moonlighting as part time instructors in evening programs.

In summary, part-time faculty appointments took any of three basic forms across the study sites. Occasional, or part-time faculty members without seniority, had no reasonable expectation of work at the university from semester to semester. Regular part-time faculty constituted a core pool of part-time labor upon which department chairs continually relied for instruction, and in return for that reliability faculty unions were able to bargain for some additional rights. Finally, separate program part-time faculty were sometimes full-time and tenure track faculty members moonlighting in summer or evening programs as part-time instructors, though in other cases they were not. These programs constituted an administratively separate unit in all of the universities, and the degree to which they consulted or relied upon the traditional academic departments varied considerably.

Full-time non-tenure track appointments.

Full-time non-tenure track appointments comprised the appointment type that was least translatable across study sites. In two study sites, Bright Lights University and Little Big Town University, mid-level administrators (e.g., associate deans, deans, and associate provosts) enjoyed wide latitude to construct FTNTT job titles, responsibilities, and pay. At Industry State University, by contrast, a faculty union contract severely

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restricted the use of full-time faculty off the tenure track. In the sites where these positions were common, an array of clinical, Visiting-Professor-of-, and -In-Residence job titles had proliferated over time. As one dean, Matt, noted, FTNTT salaries on his campus were the only ones not subject to collectively bargained pay steps (based on seniority and promotion) and were thus a point of both organizational flexibility and personal consternation:

> [FTNTT] faculty [pay] is completely unsystematic right now, and I'd say we're trying to figure out how to systematize it better, because I always have [FTNTT] faculty members in my office, often saying, "I'd like a raise. I'd like my salary adjusted." […] I'm constantly negotiating with these people, and mostly just saying, "I can't do anything for you," which makes me feel bad, and them feel not so great. So, I have to try to pull off this tricky thing of saying, "We're really happy you're here. We really value your contribution, I cannot pay you."

Matt went on to explain he usually has five or six of these difficult conversations each year, typically coming "in a wave" in June, as FTNTT faculty contracts are renewed. By comparison, he found FTNTT pay irregularity posed a unique challenge to him in two ways, as opposed to collectively bargained faculty pay. First, it resulted in a small but important imposition on his time during the final month of the fiscal year. Second, and in his mind more importantly, it consistently harmed both the faculty members' morale and his own.

Differences in FTNTT appointments hinged on three points: duration of term, renewability, and job responsibilities. Will, a department chair at Bright Lights University explained the role of the least status FTNTT faculty in his university:

We do have one small class of faculty who are full-time, non-tenure track, one year only—limited term. And they cannot be renewed. Those folks we pull from our [part-time] ranks, okay? So we have two faculty members who were [part-time], to whom we've offered full-time positions. And we're happy for them. Problem is, now they're going to go back to [part-time status]. But it gives them full-time experience and gives them better benefits and stuff, at least for that year.

It is important to note that hiring FTNTT faculty on a one-year basis was a controversial issue, as it could easily turn into an exploitative relationship between the university and faculty. Industry State University had a faculty union that had successfully opposed such hires beyond a two-year duration, because at that point, they argued, the position would be proven either sufficiently valuable to maintain or expendable. Brent, an associate provost explained the underlying principles of FTNTT faculty there:

Other than [clinical faculty whose responsibilities have to do with student supervision in the workplace rather than classroom instruction], all of our full-time faculty are the same. They come in at the same terms, they have the same requirements, same teaching loads, same responsibilities, etc.

The clinical faculty at Bright Lights University were one example of least status FTNTT faculty. Another included both the clinical faculty and the rare one-year renewable faculty members at Industry State.

There was also a class of one-year renewable FTNTT faculty at Little Big Town University, which was closely managed by deans and provosts because of the "just cause" rights the faculty union had successfully bargained into the contract. Just cause

faculty were those who had been hired on one-year, renewable contracts for six

consecutive years. After six consecutive years, the contract said, the faculty member had

de facto proven themselves indispensable, and they would be provided job protections

that were only less robust than tenure protections in that in situations of financial

exigency the just cause faculty members would be laid off before the tenure track faculty.

The just cause policy may have derived from American Association of University

Professors (AAUP) advocacy against the growth in FTNTT positions across the nation in

the 1970s and 1980s. The AAUP's report, *On Full-Time Non-Tenure Track Appointments*

(see Kreiser, 2006) makes clear the group's position that full-time faculty should, at the

conclusion of a probationary period, not have lesser job protections than tenure line

faculty. The just cause policy would seem to support that principle. In practice, as Joan, a

department chair at Little Big Town noted, just cause functioned differently:

> [Just cause faculty are] definitely treated as every other tenured faculty [member],
>
> because they're here for life, unless their contract gets retrenched. In that case it's
>
> a broader discussion within the members of the department, because if someone is
>
> in a one-year contract that has been repeated, once you get to year number four,
>
> generally there is a stronger discussion around [rehiring]. And very often no
>
> matter what the [department's] recommendation is, the administration will simply
>
> stop the contract period at year number four, because they know that the time is
>
> almost up for the person to become just cause. And so after four years, for
>
> instance, the person will not be hired because the contract is over, and then two
>
> years later we start over [rehiring for] one year, one year, one year, one year, one
>
> year, until they are at four or five, and that's it. So, there is this game played with

these people, and that's why very few of them are just cause, because they generally became just cause like 20 years ago, when there wasn't this focus about cutting down on the budget.

In one way or another, across all three study sites, one-year renewable FTNTT faculty lines had become a problematic manner of hiring.

The preponderance of FTNTT faculty at Bright Lights and Industry State Universities were employed under renewable three-year contracts. As opposed to the one-year, non-renewable hires, these positions were structured similarly to tenure track positions, with some key differences. First, these positions were filled through considerable search processes. In fact, while the policy requirements for national searches for these positions were often waived through a dean's office, the timelines for advertising, searching, and selecting among candidates for faculty search committees ranged from roughly three months (a summer search) to a year.

A second difference between the three-year contract and tenure track faculty regarded their job responsibilities. Tenure track faculty were responsible for producing some kind of scholarly work in addition to teaching and instruction (e.g., scholarly articles, academic books, art, films, performances, etc.), whereas most of the FTNTT faculty would be evaluated entirely based upon their teaching evaluations and service productivity (sometimes including—at least in one study site—service on appointment, promotion, and tenure committees). This general description of FTNTT responsibilities seems intuitive enough, but as Ryan, a dean at Bright Lights University explained, the fungible nature when one gets into the details of the agreements with this group really shows it represents a uniquely diverse, flexible amalgam of people:

[Many of the] full time faculty members without tenure that in our program are Artist-in-Residence of some sort, and I think the idea of having artists in residence is that you've got somebody who has an active professional career as a writer. So, we have writers in residence—or as a film maker, or as a playwright, or as a theater director, and the idea is to have people who are working in those professions in a significant way come in and share their experience with the students. They do that for several years, and then they go back to being working professionals. I think that's how it's supposed to work, but it doesn't work that way here. So, we hire these folks often through regular job searches, so regular academic job searches, which we would [use to] hire for a tenure track faculty member, which I think, sets a whole range of particular expectations, and then those people just become regular, principally teaching faculty. So, we're not expecting them to do the same kind of scholarly or creative work that they would do if they were a tenure track faculty member. Part of the reason we hired them is because they have this active professional life, so there's this strange contradiction there. And then, they become, kind of, regular teaching faculty members, and they get treated differently in different departments. In some they do service; in some they vote on departmental matters; in some they don't. I mean, it's a mess. Then we have this whole other group called Distinguished Artist-in-Residence or Distinguished Writers-in-Residence. Those folks are kind of people in the top of their field, like really well recognized writers, and really well recognized artists who teach maybe one class a year, or two classes a year,

and they provide, kind of, marketing for our institution, and that's a whole other

category.

The flexibility of the renewable three-year appointments made them attractive in different

ways to multiple audiences. Department chairs, deans, and provosts could craft a role to

meet their needs, and they could find creative ways to make a role appealing to high

profile individuals looking for a nuanced set of responsibilities.

Tenure track appointments.

Tenure track hiring across all three study sites followed longstanding norms in

American higher education. That is, following a probationary period of six years

(possibly accumulated across multiple universities), academic departments would have

the opportunity to evaluate and possibly grant substantial life-long job protections to

faculty on the tenure track. Tenure was typically accompanied by a promotion, from

assistant professor to associate professor, and eventually a second promotion could be

possible, from associate professor to professor. The job protections conferred by tenure

include rights of due process that prevent the release of faculty members at the will of the

president for reasons other than financial exigency. These job protections, alongside

disciplinary norms, resulted in tenure track faculty positions being viewed as of core

importance. Tenure track appointments were implicitly the standard against which other

faculty appointment types are compared by participants in all three study sites. Table 2,

on page 143 describes the full array of faculty appointment types.

Three overarching types of faculty appointments emerged from the data collected

for this study: part time non-tenure track (PTNTT), full time non-tenure track (FTNTT),

Table 2.

Faculty Appointment Types and Distinguishing Features

Type	Subtype	Description/Definition
Part-Time		Per-course contracted instruction
	Non-Regular/Occasional	No formal expectation of rehire
	Regular	Collectively bargained right of first refusal for instruction of courses based on seniority and satisfactory evaluation record; dependent upon course offering and within formal part-time faculty maximum credit hour limits
	Separate Program	Ad-hoc employment based on separate unit hiring processes, networking, and responsiveness to job postings
Full-Time Non-Tenure Track (FTNTT)		Non-continuous contracts of a duration of not less than one year
	Non-Renewable	One-year contract; regional search, often abbreviated in duration; explicitly temporary, with little or no opportunity for rehire
	One-Year Renewable	One-year contract; national search requirement may be waived with dean approval; full search; opportunity for rehire determined based on teaching evaluations, enrollment demand, departmental service burden, and dean/provostial review
	Multiple-Year Renewable	Typically three-year contract; national, full search; opportunity for rehire determined based on teaching evaluations, enrollment demand, departmental service burden, and dean/provostial review
Tenure-Track		Continuous employment with protections
	Assistant Professor	Probationary status (six years); full search
	Associate Professor	Tenured; full search
	Professor	Tenured; full search

and tenure track (TT). Each of the three overarching types was also attended by subtypes

that were distinguishable relative to one another in important ways. Many of these faculty

types became preferred under certain conditions by decision makers or otherwise profited

from decision systems in terms of their proliferation. In the next section I describe the basic steps by which faculty hiring occurred in practice.

The Process of Hiring Faculty.

Among all three study sites, I found two basic faculty hiring processes: one for tenure-track and FTNTT faculty—with little to no distinction between the processes yielding those hires—and one for part-time faculty. These processes were fundamentally separate and served different organizational purposes. A second context that is important to remember from chapter three is that part-time faculty who have worked in the past must be rehired each semester, with no formal expectation of future employment. However, the data in this study revealed rehiring to be important to the cultivation of a stable part-time faculty workforce and procedurally different from initial hiring. I note those differences throughout.

Tenure track and FTNTT hiring: from the bottom up.

The data revealed two ways in which tenure track and FTNTT faculty hiring proceeds in a bottom-up fashion: position requests and selection and approval. Position requests moving from a department to the dean and being passed from the dean to the provost often represented the first response of participants when asked how faculty hiring occurs. That is, in consultation with faculty department chairs would identify either a shortcoming in the department as currently staffed (e.g., not meeting enrollment demand), or they would identify an opportunity of value (e.g., offering coursework in an important new area of the discipline). Typically, chairs would identify needs in consultation with the faculty, but it would then be their responsibility to persuasively relay a request to hire a faculty member upward to the dean's office.

From there, the dean may halt the request and refuse to present it to the provost for final approval, the dean may approve and forward on to the provost, or more often than not the dean may ask questions (constructively or skeptically) before determining which stance to take. Ted, an associate dean at Little Big Town University explained his philosophy as the point of contact for department chairs on position requests:

> [I'll advise chairs either] "Right now, strike while the iron is hot," or "Hold up for a couple of months. Things might look better." […] It's kind of like another dean, a friend of mine in [another college], always talks about. For the end of the fiscal year, he would have files of projects of how to spend—[equipment needs] and this and that. It's kind of like that, where we know where the real outrageous gaps are in our units. And so, any time there's going to be an opportunity, we're ready to go. Kind of informally, the dean does that—we've talked through rankings of what the highest need is. So they're sort of ready to go when the call comes through.

After meeting with the provost's approval, a position request typically went through a series of perfunctory oversight procedures. For example, position requests at Little Big Town University were filled out using an online form, which then required the signatures of the dean and the provost but also the college human resources liaison, the university human resources officer, the chief finance officer, and the president. Given the extraordinary budget constraints at the time of data collection, the nature of the president's oversight of the process was far less perfunctory than it would otherwise have been. It took a presidential exception to open even a replacement position. However,

under normal circumstances the substantive final approval came from the provost, and that could be said of the other study sites as well.

Given approval of the position opening, for both tenure track and FTNTT appointments, the department chair proceeded by identifying a search committee of faculty members in keeping with the local policies and traditions for representation and diversity. A human resources officer would then provide training on compliance with applicable laws and university policies. The dean's office would work with the search committee and the department chair to finalize a position description and advertisement language and to post notice of the opening. The search committee would receive application materials and select several candidates (usually three to five) to bring to campus for a day of interviews and demonstrations of teaching and possibly research colloquially known as a job talk. During the campus visit the candidates would also interview with the dean or an associate dean and the provost or an associate provost. Some agreement on a rank order of preferred candidates would be sought among all interviewing parties, and then the search committee would move as swiftly as possible to make an offer.

The delegation of responsibility for oversight of full-time faculty hiring processes to the provost was normative across all three study sites, but it is also important to note the nuanced character of the bottom-up flow of position requests at Industry State. The president there, Fred, had implemented one additional step for all full-time faculty hires of a roughly 30 minute final stage phone call with him, one on one. He guessed he does 18-20 of these calls each year, and this is how he described his role:

What I say to them on the phone is, look, you're highly recommended. I wouldn't be talking to you if you couldn't do the job. But I want to tell you how I see the university, and where the university is going, and to see if you fit into that. And that's why I do it. I talk about the culture of the university. I talk about the work ethic. I talk about being student centered—I don't talk very much about their academic credentials, because I know them. They've been tested, they've been vetted out […]. It really connects with the faculty that the president has an investment in the institution, and it makes a big difference.

Even here, where Fred has carved out a unique additional role for himself in the process, the purpose was not to provide an additional level of oversight (although he had recalled two occasions in which candidates had performed so poorly he had recommended the search committee to go with their number two choice). Rather, the goal of the president generally remained perfunctory with regard to the basic approval of the hire but additionally informative toward the candidate who was nearly certain to receive an offer.

From position requests through selection and approval, those processes originated with department chairs and flowed upward to central administration. These processes were widely considered traditional, and some participants, like Joan, a department chair at Little Big Town, described them as "ideal." These processes varied remarkably little between tenure track and FTNTT faculty appointments.

Tenure track and FTNTT hiring: from the top down.

In several ways, tenure track and FTNTT hiring also emerged as a top-down process. That is, provosts and deans shaped department chairs' understanding of hiring

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contexts by conveying: funds, market information, and operational strategies and priorities. In most cases they also provided enrollment data as a measure of existing faculty productivity against which they could gauge the financial value of adding new positions. However, department chairs who participated in this study had also begun to develop their own redundant and supplementary data systems. The consistently unique contributions to departments from above, then, potentially included funding, market assessments as to whether additional faculty members would prove fiscally sustainable and beneficial, and also messages about the alignment of proposed new positions with strategic goals and priorities.

Once again, university presidents played somewhat idiosyncratic roles in initiating the flow of these resources from the top of the organizational chart. Recall the previous discussion about the hiring freeze orchestrated by the president of Little Big Town. The message in terms of strategic priority was clear, and that was to say the university would focus on cutting expenses almost exclusively. At Industry State, the president played a much more modest top-down role than a bottom-up role. He neither opposed the hiring of new faculty nor stated at the outset what the character of those hires should be. He was, however, ultimately responsible for ensuring the university budget effectively funded faculty labor costs, and the responsibilities for executing faculty compensation was funneled down through the provost, dean, and department chair levels of the university. Thus, information flowing from top-level management to department chairs also influenced faculty hiring.

The president of Bright Lights University, who I have not yet discussed, inhabited the highest level of a considerably top-down faculty hiring program. He interpreted the

university's strategic plan in such a way that he decided to embark on a multi-year full-time faculty hiring project, which would add approximately six to eight new full-time positions each year over five or more years. He delegated execution of that strategic priority to the provost, and the provost worked with the deans to develop a program of interdisciplinary faculty cluster hiring that would be overlaid atop the bottom-up position request, selection, and approval process. This program would account for at least four of the total new positions in each year of the planned full-time faculty growth. Greg, a dean at Bright Lights elaborated on the initiative:

> And [cluster hiring] is happening at other places. There was a piece last fall in the *Chronicle*, an entire ad about it. You know, there's just a lot of talk these days about interdisciplinarity and the need to promote diverse thinking, in terms of cognitive diversity. One way to do that [is to get] faculty from different disciplines working together, teaching together, and get students having the opportunity to work with students and faculty across disciplines. So, a cluster hire then identifies a theme or content area that people from several disciplines might contribute to. […] The position is not so different [from other full-time positions]. It's just got an additional element to it. So, it will still say, your appointment is in what is now the Department of [X], in the School of [Y]. In addition, you will be a fellow in [cluster program Z].

In each instance, whether it's the flow (or lack thereof) of position funding, or the identification of market opportunities and strategic priorities embodied in Bright Lights' cluster hiring initiative, central administrators influenced full-time faculty hiring in important top-down ways.

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Part-time hiring: from the bottom up.

Part-time faculty hiring was primarily a bottom-up process across all three study sites. It was also a strikingly more circumscribed process, rising only to the level of the dean, for only perfunctory oversight. Provided departments had enrollment-based need, deans sought to facilitate the hiring of these low-cost, low-commitment faculty. Some of the situations that precipitated understaffing for classes included unplanned staffing vacancies, like illness, departure, sabbatical, and perhaps even an ill-timed retirement. Most commonly, though, all three universities maintained regular pools of part-time faculty (people with informal expectations for rehire, often for the same or similar courses from semester to semester) just to meet well-anticipated and accurately projected instructional demand. Kyle, the provost at Little Big Town explained his role succinctly: "The provost doesn't get involved in that at all. I don't even sign off on part-time help."

Will, a department chair at Bright Lights University explained the process from his perspective:

> Well, I have, as the department chair, the authority to hire adjuncts. Okay? So, I don't need any right—I don't need to go the dean or to anybody. I mean we have sections that we have to fill, and hiring that adjunct is under my authority, but often times I'll rely on the expertise of [an associate chair]. So let's say we have a section of [Course X] that's open. So then we say, okay we need to find adjunct faculty. If we don't have enough people whom we already know and have experience with, then we'll say, "Okay, does anybody [in this department] know anybody who would be good?"And then we'll you know, look at their CVs and then chat with them. Not a heavy-duty formal interview but at least, you know,

some kind of familiarity with them. And then they join us. So it's not like that

decision needs to go any higher than my office.

Due to the budgeting approach at Bright Lights University, the faculty member Kyle

hired would be compensated out of the dean's budget, but when the enrollment need was

clear, Kyle operated with full confidence he would receive the funding.

By contrast, the hiring of a part-time faculty member at Little Big Town

sometimes took extra effort on the part of the dean's office in order to facilitate the

request, and sometimes, due to the budget constraints passed on to them by the provost,

they were simply unable to facilitate even well-reasoned part-time hires. This was

frustrating, because as Ted, an associate dean there noted, the financial proposition of

part-time instruction virtually always represented an opportunity to generate revenue:

> One of the things that's really difficult and problematic is and one of the reasons
>
> why we've had, we've relied on adjuncts less than others is we've had to make
>
> budget cuts, and it's one of the only places we really had a lot of discretion. So
>
> even though, in a broad sense, universities rely on adjuncts because it's incredibly
>
> profitable—the cost of labor is low, and they usually teach classes that have large
>
> number of students—here, we've had to make budget cuts. And to this point,
>
> there's been no real stomach to lay off more expensive faculty and permanent
>
> faculty, so that's been the only place we can really find [places to cut].

Ted did go on to talk about one way in which he's been able to facilitate some critical

part-time faculty hiring at times, but as I explain in the next section, that opportunity

emerged as a top-down process for hiring part-time faculty, not a bottom-up process.

Across all three study sites, oversight of part-time faculty hiring was conducted on a perfunctory basis and only at the middle management level of administration (i.e., dean's office personnel, or in the absence of a dean structure an associate provost). Financial distress combined with central budgeting models resulted in dean's office personnel often being unable to facilitate the hiring of part-time personnel either as freely as they would have preferred, or as made good sense in their view for the budget. However, hiring decision processes for part-time faculty were largely bottom-up and were remarkably simpler and easier across all study sites than those for full-time faculty.

A notable exception to the perfunctory character of dean oversight in part-time hiring came when a part-time faculty member received poor student evaluations. Such an occurrence was often noted by deans, who then responded by investigating the situation with department chairs and perhaps even blocking the rehire of the faculty member. Greg, a dean at Bright Lights University shared the following example:

> Just in June, in one department there were three part time faculty members with somewhat problematic course evaluations from the spring. I spoke with the Chair, he looked into them. His feeling coming back was that one of the three should not be rehired, one should be rehired but needs some counseling and guidance (and that he would do that), and then in the third case there were two [course] sections. One wasn't so strong, the other was very strong, and the person has a long history of successful teaching, so it was fine to go ahead there. And I concurred in those decisions.

Greg went on to provide some context for part-time faculty hiring processes by sharing information that was mostly consistent across all three faculty sites: "On the initial hire

phase, a CV and recommendation letters, and previous experience are crucial. At the rehire phase it really is pretty much the [student] course evaluation, unless other anecdotal information just comes to the Department Chair." The one exception to the finding that given continued course demand part-time faculty might informally anticipate continued teaching opportunities was to be found at Industry State University, where part-time faculty members are subject to a mandatory classroom observation by the department chair each semester. This gave the dean one additional source of data, besides student evaluations, which could trigger an intervention against rehiring the instructor.

On the whole, though, deans provided only perfunctory oversight of part-time faculty hiring. Department chairs held greatest responsibility for those decisions, and they showed strong inclinations for rehiring as often as possible, versus conducting fresh searches. Melissa, a union official at Bright Lights University summed up the preference for rehiring part-time faculty: "[Department chairs] are hoping to rehire the adjunct to do the same thing again, or to do another course, because it's a big hassle to hire people."

This approach fits well as an example of the decision making concept of satisfice: selecting the first option that satisfies predetermined criteria. Rehires were typically the first available option to find instructors that had met the singular criterion of not having received a poor evaluation in the past. This central criterion for continued part-time employment, not of having performed remarkably well but of having avoided performing remarkably poorly, was distinct from criteria applied to full-time faculty both on and off the tenure track. Full-time faculty were assessed based on their accomplishments, not the absence of failures.

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Part-time hiring: from the top down.

Two examples of top-down hiring decision processes emerged with regard to part-time faculty. In the first instance, recall the comments in the previous section by Ted, the associate dean at Little Big Town University. He was often frustrated at having his hands tied by budget cuts in being able to facilitate the part-time faculty hiring requests of department chairs in his college. One avenue that was sometimes available to him in helping department chairs to staff the necessary courses was to help them find a part-time faculty member to teach that course through the university's separate evening and online program. He explained:

> I had to cut a lot of part-time salary last year, and so one of the classes that fill to capacity every time is [Course X], because a lot of majors require it. We ended up putting all of our [Course X] classes at 5:30 pm or later so that we could get this [online] unit to pay for them. So, we didn't have any [Course X] classes during the day, only because we have this university rule that for this other unit to pay for our class it had to be either online, or after 5:30 pm, or on the weekend. So we're scheduling based upon this sort of arbitrary rules just to get around various budget issues, and it's not really related to the needs of the student or anything, but it's just a pure bureaucratic function. So it can be an odd situation that faculty find a little bit maddening, and I guess administrators [like me] do as well.

The president, provost, and vice presidents of the university had identified evening and online education as one of very few growth areas into which they were willing to invest money from the shrinking budget, and thus they created the online unit as a revenue center and not just a cost center—a sharp divergence from the budget models employed

with academic units. Thus, top-level administrators influenced part-time faculty hiring for online courses by providing resources, hiring approval, and encouragement for growth.

A second important top-down influence on part-time faculty hiring decisions could be seen in the compliance through the provost's office at Industry State University with the 15 percent clause in the faculty contract. That is, the faculty union has bargained in a cap of 15 percent of course sections in any department being taught by part-time instructors (not including remedial education, and with some additional exemptions). Because the union would hold the university accountable at the level of the president for contract violations, the provost had been charged by the president to ensure compliance across departments with the cap on part-time instructors. The provost's office approached the challenge of complying with the 15 percent rule while also meeting enrollment demand and abiding by course caps by generating and sharing enrollment data with department chairs. Thus, the provost's office ensured compliance with faculty contracts across departments.

The full-time, part-time divide.

To this point, I have described top-down and bottom-up decision processes for both part-time and full-time (inclusive of tenure track and FTNTT) faculty. I have not yet discussed the subject of faculty cross-over between part-time and full-time employment within the same institution. The boundary between full-time employment (whether on or off the tenure track) and part-time employment, was only rarely a porous one. Two avenues emerged from the data by which faculty might cross the divide.

First, tenure track and FTNTT faculty could become part-time faculty by resigning and seeking new employment on a part-time basis (e.g., retiring, or not renewing a FTNTT contract). These types of soft retirements for tenure-track faculty, or accommodation of FTNTT requests to scale back duties, were often viewed as an opportunity to retain experienced, well-evaluated instructors by department chairs. Thus, the rarity of these situations did not preclude organizational interest in accommodating them. Multiple department chairs at Little Big Town noted they had brought back formerly tenured faculty in their retirement to teach classes on a part-time basis.

From the other side, part-time faculty were only rarely afforded the opportunity to make a shift into FTNTT or tenure-track employment. The most common of these rare events occurred when a department was able to make a case for hiring one FTNTT faculty member over multiple part-time faculty. Such arguments could be persuasive in cases of emergency, such as when a FTNTT or tenure-track faculty member would be unexpectedly unavailable. Another persuasive argument would include both an evidence-based assertion that academic advisory and service requirements could not be achieved with a short-handed faculty and that an experienced, knowledgeable part-timer could fill the role on a temporary basis. These arrangements were typically only available for fixed lengths of one year (though in some cases policy included contingencies for a second year of emergency coverage). Following their stint as FTNTT faculty members, those who were previously employed on part-time terms would be required to return to those terms of employment.

This study revealed two examples of exceptions to the challenging cultural barrier between part-time and full-time work. One was a faculty member at Bright Lights

University who had been able to move into a FTNTT position on a multi-year contract basis following her entry into the university as a part-time instructor. Another was Lauren, a tenured department chair at Little Big Town University. She began her story by explaining her entry into part-time faculty work as a moonlighting venture that she continued mainly for personal enjoyment. She continued:

> To be completely honest, I was addicted to the money I was making in industry. You can't compare—I'm still not making what I was making back in the early nineties. But, like I said, one day the decision was made for me [and I was laid off]. Fortunately, a sabbatical replacement was advertised in a nearby small liberal arts college, and I took that. All the while I'm being advised by my colleagues here, at this university, who had been fighting for a new position for a number of years. So, the timing was just right. I was looking for a position, they were fighting for a position, so I took this full-time, one year, fixed length position [at the other college]. I knew with a pretty good guarantee the following year a tenure track position was going to be advertised at this institution. I mean, I couldn't have planned it better myself. You know, I now had five years of experience including full-time. I had history at this institution. I worked with the department, so it really did fall into place. But still, with the full hiring process there was a national search. They brought on four candidates and reviewed them, but I got the position and never looked back.

Lauren's story revealed an exception to the hard and fast boundary between part-time and full-time faculty work. Yet, it depicts substantial difficulty in doing so. With four years of part-time experience on her campus plus industry experience, Lauren had to both gain

full-time experience elsewhere and compete with four other national finalists for a tenure track position before making the change to the tenure track at Little Big Town.

A flow chart depicting top-down and bottom-up decision processes for full-time and part-time faculty hiring across university research sites can be seen in Figure 2, on page 158. In Figure 2, the line dividing the full-time and part-time side of the figure indicates the near impassibility between part-time and full-time faculty employment within the same university setting. The solid vertical arrows represent the consistent flow of the resources listed alongside them (e.g., position funding and the various types of information exchange discussed in this section). The hashed vertical arrows show the situational, or inconsistent, flow of those same resources. Finally, the curved arrows on the part-time side of the figure show the repetitive character of these processes in rehiring.

In this section I shared a descriptive understanding of faculty hiring processes in unionized comprehensive universities. In short, as a process of decision making, full-time faculty hiring presents a more complex and resource-dependent proposition than part-time faculty hiring (and rehiring) does. Full-time faculty hiring requires: a) more time, attention, funds, and information, b) from a greater number of personnel, c) at every level of the university organizational chart, whereas part-time faculty hiring requires few such resources. Importantly, the greater comparative draw of full-time faculty hiring on finances accounts for only part of the much more substantial investment universities make in those faculty members. In the next chapter, I unpack a theoretical understanding of faculty hiring processes in unionized comprehensive universities.

Figure 2.

Flow Chart of Faculty Hiring Processes Across Study Sites

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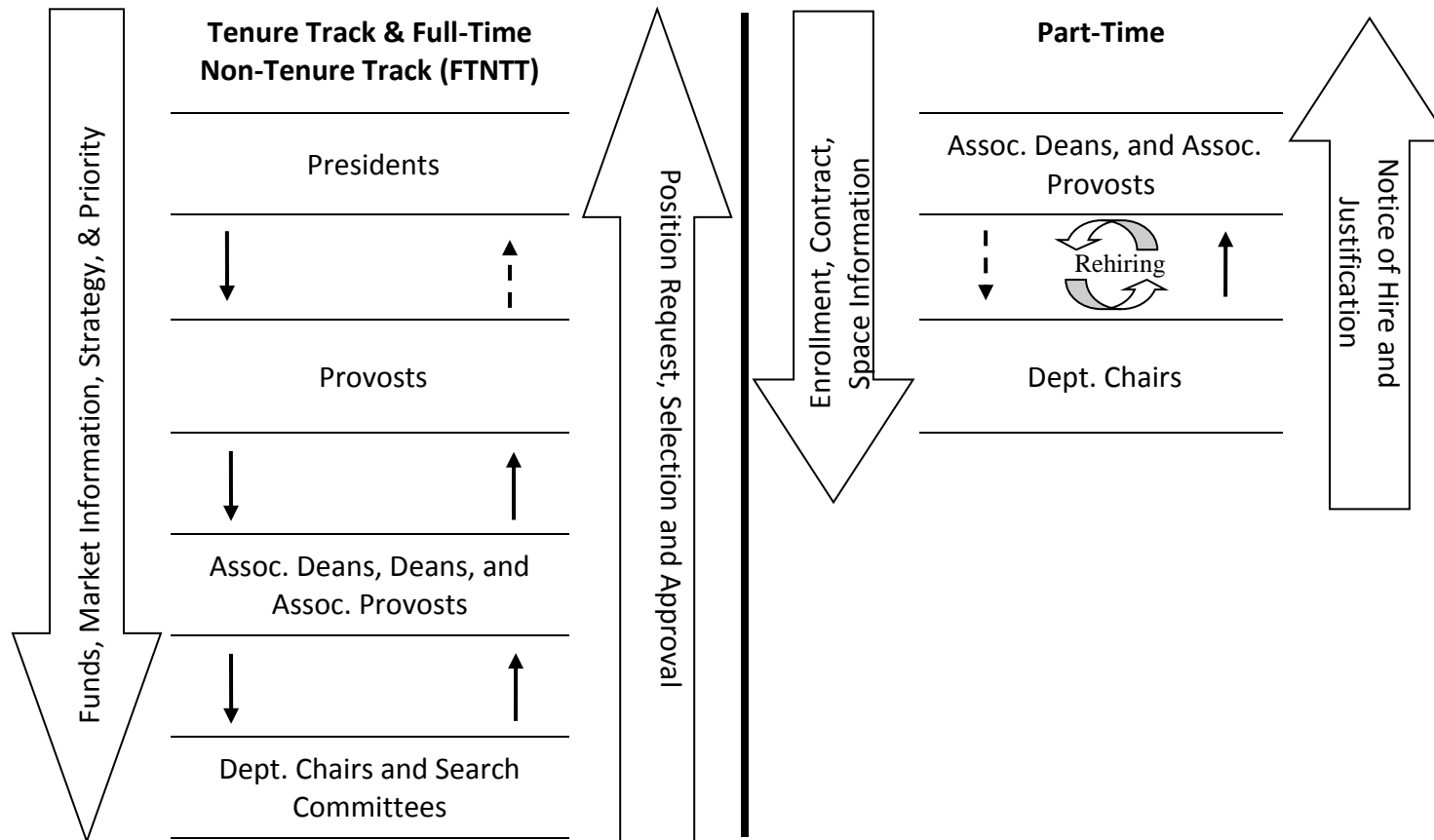
Chapter Five: A Grounded Theory of Faculty Hiring Processes in Unionized Comprehensive Universities

In the previous chapter, I shared the descriptive findings of this study. In this chapter I explain the theoretical findings. In brief, administrators at all levels of the organizational chart (i.e., department chair, dean, and provost) follow a cycle of activities that results in both direct and indirect (or systemic), outcomes in faculty hiring. First, they scan the environments in which they are situated for possible risks to their work including faculty hiring. Second, they perceive risks, including risks of opportunity, from their own viewpoints. Third, and of central importance, they assert decision role changes in response to the risks they perceive. That is, they take action. Finally, they establish ownership of new decision responsibility. A visual model depicting the grounded theory appears in Figure 3, on page 161, and the structure of this chapter follows that of the model in moving from one analytic category to the next.

The core category[30] of the grounded theory I present, asserting role change, represents the point at which a decision maker's cognitive perception of risk results in a behavioral response. Risk responses demonstrated pursuit of changed decision roles so as to either centralize decision control up the organizational chart, or to decentralize it downward. Therefore, risk is a key concept in this grounded theory and one that deserves revisiting. March (1994) initially explains risk in terms of rational choice decisions, for which the value and probability of consequence is weighed and compared across multiple alternative choices. Risk aversion for rational choice decisions thus refers to a decision

---

[30] Recall from chapter three Holton's (2007) explanation of a core category in grounded theory: "Its primary function is to integrate the theory and render it dense and saturated [and explains] how the main concern is continually processed or resolved […]" (p. 279).

maker's devaluation of choices with a low probability of even the most favorable

outcomes (March, 1994). This explains why many people choose not to play the lottery,

but because decision makers in this study did not employ a measured analysis of either

value or of probability in faculty hiring decisions the rational choice explanation is not of

great use here.

In rule following decisions, by contrast, March explains risk-taking as a personal

trait, which my analysis shows to be more applicable to faculty hiring decisions:

> The average risk-taking propensity of higher-level managers appears to be
>
> somewhat higher than that of lower-level managers. One possibility is, of course,
>
> that organizations monitor risk-taking propensity and differentially promote
>
> managers who are prone to taking risks. Alternatively, however, it is possible that
>
> risk-prone managers are promoted not because the organization seeks risk-seeking
>
> executives but because it promotes those who do particularly well (p. 51).

This explanation—the rule following view of risk—has particular utility to my analysis.

It at least partially explains why participants in this study tended to perceive risk

differently according to their titles and specifically why in many cases upper level

administrators sought changes in decision rules more readily than department chairs.

Those who have set themselves apart for promotion often do so by exhibiting distinctive

decisions, not conforming ones. In rule-following terms, risk aversion may carry the

consequence of protecting decision makers from both failure and success. Of course, this

explanation does not account for department chairs who had not aspired to dean and

provost roles as a definition of success (there were several in this study). Nor does it

account for mid-career department chairs who may yet distinguish themselves by their

decisions and thus gain promotion. With these caveats in mind, the grounded theory of

faculty hiring processes that I present in this chapter emphasizes the role of risk in

producing and reproducing faculty hiring processes.

Figure 3.

A Grounded Theory of Faculty Hiring Processes in Unionized Comprehensive

Universities
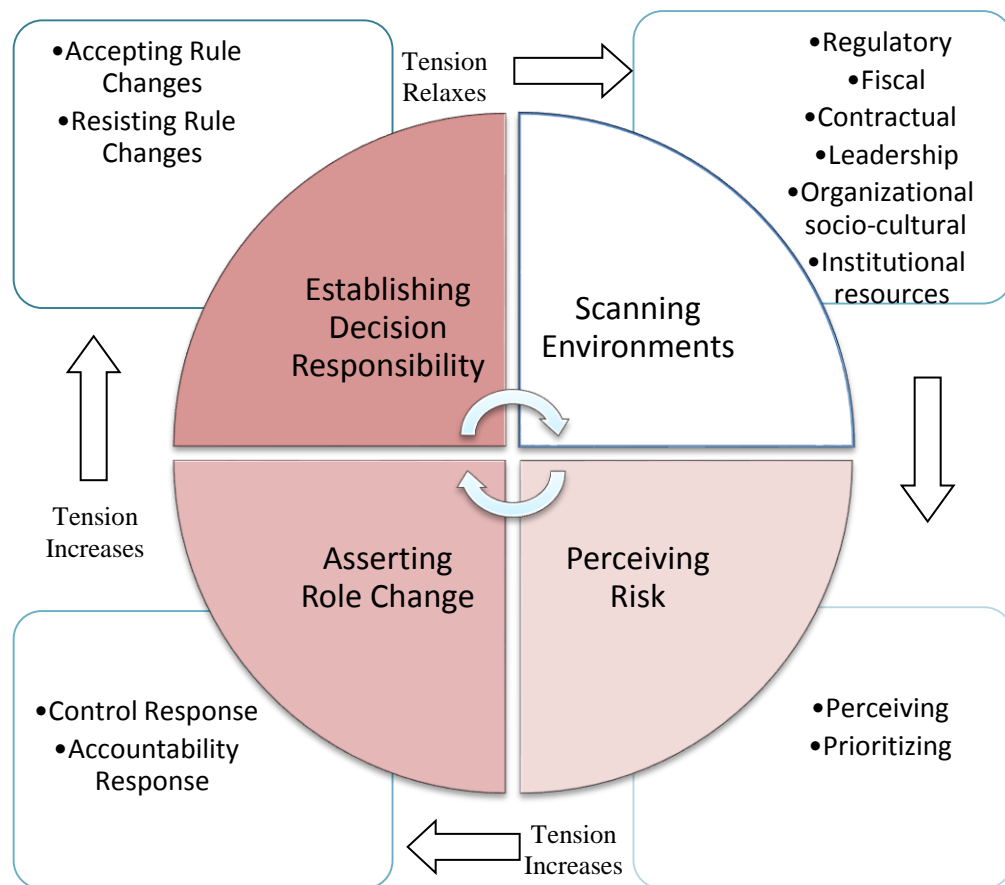
Decision Makers Scan Environments

Decision makers did not conduct themselves in a vacuum. Instead, faculty hiring

decisions occur within complex ecosystems, or environmental contexts. Participants in

this study often intimated the importance of environmental factors in interviews, which ultimately informed the creation of the first category of my grounded theory. These included: regulatory, fiscal, contractual, leadership, socio-cultural, and institutional resources environments. The opportunities available to them in the pursuit of faculty hiring and rehiring were at turns constrained and enhanced by environmental factors. However, the environments alone do not explain faculty hiring decisions. It is a first step to examine which sorts of environments were on the minds of decision makers as I inquired about faculty hiring, and why.

Scanning regulatory environments.

Participants were keenly aware of multiple aspects of their regulatory environments, and these environments often imposed hiring necessities and constraints. For example, Fred, Industry State's president confided the fact that he sometimes portrays a faculty union at his institution to the state legislature as an intransigent, antagonistic organization, even though on the whole he has a solid working relationship with union officers:

> But, that 15 percent rule—that I like, because we are a public institution. We do
>
> have political influence and involvement and intrusion. So, if we have to go [to
>
> the state legislature] for additional dollars, or we're spending more money, being
>
> able to say, "Look, we've got to hire more staff, because we have this obligation
>
> under the contract, which binds us to do that." I use that to our advantage, to build
>
> the institution. So, it is good to have some common guidelines. At times it isn't,
>
> but for the most part, if you ask me whether the union contract got in the way of

me being president at this university, I'd say definitely not. It has not been an

issue. None whatsoever.

Beyond an assessment of union relations, this anecdote implies the president maintains a

sober view of the regulatory relationship between the state and his university. He

arguably employs a savvy technique in carrying out his duty of regulatory compliance by

deflecting some legislative and state agency criticism of university operations onto the

faculty union. I provide this example not because it is indicative of how the many

administrators in this study felt about faculty unions, but because it reflects the finding

that participants reflected readily on the state legislative environment vis-à-vis faculty

hiring.

Another aspect of the regulatory environment participants monitored and assessed

is that of accrediting bodies, both regional (university as a whole) and disciplinary (at the

level of the department or college). For example, Howard, a department chair in a

professional discipline at Little Big Town University had for years been contending with

the stifled growth of his small but vibrant department amid draconian state budget cuts.

At the very top of our interview, he raised the following anecdote:

We have two undergraduate programs in our department: [Program A] and

[Program B]. [Program A] has been accredited for many years. It started with six

faculty members to deliver the program. Currently we have four. The two that

departed have been replaced by two faculty in [Program B]. [Program B] started

about six years—seven years ago, and we are about to go for accreditation. We

understand from anecdotal information that three faculty are a minimum to

deliver the breadth and depth of a [Program B] that is accreditable, and so

currently we have a third faculty of fixed term, one year on board, and we hope to

extend that next year, but we'll go for accreditation. And the only reason we got

that position is because we want to accredit [Program B].

A sizeable portion of that interview continued to focus on the obstacles and outlook for

getting the faculty human resources necessary to program accreditation in place (and in

time) for a successful review process. Clearly, the environment for accreditation

compliance drew attention from decision makers. Participants in this study exclusively

noted the added value of full-time faculty members, and ideally tenure track faculty,

toward achieving and maintaining accreditation.

It is important to note that regulatory environments were scanned for potential

risks, such as receiving a negative accreditation review due to too small numbers of full-

time faculty, by several participants across multiple university sites in this study.

However, in only this one instance was a hiring decision so directly linked back to the

regulatory environment. This finding supports the broader analytic point that indecision,

or the lack of stimulus from potential risk (or recognition as such), is tantamount to a

decision to continue normal routines of faculty hiring without change. That is, perceiving

neither risk nor opportunity, decision makers tacitly facilitated established hiring patterns.

Scanning fiscal environments.

Participants at all levels noted fiscal environments influenced faculty hiring

decisions. This was communicated especially powerfully by Karen, a dean at Little Big

Town University, which was the most financially troubled research site in this study. She

explained:

The first year [in my dean role] I cut $650,000. I have a $14 million budget. The

first year $650,000, the second year $1.2 million, and that's just on top of faculty

who retired that don't get replaced, so I'm not even counting those. I've reduced

my part-time overload budget in the last three years by $700,000. And if you're

paying a faculty member only $3,500 per class, that's a lot of classes. Just do the

math.

The fiscal environment was critically important for participants in this study to watch and

assess, and Karen's view from the dean position suggests some disappointment in the

realized flexibility of part-time faculty. That is, while those positions could be cut swiftly

and easily from the budget, their low wages resulted in only small cost savings, even at

scale. Having reduced its part-time faculty workforce to 15 percent of the total faculty,

Little Big Town University remained deeply afflicted by budget deficits. Yet, those cuts

were easy to make from a bureaucratic and a political perspective, and even small savings

could not be ignored at the dean and provost levels.

Regardless of whether the institution was in relatively strong or weak financial

shape, attention to fiscal environments often precipitated faculty hiring decisions.

Contrary to common economic explanations of faculty hiring, the lower cost of part-time

faculty instruction did not result in increases in those ranks in the one institution in this

study that had endured deep budget cuts. Rather, those positions had been dramatically

diminished in recent years.

Scanning contractual environments.

Where faculty collective bargaining held implications for faculty hiring, study

participants readily shared their understandings of those situations. The most compelling

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example of participants assessing contractual environments stemmed from a faculty

contract clause at Industry State University, which stated no more than 15 percent of non-

remedial course sections in any one department could be taught by part-time faculty. By

contrast, Dan, a faculty union officer at Bright Lights University explained:

> There are long term adjuncts [at Bright Lights]. We have an adjunct union, so the
>
> adjuncts, to a certain extent have been able to negotiate their conditions—I think a
>
> good thing for them, and I'm actually on a committee at the moment which is
>
> considering ways of integrating adjuncts further into the governance of the
>
> university. So there are steps with adjuncts, and the more senior the adjunct the
>
> more benefits accrue in terms of health coverage, and also the more courses they
>
> can teach.

Participants treated faculty contracts as strict legal boundaries to the field of play for

hiring decisions. As with the 15 percent rule at Industry State University, they sought not

to circumvent contract agreements at the point of execution but rather to improve upon

them through the periodic bargaining process. Remaining attuned to the state of

contractual environments was important for participants in this study. In one study site,

faculty contracts only indirectly influenced faculty hiring decisions by setting parameters

for faculty workloads and imposing rules around the distribution of compensation and

other resources that affected central budgeting. In another, the contractual environment

directly affected faculty hiring decisions by requiring a predetermined ratio of part-time

to full-time faculty be maintained.

Scanning leadership environments.

Participants also agreed the leadership of central administrators mattered to faculty hiring processes. For example, Rob, a dean at Little Big Town University reflected on leadership changes and concomitant changes to departmental budgeting, saying:

> I've been doing this for a while, so it depends on the administration. The current administration sweeps [savings from cost efficiencies]. [Under] previous administrations, I kept the money, and that discretionary money became reinvestment money that I could put back in the units. People in STEM subject areas love equipment, love labs and whatever. I was able to often use that money to upgrade their equipment, buy additional equipment, all those kinds of things that they sort of cherished. So, there was a little bit of an incentive to be more cost effective, because they knew that the money I had left over I'd distribute back out to the units and, you know, try to do as fair as I possibly could. When you sweep money you lose that. You lose those discretionary dollars you can use to motivate faculty and encourage innovation and entrepreneurial endeavors.

It should be noted here that campus leadership was both praised and criticized across participant interviews and within them. Participants' assessment of leadership environments often depended on the context of a given issue or initiative. As Rob's example regarding the locus of budget responsibility indicates, the leadership environment could have a substantial impact on the availability of choices to decision makers—especially where budgets and budget policy affected the level of hiring discretion. The decision of whether to propose the hiring of a faculty member on a new

line, the replacement of a retired or a departed full-timer, the rehiring of a regular part-time faculty member, or the hiring of a new part-timer was greatly dependent upon the leadership, or perceptions thereof.

Scanning organizational socio-cultural environments.

Participants noted specific aspects of their organizational and socio-cultural environments, such as organizational culture and internal university politics, which played important roles in shaping faculty hiring mindsets. For example, Will, a department chair at Bright Lights University reflected:

> I think in an institution like Bright Lights, where you have a good bit of professional orientation as well as the liberal arts […] that there's always going to be space and room for [part-time] faculty. So I think we'll always have [part-time] faculty. But the issue is to make their working and living situation positive and effective to allow them to become the best faculty members that they can for the institution.

Bright Lights' origins as a prestigious professional school that only later adopted a liberal arts mission informed Will's tolerant view on the substantial use of part-time faculty instruction. Multiple participants reflected on the idiosyncrasies of their universities, colleges, and units and considered those points of differentiation and identity important context for faculty hiring decisions.

Politically, Joan, a department chair at Little Big Town shared an anecdote about trying to select a candidate for a faculty position while working with a dean who had been the previous department chair in her department:

In the past I had a dean that was from [another] department, and she would trust

anything I would say, you know? I'm [in my discipline]; she's in [hers].

Nowadays that's not true. I have a dean who is from [my discipline], and there's

been a lot more conflicts with that dean, because she's using her knowledge to

make decisions about qualifications that she should not be entitled to make. And

that's a problem, because [contrary to established practice] I will not, as a

department, have the part-timer unless the dean approves it.

Joan's situation was not resolved, but it is clear that her hiring decisions were constrained

by the dean and that interpersonal and positional politics had come to disrupt her

established hiring practices.

Cultural and internal political environments were frequently important points of

reflection for decision makers in this study. They served to inform decision makers about

how to engage their roles in faculty hiring.

Scanning institutional resources environments.

Finally, decision makers noted the institutional resource environment was

important in faculty hiring processes. However, institutional resources—particularly

those deemed to be scarce and therefore of greatest concern—were discussed differently

across study sites. For example, classroom space was a closely managed resource at

Bright Lights University, the urban university, which had an important impact on how the

university staffed its courses. Matt, a dean there, explained the impact of spatial resources

on faculty hiring in an urban institution:

Our [student to faculty] ratio is about fourteen or fifteen to one. Which is pretty

good, and we want to keep it there. And you know right now [Bright Lights] is

also rather distinct from other institutions in that we don't admit anybody that's an

undeclared major. They get admitted into a specific program, and we admit a

specific headcount, because being and urban campus our facilities are really

tightly scheduled from eight o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night. […]

So, we're very exact and tight in our headcount for students, and we base our

faculty needs on that very tight and specific headcount.

The level of importance attributed to the spatial environment was highest at Bright Lights

University because of its scarcity. However, all participants made decisions of whether to

add a course section to meet demand (often using a part-time instructor) with the contexts

of classroom capacity and the capacity of instructors to teach additional courses.

To summarize, participants in this study frequently assessed the many

environments in which their work, including faculty hiring, was situated. These

environmental factors did not alone result in faculty hiring decisions, but in various ways

they pulled on decision makers' attention and set the stage for decisions to occur.

Decision Makers Perceive Risk

Readers will acknowledge my discussion of data revealing participants'

environmental scanning in the previous section as implicit evidence of their perception of

risk. Participant views of risk (including opportunity) were not always evaluative, or the

result of thorough examination of available alternatives. They were often visceral and

instinctive. It is also important to acknowledge that even when participants perceived

similar risks, they in many cases prioritized their concerns differently. These areas of

divergence among participants contributed to disagreement, or tension, among

individuals and constituencies. For example, one department chair at Little Big Town had

built a new academic program over several years, and it had proven to be a modest revenue generator with a good outlook for growth. With a critical accreditation review quickly approaching, the chair needed an exception made to the university hiring freeze in order to assure approval. The provost's concern focused much more narrowly on cutting the university budget to reflect reductions in state funding. Both parties perceived the same risks (the university's failure to cut costs quickly enough and the university's insufficient revenue), yet each saw them in a different order of priority.

Beyond just perceiving risks relevant to faculty hiring decisions, overt and latent messages about the relative importance of some risks versus others were embedded in participants' narratives. Another example could be seen in Bright Lights' interdisciplinary faculty cluster hiring initiative. The subtext in interviews with deans suggested that underlying their enthusiasm for the initiative they had come to believe there might be some opportunity cost (e.g., falling behind competitor institutions in implementing a new strategy, or missing a chance to enhance mission fulfillment by addressing interdisciplinary challenges). From several department chairs' perspectives, opposing the initiative based on the grounds that it was administrative encroachment into faculty jurisdiction over the curriculum presented notable risk. However, the opportunity cost of opposing significant numbers of full-time faculty hiring was greater. Matt, a dean at Bright Lights, acknowledged this situation from his vantage:

> The [department] chairs have seen it as an opportunity to break down barriers and have been very positive about it. The faculty less so. They're a little more inclined to want to hire replacements, clones of what they had, so they're a little less adventurous. But, you know, it's working, and I think the proof will be how well

these new colleagues fit in, and work with their colleagues that are already here, and I think that will work out, so they'll see the value in that, but [the faculty are] not embracing it as much as administration is.

In this brief passage, we note the tension between college and department-level personnel. Matt makes a light but pejorative comment about the cluster hiring initiative being the alternative to hiring "clone" replacements of retiring faculty members. He also describes the initiative as an "adventurous" one (insinuating disapproval of traditional bottom-up hiring by juxtaposition). Finally, he offers optimism that these cluster faculty would "work out," which potentially serves to downplay the amount of risk associated with launching a major hiring initiative. In short, Matt shows himself to be among the several college-level participants who viewed the relative risk of filling a large number of new faculty lines under traditional methods to be greater than that of filling them through an innovative program. Some department chairs held opposing views.

Differences among these understandings and assertions of relative risk set the stage for disagreement as to the best ways in which to respond to those risks. In other words, participants held sometimes divergent priorities in their work, and in many cases the order of their priorities impacted faculty hiring. Importantly, in most circumstances part-time faculty hiring was either not viewed as a risk (nor an opportunity) by participants in this study, and when it was it typically emerged as an issue of lower priority in comparison with full-time faculty hiring. As a result, the issue of part-time faculty hiring often exited the model at this point. This allowed the relational aspects of the hiring process to proceed unchallenged and unchanged and for role tension among decision makers to be avoided.

Asserting Role Change

Participants sought to impose their preferences for change on faculty hiring

processes in either of two ways. Goldstein (2005) surfaces two apt concepts from the

literature on university budgeting decisions, and these hold corollary utility in explaining

faculty human resource decisions, which are partly budgetary. The first concept is that of

a control-based system. The second, by contrast, is that of an accountability-based

system. Goldstein explains:

> At what level should financial decisions be made? Most experts believe that the
>
> best decisions are those that are made closest to the action. In fact, the real issue is
>
> where the organization is on the continuum between control and accountability. A
>
> system of accountability allows greater latitude with respect to decision making
>
> than one that relies on controls to prevent problems from occurring (p. 62).

What becomes apparent from this discussion is the relationship between a control-based

system and an accountability-based system such that they each comprise a different side

of the same coin. Both concepts are defined in relation to each other. In other words, each

is a concept about both control and accountability. In a control-based system, decision

control and accountability are both centralized, whereas in an accountability-based

system decision control and accountability are both distributed. I borrow these concepts

of budgetary control and accountability and adapt them for use in my theoretical model of

faculty hiring decisions. When applied to faculty hiring decisions, I found tensions up

and down the administrative hierarchy increased when accountability for decision making

became separated from control. Regardless of one's place on the organizational chart,

decision makers became uncomfortable when they felt they had a major stake in the

outcome of faculty hiring decisions yet had little say in the matter. Because faculty hiring was perceived to hold such important implications (i.e., risk and opportunity) throughout the university, most participants sought to protect or gain additional decision control.

Multiple participants noted the inexact, or "messy" attributes of faculty hiring. Being aware of the risks entailed in faculty hiring decisions, and in many cases disagreeing over the best path forward for departments, colleges, and institutions, participants often noted discomfort, or tension in the process. In responding to this discomfort, the act of which characterizes this third analytic category of the grounded theory, participants sought to affect either of two changes: a) consolidating central administrative control over faculty hiring, or b) distributing greater control and accountability for faculty hiring to academic units. It is important to recall the impact of environmental contexts (e.g., regulation, fiscal conditions, socio-cultural factors, etc.) in limiting the discretion available to individuals and constituencies. However, one important finding of this study is the proclivity of central administrators for control versus the proclivity of departmental personnel for the same. This point of divergence served to escalate tensions, particularly in cases where one constituency consistently effected its will.

Decision makers employ a control response to risk.

By definition, a control response places greater discretion in the hands of central administrators, such as provosts and presidents. No department-level administrators at any of the three study sites communicated support for greater central control over faculty hiring processes. In fact, many of them complained about the high degree of control central administrators had cultivated, which revealed tension between department chairs

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and provosts. I now discuss three examples of control response: 1) budgetary "sweeping" (participant terminology), 2) administrative programming, and 3) revising the hierarchy.

Budgetary "sweeping."

The control response known as budgetary "sweeping" to participants in this study was present in some form at all three research sites. Sweeping occurs when funds that would ostensibly otherwise remain in departmental and college budgets as discretionary savings instead get taken back by the provost to be redistributed according to her or his discretion. Two examples from the data are indicative of the various degrees to which the sweeping principle can be taken in practice: faculty salary savings and equipment allocation.

For the most part, department chairs in this study were of a subsequent generation to those who had battled against sweeping policies. Lauren, a department chair at Little Big Town University explained:

> I certainly do know of examples of people that have very large […] grants that were maybe over a five year period that did free up money, or in theory provided money for the [primary investigator] to have a course release, but I can guarantee that money did not go to the department. That went to pay the electric bill for some other [unit]. It's the same thing as sabbatical. If you take a half academic year sabbatical, you retain your entire salary. If you take a full year sabbatical, you get half your salary. In theory, on paper, that half salary that you give up is supposed to go toward hiring part-time people to replace you. That's never happened in my entire experience here at this university.

No participants in this study denied the legitimate interest of administrators at higher levels in redistributing salary savings toward strategic priorities, even if they did note the vigor with which they would press to get back a piece of that funding.

The comparative budget struggles at Little Big Town brought the issue of provostial budget sweeps into sharp relief, as evidenced by at least one dean's anecdote of a pitched battle over a departmental expenditure of less than one thousand dollars. Not surprisingly, the provost employed budget sweeps as part of a strategy to reduce the size of both the full-time and part-time faculty, which was not a situation shared by the other two sites. However, sweeping policies were in place in all three. The major difference was simply a lower level of tension among decision makers at different levels due to healthier budgets. Under tight budgets at Little Big Town, I observed protection of accountability-based decision roles down the organizational chart and assertion of a decision role of greater control at the top.

Administrative programming.

Administrators at the provost level, and sometimes at the dean level, in the three university sites showed varying levels of inclination toward greater control over faculty hiring through programmatic means. That is to say, in ways that ranged from mild to strong in juxtaposition, central administrators sought to enhance their roles in faculty hiring. Three examples of these hiring programs stood out, with one per study site: interdisciplinary preference, shared faculty, and cluster hiring.

In the first example, at Industry State University, the provost held the weakest control (and the department chair the greatest) for decisions about faculty hiring. Lauren, the provost explained:

[…] at the adjunct level, usually there's not that much conversation about [interdisciplinarity] unless it's extenuating circumstance. For example, we have one who is a really well known fiction writer, and he worked for a gaming company for just a little blip of time, and his contribution to the gaming company was in building worlds. He was talking to us about having some interest and perhaps teaching for us and was interested in teaching a class on building worlds. Now, when I've had a conversation with the departments on that I've said I want that to be an interdisciplinary class. I want game design kids to be able to take it, but I also want English students to be able to take, and others who might have interest […]. But anyway, for full time faculty if there's an interdisciplinary component that makes that hire of more interest to me.

She went on to explain the administrative logistics behind such hires and how she had a strong preference against joint positions in which more than one department held budgetary responsibility for the position (a view widely shared among study participants). This type of push from central administrators for curricular cohesion across the university met with little resistance among department chairs (recall Industry State did not yet employ deans as of data collection). That is, easing student access to courses across the curriculum was viewed as a legitimate concern of central administrators and was therefore not a point of major tension with department chairs.

At a relatively moderate level of central assertion of decision control, Little Big Town administrators at both the college and university level showed a preference for shared faculty across departments versus faculty who could serve only one department. Ted, an associate dean there explained:

One of the things this university has done is try to embark upon administrative

reorganization that's also all a bit more curricular, and one of my goals has been

that when we start hiring in the future we start thinking about multiple degree

programs. With a shrinking student-base, certain kinds of specialties cannot be

sustained within a single department anymore. For example, 10 years ago, we had

an African-American historian who taught strictly within the history department.

She actually left for another position. The department continually requested a

replacement line. It didn't come through, and then finally, during one brief

window of hiring that we've had a line was permitted, but what we did is design a

position to be an African-American history and politics position so that the

position could be shared between two departments. And it's actually been pretty

successful, because [before the shared faculty approach] the classes didn't really

fill very well because they only really drew off one cohort of one major. […] So,

I'm thinking as we go, if we ever start hiring again, we'd like to see where units

could actually share positions.

Department chairs at Little Big Town did not complain about having to share instructors

with other departments on the rare occasions for which exemptions from hiring freeze

were allowed. The limited possibilities for any sort of faculty hiring at all formed an

important context for deeming shared hires a major success. Deans and associate deans

celebrated these achievements alongside chairs.

Finally, the leading example of a relatively strong control response by central

administration with regard to programs of faculty hiring could be observed at Bright

Lights University, where the provost and deans had embarked on a cluster hiring initiative. One department chair described cluster hiring as:

> […] identifying a thematic area and then hiring, and creating new positions (or potentially modifying replacement positions, but I think most of this was done with new lines) so that you'd have people hired into different departments that all are thematically aligned in one way or another.

The university might hire four faculty members (e.g., one in geography, one in chemistry, one in biology, and one in history), all of whom carry some expertise touching on an interdisciplinary set of problems, such as the preservation of clean water sources.

Steve, a former associate department chair at Bright Lights shared the following experience at the outset of the cluster hiring initiative:

> This year, we had a new provost, and the first thing she did was to block one of our new hires, because she wanted to introduce a new hiring strategy. So, the faculty, the hire and the search that we came back at the new school year intending to conduct didn't happen, because at the very last minute she decided to change the rules, or at least reverse that hiring decision.

Steve went on to temper his discussion of tensions with the provost over the blocked hire and the introduction of a program of cluster hiring: "Our feeling here in this institution is that broadly speaking, in terms of all interactions with administration, things have improved [since the prior administration]." In this case, the department chairs were ultimately a key facilitator of the cluster hiring program. Important context to recall is that after a decade of union-busting and antagonistic behavior between the faculty and the central administration, the new president made a commitment to enter into a significant

growth phase focusing on full-time and potentially tenure-line faculty. Department chairs felt the change in leadership was refreshing, and they were not quick to criticize the manner in which the president's commitment was executed.

Embedded in the faculty hiring plan the president presented, however, was a strong assertion of decision control by the provost. The provost declined to participate in this study (though she did not oppose the study being conducted at Bright Lights), so it is impossible to say what sort of risk stimulus she felt that produced the control response. It may plausibly have been a perceived opportunity risk, as Steve the former department administrator supposed, which is to say she may have simply interpreted her role as an active one and seen the anticipated faculty hires as a mechanism through which she might leave her mark in a positive way.

It is also important to note the provost at Bright Lights University used a deans' advisory council to make team decisions regarding the cluster hiring themes. Between the deans' council support and the relatively warm reception to the overall hiring plan by department chairs, tensions over cluster hiring were not robust. However, provostial assertion of control over faculty hiring decisions was clear.

Revising the hierarchy.

In some ways, provosts changed administrative, or even academic structures, which were attended by latent effects that increased provostial control over faculty hiring decisions. One way in which these effects were realized consisted of adding a layer of administration between department chairs and provosts and implementing a dean structure for the first time in university history. A second example of a way in which a

provost revised the traditional administrative hierarchy was to create a parallel academic program that was not subject to traditions of faculty governance of academic policy.

In the first case, the provost at Industry State University had for some time employed one exceptionally productive associate provost in managing the duties of a traditional dean for all four colleges. This associate provost was well-respected among the department chairs in this study, and he was viewed as a vital asset by the provost. The risk in placing so much operational importance on any one person seems obvious from a structural perspective. If for whatever reason that person becomes unable to carry out those responsibilities (e.g., departure, promotion, retirement, illness, etc.), the organization would struggle to accomplish important work.

This was an administrative problem, and it was solved administratively, by inserting a middle level of management. Four deans, one per college, were in the process of being hired as I collected data for this study. The results of the new dean structure could not be observed during this study, but one plausible outcome, albeit potentially unintended, would be for the new layer of management to act as a buffer between the provost's office and the departments in faculty hiring decisions. Such an outcome would be consistent with the experiences of deans at both Bright Lights and Little Big Town Universities. Ryan, a dean at Bright Lights, explained:

It's middle management, there's no doubt about it (chuckles), so a lot of job is translational. A lot of my job is [saying], "Here's what the department wants," to the provost, and then [saying] back to the department chair, "Here's what the provost says." And sometimes you wonder, why don't the chairs talk to the damn provost and let them hash it out and then they're done with it? But the dean

provides a kind of necessary buffer between the provost and the department chairs, I think. I strategize with both sides. I develop strategy for department chairs to be successful in advocating for the definition of a particular line [for faculty hiring]. Then I strategize with the provost about how to broaden that line to work with the strategic direction of the institution.

As Ryan explains, the dean is not only a mediator for differences of opinion between department chairs and provosts. She or he contributes insight on faculty hiring decisions as with other types of decisions. It is, however, important to recognize a latent effect of implementing an intermediary, which was to transfer some decision making authority from department chairs up to deans and provosts.

In a second example of centralizing hiring control through the hierarchy, all three study sites had implemented revenue-generating academic programs outside of the traditional curriculum, whether online, evening, or summer curricula. In two such cases (Industry State University being the exception), administrators governed not only the administrative functions of a separate unit but the curriculum itself. Dan, a faculty union officer at Bright Lights University shared insights about the administrative governance of summer curricula: "Here, [summer instruction is] almost like a separate college. The department may propose something to [the Continuing Education department], but Continuing Ed is what runs the summer things, and that's I think really problematic." Dan goes on to explain the challenges for part-time faculty who need the additional income in accessing summer instruction jobs, which are limited in number and are often awarded to full-time faculty instead. Administratively run academic units found in the study sites were responsible for revenue targets, not just cost cuts. Designation as a

revenue center was the purview of the provost, or the president, and that person charged these units with assembling a course listing that met market demand. While the administrators in charge of these units often consulted department chairs prior to selecting instructors, the relocation of courses out of academic departments constituted a shift in decision control over faculty hiring up the organizational chart.

In both examples of revising the hierarchy for central control, the implementation of a dean structure and the administrative pursuit of parallel academic units, department chairs widely accepted the change in decision roles. In the case of the new dean structure, department chairs seemed to take pride in adjusting to a more common university structure, and they agreed with the view that the university had a legitimate interest in stabilizing its middle management with a structural change. No one complained. In the case of the administratively run online instruction unit, department chairs were content to use it as an avenue to resources in a time of exceptional budgetary duress.

Decision makers employ an accountability response to risk.

The alternative to a control response by participants was an accountability response. That is, some study participants demonstrated a proclivity for locating increased responsibility for faculty hiring within academic units. Many participants at the department level, and even some at the college level, espoused this view clearly and with some conviction, and this view became manifested in their behavioral responses to risk stimuli. Engaging expertise, negotiating, and "playing the game" (participant terminology) were actions exemplary of accountability responses.

Engaging expertise.

One way to enact an accountability response to a risk stimulus was to engage the expertise of the faculty. Often, department chairs employed an expertise argument in asserting their own authority over hiring decisions, though some were more successful than others in winning over deans and provosts. There were three ways in which, up and down the organizational chart, participant preferences were sometimes well-aligned toward affirming faculty members' expert judgment: academic advising, accreditation compliance, and faculty service to the university (i.e., governance).

Tony, a department chair in a professional field at Industry State University offered a rationale touching on both academic advising and accreditation compliance that yielded accountability responses regarding faculty hiring decisions:

> We know that advising is important and that it's a concept of retention, so we want to do our own advising for our students. And because we're [accredited by group X], we have these very significant gateways through the program. You know, you start out as a freshman, and there's places along the way where we stop them, and we have conversations that, "You're not going to be a [member of this profession. That's not going to happen. We've seen these dispositions. You don't have the content knowledge. You haven't passed certain exams, licensure exams," you know, "your early field work wasn't successful." So advising is important because that's what moves you through the program. All of us do that. Part-timers don't advise, so they don't contribute to that piece of the experience here. That's why we need to have full-timers, so we work at that.

Tony felt he was able to do a good job moving the provost toward full-time faculty hires in his department based on the advising imperative and based on the requirements of the accrediting agency for his discipline. Perhaps because the provost could neither advise every student in Tony's department personally, nor advise them effectively on how to gain licensure, decision roles around defining faculty needs in the department became acceptably located primarily in the department itself—an accountability response.

In addition to advising and accreditation compliance, a third area in which faculty expertise was related to an accountability response was that of faculty service. Participants at all levels and in all three university sites acknowledged the importance of faculty service to the execution of important university initiatives. One of the most forceful explanations came from Ryan, a dean at Bright Lights University:

> So, we have a newer president. The president draws on the former strategic plan and encapsulates a new strategic plan and says we're going to work in these five areas […]. They all involve faculty, and because most institutions have well developed processes of governance you can't make decisions or move forward with particular initiatives unless you have faculty involvement. […] There's just so many ways of working on this, but all of them are going to require some faculty members to participate. So, you run out of faculty, and what we find here is that we're constantly tapping the same faculty members to provide leadership, or energy, or insight into some of these new areas. And, I would say that even if there are no new big initiatives, just things like searches [exhaust faculty time].

The risk Ryan and others perceived here is that the central administration of the university will continue to encounter an opportunity cost for its reliance on part-time

faculty. Specifically, the new president will be stymied in bringing the university into its next phase of development if the faculty service capacity remains insufficient to execute new initiatives. Ryan went on to relate the full-time faculty hiring plan as an accountability response by central administrators. As I have explained, the cluster hiring aspect of the planned faculty growth constituted a control response, so the behavior was complex. To some extent, the interest in addressing the faculty service capacity problem stemmed from administrative self-interest, but behind that reality there was also a real respect for faculty work. Administrative acknowledgement of distinctive faculty roles in classroom and service work shaped a new approach to faculty hiring.

Negotiating for decentralized decision control.

Collective bargaining and agitation for leadership change, two forms of negotiation, were other ways in which department chairs achieved greater discretion in faculty hiring decisions. In the case of the former, Sally, a union officer at Industry State University explained the rationale behind "the 15 percent rule" in the faculty contract, which I have described before:

> Our [union] chapter has very much framed faculty hiring as an important aspect of workload. The previous chapter president framed it very much in terms of class size. If you don't hire full-time faculty, we see a constant trend in class sizes increasing beyond what we set them as when we designed the curriculum. And that's a workload issue, because the difference between having 25 students in your classroom and having 30 students in your class actually makes an appreciable difference on your workload. Also the union is trying to manage issues like workload and advising, because adjunct faculty don't do any advising.

So, if you have departments with a lot of adjunct faculty but a lot of students, the

advising more often becomes very heavy [for the full-time faculty].

Sally went on to explain how the union had effectively repositioned the financial threat perceived by the president related to hiring more full-time faculty as a subordinate one to the political threat of a contract violation on the 15 percent rule.

In addition to collective bargaining's direct influence on faculty hiring decisions at Industry State, organized agitation for leadership change emerged as one factor that could potentially produce an accountability response to faculty hiring decision roles in other study sites. Joan, a department chair at Little Big Town University noted:

However, [faculty unions] have shown multiple times they have the power,

especially over the last three years, to kick out a provost and a president, and they

have done so. So, if it's a matter of organizing the faculty in one direction they've

done that, and they were very successful with the results they obtained. If it's a

matter of pushing back the president and the provost about certain type of changes

or emphasis, they've done that very well also in conjunction with some members

from the state legislature who are more ready to listen to the faculty.

This statement would prove to foreshadow a similar ouster of the president and provost at Little Big Town not long after data collection was completed for this study. The data were less clear with regard to the effectiveness of union agitation for leadership change in producing accountability responses for important decision making, such as faculty hiring decisions.

Playing "the game."

Finally, in addition to multiple variations on wielding faculty expertise and negotiating for control in faculty hiring decisions at the department level, there were at least two ways in which departmental administrators (and some dean's office personnel) suggested they might achieve greater discretion in these decisions by playing "the game," in their words. One was through persuasive, evidence-based argument. The other was through budgetary process changes. Neither avenue emerged from the data as a highly effective one for affecting greater departmental responsibility for faculty hiring, but this did not prevent participants from enthusiastic effort.

With regard to evidence-based argument, despite participant endorsements of enrollment data, teaching evaluation data, workload data, and other metrics in arraying a powerful rational argument (e.g., for new, replacement, full-time, or part-time faculty), traditional methods of bottom-up faculty position requests were reported to be effective in only limited ways. This was troubling for department chairs, because they often felt provosts and deans had emphasized the importance of relying on data to make a rational case for faculty hiring, yet the deans and provosts did not respond on a rational basis in kind. Two counterpoints, made in sequence by Sarah, the provost at Industry State University, illustrate one potential disconnect between the espousal of data importance and the perceived lack of follow-through by central administrators when department chairs felt they had played this game well:

> [We provide] a dashboard of data for each one of the departments, and we give
> them three years of data. It has a lot of information on the department about how
> many majors they had, how many minors they had, how many students transfer in

and out of their program, how many semester credit hours they generate. But then

it also gives them a cost, and they can see what their cost is in comparison with all

the other departments. Everybody has the right to see everybody else's data, so

you can identify the departments that are contributing a lot to the university's

bottom line and those that cost a lot. That has really been beneficial in

conversations. If you're seeing more students, seeing more majors, I might think

about [investing in some additional faculty].

One can understand the take-away that the provost values the use of data in faculty

position requests highly. Now note the immediate follow-on comment from Sarah, as

though she was playing devil's advocate to her own previous assertion:

Well, and then you have the other end, where the faculty come and say, "Look at

how much money I'm making. […] If you give me three more forestry instructors

I can make even more money. Well, the truth is no. You won't make more money.

There might be a few more students who will take forestry classes if we even

extend them more, but we don't have enough students coming in to fill up all of

those other course requests, so you'd start going in the other direction.

Provosts and deans typically collected enrollment, cost, and teaching evaluation data for

distribution to departments, ostensibly for uses including appeals for instructional

staffing. However, in the same breath they tended to discount the analyses of those data

by the departments themselves in favor of their own analyses. Further obstructing rational

arguments for faculty hiring from department chairs at Little Big Town University was a

strict hiring freeze in response to state budget cuts. Further obstructing rational arguments

for faculty hiring from department chairs at Bright Lights University was a dean and

provost-level priority for an interdisciplinary cluster hiring program. Perhaps ironically, the sort of evidence-based reasoning most highly valued by the academy—with which department chairs, deans, and provosts would align themselves most readily—was often the least effective route to approval to hire a faculty member.

Perhaps the very least likely avenue for redistributing decision responsibility back toward the department level of the universities was the pursuit of alternative budget processes to that end. Department chairs, and even some deans, readily lamented the fact that departments were responsible only for their costs and not for their revenues. In other words, they were debited in the central budget for the expenses incurred in running their programs, but they were not credited with the tuition revenue tied to course enrollments. This is related to the point several participants made during interviews, that due to their low wages and often full classrooms in introductory courses, part-time faculty members were immensely profitable for universities. Fortunately for many of the department chairs in this study, who preferred to employ more full-time faculty members, the greater net dollar value of a part-time instructor's work to the university was not taken into account by the budget system at any of the three study sites. Unfortunately for them, this same fact of budgetary procedure formed a major impediment to innovative decisions on instructional staffing at the department level.

Yet, because not even a single department chair or dean in this study had pursued redress of the budget procedure challenge they identified, it constituted the single least important factor in producing accountability responses in decisions of any kind. Surprisingly, no participant identified a responsibility centered budgeting (RCB) model as a goal for change. This despite the fact that RCB is both well-known as a corrective

measure to the problems associated with viewing departments as cost centers only, as well as the fact RCB has become increasingly popular in research university contexts (Carlson, 2015; Goldstein, 2005).

In sum, participants in this study demonstrated proclivities toward central control and decentralized accountability in faculty hiring decisions. Table 3 and Table 4 on page 191 display the most compelling examples of these activities and behaviors according to the data.

Table 3.

Data-Based Examples of Central Control Responses in Study Sites

Control Response	Examples
"Sweeping"	Assuming greater central budgetary responsibility
Administrative Programming	Cluster hiring
Revising the Hierarchy	Adding distance between academic units and central administration

Table 4.

Data-Based Examples of Decentralized Accountability Responses in Study Sites

Accountability Response	Examples
Engaging faculty expertise	Prioritizing faculty student advising Leveraging accreditation standards
Negotiating	Bargaining for faculty contracts Agitating for leadership change
Playing "The Game"	Data-based proposition of new and replacement faculty lines Agitating for changing budget processes

The core category of this grounded theory of faculty hiring decisions involves either a decision maker's control response or accountability response to perceived risk. This analytic category is of special importance in that it departs from the cognitive character of the preceding analytic categories in the model and embodies the first point of action, or behavior. Importantly, participants in this study tended to demonstrate unwillingness to cede control over faculty hiring to others. For example, the provost at Little Big Town University, Kyle seemed to suggest he had little interest in part-time faculty hiring, saying: "I don't even sign off on part-time help. […] For God's sake, I don't want to have to sign off on all the part-time [hiring]." However, by dramatically cutting the size of the part-time faculty and requiring a provostial sign-off for exemptions to the hiring freeze, his actions differed from his words. Even where participants suggested they had insufficient time and attention to give faculty hiring, they were often reticent to give up control. Rather, conflict tended to occur when one or more decision makers attempted to alter formerly established decision processes to assume greater control.

Decision Makers Establish Changed Roles

Given either an affected control response or an accountability response to perceived risks, those playing a part in faculty hiring processes met the adjustments in their roles with either of two attitudes: acceptance or resistance. In none of the study sites did participants' resistance of role changes halt the operations of the department, college, or university. Thus, across all three study sites the outcome of participant role changes in faculty hiring processes became established and did not revert. They became the new way of doing things pending future change. This is not to say tensions became resolved

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among individuals and constituencies, but it is important to note that tensions became relaxed sufficiently for the university to carry out regular business.

One apparent exception to the assertion that tensions relaxed is that of Little Big Town University, where tensions remained high enough to destabilize university leadership. Both the president and provost departed the university after short terms in office following data collection for this study. It remains unclear whether, following the appointment of a new president the proclivity toward control response by central administrators will continue or whether the resistance that contributed to a change in leadership, viewed as a risk, will precipitate future accountability responses by new leaders. Such possible changes have yet to be seen, and data collection for this study did not include observation of the transition period. It is plausible that new leadership could impose new ways of providing greater decision control to department chairs and deans.

Decision makers accept or resist rule changes.

The most common response to changing roles around decision control among participants —and thus the rules guiding decisions—was to accept the changes. In many cases, participants expressed displeasure in the research interviews with what they understood to constitute diminished roles in faculty hiring. Nonetheless, in most cases those participants were compliant, even if skeptical or disgruntled. Will, a department chair at Bright Lights University explained:

> You have, [what] I would describe as a faculty oriented president. But within the
> faculty themselves there's still a fair amount of suspicion. They've been trained
> very well in the art of resistance and passive aggressive and sometimes aggressive

behavior towards what they see as intrusions in faculty governance. But it's a

culture change.

What Will suggests here is that faculty had accepted the approach of the new president in

dealing with faculty and academic policy with wary optimism. Whereas his predecessor

had acquired a reputation of behaving antagonistically to the tenure-line faculty,

particularly with regard to a major expansion of contingent faculty ranks during his

presidency, this president had said he was interested in working constructively with the

faculty, even increasing tenure-track positions. As I have said, although many of these

new positions will originate as constructs of the provost and the deans (i.e., cluster hires)

the faculty had largely accepted shift in decision control at the time of data collection.

In contrast to the many participants who accepted changing decision roles, some

participants found ways to resist, defy, or subvert these changes. The portrayal of a

resistant faculty by Kyle, the provost at Little Big Town University, contrasts strongly

with Will's description of faculty acceptance at Bright Lights University:

If the president, provost, or the board of trustees says, "We need [Little Big

Town] to develop a program in X," [then faculty hiring could originate outside

academic departments]. That doesn't tend to work as well, because the faculty

like to think they own the curriculum, and it's their creativity that's creating all

these opportunities, despite the fact they are not the ones who are poring over the

data about where the jobs are and where the hot disciplines are and what the

students are interested in.

Almost as though in response to her provost, Joan, a department chair at Little Big Town, elaborated on the resistance of faculty at the department level to the provost's assertion of control over faculty hiring:

> In my department we have three faculty members who are eligible for retirement. The youngest one is 66, the oldest one is 72 […], but they're still here because they don't see their discipline, at least a specialty in their discipline, being replaced [if they retire], and they're concerned about that.

Joan went on to explain how the full-time faculty in her department had been cut in half in recent years and how they now struggled to offer important courses frequently enough to support the curriculum. The passive resistance shown by faculty members who relied on tenure protections and chose not to retire seemed to have been effective in a small way. Perhaps it even contributed to the board of trustees' decision to release the president and provost from employment soon after the conclusion of this study. However, it remains to be seen whether decision rules ultimately revert back toward departmental responsibility and any faculty positions can be regained under new leadership.

Summary.

The model depicting the grounded theory of faculty hiring processes in unionized comprehensive universities, with which I began this chapter (see Figure 3, p. 161) emphasizes the role of risk and rule-following in decision-making among department, college, and university-level administrators. Data analysis revealed four sequential stages in faculty hiring decisions: scanning environments, perceiving risk, asserting role change, and establishing decision responsibility. In Figure 4 (below) I superimpose data-based examples of faculty hiring behaviors exhibited by participants onto the model shared in

Figure 3. Evidence shows the changeability of decision makers' roles in faculty hiring

processes over time in relation to one another. Tension begins to build between and

among decision makers at the point where they perceive risks differently. As tension

builds, disagreements arise over roles in hiring processes among department chairs,

deans, provosts, and presidents. Finally, by asserting control over faculty hiring, decision

makers set precedence for future practice.

Figure 4.

Administrative Rule Following in Faculty Hiring Processes in Unionized Comprehensive
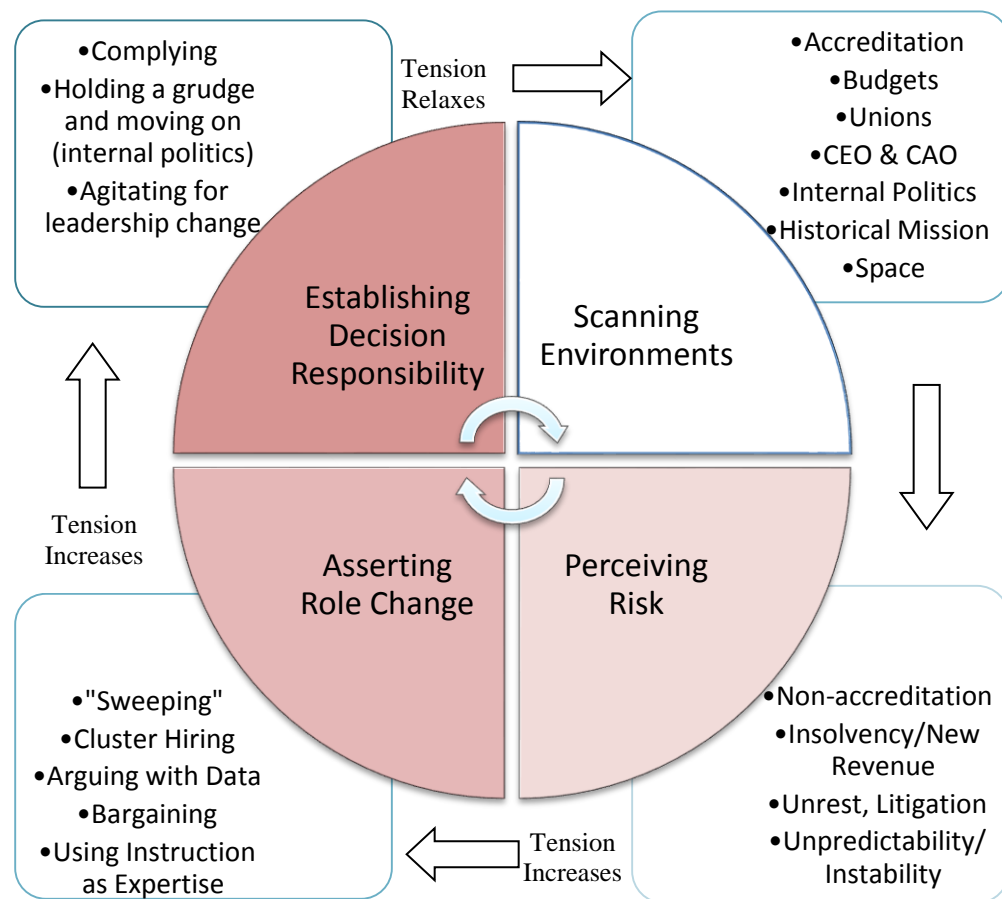
Universities

Conclusion

I have now shared a grounded theory of faculty hiring processes in unionized comprehensive universities, which explains these faculty hiring processes in terms of decision making in organizations. It positions faculty hiring largely as a manifestation of rule following behavior in response to risk stimuli (including the threat of missed opportunity). Specifically, it attributes faculty hiring outcomes to tension among views of budgetary and strategic role fulfillment (i.e., central control versus authority and accountability distributed among academic units). In the next chapter, I share the implications of these findings for policy and practice, as well as for future research.

Chapter Six: Discussion

To begin this study, I introduced the question of how instructional faculty hiring occurs in unionized comprehensive universities. I explained the significance of that problem in light of vastly expanded ranks of part-time contingent faculty across American higher education. I further explained the importance of understanding the roots of this phenomenon in unionized and comprehensive university settings. In chapter two, I proceeded to review relevant literature on faculty work, comprehensive university settings, and decision making theory and practice. In chapter three, I detailed my approach to the research. Finally, I shared the descriptive findings of this study in chapter four and shared a grounded theory analysis in chapter five. In this final chapter I draw implications from the findings of this study for institution-level faculty hiring policy and practice, as well as future research.

Discussion of Key Findings

Rather than a strongly intentional, outcomes-driven process, faculty hiring as a whole is the product of a changeable, relational process. That is, faculty hiring in the sites for this study demonstrated characteristics of collaborative decision making and political decision making, and decision makers often showed great interest in performing an appropriate role relative to others. The resultant grounded theory analysis I provide can be summarized by a dynamic model depicting role conflict as key to decision making (see Figure 5, p. 199). It describes a process by which, under some circumstances, decision makers may pull control over faculty hiring more closely to provosts, who hold the keys to central academic budgets. Under other conditions, the model describes a

process by which control over faculty hiring decisions may be pulled further down toward department chairs.

This grounded theory of faculty hiring processes in unionized comprehensive universities operates based on decision makers' perceptions of risk, which both stem from and reinforce their senses of who they are and what someone like them ought to do in a given situation. Department-level, college-level, and central administrators all demonstrated attentiveness to various environments that could influence their work. These included: regulatory, fiscal, contractual, leadership, socio-cultural, and institutional resources environments. When scanning these environments, decision makers would demonstrate sensitivity to risk stimuli. That is, they would perceive risks to their work. This is not to suggest decision makers' risk perceptions were calculated and weighed consciously against one another to determine the best among several courses of action. More frequently, their sense of risk was visceral and relatively unmeasured. Decision makers inhabiting different positional roles and adopting distinctive personal roles might in the first place perceive divergent risks from those their counterparts perceived. Secondly, even when they did perceive similar risks they might prioritize them differently. Perceptions and prioritization of risks led to behavioral responses. These responses were either supportive of increased central decision control (often along lines of budget authority), or they contributed to increased decentralization of decision responsibility. Where there was disagreement over risk perceptions among decision makers, responses to risk could serve to exacerbate tensions. Finally, having been executed, those behaviors would set new precedent and become established within the role of the acting decision maker.

Figure 5.

A Grounded Theory of Faculty Hiring Processes in Unionized Comprehensive

Universities
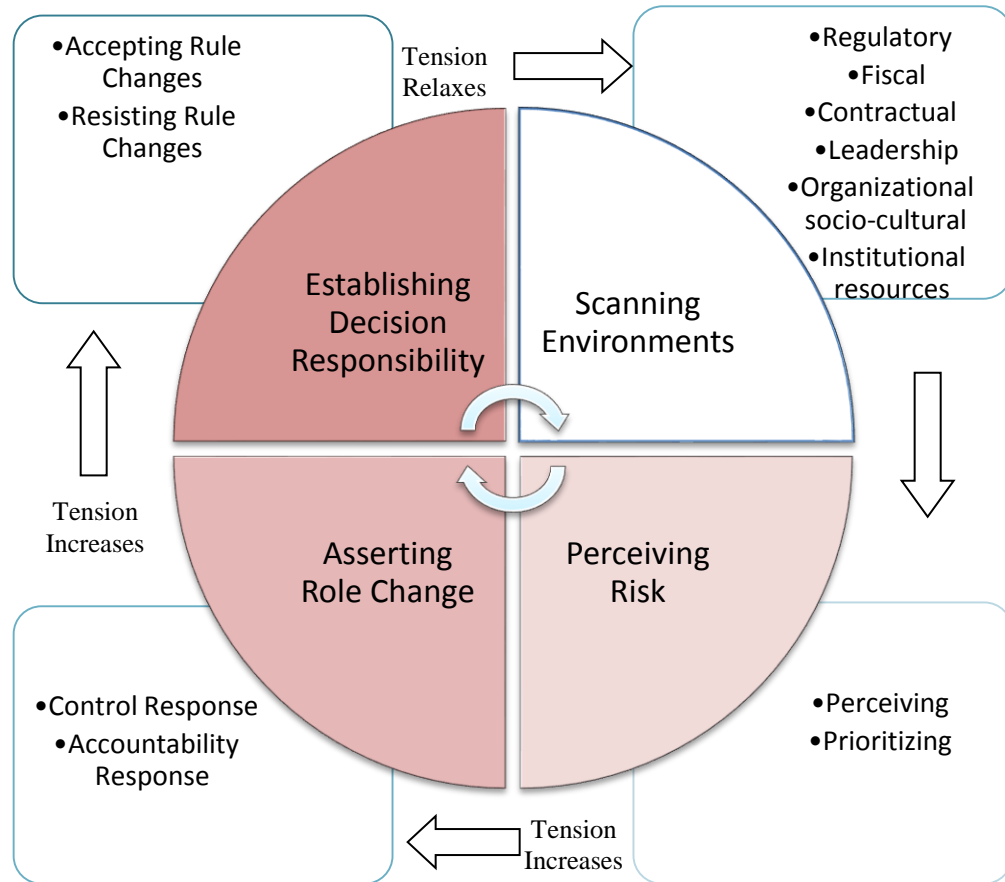
Part-time faculty hiring as comparatively low-risk.

Part-time faculty hiring, in many cases, represents a low-risk pursuit. Under

normal conditions (excepting conditions of budgetary duress, or if poor teaching

evaluations trigger closer attention), the hiring and rehiring of part-time faculty requires

far fewer resources than full-time hiring, such as personnel, time, funding, and attention.

It involves primarily department chairs, with only perfunctory oversight by middle

management, and requires little to no time of existing faculty in the department. In many cases, a department chair must simply justify the need for the additional course or section in terms of enrollment needs, confirm the availability of a part-time instructor who has taught the course before, and give notice of hire (rather, rehire) of a candidate to dean's office personnel to ensure the instructor receives payment. Thus, tension does not build among administrators at different levels of the organizational chart, and decision roles remain uncontested. This finding is consistent with Cross and Goldenberg's (2009) finding in their study of non-tenure track faculty in elite research universities to the effect that hiring off the tenure track follows a decentralized, highly routinized process. This study's corollary findings for comprehensive universities could be summarized in much the same way under normal conditions.

This study partially supports findings in previous research that part-time faculty hiring constitutes "triage" efforts (Delphi Project, 2012, p. 16). That is, given what could be construed as an emergency, such as a sudden illness that precludes an instructor from carrying out her duties on short notice, a department chair would indeed scramble to fill the vacancy. Whether constrained by space (as in Bright Lights University), or by faculty contracts (as in Industry State University), alternatives to hiring a new part-time faculty member often did not include redistributing enrolled students into other course sections. Additionally, as decision makers considered policies and practices for compliance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA, or what is colloquially known as the Affordable Care Act) at the time of data collection, it became apparent that opportunities for adding a course to the load of a regular part-timer may also become constrained. Vetting and hiring a prospective new part-time instructor takes far less time

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and resources than it does for a full-time faculty member, but on short notice that process can indeed resemble triage.

For the most part, though, participants in all three institutions downplayed the frequency of such emergencies. Perhaps due to experience with the very same conditions that made dealing with unplanned instructor vacancies challenging to resolve (e.g., workload restrictions in faculty contracts, spatial restrictions, hiring freezes), administrators took pride in their certainty of course enrollments months in advance. They had developed coping mechanisms, such as early course registration and strict add-drop deadlines that aided enrollment projections for all except entering first-year students. The implication of this finding for the use of triage as a metaphor for part-time faculty hiring is that while it applies well to some situations, those situations may be less common in institutions that have learned to deal with key resource constraints.

More commonly, the findings of this study concur with Cross and Goldenberg's (2009) characterization in elite research university contexts: "The growth in non-tenure track faculty […] is not always the result of conscious policy but instead often emerges as a by-product of other initiatives" (p. 29). Several department chairs in this study reflected that they were troubled by the lack of professional development, mentoring, and community building opportunities they were able to provide to part-time faculty. Harry, a department chair at Bright Lights University, demonstrated this conscientiousness particularly well:

> I wanted a social event to get my full-time faculty and my part-time faculty to
> intermingle, to share ideas, and we were going to get together at a bar. I was

going to pay for drinks out of pocket. None of my part-time faculty RSVP'd to the

event. I got a couple of maybes, but no one said, "Yes, definitely, I am coming."

Many rued the support system for part-time faculty, but Harry's was the leading effort I

discovered toward improving it, and it failed. The underlying problem is that part-time

faculty roles were shaped by processes of satisfice. Rather than maximize their

effectiveness, part-time faculty were hired and rehired with an aim toward efficient (i.e.,

quick) selection and a hunch, or a hope that student evaluations would be deemed better

than poor. These hires were very much by-products of other priorities.

In addition to the routine, bottom-up process of part-time faculty hiring in times

of stable budgets, I also found procedures for part-time faculty hiring that were top-down,

or had been reshaped as a result of cost-cutting by top-level administrators. Given the

right conditions, findings showed how part-time faculty hiring may originate outside of

academic units. At Little Big Town, which had endured severe state budget cuts that had

accumulated over multiple years, the provost treated an entrepreneurial online instruction

unit as a revenue center, allowing it the budgetary flexibility to spend much of its own

revenue so as to grow its part-time instructor ranks. Academic departments and even

colleges, by contrast, were subject to budgetary sweeps of any revenue or cost savings

they generated. Even as full-time faculty vacancies went unfilled, revenue-generating

part-time positions were cut. This approach indicated a forgoing of cost-benefit analysis

of instructional staffing in favor of cost-only consideration. Another top-down influence

on part-time faculty hiring was found at Industry State University, where the provost was

responsible for enforcing the faculty contract rule limiting the amount of part-time faculty

labor in any one department. These circumstances were important exceptions to the

finding that part-time faculty hiring was typically understood up and down organizational charts as a low-risk endeavor.

Part-time faculty hiring as relatively simple.

Recognizing that in the absence of budgetary duress and with few caveats part-time faculty hiring and rehiring fell into an easy routine, the juxtaposition with tenure track and even full-time non-tenure track (FTNTT) hiring also highlighted important differences in procedural complexity. Traditionally, full-time hires were made in a bottom-up fashion, beginning with a position request from a department chair, flowing through multiple discussions with middle managers, and gaining provostial approval. From there the search would begin. Search durations might be abbreviated for FTNTT hires, but any full-time search involved training from the office of human resources, the formation of a faculty search committee, the drafting of a job description, the placement of advertisements, and interviews. Tenure-line searches would yield a multi-step interview process. Timing was viewed as being of added importance to getting top tenure-track candidates before they accepted other offers. Once the offer was made, the candidate would often enter negotiations with the dean over a bevy of compensation and support details. Full-time hires on and off the tenure track required provostial, presidential, and even board action to be finalized. From initial position request to finalization of the hire, the FTNTT hiring process might take a few months to a year, and a tenure-track hiring process would take no less than one year and up to two. These processes represented major investments of resources (e.g., personnel, time, effort, funding).

Central administrators (i.e., deans and provosts) were also influential in key ways for full-time faculty hiring. They provided guidance on market (i.e., student) demand and institutional strategy to either support, qualify, or reject position requests. Budget responsibility was their primary avenue into the process. Whereas department chairs called upon disciplinary expertise in advocating for positions, deans and provosts ensured funding flowed in keeping with university strategy. Bright Lights University offered a unique example in which central administrators chose not to sit back and await departmental position requests but instead decided to shape key aspects of position descriptions themselves. They identified interdisciplinary problems of the kind they hoped their university might address, and they solicited competitive proposals from department chairs across the university for new full-time position descriptions that would conform to these parameters. The more involved central administrators became in shaping full-time faculty hiring processes, the more resources (i.e., personnel, time, effort, and funding) they contributed in addition to those of departments.

Full-time faculty hiring, whether top-down or bottom-up, represented a major investment of university resources, the picture of which serves to place part-time faculty hiring in sharp relief. Ironically, the low-effort, low-expectations approach to part-time faculty hiring resulted in considerable pools of regular part-time faculty and a preference for rehiring over new hiring in many units and divisions in this study. "By-product" (Cross & Goldenberg, 2009), or convenience, was therefore a good characterization for part-time hiring, not because department chairs were flippant regarding the importance of effective part-time instruction, because they were often very thoughtful, and not because they lacked the time, because by all accounts they invested a great deal of time in their

work. Part-time faculty appointments were by-products precisely because department chairs, deans, provosts, presidents, and boards had come to treat them as organizational release valves that allowed them to focus more resources on priorities. Where part-time faculty hiring was constrained, it was largely not due to an administrative focus on academic mission fulfillment but as an entailed effect related to budgetary and compliance efforts. To be clear, part-time faculty were not hired out of intent to reduce costs or maximize revenue, but when they were cut from the rolls the motive was expressed in budgetary terms. In some situations the amount of part-time faculty was monitored and limited in accordance with faculty contracts or accreditation guidance.

Implications for Faculty Hiring Policy and Practice

Part-time faculty hiring is attractive for its efficiency.

I have discussed the finding of this study that part-time faculty hiring decisions were comparatively simple and convenient in contrast to full-time faculty hiring decisions. I have additionally provided a sense of just how relatively cumbersome the process of fulltime faculty hiring can become as department chairs, deans, provosts, and even presidents seek to exert influence on entailed decisions. Part-time faculty hiring is in many circumstances perhaps more comparatively efficient than ever before, as full-time faculty hiring becomes burdened by centralized budgets and new administrative hiring programs and structures. Part-time hiring may continue to offer a quick and convenient alternative to increasingly complex one- to two-year full-time faculty hiring processes in many university contexts. These positions are generally not only the most affordable— the process of staffing classes through them is often the simplest available. Part-time positions tend to be both cost-efficient and procedurally efficient.

An important exception to this finding included the hiring freeze at Little Big Town University, where although part-time instructors cost little and generated more revenue than full-timers their use had been cut back to 15 percent of the total faculty. This finding supports the notion that part-time faculty are valuable because they are flexible enough to be cut from tight budgets quickly and easily. However, it does not support the notion that part-time faculty positions are utilized on the revenue side of budgets by relocating them to areas of high enrollment from areas of low enrollment. Revenue-side cost efficiencies of part-time hiring may not be realized, even in circumstances of great need.

One implication of this finding is that department chairs, deans, and provosts can more seriously acknowledge the limitations of large part-time faculty workforces in stabilizing budgets. Eliminating those positions can indeed be accomplished easily, especially when compared with tenured positions. However, the cost savings associated with such reductions may prove deeply disappointing, even at scale. Decision makers might instead work to create more fiscally sustainable full-time workforces in good budget years and, rather than avoiding tough decisions in times of financial exigency, use opportunities of constraint to make politically difficult adjustments in keeping with the university strategic plan (e.g., eliminate underperforming and unsustainable programs, shift tenure lines to support growth areas, and implement full-time position buy-outs).

Part-time faculty hiring is detached from instructional effectiveness.

In discussing instructional faculty hiring, participants in this study often raised the topic of teaching assessment, which may be viewed as a form of quality control. Typically, teaching assessment meant the collection and analysis of student course

evaluations, and in some cases full- and part-time instructors were subject to routine teaching observations by department chairs. Clearly, administrators were concerned that the instructors they had hired met some acceptable level of effectiveness.

However, consistent with previous research (Eagan & Jaeger, 2008), many participants affirmed the use of most part-time faculty members in teaching remedial and introductory level courses. Participants offered several reasons for this arrangement, such as: 1) full-time faculty having greater expertise appropriate to upper-level courses, 2) full-time faculty preference to teach upper-level courses, and 3) a lack of faculty contract restrictions on the number of part-timers employable in remedial courses. Study participants holding a variety of positions noted their efforts at populating lower-level courses with full-time instructors, as a student retention initiative, but this thinking had not penetrated decision making around faculty hiring. Although decision makers in this study subsequently sought to provide the most effective instruction with the staffs they had already hired, concerns about instructional effectiveness seldom directly influenced their pursuit of part-time faculty hiring.

Of course, as previous research has suggested (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; O'Meara, Terosky, & Neumann, 2008), part-time faculty instructors can inhabit different social classes. In some cases, participants in this study also noted the use of some part-time instructors who maintained professional careers in areas relevant to their subject of instruction, brought added value from an employment standpoint, and taught specialized courses. Additionally, some retired full-time faculty members had been brought back on a per-course basis in some contexts. These kinds of part-time hires, one may argue, pose the prospect of greater balance between instructional hiring efficiency and effectiveness.

Administrators at all levels should cease rationalizing unplanned part-time faculty expansion and implement policies recognizing mission-relevant uses of those roles (e.g., working professionals who have valuable experiential wisdom, or late-career faculty interested in a phased retirement). Part-time faculty will likely remain an important tool for keeping faculty labor costs in check while keeping student-faculty ratios low in many universities. Such decisions should be made based on student learning outcomes data, budget data, and explicit strategic direction. Likewise, faculty unions claiming that faculty working conditions are student learning conditions can become more persuasive to that effect if they cease sacrificing student instructional needs for full-time faculty prerogatives. Where the ratio of part-time faculty to full-time faculty is collectively bargained, some allowance should also be made to ensure students in remedial and introductory courses gain exposure to full-time instructors. Recall that the faculty union at Industry State University had negotiated a low cap on part-time faculty of not more than 15 percent in any one department. However, largely because remedial courses were exempted from that rule, the university's part-time ranks represented about 50 percent overall.

Preferences for data do not effect rational choice decisions in faculty hiring.

Given the high value placed on evidence, argument, and deliberation in academic contexts (Lamont, 2009), I expect many readers will be uncomfortable with the role-based (i.e., non-rational) decision process I lay out as the central finding of this study. An important concern to those wishing to insert a greater degree of rationality into faculty hiring decisions in their universities will necessarily be greater use of data. Teaching assessments are a starting point for determining whether individual part-time instructors

are adequate candidates for rehire, but rational choice decisions at the level of university, college, and department instructional staffing will focus on more robust assessments of the costs and benefits associated with existing paradigms of faculty hiring.

First, university budget officers should collect and report data on unit revenues alongside unit costs. While mission pursuit in education cannot be summarized with a dollar figure, and while revenue centered budgeting models may not be best for many institutions, this study's findings suggest decision rationality at the department and college level are often hindered by the low level of value attributed to unit-level revenues. One can expect such data to reveal what we already know with certainty: part-time faculty instructors generate greater revenue per student than full-time faculty. However, deeper analysis of both costs and revenues at the department and college levels may contribute to stronger understandings of the budgetary margins and the point at which a full-time faculty member becomes a sustainable financial investment. None of the sites for this study had undertaken such an effort.

Second, managers and leaders at the department, college, and university levels should collect and report data on faculty productivity by appointment type. These data should include accurate accounts of all services and products relevant to a given position. For some faculty this will include an array of publication types, internal service, external service, and revenue generating activities alongside course loads, advising loads, mentoring activities, and teaching assessments. These data will not necessarily resolve the differential valuations of each work component by different individuals and groups. However, they will inform hiring strategies by improving the predictability of outcomes and the generation of department, college, and university productivity goals. Bright

Lights University came closest to achieving this standard when central administrators worked with deans and department chairs and all were able to agree evidence pointed to inadequate capacity for necessary faculty service (i.e., academic governance and support of administrative initiatives). This assessment informed a plan to hire more faculty members with job descriptions to improve the capacity of the faculty for internal service.

Third, decision makers should further develop and align their understandings of faculty appointment types in their departments, colleges, and universities. This study revealed an array of fundamental differences within the three overarching appointment types (part-time, full-time non-tenure track, and tenure track). Some of these differences were clear and ubiquitous across department and college lines, while others were ambiguous and provincial. Rational hiring decisions can only occur if the functions of different faculty types are well understood in advance. In rational choice decisions, anticipation of outcomes informs and precedes selection among alternatives.

University leaders have opportunities to influence faculty hiring decisions.

This study's findings hold multiple implications for university leadership. First, two contexts shaped particularly strong platforms for central control over faculty hiring decisions. One of these was observed in Little Big Town University, where continuous, acute cuts in state appropriations supported: a strict hiring freeze, a policy of budgetary sweeping, and provostial investment in an administrative-reporting instructional unit (online education). A second example was observed in Bright Lights University, where the previous president had been so antagonistic in faculty hiring that even as the new administration's administratively guided faculty hiring program raised concerns among faculty, department chairs embraced it.

One important implication stemming from the findings regarding notable central control of hiring decisions in Little Big Town and Bright Lights Universities is that strong central leadership that is arguably responsive to an agreed-upon threat may be tolerated despite hardship. This implication is consistent with Birnbaum's (1992) suggestion that higher education leaders in political environments may do well to identify an external challenge to galvanize internal factions. Decision makers and faculty constituent groups may exhibit greater tolerance for discomfort if circumstances suggest tensions could be worse under alternative leadership. A deterioration of this belief among faculty and other stakeholders may have been what ultimately led to the ouster of the president and provost at Little Big Town following data collection.

A second important implication for university leadership is informed as much by what this study did not find as what it did find. That is, in two out of three study sites (both publics) no participant even hinted that a governing board had exerted any oversight over faculty hiring. In the third study site, Bright Lights University, multiple participants alluded to governing board approval of a planned expansion of full-time faculty ranks. Unfortunately, neither the provost, nor the president acceded to my request for an interview (though neither opposed the study), and I was unable to learn how the proposal for full-time faculty growth had been presented to, or received by the board. As the legal fiduciary bodies responsible for strategic mission pursuit, governing boards might conceivably pose effective questions regarding the aptitude of a university's instructional staff for carrying out the core teaching mission. In keeping with earlier points of discussion, greater board attention could prove constructive to: a more thorough understanding of the financial implications of faculty hiring, more robust use of data in

decision making, and a reduced focus on role and control. In short, governing board attention could potentially raise the importance of strategic hiring processes for instructional faculty.

Implications for Future Research

Management and leadership in risk-laden contexts.

March (1994) explains that decision makers in hierarchical settings are more often promoted to managerial and leadership posts as a result of decision making that differentiates them from others. Decisions that set a person apart from the group may demonstrate some openness to risk-taking, and to the degree those risks pay off, decision makers may feel encouraged to seek out opportunity through risk-taking in the future. In university leadership, and particularly in faculty hiring contexts, future research may build upon this study's findings to say more about administrative motivations to seek decision control in response to perceived risk.

Additionally, future research may be useful in enhancing understanding of how decision makers weigh multiple risks to form priorities. Some readers may be struck by the risks entailed in unchecked employment patterns yielding large numbers of part-time instructors. Others may feel the participants in this study were appropriately focused on more pressing needs. What data from this study have helped me to conceptualize but not yet to conclude is the emergence of a leadership syndrome I will call organizational vertigo. In conditions of organizational vertigo, decision makers begin by assessing risks (including opportunity). As leaders predisposed to risk-taking, they inevitably favor change over the status quo. Over the course of a career, these decisions are either praised

as bold or derided as foolish. Those who continue an upward career trajectory become vulnerable to interpretive decision biases (March, 1994) in the form growing appetite for bold shifts that may be less strategically well-focused. Much like a mountain climber trapped by an avalanche, the decision maker's disorientation may become overshadowed by an instinct to dig. The result is change for change's sake, with reduced attention to strategic direction (i.e., careful decision making tied to data-based considerations of consequence). Again, this is a concept that I have generated while analyzing the data for this study, yet I do not have sufficient evidence to support its applicability here. Future research on decision making in risk-laden contexts may help test and shape the concept of organizational vertigo, among others, and determine possible uses for constructive diagnosis.

Future research should expand the literature base on comprehensive universities, which remain understudied. One key area for further exploration will be whether and how comprehensive university leaders learn to combat mission creep. Comprehensive universities are not the only institutional type subject to mission creep (Ward-Wendel & Wolf, 2005), but their often divergent origin stories, or organizational sagas (Clark, 1972), may render them particularly vulnerable to a lack of unifying direction. Yet, out of the crucible of strained finances and strategic ambiguity a new generation of university leaders may yet be forged. Just as during the latter part of the 20th century university leaders learned how to pursue visions of grand, multifaceted expansion (Kerr, 2001), many of their counterparts in the first half of the 21st century now acknowledge they must come to terms with the maturation of the sector. That is, the foreseeable future consists of budgetary constraint, not growth, and new achievements must rely upon reallocated

resources rather than additional resources. Comprehensive universities may be forced to learn those lessons early and thus in some ways become instructive examples. Future research could be useful in revealing and interpreting such lessons for use in corollary contexts.

Finally, I hope other researchers will join me in testing and refining the grounded theory I have generated in this study in other university contexts. Future research might include case studies with a deductive approach to determine whether, how, and to what extent the grounded theory I present here is applicable in community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and research universities (especially with regard to post-docs and contingent research faculty), larger institutions and smaller institutions, and so forth. I have argued that comprehensive universities are important in distinctive ways, particularly as institutions that serve American socio-cultural and economic needs. Yet, they are only one part of a large, disparate sector of higher education in the United States, and our economy and our society relies upon many other institutions in important ways as well. This study could form an important starting point for a robust program of research with implications for improving faculty hiring processes across the sector.

Shared governance in changed faculty contexts.

Traditionally organized public and nonprofit institutions of higher education have a storied history of reliance on a system of checks and balances known as shared governance. In 1966, The American Association of University Professors (AAUP; representing a membership comprised of faculty) was joined by the American Council on Education (ACE; with a membership of college, university, and state system administrators) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

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(AGB; with a membership of higher education board members) in codifying the principles of shared governance into a *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*. The introduction to that statement concludes:

> […] a college or university in which all the components are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action will enjoy increased capacity to solve educational problems (Kreiser, 2006, p. 136)

The degree to which this principle is often effective in practice, and the manner in which the full statement should be interpreted to apply to various types of decisions, remains in some ways contested (Bahls, 2014; Birnbaum, 1992; Birnbaum, 1989; Bowen & Tobin, 2015). However, few experts would argue that in the values-laden context of American higher education constructive argument does not form a major pillar (Gehrke & Kezar, 2014; Lamont, 2009). What the cultural traditions of shared governance suggest is that many university constituents share responsibility for upholding those values in key decisions. The groups and individuals who may therefore be of utility in bringing about stronger communication, commitment to collaboration, and a collective sense of purpose in faculty hiring include: university and state system administrators, faculty, university and system governing boards, students and alumni, and the public and their elected officials. Future research may better assess these efforts and point out how constituencies can work constructively on challenging issues. Such research would follow in the tradition of similar studies of shared governance processes surrounding academic program closure (Eckel, 2002, 2000) and post-tenure review policy implementation (O'Meara, 2004).

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Alternative release valves in faculty hiring.

I have described part-time faculty hiring as an organizational release valve. Under normal conditions it is both cheap and easy and thus generates little tension among decision makers. Yet, in Bright Lights University FTNTT positions had also grown substantially in the years leading up to this study and had proven exceptionally malleable by administrators (deans faced few constraints in shaping creative job descriptions and compensation). As part-time faculty numbers begin to reach critical mass, as they become more vocal in faculty senates, and as they join collective bargaining units, one key area to observe through future research will be the potential growth of FTNTT faculty as an alternative organizational release valve.

Additionally, at least one participant at Bright Lights University raised concerns that second year master's students were being employed at high rates as primary instructors (not teaching assistants) in remedial and introductory courses. I was able to confirm through the Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) the university's own reporting that more than 20 "graduate teaching assistants" were employed on a part-time basis in the most recent semester for which data was available (fall 2013). However, IPEDS currently uses a definition for this occupation borrowed from the Department of Labor Statistics, which includes:

> Assist faculty or other instructional staff in postsecondary institutions by performing teaching or teaching-related duties, such as teaching lower level courses, developing teaching materials, preparing and giving examinations, and grading examinations or papers. (SOC Code 25-1191, 2010)

Deans and department chairs who participated in this study refuted the notion that master's students were being employed as primary instructors, and unfortunately the data collected by the Department of Education does not allow differentiation between graduate teaching assistants responsible for entire courses and those in support roles. I was unable to draw conclusions about whether this practice occurs at all, let alone whether it is growing. In the context of an institution with a history of union busting, the question of whether master's students are becoming increasingly used as primary instructors takes on added significance.

Examination of how both FTNTT faculty and graduate students are employed as instructors will be an important topic for future research in many institutional settings. As critical attention focuses on the working conditions and student learning outcomes associated with large part-time faculty workforces, and as those groups grow and become more effective at bargaining tables, decision makers may seek alternatives more readily.

Conclusion

The question of how faculty hiring occurs in comprehensive university settings is an important one, and many stakeholders may feel unsettled by the findings of this study. The question is important because public and private comprehensive universities not only educate a substantial portion of college students overall, they serve a large share of first generation and nontraditional students (Henderson, 2011). The work of producing college graduates from these backgrounds is of critical significance to the American economy and to a cultural vision of a meritocratic society. Instructing these students to a high standard of learning and retaining them through graduation can be more challenging every step of the way, because they often: require different academic support, maintain

complicated work and family schedules, do not live where they attend class, and hold less

social knowledge about college life than many of their peers (McDonough, 1997). How

instructional faculty hiring occurs in these settings is an important question to ask,

because much relies on the success of those instructors.

In addition to the importance of the central research question, the findings of this

study may also prove troubling due to the importance of the instructional mission in

comprehensive universities. First, university stakeholders, such as governing board

members, administrators, faculty, students and alumni, and taxpayers, think of decision

making in university settings as deliberate and rational—sometimes to a fault (Bahls,

2014; Birnbaum, 1992; Birnbaum, 1989; Bowen & Tobin, 2015). This study finds that in

faculty hiring, decision making largely does not follow a rational choice paradigm. Many

other factors influence faculty hiring decisions, but decision makers spend little time

weighing which sort of role to hire in pursuit of instructional effectiveness goals.

Other stakeholders may be taken aback not just by the relative absence of a

measured approach to faculty human resources but by the questionable centrality of the

instructional mission in some teaching universities. The universities in this study each

showed signs of some degree of goal ambiguity. In some instances, decision makers

showed proclivity, or at least complicity, in taking the path of least resistance in faculty

hiring. In others, decision makers were so heavily focused on other priorities, such as

budgets, that academic staffing occurred mainly as a side-effect.

Instead of the deliberative, consultative approach to decision making for which

universities in the U.S. are well known, decision makers in this study often struggled to

engage others in meaningful exchanges about how to staff classrooms effectively. Rather, individual rule-following decisions served to heighten discord and cloud a sense of collective purpose. This finding may shed some light on how higher education instructional staffing can have made the shift from 75 percent tenure-track labor to 75 percent non-tenure track labor in the past 45 years, with neither much alarm nor clear intent.

Having provided some insight as to how instructional faculty hiring works, this study should help readers respond to the following question: are we satisfied with the manner in which we staff comprehensive university classrooms? Contrary to a simple yes or no, many readers will find they have to qualify their overarching response. None of the participants in this study showed a lack of conscientiousness in their work, and most of them communicated a strong sense of professional duty and vocation. I suspect, though, that readers who hold an array of opinions on sometimes contentious subjects (e.g., tenure, shared governance, etc.) might agree that key decision making characterized by introspection and inattention to consequences is not in keeping with academic values. Likewise, on at least two fronts it runs counter to the expectations of a populace increasingly skeptical of university effectiveness. First, as others have argued, the way in which many universities have developed a caste system of faculty labor may be unethical. This study has not offered an analysis of that proposition. Second, and central to the problem identified in this study, reliance on an underclass of part-time faculty instructors has consequences for student learning. An abiding ignorance of instructional consequences now characterizes most faculty hiring in many universities. Decision

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makers should make more intentional use of available faculty appointment types in

pursuit of instructional effectiveness.

Appendix A: Initial Interview Protocol

Introduction to the study

Research questions and methods. For this study, I am interested in understanding instructional faculty hiring processes, particularly in "comprehensive," or Carnegie "master's" type institutions. I am interested in comprehensive universities because they are the institutional type where the magnitude of a decades-long shift toward increasing use of part-time, non-tenure track faculty labor has been greatest in recent years. My goal is not to evaluate the use of contingent faculty (plenty of others have done that) but rather to understand the process by which this shift is taking place.

What I need from you! I am hopeful that you will help me in three ways:
1. First, as you respond to my questions today, please also share your thoughts on whether I am asking the right questions.
2. Second, I hope you will consider speaking with me if I have follow-up questions at a later date.
3. At the end of this interview, I hope you might recommend the names of other potentially good information sources on your campus.

Please note that your participation in this study will be kept confidential, and anything you communicate to me during participation will be kept anonymous. I will report any findings from this study in aggregate, and I will take a number of steps to mask your identity, your university's identity, and other potentially identifying characteristics in any written report. Do you have any questions regarding confidentiality and anonymity? Remember, you may ask additional questions on this subject at any time.

I want to take a moment to reiterate my intent to record given the consent you have provided. Has that been made clear, and is it still acceptable to you?

Any questions for me before we begin?

I'd like to start by asking you a couple of broad questions about instructional faculty hiring, because I don't want to presuppose that the different types of hires begin under completely different circumstances:

1. What events trigger a decision to hire instructional faculty?

   a. A faculty member leaves?
   b. A department is overenrolled—dynamic change in student demand?
   c. A faculty member takes sabbatical, or leave?
   d. Implementation of a growth strategy?

2. What is the role of timing of these events in determining what sort of hire will be made?

   a. If someone leaves at a time that precludes a decent search, do you hire an adjunct to teach those classes? How does this contrast with retirements, for instance?
   b. Do you respond to a hiring need differently as it occurs in relation to annual budget cycle?
   c. How does the irregular timing of grant awards affect decisions?
   d. Is enrollment projection just that tough to nail down until just before classes begin?

3. How do you describe the difference between hiring for immediate need and hiring toward fulfillment of a long-term plan?

   a. Do you have a long-term staffing plan?
   b. How do you communicate your wishes on staffing to deans, associate deans, and department chairs?
   c. How do you receive information on hiring needs and desires from deans, associate deans, and department chairs? Is it primarily through budget requests, or do things like periodic assessments and strategic planning also provide a flow of information?
   d. What role do unions and contracts play in relation to staffing plans?

4. Would you tell me about your instructional faculty appointment structure?
   a. Include episodic hires, such as per course instructors and graduate instructors?
      i. Are some of these people stringing together multiple course contracts?
      ii. Have some of them been working in your university for a long time?
   b. What about clinical faculty and professors of practice (FTNTT)?
   c. Others?

Tell me about episodic instructional faculty hiring:

1. Who is involved in these hiring decisions on your campus, and how would you describe their roles?

   a. To your knowledge, do these people get advice or input from others, even informally?

2. What are the goals of the people involved?

3. What information is used in making these decisions?

    a. How are data used to inform decisions?
    b. How is subjective judgment involved?
    c. How is campus, state, or union policy involved?

4. How do the various people taking part in the hiring process communicate?

    a. What happens if there is disagreement?

5. How does hiring part-time, non-tenure track instructional faculty differ from hiring tenure-track faculty, or even full-time, non-tenure track faculty?

Now I'd like to ask about clinical faculty and professors of practice, both research and teaching-oriented, so please specify your responses as you see fit:

1. Who is involved in these hiring decisions on your campus, and how would you describe their roles?

    a. To your knowledge, do these people get advice or input from others, even informally?

2. How do the various people taking part in the hiring process communicate?

    a. What does the process look like?
    b. What happens if there is disagreement?

3. What are the goals of the people involved?

4. What information is used in making these decisions?

    a. How are data used to inform decisions?
    b. How is subjective judgment involved?
    c. How is campus, state, or union policy involved?

5. How does hiring full-time, non-tenure track faculty differ from hiring tenure-track faculty?

*ONLY IF TIME—ASK WHAT HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED OF THE FOLLOWING:

Regarding tenure-track instructional faculty hiring:

1. Who is involved in these hiring decisions on your campus, and how would you describe their roles?

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a. To your knowledge, do these people get advice or input from others, even informally?

2. How do the various people taking part in the hiring process communicate?

   a. What does the process look like?
   b. What happens if there is disagreement?

3. What are the goals of the people involved?

4. What information is used in making these decisions?

   a. How are data used to inform decisions?
   b. How is subjective judgment involved?
   c. How is campus, state, or union policy involved?

Appendix B: Participant Invitation

Dear NAME,

My name is Andy Lounder, and I am a doctoral candidate conducting dissertation research on faculty hiring processes in comprehensive university settings. You have been identified through my research procedures as someone who may fit the criteria for participation, and I am writing in hopes of conducting an interview with you. This study has been approved by your IRB office.

My study aims to understand the hiring processes for different types of faculty members (e.g., tenure track, full-time non-tenure track, part-time non-tenure track) in an array of disciplines and settings. I am interested specifically in comprehensive, or Carnegie "Master's" type universities, like yours, for two reasons. First, the work they contribute is extremely important to higher education. Second, they are the type of four-year institution where the increase in part-time, non-tenure track faculty labor has been greatest in recent years. My goal is not to evaluate the use of contingent faculty (plenty of others have done that) but rather to understand the process by which this shift is taking place.

I would like to ask if you would consider being a participant in this study, which requires an interview approximately 60 minutes in duration. We would conduct the interview at a place convenient to you, either: (1) in your office during a time when I can visit your campus, (2) an alternative location on your campus of your choosing, or (3) over the telephone. In order to aid data analysis, I am asking that you allow me to tape the interview; however, I could take notes if that is more comfortable.

The data used for this study will only be reported in aggregate--your name and identity would never appear in any reports or publications that result from the project. I am also well-practiced and very careful about stripping interview transcripts of identifying information.

This study will help universities like yours in their efforts to become better academic homes for faculty--by shining a light on diffuse and poorly understood processes that have immense bearing on faculty work.

If you are able to participate in this study, then I will send you the informed consent form to review and sign and initiate discussion on potential dates and times for the interview.

Thank you very much for considering this request.

Andrew Lounder

[EMAIL ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER]

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Project Title	An Emerging Grounded Theory of Faculty Hiring Processes in Comprehensive Universities
Purpose of the Study	*This research is being conducted by doctoral student, **Andrew Lounder, under the advisement of Dr. KerryAnn O'Meara,** at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am inviting you to participate in this research project because you may have information about faculty hiring processes in your university. The purpose of this research project is to better understand faculty hiring practices.*
Procedures	The procedures involve participation in one individual interview, approximately 60-90 minutes in length. Future requests for follow-up interviews by telephone are also possible stemming from the initial interview (in which case the duration would be comparatively brief, perhaps as short as 10 minutes but possibly up to one hour depending upon the participant's future consent and availability). Sample interview questions include: 1. What events trigger a decision to hire faculty? 2. What is the role of timing of these events in determining what sort of hire will be made? 3. How do you describe the difference between hiring for immediate need and hiring toward fulfillment of a long-term plan? I am asking permission to audio record this conversation so that we may get a lasting, accurate understanding of the insights you provide. Please select one of the two following options: ___ I give my consent to have my responses audio recorded ___ I do not give my consent to have my responses audio recorded

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Potential Risks and Discomforts	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. Participant confidentiality will be protected as outlined in the subsequent "Confidentiality" section. Additionally, I wish to acknowledge that participants may feel some discomfort due to the participant selection spanning university hierarchies. In some cases, but not all, previous study participants (possibly those inhabiting positions of relevant authority) will have recommended additional participants. In order to mask participant selection from those providing recommendations, the PI will in all cases request multiple recommendations and explain that he may or may not invite any of them to the study. The PI also reserves the right to contact possible participants who have not been recommended by previous participants. This will not only aid in masking participant selection but may yield important data from diverse perspectives. The goal will be to make the selection of participants legitimately unclear to anyone seeking to divine the identities of future participants based on their own suggestions.
Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits to participants. However, I hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of faculty hiring processes.
Confidentiality	Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by taking the following steps. Any data will be transcribed by PI, Andrew Lounder, or by voluntary or paid transcriptionists who have signed confidentiality agreements, and will be stored on a password protected computer for a period of 10 years (at the expiration of 10 years, all data will be destroyed). To the extent that the data include proper nouns, the names of people, places, and other identifying information (e.g., departments, projects, titles, etc.) will be stripped from the data.

If I write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. I, PI Andrew Lounder will be the only researcher to have access to any data with full identifying information. Transcriptionists will have access to raw recordings labeled with participant pseudonyms. One research auditor (dissertation chair) and one graduate peer debriefer may each have access to selections of transcribed interviews that have been stripped of identifying information, in keeping with the study design. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if I am required to do so by law. |
| **Right to Withdraw and Questions** | Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the PI: |

	Andrew Lounder [ADDRESS, EMAIL, & PHONE] or his faculty advisor: **Dr. KerryAnn O'Meara** [ADDRESS, EMAIL, & PHONE]
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount Hall** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail:** irb@umd.edu **Telephone: 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF PARTICIPANT** **[Please Print]**
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

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