An in-depth study of entrepreneurs and PhD students’ practical processes and self identities: Are they really two different species?

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<tr>
<td>BERR</td>
<td>Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Doctor of Engineering</td>
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<td>Social Entrepreneurship Monitor</td>
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The University of Manchester
Dale Carol Heywood

Abstract

Title: An in-depth study of entrepreneurs and PhD students’ practical processes and self identities: Are they really two different species?

This research explores two polarised occupations; entrepreneurs and PhD research students. It exposes similarities and differences between them which specifically defuse the species premise that all entrepreneurs are different and often portrayed as superior to the rest of society and that they, entrepreneurs, are diametrically opposed to PhD research students in the objectives of their work and ultimate intentions for that work.

An explorative, interpretive approach is taken which helps illuminate how people understand, interpret and employ their self identity to qualify the practises of both entrepreneurship and PhDship. This methodology enabled exploration of perceptions of self and role in a small sample of people of different age, gender, class, ethnicity and economic standing of two externally polarised occupational groups. This approach permits a compare and contrast of both similarity and differences between these two roles. Qualitative interviews were conducted with six entrepreneurs and six current PhD students from two North West of England research-led universities in a multitude of disciplines and industrial sectors.

Numerous existing studies have compared entrepreneurs to managers, to leaders and more recently to business students. Other studies have aimed to ascertain why some people become an entrepreneur as oppose to a salaried employee. To date, no previous research that I am aware of considers doctoral researchers in the same way, that is, as individuals making a contribution to society that is of social, economic and intellectual benefit by furthering knowledge and innovation.

The findings from this research show that there are overwhelming similarities between these two occupations in both their practical processes and their sense of self. In fact, there are more differences within the two occupations than between them. It is suggested that identification of individual purpose may prove a valuable determinate of whether people select either of these occupations for socioeconomic reasons or for socioemotional ones.

The contribution this research and its findings make is in the recognition of the different purposes individuals express as their primary reason for engaging in either PhD research work or venture formation. This recognition helps expand our understanding beyond the existing opportunity-necessity or push-pull hypothesis to demonstrate a more sophisticated intention based form of inquiry.

Individuals in both occupations are subsequently sub categorised as conformists, alterpreneurs, changemakers or vocationalists. Conformists aim to meet perceived social expectations of them; Alterpreneurs are those who buy-a-job; Changemakers intend to improve or fix a self identified problem; Vocationalists intend to develop their skill and expertise in their chosen field.

Keywords: PhD students; entrepreneurs; entrepreneurship; PhDship; social identity; occupations; changemakers; alterpreneurs; conformists ; vocationalists
DECLARATION

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Finally but by no means least, Ms Liz Mundell for proof reading the final thesis on the somewhat unexpected instructions that she must be absolutely brutal with her opinions and suggestions for its improvements. She proved an excellent choice as an objective critical friend.
Preface

I came late to higher education. My first experience of post compulsory education was studying for a HND in Business Administration at Wirral Metropolitan College in the Wirral. The first day of the course was September 11th 2001, arguably the most memorable date in Western history so far. Our programme director instructed us all to go home and turn on our televisions if we wanted to learn anything. He was right. Just before completion of that two year course I applied to study for an MBA in Entrepreneurship at University of Liverpool Management School. I was accepted without a first degree because of my 25 years practical business experience.

I had set up and run six businesses prior to entering further education from the age of 14 and had many successes and at least one failure. It is because of this hands-on practical experience that the topic area of occupational identity of entrepreneurs and PhDs came about. I recognised that I was conducting many of the same tasks as a doctoral researcher as I had in my previous life when putting all the resources needed to get a new business together. I suspected this would not be an easy or perhaps welcome link to make. Entrepreneurs and apprentice scholars appear on the surface to be as noted in the title, two different species.

I was influenced early on by the Northern European interpretations of entrepreneuring as a social activity, not a thing one is. Steyaert & Hjorth make persuasive arguments which found an appreciative audience in me and many others. Their approach corroborated my own experience of both business founding, and research student roles. I had also gone through the same tasks in non
commercial projects also which made me question why so many myths remain about entrepreneurs specifically but also early career researchers.

The identity literature was new to me but having surveyed many existing identity theories it was Jenkins (2004) who helped me understand the complexity of identity in both its individual and social contexts as being dependant on institutional reinforcement as Goffman (1959) had also made explicit. A second important aspect was finding Langdridge (2007) phenomenological inquiry paired with critical analysis. This meant I could investigate these roles without imposing my own views on interviewees and then subject the data to rigorous critical engagement. The critical component acted as both guidance and as a foundation for minor adaptations. It is the most challenging methodology I have ever used but the intense reflection and critical engagement that it requires proved invaluable for a study of this nature.

This research relied heavily on my prior knowledge of those who shared their very intimate stories with me. It is because all my interviewees were known to me that they trusted me not to distort their experiences and for that I am extremely grateful. If the study has a weakness it is in the low number of participants with just six enterprise founders and six doctoral researchers. I explore in depth their lives, their experiences and their interpretation of what it is like for them to be either a PhD student or an enterprise founder. Consequently it makes explicit how similar both these activities are. The main conclusion is that by polarising both these occupations as different we overlook many of their similarities and so identifies a typology to all those who contributed relabelling them as conformists, alterpreneurs changemakers or vocationalists. This shows more of their similarities than differences.
Chapter One

Introduction to the Research: Setting the Scene
“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

Albert Einstein

1.0 Introduction

The primary objective of this research has been to determine if the construction of a separate ‘species’ image associated with entrepreneurs and with PhD research workers is experienced by those who take part in both activities. The specialist identity of PhDs (Mead 2010) and the heroic risk taking identity of entrepreneurs (Malach-Pines et al 2006, McGrath et al 1992) may contribute to be obstructive barriers. Recent UK and European policies on greater university and industry cooperation and collaboration (George et al 2005, Jain et al 2009, Jones 2000, Wilson Review 2012) may also benefit from an in-depth investigation into what currently separates these two activities. A secondary purpose was a hope to identify whose interest is served by maintaining this rigid separation of both occupations, but that is of much lesser importance.

To position this research in its proper context a brief consideration is offered here of the vast array of policy initiatives that underlie the need to uncover duality between entrepreneurship and PhDship which is proposed in this thesis. The recent insistence on more enterprise, more entrepreneurship, more research-led innovation and greater commercialisation of the higher education sector in general has been promoted not only by the UK governments, but also the European Union (EU) policymakers and research councils who often fund academic research.

EU policymakers have been keen to increase levels of enterprise and entrepreneurship across all member countries as part of its current and future
competitive framework (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) 2007 – 2013, Entrepreneurship and Innovation programme 2007 – 2013, European Charter for Small Enterprises 2000, Kok Report 2004, Lisbon Agenda 2000). The UK has also implemented many recent policy initiatives aimed at promoting not only increased levels of enterprise and entrepreneurship in society but also within higher education itself (Davies Review 2002, Lambert Review 2003, Leitch Review 2006, Wilson Review 2012). Most recently the drive has become one of making universities more commercially focussed than was deemed either appropriate or necessary in the past (Clark 1998). The rights and wrongs of these policy initiatives remain outside this research but here in the UK these two previously separate areas, businesses and universities, have been combined at least at government level. Firstly, there was the creation of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) in 2007. Then in 2009 that was also replaced with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). This makes the focus of why entrepreneurs and research workers are regarded as so different from one another a timely area of research.

1.1 Researchers experience of both activities

My background for over three decades was in setting up and running six of my own businesses; some small, some not so small in several different, although loosely related industrial sectors. Three of these businesses were unquestioningly entrepreneurial. They created solutions to specific problems I had identified. The others were neither innovative nor entrepreneurial, but very profitable nonetheless. I was at times a serial entrepreneur (Westhead et al 2005) and at other times a
portfolio entrepreneur. However, not having studied my occupation and career choices academically was unaware of either label (Ucbasaran et al 2003).

As a doctoral degree student I recognised a similarity in the practicalities of conducting research work. Learning new skills and techniques appeared similar to how I had previously repeatedly established and managed new businesses. There were similarities in the need to efficiently gather information, to manage finances carefully, to utilise time and other resources and most prominently, to defend new and sometimes unpopular ideas which might initiate change. I soon began to question why one was thought to be so different from the other.

1.2 Research Purpose

This research employs an inductive approach to illuminate its central questions about how people understand, interpret and adapt their occupational identity to qualify their voluntary engagement in the practices of both PhDship and entrepreneurship. This approach enables exploration of perceptions of self and role in a small sample of people of different ages, gender, class, ethnicity and economic standing of two externally polarised occupational groups. This approach also permits a comparison and contrasting of both similarity and differences between these two potential vehicles for purposeful action and possible change making.

A critical component accompanies this method. Critical research methods enable latent disparities between bottom-up interpretations and top-down interpretations to be explored fully (Alvesson & Willmott 1990, Ogbor 2000). This study is concerned with uncovering both practical processes and the individual and social identities of
these two externally viewed opposite occupational choices. This research uses an interpretative premise to explore what it is like for people in these polarised occupations and what they hope to achieve by investing themselves in them.

As with other interpretivist inquiries maximum variation is sought but with a small number of participants. Therefore six people from each occupation were interviewed for between one and three hours at a venue of their choosing. There was no questionnaire and not even an outline area of interest beyond ‘what is ‘it’ like for you’ and ‘what for’ to guide my inquiry. This relaxing of direction and focus during research interviews is incredibly difficult often steering off in directions that at first appeared irrelevant. However, using a critical narrative analysis technique proved an enlightening way of getting to the root of who the individual saw themselves as in their past, present and potential future through their work in either field. The merits of this methodology and analytic tool are explicated fully in Chapter Four.

1.3 Aims
The aim of the study has been to explore the similarities and differences shared by two groups of people, equally regarded as critical contributors to a new economy; that of PhD research students and of entrepreneurs. It aims to challenge some of the ideological myths of entrepreneurs and PhDs being almost two different species by exploring their sense of identity as one or the other.

1.4 Rationale
The research rationale is based on discovering if these two activities are as different from one another as is perpetuated in both the literature and public perception. This
required an assessment of their practical day to day activities and reflective experiences of being either a PhD research student or an entrepreneur.

Although this research is qualitative, it is ultimately based on my first thorough introduction to the quantitative data that is currently held on both entrepreneurship and on doctoral degree holders. This secondary data is referred to fully in Chapter Four showing that there are a number of surveys conducted annually and biannually for enterprise statistics specifically. There are surveys which focus on regional enterprise, national levels of enterprise and even global levels of enterprise. Many are cross country comparison studies, others are trading region comparative studies and some provide further breakdowns of gender, ethnicity and age cohorts which are similarly informative.

In these studies however there is a marked difference in qualifying criteria. Some are focused more in one area than another such as employment generation levels or growth intentions. All these surveys use different phrasing in their questionnaires, different interpretations of entrepreneurs and different measuring methods. In the doctorate classification Higher Education Statistics Association (HESA) conducts surveys and collates all figures of higher education results annually for the UK. This too has presented a few unforeseen problems because it only includes successful degrees awarded which consequently excludes those who either do not complete their degrees or who complete but don’t pass the examination. These too have altered their criteria quite noticeably over the years I have been tracking their publications. For instance writing up year students were removed from quantitative inclusion of students attending UK universities in 2007.
Another secondary source is the PhD Survey which is an online survey where previous students offer advice to newcomers on areas they might find challenging. There are general topic headings where people volunteer their advice in their own words so the PhD Survey is more qualitative than the HESA studies. Other studies such as the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) survey postgraduates as a whole including all masters level students along with postgraduate doctoral students. Research Councils United Kingdom (RCUK) has begun to monitor the employment and careers of PhD students they have funded. This is similarly the focus of the HESA Destination of Leavers’ from Higher Education Survey (DLHE) for all higher education degree students.

Whilst the breadth and variety of quantitative surveys is informative for measuring the volumes of both groups, it is understandably void of detail. This study contributes to the quantitative data by adding a more personal aspect from those currently undertaking both enterprise management and PhD research management. It therefore helps to provide an understanding and appreciation of what people hope to achieve by engaging in either of these activities.

1.4.1. Critical Qualitative Study

After studying many different methodological approaches frequently conducted in research of this nature I selected an inductive, but critical qualitative method. I was keen to gain an understanding of the experiences of people active in both roles. This is examined fully in Chapter Four along with the accompanying analytical method used in this research, Critical Narrative Analysis. CNA proved helpful whilst trying to move away from general discourse and popular beliefs about both these
occupations and was of great value for addressing the influence of both discourse and ideology. Secondary data showing the volumes of how many people have been involved in both PhD research degrees and venture formation over a fifteen year period is also presented in Chapter Four.

1.5 Research Questions

I didn’t put closed questions forward which would dictate what was of importance, nor did I feel the need to ‘prove’ or ‘disprove’ something as is the intention of a great many research projects. Conversely I wanted to get an appreciation and understanding of if, how, and in what ways, people experienced any alterations to their sense of identity but also an indication of their sense of purpose once they had taken up either of these occupations. My inquiry explores several broad tenets associated with the practical as well as the psychological features of occupational change including:

1. What is their purpose?
2. Why are they doing what they are doing now?
3. Is their identity affected by their current occupation?
4. Do they feel like an entrepreneur or PhD student?

1.6 Contribution

The findings of the research make several contributions to knowledge and are set out below. Although not revolutionary contributions they have the potential to alter the way we envisage people active in both these occupations and do add quality to the quantity focus.
1.6.1 Emotional or Economic Motors determining Purpose

Interviewees expressed their socioemotional and socioeconomic intentions and that is then shown to impact sub variables of how their self and/or social identity is affected. From this vital first step interviewees are separated as having one of three central ‘purpose’ intentions by engaging in either of these occupations. A division between the two groups is quickly dismissed when their reason for action is taken as their guiding purpose.

1.6.2 Exposing What For not Why

Empirical evidence in this research shows the reasons people decided to engage in both these occupations. There were many similarities which have either positive or negative effects on their sense of self in role. By resisting the urge to analyse why people were motivated to enter their role and instead exploring what for, or what they hoped to achieve, differences are highlighted not between the two polarised occupations, but within them and across all subjects and industrial classifications. This discovery could only be determined by changing the lens of analysis from a well established motivation angle to the more focussed purpose angle.

1.6.3 Principle, Profit/Prestige, Problem,

Three different purposes are recognised and presented as either ‘principle’; ‘profit’ which also encompasses prestige, and ‘problem’. In the discussion chapter, how the three purposes relate to the above mentioned socioemotional or socioeconomic reactions is given in detail.
1.6.4 Reconceptualising and Relabelling

All twelve participants in this research are subcategorised into four types and relabelled not as entrepreneurs or PhD students because that division does not stand up once the occupational labels are discarded. Instead they are relabelled by type as conformists, alterpreneurs, vocationalists or changemakers. The new labels cross both groups and find that the majority are actually either conformists, doing what is expected of them or alterpreneurs who have in fact bought-a-job or occupation for themselves. The majority have no intention of growing or developing their work beyond a subsistence and survival level. Only three of the twelve are identified as changemakers because they are active in attempting to fix or at least expose a problem they personally identified whereas four are identified as conformists and the remaining five as alterpreneurs.

1.6.5 Value over Volume

The findings from this research echo those few authors and scholars who voice great concern and frustration about the volume over value interest in both occupations. It is recognised that there are many as yet unresolved difficulties with accurately determining if PhD research work and venture forming is of good quality that benefit society at large. However the dependence on statistical instruments is argued as inadequate for trying to determine quality in both realms. This study exposes the value or lack of it in some PhD work and in some enterprise formation and management.

1.7 Further Research
The study’s contribution to knowledge is made explicit with due consideration given to the limitations of the research and those of inductive subjectivist studies generally. Suggestions for further research are provided with how existing surveys could be modified to generate valuable information of ‘what for’ when people engage in these occupations in the future. This it is suggested is a superior indicator of determining value of enterprise and research intentions whilst adding to the already calculated volume studies in both.

1.8 Summary
This chapter has laid out the reasons this research was initially thought both interesting and worthy of a more thorough investigation. It is candid in why the topic is of interest to the researcher and how my previous business owner experience has been a significant factor of that interest. It also explains how everything we have, and continue to learn from existing statistical surveys which document successes in both these occupations informs us well about trends in volume and measures of financial performance but little about what actually initiates the willingness of individuals to dedicate many years labouring on a project of the magnitude of both new venture formation and PhD participation.

In the next chapter a thorough appraisal of the literature on the two activities is discussed with indications that although these two occupations do not share the same amount of scholarly interest at this moment in time, they are both studied in functionalist terms for the most part and presented as serving similar objectives.
Chapter Two

Entrepreneurship and PhDship: Complimentary or Contradictory Approaches for Making a Difference?
2.0 Introduction

In this chapter an assessment of the published literature on both of these occupations is discussed. There are a great many ways of employing the term entrepreneurship made possible in part because of the much debated lack of consensus on what should be regarded as qualifying for the term. For many it is anyone who is self employed. For others people have to be setting up or operating a business. For others it is a novel and innovative behaviour whilst others discuss it as a set of characteristics a person possesses. Despite these numerous differing definitions and interpretations, the overwhelmingly positive encouragement of more of it is undeniable. In this chapter these divisive views are acknowledged and accepted as the main approaches that exist in the field of entrepreneurship, studying it through any of three different perspectives.

The growth of doctoral participation as a field of study warrants commentary if only because as is shown, there is a distinct void of research conducted on PhD students. Interest in this area has begun to grow slowly over the past few years as the expansion in participation and variety of doctorates increases. As the volumes of people participating in doctoral research increases, so too does scholarly interest and research surrounding the area, although a great deal of it remains in the institutional interest and not in the more micro focus of the people themselves.

In this section a critical view of entrepreneurship speculation and mythology is explored and additionally a more suggestive assertion is made that repositions PhD research workers with the creative destruction elements weaved into the entrepreneurship discourse. It is suggested that PhDs create new knowledge in their
very private and less celebrated role, and that the new European perspective of entrepreneurship as an activity is supportive of a more inclusive interpretation that permits PhDs to be considered alongside entrepreneurs in their creative and equally risky endeavours.

Finally, a brief introduction to both effectuation theory and entrepreneuring in its action sense gives entrepreneurship scholars a refreshing new way of cataloguing and studying entrepreneurship certainly, but also highlights how PhDs do many of the same practical things, with some of those overlaps and parallels made explicit.

2.1 Entrepreneurship Speculation

Entrepreneurship may be one of the most debated and speculated about occupations of the modern world (Dunham 2010, Grant & Perren 2002). It is recognised as a global phenomenon, which crosses all divisions and demographic categories and is believed by some to reach into every strand of society. Steyaert & Katz (2004) insist that:

“researchers and theorists need to move away from the narrow view of the entrepreneur as a speciality – a special person, or competency or situation in space or time – and consider entrepreneurship in terms of a type of action that can occur nearly anywhere, at nearly any time and by nearly anyone.”

These authors are joined by an increasingly large following of researchers in challenging how and why entrepreneurship came to be dominated by the economic dimension (Blackburn & Smallbone 2008, Hytti 2003, Ireland & Webb 2007). Several
of these intend to ‘reclaim entrepreneurship’ (Hjorth et al. 2008) as an action that is able to improve communities, lives, and society by pushing forward the activity aspect through social interactions (Jennings et al. 2005). This is quite a remarkable step change from how entrepreneurship has been understood and at times demonised throughout history (Baumol 1990, Pittaway 2005). The field has been extended beyond an economic focus to include psychology (Baron 1998, 2004, Chell 2000, Kets de Vries 1985, Lessner & Knapp 1974, Markman & Baron 2003, Mitchell et al. 2002), anthropology (Arum & Muller 2004, Mokyr 2000), history (Gough 1969, Low & MacMillan 1988), sociology (Fairlie 2002, Heywood & Southern 2006, Shepherd et al. 2010, Zafirovski 1999), politics (Dale 1986, Balkin 1989, Baumol 1990, Ogbor 2000) and even genetics (Nikolaou et al. 2008) and biology. It might be that the vagueness of what is under study, entrepreneurship, has partially contributed to the eagerness of scholars in all these different disciplines to bring alternative views of their own which cause further divisions and debates about what is being studied from some (Fletcher 2007, Gartner 1990, Ogbor 2000).

2.2 Differences between the US and EU interpretation

Economics authors have begun to give these arguments more consideration and extend acceptance of their credibility (Parker 2004, Shane 2005). What has developed is a move away from largely US economic interpretations of profit, innovation, growth and financial success as the incentives to entrepreneurship, toward the more socio and psychological dimensions and what has been termed a new European interpretation (Blackburn & Smallbone 2008, Hjorth et al. 2008) of what entrepreneurship entails and is intended to achieve. This ‘giving way’ has not been entirely willingly, but economic scholars have it seems in some ways
relinquished their dependence on profit, business formation and exploitation that are the tools of their interpretation of rational economic action and its outputs (Sarasvathy 2001, Gibb 2002) and appreciate the wider societal impact that is not intended to either destabilise economic equilibrium as Schumpeter (1934) proposed, or establish economic equilibrium as suggested by Kirzner (1973) (Chiles et al 2007). Essentially, entrepreneurship may have those effects, but they are not in the mind of the entrepreneur when s/he sets about their activities (Sarasvathy & Dew 2008, Chiles et al 2008). Entrepreneurship, seen through the lens of an economist therefore is of interest because it defies rational action where the rational alternative of securing stable, prosperous employment where an employer carries most of the burden of responsibility is viewed more logically. Economists appear intrigued by the logic of why someone or a group of people would risk their own resources, be it financial or otherwise, to change what is already satisfactory to the economist and to much of the wider population.

Sarasvathy (2001a) draws on just a few of the issues to be confronted that economists appear either unable or unwilling to address with any economic explanation. Her primary contention is that entrepreneurship is not a zero-sum exercise although it is discussed as such. She dismisses among many things the success/failure polarisation, arguing that all entrepreneurs succeed but the firms they create may not. She attempts to promote a reconceptualisation which describes entrepreneurship as ‘economics with imagination’, in which society is created from the society or economy we currently have to live in. This is a concept she has developed from Northrop Frye (1964) which incorporates how:
"such a theory would explicitly seek to allow homo economicus to shape and create a changing plurality of purposes and goals in a contingent fashion, translating moral and aesthetic “oughts” into mundane economic “cans” through creative entrepreneurial action" (Sarasvathy 2001a).

2.2.1 Economists Attention

The popularised economists most revered in explaining and developing entrepreneurship both as a practice and as a credible field of inquiry are possibly burdened with an ‘if it’s not broke, don’t fix it’ mentality. Non economist observers of entrepreneurs do not share this view and recognise its limitations if developing a greater understanding of what the discipline actually is and does is to be achieved. Quite the reverse is often true of entrepreneurs as they go about seeing problems and opportunities with just about everything and see themselves as the ones able to correct these irritating anomalies, or seize those opportunities whatever the cost (Baron 1998, Shook et al 2003). As Sarasvathy (2001a) notes, it is not that entrepreneurs love risk; it is that the cost of leaving something not attended to is too great a cost to bear for some of them. Some economists have recently accepted that there is much to be learned about entrepreneurship as an economic phenomenon and in its wider context by incorporating the views of those who understand and explain the true nature of entrepreneurship in the softer sciences (Lachmann 1973, Ward 2004, Watkins-Mathys & Lowe 2005).

One of the most significant findings that can be retrieved from published academic literature on entrepreneurship is the speculative divisions that are evident of what entrepreneurship is and consequently what it is not (Breslin 2008, Sarasvathy
Some envisage it and study it as a product (Eckhardt & Shane 2003, Gartner 1985, Gibb 2002, Shane & Venkataraman 2000, Shane 2008). Criticisms are raised about the discipline being interpreted and presented only as an outcome generally a business or an organisation (Bolton & Thompson 2003, 2004, Kirby 2003, Wickham 2004). Others argue that entrepreneurship is in fact a process, that is, a series of actions that are taken and that could, if they so desired, be performed by just about anyone (Chell 2007, Sarasvathy 2001, 2001a, 2003, Steyaert 1998, 2007, Steyaert & Katz 2004). Alternatively there are those who envisage the individual entrepreneur as the focus of attention (Kets de Vries 1985, McClelland 1961, Rauch & Frese 2007, Ward 2004) and have themselves been criticised for mythesizing entrepreneurs as modern day heroes (Fletcher 2006, McGrath et al 1992, Ogbor 2000, Sorensen 2008). This trend has perhaps subsided over the past decade in academic studies but remains popular in publicly consumed sources like television, newspapers and magazines and indeed the internet as another mass media platform. Discourse on entrepreneurial image is most often perpetuated as a positive source for individualism, wealth generation and success (Anderson et al 2009, Iyer 2009).

### 2.2.2 Psychologists Attention

Despite Kets de Vries (1985) concern about the psychological inadequacies of these individuals, they continue to be admired and for some include any person who founds a venture, buys a venture or even those who just profit from one such as Klein (2003). Here again we are faced with another contradiction. Enterprise, organisation (Gartner 1985) and venture (Shane & Venkataraman 2000) are used simultaneously and interchangeably to represent small businesses, new firms, new
ventures, new organisations and even self employment (Parker 2004, Shane 2008, Southern 2001) but all denote the profit motive or personal gain connotation so vehemently resisted by non economic researchers. The financial gain view is argued to be inadequate because it excludes the many ventures founded by people to correct a recognised social problem they have identified or to simply provide them and their family perhaps with a living income (Benz & Frey 2008, Carland et al 1984, Clinton et al 2006).

New small firms are created frequently but that does not suggest in itself that they have been created by entrepreneurs (Howarth et al 2005, McGrath et al 1992, Parker 2004) and equally entrepreneurs found charitable and not-for-profit enterprises too which contradicts the associated dependence for inclusion into the category of a desire for money, power and profit (Bornstein 1996, 2004, Di Domenico et al 2010). Social enterprise (Dees 1998) has become a legitimate and growing industry sector in its own right and increasingly accepted and titled ‘The Third Sector’ in policy documents in the UK, EU and the USA. Critical and structural theorists assert this additional new sector of global economies has evolved because of the retraction of government provided public services that consequently leave voids in society that are being filled by the dedicated actions of social entrepreneurs not aiming to get-rich-quick by exploiting those less well off than themselves, but by being driven by an inner conscience to improve what they see as social inequality or other detrimental potential in for example the environment (Bolton & Thompson 2003, 2004, Chell 2007, Duhl 2000, Kirby 2003, York & Venkataramin 2010).
This brief overview of the speculation and misrepresentation of entrepreneurship as a diverse field of inquiry leads to similarities with another recognisable role that also suffers from a similar level of speculation and misrepresentation; that of PhD research students. The activities and benefits both these occupations contribute to wider society have the propensity to be equally valuable to a knowledge led enterprising economy in what appears to be distinctive but complimentary ways. The speculation discussed above surrounding entrepreneurship is, at least published and critiqued frequently, whereas PhD research students, although an equally intensive and deliberate activity is rarely investigated beyond the quantifiable realm. Volume is monitored, value is not unless it is from the perspective of the numerous higher education reformers and traditionalists which have divided themselves further and further apart over time (Hinchcliffe et al 2007, Kehm & Teichler 1995, Teichler & Kehm 1995, Tight 1998, Usher 2002).

2.3 Creative Destruction

The term ‘creative destruction’ as coined by the economist Joseph Schumpeter (1934) was used to describe what he saw as the purpose and actions of entrepreneurs which consequently mould and remould economic structures. This euphemism has dominated support for entrepreneurs by highlighting their ability and intention to create change by destroying what is no longer adequate. The term has become synonymous with entrepreneurship and progress. More recently, the same term has been utilized by historians and other professionals who aim to celebrate this phenomena of pheonix like activity in many fields beyond economic.
2.3.1 Entrepreneurships Main Functions

Whilst a broader adoption of the concept is beneficial and can be seen to incorporate all kinds of additional creative endeavours, the economic association and its accreditation to Joseph Schumpeter has proved a stubborn hurdle to overcome. The entrepreneurship heritage remains firmly encapsulated in this arguably generic term alas and has been the exoneration of entrepreneurs since its publication. So entrepreneurship has become inextricably linked and protected thus far, to wealth creation but it is also an inclusive term stretching beyond the boundaries of the aforementioned economic provenance.

Kirby (2003) in summarising many other authors’ views expands the plausibility that entrepreneurship is not restricted to profit making ventures, but is an everyday activity. He concedes however that in a business school context, it is normally associated with profit making activities. A sentiment and observation shared by Gibb (2002) who makes an aggressive plea for entrepreneurship teaching, research and promotion to be removed from business school departments of universities because of what he diagnoses as their narrow economic focus. Both these authors, and others, argue that for many policymakers and academics, entrepreneurship is perceived to serve five main functions: innovation and change (Drucker 1985, Hanley & O’Gorman 2004), new venture creation (Gartner 1985, Shane & Venkataraman 2000), business growth (Gilbert et al 2006, Storey 1994), employment generation (Birch 1979, Henley 2005) and regional development (Heywood & Southern 2005, ODPM – Sustainable Development Action Plan: Securing the Future 2006). More recently reducing social exclusion has been added to that list of positive functions it is assumed entrepreneurship can and should

2.3.2 Moving beyond business only, to wider social activities

Kirby (2003) recommends an addition to this of the social effect of entrepreneurs who operate not for financial gain but, and he says more importantly, for wider societal change. Artists, musicians, writers and sports people are presented as talented entrepreneurs capable of making widespread social improvements via their actions and abilities, so we might well add scientists and knowledge makers to this list of entrepreneurial people and activities. Bolton & Thompson (2000) also discuss not only successful business people, including criminal entrepreneurs like Al Capone, Robert Maxwell and Nick Leeson, but also social entrepreneurs like Florence Nightingale, Bob Geldof and Mozart in their interpretation of entrepreneurial individuals showing the breadth for which the term can be applied.

Wickham (2004) similarly has a more egalitarian view of entrepreneurship and notes that of the four areas it is evidenced as being productive in; political, social and cultural, non-profit and for-profit, the profit motivated dimension is of least benefit to wider society. His illustration of this is shown in Figure 1 below.
Benz (2009) similarly believes that the wealth and profit aspect associated with entrepreneurial motives is completely false and insists instead that entrepreneurship is fundamentally a non-profit-seeking activity and that the:-

"traditional economic views on why individuals undertake entrepreneurial activities are incomplete. Entrepreneurship is not only and not even mainly a quest for profit. Rather, it is more accurately characterized as a non-profit-seeking activity."

It may therefore be acceptable to suggest some PhD research work also has a position in the domain or entrepreneurial intention and contribution. The PhD by its raison d’être is about discovering new knowledge and/or disproving erroneous knowledge. In order to succeed and secure the degree there has to be evidence of new and novel work so as to qualify as an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge. Therefore in terms of seeking out what is not yet known or what has not yet been exposed or discovered, doctoral research in all fields of science, can be
seen as an act of what could be termed ‘entrepreneuring’ (Mars et al 2008, Steyaert 1998). PhD research work is similarly a form of ‘creative destruction’ of obsolete knowledge and pursued so as to progress a field of knowledge at the sacrifice and extraordinary efforts of the identifying individual (McWilliam & James 2002, Miner et al 1992).

2.3.3 Consensus that contested views are divisive

The frustration frequently voiced within the entrepreneurship research community of how the field has grown so vast, so quickly that it risks losing any constructive or instructive credibility as a field of knowledge is a valid concern but also a self perpetuating one. By excluding anything other than entrepreneuring in its established or even evolutionary sense, the secularisation much criticised in fact becomes more so. Gartner (1990) makes the bold statement that researchers need to consider more respectfully the way they talk and write about entrepreneurship saying that the words used to talk about the phenomenon affect the way we think about it. That advice surely holds as equally valid for all areas of scientific study and publicly available documents but as he puts it words are a kind of ‘window for seeing what was earlier hidden or missing’ (Gartner 1993). Others might reverse that and insist that the power of words and particularly metaphors (Alvesson 2003, Alvesson & Wilmott 1990) distorts the critical aspect of description and understanding as a challenging issue in entrepreneurial identity specifically developed further by Hoang & Gimeno (2005, 2010), Howarth et al (2005), and Hytti (2000).
Gartner (1993) warns against the dualisms of terms and distinctions of who is, or is not an entrepreneur saying that the terms most often applied have become ‘labels of convenience’. It is proposed here that perhaps it is the secularisation of presenting entrepreneurs as being uniquely and distinctively superior to all other human beings performing creative and original work that is a burden neither scholars nor practitioners either deserve, nor can honourably or informatively defend. Gartner’s frustration is that language, interpretations and the activities commonly associated with the practice of entrepreneurship do indeed cover an ever more contradictory array of functions, definitions and explanations. The reverse of this accusation then becomes one of narrowing our conceptions down so as to exclude the more widespread application of entrepreneurial behaviours. Gartner (1993) himself retains the authority to judge using the automatic association between being an entrepreneur and being actively setting up or running an organisation. To qualify this statement he insists that ‘who we are is what we do’. Individuals as I understand his interpretation, are the products of their respective roles and the functions they perform irrespective of whether or not they have elected to perform these activities voluntarily. This appears to be a narrow perspective of the very point he is making, that of who is and who isn’t, as if it were some elite club one had to qualify for. The title of his (1993) article ‘words lead to deeds’, is one way of altering the common misconception of entrepreneurship being a specialised and unique activity and solely the remit of business founding individuals (Gibb 2002, Kirby 2003, Steyaert 1997). Other authors have also expressed concerns about the damaging dialogue of entrepreneur, profit, power and control as central to the field (Herbert & Link 1989, Howarth et al 2005, Iyer 2009).
2.3.4 Connecting entrepreneurs with PhDs

It has been discussed so far that entrepreneurs and PhD researcher students can be associated as two separate occupations with ultimately the same creative destruction idealisms. I have borrowed possibly one of the most over used phrases in economic and entrepreneurship discourse. In order to create the new, one has to dismiss the current status quo in both realms. PhD research has as its objective the generating of new knowledge so as to make progress which may or may not inflict damage on the old knowledge. This may appear simplistic unless we recognise that in both entrepreneurship and PhD research it is usually incremental developments that are significantly more probable. Evolutionary progress is not the same as revolutionary progress in either field (Kuhn 1996). It is not the concern of the entrepreneur or of the PhD researcher if the economy is in a state of equilibrium or disequilibrium, theirs is a much more private pursuit. They merely intend and act to contribute something in society that has graced their perception of their world through applied concentration, personal investment and dedication in the face of adversity and occasionally outright hostility. They want to get their job done unhindered but realise they need to situate their discovery into a landscape willing to accept it. This could be for new markets, new delivery systems, new products, new methods, new ideas of all kinds that are subject to being similar enough for people to accept their credence, but different enough to qualify as new and potentially valuable (Ward 2004). That may mean progressing society through encouraging new behaviours or progressing science through a new way of looking at a familiar problem (Popper 1963). Both occupations in fact participate in creative destruction of errors, but not necessarily economic stability or instability (Chiles et al 2007, 2008).
2.4 PhD research as creating ‘New Knowledge’

Having laid out my criticisms, concerns and collaborations it is appropriate now to move on to why it is argued here that the focus on dividing entrepreneurs from the rest of society has in fact caused not only a mythesizing of entrepreneurs unmatched by any other occupation, but that in seeking differences an important similarity is consequently overlooked and perhaps even suppressed. The similarity is suggested as being with PhD researchers and how they go about meeting the demands of PhD quality research.

The PhD degree is unique to any other type of educational credential (Hockey 1994, Johnson et al 2000). The process individuals go through however varies greatly. Bent (1962) defensively gives the institutional version of what a PhD is thus: “The crucial test of a Ph.D. program is that the training shall prepare the individual to advance our knowledge in one or more specialized fields”. Bent addresses the vagueness of how the PhD is appreciated by universities, individuals and vicariously by society at large. His defence is of its continuation for society due to the advances in science made by PhD researchers and research teams that conduct knowledge advancing, cutting edge research in order to gain their degree. On the benefits to the PhD researchers who undergo the programme he describes it somewhat romantically as one in which for “a brief period of his life he is able to devote himself with little or no distraction to the process of intellectual awakening.” Almost half a century on, this ideology remains one of the main pillars of PhD degrees continuity and reverence. The PhD is still promoted and marketed as an intellectual challenge which suppresses its potentially practical contribution feature of furthering wider knowledge, not only of or for the individual, but for wider society too.
As has been discussed in entrepreneurship speculation, PhD research studentship has also been argued from outside and inside regarding its function. A similar vagueness exists into exactly how both these occupations are understood. It is suggested here that both activities are equally focused on the creation of the new and identification of what frequently must become obsolete. Salmon (1992) reiterates this feature of PhD work insisting that the outcome, the thesis, has expectations attached to it. She says that the...

"PhD thesis must show originality on the one hand and it must make a contribution to knowledge on the other. Originality may be defined further as the discovery of new facts, or the integration or previously diverse ideas" (p 9)

Whilst this assessment is widely promoted in institutional literature as the reason the degree exists, Salmon (1992) also identifies that scientific knowledge as we have come to understand it is "regarded as having entirely independent standing – as out there, equally accessible and equally valid for all those who choose to consult it" (p 9). This is a similar depiction of all new opportunities in entrepreneurship research; that opportunities are simply out there waiting to be discovered by the fortunate few. So Salmon inadvertently has entered the created or discovered debate that serves as a backdrop for both occupations.

2.4.1 What is a PhD?

A particularly interesting study was carried out by Matos (2006) to assess principally ‘what is a PhD?, but not so as to give it an unquestionable definition as such, more to assess how it has different meanings to different groups and individuals. Matos’s
study compared the views of stakeholders from five top British research universities by firstly appraising their website information for prospective PhDs, then interviewing both supervisors and students. His findings indicate that although personal views differ quite substantially between supervisors interpretations of a PhD and students interpretations, the institutional guidelines of all his chosen universities put great emphasis on length of time to complete, length of written thesis but underpinned by an overarching insistence on generating new knowledge and original work. Matos (2006) says “what these guidelines have in common is the notion of the PhD as the outlet, as the opportunity to create new knowledge” and to be permitted to contribute to one’s field. Harland & Plangger (2004) also underline the primary reason the students in their research gave for choosing to undertake a PhD was that:

“they saw the PhD as an opportunity to go further in their chosen field and typically described it in terms of ‘creating knowledge’ or ‘discovering something new’. Discourse was largely focused on the outcomes of research in terms of an individual increasing knowledge for the benefit of society.”

These studies present PhDship as a creative pursuit and an unselfish act of philanthropic self sacrifice so that society can benefit from correction or improvement of a problem not yet explored fully. Educational reformists debate the PhD from the product perspective (Bazeley 1999, Phillips & Pugh 2005) whilst other theorists debate it from the process positions (Park 2005, Salmon 1992) but whatever their preference these remain internalist opinions with aims to either radically reform
delivery of PhD programmes or radically reposition the products purpose as being more ‘professional’, ‘efficient’ and more ‘relevant’ to wider society and employers.

2.4.2 Training, Education or Personal Development

Another strand of this conflict is in disagreement over whether the PhD is an apprenticeship, training, scholarly advancement, education, a commodity to be bought, or even an acceptable avoidance of traditional employment (Matos 2006). Hockey (1991) pragmatically summarises the extent of these conflicts that are the focus of so much researcher interest in the PhD. Surprisingly all these research streams avoid the person doing the research and what their reasons for taking part are. Bargar & Duncan (1982) for example take issue with how little interest is shown of the experience and note that whilst creative freedom and experimental aspects are needed for doctoral and scientific work, they can be frightening and “anxiety-producing” because the PhD student puts themselves ‘out there’ alone with an idea which may challenge the institutional or sectoral established wisdom. It is their contention that PhD supervisors can be equated with mentors who enable their students to realise their dreams “where the “Dream” consists essentially of very long-range, deeply held, and sometimes poorly articulated ends-in-view”.

Interestingly, other researchers refer to PhD student supervisors, not as mentors, but as managers (Vilkinas 2002) who ought to manage their students as if they were employees.

Many of the studies conducted and scoured for this research appear to have been qualified because of the lack of general awareness of what the PhD entails.

Essentially they appear to attempt to codify an experience carried out by thousands
of people throughout the world from every different discipline, age, nationality and any other demographic variable imaginable. The lack of instruction and structure in a PhD is reported to trouble some people not used to working on their own volition (Matos 2006, Park 2005, Salmon 1992). The one thing that holds all these people together in both the past and the present and we might assume also the future is their willingness to dedicate at least three years of their lives to the exclusion of other interests on solving a problem and publishing their work so that others can benefit from it.

PhDs are argued to be performing a function that will reward them with a certificate, a new career, a change of title all of which are output led. It has not been considered that the person coming forward to be subjected to the scrutiny of the academy for three years or more is, like entrepreneurs, so driven to examine a problem that the sacrifices and rewards are largely left out of the equation. They are there because they got it into their head that there was something wrong with current knowledge, something better or just different could be tried and that they were able and willing to set about tackling the issue, perhaps only they could see. The university as the awarding body then becomes less of a dominant feature and more of a facilitator for the creation of new knowledge. Whilst the criteria for passing a PhD are heavily influenced as the requirement of an original contribution to knowledge, the acceptability of candidates prior to conducting the research and writing a thesis on it is heavily dependent on the identification of a problem or agreement that someone else’s identified problem is relevant and worthy of their investment of self and resources. This is mirrored in both entrepreneurship and what I will henceforth label PhDship.
2.5 PhDship

Park (2005) believes it is time for a complete reappraisal of how we make what he calls “assumptions and expectations about what the PhD is” because as he points out it is constantly being recontextualised and reconceived in new ways and in new directions. He believes the original features of quality remain, but that who and how the degree is pursued has altered almost beyond recognition. He is uneasy about the accuracy of what is expected to come out of the PhD in terms of purpose and we might postulate the market function of the degree. He challenges the training versus education commentators saying that neither are accurate representations of what is said to be the experience of the students who have and are engaged in PhD research. His research contributors are reported as talking more of vague ideas, overwhelming uncertainty, lack of confidence in themselves and anxiety at having to not only conduct research of PhD quality, but also of having to first of all uncover what is worth studying for three years or more. Phillips & Pugh (2005) advice to future PhD researchers is overwhelmingly product focus but they do concede that the primary reasons people continue to come forward in growing numbers are most often reasoned as “wanting to make a significant contribution to the chosen field” (p 4) which can be interpreted as a gift to wider society.

Both entrepreneurship and PhDship often start with a problem, not an intention of material gain. Listing some of the inertia reason, peer pressure reasons, career advancement reasons and guilt at being mistaken for being in possession of a PhD, Philips & Pugh (2005) insist that “all of these motivations are far removed from the idealistic view of the PhD student as someone dedicated to advancing knowledge and potentially worthy of becoming an undisputed expert in a given field” (p 25). It is
perhaps wise to agree with Park (2005) and others that the reason these ‘How To’ books sell so well is because of the lack of formula, and that for Phillips & Pugh and others who have joined them in the supply of PhD guidebooks (Becker 1986, 1998, Bell 1999, 2005, Bolker 1998, Booth et al 2003, Davis & Parker 1997, Finn 2005, Marshall & Green 2004, Secrist & Fitzpatrick 2001, Turabian 1996, Wisker 2001) to deride the PhD as they do, as a consumptive item, that most embarking on will not acquire, leans toward a distinct product argument as something one gets, not undertakes, experiences or ‘is’.

2.6 Product, Process, Person?

The literature in both entrepreneurship and PhDship has deep divisions both with each other which is perhaps to be expected, but also within their own specialised parameters. Firstly, and unlike the problems identified in PhDship literature, entrepreneurship as a field of study has faced criticism as an artificially rapidly growing field (Chell 1985, Drakopolou Dodd & Anderson 2007, Shepherd et al 2010). PhDship on the other hand appears to remain a field of growing ignorance with little research interest until very recently beyond the political reformist community. Despite increasing numbers of people studying to doctoral level across Europe, surprisingly little research or publications exist on the topic as has been noted by Park (2005). The opposite is true in entrepreneurship with researchers contributing from a multitude of disparate disciplines.

Storey’s (1994) classic work argued that UK governments and policymakers had come to form unrealistically high expectations of entrepreneurship, assuming that new firms would be the source of new job creation and growth. Shane (2008)
recently identified much the same illusionary thinking by policymakers in the US too. There is evidence of some truth in these arguments as the European and National, as well as Regional governments produce reports, policies and manifestos on how poorly adapted the UK and some other European countries are to cope with the knowledge economy because of a lack of entrepreneurial spirit (Lisbon Agenda 2000, Kok Report 2004) and aversion to risk, and a lack of highly educated individuals are all thought to be key ingredients for a new enterprising knowledge economy. These dictates, following the powerful economic portrayal of enterprise, unashamedly endeavour to foster entrepreneurship so as to create jobs, increase innovation and generate regional development through increasing volumes of businesses, but with two central preferences: those of increases in high-technology and knowledge intensive businesses, and those for people in depleted areas as a way of encouraging long term unemployed people into the world of work (Heywood & Southern 2006). They appear to support entrepreneurship for entirely functionalist reasons and have introduced numerous support incentives to increase the volumes of new business created.

This association of entrepreneurship and new business argues that business and specifically high growth business is the product of entrepreneurship. PhDship is similarly understood and studied from one of these three separate positions. Thorne (1999) seeks to address not only the product and process aspects of doctorates but also the purpose of them. The polarised assessments of these activities and their outcomes are addressed and illustrated in Figure 2 and discussed individually below.
The product perception in the literature of both entrepreneurship and PhDship has proved a popular view. It is dependent on studying either a venture once it has been established, or the PhD as a thing to be acquired or even consumed if some authors are to be agreed with. The popular Phillips & Pugh (2005) guides are entitled ‘How to get a PhD’, not how to do a PhD or how to be a PhD (Taylor 2007). Other authors who have responded to the guidebook demand market for people considering or undertaking PhD research work, also detail the requirements needed for ‘Getting a PhD’ in its product sense (Bolker 1998, Finn 2005) with some authors referring to the PhD as more akin to a game and an endurance test than a solid contribution to science (Marshall & Green 2004). There is an even more well established market for ‘How To’ guides to entrepreneurship, small business formation and management and self employment manuals too.

Drucker (1985) attempting to specifically broaden the situatedness of entrepreneurship to include large established organisations in both the private and
the public sector, interpreted entrepreneurship in its outcome sense. For example when using the light bulb race as an example of ingenuity, invention and innovation versus entrepreneurship, he says the inventor, Swan, invented a product and a much superior light bulb, but it was Edison who was the entrepreneur because of the focus he paid to creating an industry ready for the distribution and demand for the new invention. Drucker assumes the title of innovator and entrepreneur himself insisting he was the first person to connect disparate areas of knowledge and stream them together to create the science of management in the 1940s (p 106). Drucker became one of the most popularised exponents of segregating entrepreneurs from technologists, inventors and scientists because he insists that the scientist and technician always fail to commercialise their ideas. He is dismissive of most technologists and inventors in society stating that they fail to appreciate what their inventions or innovations could mean, commercially we have to assume: He writes:

“Such analysis would appear to be fairly obvious, yet it is still rarely done by the scientific or technical innovator. Scientists and technologists are reluctant to make these analysis precisely because they think they already know. This explains why, in so many cases, the great knowledge-based innovations have had a layman rather than a scientist or a technologist for their father, or at least godfather.” (p107). (emphasis in original)

Drucker also identifies that low-technology or no-technology businesses are the more likely to achieve financial successes because of their lower risk propensity but overall, the ‘business’ success and avoidance of failure are presented as the objective. This observation is made explicit by Shane (2005) also.
Possibly the most obvious betrayal of the entrepreneurship phenomenon as more than economic products and capitalist intentions is found in Gartner’s (1985) proposed ‘conceptual framework’. Whilst addressing the four aspects related to venture creation being an individual, a process, an environment and organization, he intentionally or not, makes the term ‘venture’ redundant in favour of organization giving a decisive product or outcome focus. He avoids defining the entrepreneur instead seeking “to define the term “new venture creation”. Put another way, few people have previously attempted to give new venture creation a specific definition but Gartner’s widely cited proposal emphasises the ‘organization’ as an outcome, not organisation as an activity, but as the end product and consequently the intended outcome.

Clearly our collective understanding of entrepreneurship depends on how we term it, but the same language perpetuates acceptability in published research on the topic. Venture (Shane & Venkataraman 2000), opportunity (Chell 2000, Eckhardt & Shane 2003, Sarasvathy & Dew 2008), organization (Gartner 1985), enterprise (Gibb 2002) and exploit (Drucker 1985, Shane 2005) are common currency but all taken as terms of profit motivated business creation for those who promote the product perception of entrepreneurship.

In PhDship Enders (2002) reminds us that the PhD has been available for centuries but that it has undergone many adjustments and modifications since its inception by Humboldt in the Middle Ages. Young et al (1987) are reported to be among the first to separate the ‘product’ or ‘process’ focus of PhDship. As a qualification, or a product it is recognised throughout the world as the highest of intellectual academic
awards which has become the reason many reformists want it changed (Bent 1962). The prestige of the degree is thought to be the reason for it being targeted, but also for questioning its applicability to wider society by some (Denicola 2003, McAlpine & Norton 2006). Walters (1962) states that “almost every aspect of this venerable degree, it seems, is berated by critics from within and without.” Even so, he continues, the PhD “continues to retain its lofty prestige.” The degree then is a globally recognised credential that critics argue is in jeopardy because they insist it, the PhD, needs to have a wider function outside of academia. Bazeley (1999) for example points to how two years after completion, the majority of successful graduates were not using their research training and that for his interviewees there was an “intense frustration evident among those who were unable to gain secure, appropriate employment after all the years of study and training to be a researcher.” This ‘intense frustration’ has been an issue for decades with Faris (1934) challenging the ‘entitlement’ aspect on completion eloquently. Faris’s paternalistic view is less one of having laboured, rewards should be forthcoming, and more one of a social debt being acknowledged for having been educated to such a high level by the university with the cost attributed to society at large. The PhD has been seen as an ‘octopus’ as described by William James (1903), as a ‘union card’ to teach in universities but was originally less specifically ‘a licence to teach’. Faris insists, that as a profession there were many opportunities for holders of a PhD to teach in other education establishments, including the less illustrious high schools across the US which, during the 1930s were possibly in greater need of highly skilled teachers. Park (2005) similarly explicitly states that those that view the PhD as a product, focus only on the outcome, as a thesis, or as a certificate but that they are
overlooking the principle function which he consistently argues is ‘the original contribution to knowledge’

Some of the literature discusses the PhD in terms of an apprenticeship (Brush et al 2003), an education (Campbell et al 2005), as training (Bazeley 1999, 2003, Hinchcliffe et al 2007), an internship (Harland & Plangger 2004) and occasionally as an experience (Wright & Cochrane 2000). These labels carry with them a variety of both expectations and understandings of this venerable degree, and also of either empowerment or, as having a submissive component attached to them. However one feels about these confusing and often contradictory interpretations of the persons participating, they are likely to be radically different positions than the persons labels prior to admission onto a PhD programme. The most popular term, programme, indicates a conditioning and a kind of retraining which is fit for an academic career in research. The person studying for a PhD is programmed to behave in certain ways and to produce certain outputs, but little is investigated about the person behind the process or product and how they tolerate and adapt to this new identity throughout their PhD experience. As creators of new knowledge and as creators of new ventures the similarities between PhDs and entrepreneurs as co-conspirators in the destruction of what has become obsolete appears as a remarkable oversight to date. By focusing on the PhD as a thing and on entrepreneurship as a business or an organization is a positivist functionalist approach which disregards both the people involved and the way these things come into being (Salmon 1992, Sarasvathy 2004).

2.6.2 Process
The focus now turns to the process argument in both entrepreneurship and PhDship. Steyaert (1998) insists that:

“...entrepreneurship is a creative process enacted through every day practices: It is never done, and always going on, a journey more with surprises than with predictable patterns.”

Salmon (1992) also acknowledges that in PhDship:

“...taking authorship seriously entails seeing a research project not as a pre-set, standard sequence of activity, but as a creative process, involving its own prolonged, complicated and unpredictable course. As in any creative endeavour, the work of research is transformative – of the researcher as of the work itself. What ultimately emerges in the course of work could not have been foreseen at its beginning” (p 10).

These descriptions appear tantalisingly close and describe activities that share a great many features, intentions, processes and problems. Bargar & Duncan (1982) remind readers that science itself evolved as an activity humans engage in because it is a pursuit that allows the mind to work creatively. It is valued so highly because it excites the mind as well as its potential to have a positive impact on human development and adaptation through knowledge and technological progress. They argue that science is exciting when the scientist is free to play with ideas, to be creative, and when they can engage in the research that best draws upon their own “experience, values, and commitments as a human being as well as upon his
knowledge and skill. Proponents of the process position in entrepreneurship and PhDship are quite recent but appear to be developing a large and rapid following. In the entrepreneurship researchers community this is especially evident across Europe (Blackburn & Smallbone 2008, Hjorth et al 2008).

It is acknowledged here that the process position has more breadth than the product, but still fails to fully capture the someone behind the intention, whether that is the PhD researcher (Adler & Adler 2005, Sweitzer 2009) or the entrepreneur (Sarasvathy 2004a). It also undermines the possibility that the identification of a problem and the willingness to adhere to individual ideological motives that prompt a person to search for an improvement or correction through entrepreneuring or research activities is a personal choice. As mentioned earlier, much of the process position is reliant on examining whether opportunities are discovered or created. The shallowness of this historic dispute is the omission of the ‘problem’ aspect. It is questioned here how an ‘opportunity’ can arise without there first being perceived to be a ‘problem’ worthy of effort to fix? By focusing on the opportunity researchers are steered towards the intention without first having acknowledged the ‘intention of what’.

2.6.3 Risk avoidance contradicts the wider discourse

Whilst there is a lot to be gained by mapping and imitating the actions of successful entrepreneurs, or we might add, successful PhD graduates it has a similar limitation in that it assumes a carbon copy can be found of how everyone could and should imitate the actions of those that succeed. What is disregarded or acknowledged is that vast arrays of innovative activities are secret, private, personal and not open to
public or academic scrutiny. Imitating the few ‘gazelles’ (Heywood & Southern 2005) and how they behave in certain circumstances becomes something of a relentless pursuit of error avoidance. We don’t actually see or become affected by the errors that people make when they are completely immersed in a project sometimes only they have identified as worth working on.

The PhDship literature is also generating a larger following of researchers attempting to detach themselves from the product argument and to concentrate on the process position with contributions from a few reflective students (Chan 2003, Gardner 2008, 2010, Taylor 2008) but also authors who publish their own experiences of supervising students so that the endurance element and the learning by doing aspect can also be acknowledged (Hockey 1994, Hockey & Allen-Collinson 2005). Salmon (1992) is possibly the most ardent critic of the product argument. She incorporates not only a diversity of students applying, succeeding and on occasion withdrawing from their PhD but also acknowledges the impact of prior experience for her students. This is included to assert her point that people come forward to PhDship often because they have identified a ‘problem’ in their work or personal life experiences. This is in her opinion, what gives the PhD its genuine social value. She is quite succinct in her questioning of whether what gets researched has bearing on society at large in the eyes of those being researched, whereas when professional people come forward with a problem they would like to investigate further it is she says, from a working knowledge of what they believe doesn’t work adequately in the world and that they commit at least four years of their lives to correcting it, or at least that’s the ideal. As is now noted more widely in some of the social process literature of entrepreneurship and PhDship, it is the correcting of a perceived anomaly that
drives and sustains both entrepreneurs and PhDs through their sacrificial efforts, both of which are not only a contribution to new knowledge, new products, new processes but are undertaken with the intention of making their world better than they believe it currently is using their own resources to do it.

So the process position is one that does oppose the functionalist position to a degree, but supplants it with an image of ‘observe and duplicate’ which might prove equally naïve and narrow minded. Process researchers accept that not all entrepreneurs are in pursuit of wealth and they include the intrinsic factors of achieving personal satisfaction from having made a difference, but the process perspective leans on the established order of try and succeed which omits the personal ability component. Not everyone can, or wants to be an entrepreneur. Many people have been conditioned to expect someone else to fix all of the problems of the world. The entrepreneur and the PhD student are sometimes those individuals driven to distraction with trying to correct a problem at any cost.

PhDship as a process is deemed either education, an apprenticeship or an enduring pursuit of the new, through personal reflection, search and hopefully discovery but also a large amount of compromise and uncertainty. Phillips and Pugh (2005) make a distinction between the sciences and assert that natural science PhDship is more akin to a job because the person is recruited to work on a specific problem whereas the social science student has to create their own problem to study and are more aligned with what we have come to understand as entrepreneuring (Jenkins & Johnson 1997, Steyaert & Hjorth 2006). Fletcher (2006) supports the progress made
in understanding entrepreneurship as an activity as oppose to a product but as a social constructionist introduces a caveat that claims:-

“when it comes to understanding the process of opportunity recognition, beyond descriptive mapping or linear process models, understandings of how and why business ideas ‘locate’ with particular individuals at particular points in time are still fairly underdeveloped”.

The same might be said of uncovering how and why individuals volunteer themselves to come forward to address a problem or an issue perhaps they alone have identified in PhDship as well as entrepreneuring and therefore by understanding one, we might better understand the other.

**2.6.4 Person**

The final strand of this literature survey of both roles is the individual who puts themselves forward to contribute to the problem they have identified or has been informatively identified by others in both entrepreneurship and PhDship. The psychology and traits theorising of entrepreneurs was a very popular strand of research for a few decades before being abandoned in the late 1990s, however as Popper (1963) observes, themes don’t disappear for everyone and there has been a recent resurgence of interest in the person from not least cognitive scientists (Baron 2004, Ward 2004).

It could be suggested that because of the limitations highlighted so far of the previous two angles to create the entrepreneurship culture so sought after from
policymakers, the person has once again become the topic of interest. Entrepreneurship does indeed depend quite heavily on establishing a proper exposure of the entrepreneur as a person. The entrepreneur is the one who is moved to act, moved to invest in the venture, moved to dedicate a portion of their own and often their families’ lives to the creation or improvement of something. Therefore the entrepreneur is considered to be primarily the most important feature of entrepreneurship studies but whilst not enthusiastic about the popular entrepreneur versus manager testing (Busenitz & Barney 1997, Carland & Carland 1996) or the later entrepreneur versus leader testing, or even more recent entrepreneur versus business student comparisons (Dew et al 2009, Kirby & Ibrahim 2011) it is evident that it is the person that matters, not only what they produce or how they produce it.

2.6.5 The missing piece of the PhD jigsaw

The PhDship literature is somewhat scarce when addressing the persons undertaking doctoral research but thanks to authors such as Chan (2003), Hockey & Allen-Collinson (2005), Pole (2000) and Taylor (2007), these are becoming more accessible and stem from a variety of different disciplines. The person who dedicates many years of their lives to working on a solution to a problem will hopefully gain more significance and be able to help us appreciate the intention, application and assessment of current and future PhDship research. Currently it remains an obscure approach that reflects how little focus it has attracted in academic literature. What does exist can be regarded as an attack, or at least criticism of recruitment policies of universities that insist on employing only those
who have completed a PhD successfully (Davis 1976, 1981, Wilson 1997, Boddy 2007).

In the field of entrepreneurship cognitive scientists are now more dominant and focus less on identifying who is and who is not an entrepreneur (Gartner 1990) but more on what makes people who behave entrepreneurially, think differently to the rest of society (Baron 1998, 2004, Ward 2004). The same discipline has also attempted to re-legitimise this stream of research by proposing the familiar ‘why’ (Baron 2004) questions or ‘who’ are entrepreneurs (Rauch & Frese 2007) in an attempt to predict future uptake. From other disciplines, it is validated so as to predict when and how (Bird 1988, Sarasvathy 2003, Shane and Venkataraman 2000) individuals show a propensity for entrepreneurial behaviours.

Krueger (2007) is another who favours the entrepreneur being put back into the equation, observing that it takes a person to pursue an idea and, we can take it, a person to operationalise and hang on to the compulsion to act in order to bring the idea to fruition. He insists that by studying role identity we will be able to dig deep into cognitive structures that are currently misunderstood. He explicates the value of developmental experience as being an under studied area because it causes people not to alter what they know as such, but how they structure knowledge through reformulating, or as he puts it, finding new ways of looking at the world. This is a similar sentiment to Sarasvathy (2004) that if something is to be made to happen, then it must first start with a person willing and able to make it happen, whatever ‘it’ may be. Ward (2004) maintains that creativity can be hindered by constrained thinking saying that “along with our enormous capacity to create,
humans appear to have an equally impressive capacity to become stuck in the past.”

Here he discusses how believing what is already known is sufficient, prevents us from considering other perspectives or adaptations. This is reminiscent of the need to identify and understand a problem before improvements can be considered and that sometimes either individually or collectively “knowledge provides a bridge to the next development and sometimes it becomes a fence that blocks our path.” He argues that we need “more bridges and fewer fences” because

“when people attempt to make sense of novel combinations and, in particular, when they reason out how two discrepant concepts can fit together, the process can yield emergent properties that do not come to mind in considering either concept in isolation. Something new emerges from the mix.”

These externally polarised occupations, PhDship and entrepreneurship appear to be significantly less opposite than we are led to believe with a shared intention of contributing to a problem, sometimes, only the individual has identified. The people involved have to operationalise and invest themselves in working towards a solution to a problem that may not be solved, and that they may not be able to complete satisfactorily. That invested effort and outcome may ultimately be an expression of not only who and how they see themselves, but also how they will be labelled and judged on completion, withdrawal or failure.

2.7 Entrepreneuring as an Active Process
If entrepreneurship and PhDship are seen as processes, then it becomes more accessible and believable to witness people outside these exclusive domains also practicing what Steyaert (2007) calls, entrepreneuring in the active sense in their everyday lives. Not being an advocate of the exclusivity of entrepreneurship as being only for the successful business founder, society exposes a plethora of entrepreneurs in all walks of life who are busily trying and succeeding to improve their own environments. If entrepreneuring is recognised as an activity that has set intentions but not set outcomes, then the majority of entrepreneuring probably goes largely unnoticed, unrewarded externally and undetected in the broader horizon.

Steyaert (1998, 2007) introduces the concept of ‘entrepreneuring’ and encourages its wider application and use of the term as a verb or an action word that crosses all areas of social activity. He adopts the process approach to make his repeated pleas for thinking about actions one takes when he asks if the notion of ‘entrepreneuring’ itself might function as a common denominator which can usefully be linked to the increasing breadth and complexity of attempts to theorize these diverse processes (Steyaert 2007). He also criticises the lack of theoretical rigour but does state that whilst social constructivist, social constructionist and relational constructionist perspectives make some progress in dispensing with dualist, deterministic explanations, they differ in how central the individual entrepreneur is authoritatively situated whereas phenomenological inquiries he feels, come closest to being inherently processual because of the fundamental ‘as it happened’, happens or ‘lived’ experiences these studies can uncover (Mitchell & Shepherd 2010, Nadin 2007, Nicholson & Anderson 2005).
2.8 Effectual or Causal Reasoning?

Having studied the field extensively it becomes apparent that without a theory, the field suffers from legitimacy issues from some. Sarasvathy (2001, 2004, 2004a) has been instrumental in establishing an applicable theory to the field. She rejects the utilitarian principles which dominated the field for so long with its dependence on cause and effect reasoning being central to entrepreneurial processing and behaviour. She instead demonstrates how her ‘effectuation’ thesis applies showing that entrepreneurs work with what they have in terms of resources of all kinds, knowledge, contacts, finances, imagination, talents and modify their venture design and expectations according to what knew knowledge, opportunities and most significantly perceived and more tangible constraints they encounter.

What is required is a transfer in thinking from this description of how an entrepreneur adjusts to their environment and acts accordingly, and the way the PhD student acts in a similar fashion from similar prompts, restrictions, opportunities and barriers to overcome or avoid. The actualising of both bringing a vague idea of a venture to life and bringing an equally vague idea of a large research project to completion are noticeably similar in content, context and complexity as well as both having the added element of risk and uncertainty attached to them. Although a relatively young theory, and resisted by the dominant economic and product focused researchers, her proposition has gained credence and recently been suggested to be associated with a rather elusive Austrian economist, Ludwig Lachmann by Chiles et al (2007) who concur with her observations and the validity of effectuation theory as a valuable contribution to theory development.
A great many knowledgeable scholars have battled with this concept for over a century but it remains something of an economic blind spot. What scholars who observe and work with entrepreneurs insist is that ventures are much more disorganised and un-resourced than previous entrepreneurship commentators were able to admit or explain away. People work with imperfect knowledge, imperfect resources and imperfect motivations. What they do all share however is the will to act; somehow. This is the basis for effectual reasoning. Someone decides to do something about a perceived problem, somehow. They experiment with ways of going about their search for a solution and are replete with errors, dead ends, wrong turns, poor results and any number of what would be considered irrational actions, all in pursuit of proving their point and thwarting their critics. It does not take a huge leap of thought to replace the term entrepreneurs with PhDs in this description of actions, intentions, modifications and challenges that must be addressed, dealt with and hopefully overcome before intrinsic, not extrinsic, satisfaction can be achieved.

PhDship and entrepreneurship share this common irrationality if considered from this stance and yet history has for thousands of years exalted the entrepreneur and similarly ‘tipped its hat’ to PhD pursuers and holders, but failed to link the two ideals as having similar purposes. To date no one has appreciated how these may be both sides of the same coin and that without either, science, knowledge, technology and economies would not have progressed at the rate they have. More importantly, unless this correlation can be identified both may progress in opposite exploitative directions whereas their symbiotic features could remain buried in social ignorance and occupational elitism at the expense of the societies they both pertain to support, and who increasingly support them, both financially and respectfully.
2.9 Individual Pursuit

A popular angle from which entrepreneurship is presented in academic literature and increasingly in all popular mediums is as the lone, crusading individual with an often 'conquering against the odds' story attributed to them. Fletcher (2006) explores this by analysing a bestselling book on how the coffee house chain Coffee Republic was set up by the brother and sister partnership and challenges not only what is written, but how this heroic but intentionally inclusive 'anyone can do it' message translates. On a more supportive vein Sarasvathy (2004a) explores the cognitive disciplining associated with entrepreneurs and explains that by deliberately using the overly brandished cliché "Making It Happen" she is able to force the reader to appreciate the foundational necessity of a dependence on artefacts such as firms, markets, economies and sectors. We could at this juncture consider the artefacts which also exist for PhDship including research councils, scientific disciplines and higher education institutions (HEI) which are currently the institutions with the monopoly of delivering PhD student training and awarding the degree credentials.

Sarasvathys’ point is aimed at the significance of some-one making some-thing happen. This is a useful linkage for expanding the compare and contrast principles between PhDs and entrepreneurs. Discoveries and disturbances in knowledge only come about because some-one gets it into their head to do some-thing about what they perceive as worthy of their efforts to improve it. Sarasvathy states:

“...making anything happen suggests the existence of a maker and the importance of his or her role in making it happen. Not only will entrepreneurial agency matter in how things come to be, but also what comes to be.”

(emphasis in original)  
(Sarasvathy 2004a)
To compliment this somewhat basic, but often neglected detail she gives three reasons why studying the firm and not the person is an absurdly defensive preference for researchers;

1. they don’t distinguish between the firm and the entrepreneur
2. they assume all entrepreneurs want the same thing;
3. they assume opportunism is present at individual and at firm level.

Drawing her inspiration from Herbert Simon’s ‘Sciences of the Artificial’ thesis, this is described as a development to her earlier argument (Sarasvathy 2001, 2001a) for effectual versus causal processing when entrepreneurs make decisions.

If the objective for both PhD researchers and entrepreneurs is to ‘make it happen’ then how they go about that might share similar motivations, creative applications and dedication in the face of adversity. Drawing on Sarasvathys’ repeated insistence for researchers not to attempt to determine the existence of economic outputs and return on investment criteria, permits an inclusion of the heterogeneity of entrepreneurs as noted widely with the equal heterogeneity of PhD students. There is no such person as a typical PhD student just as there is no typical entrepreneur. These two individual pursuits as activities provide intrinsic rewards and either together or individually contribute to furthering knowledge through making changes in society.

2.10 Being whilst also Becoming

The popularisation and growth of formal higher education is overwhelmingly marketed as the means with which to secure increased financial rewards through
improved employment and earnings although many recent studies challenge the superior employment argument (Kehm & Teichler 1995, Lee et al 2010, Teichler & Kehm 1995). The associated identity shift of ‘becoming’ and ‘being’ a doctoral research student or an entrepreneur still remains silenced when it could in fact offer its own revelations. Very little is known about the identity shift or evolvement of transferring from one categorisation to another although there is an infant interest occurring in entrepreneurship research (Down & Reveley 2004, Down & Warren 2006, Hoang & Gimeno 2005, 2010) facilitated partly by feminist researchers (Cohen & Musson 2000, Hytti 2005, Nadin 2007).

There has always been kudos and respect associated with being highly educated but not all people treat their formal or higher education participation as a means to an end. Some treat the experience as the end in itself; as an opportunity to learn something they have always been interested in; as a correction of an earlier unpleasant university experience whilst they were young are just a couple of examples. Both Neef (1999) and Lasch (1979) have targeted education as a modern consumption product, however the promotion of higher education qualifications as an elite commodity disguises the process of learning and people’s ability to redefine themselves during the participation process. Similar to investing in forming a new venture, PhD study requires a high level of self investment of a multitude of resources with similarly no guarantees of success.

The activities and experiences of PhD research students is possibly the most mysterious of all activities as it is very rarely investigated in academic research. What work does exist, is in postgraduate studentship encompassing masters’
degree students, not PhDs specifically. A handful of exceptions are Powell (1976) who looked into the role anxieties of PhD students who were also university teachers and Chan (2003) who uses poetry to reflect various points of pressure throughout her own PhD research experience. Mercer & Saunders (2004) and Mercer (2007) have studied the effects of mature student identity changes over a longitudinal period as have Baxter & Britton (2001) but their samples are of first time undergraduates, so although informative, they are unlikely to support much of my distinction between PhDs creating new knowledge and how their role as a PhD student affects their sense of value, identity and worth, either internally or externally.

Other studies by Harland & Plangger (2004) for example, expose the ‘chameleon effects’ of PhD participation noting it requires rapid and diverse identity shifts between expert, learner, teacher, student and academic. This is possibly the closest research I have found to expose the multidimensional processes and identity aspects involved, whereas Hockey & Allen-Collinson (2005) expose the difficulties of learning to think differently for fifty arts and design PhDs across twenty five UK universities. The pressure their respondents describe of having to adapt to their research student role is demonstrative of the significance of encouraging people to articulate the ‘lived identity’ of those who consider themselves as expert in their previous field who then have to become analytic researchers and knowledge creators. These studies of course, draw entirely on the professionalizing of academic apprenticeship but not peoples’ extensive personal roles outside of their university environment. Similarly the few studies that are now appearing to address the identity of entrepreneurs are prone to be more interested in the ventures they have established than their private and personal identity (Hoang & Gimeno 2010, Howarth
et al 2005,). These studies overwhelmingly endorse associating what a person has done already with who a person believes they are now but fail to capture how what they are doing, be it participating in PhDship or entrepreneurship reflects who they want to become through what they are doing and at what cost to themselves and their families, careers and social standing. They also overlook the institutional factors that permit or hinder achievement of these new identities.

2.11 Summary

It has been suggested in this chapter that there exist similarities in the way both entrepreneurship and PhDship have been researched and reported and that both research specialisms share an equally divisive dependence on them being portrayed either as products, processes or persons. With this in mind the debate over what each occupation is separately has clouded out the similarities that both share and their potential to be regarded with equal value for knowledge led economy and society.

From this point the focus of the literature search moves to what the identity is of both these occupations and people involved in them from again, three different but interdependent aspects including assessing the institutional identity of scientists engaged in PhDship, the individual identity perceptions of both occupations some of which has been covered briefly above, and the interactions that make these identity features so divisive and separate but which could in fact bring them closer together with a degree of exposure of their similarities.
In contemporary definitions occupational identity is either described as a social construction or an internal psychological process. Unlike many other occupations and professions, PhD students are rarely given much scientific consideration as a collective cohort whereas there is a great deal of willingness for commentators to engage in rhetoric of entrepreneurs being as diverse as the ventures they develop. Doctoral research students are collectively regarded as students even though they have little in common with other degree students in reality. PhD researcher’s collective identity appears to be equally difficult to determine beyond student although as noted by Kehm (2007), PhD research students across Europe prefer to be called ‘early career researchers’.

Identity as a whole is a complex issue on all levels and some scholars remain less than enthusiastic about the recent surge in identity attention. Maclnnes (2004) surveyed six popular identity texts and insists there are difficult questions to be asked about particularly “why identity and why now?” There has undoubtedly been rapid growth in identity research and many conflicting theories have been proposed as a result. This research will survey only what is significant to exploring the occupational and lived identities of people in these two occupations.
Chapter Three

Identity: Social and Self
3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the literature was reviewed on both entrepreneurship and PhDship and an observation made of how they are studied divisively as either a product or process dominantly. It was stated that each activity involves a person willing to commit to either occupation but that the person angle is scarce in scholarly research. It is this recognition of both activities being person specific that in this section the literature review moves to what the identity is of both these occupations and people involved in them. Again three different but interdependent aspects are included which assess the institutional identity of students engaged in PhDship, the individual identity perceptions of both occupations some of which has been covered briefly already, and the interactions that make these identity features so divisive and separate but which could in fact bring them closer together with a degree of exposure of their similarities.

This chapter focuses on the identity of those who study for a PhD and those who enter into entrepreneurship. This requires an assessment of both the social and self identity literature and theorising. As was highlighted in the previous chapter the lack of consensus of what entrepreneurship is dictates that there is also a lack of consensus of who is and is not an entrepreneur. This invites an opportunity to explore further how being an enterprise founder feels for those who are collectively categorised as entrepreneurs. Again, as noted in the previous chapter there has been very little interest in determining the PhD research student identity but it too has a collective image that is worthy of exploration. The aim is to ascertain if those who are PhD research students, feel the image imposed on them by wider society as a homogenous group, is an accurate one in their experience. In order to
accomplish this aim, a survey of existing literature on the now vast field of identity in all its guises is required and includes the numerous different ways of studying identity over the past fifty or more years.

The fields of sociology, psychology and social psychology are included in this review with a detailed examination of the various theories that often contradict one another. Social Identity as external identity and self identity as internal identity are brought together with the aid of a conceptual model based on Richard Jenkins (2004) thesis. Social and self identity are shown to be both emotional and economic and enabled via institutional interactions. Links are drawn between this developmental concept and previous works by both Schutz (1967) and Erikson (1980) which are loosely incorporated into the model.

3.1 Identity: a modern obsession?

Identity, some argue (Bendale 2002, Gordon 1976), has become something of a modern obsession which remains surrounded by speculation. Ezzy (1998) argues specifically for the integration of narrative theory and a sociological conception of the self by combining classic symbolic interactionists such as George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman with more recent philosophers and research findings as a means of explaining self-identity. He believes that although Mead is acknowledged widely for his analysis of the self concept, it has been at the exclusion of his theory of time. Mead’s time feature reminds us that at any given point in history or even in one’s lifetime different points of view will foster a sometimes quite contradictory reality. The temporal aspect of self understanding has also been explored by Glaser (1965), Glaser & Strauss (1968) and perhaps most successfully McCall & Simmon (1978).
3.2 Institutional Identity of entrepreneurs and PhDs

In order to look closely at the identity aspects of either entrepreneurs or PhD research students it should be mentioned that there is currently a very sparse amount of research conducted on either group from an identity perspective. As noted in the previous chapter a fair amount is known about the outcomes of these activities but very little about how or why people undertake such work. Added to this, identity as a topic of interest has many commentators and researchers working in the field but from rather polarised and divisive platforms. House & Mortimer (1990) discuss the three “faces” of social psychology we see taken in the literature as sociological social psychology, psychological social psychology and symbolic interactionism. They identify that the dominant approaches in theory and consequently research on social structure and personality, and in social psychology more generally, has been to analyse when, how, and why social structure influences individuals (Honess & Yardley 1987). Much less attention or consideration has been given to how individuals might influence social structures however (Becker & Strauss 1956, Bernheim 1994, Brown 2000, Merton 1959, Weick 1995).

PhDs and entrepreneurs are identified as representative of two examples of how individuals set about trying to alter or (perceptually) improve flaws they have identified or others have identified for them in existing social structures (Tarricone 2004, Ucbasaran et al 2001)). Researchers in both sociology and psychology favour the argument that individuals merely react to structures of society. This premise dismisses consideration of its alternative that perhaps they are both self directed, self motivated, proactive efforts to change or improve our society through their actions in both PhD research and venture formation. Both occupations can plausibly
be likened to a form of volunteering. The area of voluntary work is speculated about widely because of the lack of financial incentives (Omoto & Snyder 1995) that voluntary work provides but is nonetheless a globally recognised and valued endeavour.

Theories of identity appear rooted in either the sociological tradition with Stryker’s (1968) Identity Theory (IT) which analyses social structures and how and when individuals form ties to others, or alternatively in a psychological tradition based broadly on Tajfel (1971, 1974, 1981) and Tajfel & Turner (1979) Social Identity Theory (SIT) and then Turner’s (1962, 1978) Social Categorization Theory (SCT) which emphasises individual cognitive and motivational mechanisms that underlie the formation of these relationships (Deaux 1993, Deaux & Martin 2003).

### 3.2.1 Sociological Identity Theories

The emphasis of the sociological theories is essentially the structural-functional aspect and engages in the maintenance of social order whereas the psychological theory stresses conflict between social structures and individuals, and attempts to explain social change (Berger 1963, Brewer 2001, Burke 1980, 1991, Thoits & Virshup 1997). Many of the sociological identity theories are formulated from symbolic interactionism (Mead 1962, 1977, 2002). Symbolic interactionism is concerned with relationships between actors who perform mutually complementary roles that facilitate one another, for example doctor-patient, teacher-pupil, supervisor-student, husband-wife.

### 3.2.2 Psychological Identity Theories
The psychological based theories are concerned with the effects and relationships that manifest from having these seemingly uncomplicated, shared group category memberships. Tajfel (1971) identity theory (IT) and later Tajfel & Turner (1979) social identity theory (SIT) explore the impact of in-group/out-group biases identifying that divisions are overwhelmingly based on processes of categorization, both of the group people believe they belong to, and the group they compare themselves to as opposing or ‘other’. This theory and argument depends heavily on not only individual, but also collective identification of some other categorised group being different, but also comparable to themselves. Age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, class and religion are the main pillars of difference and what we might term institutional identities or those that cannot be deliberately altered easily. A person can abandon one religion in favour of another and obviously no one can avoid the aging process. Similarly social mobility is how we term moves up and down the socio economic hierarchy, but essentially these primary identities are beyond our control and act as the overarching messages of who we are at any given time, externally.

Turner’s (1962, 1978) SCT is only slightly more individual than collective because it addresses the notion that people define themselves via others around them, and he presents self-definitions as more dynamic according to the situation one is in, so making context important. Schutz (1967) in *The Phenomenology of the Social World* similarly emphasises that individual identification emphasises difference while collective identification emphasises similarity. Consequently we see each person as unique, different, like us but not really because of their differences but when we
identify groups of people we draw on their similarities with one another, not necessarily with ourselves.

### 3.2.3 Person-Society Dynamic

An increasing number of authors are now expressing a keen desire to join both social and psychological theory bases because they recognise voids in both (Deaux & Martin 2003, Jetten & Postmes 2006, Reicher & Haslam 2006, Stets & Burke 2000, 2005, Stryker & Burke 2000, Turner et al. 2006). The main criticisms are that identity theory appears too static, and is assumed as being fairly fixed and unchanging. As noted above, people age without intent and on that category alone people are changing frequently. People move in and out of age categorised groups, socioeconomic groups and can relocate to other countries or other regions making their nationality more significant to them as foreigners in a new land than it is likely to be when they are indigenous to where they live. Hogg et al. (1995) argue that according to identity theory, changes are tied primarily to changes in role position which affect how we understand ourselves, but emphasis is placed on the social structures whereas context factors that permit or restrict an identity are under exposed in much identity research. With this then, desirable, and we might add deviant identities are not themselves static, but affected by wider society and subject to modification over time. Deaux & Martin’s (2003) concern is that identity theory fails to account for two key features that they believe complete the person-society dynamic

1. Firstly, identity variability - or what is desirable now, may not have been in the past, or continue to be in the future.
So for example, entrepreneurs have comparatively recently become admired and widely regarded as capable of positive social and economic intervention to improve society (Pittaway 2005). Scientists have also seen their profession rise and fall in popularity (Feyerabend 1978, Kuhn 1996) and public admiration depending on the impact of, among other things, religious power, public trust, widespread scientific literacy as well as the opinion power of groups such as creationists, animal rights campaigners and environmentalists.

2- Secondly, how people negotiate between identities that they desire and those that are ascribed requires a psychological process and the willingness to perhaps sacrifice ‘felt’ identities in favour of the shared meanings that define who they are judged as.

This issue might be important in the previously discussed associations of wealth generators, exploiters and business ownership replacing what may actually be the felt identity of entrepreneurs as pursuers of solutions to problems and for PhDs a similar mis-association of apprentice academics is given (Vilkinsas 2002, Waller 2006), whereas they too might see themselves as problem recognisers and solvers (Hockey 1995, Lovitts 2005, Neumann 2005, Peterman & Kennedy 2003, Prusak & Cohen 1998, Sastry 2004) or working researchers.

Deaux & Martin (2003) acknowledge the value of the classic theories, but add that the significance of a cognitive component is currently still lacking. Other well established researchers are also making requests for collusion and connecting between the three positions instead of a strict separation of sociological,
psychological and social psychological research. Stets & Burke (2000) for instance contrast the cognitive content of group-based identities with the ‘interrelated’ quality of role-based identities. They recognise that the latter necessarily entails specific counter roles for their definition. However, as already observed that means that there must be an-other group or an-other person of enough similarity and difference for each of us to compare ourselves to and we must be able to identify them as such. This raises the question of what then, are the counter roles for entrepreneurs, and what are the counter roles for PhD research students? As occupations there is uncertainty or at least disagreement as to which occupations they are closely enough paralleled with to constitute an appropriate comparative occupation.

3.3 Occupational Identity

In past research entrepreneurs have frequently been subjected to a substantial amount of research and commentary that positioned them either opposite corporate and SME managers (Carland et al 1984, Stewart et al 1999) or as the same as them. When those studies were challenged they were then positioned either as opposites to leaders, or as an extended form of leaders (Kets de Vries 2001, Klein 2003, Leighton 2007) and consequently as similar. They have also been compared and contrasted with inventors with some asserting major differences (Drucker 1985) with others more inclined to view them as equals (Bolton & Thompson 2003, 2004, Miner et al 1992). Entrepreneurs continue to be most closely associated with all, and every new business founder including anyone who is a self employed individual than any other occupation (Parker 2004, Saar & Unt 2008, Scanlon 1980, Shane 2008). This association may be both a remnant of the dominant economic growth aspiration that validate support for entrepreneurship as an endeavour, and simultaneously an
incentive to promote increases in the volumes of new businesses created. Other occupational comparisons have not been widely considered. Drucker (1985) warns against any comparison of inventors with entrepreneurs and yet both policy and scholarly literature continue to present entrepreneurs as being the key facilitators of innovations and new developments in numerous areas of society, both profit and non-profit motivated.

The PhD occupation on the other hand appears on the surface to be positioned only against professional academics, experienced scientists and established authors in their field. This is a somewhat naïve comparison group which requires the acceptance that we can unquestioningly take the apprentice-master position of PhDship as being uniquely different to apprentices in other sectors. For example, apprentice chefs, mechanics, teachers, nurses, tailors, joiners or pilots are not ordinarily compared to experienced people in their own profession externally but to other professions similar to their own. Nurses might be compared to doctors, chefs to cooks, teachers to education managers, tailors to fashion designers, joiners to carpenters and so on. The PhD research student however appears to lack an opposing similar comparator beyond perhaps all other postgraduates and students in higher education.

3.3.1 Occupational Choices as Identity Confirming

Bandura (1993, 1995, 1997) recognises that there are few choices adult human beings make which have greater impact on their life satisfaction than the choice of occupation or career. Expanding on this and others (Becker 1964, Becker & Carper
earlier work, Maddux & Gosselin (2005) state that occupational and career choices are

“limited not by deficiencies in skills and abilities but by deficiencies in one’s beliefs about one’s skills and abilities. Such self-efficacy beliefs are important predictors of what occupations people choose to enter (the content of career choices) and how people go about making their choices; (the process of career choices Hackett & Betz, 1995), above and beyond what can be predicted from people’s vocational interests (Dannoy & Borgen 1999)”.

(Leary & Price Tangney (Ed) Handbook of Self and Identity page 231)

Fershtman et al (1996) argue that in a culture that celebrates high social status, both occupational and educational choices are consequently influenced by not only economic rewards but also by nonmonetary rewards like self esteem and so the influence of these additional, but non financial rewards increases its contribution to the decision to enter any given career or occupation. They want to draw attention to the power of social identity on certain occupational roles. They insist that “the distribution of wealth in society affects the incentives to seek high-status activities”. Postgraduates earn credentials which for some act as symbolic currency for demanding higher salaries, whereas entrepreneurs don’t always maximise the social endorsement of their role in society as potential job creators, innovators and risk takers. Many of course don’t in reality create employment for others, innovate or take risks.
The importance and ‘choice’ involved in deciding which occupation to enter is a process of selecting one by comparing it with alternatives on numerous criteria which might include income, social standing, entry barriers, likelihood of competence and why one occupation is more suitable than another (Katz & Martin 1962). These two occupations of entrepreneurs and PhDs have not previously been considered as each others’ counter roles despite widespread agreement that both are in pursuit of the new, and require the willingness to labour on a problem they believe they can contribute value to. That problem may have been recognised either by the individual or by someone else, but both routes to discovering or creating a solution requires a high degree of sacrifice to change or improve what already exists. This is admittedly at odds with the popular perceptions of both occupations. As highlighted above, entrepreneurs have been compared to managers in the past, and also to leaders and inventors but never to PhD researchers to my knowledge. PhD researchers’ obvious comparative group are established academics in their discipline in a novice-expert categorisation or to other postgraduate students although these seem primarily internal comparisons. There is little evidence of an external one beyond the disciplinary difference between natural scientists and social scientists (Feyerabend 1978)

3.4 Personal Identity
Personal identity has been given very little exposure throughout history, compared to the more socially focused areas of identity research and recently Hitlin (2003) notes that the uniqueness we all treasure as what differentiates us all from everyone else is actually the factor that theorists of identity are most reluctant to engage with. The accusation is not without merit as researchers continue to almost point and name
every single human being as belonging to a group of convenience that they then feel is appropriate to study, measure and count. A further criticism of the field is that although sociology and psychology provide the legitimation of various specialist examinations of identity, the sub discipline of social psychology has itself fragmented in two opposing directions: Sociological social psychologists in one camp and psychological social psychologists in the other. Both these disciplines rely on different research methods, philosophical justifications and sampling procedures. The use of the term ‘camp’ is deliberate and indicates that the field exists to deal with groups and group behaviour. The irony of secularisation within the academic community dedicated to studying and explaining human action but one which continues to seek differences and to disregard similarities is one issue that will be addressed in this thesis. In an era of socio economic change, large scale physical as oppose to virtual gatherings of people are greatly reduced in both the developed and developing world. Gatherings are significantly smaller and more widely spread in employing firms and workplaces, in schools, in religious venues and even family households than was once the case. Collective classifications that were once so easily recognisable appear to be less prominently projected and consequently less easily identifiable in an era of constantly ‘becoming’ whatever and whoever one is able to as oppose to ‘being’ (Bauman 2000, Beck 2000, Sennett 1998, 2006).

This research is interested in the identity of those people who invest their own efforts and resources of all kinds working on an issue sometimes only they have identified and the practical processes they select to help them accomplish their aim. Either university environments are chosen on PhD programmes, or alternatively via their own volition in the form of enterprise formation but many people reject these formal
paths and instead opt for being what might be termed an ‘enthusiastic amateur’ in their field of interest. As such it becomes an almost impossible task to attempt to categorise ‘who’ typifies either of these occupations.

Rossan (1987) looks at expanding exactly what identity is and how researchers can appreciate its meaning by examining the changes women experience during their pregnancy and early motherhood. Her definition of identity is “the set of complex, more-or-less integrated attitudes which the individual has concerning him/her self”. It is hypothesised that it has three principle components: sub identities, generalised traits and a core.

- sub identities – are roles, socially recognized and endorsed/accepted
- generalised traits – characteristics we attribute to ourselves and others
- core – fundamental sense of self

Rossan argues that sub identities change most often, traits less so and core can be added to, but almost never changes. Other authors have presented evidence that challenges this assertion (Sennett 1998). All of these components are equally subject to change. Even a person’s core values evolve and alter with new experiences and new knowledge and given unfamiliar situations, people often describe a heightened awareness of their previously unidentified frailties and sense of inadequacy (Adam 2003, Adkins & Lury 1999).

3.4.1 Self Efficacy
Erikson (1980) found that adults develop and redevelop their identity for as much as eighty years once childhood and adolescence are successfully survived. This observation compliments Hitlin's (2003) and Bandura (1995, 1997) focus on core values affecting personal and continuous identity. The core is what we judge ourselves by, and in turn affects how we judge others as similar or dissimilar as in the in-group/out-group arguments in SIT and SCT. These judgements subsequently influence which roles we inhabit willingly such as work roles, family roles, political affinities and dominant/submissive roles. They may also affect a person’s propensity to take risks, raise their status to a level equal to or above their peers, set out to do extraordinary things like PhDship and establishing entrepreneurial ventures. This is believed to be because we assess our self worth by comparing ourselves to others, above and below our perceived and felt status. Our sense of self is affected by self efficacy and this area has frequently been associated with entrepreneurial intentions and success. Maddux & Gosselin (2005) state that

“the study of self efficacy is concerned with understanding this important aspect of self and identity – people’s beliefs about their personal capabilities and how these beliefs influence what they try to accomplish, how they try to accomplish it, and how they react to success and setbacks along the way.”

(Leary & Price Tangney J [Ed] Handbook of Self and Identity p 218)

Self efficacy therefore plays a significant role in both formulating and accepting self and identity, but also in how people perceive their future selves and their chances of succeeding at whatever they embark on. Both the occupations which are the focus of this study have a high failure prospect. We can therefore draw the conclusion that
those entering them must have at least a moderately high sense of self efficacy at the outset.

3.5 Achieving and Maintaining an Authentic Self Identity

Values and personal identity are linked at the theoretical level through the concept of authenticity. Authenticity as a primary self-motive (Gecas 1982, 1989) explains why we feel authentic when we behave in keeping with our values. Authenticity, in other words, reflects an activation of one’s personal identity. Reid & Deaux (1996) link personal and social identity and find them to be more strongly correlated when considered together than when segregated. Hitlin (2003) similarly claims to “develop a sociologically grounded understanding of the personal level of self by anchoring the self in individuals’ value-structures” and he suggests “the self and personal identity in particular, is not simply constituted by role obligations or self-comparisons with relevant others” in the way that Tajfel (1971) and Turner (1978) suggest. Other theorists (Devos & Banaji 2003, Feather 1995, Gecas & Schwalbe 1983, Katz & Martin 1962) believe the link from values to behaviour as oppose to attitudes is much less direct in the field. Personal Identity gives emphasis to ‘individual autonomy’ and is believed to be at each person’s core or unique reasoning as to why one action is taken and another resisted and rejected. This suggests that there is strong support for people pursuing groups and categories they believe will furnish their personal identity with accolades, influential status and other intrinsic rewards. Each of us are driven by our inner values which indicates we make a choice about which interactions are attractive or unattractive (Feather 1991, Reitzes & Mutran 1994, Stets & Burke 2005). These choices suggest our inner core values are how
we retain some sense of being individual, uniquely different to all others in some way.

3.6 Social Identity

Stryker & Burke (2000) claim also that identity theories have evolved in two quite different but closely related directions. Both they believe stem from Stryker’s (1957, 1968) structural symbolic interactionism which intends to help understand and explain how social structures affect the self and also how the perceived self affects behaviour of societies. The first is self in society and the second is the internal self-processes and how they impact social behaviours. The authors confess that “relatively speaking, the first neglects internal dynamics of self-process, while the second neglects ways in which external social structures impinge on the internal processes.” Theorists have argued that because there are expectations attached to many roles, these expectations become internalized and consequently enacted (Goffman 1959, 1963). As such people behave according to their perceived identity norms in ways that they believe correspond with the expectations of someone ‘like them’. Social identity therefore provides guidance from structures to attract commitment whereas individual identity informs perceptions as to which actions are most appropriate to suit or fit any given social situation.

3.6.1 Role Conflict and Cohesion

Identity theory has generally focussed on role identities and implies a duality. Roles are external and associated with social positions within society’s structures but identity is internal and consists of perceived and felt meanings that are associated with roles. So it is currently honourable to be a hard working person but if all that
hard work means family are neglected a mismatch can occur where an individual will either mentally excuse herself for aiming high at the cost to her family’s interests, or reduce her demanding work so as to comply with family demands and expectations. One component of commitment is obviously the number of people a person is connected to by possessing a particular identity (Stryker & Macke 1978). This aspect of commitment reflects density of ties, and power in some cases of retaining a particular role which is a characteristic of the social structure in which an identity is embedded.

Multiple roles and multiple identities may reinforce one another but often they clash or cancel one another out which explains why we see ourselves as only one or two identities at a time e.g. wife and mother are reinforcing but scientists and entrepreneur may not be so complimentary a pair. Scholar and business person don’t congeal easily either so society polarises these roles and constructs beliefs about their different requirements and intentions.

Tsushima & Burke (1999) identify a difference between lower level identity standards and higher level identity standards. Higher levels reflect values and beliefs such as, for example, being a good person entails some sacrifice and a high degree of diligence and persistence, whereas those values and beliefs subsequently affect the choices people make in their lower level identities of enactment. So for example someone might believe that in order to present and ‘prove I am this, I could do that’. In order to be seen as an intellectual I could earn a PhD, or, in order to be seen as an entrepreneur I could set up a new venture. Burke & Stets (1999) discovered that commitment to others who verify an identity increases when several people self-
confirm their own, and other similar people’s identities. Individuals then start to see themselves as belonging to a group which further validates their existence and their identity. If they don’t verify one another’s identities there is no group cohesion and the structure or group will break up and disband.

Theoretically that may have some relevance but this study is interested in two groups of people who collectively do not have a very strong, identifiable cohesive institutional structure. In fact quite the opposite might be observed. For the majority or small entrepreneurial ventures, all other new and established venture founders are primarily regarded as competitors and similarly in PhD research work the competitive nature involved also invites a sense of competing with other PhD students as well as established researchers and authors in their field. The group dynamic in both these occupations appears from the literature to be rather fragmented and disparate. It is difficult to determine therefore how either of these occupations or their participants would have much opportunity to confirm or reject one another’s inclusion in their respective categories.

3.7 Self Discrepancy Theory
Self Discrepancy Theory is posed by Higgins (1987) who contest that standards alter when self verification fails to materialise. Drawing from evidence in the field, Higgins constructed a hypothesis that the greater the magnitude and accessibility of a particular type of self-discrepancy possessed by an individual, the more the individual will suffer the kind of discomfort associated with that type of self-discrepancy which often leads to depression and anxiety. Therefore self discrepancy may occur when someone attempts to set up a new venture or begins a doctoral
programme but is simply unaware of what is expected of them. They may simply be unable or unwilling to adjust to the requirements of their new role. Higgins (1987) focuses on failures to meet the standards of others expectations of what to do, which can result in anxiety and failure to meet self-generated ideal standards. Gecas & Mortimer (1987) approach the multiple dimensions of psychological elements such as attitudes, beliefs, values and experiences. They say all these fall under either identity or self-evaluation where identity is an object or a thing, and self-evaluation is how a person feels about themselves. Identity then generally refers to who or what one is. Who we are to others and what we do to respond to those judgements. They use ‘character’ and ‘character identity’ to address qualities, not functions (roles) or categories (group members). They are interested in a person’s character through qualities people attribute to themselves and others, their values, beliefs and traits such as honest, brave, hard working, resourceful, tenacious, fair and so on. There are negatives also though such as lazy, spiteful, dishonest, cowardly, deceitful and greedy and so on. These are introduced as morally enforced when they say:-

“Identity-as-character emphasises the kind of person one is, whereas identity-as-role emphasises what one is. Dispositional identities or character identities link the individual to the cultural-ideological domain via systems of values and beliefs as these are expressed in definitions of self.” (p 266)

Interactionists concepts can be drawn upon to explain, justify or excuse people when presenting themselves as a certain kind of person, as a morally acceptable person, a proven worthy person. They insist there is a connection between role and character identities because many role identities carry desirable “characterological"
features such as hard working entrepreneurs and PhD research students, obedient child, jovial host, caring nurse. As has been suggested entering a doctoral programme or introducing oneself as an entrepreneur has currently considerable symbolic value and it is reiterated here that both occupations are self-selecting. Gecas & Mortimer (1987) recognise that there is a self-selecting factor in occupational choices and that certain types of people seek out roles which have stereotypes compatible with their self-conceptions (Blackman & Secord 1962, Mortimer & Lorence 1979a 1979b). It is exactly those stereotypes that are of interest in this study.

3.8 Self Esteem

People are encouraged to not only maintain, but also to enhance their self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe1983, Gecas & Seff 1990). People are urged to regard themselves as efficous or capable of action and they need to feel authentic about themselves as individuals or as genuine. Gecas & Mortimer (1987) discuss the disturbances widely appreciated that occur in the shift from being a youth to becoming an adult, from family dependence to forming one’s own family and from school pupil to employed worker as some of the major institutional changes. These instances of identity shifts were also the focus of Erik Erikson’s (1980) work although he observed them as occurring throughout the lifetime, not limited to the youth era. Concurring with this observation thirty years on, we witness these triggers of identity shifts being experienced in reverse also. Success in previous employment positions are of limited value when for example mature students enter higher education (Baxter & Britton 2001, Blaxter et al 1996, Britton & Baxter 1999, Waller 2006) for
Bachelors, Masters or doctoral research degrees. Similarly, entering higher education can be an enormous confidence booster for some (Morgan 2007).

Increases in family breakdown also mean people are leaving (voluntarily or not) the family home and starting their life afresh and the pressures now seen to relocate for work are another distressful trigger that might force a reappraisal of self and values (Sennett 1998, 2006). Adults are as likely to experience the same problems Gecas & Mortimer (1987) describe as being typical of youth to adult transitions repeatedly across a lifetime (Adkins & Lury 1999, Becker 1964, Erikson 1980, Kiecolt 1994, Webb 2004).

3.9 Identity as a Meta-concept

The most persuasive theorist I have found in relation to this research presents evidence that identity is more constructively appreciated if it is regarded as a meta-concept and not as sub divided specialisms. Jenkins (2000, 2002, 2004) clarifies the significance of interplay between numerous roles as well as the obligations to act in certain ways to achieve and maintain a worthy identity. He notes the epistemological distinction between groups and categories stating that whilst groups are known by their members, categories are not (Jenkins 2000) and therefore what we think about ourselves is equally important as what others think about us. Individually we identify ourselves, and work at creating an impression we intend others to accept, but we cannot guarantee that they will. In his later work he, following Mead (1962) focuses on the link with time and urges consideration of the significance of capturing a present self so as to reflect on past selves and to imagine future selves. Our past he points out, gets continually larger whilst the future obviously is reduced, and all we
can in fact grasp is the tiny slice of now that is the present (Jenkins 2002). In an era
of short term prioritising it seems prudent to explore what people are consciously
pursuing in both PhD participation and new venture creation considering the
temporary nature of both. Statistically the majority of new businesses will have less
than three years of continuous activity (Shane 2008, Storey 1994). The PhD now
has a much shorter completion time limit also of just four years whereas a much
more leisurely time to complete existed until very recently with many current
scholars having taken a decade or more to complete their research for their own
PhDs (Boud & Lee 2009, Ehrenberg et al 2010, Hinchcliffe 2007, Lovitts 2005,
2008).

Goffman (1959, 1963) refers in depth to this performance of a self within social
positions which as has already been argued, entrepreneurship and PhDship offer.
He says

“…a status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and
then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and
well articulated”. (Goffman 1959 p 81).

In this he is putting forward his assertion that what a person does is not in fact, what
a person is, contrary to those who insist that is so discussed earlier. This is opposed
by others who state specifically the significance of employment to identity
management and realisation and in fact Goffman’s (1963) later work on stigmatised
identities notes that there are typically three types of stigma; ‘physical abnormalities’,
‘character abnormalities’ and ‘tribal abnormalities’ such as race, gender, faith, and
nationality. Unemployed and uneducated individuals, he places in the ‘character abnormalities’ category. His focus here is on personal identity and he says:-

“…by personal identity, I have in mind only the first two ideas – positive marks or identity pegs, and the unique combination of life history items that comes to be attached to the individual with the help of those pegs for his identity”.

(Goffman 1963 p 74).

Jenkins (2004) sees identity as a “meta-concept that makes as much sense individually as collectively” and that it is strategically significant for the structure-action debate in social theory. He acknowledges however that collective and individual identities are typically understood as different kinds of phenomena and are almost always treated as axiomatic. He refers to the inadequacy of ‘black boxing’ in both social identity theory and also in discourse theory. He himself prefers to take an alternative unity approach because he believes:-

- With respect to identification, the individually unique and the collectively shared can be understood as similar in important respects
- The individual and the collective are routinely entangled with each other
- Individual and collective identification only come into being with interaction
- The processes by which each is produced and reproduced are analogous and
- The theorisation of identification must therefore accommodate the individual and the collective in equal measure
He validates this revised, connective view by saying:

“to know what we are doing and who we are, we must have some idea of what we are going to, or might do. Intentionality is thus an important aspect of mind (and therefore selfhood). But more than intentions are involved: planning involves drawing on direct and indirect experience, on theoretical reasoning and on the hunches of implicit practical logic, in the attempt to make the future more predictable. However, projection is concerned with more than reducing uncertainty. It is a human characteristic to look beyond the here and now, to locate oneself as the link between a past and a future (Clark 1992, Jenkins 2001). Thus it makes sense to include projection with retrospection and observation in the repertoire of reflexivity” (p33).

Jenkins prefers to use internal-external dialectic of identification. He dismisses the various reflections of the self made up of ‘bits’ and prefers instead the unitary model because it permits the recognition of selfhood as being simultaneously cognitive and emotional consisting of a rich combination of knowledge and feelings, both individual and collective, and thoroughly interrelated and autonomous at the same time. He suggests that the internal-external dialectic is informative for three reasons. Firstly, individual human selfhood is ascertained in reference to others and we come to know ourselves through other people. Secondly, we develop continually throughout our lives meaning both mind and body are never a static phenomenon. Self-identification involves the ongoing back and forth of the internal-external dialectic. Thirdly, the presentation and elaboration of self-identification draws upon many features of the human world such as relationships with others. These
relationships inform each of us, and furnish our identity. These above all else make the interactive nature of relationships and judgements the most specific aspects of identity formation and protection, and just as we attempt to create and maintain an identity, we also guard it from threats. He adds other more tangible tools that are employed including home, location, music, car, clothes, religion, pets and so occupation would be an additional tool or symbol of who we want others to regard us as, at this precise moment in our lives. Things of all kinds, both tangible and intangible can be put to use to enforce how we want the world to see us just as they can betray an artificial identity.

3.9.1 Internal – External dialectic as a significant development in Social Identity

The multitude of conflicting identity theories discussed so far leads me to favour Jenkins (2004) Social Identity thesis where the internal – external dialectic are incorporated into an assessment of whether the popular images of these roles match the private ideas of ‘being’ one or the other. Jenkins thesis invites simplicity and inspires a degree of recognisable conviction in the way he insists that individual identity is influenced by interactions with, and of, institutions in society. He stresses that the most significant contrast between individual and collective identification may be that the former emphasises difference, and the latter similarity, but both are enacted and enabled through interactions. Jenkins (2000) says there are two ideal or typical modes of identification: self or group identification (internally-oriented) which might be I, me, we or us for instance and the categorization of others (externally-oriented) such as they, them, him, her or those. Collective identity security, or a consistent sense of belonging whether it is to an employer, an
occupation or a geographic area are becoming more diminished and difficult to preserve in modern times. Changes to traditional identity platforms are in decline.

3.9.2 Conforming

Incorporating both Schutz (1967) and Erikson (1980) into this review it is recognised that both polarise and create a dichotomy in both of their related theories. For Schutz it is that activities are pursued either proactively in-order-to accomplish something or conversely reactively, or because-of something or an experience that precedes the activity. Erikson (1980) makes a similar observation that identity is formed very much along a basic preference for either standing out from others or alternatively from wanting to fit in with others. This then suggests a preference for conformity and perhaps an aversion to attracting attention and being a spectacle. We all prefer either one or the other. Aronson (1991) suggests that two motivations inspire conforming behaviour in people; the desire to be correct and the desire to remain in the good graces of others. The former is relative to what Goffman (1959) would call ‘back stage’ decision making, whereas the latter, the desire to remain in other peoples’ good graces is relative to ‘front stage’ public behaviour. These motivations are believed to stem from early socialisation and are continued fuelled by an emotional need to ‘belong’. So for Aronson (1991) compliance is produced by compulsion.

The powerful political messages of the policy quest for a ‘knowledge economy’ and an ‘enterprise economy’ may compel more people into acting effectively towards these outcomes through continuous self development and upgrading or improving their education credentials and also of exhibiting publicly more enterprising
behaviour. People are increasingly expected to make their own life and not to depend on society to provide for them (Bauman 2000, Beck 2000, Gortz 1999, Marchington et al 2005, Sennett 1998, Smeaton 2003, Tremblay 2008) which makes entrepreneurship and PhDship more appealing to many.

3.9.3 Combining all these aspects together

Having accepted Jenkins (2004) central arguments, a visualised model is presented in Figure 3 that incorporates and combines firstly the internal - external dialectic. The differences between the internal and the external are recognised as either individual or institutional identities but both he insists are enabled and enacted via interactions. This invites a simplified recognition that socioemotional identity is psychologically based and specific to individual or internal identity. This is markedly different from our external identity which is sociologically based and is recognised as more socioeconomic. Situated beneath the simplified model are some of the features taken from the literature which I have put into boxes that are believed to influence individual identity. These psychological motors include individual values, beliefs, self efficacy, commitment, intentions and argued to provide intrinsic reward. The institutional or social identity motors in line with the literature include some of the institutions that determine social identity. These include roles, groups, established categories, labels, occupations and it is suggested provide extrinsic reward. Centred in the lower half of the model, some suggestions for which interactional features would make successful self and social identity more likely are offered. This is not an exhaustive list but features recognition, acceptance, belonging, authenticity, access, accreditation, legitimacy and credibility. All are thought to be relevant requirements to developing and confirming self identity.
Having considered these aspects at length a correlation with Alfred Schutz (1967) notion of actions being taken either in-order-to achieve something or alternatively because-of something that has happened in the past is introduced. The *in-order-to* purpose is situated beneath the individual identity side whereas a *because-of* purpose is more likely to be in reaction to something so is situated on the institutional or social identity side of the model. Consideration of Erik Erikson’s (1980) notion of people wanting or preferring to either stand-out or alternatively to fit-in is also included. The desire to stand out is considered more of an individual desire than that of those wanting to fit-in or conform to group norms which is situated on the institutional side of the model.
A Conceptual Model of Social Identity

(Adapted from Richard Jenkins (2004) internal-external dialectic principle)

Social Identity combines social identity with personal identity via the Internal – External Dialectic

![Diagram of Social Identity Model]

Individual
- Psychological (Socio-emotional)

Interactional
- Inherent features might include
  - values
  - beliefs
  - self-efficacy
  - commitment
  - intentions
  - intrinsic
  - Alfred Schutz (1967)
  - standing out

External
- Sociological (Socio-economic)

Interactional
- Interactional features might include
  - recognition
  - acceptance
  - belonging
  - authenticity
  - access
  - accreditation
  - credibility
  - legitimacy

Institutional
- Social Identity Motors
  - roles
  - groups
  - established categories
  - labelling
  - occupations
  - extrinsic
  - because-of
  - fitting in

Institutional
- Personal Identity Motors
  - in-order-to

Fig 3
3.10 The Species Image in Both Occupations Exposed

Chell (1985, 2000, 2007) and several other scholars (Carland et al 1984, 1996) would prefer entrepreneurs and small business owner/managers segregated. The reason for this preference of separation is formed out of the persistent belief that entrepreneurs can be differentiated on a set of behavioural characteristics including alertness to opportunity (Crant 1996), analytic versus intuitive thinking (Buttner & Gryskiewicz 1993) and cognitive style (Baron 1998, 2004, Mitchell et al 2002, Mitchell et al 2007, Olson 1985). For several researchers these characteristics are sufficient to insist that indeed entrepreneurs are in fact a separate type of people to the wider population. Entrepreneurs allegedly possess and employ “characteristics that would appear to distinguish entrepreneurs as a species or type (Chell 2000).

Baron (1998) and Ward (2004) insist that entrepreneurs are different from everyone else because they are reported to think differently to every non-entrepreneur. These authors argue that these special beings think differently, so consequentially become entrepreneurs but if there is merit in this premise it could be that perhaps they think differently because they are entrepreneurs. This alternative view is not actually specified or addressed in their work. Hoang & Gimeno (2005) claim their research “is the first to fully develop the concept of the entrepreneurial identity and apply it to explaining outcomes in the process of nascent entrepreneurship”. They appeal for use of career studies in preference to psychological profiling which as has been shown many times offers little evidence that specific characteristics or traits were found to be unique to the entrepreneur. Corporate managers have often been shown to exhibit most if not all of the same qualities and characteristics. The authors validate this appeal by insisting that: “there has been little theoretical work at the cross section of identity, careers, and entrepreneurship” and consequently they
observe "there is no explicit account of the relevant dimensions attached to an entrepreneurial identity. This observed gap in our understanding of the entrepreneur will be addressed in this research.

It is difficult to appraise PhDs as a cohort and admittedly I can find no article, book or editorial willing to categorise them as a distinct species the way I have in the title of this thesis. Even Charles Darwin could not or would not, define the difference between a species and a variation in his seminal bestseller *On The Origin of Species* so it seems PhDs as they stand today are in an evolutionary phase. They currently qualify as students, learners, research apprentices, university customers and novice scientists. A great many of them are also university employees whilst conducting their research and writing their thesis up employed as teachers, tutors, researchers, authors and project managers too. I have differentiated PhD students specifically because they have more scope for creativity and innovation than either salaried researchers or even tenured professors. This alone makes them unique. Many can choose what they research and how. Only those that are given a topic which has funding attached to the outcome or results being completed to the satisfaction of the funding party such as Research Councils and corporations are given strict parameters on what to investigate.

### 3.11 Summary

Having surveyed the breadth and depth of most of the identity theorists and their somewhat polarised areas of focus it was helpful to combine the major threads into a model which helps explicate aspects of difference in the psychological, sociological
and social psychological theories but is able to pinpoint how all interplay and affect the three dominant realms.

I accept Jenkins (2004) and others (Burke 2004, Stets & Burke 2000, 2005, Stryker & Burke 2000) persuasive insistence that polarised psychological and sociological streams are unhelpful for understanding identity in its entirety. His theory is equally valuable for appreciating factors such as how individuals enact and are enabled or even prevented from becoming what they intend to. It considers what restrictions might be in place for that person to achieve their aims. These barriers often lie in the degree of interaction between the individual identity and institutional identity or personal and social.

Condensing Jenkins theory resulted in a visual model being devised showing how socioemotional as well as socioeconomic features need to be incorporated or overcome if people are to achieve and develop fully in their chosen role, and retain a sense of authenticity based on the internal-external dialectic principle. Stemming from this is a linked identification with both Alfred Schutz’s (1967) observation of the motive behind action as either ‘in-order-to’ achieve something proactively or alternatively ‘because-of’ in reaction to what may have already been experienced and Erik H Erikson’s (1980) assertion that people are drawn to either stand-out from others or conform and fit-in with wider societies expectations of them.

In the following chapter the secondary data is presented along with a discussion of the selected research methodology. My data analysis is described in detail and the use of critical narrative analysis presented as the most fitting for a study such as
this. The chapter examines the phenomenological based method used in this study illuminating its central questions about how people understand, interpret and employ their self identity to qualify the practises of both PhDship and entrepreneurship. This approach permits a comparison and contrasting of both similarity and differences between these two roles. Explorative inductive methods were selected because they enable latent disparities between bottom-up interpretations and top-down interpretations to be explored fully which as someone who has experience of both occupations I was aware may surface from my interviewees.
Chapter Four

Methodology, Method and Analytic Rigour: An Explorative Inquiry using Critical Narrative Analysis
4.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine the explorative method used in this study to illuminate its central questions about how people understand, interpret and employ their self identity to qualify the practises of both PhDship and entrepreneurship. A phenomenological based inquiry enables exploration of perceptions of self and role in a small sample of people of different ages, gender, class, ethnicity and economic standing of two externally polarised occupational cohorts. This approach permits a comparison and contrasting of both similarity and differences between these two roles of potentially purposeful action and change making. Inductive explorative methods enable latent disparities between bottom-up interpretations and top-down interpretations to be explored fully.

As this study is concerned with uncovering both practical processes and the self and social identities of these two polarised occupational choices, the only way I saw of being able to access and understand what people believe they are doing, is through an inquiry which could encapsulate who they were, are, and believe they will be because of their decision to enter entrepreneurship or PhDship. It was important not to influence those participating whilst interviewing so unstructured conversational interviews, or more accurately, inquisitive enabling of narrative development was believed to be the least invasive method of primary data collection. If everyone is arguably an expert in their own identity, then who people believe they are, and present themselves as, and who they were or describe themselves as prior to enactment, is admittedly subjective. Who they intend to become both during, and on completion of their current occupation, is also laden with conjecture and perhaps
idealised predictions, but nonetheless intentional and validated through their own reflective considerations.

As in all face to face interactions, a degree of politeness, behavioural modification and editing of details divulged was to be expected but as a humanistic researcher, I do not believe that detracts from the validity of an inductive approach. After all, our social standing and others perceptions of who we are, is partly, if not completely attributed to how they perceive us, even when that is not how we would like to be perceived or agree with. As Goffman (1959) points out, our performance is actually a dual performance between actor and audience so putting on a show for the researcher is arguably a deliberate attempt to present a specific persona which will act as a major ingredient in identity formulation. The open interview was therefore justified by its relaxed conversational nature. With structured questioning or preset questions to fill out, interviewees not only are known to give what they think is the ‘right’ answer but are similarly unable to explore or give consideration to additional descriptive information about themselves, particularly when asked what prompted them to take a certain action. Zahavi (2003) elaborating on Husserl’s notion of ‘presuppositionlessness’ explains that in phenomenological research the researchers role and experience should not interfere with the gathering or analysis of data when he says researchers employing should “not let preconceived theories form our experience, but let our experience determine our theories.” (p45). This simple instruction proved valuable throughout the research in its entirety.

As this study looks specifically at people who have entered entrepreneurship and PhDship, it aims to understand why they chose these occupations; what their
background was and for many still is; what they feel like in these roles and whether it contributes to who they want to be in the future. Why now, what for and for whose benefit are matters for discovery and understanding, not judgement. It is an attempt to gain insight into what both these occupations provide for people and what similarities there might be between them as well as identifying any significant differences in the way they are experienced by individuals. It is believed that a narrative method provides the most suitable means of eliciting information about how a selection of widely variable individuals who have volunteered to commit themselves to either of these occupations absorb or reject both the external understanding of their roles, and the internal alternatives they may develop to compensate for any perceived misrepresentations (Crossley 2000, Fletcher 2007). Narratives are themselves influenced by society’s cultural norms, symbolic structures and numerous levels of acceptance (Alvesson 2003, Gartner 2007, 2010, Pitt 1998,).

Several authors celebrate the value of narratives in entrepreneurship identity research (Anderson & Smith 2007, Hjorth 2007, Johansson 2004, Mitchell 1997, Rae & Carswell 2000, Steyaert & Katz 2004) but as noted in the previous chapters, there is very little attention given to the identity or the motives of people entering doctoral research programmes. Research work itself exists as an opportunity to discover and perhaps change what already exists in the scientific, economic, medical, and artistic and collectively, the social realm. Phenomenology is similarly beginning to be applied in entrepreneurship research with recent works by Berglund (2005, 2007), Cope (2001, 2005) and Seymour (2006) as just a few examples.
4.1 Philosophical Underpinnings of the Study

This study is built on a phenomenological style approach. Phenomenology is a branch of philosophy owing its origin to the work of Husserl and later writers including Heidegger, Sartre, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty, Schutz and Ricoer. The aim of phenomenology, as propounded by Husserl, is to study human phenomena without considering questions of their objective reality, or even their appearances but instead to explore how human phenomena are experienced in consciousness and in cognitive and perceptual acts. Phenomenology seeks to understand how persons construct meaning and a key concept of this is intersubjectivity. Our experience of the world, upon which our thoughts about the world are based, is intersubjective because we experience the world with, and through others. Whatever meaning we create has its roots in human actions, and therefore the totality of social artefacts and cultural objects is consequently grounded in human activity.

Phenomenological based inquiries seek to discover the world as it is experienced by those involved in it. It is about the nature of human experience and the meaning that people attach to their experiences. In trying to arrive at this kind of understanding, the researchers is asked to ‘bracket’, or suspend belief in the phenomena of the external world, to put them aside and focus on the consciousness of that world. Theory first and hypothesis formation for testing are absent in inductive qualitative studies; in particular, observation and qualitative interviewing are widely used, as is documentary analysis, although documentary analysis is frequently categorised under the heading of hermeneutics, which is closely related to phenomenology.

Husserl’s ideas, amended and developed, have informed research in sociology, psychology, social psychology, education, health sciences, and many other fields.
Phenomenological ideas therefore underlie virtually all of those schools of thought that hold that it is necessary to understand the meaning attributed by persons to the activities in which they engage in order to understand their behaviour. From this point of view, the move towards the adoption of qualitative methods in social research was prompted by the rise of phenomenological sociology, particularly through the social constructionism of Berger and Luckman (1966) and the ‘*Phenomenology of the Social World*’ from Alfred Schutz (1967). The intention of this chapter is to bring interpretative methods into the general debate on theories of information behaviour, and to emphasise the distinction between methodology and method. Over recent years more attention has been devoted to research methods than to the underlying methodological principles of different research frameworks (Cope 2005).

### 4.2 Narrative and Interpretative methods

Narrative inquiries are well established in sociological research and utilised in many of sociology’s sub disciplines. Johansson (2004) says narrating stories and narrative knowing can be more informative than logo-scientific knowledge. He refers to Steyaert & Bouwen (1997) who insist that narrative approaches contribute to entrepreneurship by enhancing conceptual epistemological and methodological reflection. The researcher is a co creator of knowledge and therefore their part in the generating and reporting process is held to account more than in the more common ‘explain and predict’ type studies. Johansson (2004) highlights three areas of potential value for narrative approaches in entrepreneurship particularly:

1. the constructing of an entrepreneurial identity
2. the role of stories for articulating experiences and learning
3. the use of narrative to conceptualise and reconceptualise entrepreneurship

Narratives and storytelling is not therefore a new addition to the toolbox of organisational research studies. They are widely employed in management and other disciplines through case studies and contexts. Recently, narrative theory has been appointed an explicit use “where stories are seen as fundamental to knowing and not secondary information intended to give some illustrations and to present an issue in context” (Johansson 2004) which makes them a most valuable means of getting at what is important to someone in their own view, not the researchers need to get at some obstacle laden ‘truth’ (Cope 2005). This argument is also put forward by others (Hjorth 2007, Hjorth et al 2008, Howarth et al 2005, Rae & Carswell 2000, Rae 2004, Short et al 2010) who aim to develop a reconceptualisation of entrepreneurship through critiquing established narratives, language exploration and interpretation of some research results.

The focus of interpretative research is understanding, not judging or putting an artificial value on the interviewees' interpretation of themselves and their life through stories and recollections as well as future constructions of what their intentions might be. Through narrative disclosure all states of thinking, past, present and future can meld into a sequential story which addresses and uncovers any of what Schutz (1967) identified as 'in-order-to' features as well as 'because-of' features as explanations for actions. Similarly by ‘bracketing’ or suspending the researchers own views, s/he can discover if the actions taken are described freely in terms of Erikson’s (1980) polarised motives of being those that act as a way of the individual ‘fitting-in’ or in fact if they are performed so as the individual feels they will 'stand-out'
from others as a form of individual identity validation. An additional aspect of letting people tell it their way is the choice of language they use comfortably. The language and terms we use and are relaxed with, portray as well as many other identity signals an element of actions taken or considered which are presented as being that of a personal choice. As I am investigating what people actually do in these occupations and its significance to both their self and social identity, then it was recognised that perhaps some would discuss their actions and intentions in one or the other of these veins.

The unstructured interview method similarly permits a free flowing, idea generating narrative where points can be clarified and beliefs about how they see themselves in role could be explicitly addressed if they arose. Entrepreneurs are, it could be argued portrayed, like no other time in history in something of a heroic light (Fletcher 2006, Hjorth & Steyaert 2004, Malach-Pines et al 2006, Mitchell 1997, Ogbor 2000, Sarasvathy 2004, Smith & Anderson 2004, Steyaert 2007) with almost mystical personas in some reports. Therefore social approval of entrepreneurs, although densely socio-political and socioeconomically constructed, has a bearing on how subjects interpret their sense of self in a world where setting up an economically driven venture is admirable. Conversely dedicating a similar amount of one’s own time and resources to PhDship appears to be less admirable and interpreted if not of a waste of time and money, as a more self indulgent pass time (Boddy 2007, Breiger 1995).

Mitchell (1997) presents an objective and modestly balanced argument to overturn the myths about entrepreneurs in a non-sensational tone which is a precursor to
Shane’s (2008) recent similar attack on the US public policy. Like others, Shane challenges the myths built up around the new start frenzy and support as an economic panacea and instead shows some macro level uncomfortable data to attempt to overturn the blind faith that all new businesses are to be encouraged. Fletcher (2007) also addresses the artificiality of entrepreneurship in the public psyche by using a popular success story text to show how the construction of a socially understandable account of the wondrous ways, but also open-to-all promotion of entrepreneurship as a career choice, perpetuates the myth that it is not only available to anyone with the skills and desire to succeed, but acts in a coercive manner to imply that if one isn’t an entrepreneur and successful, one is somehow a deficient character. Smith & Anderson (2004) use the term “e-tale” to reflect the widely acceptable promotion through narrative of entrepreneurship that it can overcome adversity by indicating its unquestioning heroic/villainous outcomes. They argue that entrepreneurship is a concept within a nebulous which makes demands on narrative to demystify its complexities but also present it with legitimacy to become a novel, occupational choice (Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff 1991, Downing 2005).

King (2004) states that in epistemological terms, phenomenological approaches are situated in “the middle ground on the kind of dimension proposed by Madill et al (2000)”. This view is supported by Cope (2005) who states emphatically that phenomenological research is in opposition to positivist forms of research because it is an interpretive paradigm. He sets out to “clarify the relationship between “as a philosophy and ‘phenomenological inquiry’ as a stance or approach” In recognition of how some researchers impose their own values and beliefs on their research and
reporting of results. The aim of this study is to ensure that entrepreneurship and PhDship as occupations are considered fairly and sympathetically and that personal preference are not made either implicitly or by default (Easton 1995).

On the aspect of time it is important to realise that people may well interpret things differently at different times and in different contexts. An individual’s perspective on an event or experience therefore can change over time (Bogdan & Taylor 1975) and as such this study is temporally sensitive particularly as my study is of current roles where some reference may be indicated about prior roles and intended future roles. Nonetheless people change their plans and also have change thrust upon them unwillingly. Rather than trying to confirm or disconfirm existing theories, the aim of explorative research is to develop ‘bottom-up’ interpretive theories that are inextricably ‘grounded’ in the lived-world. Berger (1963) explains that some sociologists are obsessed with methodological questions which then cause them to learn nothing useful about society or social life. There has certainly been a degree of over analysing and second guessing on my part as to whether phenomenological based methods were appropriate for what I was trying to understand and how to go about it. I knew I didn’t want to put closed questions forward which would dictate what was of importance, nor that I needed to ‘prove’ or ‘disprove’ something as is the intention of a great many research intentions. Conversely I wanted to get an appreciation and understanding of if, how, and in what ways, people experienced any alterations to their sense of identity but also an indication of their sense of purpose once they had taken up either of these occupations. My inquiry explores several broad tenets associated with the practical as well as the psychological features of occupational change including:
5. What is their purpose?
6. Why are they doing what they are doing now?
7. Is their identity affected by their current occupation?
8. Do they feel like an entrepreneur or PhD student?

Cope (2001) explains that for his own PhD research a key objective was to ensure his research remained authentic and identifiable to the entrepreneurs he interviewed. He considered it vital to ensure participants’ voices were heard during the interviews. This is an objective I hope to replicate so that the participants themselves would recognise, if not agree with my analysis of their story and what effect their chosen occupation has had on their sense of self and purpose.

4.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of Participants

As is demonstrated in the Research Design model overleaf there were several considerations to be made of exactly who could participate in this research. As has been mentioned several times, the definition of entrepreneurs remain unresolved and even PhDs are not an uncomplicated homogenous group of people. Therefore the next section explains these difficulties in more detail.

4.3.1 Inclusions

As laid out in my Research Design model, after studying the literature at length and formulating an area narrow enough to be completed in the PhD timeframe, selecting who to include and who to exclude was given a great deal of consideration. The PhD participant selection was comparatively straightforward. To qualify, participants had to be currently studying for a PhD at a British University of Higher Education. In fact I interviewed participants from two Russell Group Universities in the North West of England for the sake of cost, convenience and accessibility. It is not believed that
this has limited the study in any detrimental way because I was able to satisfy the maximum variation of participants in other ways including their gender, age, ethnic origin, scientific discipline, stage of progress, funded, unfunded and sponsored, full time and part time as well as one who was undertaking a portfolio PhD also known as a PhD by Publication. This essentially requires a student to produce a portfolio of typically three or four published articles in scholarly journals over a four year period which qualify the researcher as a PhD and are a recent modification to gaining a PhD for experienced academics and lecturers. These variations give an indication of the differences in people who conduct and complete doctoral research projects giving valuable insight into the variety of circumstances under which people ‘do’ a PhD. This differs from the PhDs historical limitations and is perhaps not widely appreciated yet by the general public.

The contrasting group of entrepreneurs however was more difficult due to the variety of definitions available as to who is, and who isn’t an entrepreneur. I selected people who are currently operating a venture they founded which fits with the majority of definitions accepted by both the scholarly and policymaking communities and to a greater degree the media and general public also. Maximum variation was again sought by selecting people of different gender, age, ethnic origin, size of firm, age of firm, non profit, for profit, micro, small, large, sectored variations, funded and self funded. Again all participants are currently resident in the North West of England and operate their business in this locality which was similarly an issue of cost, convenience and accessibility.

4.3.2 Exclusions
The exclusion of people in the PhDship category included those who had completed their PhD prior to my fieldwork, those who had withdrawn from their programme, also known as ‘failed to complete’ at time of interview and those who were studying for one of the newer professional doctoral degrees such as DBA (Doctor of Business Administration), D.Lang (Doctor of Language), Eng.D (Engineering Doctorate), EdD (Doctor of Education), DNSc (Doctor of Nursing Science), DNP (Doctor in Nursing Practice), Ent.D (Doctor of Enterprise) and a growing menu of new alternative specialist professional doctorates. These exclusions were deliberate in an attempt to capture only those who are pursuing a project over the full four or eight year period and for whom their role as a PhD student is seen to be significant. It is not here asserted that people pursuing other Doctorate degrees in industrial specialism feel any less or more affected by their research degree participation. Only that as the PhD label is more widely known and understood, the identity aspect of which this study is interested is deemed to be more prominent to the wider employing community and observing public. Consequently it carries a certain amount of expectations of behaviour, type and purpose not yet shared by post 1980s modifications which the professional doctorates are argued to be (Kivenen & Nurmi 2003, Lee et al 2009, Park 2005, Smetherman 2006).

The study also hoped to gain insight into whether differences occurred between those who had identified a problem to study and those who had an ‘off-the-shelf’ problem to research and so both were included as well as one whose employer is sponsoring her research. The sponsored student identified the problem herself first, then approached her employer for backing to pursue it’s examination. Due to the aforementioned definition difficulties associated with entrepreneurship it was felt
important not to exclude socially motivated, not-for-profit firm founders in favour of profit motivated firm founders, however the line was drawn between legitimate, in the legal sense, and non legitimate, or hidden economy enterprises (Harding & Jenkins 1989, Webb et al 2009, Williams 2009). Therefore I excluded participants who operate in many well recognised occupations that are unquestioningly illegal practices (see Appendix 1) most of which operate in a self employed capacity or as part of a team or gang and consequently are ‘entrepreneurs’.

4.3.3 Sample Size
On addressing the limitations of numbers to include, it was also consciously decided to avoid, if not exclude, a whole host of other occupations who are readily accepted as new firm founders and so by association, entrepreneurs. In professional sectors these are represented as those occupations for which specific lengthy and expensive higher education and training has been undertaken in order to qualify someone who frequently then, on completion, open a small practice and commence trading in their field. In low entry qualification alternatives such as domestic cleaning and caring firms, as well as other personal services and trades, there is reportedly little innovation or entrepreneurial behaviour. It remains questionable therefore if these people do in fact operate entrepreneurially. Several industrial sectors were consciously omitted from this research (also listed in Appendix 1).
Fig 4

Research Design

- Literature Search
  - Literature Filtering
  - Topic Area Reduction

Formulating the Research Question

Selection of Participants
Inclusion - Exclusion criteria

Secondary Quantitative Data ➔ Data Collection ➔ Primary Interview Data

- Conformists or Change makers?
- Initial Interpretations
  - Vocation or Alterpreneur?

Transcribing of Interviews

Thematic Categorising

- Personal Identity in Role (Internal) Changed or Retained
- Relevance to sense of self
- Institutional Identity (External) Adjustment or Rejection
- Purpose

Critically engage with both interviews and own interpretations

- Compare and contrast personal identity features
- Draw out similarities and differences between both occupations

Turn your own conclusions about their narrative around repeatedly

Write up and formulate own tentative theory

Institutional Identity
Adjustment or Rejection

Primary Interview Data

Secondary Quantitative Data

Personal Identity in Role (Internal)
Changed or Retained

Relevance to sense of self

Conformists or Change makers?

Initial Interpretations

Transcribing of Interviews

Thematic Categorising

Critically engage with both interviews and own interpretations

- Compare and contrast personal identity features
- Draw out similarities and differences between both occupations

Turn your own conclusions about their narrative around repeatedly

Write up and formulate own tentative theory
4.4 Research Design

The design of the research follows the standard scientific method in its early stages as shown in Fig 4. A survey of associated literature was the start with a filtering of what was and what was not thought relevant. It was during this filtering process that the topic area was narrowed down to one which was achievable to complete in the time and resource limitations of a PhD framework. The research question of whether we regard entrepreneurs and doctoral research students as polarised species different both from wider society and from one another surfaced as worthy of investigation.

Once the research question was established the next stage was to consider who could contribute value to such a study and who ought to be excluded. As has been indicated in the previous section, this was an area that caused great concern due to the generic labelling of all firm founders and self employed individuals being entrepreneurs and of all PhD students being seen as an equally homogenous cohort. The ‘Selection of Participants Inclusion – Exclusion criteria’ was also influenced by access to those with an interesting story to tell about their experience of being and becoming either an entrepreneur or a doctoral researcher. Brief biographies of all those who took part are provided (see Appendix 2)

The Data Collection phase as shown in the diagram was an unexpected ‘toing and froing’ exercise. It was not an either/or process of gathering either secondary or primary data. There were occasions when secondary data influenced interviews and on other occasions the primary interview data indicated further exploration of secondary data was required for deeper understanding and assessment of the
statistical significance or certain issues such as frequency, breadth and validation of details. My 'Initial Interpretation' stage was documented and after several attempts interviewees, irrespective of their external label were recognised as one of the four categories I devised: Conformists or Changemakers or Vocationalists or Alterpreneurs.

The next stage was ‘Transcribing ot the Interviews’ verbatim. During this stage I was able to analyse whether people adopted fully or adapted to their external labels willingly or whether they rejected them outright. It was also possible to determine whether they had experienced any conflict between their personal identity and their social identity. The dividing factor became evident that the individuals purpose made a significant contribution to how they felt about themselves and their work. As with all phenomenological based research the critical phase is an intensive one. Here I kept turning my analysis of both the interviews and my interpretation of them around extensively. This was the most exhausting phase of this research because I found that reading flat transcribed texts as evidence did not give the same richness or context that listening to the interviews over and over again was able to provide. This I acknowledge is a personal preference and perhaps not preferred by every social science researcher.

The final stage of the Research Design has been to write up my research and formulate a tentative theory which I am confident other researchers will be able to test in the future.

4.5 Definitional Difficulties
In showing how defining entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is problematic because of the various methodological approaches (Alvesson & Deetz 2000, Pittaway 2005) that impacts what we understand about the topic, Howarth et al (2005) sought to explicate this trend in a study where they interviewed four people whom they identify as being entrepreneurs; three men and one woman. The objective in their study was to get a first hand definition of entrepreneurs from those who are labelled externally as such. They then subjected all the interviews to Alvesson & Deetz’s (2000) paradigm. Alvesson & Deetz (2000) assertion is that research falls into four paradigms which are headed as Normative, Interpretive, Dialogic or Critical and that the intentions behind the research as well as the outcomes and assumptions drawn from research strands relate to either Dissensus or Consensus and Local/Emergent or Elite/a priori conclusions.

**Fig 5**

Contrasting dimensions from the metatheory of representational practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation to dominant social discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissensus</td>
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<tr>
<td>(dialogic studies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(postmodern, deconstructionist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(critical studies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(late modern, reformist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(interpretive studies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(premodern, traditional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(normative studies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(modern, progressive)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Origin of concepts and problems)

(Source: Alvesson M & Deetz S 2000 Doing Critical Management Research p 24)
These four separate lenses are applied by Howarth et al (2005) in an effort to surface both common definitions and any variants.

Interpretive studies aim to uncover and understand meanings in context. So their interviewees’ wider lives, work roles and attitudes were explored because interpretive studies place a high premium on the path dependant nature of knowledge meaning that the work and personal histories of informants is explored to uncover potential themes, consistencies or paradoxes which are sought out from the data.

Dialogic approaches focus on the constructed nature of individuals and reality and one of its key features is a focus on local or emergent origins of concepts and problems. Being in a position of dissensus with prevailing discourse (Alvesson & Deetz 2000) one research aim is to make visible commonly held assumptions.

Normative analysis follows the standard scientific approach. Themes from literature are exposed, transcripts are coded based on frequency of terminology, margin notes are made to track deductive processes so that summaries and tables can be produced. This remains the most dominant methodology in entrepreneurship research (Endres & Woods 2007, Gartner & Birley 2002, Hill & McGowan 1999, Ogbor 2000,).

involves challenging prevailing assumptions, rhetoric and meanings to provide different interpretations of entrepreneurial activity and policy. It differs from the dialogic approach, as there is an assumption that language is regarded as elite or a priori. This suggests that what is said may be largely pre-determined by political forces.

This became something of a problem for me. The existence and notion of an ‘entrepreneur’ is questioned as a construct which is held in place by those whose interests it serves to maintain and promote. This is currently an overwhelming economic focus and dimension. By labelling all new self employed people and firm founders as entrepreneurs, the convenience of count-ability appear obvious and difficult to dismiss (Cheng et al 2009, Davidsson & Wiklund 2001). As indicated previously in the inclusion-exclusion dilemma, the majority of firms accounted for on statistical databases are safe, secure, predictable, survival firms, not entrepreneurial firms, and similarly social enterprises can be extremely entrepreneurially motivated or simply me-too enterprises exploiting grant funding made available for a particular cause, movement or centrally recognised problem within any society. The additional limitation is in that if no legally recognised enterprise is formed, either commercial or social, then all other people are automatically disqualified from being considered entrepreneurial.

Critical analysis should deal with the rhetoric of enterprise and the identity of the entrepreneur from an acceptance position. However whilst the popular views continue to gather followers, the question of who is entrepreneurial, what is entrepreneuring and when and where does entrepreneurship take place (Reynolds
2007), has been overshadowed and even silenced in many ways. Howarth et al (2005) argue that the “goal of critical work is to demonstrate forms of domination and distorted communication by showing how social constructions of reality can favour some interests and obscure alternatives”. This concern has been voiced by others also (Hassard 1990, Ogbor 2005, Smilor 1997).

I am consequently forced to employ currently accepted definitions of entrepreneurs as essentially ‘anyone who is self employed or involved in setting up or running a business’. This is an abbreviated form of what is widely accepted as accurate. The GEM definition of entrepreneurship for example is given as follows:-

“Any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self employment, a new business organisation, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, teams of individuals, or established businesses.”

(GEM 2001 p 6)

My selection of participants therefore, at least for those externally recognised as entrepreneurs, was expected to be sufficiently varied to meet the recommendation put forward by other inductive researchers.

4.6 Sample Selection

Langdridge (2007) insists that the most suitable sampling in descriptive is maximum variation sampling, where the researcher seeks out participants who have a common experience but who vary on as wide a variety of demographic characteristics as possible (Bogdan & Taylor 1975, Polkinghorne 1995, 2007). With
this in mind, I approached those people whom I either had previous knowledge of, or had been introduced to in respect of their reasons for pursuing the path they were on by colleagues and acquaintances. It is acceptable and indeed expected, that sample sizes are often very small in phenomenological based studies due to the time consuming nature of the analytical process and there have been numerous studies published using only single cases for this reason (Foss 2005).

I was purposive in my subject selection based on attempting to satisfy the maximum variation recommendation but also to highlight the many different routes a person can pursue in order to achieve their goal. A brief overview of those who took part is shown below with some basic detail about their history inserted. F/T and P/T to the right of the columns are abbreviations of full time and part time occupation of their role at time of interview. As can be seen in Table 1 I have a selection of both full and part time students as well as full and part time venture formers (Petrova 2010). They also vary in age, gender, length of service and sector. There are micro enterprises, a social enterprise, a PLC, a university spin-out firm and a medium sized firm. Some are new whilst some are quite well established with the oldest firm being over ten years in operation. Some have employees, some do not. The selection of firms is also of founders in different age groups.

On the PhD selection they too are a widely mixed selection from different scientific disciplines, full and part time, funded and self funded and one who is sponsored by her employer. The interviewees are at different stages of completion being a mix of first years, second years and third years and their respective part time equivalents.
**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhDs</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong> Funded PhD</td>
<td><strong>E1</strong> Funded business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bio Chemistry</td>
<td>Bio Technology Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began 2005</td>
<td>HEI Spin out 2006 (1 employee plus founder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong> – Funded PhD</td>
<td><strong>E2</strong> – Self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>AV Equipment Sales &amp; Service Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began 2007</td>
<td>Established 2007 (no employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong> – Self funded</td>
<td><strong>E3</strong> – Self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biopharmaceuticals</td>
<td>Retail – Craft – Manufacturing Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began 2006</td>
<td>Established 2005 (no employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong> – Employer sponsored PhD</td>
<td><strong>E4</strong> – Self &amp; Lottery funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>Social Enterprise in Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began 2008</td>
<td>Established 2006 (3 partners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong> – Self funded</td>
<td><strong>E5</strong> – Small funding subsidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Management</td>
<td>Special Occasion Services Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began 2006</td>
<td>Established 2003 (no employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P6</strong> - Self funded</td>
<td><strong>E6</strong> – Self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>IT web-based Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began 2007</td>
<td>PLC trading over 10 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I deliberately selected participants from each occupation that divulged differing motives, past occupational identities, intentions and demographic groups. This was to avert any patterning of for instance age cohorts, scientific disciplines, gender, sectored similarities or anything else my participants might share in common other than their occupational role which may have distorted the findings at a later stage. These are presented below in **Table 2** and **Table 3**.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Demographic Mix Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>25 – 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Gender Demographic Mix Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>P3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>E3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>E4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The few in number are to realistically complete the study in the knowledge that interviews would be long, intensive, and that analysis of the data would be a personal exploration process of both interviewees and researcher. Being unfamiliar with some of the specialisms of bioscience, anthropology, audio visual equipment servicing and IT platform development was not considered to be an obstacle. I was interested in the participant’s sense of self in role and their intended outcomes which despite the numerous opposites in occupational expertise, were expected to be accessible and understandable by a lay scientist, technician, or man-in-the-street. The emphasis as Langdridge (2007) asserts is that there is a focus on identifying narratives and examining them for function and tone, as well as their thematic content. Crucially, there is a critical moment in CNA where the researcher employs imaginative hermeneutics of suspicion to interrogate his or her own way of viewing the topic and the narratives being employed by the participants. With this personal and emotional investment expected, a small number of participants were considered appropriate and manageable. It turns out that although the declared sampling is of
twelve participants, six firm founders and six PhD students, the researcher in this form of study is in fact the thirteenth participant. S/he is subjected to a high degree of critiquing and reflective questioning throughout the process.

4.7 Method of Data Collection

Initial interest in this topic was inspired by firsthand experience of both occupations and an early exploratory investigation of the statistical aspect of how many people were engaging in both doctoral degree participation and in enterprise formation. This developed very quickly into a fascination for the recent growth in doctoral level education since the turn of the century. This period also saw a significant shift from people undertaking doctoral degrees on a part time basis to committing to being full time doctoral research students. This finding inspired me to try and gain an appreciation of not why people had suddenly begun to study at doctoral level full time, but what they hoped to achieve from their doctoral level research work. A thorough analysis of secondary data commenced first.

4.7.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data has been gathered covering a fifteen year period tracking amongst other sources, BERR SME statistics, GEM and SEM research findings and HESI Doctorate completion rates, which include demographic and sectored breakdowns. This material has elicited a great deal of encouraging in some cases, but also disturbing findings which warrant further attention and analysis.

4.7.2 Enterprise Statistics
Statistics are published annually by BERR and these have been analysed, tabled and graphed here with a focus on volume and percentage of small and micro enterprises per total enterprise population and the numbers of jobs these enterprises create or don’t as the statistics indicate. Highlighted below in Table 4 are the years 2000/01 and 2008/09 when self employment grew across the UK but that growth corresponds with a reduction in enterprises which employ 1 to 4 or (later) 5 people.

**Table 4**

15 years of Enterprise Growth but also a lack of employment creation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total UK Enterprises</th>
<th>S/E with no employees</th>
<th>plus or minus</th>
<th>1 to 5 employees</th>
<th>plus or minus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 10</td>
<td>4,923,320</td>
<td>3,832,670</td>
<td>52,030</td>
<td>629,860</td>
<td>11,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 09</td>
<td>4,871,290</td>
<td>3,767,145</td>
<td>+299,045</td>
<td>641,175</td>
<td>-217,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 - 08</td>
<td>4,679,080</td>
<td>3,468,100</td>
<td>+197,995</td>
<td>858,245</td>
<td>12,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 07</td>
<td>4,550,930</td>
<td>3,270,105</td>
<td>+100,735</td>
<td>845,375</td>
<td>22,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 06</td>
<td>4,423,500</td>
<td>3,169,370</td>
<td>43,865</td>
<td>823,085</td>
<td>14,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 - 05</td>
<td>4,360,475</td>
<td>3,125,505</td>
<td>+255,325</td>
<td>808,525</td>
<td>5,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 - 04</td>
<td>4,097,095</td>
<td>2,870,180</td>
<td>+235,785</td>
<td>802,860</td>
<td>5,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 - 03</td>
<td>3,860,465</td>
<td>2,634,395</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>796,880</td>
<td>49,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 - 02</td>
<td>3,808,930</td>
<td>2,596,395</td>
<td>4,620</td>
<td>747,655</td>
<td>8,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000 - 01</strong></td>
<td>3,783,429</td>
<td>2,591,775</td>
<td>+267,435</td>
<td>738,685</td>
<td>-224,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 - 00</td>
<td>3,581,470</td>
<td>2,324,340</td>
<td>-15,305</td>
<td>963,615</td>
<td>41,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 - 98</td>
<td>3,707,695</td>
<td>2,523,535</td>
<td>6,715</td>
<td>803,275</td>
<td>-9,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 - 97</td>
<td>3,724,423</td>
<td>2,516,820</td>
<td>30,438</td>
<td>812,871</td>
<td>1,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 - 96</td>
<td>3,706,078</td>
<td>2,486,382</td>
<td>-103,034</td>
<td>811,610</td>
<td>198,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 - 95</td>
<td>3,581,469</td>
<td>2,589,416</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>613,436</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform - BERR)

In the years 2003/04 and again the following year in 2004/05 self employment with no employees appears to increase by almost half a million people over the two year period. The employing one to five category remains stable during this period. This indicates that between 2003 and 2005 an additional half million people took up self
employment or micro enterprise formation in the UK. It was not until 2003/04 that the 4 million enterprises mark was passed. In 2009/10 total enterprises are now rapidly approaching an all new 5 million landmark total.

Fig 6 below shows a consistent growth in self employment and micro enterprises in the UK from 3.58 million in the mid 1990s, to almost 5 million at the beginning of 2010. These statistics indicate that enterprise formation in both self employment and micro firm formation has grown as an alternative choice to employment per se. The economic recession beginning in 2006 has had little impact negatively on that historic growth. Since the recession was first reported by popular media in 2007 the move appears to have been a reduction of jobs provided in firms with 1 to 5 employees and an increase in independent self employment.

Fig 6

Enterprise figures by volume and employment creation 1994/5 – 2009/10
There have been numerous changes in counting criteria however of ‘All enterprises’ including public sector and non profit enterprises as well as private profit led firms. Also in the micro calculation there have been changes of calculating firms with ‘No Employees’ which changed to calculating firms with ‘1 to 4 employees’ which the statisticians admit could be just the founder and back again in 2008 to ‘Zero or one employee’. However the differences are presented, the historic increase in the volumes of people working in firms with fewer than four or five employees is quite staggering over just the past fifteen years.

The overwhelming majority of enterprise figures indicate that there are more self employed individuals contributing to the enterprise statistics than any other cohort with 3.83 million of the total 4.92 million enterprises in 2009/10 having no employees other than the founder or self employed individual. Some of the most notable increases and decreases are shown in bold to highlight these developments.

4.7.3 Doctorate Completion Statistics

HESA publishes data on all higher education statistics several times a year however for this research I have focussed only on doctoral degrees, the volume and whether people are full or part time research students. A reminder is cautioned that not all doctorate degrees are any longer necessarily PhDs. The growth and breadth of professional doctorates have not been separated by HESA in their data gathering.

The remarkable growth shown in Table 5 of doctoral study as an occupational choice has grown globally (Boud & Lee 2009, Ehrenberg et al 2010, Hinchcliffe et al 2007) but in the UK has increased from just 800 people committing to full time study
at doctoral level in 1994/5 and seven and a half thousand being awarded by British HEIs in the mid 90s to now almost ten thousand UK students being awarded doctorates each year.

When documenting the figures for doctorates completed in the UK some unexpected findings surfaced. Firstly the criterion has altered modestly over the past decade and it is only the successful graduates that are included.

Table 5
15 Years of Doctorates Successfully Completed in UK HEIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total UK Awarded Doctorates</th>
<th>Full Time UK domicile students</th>
<th>plus or minus</th>
<th>Part Time UK domicile students</th>
<th>plus or minus</th>
<th>Total UK Earned Doctorates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 10</td>
<td>18,755</td>
<td>6,445</td>
<td>-915</td>
<td>2,230</td>
<td>-340</td>
<td>8,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 09</td>
<td>17,650</td>
<td>7,360</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>2,570</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 - 08</td>
<td>16,635</td>
<td>7,045</td>
<td>-475</td>
<td>2,555</td>
<td>-325</td>
<td>9,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 07</td>
<td>17,545</td>
<td>7,520</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 06</td>
<td>16,515</td>
<td>7,215</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>-120</td>
<td>9,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 - 05</td>
<td>15,775</td>
<td>6,870</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>2,770</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 - 04</td>
<td>15,255</td>
<td>6,910</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>9,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 - 03</td>
<td>14,875</td>
<td>6,670</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2,570</td>
<td>-100</td>
<td>9,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 - 02</td>
<td>14,210</td>
<td>6,460</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2,670</td>
<td>-70</td>
<td>9,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 01</td>
<td>14,120</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>+5000</td>
<td>2,740</td>
<td>-3,400</td>
<td>9,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 - 00</td>
<td>11,550</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-6,090</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 - 99</td>
<td>11,338</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>6,016</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 - 98</td>
<td>10,993</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>5,959</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>7,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 - 97</td>
<td>10,214</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>5,564</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>6,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 - 96</td>
<td>9,761</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5,156</td>
<td>+1,000</td>
<td>5,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 - 95</td>
<td>7,559</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,169</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Higher Education Statistics Agency - HESA)

As can be seen above, British doctorate holders have doubled during this period which goes some way to dispelling the widely held belief that overseas students dominate UK higher education establishments. At doctoral level that has not been
held as accurate. However the most recently released figures are for 2009/10. These show that although there is still an increase in doctorates being awarded by UK HEIs to a staggering 18,755 in one year, there is for the first time fewer than 50% of those doctorates being awarded to UK domiciled students. Fig 7 below charts the breakdown of Totals awarded to all students, full time figures, part time figures and what proportion of those doctorates were awarded to UK nationals.

**Fig 7**

**Completed doctoral degrees in the UK 1994/05 – 2009/10**

Additionally informative as the overall growth in participation in doctoral work is the monumental shift of numbers of people who opted not to undertake doctoral research as a part time endeavour but instead to engage in it as a full time occupation. In Fig 8 below we see this shift most dramatically in 1999 – 2000 with an almost unimaginable alteration from part time PhDship to full time PhDship. I can offer no substantial explanation for this as it was outside the remit of my research but acceptable suggestions might include the wider environment having an impact on people’s perceptions of employability. This may alternatively have been linked to a
Millenium effect or the policy of 50% of people going into universities brought in by New Labour in 1997 under the mantra of ‘education, education, education’ making graduates fear they were no longer elite and urging them to upgrade their degrees to postgraduate and doctoral degrees as a solution. It may just as likely have been a consequence of the relaxed credit market that drove this change in thousands of people’s behaviour, but it has certainly continued to grow as the figures presented here show.

**Fig 8**

A dramatic shift from P/T to F/T participation in doctoral research

Other sources that proved useful in the early stages of secondary data examination include online PhD forum websites such as [www.findaPhD.com](http://www.findaPhD.com), [www.postgraduateforum.com](http://www.postgraduateforum.com), [www.thestudentroom.co.uk](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk) and particularly [www.phd-survey.org](http://www.phd-survey.org). These sites offer tips and advice as well as peer support for those considering or conducting PhD work but the PhD Survey publishes students own advice for those considering participating in PhD research. Some of the suggestions offered resonated with me and as they cover more than ten different disciplines they
can be used to show the similarities of difficulties and experiences faced by PhD students working in sciences as diverse as Chemistry, English, Molecular Biology and Sociology (see Appendix 3).

4.7.4 Primary Data

Primary data was collected using face to face unstructured interviews. Often explorative and inductive studies employ semi structured interviewing techniques and extensive life history narratives but as a personal choice, I felt that if I led the interviewees into areas they were not comfortable discussing, a barrier might emerge which I hoped to avoid. Similarly questions directed at people can sometimes dictate the tone of importance upon the interviewee. That too was felt to be unhelpful so was consciously avoided. It was important to let it be ‘their story’ about ‘their life’, ‘their motives’, ‘their intentions’ and ‘their sense of self and authenticity’ in the role they were occupying at the time. Their personal history and previous identities was not an area I was familiar with and didn’t want to press for information unless the interviewee thought it relevant or important enough to divulge. The interviews were approached with a casual “so what do you want to tell me about yourself?” as an opener once they knew I was interested in their identity as either a PhD student or an enterprise founder and operator. King (2004) comments on the advantages of qualitative interviews and notes that interviewees often enjoy the opportunity to talk about their experience to someone who is an interested outsider. The interview can become a cathartic exercise for people to clarify their own thoughts on a particular topic. That was certainly hoped for here considering identity is a topic people may not spend a great deal of time contemplating.
4.8 Researchers Role – the 13th Participant

Many interpretative researchers suggest that researchers must reflect on the presuppositions they hold and be alert to how they may colour every stage of the research process. As I encountered and conceded to some of the difficulties already discussed in areas of definition of entrepreneurs, the scarcity of scholarly interest in PhDs as a cohort group with a collective identity, and indeed what I learned from each interviewee about their reasons for commencement or continuing, it became impossible not to formulate my own theories about what qualifies and what doesn’t as entrepreneuring. Cope (2005) sums up the difficulty of retaining the assumed innocence of phenomenological studies when he addresses the issue of researchers having a ‘hidden agenda’ which must be acknowledged, if not prior to and during the interview, then certainly on analysis. He notes that:

“in terms of reflexivity it is extremely important that researchers using the phenomenological interview recognize the implicit, ‘hidden agenda’ that they bring to the research process, even though the primary aim is to explore phenomena from the level of lived experience and not to explore or confirm one’s own perceptions, ideas or theories.”

My interviews were as unstructured as possible, but they were intended to draw out the participants sense of self in their current role; to assess whether a change in personal identity had taken place; to assess whether there were similarities and differences in how these two occupations impacted one’s sense of authenticity and what everyone involved hoped to achieve by pursuing the occupation they had taken up. This list of interesting features is where the researcher becomes the thirteenth
participant in this, and many other studies. Again Cope (2001) articulates this
dilemma succinctly as follows:-

“On the one hand the researcher makes a commitment to allow
participants to tell their own stories from their own perspective and in their
own way, with as little interference as possible. On the other hand, the
researcher is interested in discussing certain issues and experiences that are
broadly related to the underlying questions driving the inquiry; otherwise it
proves difficult to produce any meaningful conclusions that are also relevant.
These implicit research objectives go against the grain of phenomenological
research as the researcher should not enter into any fieldwork process with
any preconceptions or any specific issues that need to be addressed. Rather
the discussion is guided by what the participant feels is important”

Along similar lines Steyaert (1998) also endorses approaches and methods that are
not only creative, but also more illustrative of the activities involved in
entrepreneuring. As the person ‘doing’ the studying, the interpreting and the
reporting, it is suggested here that the researcher is indeed, with this method, the
unsilenced participant. Steyaert urges:-

“a kind of entrepreneurial imagination with regard to “methods” where
scholars are eager to be their own methodologists and to invent research
practices helpful in documenting the specific entrepreneurial activities they
are involved with through specific ways of generating, analysing,
interpreting and reporting.”
In this study where the primary data was gathered through interview, but perhaps more accurately, explored through conversation specific to each individual account, then the prompts, questions and requests for elaboration by me as the researcher make me the thirteenth participant in acknowledgment that without me, without my fascination for the material, the research question and my commitment to finding out more, the data would not exist in its collected form.

To my knowledge, no previous research has paralleled these two externally polarised occupations. Therefore, it is my experience of their similarities that has conceptualised an inquiry into the value of others experiences. As much as I would like to remain neutral and without judgement on this issue, it is me who is interested in discovering more and gaining understanding of the nuances of practical processes and self identities of these roles when pursued by a small but varied group of people. As the one with the interest, I am consequently the one with something to gain from the work involved in this particular study.

4.9 Prior relationships improving access to interviewees

It should be declared that access to almost all my participants was in most part due to my prior associations with them. Access was granted by firm founders in part because I share a common history with many of them and several know me as ‘an entrepreneur or a serial entrepreneur’ which may have given me an ‘expert’ mantle I don’t necessarily hold myself. Similarly, fellow PhD research students at both universities agreed to my interviews primarily because they didn’t see me as an expert, but as a fellow doctoral student interested in their current occupation. I believe this to have added to the quality and certainly quantity of information I was
permitted to share with all twelve of my interviewees. I was able to conduct the interviews at my participants’ place of choice. Most were conducted at people’s place of work or study but one was conducted at my home with an interviewee who stopped briefly in the UK between the US and Ireland. Two others were held at the interviewees’ homes due to childcare problems at the last minute. I have known both these families for several years and so security and imposition was not thought to be of any consequence or to have had any detrimental effect. It was felt more important for people to feel relaxed and in these two latter cases, literally at home. The interviews lasted for between one and three hours and were digitally recorded. All interviews have been transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 4 & 5).

4.10 Thematic Exposure and Categorisations

It may appear at first that my approach leans towards the positivist principle of refute or confirm to draw out themes and categorisations but as Feyerabend (1975) informs us, the history of science does not consist of only facts, or of conclusions drawn from facts, but as much has been drawn from ideas, from alternative interpretations of facts and of problems created by some of those conflicting interpretations. A great deal has been learned in science and history from the exposure of mistakes in many cases, and from addressing the errors of the past by evaluating what is ‘known’ from what is ‘believed’. This is often how new theories replace redundant ones. He says as much in the following passage:-

“some of the most important properties of a theory are found by contrast, and not by analysis. A scientist who wishes to maximise the empirical content of the views he holds and who wants to understand them as clearly as he
possibly can must therefore introduce other views; that is, he must adopt a pluralistic methodology. He must compare ideas with other ideas rather than with ‘experience’ and he must try to improve rather than discard the views that have failed in the competition.”

(Feyerabend P 1975 Against Method p 30)

This research certainly qualifies as one which aims to compare and contrast not only two disparate and on the surface, completely different activities, but also the discourses that maintains that entrepreneurs are one species and PhD research students are quite another. Having experience of both lead me to question the validity of this assertion and whose interest it serves to maintain it so vociferously.

4.11 Learning from the explorative interview style

Discussing inductive interviews King (2004) insists that important strands within psychology include a hermeneutical – phenomenological approach using Moustakas (1994) transcendental phenomenological model and Smith’s (2004) interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) as examples. One key feature of phenomenological based models is the emphasis placed and the need for the researcher to consciously set aside his or her own views. After both extensive reading of these instructions and firsthand experience of interviewing my own participants I have come to feel more comfortable with the practice of ‘suspending’ or ‘bracketing’ than I was at the beginning. Our beliefs can be altered with new knowledge or overturned by evidence that contradicts what we believe to be true, but an overall disregard for what we believe to be true and accurate seems not only difficult, but impossible. We can however be conscious of those views potentially contaminating data collection and analysis. We base our views on either personal
experience or secondary information but those views once accepted can be difficult to dismiss however much it is encouraged (Thompson & Holland 2003). For this reason I was conscious of the rules so to speak, but admit that my own aims were to seek understanding and appreciation of two occupations I myself am familiar with so was able to suspend my own experiences, but not completely bracket them as though they were not my own.

Unstructured explorative interviews are often more lengthy than for instance structured or even semi structured. It becomes common for data analysis to overlap with data collection and for the analysis of interviews to influence future ones. This can make subsequent interviews adaptive and arguably more supportive towards gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of those involved. Such approaches recognize that the text produced in the interview situation is shaped by the context. Patton (1990) explains that phenomenological style interviews require careful capture and description of how people experience some phenomenon, how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. In keeping with both King (2004) and Cope (2001, 2005) it is hoped that interviewing people who have experience of a phenomenon in-depth can give the topic humanity and validity perhaps not achievable by more structured but restrictive styles of data collection. For phenomenological based inquiries to be credible they must be conducted without a priori assumptions but the linearity of PhD research as a process requires extensive engagement with published literature prior to fieldwork. Consequently abandoning all you have learned outside the exercise is incredibly difficult. It was therefore something of a relief to know that the interviews were set by the participant with them free to divulge as much detail of their
experiences as they were comfortable with, not the interviewer chasing down a specific line of inquiry in search of truth for instance.

The only imposed structure on the interview was that participants were informed before the interview that I was studying what people do in their occupations and if that had any impact on their sense of self and their identity. They were also told it was a compare and contrast study with another occupation and that the focus of the research was on their personal recollections of what stimulated them to take up the role they were currently in to either to start a small venture or enter into a PhD research programme. Explorative inquiries prioritize the interpretations of the participants’ experiences and knowledge rather than trying to confirm or refute existing theoretical propositions or seek answers to predetermined questions with a right-wrong result.

4.12 Critical Narrative Analysis

This section is dedicated to explaining critical narrative analysis and why it is deemed appropriate to this study but also how the value of Jenkins (2004) social identity theory acts as an appropriate framework through which to appreciate my interviewees’ sense of purpose and personal commitment through their work. As it is a recent addition to the menu of analytic techniques commonly applied in qualitative research, it is prudent to explore some of the features of CNA here and consequently some of its weaknesses so that other researchers might better appreciate its value for interpretative and other research methods. Because it is so new, very few studies have been published which specifically apply CNA to their data and so with many new things, it suffers from authenticity issues. Having
similarities with interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) and thematic analysis (TA) it is understood as unique in its endeavour not to disrupt the flow and context of the data from interviews by coding the narrative as both IPA and TA do. CNA remains authentic to the provider of the data wherever possible and does not segment, dissect or rearrange what is actually shared by the interviewee.

4.12.1  A Critical Component

CNA introduces a much needed critical component to both published ‘propaganda style’ information about the ‘enterprise economy’ and/or ‘knowledge economy’ which invites a similarly critical interpretation of widely available texts (Davies Review 2002, Kok Report 2004, Leitch Review 2006, Lisbon Agenda 2000, Sadlak 2004). Governments, corporations, media, authors and politicians can be subjected to a modified form of critical narrative analysis and Langdridge and others (Ogbor 2000, Sampson & Comer 2010, Tight 1998, 1998a, Zantout & Dabir-Alai 2007) argue that perhaps there ought to be much more critical analysis of these metaconcepts than we currently witness.

4.12.2  Features of CNA

Early inspiration and appreciation of phenomenological based methods for studying entrepreneurship specifically, came from reading the work of Cope (2001, 2003, 2005), Berglund (2005, 2007), Seymour (2007) and Verduijn (2007). Cope (2001) for instance used four stages of analysis in his own doctoral research; transcribing the interviews; constructing a narrative of each story; content analysis and finally a clustering of broad themes so as to let the text speak for itself. CNA recommends six stages of analysis which I have modified to include the following:-
1. first impressions table prior to transcribing data/interviews
2. identifying tone and rhetorical function (I/O/T – B/O and F/I – S/O)
3. identity analysis (social, personal, institutional)
4. thematic analysis (similarities – differences)
5. destabilizing the narrative – (gender, class, race, career, age, motive)
6. synthesis of the data (internal - external dialectic)

The hermeneutic cycle devised by Darren Langdridge is shown below in Fig 9 and although not exactly as his original model suggests has been modified to include more of the features specific to a self and social identity investigation.

**Fig 9**

The CNA Cycle Model

![Diagram of the CNA Cycle Model](image)

- **Stage 1**: Brief tabling of first impressions
- **Stage 2**: Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function
- **Stage 3**: Identities and identity work
- **Stage 4**: Thematic priorities and relationships
- **Stage 5**: Destabilizing the narrative
- **Stage 6**: Synthesis

*(Source: adapted from D Langdridge (2007) Phenomenological Psychology p 134)*
The fifth stage of critical narrative analysis, destabilising the narrative, is broken down even further into six specific hermeneutics shown below in Figure 10.

**Fig 10**

The Hermeneutic Cycle

4.13 Brief overview of CNA applicability to this research

I discovered how effective CNA could be at helping to determine not only what is said in conversations with my interviewees but also the reason each piece of information was put forward. I felt it was the only analytical tool I wanted to apply. Not only does analysis begin once a narrative begins, it also feeds key learning into future interview conversations. Added to this learning as you go along aspect, I appreciate the strictness of reflecting repeatedly on how any of my own preconceptions or judgements might cloud the true meaning of what was shared by my research participants.
There may be other methods and analytical tools that encourage these features but CNA seemed to fit both my research and my personal anxieties of misinterpreting what was meant by focusing on detailing what was said as might occur in coding and categorising aspects of some research techniques. An introduction to the key components is given below.

4.13.1 **Critiquing subjectivity of first impressions**

In the first stage of analysis collected data and the researcher who gathered the data, are critiqued using reflexive engagement where the researcher thinks through their own background and experience. The hermeneutic can be affected by many things including gender, religion, social class, ethnicity, occupation, age, (dis)ability, values or location, any of which might affect how the analysis is conducted and presented. In my case it was my prior entrepreneurial experience and my current PhD research student identity which were the sources of my own subjectivity. First impressions were briefly documented on completion of the interviews but my later reflection showed some of those first thoughts had been reached too hastily.

4.13.2 **Narrative Tone and Rhetorical function**

In order to identify any distinct narratives the analyst reads through the text and attempts to delineate it by looking for distinct, identifiable stories. Looking for new beginnings and perhaps marked shifts in content, especially involving a new setting or new characters, it is possible to identify clusters of narratives in one account.

4.13.3 **Narrative Tone**
By focusing then on the tone of the narrative, analysts are able to determine if for example it has an optimistic or pessimistic tone. If the story is presented as comic or tragic, or if it is given a heroic or victim tone and also enables assessment of any tone changes that might develop as the story progresses or if different tones are employed for different events in the person's story.

4.13.4 Rhetorical Function

This particular feature focuses attention on what kind of story is being told and what the interviewee is trying to express. For instance whether the account given is doing something specific such as pervading, opinion forming, defending or attacking a system the person has experienced or simply a sincere recollection of their memory of their lives.

The principle of identifying rhetorical tone and function is significant in assessing whether what is being said is perhaps being said so as to give a certain impression to the researcher of who the interviewee intends to be taken as. This then became an accommodating approach for identifying if people narrate their experiences from the numerous stances identified by Erikson (1980) as a desire to stand-out or fit-in, or by Schutz (1967) as motivated by presenting an in-order-to or because-of intention. These numerous explanations for actions by participants are scrutinised by examining the narrative tone and what is revealed from participants' recollections of events and decisions that have brought them to their current role. An optimistic tone would represent a proud and positive description of an experience. A comic experience may be narrated with a humorous upbeat pleasant tone whereas a tragic recollection might be recounted with a sorrowful tone. A pessimistic tone might be
representative of regret, anxiety or bitterness towards themselves or others, resulting in a more solemn experience and tone which may be accompanied by language of blame towards others in some way. A heroic recollection will have the intent of imbuing admirable qualities to the interviewee and so all manner of ways of retelling their experiences can be examined through the application of CNA.

4.13.5 **Identities and Identity Work**

This stage looks at the text again to find the particular self being brought into being in a narrative. The analyst seeks to identify who is this person, what kind of person does this particular narrative construct and what does that reflect what we know about them (age, sex, ethnicity etc) and the topic being discussed. Stage two and three are almost inseparable because tone and function both contribute to the way narrative depicts the persons’ desire to be understood in a certain way. Langdridge (2007) insists that narrative identities inform us of how interviewees understand themselves through presenting and developing a sensemaking depiction of who they are and how they want to be explained through the use of stories.

4.13.6 **Thematic Priorities and Relationships**

Themes and relationships between themes in the story are important features. Unlike thematic analysis it is important not to break down the text in CNA. Langdridge (2007) commits a great deal of emphasis on the fourth stage of his methodology which has been employed here. In stage four of his model he explicates why themes and relationships between themes in the participants story are so informative. Critical narrative analysts search to identify major themes in the text without losing the very important sense of coherence in the narrative as it is
presented. This requires the analyst to work through the text systematically as would be done in hermeneutic phenomenological analysis looking for themes and categories, but once these themes have been identified then the researcher ought to try to work through them again, in order to assess if they are still distinct or whether they can be collapsed into one category.

The clustering stage is one of looking into the text for what can be understood from all the interviewees’ narratives. This is not as clinical an approach as in Content Analysis for example which codes and clusters themes, but instead enables the narrative to remain flowing and in context. The clustering in this study draws out practical aspects as much as experiential accounts and if they were deemed relevant to occupational fit or rejection. These are explored at this stage by scouring the text for identity tags and how they are expressed by participants and under what circumstances.

Thematic categorisations are invaluable in a search for both similarities and differences in how people participating in the study experienced for example, their sense of self, their occupational identity, their motives for action and what they hoped to achieve by continuing in their respective roles. How people articulate why they did what they did, and if it consequently affected them and others around them is worthy of greater attention in order to appreciate the personal pursuit aspect, but also to understand what it is like to be in either of these occupations and to be labelled as such.

4.13.7 Destabilizing the Narrative
Here the analyst needs to complete the hermeneutic cycle. Instead of interrogating his or her own imaginative hermeneutic as before, the analyst interrogates the text. This stage is explicitly political and requires the researcher to engage with critical social theories. Race, class, gender, age and ethnicity are the most dominant examples used by social theorists to categorise people.

By destabilising the narrative, the researcher subjects themselves and their interpretations to an intense cycle of scrutiny. This is not for the sake of self torture but to force an alternative view from the one first taken. This stage encourages the researcher to question those first impressions objectively and attempt to seek an alternative view from what their natural instinct tells them. Reflection is a term often associated with qualitative research but with CNA it is an explicated exercise and is as much a part of the analysis as gathering data, sampling and interviewing. Researcher biases, politics, affiliations and empathy can all feed in to analysis but this process forces the analyst to acknowledge, and if necessary, amend their initial interpretations.

4.13.8 Synthesis of the Data

Finally all the data and analysis must be synthesised. In this study the internal – external dialectic should be recognisable for both the interviewees themselves, as well as the researcher through the research findings. It is clearly very important to present key narratives and themes which privilege the voice of the participant. Within the description of the narratives and themes, discussion of the narrative tone and rhetorical function becomes possible, along with discussion of the identity work being done. Finally, the work on the imaginative hermeneutic of suspicion may be
disclosed alongside discussion of the narrative structure and tone, but caution needs to be exercised in order to avoid subsuming the subjectivity of the participants beneath that of the analyst and the particular social theoretical hermeneutic being employed.

4.14 Summary

This chapter has explicitly addressed the philosophical and methodological strengths and criticisms of explorative, interpretative philosophy and methods. A discussion has also been provided of the difficulties faced on both inclusion and exclusion features of who could be included in the study due to the definitional dilemmas surrounding particularly entrepreneurs but also with new doctoral degrees being offered in ever varied titles and specialisms, why PhDs only were selected.

These decisions have been explained as directly influencing sampling, data collection and analysis but also how as the person doing the research why the researcher is presented as the 13th participant in this study. My background and experience in both roles contributed positively to areas of access to interviewees, to the level of trust between researcher and researched because of prior relationships with almost all of the participants and it is believed, to the willingness of interviewees to share some of their most intimate thoughts and feelings about themselves with me.

A detailed overview and explanation is offered of why CNA is considered the most suitable analytical tool for this study and perhaps other studies of this nature. The interpretative method works well with a newly developed critical tool which can keep
experiences intact whilst simultaneously helping researchers and analysts to appreciate the wider context in which people experience themselves and the world around them. This, as has been argued, gives fairness to the interviewees whilst at the same time insisting on both researcher’s reflection and an appraisal of influences on peoples’ perceptions of their role in society at large, at specific points in time.

In the next section an introduction to the characters who took part in this research is provided. A deep consideration is given of what their motive to become an entrepreneur or to become a PhD research student was based on which draws on Jenkins social identity model. As I have developed the model beyond his literary thesis to a conceptual model, it is suggested that the conceptualisation is suitable for visually exhibiting the parameters of socioeconomic and socioemotional aspects.

With the headings of socioemotional and socioeconomic as umbrella terms only, a detailed look at how these two alternative prompts are responded to by people and which social and psychological aspects manifest themselves through action or in some cases inaction. These are discussed fully in the following chapter with excerpts from the interviews providing context and contrast.
Chapter Five

The significance of Socioemotional and Socioeconomic influences in both occupations
5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the methodology of the study was documented and explained thoroughly as well as an introductory assessment of the suitability of CNA for studies of this type that illicit sensitive information. It was argued as valuable for researchers with a desire to stay as close to the meaning of people’s experiences as possible. The critical aspect of CNA was also discussed as a welcome addition to narrative research techniques for its requirement of situating the narrative in its wider temporal and spatial environment to expose how we often formulate the stories of our lives according to existing societal norms and values. CNA was positioned as a counterbalance to that acknowledgement.

In this chapter a more thorough exploration of the interviewees self and social identity is drawn out. Comparing their past identities with who they regard themselves as in their current role exposes what these individuals initially hoped to achieve by pursuing either venture formation or entering into PhD research training programmes. Past experiences appear to play a significant part in how they regarded their previous identities in relation to current identities and in establishing their hopes for their future selves. With this knowledge it is necessary to separate these characters into those who have taken action for socioemotional reasons or for socioeconomic ones as set out in the conceptual model based on Jenkins (2004) presented in Chapter Three.

The psychological and sociological divide or socioemotional and socioeconomic separation is not proposed as exclusive. People often act on both but in this research by studying what they say they have done and for what reasons has
illuminated their more dominant reason as being one more than the other. This is made possible by analysing critically what they understand to have been their original purpose on commencement of their current occupation.

A brief table of ‘first impressions’ was provided in the previous section so in this chapter a slightly more detailed table is included which shows some interesting additionally informative elements of prior occupations. In most cases past identities are completely different to the occupation or social identity these interviewees now inhabit. Excerpts of the narratives from interviewees are provided here to expose the aspects they experienced, and are headed under broadly psychological or sociological themes as socioemotional and socioeconomic.

Psychological or socioemotional themed areas discussed include personal values, individual pride, challenge, ego and perceptions of injustice. There is also evidence presented which determines whether the individual believes they were attempting to fit-in or stand-out (Erikson 1980) by taking on these difficult roles.

Sociological themes are broken down into more socioeconomic aspects and include reasons which can be understood as either because-of or in-order-to (Schutz 1967) achieve something specific or as either proactive or reactive to simplify the two. These included income, as either an investment or a cost, access to capital, pursuit of wealth, educational attainment, career development and status pursuits as purposes for some of the interviewees.

5.1 First impressions revisited and expanded more fully
The tabling of ‘first impressions’ provided in the previous chapter was useful for several reasons. Firstly, it encourages the researcher to document what they believe to be the most important details only almost as soon as the interview is ended. In my case it consisted of a one page table I carried with me to every interview which could fit very few handwritten words into it, so brevity forced me to only document my most significant initial thoughts.

These thoughts did indeed change at a later date on closer analysis of both the data, and my own interpretation of importance once the interviews had been listened to several times and finally transcribed. Here, Table 6 is presented which gives a little more detail of the situation interviewees said they were in prior to engaging in their occupations as either an entrepreneur or a PhD research student. Their gender and age groups have already been tabled previously but here in Table 6 it can be seen that there are some quite similar reasons given for why people entered into these occupations now, some voluntarily and some more reluctantly.

P1, E2 and E5 for instance all sought to avoid unemployment and P2 admits her PhD research is something she has to do in-order-to retain her existing occupation as a university lecturer and avoid redundancy. P3 and P6 appear to be acquiring the credential as currency for better employment prospects in the future. E1 and E3 both accredit available grant funding as significant in their decision to launch their new ventures whereas E3 sacrifices a well regarded profession despite the reduction of income earned in her new role.
### Table 6

**Reasons for entering into PhDship or Entrepreneurship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhDs</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong> funded PhD</td>
<td><strong>E1</strong> funded business -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemist</td>
<td>Biotech’ Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to avoid unemployment. Nothing better to do. Never left education. PhD was natural next step after Masters in same topic. Small lab, pressure to publish, not optimistic about career or even completing on time. Doing it because it’s funded. ‘Off the shelf’ problem being studied. Not one she is “enthralled by”. Avoiding the outside world.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – To exploit funding opportunities. Spin-Out biotech firm. 1 employee (his wife) Medtech enterprise. Talks a lot about “grant squeezes” not results or the business. A scientist. Not a businessman. Pressured by uni to set up the firm with incentives and promises. Set up because public funding was available for spin-outs. No growth plans. T/O less than £10k. “Trapped”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong> – Age 25-34</td>
<td><strong>Male</strong> – Age 55-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong> funded PhD</td>
<td><strong>E2</strong> self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer/Economics</td>
<td>A/V Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to keep her job. Established academic 12 years but in order to keep her job she is taking a PhD by Publication. Topic not her natural interest but has enough to keep her productive. Working on a PhD to keep her post. Reluctant student.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to create a job. His boss closed up an established business. 3 days later he simply set up on his own to fill the void. 0 employees, growth intentions, diversifying product range. Set up the business to keep his job. Self Employed technician. Reluctant business owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong> – Age 35-44</td>
<td><strong>Male</strong> – Age 35-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong> self funded</td>
<td><strong>E3</strong> self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biopharm’ Consultant</td>
<td>Makes Fancy Dress Costumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – To escape a bad marriage and prove she is clever. Overcoming work prejudices. Research explores a problem she has identified in her sector. To “come home” to same uni’ as her Masters and make family proud. To gain respect and to improve her career prospects. Ego. PhD was excuse to leave her husband and the USA. Credentialist.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to be there for her family. Home based. Quit 20 years of nursing, disillusioned with the NHS. Set up hobby enterprise from home. T/O £14k with less than £4k profit. No employees, some growth aspirations. Sells costumes on eBay. Hems fishing nets when asked ‘cos good money, but no enjoyment. Enjoys creating costumes and working from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong> – Age 25-34</td>
<td><strong>Female</strong> – Age 45-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong> employer sponsored PhD</td>
<td><strong>E4</strong> self fund + lottery grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistician</td>
<td>Health + Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – Expose corruption. PhD pitched for funding but motivated by self identification of a problem first. Found anomalies in established data which she believes have detrimental implications. Campaigner in many ways. Politically astute about health funding priorities.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – Solve a problem she has experience of. 3 Social enterprises to improve the lives and health of people with learning difficulties. Classic social entrepreneur. Not making any money after 2 years. no revenue outside of grant funding. “No grand plans”. Wants to fix a problem for her daughter. Crusader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong> – Age 35-44</td>
<td><strong>Female</strong> – Age 55-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong> self funded</td>
<td><strong>E5</strong> funding subsidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Bird Release Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – To become an academic. Research not ‘allowed’ to contaminate values. Aims to follow in fathers footsteps. Chose to study a topic he could complete but not necessarily care too much about. Functional approach to gaining prestigious employment. Careerist.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to escape unemployment. Started a business because had no choice. No jobs so created a micro firm. No employees, no growth intentions, keeps the business manageable. Turned hobby into a venture. “coerced” by jobcentre to start up own firm. “Bribed into it!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong> – Age 25-34</td>
<td><strong>Male</strong> – Age 55-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P6</strong> self funded</td>
<td><strong>E6</strong> self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>E Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to leave a legacy. Compensate for having no children. To expose (perceived) prejudices in his profession. To improve his status and status of his profession. His PhD research is a vehicle for correcting something he has experience of. Corrects university rejection to Cambridge when he was young. Academic career intentions.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong> – to correct a problem he identified by solving it first and creating a successful business out of the solution later. He created demand once the solution had been found. Accidental entrepreneur. PLC with 600 employees, over 10 years in operation. Continuous development and creativity expected. Now portfolio entrepreneur with 2 other start-ups. Neither yet profitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong> – Age 55-64</td>
<td><strong>Male</strong> – Age 35-44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several of the others included in this study such as E1, E5 and P1, all admit to doing what they are doing now primarily because they were offered funding for it and that in the case of P1 and E5 they perceived few alternatives. Others who also receive funding however don’t regard financial support as their primary reason for becoming either an entrepreneur in E4s case or for becoming a PhD research student in P4s case. Both these people believe they are working to improve something regardless of the financial support both receive and are described in the table above as ‘campaigner’ and ‘crusader’ respectfully.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, more evidence will be put forward which helps to exhibit the complexities of how initially I was trying to understand their ‘reason’ for entering into enterprise formation or doctoral research which after careful consideration appeared flawed. Searching for people’s reason is felt too deterministic so although I have kept faithful in the table above to condensing what interviewees shared as their ‘Reason’ shown at the top left of all cells, I eventually began to explore not reason, but purpose. Purpose is considered to be less judgemental and as the interpretative based method insists that judgements about people are to be avoided, it was felt that seeking an understanding of purpose can illuminate both short and long term hopes and ambitions which reason cannot provide to the same depth or degree.

5.2 Individual purpose or what people originally hoped to achieve.
Interviewees volunteered why they had taken the decisions to pursue their chosen path and what purpose they hoped it would serve. Here are some extracts that illuminate those intended purposes which cover a variety of objectives and
responses to their decision to take the action they have. Some appear to have acted in response to events or situations in their lives which have acted as a trigger to purposefully change their lives and pursue a perceived better path either in PhDship or enterprise formation, whilst others define their purpose in terms of responding to external authorities and expectations. For some, this was understood as a perception of injustice, resulting in them performing their roles begrudgingly. These individuals adopt a defensive explanation to their decision to pursue their new roles but also display a rather dismissive attitude to the value of their work.

Two of the twelve interviewees talk in terms of their purpose being in-order-to fix a problem they had experience of and another one states a need to expose, but not fix a problem they identified. Nine have taken action either because-of events or experiences they have been subjected to. These purposes represent a complex mixture of psychological or sociological factors for entering both occupations and as either powerful enablers or as equally powerful satisfiers for people of personal needs to pursue their chosen occupation. In this study however, there was also evidence of factors acting as severe constraints for some individuals’ to retain their ability to feel a required sense of control of the choices they have made in their lives and their occupational careers. Some felt they had been somewhat seduced into taking up their occupation whilst others talk more of feeling coerced into it reluctantly. There is evidence of both these instances in small firm formation and in entering PhD programmes. The overarching purposes therefore can be viewed as responses to either socioemotional or socioeconomic factors.

5.3 Socioemotional Purposes
Looking first at the socio-emotional factors which are internally driven, these purposes include such features as acting in ways that reflect the individuals’ values and in others appears to enhance their sense of pride in themselves or to satisfy their ego. For some their actions were taken so as to give them a greater sense of control. There are frequent expressions of what can be viewed as individuals wanting to simply fit in whilst very few express a desire for wanting to stand out from others. These are examined and evidenced in detail in this chapter and discussed in relation to the significance these socioemotional elements have had on the people affected by them both positively and negatively.

5.3.1 Values

Several of the contributors from both occupations voiced their beliefs in doing something they felt reflected their personal values. One person set up a social enterprise with the primary intention of making other peoples’ lives better who could not make the necessary improvements themselves. Another is doing her research work in an area she feels is corrupt and is hoping to expose how one group of medicine is exploiting the cost of caring for the most vulnerable people in society. Another however selected not to study either of his two declared great loves of mathematics and history for fear of contaminating his passion for either of them. He chose instead a topic which he does not have the same level of emotion invested in. This is expressed as a conscious attempt to protect his established values and beliefs about the sanctity and purity to him of both history and mathematics as disciplines and his faith in ethical reporting which he assumed would be jeopardized by what is required when studying for a PhD.
Interviewee - So I was inclined to go along that route but I decided against it because I’m a little bit passionate about ethical issues and erm... sort of like social responsibility issues so I thought like... if I do like a research on that, it’s very difficult to stay unbiased you know, to look, like in erm... it would be very difficult for me and also I didn’t want to lose my passion if I suddenly came across something that I didn’t like or did not expect.

Researcher - Ok... so that’s almost like a reverse theory on... like you say, you’re very passionate about social responsibility issues. There’s a fear that you might find something that will damage that, so you want to keep that part of your values intact, so you’ve opted for the other topic?

Interviewee - That’s right.

Researcher - That’s amazing. But it makes perfect sense.

Interviewee - I’ve done a lot of things like this in my life. Before I did studying engineering I had always loved Math’s. As you can see if you look around my office I’m surrounded by Math’s books. I sometimes go through a little maths book and I still read physics books and physics articles because I’m interested in them but before that, I was also a big fan of history. I love history, ancient history, modern history, I love it, I absolutely love it. So before I went to university and that’s eight years ago, I was thinking of maybe doing a history thing you know. I thought about it and I said, this is something I really love. Do I want to, as much as I love to do the history, a course or like a classics course, I wouldn’t necessarily want to do it because I’m afraid that it might ruin the pleasure that I get from it and reading about history you know? But a lot of times I’ll pick up a book about world war two say, and I just want to read it and I would really enjoy it but I wasn’t sure if I pick up that book up and read it as like the literature for my... you know

Researcher - And you’d have to critique it...

Interviewee - Yeah and I just want to enjoy it so it’s a similar situation with the choice for my PhD topic.

He has chosen not to possibly contaminate his personal passion and reverence for maths or history and to retain his personally held beliefs in social responsibility issues and has selected a topic for research that does not run the risk of breaching his own ethical position and beliefs. The research he is conducting is in an area he has only a modest interest in and is for him something that needs to be completed if he is to secure a job as an academic.
Another person discusses some of the tactics the interviewee and her family adopted during her daughter’s childhood. In an effort to ensure her daughter was included in as many activities as possible regardless of her disabilities this interviewee attempts to minimise the sense of exclusion she feels youngsters with learning difficulties experience on a regular basis. This well documented social exclusion of young people with disabilities is the source of frustration that eventually led to this person setting up her own ventures to overcome a few of the problems she witnessed her own daughter going through. She talks of what she sees as the cruelty of people who are disabled not being permitted to access all the activities that people without disabilities can. Dressing up and going out dancing is given as examples. She compares the differences between her two children’s upbringing and concludes that they want the same things but that the one with a learning disability is in her mind, unjustly excluded or limited in opportunities.

**Interviewee -** I feel that we did that consciously for her, but there’s another side of that. There’s nothing there for them. There’s just nothing there for people with learning disabilities at all. And it’s so cruel when they want the same things that you or I want. She wants a boyfriend. She wants to dress up and go to nightclubs. You know maybe if she was an only child it may not work out that way, but because (sons name) and (daughters name) are so close and always were growing up, then she wanted the things that he wanted, which was only natural.

**Researcher – Yeah**

**Interviewee -** And so I must admit, for a couple of years it was really difficult. We had a really, really bad time with her. She was, well I got I don’t want to be Downs, I don’t want this face and we had a really bad time. So you find something that’s not there so what’s the best thing to do? Go and do it yourself. And that’s what I did and that’s how (business name) was born although it hasn’t been an easy road.

The attitude of this individual has been to tackle as many obstacles to her daughter’s well being and social inclusion as she encounters herself. This crusader element is more obvious than many of the other interviewees described. Others have taken a
more pragmatic approach and as we see here the new role serves several purposes including permitting more time and attention for distressed family members and allowing an escape from a career that was causing the interviewee extreme stress and anxiety. As a consequence of a family tragedy and disillusionment with career success this person began selling second hand items on eBay at first then progressed into making fancy dress outfits to also sell online and from her home. Her values are towards her family needs which she states must come before career and money and her home-based business gives her the freedom to be flexible in how, where and when she works.

Here she explains that following a family crisis involving her adolescent son she felt she had to change her priorities from career to protecting her family.

**Interviewee** – He was absolutely devastated and well, one thing led to another and it all seemed to get on top of him and he tried to take his own life as a result of them breaking up and her aborting his baby. That is one call no mother wants to get from the hospital. He’s been suffering from depression I think for over a year and that incident just tipped him over the edge but he will be on medication I think, for a good few years yet so I naturally wanted to be on hand to take care of him. He is a grown man in age but he isn’t really and he has serious episodes where no one can get through. So he moved back in here with us but she is still hanging around being a nuisance and messing with his head which I can’t interfere with. I know what I would like to do to her but he is still besotted isn’t he? So that was really the time that made me think about what I could do to earn a living but to also be at home to support him while he recovers. It was his idea to sell bits and bobs on eBay because he also lost his job after the suicide attempt so really, it started as a joint or even whole family project to give (sons name) something to focus on. The whole family would scour junk shops and market stalls looking for things for him to sell so it brought us all closer in a way which is a terrible thing to say and I used to hear it from patients, but it is true.

This person when faced with a family crisis explains that she consciously contemplated what she “could do to earn a living but to also be at home to support him” when one of her children got into personal difficulty. The solution for this person
was to work from home. Her family and their needs take priority for this person over career and professional position.

5.3.2 Pride

Another recurring element through this research has been those that took the action they have for reasons of pride and their desire to combat perceived stereotypes. Here someone describes how his profession is not given the status he believes it deserves. He goes to some lengths to deny his purpose is driven by pride or status recognition but despite that rejection he intentionally re-labels his previous work of holding drama workshops for employee development purposes in corporations as “organisational theatre”. He is attempting to have his occupational status considered as comparative in stature and relevance to organisations as he believes management consultants are.

Researcher – I was wondering, where does your research come into this, the drive and the trigger that brought you to do a PhD to begin with?

Interviewee – Yes well that’s a very good question. Throughout the time as, for want of a better expression, I think it is the correct expression that seems to be used, during the time I was involved with organisational theatre, I have all the time been wanting to rearrange its status. Not because I want greater status, not because there’s to an extent, a glass ceiling over people from organisational theatre. Oh, here are the actors. And although people do listen and people do take it very seriously, there’s just the sense that you’re not in consultancy status. So there’s a gap for the money that you could earn, A, and B there’s a gap between a sense of, of identity that you have within an organisation. Well here you are, you are the one who entertains, whereas the impact of what you are saying is as great and more, than consultants one’s working alongside.

His sensed injustice and resentment of another profession, management consultancy, which he compares his own profession to, is suggested as being regarded and rewarded much higher than those in “organisational theatre” which he
believes is unfair. As he talks about the lack of respect within organisations for people in his profession there is a resolution that he wants to “rearrange its status”, we can assume upwardly. Gaining a PhD he believes will give him the credence and respect befitting him and so his pride is very much attributing to his purpose for pursuing a doctoral degree.

5.3.3 Individual Challenge

Others present modest explanations for what they have achieved and when asked about general background information at the beginning of our interview this somewhat rehearsed story is offered of someone who didn’t “fit in” at university as a young man and of having a “lazy side” which he then attributes to the reason he succeeded with his business. He draws on a modest laziness to explain his determination to find a better way of gathering and reporting large amounts of data more easily. His challenge is described as his unwillingness to perform daily mundane rituals he found both laborious and repetitive and so sought an easier, more efficient method of working.

Interviewee – I had a good education but left University without completing my degree. I hated it. It was so dull. I just didn’t fit in. So I scrabbled about a bit and set myself up as a freelance mortgage advisor. That was equally dull but it is where I got the idea of starting my own magazine, well it was a sheet of paper at first and nothing very glamorous but it listed all the mortgage products with best buy tables which was eventually a great source of information that helped other mortgage advisors. I gave it away at first just to see how it would be accepted and then one week I was late delivering it and the advisors were really put out and started screaming at me about them waiting on the newsletter. Well I knew then they would be prepared to pay for it so I set about glamming it up and making it more professional looking and added a price tag of course. Then that is what began (1st company name) - a mortgage sourcing and packaging company which is really how I was able to develop it into the next business (2nd company name) in 1999 which is an online version of the same product, and a few others now of course but that was where it all started. I couldn’t understand why on a daily basis we would have to ring around ever mortgage provider for up to date info and then compete against one another for clients. It was all secrecy in those days and nobody would give out prices
unless there was the chance of a sale in it of course but it was so time consuming and inefficient. So I suppose it was my lazy side that meant dropping out of university was more sensible than studying something that bored me but that trait was probably the feature that caused me to look for a more efficient and effective way of collating vast amounts of rapidly changing data with (1st company name) and then the idea of making it public was, was, well brilliant, but so unheard of back then.

**Researcher – What did you see yourself as back then?**

**Interviewee – Oh a university drop out; a failed accountant; a fish out of water. I don’t remember thinking about it much I was just ticking along getting irritated by the work practices I had to go through daily and I suppose I must have made an effort to do it my way instead of how it had always been done. It’s still a very traditional sector of industry and they don’t like new things and as I said secrecy was their gilded currency in those days which made no sense to me because it stifled everything.**

The direct question of who he saw himself as when he started up his business is tempered by the self denigrating terms of “university drop out” and “fish out of water” presenting a somewhat humble apologetic identity able to acknowledge his weaknesses but his business was started in 1997 and he has no doubt told this story many times and perfected every aspect of what is revealed. His enthusiasm shows when he describes how one action led to changing an industry steeped in secrecy and his sense of accomplishment and pride at being responsible for that is evident.

**5.3.4 Ego**

Similar to pride, ego also features throughout the narratives of purpose from people from both occupations. Whereas pride was deemed as more of a motivator to pursue and even continue in their chosen occupations, ego seems to be most often a reactionary element; one of answering to a suggestion that they might be able to achieve more if they set up a business on their own instead of remaining an employee, or if they went on to earn at PhD degree. For one person it was suggested that he set up a new firm because he had enjoyed a very successful
scientific career and had no notion that he wouldn’t replicate that success in his new venture. He states that it “never entered my head that I wouldn’t be incredibly successful at first so I was quite keen in the beginning. My colleagues had just commercialised their stuff six months before and were already very rich men. Lives in Monaco now he does”. Here one person’s past success as a scientist led him to the rather naïve expectation that he would be equally successful at running a new business. This heightened sense of ability appears to have played its part in his decision to try to commercialise his work but is similarly supported by the example he mentions of seeing his colleagues selling their technology very quickly which had an appeal he later recognises.

In some cases the suggestion of pursuing a PhD came originally from existing academics while interviewees were either on lower level postgraduate courses or at academic conferences. Here someone talks of the high caliber of professors who suggested that doing a PhD was well within her capacity and that she and just one other student from her previous degree were considering it.

**Interviewee** - Yeah and then one of the professors at the time [name] said you could easily do a PhD and I thought yeah, I will be a doctor. I don’t know what it was.

She continues on this vein talking of how she came not to think of ‘if’ she could conduct PhD research but ‘when’ partly because of the encouragement she received from esteemed scholars and professors she was in contact with.

**Interviewee** - Then they said, so are you going to do the PhD but then of course at the time, I couldn’t. [Husband’s name] wouldn’t settle in Manchester. He had to go back to America. So I just thought well we will come back, I am going to come back and do a PhD. I thought well if I can do well in the masters then I know that I can probably do the PhD in throwing all my energies up at something even more
specialized and I had good input at the time. You know the professors that were there [name, name, and name] and they were all like yeah this is you. You can do it you know? There was a friend off my course [name], he went on to do the PhD. He and I were the only ones out of our class who had any notion of it.

The impact of having admired mentors suggest they were possibly not achieving their full potential without pursuing a PhD has notable impact in another persons’ decision too. He admits to feeling “flattered” when an esteemed academic invited him to be her student. Working in corporate organisations he had experienced what he considers to be insufficient recognition for the value of the work he has done. This had become something of a frustration to him which earning a PhD he hopes will alleviate.

Researcher - Ok, so I am trying to ascertain what your reason was for starting and possibly for continuing. Was it important that someone so distinguished sowed the seed of suggestion? How did you feel when your now supervisor made the PhD suggestion at the AoM conference?

Interviewee - I was flattered. Then I thought very hard about it because as I said I was busy in the middle of running a business that was growing. And erm, flattery still worked. I acknowledge that that was part of the reason why I took it on but also, I genuinely wanted to pull together, weave together something. Another part was the challenge, how far can I take this?

Researcher- Personal challenge?

Interviewee - Personal challenge. Yeah, how, how...can I really make a statement through a PhD which says this is a body of work which sits on top of a body of experience and which has genuinely contributed out of that body of experience something which is, got through the glass ceiling.

Both of these interviewees have been persuaded that their ability to apply for a PhD is not only encouraged but almost their duty and the fact that this first suggestion comes from established intellectuals appears to have flattered and reinforced their own sense of ego which both freely admit is an accurate assessment on reflection.
5.3.5 Beliefs of Injustice

Another doctoral student states that her PhD was in several ways a reaction to her experiences in the workplace. She had been “overlooked three times” for senior roles which she says “all went to men” even though she believes “they had neither the experience nor the capacity to make effective directors. All they had were balls and I got fed up with it.” The PhD once completed is hoped to give her more power and authority in her workplace and possibly prevent a repeat of being “overlooked” for future promotions. She wants to prove her employers were wrong not to promote her and is pursuing a PhD in many ways to overcome her perception of gender bias in her workplace.

One person is undertaking her PhD in secrecy almost and works hard not to allow it to penetrate her lecturer status but notes that she often feels slightly inferior to her colleagues who have gained their doctoral degrees. Her ego is she notes likely to improve once she has her PhD but probably less than those who are not already working in universities as a recognised lecturer by students and faculty.

5.3.6 Control

There is strong evidence to suggest that both these occupations are seen as being able to offer participants a greater sense of control in many aspects of their lives. Some want to control the balance between professional and private life while others intend to build a new career that will reduce their dependence on others for employment. Some who have experienced frequent employment interruptions are aiming to pursue these new career paths because they appear, rightly or wrongly, to be more stable than their previous career and employment experiences. In some
cases there was very little choice. One self employed person was a reluctant entrepreneur but had after almost six months come to terms with his experience and was beginning to make sense of its inception and talks positively of its future. His firm was set up when his previous entrepreneur employer closed down his business under what can only be described as dubious circumstances and relocated to a city forty miles away under the same name and offering the exact same products and services. The interviewee admits he is still “bitter” about how he feels his employer betrayed him and his colleagues, but felt he had no choice but to start up on his own in the absence of alternatives. Here he describes what happened.

Researcher - Do you know why it went into liquidation?

Interviewee - Because he couldn’t afford to pay redundancies so he kicked us all out

Researcher - Right I see

Interviewee - And within two hours of going bust, he set himself up again

Researcher – Ok

Interviewee - Exactly the same trading name everything, just a different set of people so there’s a niche in the market on (Borough name) now where he left ‘cos he, when he uprooted the company he transferred it to (City name) and he had the cheek to say he never knew it was coming. The more we now know about what had gone on, the more it was so obvious, no way could he have done it quickly. He had to have had it planned.

Researcher - So his actions, rightly or wrongly created a market in the (Area)

Interviewee – Yeah, erm for a small AV company, I had no choice ‘cos it’s the only job, it’s the only job I know

It is evident that this interviewee tried to make the best of a shocking situation and as he explains, he had experienced a traumatic event with his employer shutting down the business without notifying the twelve employees or affording them due compensation. His decision to start a new business wasn’t a choice made in a
planned and calculated fashion pursuing an opportunity to build a successful new business, but more of an impulsive reaction to the unexpected events that he experienced. He set up on his own just three days after his boss disappeared. Another of the small firm founders talks of the business being run down whilst the family move house and how he now tailors the business performance and productivity to suit his children’s school needs and other responsibilities. This is a conscious effort not to let the business or his job in the business dominate his family commitments.

Others have more proactive career control motives for their actions. Here we have someone who chose to leave behind what would otherwise be considered a very successful career in nursing to set up a small home based business. A family crisis caused her to reflect on her priorities and question what was most important to her. She chose her family over career and began transforming her hobby into a business. The interviewee had become “disillusioned” with her profession but had endured it until a family crisis struck. She then walked away from an almost thirty year career and into what she saw as a more lifestyle accommodating role working from home. She talks of feeling “completely powerless” when her child got into difficulty which prompted her to change how and where she worked and to be available for her family regardless of the financial sacrifices that decision required.

*Interviewee* - But with all this going on the job was just not top priority and so I started reducing my days then finally quit altogether so I could be at home for my family and help mend the rifts that had opened up between him and her and the rest of the family ‘cos people take sides don’t they. It was not a good time.

The opportunity for a greater sense of control over her life and more time with, and for her family, seems to be the purpose for turning what had previously been a
hobby and a learned craft into a small business which she operates from home with very little outlay. This eBay enabled business owner has maximised the flexibility that self employment offers many and turned her back on the lucrative financial and security package she was able to enjoy as a senior level nursing professional.

5.4 Fitting In

The participants in this small study can be divided into those who are pursuing the paths they are on so as to fit in or to stand out (Erikson 1980). Of those whose aim is to fit in there was one person who admits that because he lives in Cambridge he has “joined the club” of his neighbours and peers by doing his PhD. Another is taking her PhD because it is now a necessary requirement if she wants to keep the job she has held for over a decade as a university lecturer. Although she doesn’t believe in the PhD as such, she recognises that she has to have one if she is to fit in with her colleagues. She enjoys the scholarly role.

A third person has switched from studying to be an engineer to studying with the intention of working in academia. He is pursuing his PhD to become an academic like his father before him. Another interviewee talks of the barriers she has faced in the workplace for “being a woman and especially being blonde” and how she believes some specialists receive a greater level of reverence and better treatment because of their qualifications. This is a role she wants to fit into whilst another young woman, although the first in her family to go to university wants to become a scientist in industry for which a PhD degree is also a necessary entry requirement.

There is still a popular belief that those that set up their own businesses and become
entrepreneurs are risk takers and pioneers (Hartog et al 2008, Hytti 2005, Manimala 1992, McClelland 1961, McGrath et al 1992, Klein 2003, Ucbasaran et al 2003). The people who set up their firms and took part in this research however did so for more risk averse, stable reasons. For one person with limited employment opportunities he felt he had no choice but to create a job for himself. This person talks of himself in terms of being working class and proud of that label but with few options to actually get regular paid employment, his perceived only option was to turn a hobby into a small business. Another only escaped unemployment by setting up as a freelance technician. The university spin out firm founder included in this study states that he felt compelled to set up his firm by his university employers. He feared that if he didn’t form a company, he would lose his position within the university. That position as a scientist in a leading university is what he is most bereft of and where he feels he fits in. Another just wanted to be accessible to her family through working from home so started selling second hand items found in junk shops through an online auction website. Now after a few years of trading she regards herself as an “eBay Trader” of which there are millions worldwide. Some eBay entrepreneurs are incredibly successful (see Appendix 6) in part because there are very few risks, low entry barriers and no pioneering practices required.

As a qualification the PhD for at least two of the interviewees permits them access to work or to continue working in higher education universities. For three others it is hoped that having a PhD and the title of Dr will add credibility to them in the workplace and allow them access to the more senior roles they feel they have so far been denied. Seen from this stance the PhD serves a socioemotional objective for those who are undertaking it with the intention that on completion, they too will be as
highly regarded as the people they compare themselves to in the workplace.

5.5 Standing Out

The rhetoric of an enterprise society implies that individuals who set about changing their situation by starting up a venture do so because they somehow want to be seen as different or we might suggest, superior to those who settle for being a wage earner or employee. In this research there were no mentions of this allegedly desirable intention in fact the opposite was discussed most often. The entrepreneurs spoke of being uncomfortable with media attention which was attributed to them and their collective identity. One considers himself as being a “quiet, private person” and some of those in PhD programmes insist that the work they do is to expose an error they have identified but that it is the work that is important, not them. Similarly, people in both roles explain that what they do is for the benefit of other people not themselves. Neither the PhDship participants nor enterprise founders feel as if they stand out from other people because of their work but perhaps that has changed from their original intention now that they are doing the work required of them in their respective roles. None of the contributors to this study discussed a strong desire to stand-out although a few clearly do or have done in the past.

5.6 Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic factors were prevalent in this research for both occupations and can be viewed as the external limitations and facilitating functions required in both. Both occupations require a degree of investment of resources of many kinds, not only financial. There is opportunity cost associated with working on one project for anything between three years and a decade at the expense of other alternative
opportunities for instance.

The numerous policies that support these activities cannot be overlooked. Widespread support for innovation; creativity and knowledge development has generated various financial supplements and incentives. Having access or qualifying for these was found to be significant in both groups. Other factors include access to disposable financial capital as well as social capital and whether the purpose was one enacted for personal gain or society wide improvements also arose. Education is widely seen as an asset to individuals and some surprising results in that area surfaced. Finally, looking at peoples’ purpose as being a more obvious career development and status driven factor, showed that both occupations offered a perception of these for some individuals whilst not for others. As much as entrepreneurs are admired in wider public perceptions and as revered as PhDs are also of the most intellectual members of our society, the experiences of those who participated rarely reflected that supposed external admiration or sense of superiority.

5.6.1 Finance as Investment or Cost

Looking first at the financial investment required for studying at PhD level in the UK and considering the required income commitments commonly associated with new venture formation many people discussed how they justified to themselves the logic of having made such a substantial financial commitment. A few examples are shown here with the first explaining why it was more beneficial for them to study in the UK and not in the US where she was living at the time of deciding the PhD was right for her. She returned to the UK for several reasons but commencing her PhD she said
acted as the perfect excuse.

**Interviewee** - Yes and I have to be frank about that because in a way the PhD was my excuse to walk away from the marriage and the situation in which I was in. I always knew I would do it but I had to realise that it was a brilliant way for me to say I am going to do this. If you want to come you can. The other thing about doing it in America is if you don’t find funding, you know you are looking at a $200,000 expense. I just thought, oh no. For a good university for fees you could be looking at $50,000 a year. My friend went to quite a good university and I think she is paying $44,000 a year. That was too much money for me. That’s how much I pay for my house for god sake so there is no way I was going to pay it for a PhD especially when I knew I could get one at Manchester for what is three, six, nine, worst case scenario £12,000 yeah. I mean, for god sake you know. I can add and subtract.

**Researcher** - So it just didn’t stack up?

**Interviewee** - No, not those numbers.

There are many reasons why people commence PhD research or set up new ventures and many of the support structures that enable both of these pursuits are similar. Many of the participants in both occupations talk of the financial support they rely on from their spouses, and some from their parents. Bootstrapping is mentioned by the venture founders in a few interviews but also from several PhD students. One enterprise founder explains that he "bootstrapped for the first ten years" which is a long gestation period for someone to commit to a project that has no certainty of success, or that it will ever be capable of providing an income to the founder. In another case the founders were clearly on the cusp of giving up running their small business in part because it did not earn enough for them to make it sensible to continue. This family was experiencing difficulties before they set up their business so running a business that has after three years still not reached a break-even point was not improving their income levels significantly. The commitment to projects spanned both occupations with a PhD student also talking about it being a necessary commitment of finances in order to secure an academic post in the future.
Researcher - Is that why you decided to dedicate about four years of your efforts to pursue a PhD?

Interviewee - Well I could have looked for a full time job but it’s hard to say now if that would have given me the same sense of achievement that finishing my PhD will and hopefully becoming an academic. It would have been paying me instead of my paying for the pleasure of my studies sure, but who can say if under different circumstances it would have featured more strongly as who I see myself as? Does that make sense?

Both occupations can require people to commit a substantial amount of money, concentration, emotion and effort to their project but there is often also not only a capital spend aspect but also a loss of income during the projects duration. People spoke of their investment and dedication of other valuable resources like time and the forgoing of alternative opportunities.

5.6.2 Access to Finance

As suggested above there can be noticeable differences in the perception of what capital might be available to people should they need it for their work. In this research there was one person in rented accommodation who was not a property owner. Three of the participants lived with their parents but one of those is also a homeowner herself and the remaining all owned their own homes. Personal funding was not the only source raised in this research. There were many surprisingly varied ways people had secured or applied for finance to enable them to continue with their work. Universities have bursaries and emergency cash flow products for struggling students and one person had had her fees for her PhD waived by her university employer. More widely, research councils also sponsor research projects which should not be mistaken for supporting the individual conducting the research and one person was able to conduct her research because it was funded by a research
council. In this study people had been awarded external funding to commence or continue with their work from the National Lottery; from European Enterprise support funds; from employers, and at the time of our interview another had succeeded in raising capital through an Initial Public Offering (IPO) of his ten year old successful business.

There has been a plethora of financial support initiatives for people to access if they are willing and able to commit to either conducting research in a broad array of scientific areas or to set up and manage a new business. These initiatives have been introduced to encourage greater levels of engagement in both the knowledge economy and the enterprise economy.

### 5.6.3 Wealth Pursuit

If we are to believe much of the popular mythology about entrepreneurs then we could expect to see people pursuing their goal highly motivated by wealth and power. In fact only two people confessed to being initially driven by wealth. In the early days one entrepreneur admired an uncle who ran three businesses and as a young man he envied him and his lifestyle. The same person also states however that money soon became the least significant driver for him. Another agreed to set up his business in the hope that it would be sold within a year which he had initially believed would make him a very wealthy person. The remaining ten people appear quite incensed at any suggestion of their work being in any way for personal profit. Two enterprise founders express specifically that they are “not doing it for the money” and “not in it for the money” and that theirs is a more personal pursuit of family wellbeing. Several people talk of a desire for stable employment and regular
earnings, but not necessarily increased earnings. The majority of PhDs however express an expectation that once they complete their PhD degree they will be able to expect an increase in salary and earning ability greater than they had experienced in the past.

5.6.4 Educational Attainment

All but three of my interviewees have higher education qualifications ranging across HND, BA, LLB, MSc, MPhil and PhD. Of those that don’t have at least a diploma level certificate, professional qualifications are held as SRN and RGN for one person. Of the remaining two people one didn’t complete his university degree and the other has built up over twenty years experience in his field as an employee. This finding supports the literature that formal education is not a barrier to setting up a new venture but Higher Education degrees are a prequel to acceptance into a PhD programme and more recently a Masters level degree is required on top of an undergraduate degree (Hinchcliffe et al 2007, Pole 2000, van Weert 2006, Veiga & Amaral 2008).

What was most notable with regards to education was the person who after long periods of unemployment and underemployment had gained a great sense of accomplishment and pride in himself for studying and achieving a Bachelor degree. Formal certification is as important for him as it is for all of those currently studying for a PhD. This is significant also for others including what would be termed the most successful business founder. He mentions several times that he did not complete his degree but his account of that is given a positive twist to echo the widely promoted message that a university education is unnecessary to succeed as an entrepreneur.
He rather sorrowfully states however that it was his persuasion of his partner to also drop out of his degree programme that caused an irretrievable breakdown in their friendship. His business partner never forgave him and he doesn’t appear to have forgiven himself either by mentioning it so often.

5.6.5 Career Development

One interviewee confesses to pursuing a PhD in part because his father is an academic and so feels a duty to follow in his footsteps in some ways but his expressions begin with his disappointment at the way engineers, his original occupation choice, has been in his mind, diminished and discredited which is also significant. This makes his a dual purpose in both an effort to regain occupational credibility as an academic like his father but also to detach himself from the occupational classification of engineers, which he perceives as having recently been weakened by heterogeneity and consequently devalued. He talks not of the PhD being any kind of life changing or intellectually enhancing pursuit, but one that must be endured and accepted because it is a necessary requirement to become an academic.

Researcher- Ok I might be jumping to conclusions here? I am doing these very strange types of interviews where I can ask anything and no two interviews will be the same because no two experiences are the same and no two people are the same. What it does allow is for previous interviews to influence future interviews as I learn about other peoples’ experiences so with that, what the last person described was his PhD as a destination point. It’s something he really passionately believes in and sees it as having value and worth. So what you have said appears to be almost the opposite of that as you seem to be looking at it…almost as a…well two topics one which you love and so need to protect yourself from, and the other one. How much of the choice of taking the less passionate topic was there?

Interviewee - Actually that’s a really good question
Researcher- Yes and I'm not supposed to be asking direct questions really. (laughs)

Interviewee - Also one of the major things, major sort of factors that made me go for this topic is it is a relatively new topic. There are arguments that other topics have become increasingly circular over the years. There’s hardly any contribution out there from other fields about it. Every now and then someone writes a paper but they don’t know if they wrote the paper about that or about something else. If you look under databases there’s only one book published about it. So in some ways it’s a very sensitive thing that I’ve touched. But you know, there’s a part of me that says, yeah why not, I want to contribute something to the literature which in a way it's quite easy for me to contribute something to it because there’s hardly anything known about it. At the same time it’s a challenge you know?

When asked if he felt more like a PhD now or an engineer which he had trained for originally he is quite direct about his opinion of the engineering profession as shown here.

Interviewee - Oh yes definitely, but engineers in inverted commas, are such a broad spectrum of expertise. These days everyone is an engineer. Aren’t housewives now called domestic engineers and plumbers are now heating engineers? Being an engineer used to have some respectability but I don’t think they are valued anymore because pretty much every profession claims to be of an engineering discipline which is just mad if you ask me.

There is a note of disappointment in this statement that his original professional choice has seen in some ways a loss of credibility. The occupational classification of engineer he says is used to categorise more professions than he believes deserve to be included.

Career development features most notably in many of the PhD students’ decisions. Here a young scientist explains that after her master’s degree she made several applications for employment but was unimpressed with the potential employers’ attitude towards her by not responding to applications, and the level of financial reward in her chosen industry sector describing it as “pretty grim”. Her decision to
continue to PhD is described as being “something to do” and not for any desire to become a great scientist or make a contribution to knowledge or society. She acknowledges that she would like her family to be proud of her for achieving a PhD but is concerned that she may have simply delayed important employment decisions and will have to experience the same fate once she completes.

Researcher - What purpose did you think your PhD would serve when you first started, or didn’t you think of it in those terms? I mean why did you decide to do a PhD?

Interviewee - Mainly personal interest and I still would say to people the only reason anyone should do a PhD is because they're actually really interested in the subject. It has to be something you both love and can focus on for years at a time. In a sense, it was also to do with carrying on, carrying on because I finished my degree and I did pretty well and I enjoyed it, so I did a masters and I finished my masters and I did pretty well and I enjoyed it and so I did a PhD. I did spend a good deal of time towards the end of my masters looking at the jobs market for biochemists and it was, well pretty grim. I applied for about a dozen jobs in my final phase but didn’t even get replies so I started to worry about what I was going to do next. There were lab jobs paying barely a living wage and yet people had already studied for five years in university to be able to get the degrees they needed to be a lab assistant so that wasn’t very encouraging. I have racked up huge study debts so I couldn’t afford to work in some of those jobs anyway. People would ask me if I wanted to go on and carry on in academia. I would say to them, at the time, yes at the moment I think I do. But people change their minds don’t they and I knew people who’d said, yes definitely I’m going to be an academic, and then got to the end of their three, four years and said, I can’t stand it anymore, I definitely want to go and do something else. So I was quite open-minded about not necessarily carrying on into academia but I haven’t decided yet. As I said, I had a keen interest but I don’t think I thought of it as serving a purpose other than to give me something to do, maybe make my family proud and to help me stay off the unemployment register if I’m honest. I have been a student now non-stop, for nearly eight years, no nine actually. But once I get this finished I will have the same choices to make I suppose.

Here is one of several statements made by people in both occupations having taken action to set up a new enterprise or to pursue a PhD because of their experiences of unemployment, redundancy and underemployment. Two more female interviewees attribute their experiences of perceived gender bias in their workplaces as the reason there own careers had not been as rapid or as successful as they believe
they ought to have been. For these two people the PhD is intended to circumvent prejudice against them once they complete.

In some cases the choices are less than ideal and often there is a perception of a lack of alternatives for people, real or otherwise. In one case the PhD was being done by someone who had already gained over a decade of work experience as a Teaching Fellow but describes why she believes her skills and experience is no longer valued in universities. She is working on one of the newer styles of gaining a PhD which is by publication. When it is suggested she is doing her PhD in-order-to keep her current job as a university lecturer, she rejects this suggestion and becomes quite defensive. Throughout her interview however her expressions of resentment and critical description of both the institutional requirement for lecturers to obtain a PhD, and the value of it as an emblem of scholarly excellence, present a different angle to the one she attempts to put forward.

**Researcher** - *What I’m trying to get at is your PhD is come at from a different angle. You almost have to do it to keep your job and so ...*

**Interviewee** - No.

**Researcher** - *No, oh well correct me if I’m wrong*

**Interviewee** - No. Teaching Fellows has nothing to do with, as I pointed out in my PDR yesterday, has absolutely nothing to do with my current contract.

**Researcher** – *Right*

**Interviewee** - Interviewee - *I get no compensation. No benefits whatsoever from doing a PhD currently.*

**Researcher** - *Right. So why are you?*

**Interviewee** - There’s two reasons I was doing a PhD. One, was so that the Management School, particularly certain individuals within the Management School did not try and claim the funding from which I was previously paid. The funding
belonged to either the individual who was a significant part of that group so it should have been diverted back to where it came from and I, since it wasn’t going to go back where it came from, I took a piece of it to further my career even though it wasn’t going to happen here any other way.

Researcher – Right

Interviewee - So the second reason I did it was in case they did erm, make me redundant which was a possibility at the time I had something to do. Keep me busy. So I wasn’t bored.

Researcher - So it is something to do right now as oppose to being insurance for something you are going to want to do in the future?

Interviewee - It’s transferring because I originally thought I might want to be a lecturer which I have now decided I positively do not wish to be. Under no circumstances do I wish to assume the 30, 30, 30 role erm, so my research remains separate. I want the PhD just because, even though I already have a doctorate, it looks better.

Researcher – Right

Interviewee - And it’s still half way there and I enjoy the research so it’s sort of a hobby. So I’ll keep doing it.

This interviewee has constructed a sophisticated defensive argument denying when asked, that she has been compelled to do a PhD under the threat of job insecurity and the possibility of being made redundant. Part of that defensive denial is highlighted in her insistence that although she states she has been a lecturer for twelve years, she no longer wants to be a teacher at university because of the more recent associated role expectations of being research active and publication pressures that dominate the modern academic career. Her rejection and resistance to what she calls the “30, 30, 30 role” is given as the reason for no longer wanting to be an academic. She instead states that her research is more of a personal endeavour when she refers to it as “a hobby” and not related to any kind of career management strategy. This is rather unconvincing at times. She states for example, that she already has a doctorate which is another defensive statement which seeks
to reject US and UK higher education occupation title differences, but then acknowledges that having a PhD has some superior image qualities. As with a few others, this interviewee is resentful that she feels she has been manipulated into doing something she insists is worthless, but feels powerless to avoid, without sabotaging her own career options in academia. Another interviewee who set up as a self employed technician shortly after his previous employer disappeared shares many of the same attributes and intentions of career ‘continuation’ but not necessarily development. By setting up as a sole trader in the same area and with some of his previous employers’ clients, his intention is to carry on, not progress. Stability and continuity are evident in both these examples.

5.6.6 Status Pursuit

Status is a complicated aspect of both social and self identity. Some professions and occupations are admired whilst some are not. In this research it is recognised that entrepreneurs enjoy widely held support and admiration especially recently, and if the PhD is seen as an apprenticeship to academia, then that too enjoys a certain respectable and admired position in society. For some people, their PhD participation gives them an opportunity to validate what they already feel about their identity and their ability. Someone here had continued to attend academic conferences and write papers to present at them after his Masters degree several years earlier.

*Interviewee* - *That’s quite clear to me so, along the way over the last few years I’ve been writing papers for conferences. And I’ve written about four papers for different conferences over the last four years or so. One of them was presented at the British Academy of Management conference about two years ago. And erm, there was a woman in the audience who said you should do this as a PhD. She is now my current supervisor.*
**Researcher - Prior to that you hadn’t considered doing a PhD?**

**Interviewee** - I hadn’t no, no. For me it was just trying to work on writing some papers and trying to get a sense that this is stuff which has got some rigour, which has got some theoretical basis, which has got some interest for the organisational community. I guess I was doing it for my own satisfaction and erm; it was intellectually engaging so I wanted to keep on writing in that area aswell. And there’s also a sort of, I’ve always sensed that I was destined to be an academic anyway. But I didn’t take that route, for various reasons.

What this appears to be is someone validating their own sense of self and ability as an intellectual when they state that they felt they had always been “destined to be an academic” which might explain why he attended academic conferences. By writing and presenting in such an environment he was attempting to remain engaged with researchers and scholars in his chosen field and to benefit from the prestige that scholarly conference gatherings present themselves as fostering.

For another, overcoming her workplace sense of inadequacy and inferior status dominates her decision making. Her PhD is being conducted in an attempt to level what she sees as unjust prejudice against her and others who don’t have the title of PhD or Dr as highlighted below.

**Interviewee** - Then suddenly I am jumping into an environment where I am surrounded by people who had PhDs. So of course I realized that the masters was good, but, and I had one and not many other people did but it was just always at the back of my mind. When would be a good time to go back and get it?

**Researcher - In a not quite good enough, is that the prequel to that?**

**Interviewee** - Yes. I think, well I have never, ever had a confidence issue. I had so much confidence and so much belief in myself and what I could do and everything else and what I’ve found is I saw the PhD as a validation of that, you know, look at me. I am, you know, clever enough to be called doctor. I’ve got evidence of this tremendous achievement you know? So even if you thought about treating me as inferior, you know, don’t, because, I’m not.

**Researcher - So you appear to be pursuing the credential for the credentials**
sake. It is going to make the difference; it's the letters are they going to make the difference?

**Interviewee -** The letters absolutely; Even when I entered into the PhD programme, I know this is terrible but it is the truth. I never thought the PhD was going to give me something that I never had before. Which I know is terrible because I have learned a lot and I am so glad of the first year. Doing the philosophy course, I loved it and in retrospect I am so glad we did it but, to me this has never been a training process. I know it is supposed to be but to me this has always been something that I had to figure out and do on my own to get my qualification.

Here someone acts to both validate her own sense of identity and to be able to present herself in the future as an intelligent individual in response to past experiences of being made to feel inferior. For those who set up businesses and became enterprise founders there was much less of a sense of status being an important pursuit. There were some who joined professional organisations which they hoped would raise their professional profile within their respective industry sectors which is one way of seeking to improve their entrepreneurial status and there were others who perceive their existing occupation as having damaged their preferred status because of the disappointing performance of their business.

Success in both occupations ultimately will lie somewhere in their future so status as a pursuit in itself appears to feature only as a way of reinforcing previously held expectations of themselves. It confirms their sense of self efficacy which is a psychological asset for both entrepreneurs and doctoral research students.

### 5.7 Summary

This chapter has readdressed what were the initial impressions of the researcher to expand some detail of the characters who took part in the study. Through a small selection of excerpts of interviewees narratives, detailed differences in psychological
and sociological purposes are discovered from both those in the entrepreneur category and those in the PhD research student category. The similarities have been shown to indicate that regardless of external labels they have responded to perceptions of expectations of themselves externally, and their internally felt sense of self and perceptions of ability. These ultimately situate their purposes as being for either socioemotional or socioeconomic reasons.

This challenges the popular external labels and images not only of these two groups of people being completely different to one another but also the concept that entrepreneurs are driven to seek profit whilst intellectual research workers are not. The results of this study show that this segregation is both artificial and misrepresentative because some PhD research students were indeed doing their research for personal gain in prestige and career advancement or because funding was available and employment alternatives appeared disappointing at the time.

These are not the altruistic motives often surrounding our understanding of dedicated research scientists sacrificing better more lucrative options for the furthering of wider science. Those externally labelled entrepreneurs on the other hand also set up and ran their enterprises for personal gain in some cases, or social development in others. Those we casually label are shown here to be equally subject to external factors which sometimes enable them to start-up a new business or they find themselves feeling ‘trapped’ by the ventures they have founded but have no pride or passion for developing the business.
In the next chapter having separated socioeconomic from socioemotional purposes here, further examination of the sub set of character types can be elicited by examining what interviewees expect to accomplish by setting out to conduct doctoral level research or by establishing an enterprise. By examining what people hope to accomplish it is possible to theme certain characteristics and intentions into a further four categories based not on occupational divisions, but outcome expectations.
Chapter Six

Overlapping Themes of both Occupations
6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter showed the impact of socioemotional and socioeconomic influences and how they reflect the internal-external dialectic put forward by Jenkins (2004) in his social identity thesis. In this chapter the key components of not only the internal and external identity, but importantly the interactional aspect of living an identity that feels appropriate to the person themselves. A number of thematic overlaps are presented which show self identity as understood by people in both these perceptually polarised fields. The external view of both occupations fails to be incorporated into the most significant roles people relate to in their understanding of themselves and their identity.

This chapter begins by readdressing what were the initial impressions of the researcher to expand some detail of the characters who took part in the study. Through a selection of excerpts of interviewees’ narratives, detailed overlaps are uncovered from both those in the entrepreneur category and those in the PhD research student category. The similarities are shown to indicate that regardless of external labels interviewees all react to their perceptions of expectations of themselves externally, and their internally felt sense of self affecting personal perceptions of ability.

Having already separated the socioeconomic from socioemotional purposes in the previous chapter, further examination of the sub set of character types and drivers can be elicited by examining what interviewees draw on as their identity stabilisers. These include internalised identities such as parental position, age, gender and authentic self. Institutional overlaps are seen by peoples’ understanding of roles,
groups and associations they belong to and through the interaction aspects such as credibility and legitimacy in their sense of self identity. These and more are examined demonstrating what interviewees feel is important to their sense of self and purpose in entering and continuing in what they have chosen to pursue.

6.1 External identity – adjustment and rejection of their label

Several of those interviewed have found quite constructive ways of adjusting to their given external identity. It is a gradual process for some where they talk of slowly adjusting to their given role depending on both their perceptions of what is expected of people who occupy the same roles as themselves, and also the differences they prefer to make between themselves and others who also occupy the same role.

Here we have someone explaining that the entrepreneur label wasn’t really accepted in the early stages of his business and that he didn’t think of himself as being an entrepreneur until he began to have employees, which appears to be his conceptual turning point.

Researcher - Do you think we have a good understanding of entrepreneurs?

Interviewee - I think it’s hard for anyone to have a thorough understanding of entrepreneurs as each one is so different but there definitely seems to be a certain pride in our country about those who stand out in business.

He continues saying:

I know I didn’t use the name entrepreneur in the early stages of my first business but once I had to get in help, you know, have employees. Well, that was what made the difference. You go from being that lad who does this or that to being the boss and it makes you realise that other people depend on you now to pay for their families and their mortgages and rent and so on, so then I started to feel like a business owner with all the responsibilities that entails and eventually I accepted the entrepreneur handle, but it wasn’t straight away. It is much more common now since the 80s to be admired for being an entrepreneur and at the same time it is a lot more complicated too because the world changes so quickly now which means the opportunities and openings are more fleeting.
Once he had employees he became more comfortable with being referred to as an entrepreneur and currently wears the label with an element of pride and internal acceptance. It has been twenty years since he set up his first business which started off for a long while as just himself and a partner with no employees needed. When it began to take shape and have an impact is when he first employed others to help him in the business. He talks confidently about his multiple business ventures, one of which is an entrepreneurship development project he has set up, but much less comfortably when talking about himself. He is quite relaxed about using the term entrepreneur to categorise people who come to him for help hoping to set up their own businesses and attributes that in part to the time we live in, where he says there is now a much greater need for more entrepreneurs to be successful.

Others however, reject their external label outright and even find sophisticated alternatives they are happier to adopt. When asked about how he introduces himself, this person has invested a good deal of intellectual effort to find an identity he finds more attractive or impressive than that of a PhD student.

Researcher - So if I was to ask you which occupation you describe yourself as having at the moment...

Interviewee - Now? The label?

Researcher - Yes.

Interviewee - I say I am a research psychologist.

For this person the “research psychologist” has been employed as a more attractive alternative for referring to himself than as a PhD student or student of any kind. He admits he has copied it from a fellow student and says that during our interview he
was “trying it out”. He then back tracks a little and is almost apologetic for being so definitive about not using the PhD or student identity, but confesses he actively resists it. He explains this through a critical assessment of how he feels he is treated by the university as being made to feel like doctoral students “aren’t very much at all. You are in the way. You are an obligation”. This explanation is employed to qualify and justify his decision and conscious effort to adapt his occupational identity towards what he believes is a superior alternative. One which permits him access to people and places he might not otherwise be able to connect with when he says the adopted identity he prefers to use serves as “a great door opener” which he must assume the PhD student label isn’t.

**Researcher** - You don’t say you are a PhD?

**Interviewee** - No I don’t.

**Researcher** - That’s interesting the PhD student has…

**Interviewee** - Well for people of our age, after having been successful and then coming to be a lowly student, we seem to resist it.

**Researcher** - Resist being a student?

**Interviewee** - Resist calling ourselves a student. It is the PhD student. We don’t call ourselves student or at least I don’t. I am a student. I’m resistant on it. I don’t know why I’m resistant on it. I sounded very definite when I said research psychologist just a moment ago to you then. To some extent that’s was me trying it out to be honest. The reason why I say it is that one of (supervisors name) previous PhD students, I saw this letter that he wrote to try and get into this big organisation and I wanted to get in touch with him and he called himself a research psychologist and I thought that’s good but he was a year two. So it has a submissive tone to it.

He continues validating his reasons for being made to feel submissive as the fault of his university and how he is treated:–

...within the context of this university you aren’t very much at all. You are in the way. You are an obligation. And if you can avoid it, then people will. And I think that may be generally unfair, and I think that quite a lot of the time people say well, we aren’t
giving you the support that you are expecting because you are a PhD student and you have got to get out there and do it for yourself.

The tone here is frustration and resentment towards the institution which impacts his willingness to categorise himself as a PhD student. He believes it is an inferior label to his preferred one of research psychologist. In a similar vein another interviewee doesn’t like to admit that she is doing a PhD at all because having been seen as a professional academic and lecturer for most of her career she finds the student label “humiliating” and says it is shameful when her PhD status is brought up in public. She avoids making or admitting to any reference to her PhD identity.

When asked if she thought the PhD student enjoyed greater freedom than established academics due to their perceived creativity and kudos she challenges any notion of the PhD having kudos but confesses to being aware of “the chip on my shoulder” about her own situation.

**Interviewee** - I would take issue with that again, kudos or shrouded in kudos about doing a PhD, for me it’s almost humiliating. Because I have been in academia so long, I’ve got so many degrees already that to have people see me as a student is actually something I avoid, I do. I do not talk about the fact that I’m doing a PhD at all.

**Researcher** - You don’t refer to yourself as a student?

**Interviewee** - No. There is, there is the chip on my shoulder. Yes, I feel that is a good one to keep a hold of and I do bristle, particularly when they do it in public you know, oh are you doing a PhD? And I gnarl under my breath. Yeah, yeah, no I am doing my research. It is nothing to do with you. Yeah, and yeah I haven’t quite shook that one yet. I’m starting to, I care less and less what people think. We are all students and that ridiculousness is why there is so little scholarship in academia because people tout themselves as experts and we know from experience and you do too I don’t doubt, that knowing them and seeing that the more expert people claim they are the more stupider they are.
This embittered rejection of the PhD and academia having any scholarly credence was a surprise when it is understood that this person already inhabits a lecturer identity. The lecturer identity is protected whilst the doctoral research student identity undermines that by having to now obtain a PhD. Consequently, she is very critical of everything to do with the higher education sector and a credentialist society continuing to express more reasons why she wants no part of it.

**Interviewee** - Yes, but once you have got it, fast forward ten years, you have got your degree and you have been on staff and then it is someone else saying this needs investigating you must go and study it so that’s why I am not going to do it. That’s precisely why I said no way. I don’t want any connection with it at all. I don’t want somebody saying, now you’ve got a PhD and now you have to start accepting PhD students and you need to start supervising them in your area and getting published because if you don’t get published then we are not going to let you keep your job. I’m a teaching fellow, I’ve got a job. We know with the volume of the students they are going to keep me here so why would I want to take on that mantle? Just so as I could have the label of lecturer but would actually make my quality of life probably worse. My pride would be better but my actual quality of life would be worse.

In this complex statement she admits that her pride would grow once she achieves a PhD, but she notes her quality of life would deteriorate because she talks of having to do research in areas she may not be interested in and the duty of supervising other potential PhD students once she has achieved her own. Whist stating repeatedly that she wants no part of the “game”, her voiced resistance to the institutional expectations remains passive as she dutifully continues to conduct her research and submit articles from it for publication.

Some others appear to either misunderstand the meaning or concept of what their external label signifies, or deliberately try and find one they are more comfortable with. The external label that most closely applies to this interviewee is that of a social portfolio entrepreneur in that she has set up and manages three interconnected not-
for-profit ventures and has done so for several years. When asked about the impact of her HND Business course on her entrepreneurial performance and success she quickly rejects the idea of being an entrepreneur, likening entrepreneurs to famous, wealthy businessmen; Sir Richard Branson specifically.

Researcher - This is important because it's very easy to assume that people who start a business fall into very fixed stereotypes and part of this research is unearthing that. There’s a multitude of reasons.

Interviewee - Yeah, I didn't. I didn't. And I also really genuinely, without the course I would not. Without the HND I would not have done the business. I think I'd have got ten minutes into and gone uuhuhuhuh. I think because I've done what I did and the road I went down you know hopefully done it right. Although I haven't done the business right, you know setting up the business side, yeah, I hope I've done that right but erm, the HND helped me enormously.

Researcher - So now you are an entrepreneur do you think you have been encouraged to be more business minded, perhaps in the style that you must have learned about in your HND?

Interviewee - Oh blimey I don't think of myself as an entrepreneur oh my. No I am not an entrepreneur that's Richard Branson isn't it? No, no that's not me. Well if I had his money I could really make a difference then couldn't I? No entrepreneurs are people who set up big businesses and makes loads of money or at least that's how I think of them. No, I just run three little projects that help people with learning difficulties have a better, you know, a better chance in life, that's all I do. I am not an entrepreneur, (laughs) far from it.

This is evidence of the popularised myth of wealth and fame being synonymous with entrepreneurs which feeds peoples’ perceptions and is reiterated widely in the media but surprisingly, although she rejects the label for herself, she does volunteer her husband as a possible entrepreneur because he operates a local ironing business that makes a modest profit. So profit led businesses are how she understands entrepreneurs and as in many other studies, female business founders are often believed to reject the entrepreneur label because of its masculine, greed

To clarify how she was comfortable understanding and describing her occupation she was encouraged to expand on her rejection of the entrepreneur label and asked directly if she thought she was perhaps a social entrepreneur.

**Researcher - Well aren’t you a social entrepreneur?**

**Interviewee** - Oh well, yes I suppose I am I mean my businesses don’t make money but they do make a difference and we have helped improve hundreds of people’s lives so maybe yes, I can call myself a social entrepreneur. I am definitely not doing it for the money that’s for sure. Well because there isn’t any money in it. I don’t like the idea of calling myself an entrepreneur ‘cos everyone will think I’m loaded won’t they? (Laughs) Maybe my husband is an entrepreneur because his little business makes money doesn’t it? Not huge amounts but enough to keep going and pay the bills and that so he could be called an entrepreneur but not me. No I am just doing my bit to help people like my daughter and even though it doesn’t make any money I still do it. I get a different kind of pleasure out of what I have created with the three businesses and seeing how people now enjoy themselves and feel safer and of course we don’t want any more people suffering the way [name] and [name] did when it can be avoided. We need to see that just because people can’t always communicate or understand everything they shouldn’t be treated any less serious when they are at risk of cancers and everything else you know?

This label she seemed more content to accept. The term, social entrepreneur is not a recent phenomenon but for this interviewee hadn’t until this was suggested as a reflection of her, been considered it seemed as an accurate social identity.

**Researcher - Yes I know, you’re right of course but it is interesting that you don’t consider yourself an entrepreneur even though you have set up three businesses even if they are not-for-profit.**

**Interviewee** - Well for me you see that’s the difference and I just don’t measure my businesses by them that make money. It doesn’t matter does it what I call myself? I am a bit of an angry parent who doesn’t like what the future holds for (daughters name) so I set about making sure it was made better not only for her but her friends and everyone else who needs to have someone fighting their corner if you know what I mean?
As with many social entrepreneurs, there is an element of adopting a crusader role here. As championing those who are unable or unwilling to improve things for themselves. This seeps through almost every word accompanied by a self denigrating argument that she is not doing anything extraordinary. She is fixing a flaw she has identified which is not for financial gain but nonetheless, is perceived as necessary. This interviewee has not been conditioned to think of herself as a social entrepreneur or an entrepreneur of any kind claiming instead to be “a bit of an angry parent” which for her makes more sense than the misunderstood label posed to her in the interview.

6.2 Internal Identity and Selected Personas

The notion that people become what their external occupational identity dictates was rarely evidenced in this research. The contributors instead gave a candid interpretation of who they remain regardless of the roles they currently occupy. Some are proud of who they are, and what they are doing whilst others are ashamed of their title and position, and consequently explain themselves in alternative categorisations.

The scientist remains a scientist, but operates a small business. The scholar remains a scholar and has confidence in her assertion that the PhD offers little confirmation of her chosen internal identity as that of a scholar. The working class identity is a declared statement of pride for another individual. It represents a well defined set of values and beliefs for this person and he feels he is reflective of those whilst his description of his place in the world contains elements of both hero and
victim. Another presents a middle class pseudo intellectual identity and describes himself as belonging to the place where he currently lives, Cambridge. He employs this particular geographical location purposefully as it serves to validate his internal identity construction of being an intellectual.

The dutiful son identity was put forward too as someone willing to sacrifice his initial plans of a career in one sector to follow his father into another his father prefers for him. Then there is the business owner who became surreptitiously redundant but is able to retain a sense of continuity and stability by operating an identical business doing the only job he has ever known except not as a manager, but as owner.

6.2.1 The parent principle
There were eight parents who contributed to this study, three fathers and five mothers took part. One person in fact gives his reason for entering his current occupation as being because he has no children and is using his work on a PhD partly as a replacement for the disappointment of being childless stating that the PhD acts as a legacy; something for him to leave behind.

Two of the fathers talk of their children but not in regard to how they see themselves or the significance of being a father to their life choices. One in fact defends his rather poor business performance as being because he prefers to be a “house husband” caring for his two young sons whilst his wife works full time. The third has grown up children who have left home and so perhaps that contributes to the distance emotively he feels of fatherhood now that the active part of his parenting responsibilities are matured, but he does declare that he is soon to be a grandfather.
Two of the five mothers refer to themselves as mothers above any of their other roles. Children were mentioned by the more mature women as possessions with phrases like I have two children; I have four children and so on. Both the mothers in the over 46 age group showed a preference for regarding themselves as mothers first and foremost. This may be a feature of more mature mothers or alternatively a cultural and class limitation on how women in the past were somewhat conditioned to present themselves in maternal ideology as favourably instrumental of their role and purpose in society. The younger mothers declare themselves as ‘a mum’ or as ‘a mother’ of one, mother of two, mother of three. They regard themselves in terms of career position second to being a parent but their career experiences and ambitions do feature more prominently than in the more mature parents. This curious finding may of course be coincidental and in a larger study may have no bearing or stand up to further scrutiny but nonetheless, for the small number of participants and the mixture of age groups that contributed to this research, the role of the parent was often given as either the reason for making their occupational choice to enter into venture formation or enter into PhD studentship or as the main reason they experienced difficulties having made their occupational choice.

6.2.2 Age and generational impact

People occasionally portray a certain crusader aspect to their explanation of what they are doing and so it has become representative of who they understand themselves to be. The internal drive for these people in battling the establishment and their sense of duty to champion the rights of other people who they believe are at risk crosses the age groups with one in their 30s and another in their 50s. Another contributor presents a determined but sacrificial explanation of themselves, quitting
their successful thirty year career to do something, anything that would allow them to be more available for their family and more specifically a son who was experiencing difficulties.

Other people found that their age was a burden, or so they believed. Someone who had experienced long periods of unemployment and underemployment attributed much of his inability to secure a job even as a graduate to his age talking of employers expectations that new graduates should be youthful and in his fifties he felt unfairly disadvantaged. A similar anxiety was felt by the person who had been encouraged to set up his new business after a very successful academic career as a scientist but felt he was “running out of time” as he approached retirement age to secure another university position following the underperformance of his venture. The youngest of the interviewees also believed her age was a barrier to securing employment that she felt was worthy of her qualifications and gives this as her reason for staying on in university to pursue a PhD. These results confirm that the perceptions people carry of their chances in life and employment opportunities often dictate how they regard themselves and have been studied many times elsewhere (Cope et al 2007, Gecas & Seff 1990, Katz & Martin 1962, Kor et al 2007).

6.2.3 Gender as a foundation of internal identity

The younger females prefer to present themselves in terms of their objectives and their intentions for their professional future. Four of these are in PhD programmes but all carefully present themselves as accomplished, highly intelligent, hard working people. Three women mention that their choice to enter a PhD programme is partly spurred by perceived injustices and gender prejudices they have experienced in
their respective workplaces and career histories although one admits she has never actually been in paid employment. She has been a higher education student for over eight years since leaving secondary school. Two other women talk openly about in one case “being a woman and blonde” and in the other as “being female and having children” as a disadvantage to their past career ambitions. Both mention being undermined and overlooked for promotions in their previous and indeed current jobs. This is a source of frustration and perceived injustice for both women and the PhD they believe will help to remove those barriers.

One woman however tries to detach herself from the broader feminist position by insisting that men have fewer choices than women when it comes to career management and parental expectations and that men have more pressure to earn a high salary and make sacrifices for their families than she believes women and mothers do. The prejudices she mentions are not a female – male dichotomy therefore, but presented as a mother – father one. She refers to herself as the “second earner in the family” indicating that she measures her positional power in terms of income levels. As she earns a lower salary and acknowledges a greater sense of career fragility, therefore she adopts an inferior position to her husband who she states earns more than her and has a more successful career. Both of the venture founders who are female refer to the support of their husband’s income as an enabling feature of how they are able to continue with their small businesses. One puts her husband’s small business as superior to hers because it makes a small profit and the other confesses that she doesn’t like relying on her “husband’s generosity” so as she can continue to operate her small venture.
The male participants are also gender conscious although in a different way with emphasis on their roles as sons, husbands, grandfathers and fathers and indeed not being a father is significant to one of them. The familial role is how they reference themselves and gendered by labels they comfortably employ in almost all cases. For the men, their gendered roles are something of an accomplishment and so don’t feature as a negative component of their identity but quite the opposite. The exception to this is the one person who opens the interview with a declaration of being single which is a non gendered statement.

6.2.4 Race, Ethnicity and Religion

Of the twelve people who contributed to the study all are North West England based, for either where their university is, or where they live. There is one Irish born, one American born and one of Indian descent. Country of origin isn’t openly brought out but does have some references from the American born when discussing academic label difference, and for the Ireland born, who had moved back to England from America, only cost differences between the UK and the US of obtaining PhDs is mentioned. It is not thought to have played a dominant feature in how these contributors understood their internal identity.

Religion did not feature highly either in this study and ethnicity although sought out so as to ensure the broadest mix possible for a cohort of similarly occupied individuals as recommended in interpretative studies, did not feature as significant either. Nobody raised the issue of their heritage or their families’ heritage so it did not feature as an identity construct in the interviews and it was not raised by the researcher. The high level of multicultural and multi-ethnicity aspects of both higher
education and entrepreneurship are arguably just one of their strengths. Neither occupation have recognised barriers to entry based on race, religion or ethnicity.

6.2.5 **Contradictions causing individual anxiety**

The three openly distressed contributors all occupy positions they feel are unworthy of them and not a true representation of who they aspire to be or have already succeeded as prior to their current position. The self declared working class graduate, the scholar and the scientist resist adopting the behaviours and performances of the occupations they believe they have been coerced into accommodating. Two operate micro businesses and one is in a PhD programme. Their resistance is not so strong as to make them leave or quit their occupation and so is in many ways passive. Their discontent and anxiety though is evident and so they reluctantly and begrudgingly perform the roles they are assigned. The mis-fit of self view and role appears to causes these individuals a good deal of emotional torment.

6.2.6 **Self identity control**

Half of the people interviewed had devised quite sophisticated mechanisms and strategies for protecting their self identity and the beliefs they have about themselves from perceived threats. For some it was to take what they saw as the easiest option for them, which would not present too great a challenge that it might not be achieved. For others it was to deliberately and calculatingly pursue a steady and predictable course of action which permitted them to remain as close to their original identities as possible and not allow themselves to have their occupational requirement infringe on their established and protected values and beliefs.
This includes defining themselves through their individual anchors and positioning themselves and their identities around those allowing them to seamlessly and constructively present a high degree of continuity with who they believe themselves to be. Continuity and risk avoidance feature highly and are preferable for many of the interviewees demonstrated through their efforts to establish a solid and demonstratively consistent self identity.

### 6.2.7 Authentic extension of self identity

There are just three people from this study who see their work and achievements as an authentic extension of their beliefs and their passions and fully inhabit all that they believe is required in their occupations. They appear to want to ensure their true intentions are accomplished by being whatever it takes to succeed in their individual quests. These three individuals identify unquestioningly with both their internal purpose and their abilities to achieve something valuable to themselves and others. Two run businesses and another is in a PhD programme.

### 6.3 Institutional factors as both facilitators and burdens

As discussed in the previous section looking at the individuals' internal identity and sense of self was often understood through the roles and groups they aligned themselves with which impacted how they understood their own labels and categorisations. These roles, groups and established categories are well documented in identity literature (Gecas 1982, 1989). It is often argued that institutions serve as both master and servant in many respects to how people behave and conduct themselves (Adkins & Lury 1999, Bauman 2000, Hatch & Schutz 2002). The most frequently discussed institutions in this study included
partners, family and employers. Perhaps not surprisingly considering the focus of the study, enterprise support providers and universities also featured as key institutions that affect people and were referred to frequently.

6.3.1 Family and friends

There were several dominant institutional factors which impacted on people’s identity which were introduced in this research. The one mentioned by almost all the interviewees was family and friends. The institution of family influenced many on their actions and how they were influenced to act in ways conducive to their role within their family and for some that was a facilitator for what they hoped to do, whilst for others it was much more of a burden. Interviewees in both occupations expressed their concern about their conflicting sense of parallel duties. Samples of a few are given here.

Researcher - What about family and friends outside of the PhD world?

Interviewee - I think friends who aren't doing PhDs don't always understand what I'm doing and it's something that's quite difficult to explain to other people who aren't doing it. What it's actually like. So friends who were pursuing other kinds of careers find it a bit baffling. Similarly family who haven't done, you know, I don't come from a university background. Family, they have found it very baffling and don't really understand why it takes so long. They kept thinking it would be finished and they just didn't really grasp how difficult it is or how long it takes although they are supportive in many respects, they really were, but they couldn't really grasp it. But they certainly weren't, I don't feel that they were detrimental to the process. I just think they didn't fully understand it. I live with my parents and they have been so helpful with helping me out financially and everything and giving me everything I need, but that sometimes spills over into the almost unspoken, when will this end, or when will you be able to get a real job?

This interviewee has pursued her academic role as the first in her family to enter university and that clearly gives her a sense of pride however, she has been at
university for longer than the three or four years that an undergraduate degree may take and has continued on to masters level and now doctoral level which she says means her parents don’t understand what is involved in the PhD and as she says, “spills over into the almost unspoken, when will this end, or when will you be able to get a real job” which adds yet more pressure for her at home.

Those who set up new ventures also voiced difficulties of managing their domestic responsibilities and expectations of care for children and the support given to them at least for a while by extended family. When asked directly how setting up their business had impacted the whole family we hear of strains both emotionally and economically of trying to maintain the support from family members often needed in new business start ups.

**Researcher - We talked a little bit about this before. What affect has the business had on the family?**

**Interviewee 2 - It is an emotional drain**

**Interviewee 1 - A complete emotional drain**

**Interviewee 2 - The pressure well for Sundays last year for virtually the whole of the wedding season we were out.**

**Interviewee 1 - Child minders tend not to work on weekends so it is difficult to get a child minder so we relied on C’s side of the family and I suppose, well we seemed to be taking advantage because well we are not there and they have got the kids all day.**

**Interviewee 2 - Well for a couple of hours.**

**Interviewee 1 – So they reacted didn’t they?**

**Interviewee 2 – Mmm**

**Interviewee 1 – And it got to the stage most recently, where they have now said, we’re not prepared to do this anymore.**

**Researcher - Oh no. Actually that is one of the areas that is so often**
overlooked isn’t it how it is not just yourselves but extended family and friends and the support they provide because they want you to do well. So you had help, up to a point.

**Interviewee 1** – To a point. (Laughs)

**Interviewee 2** – When we started this we did ask, we did say to them you know, come on, help us with this and I don’t think…I don’t think…that… they realised, erm, you know the level of commitment we were going to need. We didn’t realise ourselves either.

Almost all the people who contributed to this research regarded family and friends input as significant and quite often the reason they pursued the action they did. The same forces however created barriers and hurdles too as shown above and in other instances. For some it was childcare, for others it was parents and for some it was both. It is well documented and accepted that the support of family and also friends is a very important feature of commitment to a long and difficult project like setting up and managing a business or undertaking a large research project and seeing it through to successful completion.

### 6.3.2 Employers

For other people their employers and their universities were not surprisingly believed to both enable and to restrict how they saw themselves and their social identity was affected by that dichotomy. For one person her employer is her university. For another, her employer is funding her PhD. Both these people feel torn between their employee role and their doctoral research student role; although one admits she hides her student role quite successfully because it makes her feel ashamed. For her the university insistence on her doing a PhD for a job she already occupies is an unworthy and unwarranted expectation. It is discussed below.
Researcher - Does that have an impact on you so you are the person who researched this topic and found these findings?

Interviewee - You know it's strange how I have changed as I've gotten older. Whereas before I think I was very much I want the label even though as I said I already have a doctorate. But no one is supposed to call me doctor unless they are a banker. So I don't have the label and you do have a slightly inferior status of being Miss or Mrs or whatever but as I've gotten older I really care less and less and less about that actually. I could swear about it now but the recording device is on (laughs).

Here she expresses several issues relevant to her social identity being one of inferiority for people working in academia who have not succeeded at achieving a PhD and gained the title of Dr. This is why she hides her PhD status and prefers to use the academic or scholar title throughout our interview. She tries quite hard to diminish the significance of the PhD as a requirement and what it signifies but has already given herself the title in limited circles which she justifies as appropriate because she insists, she already has a doctorate but confesses that it is not like having the label because of the status attached to the PhD degree. She goes on to rationalise her use of the Dr. Title by making a comparison with the medical profession saying that there is more merit in switching from Dr to Mr or Mrs once they reach Consultant level. This analogy serves to substantiate her own status as feeling she is worthy of Dr which she has not yet achieved. It is a source of frustration and contempt for her. She constantly attempts to insist that she is not affected by labels or perceptions of her status and achievements but frequently admits to having made claims about her role that are deceptive and that she has manipulated an opportunity to improve her social standing with her bank for instance in search of the “deference” and “respect” she says people receive when other people “think you are clever”.

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Interviewee - It’s very weird. Well, I can’t say that I have ever used a title in any form. I don’t like Mrs or Ms or anything like that. I tend not to use that either. The only place I have ever used my title is with the banks because you do get a bit more, a bit of a cross, you do get that slight margin of respect and deference when they think you are clever which as we know is not necessarily true. So I don’t think even when I get it that that will change to be perfectly honest. I’m almost the kind to go the opposite and make a point of not saying it, not having my name changed on the door.

Researcher - Or on your cheque book?

Interviewee - Well it is already there. It’s the only place it says Dr which is harmless. Should it be? Well I already have a doctorate so why don’t I? Who says?

Here is one obvious facilitating aspect of universities being able to correct or at least permit approved use of the titles they bestow on PhDs. As someone who has been using a title they were not authorised to, the PhD once completed and passed, can remove the stigma of misrepresenting herself as having a degree she doesn’t have, and using a title she hasn’t actually earned.

Researcher - So yours is an American one so are people a bit snippy about it over here?

Interviewee - Yes. So you wouldn’t use it in America either except you see this is the weird thing which has been pointed out over here, I wouldn’t be doctor in America but I would be Professor as would you so very bizarre. Once you become a lecturer of any description you are automatically called Professor so they wouldn’t even use that label at any point in time. Strange.

Having built a rather inconsistent argument against wanting to use labels and titles she refines the status and labelling issue by declaring that in the US she would be able to refer to herself with the label of Professor and sees this as an additional detail she thinks is unjust and unfair on her. All this defensive explanation represents someone who sees themselves as one thing but is made to feel like an inferior version of that by her employer, colleagues and the wider academic community in which she works.
6.3.3 Universities

For another PhD student their university is described as both a facilitator at times and also a burden in other ways. This person exemplifies what all the doctoral students felt when they first decided to go and study for a PhD. They all began with a great deal of hope, ambition, desire to make a difference and confidence they could achieve almost anything. The university institutional requirements or structures and expectations of students on their PhD programme across all disciplines covered in this study in many ways eliminate almost all that positive outlook very quickly. Here the expectation of her is described as a constraint which replaces the ultimate liberation she had felt in the beginning.

Researcher - So you've gone from feeling liberated to feeling what?

Interviewee – Constrained. Yes very constrained.

Researcher - Is that constraint real or self imposed do you think?

Interviewee - Yes I think that's exactly right, yeah. I think that was partly a learning curve which maybe everybody goes through but a part of me feels that that was a useful thing in learning how ideas can't always materialise and that gap between fantastic, exciting ideas and your ability to realise them in practice was something I had to learn the hard way. The PhD has taught me that and I think I was perhaps a bit too ambitious when I started out doing the PhD. I had very grand ambitions about it but I didn’t quite have the skills to realise those ambitions so it was a learning experience about that and I feel perhaps, no definitely I wasn’t given enough guidance by my supervisor earlier on as to what was realistic, but in a way I had great fun exploring ideas. Yeah so I learnt lots of things which are helpful I suppose but not always enjoyable.

The feeling of constraint she discusses appear to be partly understood by accepting responsibility for her own inadequacy and lack of skills but is then attributed externally to the lack of help and support she experienced from the other institutional...

This sense of inadequacy permeates her interpretation of her self identity in role as a PhD and consequently causes her to question quite often if she has the ability to do what was being asked of her. When asked what she doesn’t enjoy about her PhD, she is quite graphic about what she feels are unnecessary and deceptive cultural norms in her opinion which she says caused her intense levels of stress and anxiety.

**Researcher - What don't you find enjoyable?**

**Interviewee - I don’t enjoy erm......I think I just end up with, I struggle to make the realities of the PhD thesis meet my ambitions and that’s very frustrating. I don't enjoy that. I don't enjoy the writing up. It’s just intensely stressful and I think the viva and the whole experience of passing the PhD is highly mythologized in my department, in my university and overtly sort of treated by all PhD researchers, graduates as a kind of impossible Herculean task and no supervisors or academics are really offering sufficient advice about what it is in practice and they just foster this atmosphere of fear amongst graduates about the viva and about passing which I think is very unhelpful and intensely stressful.

She also states that the practice of writing up the thesis is something she doesn’t enjoy. Again she believes that in her experience PhD students are deliberately intimidated by the importance and difficulty of completing a PhD so in that respect she sees the university, the discipline, the whole academic institution as a burden on her. Her feelings towards her department is strained and she describes their exclusion practices as being akin to their myth making who deliberately promote PhD success as a “Herculean task” and not helping her or other students to succeed which she feels entitled to.

This experience is punctured with some more positive aspects that should be acknowledged. Her experience at university as a PhD is facilitated when she talks
positively of some of the most valuable and enjoyable aspects of her experience including meeting her partner and forming many very good friendships with “incredibly stimulating people” who compensate for her continued insistence that supervisor support was lacking and so gives her a sense of inclusion and a shared identity albeit in their mutual disappointment with the institutions treatment of them as PhD students.

**Researcher - What do you find most enjoyable then?**

**Interviewee -** The thing that I enjoy most about doing the PhD is the fellow graduates that I meet outside my department and the intellectual friendships that I have developed from them. I found some incredibly stimulating people who share my curiosity and I value them highly and it’s one of the best things I’ve taken from the PhD experiences – a group of really interesting friends who really shared that experience, the sort of ups and downs and I think my friends who were doing their own PhDs helped me more than my supervisor in the end actually and particularly my partner who’s also – who I met during the process of doing the PhD and who also did a PhD in Chemistry. We really helped each other and our intellectual sort of endeavours are very central to our relationship and that’s a really exciting and a wonderful thing. So that was very supportive.

The social aspect features widely as a positive component of the PhD students’ experiences for almost all those who are on PhD programmes. The exceptions are the lecturer who feels coerced into studying for her degree and the engineer who is studying in a management school who retains his engineering friends primarily and hadn’t at the time of our interview made any of those valuable connections with likeminded people. His primary focus was on securing a third supervisor after the first two had either not met his expectations or left for another country.

Another interviewee talks quite critically of the quality of the student community criticising those who are young and inexperienced in industry. On commencement of her studies she details the feelings of elation and excitement but explains how that is
transformed into one of recognition of a perceived “lack of humility” and over confidence in her ability to succeed at a PhD. She resents the notion that throughout her PhD experience she has increasingly been made to feel “impotent” which as a strong person is, she believes unnecessary. The same person enthuses about how “fantastic” she felt about being able to study something she is interested in.

The PhD cohort in this study share many of the same anxieties which implies that the PhD experience is widely similar irrespective of which particular institution one studies at or in which area of science. The common theme heard from people entering and remaining in the PhD programmes is one of perhaps unrealistic but very ambitious intentions to as many said “change the world” and to “make a contribution” or even to “leave a legacy” which in all the cases in this research ultimately fails to meet their actual expectations once they begin. The HEIs are both enablers and restrictors in these cases. They serve as enablers in that they are currently the only route to gaining the PhD degree and also as sites of a wide diversity of people which are accessible. They serve also as restrictors of ambitions that might not be realised in the short three or four year period that doing a PhD must be completed in. The historic expectations and quality standards laid down as befitting a doctoral programme of training dominate what can and what cannot be pursued. These are not always made clear to people until they have commenced their own PhD experience.

6.3.4 Funding Bodies

Since the Lisbon Agenda (2000) a good deal of funding initiatives has been made available to further and encourage both enterprise and knowledge through research and development. Whether one approves of these initiatives and incentives or not
their existence has altered the propensity of many people towards pursuing what they believe is important work. Whether it is research councils or development agencies in government that are behind these is of little concern, but what is evident is that there is fierce competition in applications. In this research there were two people whose research was funded by European research funds which aim to harness greater levels of science technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and economic sustainability. Another was supported by European enterprise development funds allocated to the most deprived areas of Europe through targeted financing designed to commercialise biotechnology in cluster regions. One was eventually funded by the National Lottery and three small enterprise founders were hoping and in some cases had received small enterprise grants to help them on their way. By making funding available there is a sense of facilitating projects that may not otherwise have been possible. At the same time this presents a view that both high level research at PhD level and encouraging more small businesses is worth investing in. The competitive aspect of applying to funding sources for either of these occupations is an additional area of similarity in which interviewees would have to qualify their intentions to meet a preset criteria and have it judged by others as commendable and consequently worth the investment of public funding.

### 6.3.5 Enterprise Development Programmes

Another of the institutions that act as both facilitators and burdens is the overarching enterprise development policies which have existed for several decades in the UK and across Europe. These have manifested a myriad of programmes and advisors intended to encourage greater levels of entrepreneurship and enterprise as well as better quality business performance. In this study there were some who felt they had
been enabled by these initiatives whilst some others had difficulties or dismissed them due to a lack of faith in their capacity to help them with their businesses. The impact of this was that they had been more reluctant to foster their external identity labels possibly due to lack of interaction with professionals and peers who were similarly running small ventures. When people were asked directly about any help sought whilst setting up or during the running of their businesses we see that the level of confidence in the quality of these programmes is varied.

Researcher - Did you approach any professional advisors?

Interviewee - No, none at all. Well the bank insisted on a business plan so I did that and got that sorted out. I had to do a business plan so that’s what I took to the bank but I never had any professional help from anyone or anything. I don’t think they know anything about special needs and I think that’s possibly where they fall down.

This person states that the professions people usually approach would simply not be qualified to give her any help or support but that preparing a business plan was a requirement of the bank. That was her way of legitimising her business. She is not critical of those she sees as professional business advisors but feels her own experience is superior to anything they might be able to offer. She talks of operating a business like hers as oppose to a simple business like her husbands, as a minefield of obstacles and barriers which she attributes to the clientele her business serves. This reliance on understanding her business as different to everyone else’s possibly contributes to her sense of not being an entrepreneur or at least her logic for rejecting the entrepreneur label.
Another is frustrated at her experience of having learned that small grants were being made available to people to help them start up a new business, around the time she was starting out but explains that she was “in the wrong postcode” to qualify. This interviewee regards herself almost completely in terms of her role within her family and not as a business person or an entrepreneur but talks humorously of the bank manager whom she says still contacts her from time to time with advice on pricing which gives her an infrequent sense of being a business person and a modest level of acceptance into the business community.

Neither of these small firm founders belongs to any professional business organisations which might validate their social identity as entrepreneurs. This matter is thought to be extremely important for another interviewee who argues that being involved with other new firm founders and established business owners in his early operating years was a great source of encouragement, learning and networking to help grow the business. He talks of developing his social standing within the business community as fundamental to the survival and growth of what is now a hugely successful business.

Enterprise initiatives are widely seen as positive in assisting those who would like to set up their own business or become self employed. In the North West of England there have been a great many incentives given for those that are attracted to entrepreneurship but lack either capital or training in small business operation. There have accompanied these incentives somewhat more clandestine pressures for people who have experienced long periods of unemployment to create their own job in light of the lack of employers in the region. In one of my interviews a man speaks of how proud he felt at having gained a degree but five years on he still hadn’t been
able to secure regular employment. He feared the family’s income would be reduced unless he applied for an enterprise grant of just £500 and started up his own business.

Researcher - So how long after you succeeded in getting your degree did you start your business? Were they related? Sorry that’s another two questions. I must stop doing that.

Interviewee 1 - It’s ok. No it was a good four maybe five years after I finished my degree that we started the business but that was the first eye opener. Whilst I can honestly say I am proud of having got a degree and it didn’t cost anything because we were on benefits, it didn’t give me any better chances at getting a job, and that was a real shock at the time. Still is really. The degree was supposed to turn things around for us but it just didn’t. I was really fed up actually. So there I was a graduate and still unemployable. I applied for everything that said graduate in the job spec but didn’t even get invited for interviews. No sorry there was one with (company name) but it must have come down to age then I started to think because graduates are supposed to be in their early twenties. Well I am in my fifties. So the age thing I think is why I couldn’t get a job. So then the dole started threatening me that benefits would be stopped and I would have to train, no retrain at McDonalds or something unless I either got a job or started my own business. My degree is in theology so how do you make a business from that? Start a new sect or a cult? (Laughs)

Interviewee 2 - Our business will never make enough money to keep us and the kids so it’s crazy to pretend it will but that’s what happens.

Interviewee 1 - It turns over about four, five thousand a year but that’s not profit that’s turnover. We have our costs to come off that.

This couple set up a business in response to pressure from authorities and although as they state it is not able to provide enough income for their family they continue to perform the role of entrepreneurs in spite of their misgivings. They attribute this to partly the lack of employment alternatives and partly to feeling coerced by government policy to create their own employment even if it is not financially viable to do so. With two young children the interviewees’ wife and partner had managed to secure part and then full time work at a local hospital to subsidise the underperforming business they have been running for a little over two years. The
business is a low value service firm releasing white pigeons as representative of doves on special occasions like weddings and funerals for a fee. As they explain here, it was not how either wanted to progress and as is stated; turning a hobby into a business has not been the wisest or most financially advantageous move for them.

Another person who used similar terminology of “coercion” and “bullied into it” was the biotechnology firm founder. Both these firms had been set up initially “because there was free money” and because “someone thought it would be a good fad to run with”. It is not known how much validity there is in these interviewees interpretation of how their obviously disappointing business were brought into existence but both talk of outside “pressures and threats” and of setting up their businesses “to meet targets”.

Another impact of the widespread enterprise development initiatives is the volume and variable quality of enterprise support officials. Without experience people are often compelled to seek professional support and advice of someone more qualified to ensure success in small firm start-ups. For several of the people interviewed this compulsion was a feature of obtaining grant funding but as found here, not all professional advisors act in the best interest of the founder’s wishes. Here one person tells of how she was ill advised and in her view manipulated by an assigned professional she believes was an inexperienced business advisor.

**Interviewee** - I let (name) do the, we then put in for a lottery bid, and I let (name) put in for a lottery bid and he balled that up good style. In all fairness to him he didn’t know what he was doing. I don’t think he had ever done a lottery bid and I don’t think he had the experience to do the lottery bid but erm, erm and we failed on it. Whereas now the lottery bid has gone in and I got a proper accountant to do the books, the whole committee has had an input. We’ve gone to (place name) they
have had an input in supporting our application you know what I mean because (business 1 name) has got to take off.

She continues further:

So (business name) has got to set up and as I say we needed to redo the lottery bid but as I said it’s been done with all the professional help that is needed to get it done properly.

The interviewee’s son had suspected the advisor had ill intentions she says here:-

And my son, all the way along was saying Mum, (name) is in it for what he can get. He had put down a salary for himself of a thousand pound you know, a month. He put down his own salary and he genuinely thought he’d jumped on the bandwagon, saw it was a good idea, jumped on the bandwagon and thought he was going to get... You know something for nothing and all the way along my son was saying don’t trust him this that and the other.

Her acceptance of her part in the situation is given below:

So that’s my feelings with so called experts but that is a very personal one not a general one in any way shape or form. That’s between me and him. I thought I had a friend. I genuinely, but stupidly, stupidly, I sat back and let him. I sat back and let him do it. I was quite happy to sit back and let him convince me you know I was, oh well you’ve got experience, much more experience than I have you know so now, it wouldn’t happen now.

This person felt betrayed and manipulated by the person assigned to be her individual advisor and one which left her describing him in very unfavourable terms but she blames herself when she states that she allowed herself to be made to feel vulnerable at the hands of someone her son recognised as “in it for what he can get.” As she says, this is not a very nice story but the experience makes her feel incompetent but also betrayed and deceived.

6.4 Interactional features - the impact of personal experiences

There appear to be many interactional features of how people balance their identity with what they are doing as an occupation. As identity theorists have recognised, interaction is the adjoining link between self and social identity because without
aspects such as approval, recognition, accreditation and credibility of a proclaimed identity, then acceptance and believability are likely to be jeopardised. To claim we are something requires an element of confirmation through both tangible and intangible interactive factors which are examined more thoroughly in this section.

6.5 Corrective function of new occupation

Several people in this research had taken proactive decisions to pursue their chosen occupation for reason of correcting a stigmatised past (Goffman 1963, Sennett 1998, 2006). Their new identity or outcomes of their pursuit therefore served to cleanse or correct what they perceived as episodes of misalignment with who they considered themselves to be. Some also pursued less obvious, but recognisable stability occupations where people had experience of instability both in career and domestic issues. Here we hear from someone who had as a professional actor been forced on many occasions to take employment in low value roles such as catering and hospitality which were “in between work” as he terms it. This unstable employment history perhaps makes working in academia appear a more stable option. However his actual statements refer mainly to a long held disappointment and possibly shame at not gaining a place at his first choice university almost forty years earlier.

Researcher - Are you still destined to be an academic?

Interviewee - Well I do find I am much more inclined to steer that way than I was before but of course time has played a major contribution in that. Time is against me aswell really but I think while I am very interested in academia, I am very interested in the discipline and the rigour as I say, to making sure that everything you produce is tied up and justified ontologically and epistemologically, referentially, framed in a way that is just sweet. I like that and I erm, and I think that in some ways it’s a loop. Maybe it goes back to when I was very young just leaving school. I wanted to do empirical psychology and I didn't get into the university that I wanted to get into to do that, and I expected to have got into it and I went to another university and did biochemistry because I couldn't get onto the empirical psychology course so I did
biochemistry. My A levels fitted that so I was in a sense in a square hole; a round peg in a square hole.

Researcher - Is it fair perhaps to say that your PhD is a corrective role?

Interviewee - Does it what?

Researcher - Does it have any corrective function relating to your disappointment at not getting into your first choice university? You sound a little bit bitter that you didn’t get a place at your chosen university when you were very young.

Interviewee - I am yes! I think I am. I think I’m not bitter. I think it was wrong, frankly. I’ve talked to people at that university since who are friends and who are selection tutors, and they say, we make mistakes. So I think I was perfectly able to go to that very prestigious university and I think it did, it did take me some time to get around it and I think I decided well I am going to be an actor so I’ll take a parallel course but I didn’t. I took a different course. A very different course because erm, erm, I think it was probably an escape route really. I mean I have really loved being an actor. I love performing. It is sometimes a hateful experience but sometimes it is a very passionate and wonderful experience. So, it is a corrective but I don’t think I am doing it to be a corrective.

Researcher - No, no, no.

Interviewee - Because I think if I thought in my heart of hearts I’m doing it because I didn’t get in to do psychology I’m not doing it to prove to the world. I don’t think I could accept that actually. I have thought a lot about it. It’s about combining together my different interests over a period of time of working and including time study. It’s a way of bringing and weaving it all together which will then make a powerful contribution to the organisational world through acting or through academia to organisational world.

This simultaneously validates his role in what he is doing now but also relates to his long held belief that he was in some ways cheated out of a different life by being refused a place at “that very prestigious university” and one which he hopes that becoming an academic may be able to rectify for him. Others have used their chosen occupation to escape from situation that was no longer fulfilling their expectations and also to improve their standing in the workplace where they experienced prejudice and feelings of inferiority and exclusion which one interviewee says is common in her industry for women.
**Researcher** - So the PhD, it came at a pretty traumatic time?

**Interviewee** - Yes. I was separating so…

**Researcher** - Is there any chance that the PhD is being done at this particular point in your life because of everything else that was going on?

**Interviewee** - Yes and I have to be frank about that because in a way the PhD was my excuse to walk away from the marriage and the situation in which I was in. I always knew I would do it but I had to realize that it was a brilliant way for me to say I am going to do this. If you want to come you can.

**Researcher** - Ok a final point. Your PhD sounds to be a title you are aiming for, an opportunity to free yourself from a situation you didn’t want to be in, at the same time an opportunity for you to come home to people you needed to be around at that point in your life because of everything that was going on. You always knew you could do it, this is just going to prove it, and yet you don’t want an academic career particularly?

**Interviewee** - No, no. Well maybe to supplement. I would like to make my mark with my own company but at the same time I did enjoy the teaching and I did enjoy being around university. I find when I walk into (city name) and I’m strolling around (building name) or the library or I am walking around there I, I don’t know how to describe it but I feel….

**Researcher** - Like you belong?

**Interviewee** - Yeah, absolutely, yeah definitely. I feel like so happy and so, you know my first day back, I will never forget it, getting off the train and walking up on that first day of induction and we were all in that big room and I was literally, I was so overjoyed. I was just; I was like the cat that got the cream. I couldn’t believe that I had finally done it that I had taken all those huge steps to make that huge change in my life and to be finally embarking on that final academic achievement.

The PhD is more than simply a qualification to this interviewee, it is a ticket to her freedom from a relationship she no longer wanted to continue with. It is as she puts it “my excuse to walk away”. Part of the jubilation she describes on her first day is heightened because she has returned to the university she studied at for her earlier degrees and she felt a sense of coming home and belonging which suggest a sense of accomplishment and freedom once again.

Others through their current occupation are enabled to earn the right to use the titles
they have adopted for themselves though not until they succeed in completing what they have started and another found that merely taking part in a PhD programme has already raised their profile and perceptions of respect in her workplace from those who had previously been less than considerate of them now expressing their admiration for her determination and drive.

For those who set up businesses it is a slightly different story. The person who did not complete his degree has put this aspect of himself front and centre almost. He states that once people are successful in business it doesn’t matter that he didn’t finish his degree. His constant references to being “a university drop out” has been constructively weaved into his sense of who he is but also who he was. It also plays a dominant role in the myths of entrepreneurs where academic ability is often dismissed as insignificant and unnecessary to entrepreneurial success. For another entrepreneur setting up as a sole trader was the only logical step once he realised he had been made redundant so the business gives him a corrective function in that he is at least gainfully employed even if it did come under circumstances he was not prepared for.

6.6 Perseverance and overcoming adversity

Another area of popular differences said to be associated with entrepreneurs is their unique capacity for overcoming adversity and persevering through challenging times. In this study there were equal amounts of perseverance and of overcoming adversity although under different guises and language across both groups. For the PhD students for example one experienced several supervisor changes in their first year. Another had persevered through a marital separation and adjustment to being
a lone parent and moved to a new country twice, and moved house whilst on the PhD three times. Another gave birth to a third child whilst another persevered with the constant threat of redundancy hanging over her. A multitude of other testing circumstances were experienced and overcome by people whilst they are supposed to be committed to conducting doctoral level research at the exclusion of other distractions. Financial difficulties were evident in the entire doctoral student cohort.

For the enterprise founders there were also dramatic events that occurred that required a high degree of perseverance and overcoming adversity. These incidents were for some the incentive to set up the new business as in the audio visual technicians case and the dressmakers case. Both had suffered a personal tragedy and for both, setting up their firms was a reactionary attempt to regain normality. For two venture founders witnessing their children suffer was the incentive to act whilst for two others running the businesses they had been persuaded to found was itself the most difficult and destructive aspect of their experiences. One persons' business partner conflict lasted for over five years with neither of them communicating with one another but still officially being co founders of a publicly recognisable firm.

This brief summary shows that in both occupations the people who contributed to this research showed an extraordinarily high degree of perseverance and ability to overcome obstacles, both personal and public. Consequently far from entrepreneurs having a unique ability to keep going when mere mortals would quit and give up, this research shows that there were equally numerable episodes of perseverance on PhD students whilst conducting their work as there were in those who set themselves up in business.
6.7 Problem identification as the reason for action

People pursue both of these occupations as serving a personal purpose they have usually set for themselves. What is interesting is the differences between those who identified a problem themselves and those who had a problem presented to them as something worth trying to solve. If this is the defining factor then some very important results can be drawn from the findings of this research. Of the twelve people who took part an interesting separation can be formed between these two types of people. Their occupational polarisation simply does not corroborate the findings in this small study. Of the PhD students and the enterprise founders there was a certain amount of apathy about the value of the work people were doing and confusion about how they wanted it to be viewed. When asked what they believed their work was for there were a variety of slightly uncomfortable admissions. Here is a sample of some of them.

**Researcher - How do you regard your PhD? Is it for example a personal endeavour, or a gift to society, or a search for truth or something along those lines?**

**Interviewee - Oh gosh I haven’t given it much thought but it’s a really good question, if not a bit difficult to answer. I suppose it’s more of a job or perhaps an apprenticeship than anything right now because it is taking up all my attention. I like the jealous mistress analogy actually because if I neglect it for even a few days it haunts you when you least expect it. There are many a middle of the night panic moments I can tell you. The work I’m doing isn’t a gift to society I don’t think. It’s what I need to do to be where I want to be. I might have to think that one through more thoroughly.**

This person regards his PhD work as “more of a job or perhaps an apprenticeship” that contributes towards his intention of entering academia in the future. This person has little notion of the aspect of a PhD that makes it a socially valuable venture or exercise and rejects the suggestion of it being “a gift to society” outright. People
running small ventures talked of their actions to set up and run businesses and what that means to them using phrases like “something to do” or a “hobby” and these phrases are also used by the PhD students occasionally.

The difference is shown in three cases however. For three of the participants in this study, one a PhD student and two running their businesses the problem identification and investment of their own resources into fixing or alleviating those problems becomes the detail that separates these people. Not into external occupational classifications, but individual purpose typologies. Off-the-shelf business formation and off-the-shelf PhD research show similarities and more functional purposes of private satisfaction whereas the three who are labouring on a problem they themselves recognised and decided to act on, regard it as serving wider social value. Below is an excerpt from one interview where the founder had systematically addressed three problems she had witnessed by setting up small enterprises to overcome or alleviate them.

**Interviewee brings literature for the three enterprises, including flyers, website addresses and images and other promotional material for the researcher.**

**Interviewee** - Here you are that’s (business name) named after (name) and (name). But they all, believe it or not, tie into one another. They are all born from one another. They all form part of a larger organised solution to... well they all counteract what were identified needs.

**Researcher** - Yes, and have you founded all three of these yourself?

**Interviewee** - Yes but I’ve had good people to help with (business name) but then I’ve also had some well, not so good help to deal with as well if you know what I mean?

**Researcher** - Right I see. So you started all three of your businesses when you saw the needs first hand of (daughters’ name) needs and forgive me, but she is not so unique as to be the only person affected by these issues?
**Interviewee** - Yes that’s right. I was talking to a friend and I wanted to launch (business name). I wanted to do quite a good launch right at the start and someone told me about these grants of about £1000. These £1000 grants and we were recommended so I went down that route so that’s how I applied for a grant and got it. The trouble is you are then tied to them because they have to hang on to you and monitor you. Well that just means that periodically someone checks up on you to make sure it is being spent properly I suppose which is fair enough.

She is referring here to the recent shift in enterprise development funding priorities and initiatives away from for profit enterprises to a priority for third sector or not-for-profit ventures. Having established two social enterprises prior to the one eligible for grant funding her purpose is described as solely to attempt to alleviate the problems she has witnessed for a specific vulnerable group of individuals in our society. Her enterprises are expressed as an intended solution to those identified problems regardless of their commercial viability.

From the PhD cohort the one student who regards her research differently to the rest talks of not solving a problem she has witnessed but of exposing it. Her strong feelings of injustice are very similar to the person who set up three small ventures to help other people who couldn’t help themselves. The PhD student had tried to bring the problem to the attention of those who could fix the problem but was furious when they wouldn’t take her seriously. Her PhD research serves therefore to bring this problem to the attention of those she feels strongly are behaving immorally and indeed illegally in the healthcare sector. When this person talks of all the troubles of doing a PhD whilst working and being a mother of three, she puts it into the wider issue she has developed for herself of more simply “what will happen if I ignore it and allow them to get away with it?” She believes “people might die who can’t afford to live in the right surgery districts”.

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The person who has built a large business over the past twenty years and enjoyed what would commonly be referred to as success is nonetheless equally modest about his purpose. As a quiet reserved person he is more content to apportion at least some of his own success to environmental changes going on around the time of his business being set up like increased internet usage and other factors not directly influenced by him.

**Researcher - Are your businesses in response to something or have they just come to you out of the blue?**

**Interviewee** - Well it’s been a combination of a couple of things I have already mentioned. I didn’t have a job so I became a freelance mortgage advisor so clearly that was the need to earn a few quid. Then whilst I was doing that I didn’t like the system that I had to work in with the daily chore of ringing around for information so I suppose I started to search for a better way of doing it which was the newsletter. Then in the background there was increased use of computers and someone’s dream of getting a PC into every home looked like he might just pull it off so with that there was more bandwidth in giving customers, not industry providers, the type of information directly. So it was in response to my own frustrations and the horizon looking so much more online than on the high street for instant access to information but I can’t take credit for the widespread use of computers and free internet or next to free anyway. So as internet usage has increased so have the opportunities to exploit it as we saw in the dotcom bust. Not all new ideas are as solid as they appear so my businesses tend to stick to the simple formulas. Is that what you were getting at?

**Researcher - Yes definitely. It is a curiosity about whether entrepreneurs deliberately create firms to exploit gaps or if they react to something they recognise as problematic and then set about solving those problems. The jury is still out on that one.**

**Interviewee** - Well for me it was the second one. I was so fed up with half my day on the phone to banks it warranted someone taking the initiative to save everyone working in the industry time and effort. The business evolved then in response to changes going on at the time so at some point it became a deliberate creation to exploit I suppose, but that was after about twelve years and a lot of work to keep the online version of the magazine going and growing and by 1993 it made sense to make other products available for comparison, not just mortgages. It was a long slow process in some ways but now of course journalists are only interested in the highlights and the successes. They don’t want to know about the problems faced. Problems and hard work stories don’t sell papers do they? Which other entrepreneurs are you talking to for your research?
This interviewee works hard during our interview not to give the impression of being aloof and in fact was at times quite hostile about the media attention he receives. His response to the direct either or question of reaction to something or exploitation opportunity is a measured one. He explains that his first business was started because “it warranted someone taking the initiative to save everyone working in the industry time and effort” but he also confesses that it was his personal frustration at existing practices that drove him to try and change what existed.

These three individuals stand out from the other nine contributors not so much as how people commonly understand entrepreneurs but certainly how they see themselves as change-makers. For these three, it was the problem they witnessed or experienced firsthand that acted as their purpose and drive to set about improving or at least alleviating those problems.

6.8 Summary

Having shown extensive evidence of relevant primary data gathered for this research in this and the previous chapter, a substantive and analytical argument is presented to explore the extent of their significance. In this chapter a comprehensive presentation and discussion of the findings has been put forward which draws parallels between the two groups on areas of self identity, acceptance and rejection of labels and differences between those who feel compelled into participation in either occupation, and those who are driven by a more determined vocation ‘to do something’ about a problem they have identified.

This chapter has shown how people in both roles make sense of their individual and institutional identity management through maintaining order and reason in both their
public and private sense of self and place in the world and how external forces often inhibit realisation of their desired social and personal identities. For both occupations this was a desire for recognition in a variety of areas. For some it was as competent workers, for others it was to be recognised as intelligent, or as equals to their peers. Through exploring the three aspect of social and self identity as internal, institutional and interactional we can see that a failure in any of these areas can limit peoples’ sense of self and affect their capacity to carry out the roles they occupy effectively.

This chapter has exposed the similarities and differences between two externally recognised but often misrepresented occupations. The collective understanding of both of these occupations and what they entail is believed to be easily recognisable. Both are singled out as somewhat specialised and revered. It appears from the findings of this study that the separation of these two occupations however dominantly it affects how we understand them is not upheld as a qualified division here. The similarities experienced by people in both roles are overwhelming and for many indistinguishable from their counterpart.

In the next chapter a full and frank exposure of how these results might be situated in the literature and broader understanding of what both these occupations entail is discussed. With literature from three dominant areas of doctoral development, entrepreneurship and identity to be incorporated some anomalies and misrepresentations are given as alternative theories to how dividing these two groups has served to protect mythologizing of one and almost demonising of the other through a social identity bias that stems from the rhetoric of enterprise equalling economic progress and scientific research equalling elitist institutionalism.
Chapter Seven

Discussion of Findings
7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter showed that people in both roles make sense of their individual and institutional identity through seeking to maintain order in both their public and private sense of self and place in the world. It was also shown how external forces enable or inhibit realisation of their desired social and personal identities. Chapters Five and Six have exposed many similarities and some differences between these two externally recognised, but polarised occupations. The results of the research are brought together and discussed in this chapter which covers the main findings and some important discoveries.

Entrepreneurship scholars have attempted for many years to answer the ‘why’ question posed by amongst others Baron (1998, 2004), Mitchell et al (2007), Orhan & Scott (2001) and Sarasvathy (2004). McClelland (1961) is most often attributed with recognizing that motivation is a key contributor to understanding individual actions and this argument has been developed and adopted widely by scholars in a multitude of disciplines. Other authors and a great many policymakers ask not ‘why’ but ‘why not’, or why more people don’t establish their own ventures. This may be based on the widely held assumption that more enterprise is good and that it is an instrumental contributing factor to both economic growth and positive social development. This study showed that both of these beliefs are flawed in several ways. Interviewees were encouraged to dictate what they considered fundamental to their own experiences. They talked extensively in terms of what they intended to accomplish at the outset and also for some, how their initial intentions altered once they had commenced. These modified intentions were attributed in large part to institutional and interactional factors which suggests identifying purpose is potentially
more informative than motive and corroborates Jenkins (2004) thesis that social identity includes both personal and institutional roles which are enabled or even prohibited by interactional aspects. The interactions affecting the individuals in this study are discussed in this chapter.

Two overarching themes emerged from the narratives. That has been made possible by uncovering not just ‘why’ people entered these occupations, but more specifically ‘what for,’ or what they hoped to achieve by participating in either role. This has been drawn out from critically engaging with the narratives of the interviewees in both roles and is discussed in detail in this section. What surfaced suggests an interesting advancement of established wisdom of motive being a precursor to action (McClelland 1961, Ward 2004) because in this study it was by examining individuals’ purpose and the differences between those purposes that illuminate much more than merely motive.

By determining the ‘what for’ as oppose to the ‘why’ is taken from adoption of Schutz (1967) observation that people act either because-of something, or alternatively in-order-to achieve something. It was recognised that to inquire ‘why’ someone does something limits interviewees to providing a reactionary response or explanation. To inquire what was their intention prior to commencement accommodates a proactive response as well as a possible reactive one. This microscopic deviation provides an understanding that actions are taken either because-of something that individuals have experienced or that the actions were taken in-order-to achieve this or that.
Of the many ‘what for’ declarations that were exposed in this research a division can be drawn between those that satisfy a socioemotional desire from a socioeconomic expectation (Davey 2003, Leonard et al 2005, Schjoedt & Shaver 2007). The separation of socioemotional factors from socioeconomic ones are explicated in Chapter Five and when examined thematically can be identified as serving one of three different purposes. The three differing purposes are identified in this chapter and separated into either ‘principles’, ‘profit/prestige’ or ‘problem solving’ as a result of extensive critical engagement with the narratives (Gunasekara 2007, Yow 1997).

This recognition of the important differences between these three purposes invites a proposed recategorisation and relabelling of both the entrepreneurs and the doctoral research students into four distinct types. These relabelled types are conformists, alterpreneurs, changemakers or vocationalists. This theory dismisses the established separation of these two occupations as being made up of almost two different species (see Appendix 7) and relabels them according to type finding many parallels between the broadly used umbrella terms of entrepreneurs and PhD students.

The people contributing to this research also experienced many of the same obstacles in both the practical processes and their adoption of self identity of being either an entrepreneur as we have come to understand it, or of being a PhD research student. These are discussed here as the interactional aspects of social identity.

7.1 Socioemotional or Socioeconomic Intention
Beginning with Jenkins (2004) social identity thesis and its recognition that identity is both individual and personal whilst also being public or institutional, the two prominent aspects found in this study were the differences between those who were responding to an emotional intention and those who were responding to an economic one. Whereas much of the existing quantitative surveys of both entrepreneurship activity and doctoral research student participation seek to measure ‘why’ and ‘how many’ people engage in these activities, this study has been more explicitly interested in the self identity and lived experiences of those who participate in them (Kovacs 1986, Leitch et al 2010).

The emotional or internal identity of those contributing to this study was understood to be representative of people’s sense of both private and public self (Leary & Tangney 2003, Stets 2005). Some believed they were protecting their values, or enhancing their sense of pride through their role activities. Others felt their ego had been damaged and their new occupation was intended to rectify the negative feelings they had felt about themselves in the past (Leonard et al 2005). Some discussed a preference and desire for control and wanting to belong or aspire to be someone different which are all emotional desires. The emotional aspects were understood as the reason for entering, remaining and in some cases wanting to vacate their role as an entrepreneur or a PhD student if it failed to meet their expectations (Ibarra 1999, Kronus 1976, Musson & Duberley 2007). Emotions featured more in this study than was expected or is often discussed or fully considered in identity literature (Stets 2005).
Half of the interviewees were focused on economic or externally recognised advantages such as the level of income they believed they could earn in the future or increasing their social status. Where financial resources were discussed as significant, many measured themselves by whether they could successfully access funds to commence or continue (Kim & Otts 2010, Patzell & Shepherd 2009). Seeking educational credentials for their symbolic value, is also a socioeconomic factor for those who were determined to improve their career through their activities. Many were seeking an improvement in social status which here is associated with prestige (Hesketh 2003, Huberman et al 2004, Peters & Humes 2003, Stets & Harrod 2004).

### 7.2 Interactional Features

In this section the interactional features taken from identity literature are considered. Interactions dictate whether a desired self identity can be achieved through positive reinforcement or restricted due to a lack of corroborating interactions which act to confirm self and social identity (Oldmeadow et al 2003). These are based on the concept of symbolic interactions (McCall & Simmons 1978, Mead 1962, 1977, 2002, Morgan & Schwalbe 1990) and are incorporated into the development of my attempt to conceptualise many of the progressive identity theorising.

In the *Conceptual Model of Social Identity* (shown on page 98) which was developed from Jenkins (2004) social identity thesis, the internal and external identity aspects are shown to be dependent on positive interactional features. These were suggested as including but not limited to recognition, authenticity, belonging, acceptance, access, accreditation, legitimacy and credibility.
The model confirming other theorists shows that a person’s internal or individual identity is developed and understood as representative of their values and beliefs (Gecas 1982, Hitlin 2003) and other emotional characteristics. Personal identity and what makes us all unique includes aspects such as pride (Hart et al 1987), self efficacy (Bandura 1995,1997), intentions (Morgan & Schwalbe 1990) and are believed to provide intrinsic benefits or perhaps penalties (Goffman 1959, 1963, Scheff 1988, 2000) if a person’s characteristics are deemed less than admirable for instance.

Institutional identity on the other hand is reflective of the roles people take on and the groups they associate with. Established categories are significant here as both PhDs and entrepreneurs qualify as established categories (George et al 2005, Jain et al 2009). Occupation has been shown to be relevant to not only paid employment roles but may also be hobbies and interests or activities someone aligns themselves with in an unpaid occupation (Taylor 2007, 2008). External identity provides extrinsic value whereas personal identity creates an intrinsic value through a sense of wholeness and authenticity. These rewards and benefits whether intrinsic or extrinsic are limited if the interactional factors fail to reinforce what someone perceives as a true reflection of who they believe themselves to be (Cerulo 1997, Hart et al 1987, Kronus 1976). In this section the many variants of interactions are considered from the experiences and perceptions of the interviewees in this research.

7.2.1 Recognition
Recognition was regarded as important for three of the entrepreneur interviewees. Recognition was very important to the social entrepreneur. She wants to be acknowledged as having expertise in her specific specialism and sought recognition through interactions with policymakers and other social enterprise facilitators (Birley 1985, Granovetter 1973). One was attempting confirmation of industry recognition by joining professional associations and another was struggling with recognition that his business had value to associated parties in his field (Beaver & Jennings 2005, Schjoedt & Shaver 2007).

Some of those undertaking PhD research expressed irritation at not being recognised in the way they felt they ought to be (Jones 2000). The student role they felt was not recognised in a co worker sense within the academy but was admired externally for all of those in the PhD role (Adler & Adler 2005, Harland & Plangger 2004). For several the additional responsibilities and opportunities that being a PhD research student permits of teaching undergraduate students was for a few how they retained a sense of self worth. This often compensated for what they felt is widespread acceptability of their perceived low value identity (Clark & Holt 2009).

7.2.2 Authenticity

Authenticity appears to be significant for two of the participants in this research. For one entrepreneur business founder there is a constant search for new opportunities to set up new projects and firms. As someone who has finally accepted the label of entrepreneur, he feels it is his mission in life to continually break down barriers and form new ventures. The teaching fellow on the other hand is undertaking her PhD research reluctantly, but accepts that once she can legitimately call herself Dr she
will have a greater feeling of authenticity in academia. Her status has been undermined and she now needs to regain that so her PhD is merely something she has to do to get back to who she was in effect. One person having left a successful career, talks of a more authentic self as a parent who just happens to run a small firm from home. One business founder however expresses a genuine loss of authenticity. For him to regain his sense of identity he would like to return to his previous role of being a university scientist.

7.2.3 Access

Access was raised by a few interviewees as problematic also. Two people talk of the problems they experienced in gaining access to worthwhile employment and career opportunities but one particularly is grateful for the opportunity to gain a degree as a mature student. This accomplishment gives him immense pride and as someone who admits he had a poor start educationally at school, new developments allowing people to enter higher education when they feel ready is something he is supportive of. Unlike this individual it was the lack of access to a university of choice as a young man that had clearly had a detrimental impact on another person and one which almost forty years later still plagued him with bitterness and shame. HEI in both these cases therefore acted as enabler for one and restrictor of access to the other.

Access to many different institutions was overall quite favourable but it should be noted that the study was of two occupations where people already accommodate them. If the study had included samples of people who would like to become either a PhD research student or an entrepreneur then the results on this area alone could have been markedly more complex and prominent as the high entry barrier to one
restricts anyone who does not already hold a good class undergraduate or postgraduate degree. The most often referred to access difficulties for entrepreneurship are believed to be equally restricting in terms of access to finance, networks and market (Parkinson & Howarth 2008, Thompson et al 2009, Westhead et al 2005).

**7.2.4 Accreditation**

Perhaps not surprisingly, the two people who were aiming for a career change into academia were seeking accreditation and acceptance through their PhD student occupation. More so than in the past obtaining a PhD is almost universally a required qualification for people seeking to enter the professions of lecturers and researchers (Barnacle 2005, Baschung 2010, Ehrenberg et al 2010, James 1903, Walters 1962). As with the need for recognition, accreditation is symbolic of a wider acceptance that someone is accredited with an identity. The tangibility of the PhD degree itself is evidence of this but in the enterprise founders group there are many ways that accreditation was sought and examples of where it was not. In the dressmakers case, she had come to believe that her lifetime of self developing her own skill was insufficient for her to be able to pass on her experience to others (Cast et al 1999, Hytti 2003, Thompson et al 2009, Verheul et al 2005). Without a formal accreditation certificate she was made to feel unqualified in her own business.

**7.2.5 Credibility**

Credibility was an issue that was raised by most of the people in this research. Credibility can be either felt internally making it an internal interaction and/or bestowed on people by others making it an external interaction (Smetherham 2006).
The firm founders who have most obviously pursued credibility include the sole trader who set up on his own when his previous employer absconded. Almost all new businesses suffer by their newness but his actions to continue as a freelance technician was an attempt to give his professional identity credibility through continuity. Indeed all of the enterprise founders had struggled with credibility at some point but for one person who had publicly listed his company earlier in the year, his credibility was something he felt had been most interrogated as a result of the business performance. The success of that stock market listing had raised his internal sense of credibility and encouraged him to believe he could now introduce and identify himself as a serial entrepreneur (Dew et al 2009, Kronus 1976, Ucbasaran et al 2003)

The experienced lecturer and the engineer admitted seeking credibility by conducting research so as to acquire the PhD title which would permit them to be employed as academics in HEI. The PhD credential had a functional purpose for all the others doing PhD work too. All were seeking to improve their perceived credibility whether inside or outside of academia. Although not for academic positions, the others all discussed the PhD credential as a recognised symbol of their internally believed superior intelligence and ability. Achieving the degree acted as evidence of how they regarded themselves internally.

7.2.6 Legitimacy

Finally, seeking legitimacy was evidenced in both occupations with people expressing concern about feeling as if they were not good enough to hold the post they occupy. People described instances of doubting their legitimacy in areas such
as feeling unqualified and feelings of being an imposter on occasions (Aittola 2008, Powell 1976). This recurring theme was most prevalent for PhD students who all talk of their self doubts about their ability, but also about how their colleagues in universities promote a sense of student incompetence and unworthiness (Barnacle 2005, Cherwitz & Beckman 2006). Over time many began to believe these were accurate descriptions of them as their confidence and self belief eroded.

The singular consistent detail uncovered in this research has been that those on PhD programmes in whichever scientific discipline and at whichever university, all described a deeply felt sense of inadequacy about their ability. For many it was in their ability and competence to write a thesis of sufficient quality as their successfully published academic peers (Boud & Tennant 2006, Green 2005, SRHE Report 2010). Some mentioned that they felt they “would never be able to write like” the authors that produced the articles and books they had read. Others felt intimidated by the “eighty thousand word massive contribution to knowledge thing” and for others it was the shock of having been confident and capable in their previously successful management roles that they feel dissipated once they began to do their PhD. Several take responsibility for their own sense of inadequacy and one attributes it in part, to having just read a well known book designed to help doctoral students get through the process successfully, but for this person it had a different effect and reinforced her sense of inadequacy. One PhD reflecting on their situation admits he felt close to breaking point because of his difficulties and almost quit his PhD a few months before our interview. This has been explored in the literature before (Leonard et al 2006, Lovitts 2005, 2008).
The enterprise founders also experienced times of feeling they were unable and incapable of performing sometimes simple tasks adequately to reach their goals with their ventures because of perceived lack of skill. They often felt they had a lack of knowledge or experience and general acumen in business management. This appears similar, but not as severe, as the PhD students expressed frequently.

Of the six business founders in this study, three felt manipulated into business ownership by numerous authorities and factors they feel they had little control over. By using words like “forced”, “bullied”, “conned” and “coerced” their legitimacy in role is almost nonexistent. The other three also experienced issues of feeling less than legitimate. For one it was a self recognised lack of business acumen which made her feel uncomfortable as a business founder and manager. Public perceptions of greatness troubled another business founder who had become very successful at the time of our interview but his new venture he insists could fail and so he reminisces about what he refers to as the “urgency of being broke” which was how his first venture came into being. Even being successful, wealthy and a household name doesn’t appear to satisfy his quest for new challenges and as he puts it “new opportunities to fail and learn”.

7.3 ‘What for’ inquiry as more informative than ‘why’ for identity studies

Establishing if interviewees were reacting to an emotional or an economic experience helped me to understand how their self identity was part of that recognition process. That led to further exploration of their intention for their future as oppose to judgment of their past experiences. Motive implies reaction to something (Schutz 1967). That is, if motive is explored it is similar to examining what
has happened to make a person behave a certain way or as Schutz uses it, to determine what their ‘because-of’ reason is. It carries a reactive connotation with it and is associated with the historically employed ‘why’ inquiry but cannot make allowances for any desired future intentions. To include both past and future selves, an expansion from ‘why’ to ‘what for’ is suggested as a more appropriate approach which is closely associated with Schutz’s alternative observation that people act in-order-to accomplish something specific. This led me to a ‘what for’ investigation. This may be a modest variation but showed that identifying purpose as an alternative to motivation, can lead to exploration and identification of both past events and future intentions. These proved more informative and reflective of how the people in this study, defended their actions, or in some cases, sought to distance their self identity from their practical activities. This was identified in both PhDs and enterprise founders.

Three purposes surfaced in this study by identifying explanations for action and original intentions for becoming either a business founder or a doctoral researcher. These three separate purposes for becoming either are proposed as either ‘principles’, ‘profit/prestige’ or ‘problem solving’. These three purposes reflect the self identities of the interviewees at the time of commencement but not necessarily maintained for the duration of their role, particularly if their desires and intention had not met their expectations.

7.4 ‘Purpose’ as a reflection of self and social identity

This study has looked at the identities and practical realities of what people labelled entrepreneurs and people labelled PhD research students feel about themselves
and the work they are doing, but also their perceptions and beliefs about what effect the work has on them and their sense of self. Work has often been regarded as fundamental to how we exhibit our identities to others and also, on how we form judgements about others in the same and different types of occupation (Sennett 1998, Beck 2000). Work however should not be automatically associated only with employment and paid labour and there is perhaps too fragile a distinction between the two in common understanding. Fuller (2000) takes a dim view on employment for instance or more specifically on the desire to be employed by someone else. He refers to being employed as ‘a hangover’ which reflects he feels, people’s abandonment of their own responsibility to make their future for themselves.

In entrepreneurship research specifically Townsend et al (2010) recently looked at how peoples’ beliefs about their capability affects whether or not they will set up a business and found that it was actually the journey of entrepreneuring that was fundamental to the founders. This opposes the collective expectation of entrepreneurship researchers that the outcome of rewards from business ownership is the ultimate goal. There is a sparsity of understanding of what purpose doctoral students have for entering PhD programmes with the innate assumption that if not all, then most intend to become academics and lecturers. This study found only two people out of six declared that that was their intention. The remainder all expressed an absolute rejection of working in universities after completion. This is an area that desperately needs more accurate data on the purposes of PhDs before, during and after graduation it seems.
The reason purpose is suggested as offering an indication of which of the proposed categories most suitably applies will be examined further and consideration of why it has proved more constructive than the traditional ‘motivation’ argument put forward by McClelland (1961) and many others since. Purpose is proposed as more accurate than motive if only because it indicates longer term objectives as well as short term hopes and ambitions. It may for this reason alone prove to be a more strategic indicator. Motives for action can often be fuelled by emotions such as shame, greed, envy and love. Therefore assessing purpose has a more future oriented focus and can be explored using a ‘what for’ inquiry as oppose to ‘why’ with its retrospective tendency. Of course we can ask someone why they are going on holiday to such and such a place, or why they take the train instead of the bus but establishing ‘what for’ proved more instructive than ‘why’ in this research.

7.5 Recognising purpose as fundamental to value

By examining what purpose people had, that is ‘what for’ not ‘why’, three distinctly different purposes surfaced repeatedly. These were those that are driven by their principles, those that are driven by profit or prestige and those that are driven by problem solving or alleviating a problem they have identified personally.

7.5.1 Principle purpose

Principle driven activities are socioemotionally fuelled whether in entrepreneurship or PhDship. In this study, when a person’s individual values and beliefs were threatened or damaged, this acted as a trigger in their choice of activities to attempt to restore a balance with their own self identity perceptions. This was evident in three of my research participants.
Table 7

Principles as Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protect family</th>
<th>E3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combating perceived prejudice</td>
<td>P3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment security</td>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table above one quarter of the people in this study had acted on something that had threatened their principles personally. Their principles and sense of self were tested in different ways from experiencing gender prejudice in employment or being threatened with redundancy and one of feeling that protecting their family was a higher priority than remaining in a successful career. All these were given clarity and justification when discussing what they had entered into their current occupation to accomplish. These three interviewees are from both occupations and have entered their current roles because their principles are what they deem important to their self identity.

7.5.2 Profit/Prestige purpose

Profit and prestige driven activities on the other hand are socioeconomically fuelled. There was more immediate gratification and tangible rewards expected from the activities these interviewees engaged in. One enterprise founder set up a firm with the primary intention of selling it for a profit. He termed it, “to get rich quick”. That is not to say all sought immediate profit or wealth increases but the inclusion of prestige as an equally tangible reward was evident in several of the PhDs. Some saw the PhD programme as a destination in itself and for a few of the enterprise founders to be out of the unemployment category was seen as an increase in their prestige too.
Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profit/Prestige as Purpose</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Seduced by talk of big profits      | E1  
| Funding available - free money      | P1  
| Career Continuity                   | E2  
| Funding available - free money      | E4  
| Acceptance into a Profession        | P5  
| Seeking Credibility                 | P6  

Half the people in this study mentioned either profit or increased prestige as a purpose in their current occupation. The financial incentives to commence their occupation included one very small enterprise grant and one quite substantial enterprise grant. Another was awarded a modest stipend for PhD study. One of the three, E1, admits to being ‘seduced by talk’ of a successful quick sale even before he had launched his biotechnology university spin out firm. Those who mentioned external funding support as an incentive were aware that they had no repayment liabilities for funding given to them and two of them termed it ‘free money’; one in entrepreneurship and one in PhDship.

7.5.3 Problem solving purpose

Problem driven activities surfaced in this study as the inspiration for action and experimentation. Problem solvers aspired to fix something initially but that commitment to the problem proved beneficial to overcoming barriers during the process of both occupational objectives. This was evident whether the individuals
were attempting to continue with research or continue establishing and managing a venture.

**Table 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Solving as Purpose</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fighting perceived injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for the health and wellbeing of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying secrecy as damaging to an industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One quarter of the interviewees talked primarily of the work they have accomplished and how it will be furthered and expanded in the future making their purpose one of solving a problem they have dedicated themselves to. One person has already dedicated over a decade to solving his identified problem. Another has invested five years so far and the other a willingness to dedicate the next six years to solve or raise awareness of a problem they have identified. Unlike the other research participants, these people say the work they are doing is a reflection of themselves. Even when things didn’t go very well they felt able to recover from difficulty because the work and the purpose it served was seen as their most important objective. This area is now becoming more recognised in entrepreneurship research. York & Venkataramin (2010) for instance, recently acknowledged through their own research that some entrepreneurs are inspired to solve problems they have identified.

### 7.6 Purpose Identification Leading to Personal Profiles

Having stated the importance of investigating and exposing an individual’s proposed purpose for undertaking either of these occupations, a reconceptualisation is
proposed which differentiates between those driven to work on solving a problem they have identified which I term changemakers from those who have bought a job which I term alterpreneurs, and those who conduct themselves to fit in with their peers which I term conformists. Finally, those who are determined to constantly improve their individual ability and skill or talent, I term vocationalists. These revised profiles stem from what interviewees, regardless of which external labels they were collectively regarded as felt was important to how their work impacts their wider sense of identity.

It is suggested that determining purpose may inform whether or not wider social and economic progress is intended or purely a personal one. The founder of the largest and longest established business included in this research had a rather modest explanation of why and how he first set up his business which at time of our interview had over six hundred employees. Most of the other enterprise founders employed no one.

From those who have set up new enterprises and those pursuing a PhD, there are very similar purposes given in many cases. Unemployment and underemployment fears are mentioned frequently across the occupations and disciplines but also institutional pressures to perform in a certain way are also surprisingly similar. One interviewee was openly angry at what he describes as being ‘pressured’ to form a new spin out business by his university employers when he insists he didn’t want to, whilst in the PhD contributors another interviewee is equally resentful that after twelve years lecturing experience she was also ‘pressured’ into achieving a PhD in order to continue in a university teaching job. Another interviewee made no attempt
to disguise his view that he was “bullied” into setting up a new business because he was at the time categorized as long term unemployed and another had his stable employment and perceived financial security removed in less than desirable terms leaving him little option but to continue doing the same job, but for himself as a sole trader.

This correlation is perhaps a sign of our times that crosses both those in the higher echelons of science and academia with those at the other extreme, of long term unemployed. One enterprise founder had already reinvented himself by studying for a Bachelors Degree as a mature adult. The contempt voiced by several of these people and their feelings about their current occupational circumstances was that they felt betrayed and compelled to perform roles that were destructive to them. The examples given by some interviewees in this research show contempt for their current occupational positions and why they remain very skeptical of who they are and what purpose their work serves.

7.7 Re-conceptualised and Re-Labelled

The four reconceptualised labels suggested here surfaced from how the frequent misrepresentation of an entrepreneur label adds to the frustration of identifying what entrepreneurship is and indeed what it is not (Barton-Cunningham & Lischeron 1991, Jones & Spicer 2005, Reynolds 2007). Consequently the overarching ‘entrepreneur’ label was rejected almost universally by those who were self employed or had set up an enterprise. The only person willing to accept the label explained that it was only once he was employing a large number of people that he felt qualified to introduce himself as an entrepreneur.
PhD students also rejected their label of ‘student’ and some even tried to deny being a PhD student at all, whilst another had reconceptualised his identity as that of ‘a research psychologist’ in preference to the ‘student’ identity. This suggests a negative aspect of doctoral researchers self identity that invites reconceptualising and re-labelling of PhDs. One that recognises the individuals purpose for entering into a PhD programme and what they intend to accomplish. Several recently published policy documents acknowledge that the ‘student’ identity is not appreciated by doctoral research students (Kehm 2007, Sadlak 2004, SRHE Report 2010).

7.7.1 Conformists

Identifying conformists in this study showed that they are more tolerant of limitations imposed on them by institutional barriers. They felt able to overcome barriers due to their sense of belief that they are almost destined to become this or that. This type felt a greater willingness to adapt their own beliefs about behaviours to conform to the expectations of their intended peers (Bernheim 1994). The conformists in this research were the most risk averse by their own admission and saw their immediate sacrifice as being a necessary investment in what they hoped would be a stable future career (Scheff 1988). They regarded routine and continuity as much more favourable to discontinuity and uncertainty.

Conformists are inspired by either emotional or economic purposes or even a combination of the two. The interviewees who were conducting their PhD in order to be eligible for an academic post in the future fit this label well as do those who want to achieve a PhD degree to improve their employability outside of academia (Merton
Entrepreneur conformists include those who set up (or inherit) a venture for which they have specifically trained such as professional practices in law, general medicine, accountancy, veterinary practices and other highly educated and skilled professions. The professions are most reflective of this type of entrepreneur but also the less revered industries in low value services and manufacturing would also be included. Bakers, care workers and construction workers all now have to be trained in their professions and a great number of them go on to self employment or form very small enterprises around their specific specialism.

The conformist label for this research encompasses those who have trained or are training for a particular educational and legitimising credential (Bernheim 1994, Merton 1959). Obtaining the qualification itself enables them to be regarded and accepted on completion, as qualified in their chosen field. These are types of occupations for which a licence to operate is required and consequently credentials and competence tests have to be achieved to prove these individuals are fit for office and they expect to conduct themselves with their industry norms and codes of practice (Cast et al 1999).

Conformists then have selected to invest a great deal of their time, money and effort in their own training and development so that they can acquire a specific role, or job with a predetermined associated occupational status and as they are still widely regarded as ‘the professions’ there is an element of risk aversion associated with
them. Cohen & Musson (2000) for instance, in their widely cited ‘entrepreneurial identity’ article use a sample of eighteen General Practitioners (GPs). Gibb (2002) also uses GPs in his study and includes Police Commissioners when describing entrepreneurial behaviours and enterprising activities. GPs and Police Commissioners are not typically the first endeavours that spring to mind when conjuring up images of successful entrepreneurs. GPs and Police Commissioners it is suggested here are more closely aligned to conformists or vocationalists than entrepreneurs as are many of the other professions we see categorised as entrepreneurship in the literature (Nadin 2007, Ucbasaran et al 2001).

### 7.7.2 Alterpreneurs

The term ‘alterpreneur’ first appeared to me in 2005. A UK insurance organisation MORE THAN commissioned a research company called Critical 2 Ltd to uncover what small and micro business owners felt was important. The results of that study showed that the vast numbers of people start a small business or become self employed merely as a way of earning a living, not generating growth or captaining an empire (Schjoedt & Shaver 2007). The report was entitled: *Alterpreneurs – Life Makers not Risk Takers*. It is from this report that I have borrowed the term as fitting several of the contributors to this research in both the entrepreneur category and the PhD student category. PhDship can be seen equally as an occupation one buys in order to gain prestige and on completion earn a better living, but not necessarily be committed to the grander association of demonstratively furthering knowledge for the benefit of wider society (Aittola 2008, Bent 1962, Gardner 2008).
Alterpreneurs who form small businesses or work as self-employed differ from conformists slightly in that they have significantly lower expectations of what should be provided to enable them to achieve their goal. This goal is overwhelmingly to earn a living without too much interference. This is accompanied with knowledge that their limited capacity is not a hindrance but furnishes their modest aspirations. They prefer to buy-a-job so they don’t have to take orders or be beholden to an employer (Patterson & Mavin 2009, Shane 2008) or they buy-a-job when other employment opportunities and occupations are perceived as either unavailable or unworthy of them (Hytti 2005, Jenkins & Johnson 1997). These were seen in doctoral students as well as in new enterprise founders. Several had entered doctoral research purely on the basis that the employment opportunities they had witnessed on completion of their first postgraduate degree were deemed unsatisfactory so had ‘stayed on’ in higher education hoping the situation would improve (Pole 2000, Vickers & Parris 2007).

This cohort includes people who establish enterprises and people who become doctoral students and has been recorded in the latter in many surveys of why individuals enter PhD education and training. Much of the published statistical data on enterprise activity acknowledges this development although perhaps not quite so directly as is done here by the term buying-a-job. Several of the PhD students recognised that by funding a three to six year PhD they were also buying a job. The PhD is a three, four, five or six year job that students engage in irrespective of whether they intend to later become a professional researcher or not. Six PhD students were interviewed, and only two stated that they wanted to become university academics. The PhD identity had become the destination point for the
remaining four interviewees from the doctoral student cohort but all six recognised the PhD as work and as a type or substitute for having a paid job. Half were funding themselves and half were funded externally.

Having conducted secondary research on the statistics of SMEs spanning fifteen years it became apparent that the findings uncovered by Critical 2 Ltd. appear to be born out in the calculating of SME firms in the UK as shown in detail in Chapter Four. The largest percentage of enterprises in the UK have no employees and added to those who have less than four or five (perhaps a husband and wife or parent and child), the evidence suggests that self employment and micro firm formation has become a choice a greater number of people are willing to make. They appear to be more alterpreneurial than entrepreneurial however.

Established statistical surveys that regard ‘all enterprises’ as the same has been questioned by Cheng et al (2009). Industrial and economic restructuring witnessed over the last half century has altered employment dramatically (Arum & Muller 2004). Whilst the service sectors and service jobs have grown in the UK production of goods and manufacturing jobs have diminished. There are fewer costs and restrictions involved in setting up most service businesses than there are for manufacturing where plant and machinery are required. People can very simply set themselves up as sole traders in a multitude of service sectors such as hairdressing or driving a taxi or childminding or consultancy for instance. Even if they are not strictly speaking forming a new business, employees we now know are frequently engaged on a self employment basis for the same firms they were previously employed by (Fuller 2000, Parker 2004).
Charles Handy (1989) popularised the ‘portfolio’ working model as one where individuals could retain more freedom. This has since been not only experienced by many more people but has now developed further again into not only portfolios of time as Handy predicted, but now into a newly recognised employment model which Allan Leighton (2007) termed ‘going plural’. This means some people are employed by not just one company or organisation but several. An individual may work for numerous companies and yet still remain available for work at the same time.

7.7.3 *Changemakers*

Whilst there is more familiarity with what it means to be changemakers, the term first presented itself to me through Klein’s (2003) book called ‘*The Changemakers: From Carnegie to Gates; How the Great Entrepreneurs Transformed Ideas into Industries*’. In his book Klein categorizes his 26 businessmen into five schools or more accurately, trades. They are *Producers, Organizers, Merchandisers, Technologists* and *Investors*. The first four trades would suffice but the successful investor, Warren Buffet is included as one of his examples of “*great entrepreneurs*” despite Mr Buffet not having transformed anything other than money into more money. This is highlighted elsewhere by Duhl (2000) who recognises that “*the best popular press now celebrates successful sales people and investors – men and women whose sole achievement has been to make a good deal of money*” (p2). Whilst I strongly disagree with Klein’s interpretation of entrepreneurial endeavours, the term ‘changemaker’ applies well to those I have identified as such in my small study. The results of this study concur with Silva (2004) who insists that “*it is crucial to distinguish true entrepreneurs from self employed who choose low-quality...*
entrepreneurial occupations pushed by poor labor market alternatives” and that is what is proposed here too.

Changemakers are the ones who without question have a problem driven purpose. This however may stem also from a principled purpose of feeling they have to do something to alleviate whatever problem they have recognised. It is those who have identified a problem with science, with the community, with society or anything they are familiar with personally in any realm. The difference between changemakers and the rest of us is that they are committed to improving those problems whereas the vast majority of people either become tolerant of the problems they face or expect someone else to fix them. For this reason they can have either or both a principled and problem solving purpose.

Changemakers should not necessarily be regarded as superior or more valuable in any way to the other three categories. It is perfectly possible that the problems one decides to fix or alleviate may be quite mundane or not recognised as a serious problem by the majority of people. A problem might be only recognised as a problem to the person who experiences it. It may have become commonplace and acceptable for everyone else for instance.

In this study three people are recognised as changemakers. One changed one industry and created an entirely new one that has benefited more than just the founder. Another changemaker set up three ventures in-order-to improve the health and wellbeing of others who are unable to do it themselves because of their severe learning disabilities. Finally, another changemaker through her PhD research hopes
to expose levels and frequency of (alleged) institutional corruption by one of our most highly regarded professions in the UK.

There is it seems little appetite for differentiating entrepreneurs that employ innovation and growth strategies from those who actively seek stability and prefer low risk venturing to change making (Carland et al 1984, Silva 2004). PhD students sometimes also see the research they will conduct as being a contribution to changing problems they have experience of. Salmon (1992) acknowledges and appreciates this factor from people whose personal experience and frustrations in the workplace and personal lives are what first initiate many of them to apply for a PhD. Other authors however (Phillips & Pugh 2005) almost mock what they regard as the naïvety of PhD applicants desire to ‘change the world’ with their research although concede that it is a common occurrence. This study identified one PhD researcher as a changemaker who was dedicating herself to exposing if not directly eliminating a problem they had experience of in their work environment.

7.7.4 Vocationalists

The vocationalist category includes those who are intent on perfecting their own ability. Their purpose is to be better at what they do which has an element of competition incorporated into it if only with themselves. These are believed to be principle driven because improving their individual performance at any given skill is a self satisfying purpose. This category is as likely to be as applicable to growing the largest pumpkin for horticultural enthusiasts as it is to being the best independent researcher or most widely cited author for PhD students, or being the founder of the most highly respected enterprise in any sector. None of the interviewees in this
research fell into this category but it is included as an alternative type due to an acknowledgement that some people are constantly in competition with their own performance and are driven to constantly improve themselves.

Although none of my research participants expressed a great desire to be the best that they could be at the occupation they held or were working towards, it can be assumed that there are some research students whose desire is in fact to become a highly accomplished and independent researcher. The omission of such a finding can therefore be related to the small number of contributors from either occupation.

Likewise in setting up a new venture, some people may be compelled to do so because they identify flaws in existing practices as one of my entrepreneurs did, but the motive for E6 was for his own work to be made easier for him to do. He was not driven to be the best mortgage advisor when he started out. Simply put, he decided to design a way he could operate his new venture with less effort. Vocationalists therefore are admirable in that they aspire to improve their ability and level of performance continuously much like an athlete. In this small study of just two occupations no one is identified as a vocationalist whereas a larger study might identify vocationalists as a prominent cohort. The table below gives the breakdown for those re labelled conformists, alterpreneurs, changemakers in both categories.
Table 10

Conformists, Alterpreneurs and Changemakers in both occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conformists</th>
<th>Alterpreneurs</th>
<th>Changemakers</th>
<th>Vocationalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong> PhD by Publication to keep existing HEI job</td>
<td><strong>E2</strong> Employer disappeared so he was forced to become self employed</td>
<td><strong>E4</strong> 3 Social ventures in health education to help people with Severe Learning Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong> Dr title to improve career prospects</td>
<td><strong>E3</strong> Home based craft business to be at home for her family</td>
<td><strong>E5</strong> Long term unemployed Enterprise Grant meant hobby to enterprise was his only option</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong> To become an academic like his father</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E1</strong> Spin-out formed for quick sale and because free funding was offered</td>
<td><strong>P1</strong> To avoid unemployment. Never left university because funding was available for a PhD</td>
<td><strong>P4</strong> Exposing data anomalies in healthcare to expose (alleged) corruption</td>
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<td><strong>P6</strong> Wants to change career and become an academic</td>
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7.8 Both occupations contribute to a knowledge led, enterprising economy

PhDs are uniquely privileged by society permitting the individual to prefix their name forever with the much admired Dr title. As researchers in training they are given either a broadly undefined scope for studying whatever attracts their attention in innumerable fields or they can be presented with an off-the-shelf topic that science has already recognised needs further research. Even those assigned a problem to study identified by someone else as worthy of further research are encouraged to challenge, discredit and even overturn established research techniques if an
advancement in knowledge is the result. The ethos instilled into the purpose of doctoral research is wholly to apply processes of alternative viewpoint generation and disseminate new knowledge to a wider audience (Clark 1998, Denicola 2003, Lambert 2003, Mead 2010, Usher 2002). This ethos accounts for a large part of the originality research students must achieve if they are to successfully make their own unique contribution to science and knowledge.

There is much rhetoric surrounding the need for more enterprise and entrepreneurship and both being regarded as the fundamental engines of growth through employment creation (Lisbon Strategy 1999, Kok Report 2004). PhDs don’t usually employ others or generate wealth but then the statistics in Chapter Four show that the vast majority of enterprises don’t either and those that do, employ fewer than five people including the founders. PhDs however do make a contribution to wider society by making a unique ‘contribution to knowledge’ through personal sacrifice and commitment for between three and seven years. The outcome of the PhD research students labour is their written thesis. This is then made as a ‘gift to society’ in that they are all made available to the public should they wish to view them. PhDship seen in this sense could be described as ultimately a ‘social enterprise’.

7.9 Value not Volume of entrepreneurs and PhDs

It has been acknowledged for some time that counting how many people are self employed or operating micro and small firms is only partially informative without determining if the operators are growth and innovation focussed. Critics of the statistical weaknesses are beginning to question why we count the volume of start
up firms at all which grows year after year across the UK and beyond. Cheng et al (2009) propose measuring entrepreneurship quality as oppose to quantity and are critical of the rather uninformative trend of measuring how many firms exist when they state “previous literature focuses on the sheer quantity (breadth) of entrepreneurship but overlooks the quality (depth) of entrepreneurship.” This criticism has been raised in the past (Carland et al 1984, Carland & Carland 1996, Storey 1994) but as yet large scale surveys have failed to include quality in their measurement capabilities. This small study has addressed the value over volume factor by looking at the self identities and practical processes of people occupying the role of entrepreneur.

In doctoral participation there has not yet been any appetite for understanding what doctoral students are doing PhD research for. Perhaps with the extraordinary growth in numbers of individuals conducting PhD research and other doctoral degrees, now might be a good time to consider whether determining ‘what for’ can help in the provision of support and development of early stage researchers across the UK and Europe.

7.10 Wider Impact

The findings from this research may have wider implications at micro, meso and macro level (Aguinis et al 2011) which are illuminated further here.

7.10.1 Micro significance

Changemakers, conformists and alterpreneurs are identified in both occupations but in this study no vocationalists were found. This is surprising as it was expected but a
larger study would possibly uncover people in that category. Investing many years in research training programmes at substantial cost to the individual that exists in order to develop researcher competence could be seen by some as a vocation.

Again on the micro level, all but one person from the entrepreneur contributors rejected the entrepreneur label outright. The one who was eventually comfortable with it only began to feel like an entrepreneur when he had the responsibility of other people’s livelihoods to consider. Relabelling all new enterprise founders as alterpreneurs not entrepreneurs appears to be more fitting. If they eventually begin to innovate and grow their ventures they would be inspired to become more entrepreneurial without being burdened with an idealised external identity which only serves to make so many of them feel inadequate. Other studies have found this to be true also (Down & Warren 2006, Drakopolou Dodd & Anderson 2007, DeClerq & Voronov 2009, Falk et al 2009, Howarth et al 2005, Iyer 2009).

The historical division between different methodologies with advocates falling on either side of the quantitative – qualitative divide remains. This critical qualitative study has taken the personal experiences of just twelve people who occupy one of two roles and emphasised what it has been like for them. In doing so it has concentrated on the bottom-up interpretations of life as an enterprise founder and life as a current doctoral researcher as oppose to the prescriptive top-down interpretations of what it ought to be like. Phenomenological based studies are unique in that they demand existing viewpoints are ‘bracketed’ and so free flow of what was quite the reverse of current thinking was able to be explored unjudged and unchallenged. It is only through this exposure of actual lived experiences that an opportunity to rectify current flawed top-down thinking is permissible.
Finally, the PhD as an experience was shown in this study to be a life altering event with both positive and negative effects on personal identity. The interviewees who shared their experiences with me were often made to feel inadequate and a drain on support provider's time. They did not believe they were seen by faculty or university administrative staff as the scholars of the future irrespective of which university they were studying at for their PhD. It is only through close-up studies such as this one that the real experiences as they are happening can be illuminated.

7.10.2 **Meso Significance**

The volumes of individuals coming forward to study for a PhD have increased substantially around the world so it ought now to be recognised as an occupation in itself (Kehm 2007, Lee *et al* 2009, Taylor 2007). Similarly self employment statistics indicate a historic rise in people working for themselves, many with no growth aspirations totalling several million in the UK alone (Arum & Muller 2004). These are currently regarded collectively as entrepreneurs but it is suggested here that they be recognised more appropriately as conformists and alterpreneurs. These individuals deserve to be recategorised and recognised as such for the benefit of the founders’ sense of accomplishment. The more specific label of conformist or vocationalist, alterpreneur or changemaker could alleviate unrealistic pressure to grow an enterprise beyond the founders desired level if only because universal messages about non growth enterprises remain quite unsupportive and negatively judgemental (Cardon *et al* 2009, DeTienne 2008, Drakopoulou Dodd 2002, Fletcher 2010, Verheul *et al* 2005).
The external polarisation of what entrepreneurs and doctoral students do and contribute as collective occupations is destabilised in the findings from this study. There were more differences found within (Alvord et al. 2004, Becher 1994, Farmer et al. 2009, Shepherd & Haynie 2008, 2009) than between (Clark & Holt 2009, James 1995, Shibayama 2011) entrepreneurs and PhDs when ‘purpose’ was elicited as the deciding factor. If an innovative activity can usefully contribute to a ‘knowledge economy’ or an ‘enterprise economy’ then innovation must be seen as a valuable component (Bargar & Duncan 1982, Dti 2003, 2006) and was evidenced only in a few by both those who are in PhD programmes and those who have established a venture.

Bringing both these occupations closer together could be considered a constructive paralleling exercise which might help remove established myths about nerdy scientist and wealth or profit seeking entrepreneurs having nothing in common. Both occupations are sought after in a knowledge-led, enterprise economy and both are regarded well by policymakers but both cohorts do not appear to be equally valued or appreciated as being able to contribute to a more research and development enterprising framework for Europe and beyond.

On the meso level both these activities remain valued but polarised. This study has shown that polarisation to be institutionally embedded and an artificial one. Numerous studies now attempt to survey the views of employers attitudes to both PhD graduates and established academic researchers (ESRC 2006, Davies 2002, Sastry 2004, Sastry & Bekhradnia 2007, Souter 2005) because they are viewed as intellectual but not necessarily of practical value. This study has shown that there is
more to be learned by looking at the purpose of each individual in undertaking either role because not all entrepreneurs are the same and as has been shown not all PhDs are the same either. This bridges scientific disciple divides and dismisses the private versus public interest also.

Potential exists therefore to remove some of the institutional and interactional barriers that still remain between HEIs and the wider community. Whether that is with business people or other stakeholder groups, all are prospective beneficiaries of both furthering scientific knowledge and economic growth. In order to accomplish this requires an examination of existing barriers and it is suggested here that the institutional identity of early career researchers working in HEIs is not as resistant to acknowledging they engage in enterprising and socially beneficial developments as the literature and numerous policy documents imply (Shibayama 2011, Zalevski & Swiszczowski 2009).

### 7.10.3 Macro Significance

Counting self employed and small enterprises can not reflect the high proportion of imitating small ventures that are simply set up to provide the founder with a modest income (Cheng et al 2009, Parker 2004, Shane 2008). The high percentage of people identified as conformists and alterpreneurs found in this small research project alone shows that a more sophisticated measuring instrument than volume, income and persons employed is desperately needed.

Policy initiatives which compel people to become doctoral researchers or to employ themselves merely to reduce worklessness statistics are questioned both morally
and on issues of productivity (Heywood & Southern 2006, Sampson & Cromer 2010). It has been shown in this research that those who felt ‘coerced’ into enterprise formation and self employment and ‘enticed’ into enrolling as a doctoral research student merely because funding was available or employment as an alternative was deemed unattractive all suffered great distress and anxiety (McCormack 2005, McGrath et al 1992,).

It therefore seems prudent instead to encourage people to identify a problem worth solving and provide support for their efforts in both occupations. This shift change requires a bottom-up approach where the existing top-down approach is often detrimental to innovative problem solving. The findings of this study also indicate that push programmes can be instrumental in distorting the balance for someone working on what they see as fundamental to their sense of wellbeing and identity.

7.11 Summary

Several of the findings are discussed in this chapter including the main findings and analysis and what appear to be some unexpected discoveries. These include the value of separating socioemotional from socioeconomic purpose as first discussed in Chapter Five. From recognising these two dominant incentives it became possible to examine further not just ‘why’ people took on these roles but more specifically ‘what for’ or what they hoped to achieve by participating in either occupation. What surfaced suggests an interesting advancement of established wisdom of motive being a precursor to action whereas in this study it was by examining individuals’ purpose and the differences between those purposes that illuminate much more than merely motive.
This Chapter has proposed that the simplistic motive search or ‘why’ inquiry is limited in several ways. When interviewees were encouraged to dictate what they considered fundamental to their own experiences they talked confidently in terms of what they intended to accomplish at the outset and how their initial intentions often altered once they had commenced their activity due to institutional and interactional barriers. This chapter has suggested that examining purpose is potentially more informative than examining motive.

The purposes are divided into either ‘principles’, ‘profit/prestige’ or ‘problem solving’ as a result of this analysis. This recognition of the important differences between these three purposes invited a recategorisation and relabelling of both entrepreneurs and doctoral research students into four distinct types. These revised labels do not differentiate them on activity as either an entrepreneur or a PhD student, but on their type. This consequently undermines the established separation of these two occupations as different species, and instead subcategorises the generic umbrella terms of entrepreneurs and of PhD students into four types of endeavour. These are given as conformists, alterpreneurs, vocationalists and changemakers. These four typologies cross the divisional barrier between the two externally labelled groups and in fact draw parallels between the two roles and activities as being more closely associated than is currently recognised.

Earning a living therefore whether as a conformist, as an alterpreneur, a vocationalist or as a changemaker, should still be celebrated and congratulated. I have been conscious of the temptation to make value judgements on all these types but hope I have succeeded in overcoming such temptations. All are individually
valuable and have their place in a modern developed economy. Maximizing financial reward has often been given prominence in individuals employment and status decisions but in the current recessionary climate being any of the given categories is preferential to choosing or being randomly selected not to be permitted to earn a living at all. Consequently purpose could present its own value to people and be more highly regarded, if not tangibly rewarded as can be seen in the voluntary work activities carried out for centuries by people without financial reward as the objective. For a growing number of people, working for themselves has become on the one hand increasingly feasible and attractive, and on the other hand the only alternative to unemployment and underemployment, hence the introduction of the ‘alterpreneur’ classification.

As indicated throughout the thesis, entrepreneur as a collective identity is an admired one. However admired it was not felt or accepted by five of the six people widely labelled as such. This has become a recurring issue in entrepreneurship and management research. Who qualifies for the label remains a contentious issue which will no doubt continue to raise debate and disagreement within the scholarly community and wider public understanding.

In the next section the contribution this research makes is reiterated fully. A discussion of the limitations of the research is explicated and what can be regarded as opportunities for further research and wider applicability are also addressed in the following and concluding section.
Chapter Eight

Contribution to knowledge and Limitations of the Study
Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph; a beginning, a struggle and a victory.  

Mahatma Gandhi

8.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out what the research and its conclusions contribute to our understanding of occupational choice and intended outcomes or rewards from engaging in both these roles. The findings dispute much of what has become folklore and mythology about both doctoral research students and entrepreneurs (Shane 2008, Sorensen 2008, Souter 2005, Strain & Field 1997).

The aims of the research have been to challenge ideological myths of entrepreneurs and PhDs. The findings of this study present some difficult challenges. It has become acceptable to categorise entrepreneurs specifically very broadly as almost anyone who conducts themselves in order to exploit an opportunity to make money. The problem with this understanding is that it can be argued that everyone who is also a wage worker similarly exploits opportunities and conducts themselves in order to make money by way of earned income. Consequently self employed individuals and lifestyle enterprise owners who merely intend to earn sufficient income to live on are also included in this broad categorisation of entrepreneurs (Bolton & Thompson 2003, Parker 2004). The lack of risk or innovative practices ought to negate for example sole traders and contracted workers with little or no growth intentions from inclusion in the category ‘entrepreneur’. This has been identified as a problem by researchers for many decades (Carland et al 1986, Carland & Carland 1996, Cheng et al 2009, Fairlie 2002, Hartog et al 2008) but has yet to be successfully implemented.
The entrepreneur label has also been extended to those who work in the voluntary sector and in organisations that do not have profit as their principle focus. We collectively term these people social entrepreneurs (Alvord et al 2004, Parkinson & Howarth 2008). Many of these individuals and teams of individuals attempt to alleviate problems in society with both large and small charities, foundations and other non profit making activities (Mair 2008, Wickham 2004). This aspect is believed to be of growing significance in developed as well as developing economies.

This study challenged common enterprise ideology by comparing what we have come to identify as entrepreneurs with PhD research students and examining both their practical processes and their sense of self as one or either of these occupations. This was to determine if their externally polarised division was a valid one by exploring occupants of both from an identity perspective. The findings indicate that the social identity of entrepreneurs and PhDs is rarely actually felt by those who are externally regarded in such high esteem.

8.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The findings from this research invite a clearer demarcation firstly between the people who conducted their activities for a socioeconomic purpose from those whose activities are perceived to satisfy a more socioemotional one. This initial division itself helps inform us of the reason people enter into any occupation or voluntary activity. For some it is clearly for socioemotional reasons. They may perhaps reject the concept of employed labour for personal or ideological reasons (Thompson et al 2009, Tremblay 2008). For others, their perception, accurate or not,
is often of being able to maximise their own emotional rewards which can vary in content from a desire for independence, freedom to make one’s own choices or of gaining self respect. These are different objectives to those who express more socioeconomic intentions. These people attempt to increase their prestige and consequent earning potential in order to raise their social status and perceived economic power.

Within these macro divisions there were also more targeted micro differences between peoples explanations of what they hoped to achieve by becoming and indeed being either a PhD research student or establishing themselves as an enterprise founder (Barnacle 2005, Carspecken & Cordeiro 1995). The parallels of the intended outcomes of doctoral students and of enterprise founders were an unexpected finding which surfaced across all research subjects. These then determined much more valuable information about how regardless of which path they had chosen to pursue, they could all be identified by one of three dominant purposes. These were identified as principle, profit and/or prestige or problem solving purposes. These purposes reflected their sense of intention and allowed a relabelling of individuals in both PhDship and entrepreneurship as conformists, alterpreneurs, changemakers or vocationalists across both occupations. All four have different objectives for entering and remaining in their role.

Differences were also experienced across both groups whilst enduring difficult problems within their role. Their consequent sense of self identity reflected these differences within, not between the two occupations. This recognition and explication of identifying purpose and recognising it as the most important determinate of
expected outcomes is a significant contribution to several fields including sociology, psychology, organisation studies, entrepreneurship and economics. It is also useful for researchers and policymakers interested in higher education training and development of doctoral researchers.

8.1.1 Theory development

The theory put forward in this thesis is that by firstly appreciating if people are driven to act from a socioemotional purpose they were here more likely not to be profit seeking but are of equal if not superior value than socioeconomic ones who pursue personal gain through profit or prestige or both.

Secondly having established the different purposes uncovered here between emotional and economic, the three dominant purposes surfaced as either Principles, Profit/Prestige or Problem Solving. This led to the subcategorisations of ‘conformists’, ‘alterpreneurs’, ‘vocationalists’ and ‘changemakers’. As a tentative theory these new categorisations may be worth investigating further.

Although not a radical theory, these proposed alternative labels could go some way to contributing clarity to the value-versus-volume debate in both entrepreneurship and in researcher education development. Weick (1989, 1995) encourages taking what we believe we know well and questioning if that wisdom is indeed the best and the only explanation. In this case the established wisdom has not born out as a true reflection of how the people engaged in enterprise or doctoral level research identified themselves. Building on Weick’s appeals Zahra (2007) says that theory
Proposing a theory, even a tentative one as is done here, should not seek to confirm what we think we already know because it is more convenient. On the contrary, being brave and challenging critically what we discover does not fit the real world situation is one way to further our knowledge and broadens our collective understanding. Aguinis et al (2011) recently appealed for more theories and methods that are able to bridge micro and macro situations. This study has attempted to do just that by looking at micro cases almost all of which do not corroborate the ideologies that surround the doctorate student identity or the entrepreneur identity.

8.1.2 Entrepreneur and PhD similarities explicated

With the recent development of offering doctoral degrees in enterprise and entrepreneurship, there has never been a more urgent time to establish the breadth and depth of both these occupations and remove many of the established misrepresentations that surround both. Brush (2008) examines the ‘pioneering activities’ of entrepreneurs because she explains, entrepreneurs throughout history have pioneered successfully by three strategies: visioning, bootstrapping, and using social skills. They have had to manage cash creatively, or bootstrapped and they have learned to persuade others to commit to their venture using social skills. Individuals in both my occupational divisions have conducted these activities, particularly the bootstrapping and the persuading others that their work had merit and purpose. Pioneering activities are fundamental to entrepreneurship, but they are
also fundamental to developing a scientific field which insists on discovery, new knowledge, and originality. PhDship is certainly similar to persuading others that an enterprise or a research project they have been working on for many years is worthy of acceptance and holds merit and credibility. The final thesis must in fact hold up to the scrutiny of much more experienced scholars who ultimately decide if a research project and accompanying written thesis has achieved the high standards required by the academy. In effect every PhD thesis that is produced must be in some way ‘pioneering’ also.

8.1.3 Existing Misrepresentative Labels

The results of this research require an acceptance of the inadequacy of current auto associations of entrepreneurship being only about successful business founders (Jones & Spicer 2005) and wealthy tycoons (Klein 2003). This auto association is shown here as misrepresentative and completely misleading (Wickham 2004).

I have categorised the people who contributed to this research as conformists, alterpreneurs, vocationalists or changemakers. Similarly annual collection of statistics for successful PhD completion rates is informative on volume but gives no indication of the quality or value of research being conducted in HEIs across the world. There are more doctoral research students now than at any time in history and that trend is expected to continue in the future but we know little if anything of what these highly competent individuals will do with the knowledge they produce. The assumption that all are hoping for an academic career was not verified in these results or in some other studies (Secrist & Fitzpatrick 2001).
8.1.4 Practical Process Differences: Time and exit points

There is a recognised need to highlight that there are differences between PhDs and entrepreneurs but the most significant difference is in fact time. PhDs often felt they were working to a strict timeframe which HEIs now enforce of four years maximum to completion. New ventures are considered more reputable and accepted as credible when they have been established for much longer. So in one cohort you have the race against the calendar and in the other a desperate desire for continuity where credibility is garnered through that longevity. Historically the PhD was much less time sensitive but with recent European interventions the tight timeframe has been implemented forcefully by all HEIs with institutional penalties attached if the four year deadline is not met for all PhDs or the part time equivalent (Baschung 2010, HEFCE 2001, 2004, SRHE Report 2010).

8.2 Limitations of the Research

Stages of study for the PhD cohort are the first limitation which must be acknowledged. First year students in this study felt quite overwhelmed by the intensive schedule most UK PhDs and other doctorates are subjected to during their early research training year. Students in their second year on the practical side talked of feeling neglected by their university. This was frequently attributed in part because the intense first year training had been successfully completed the reduction in contact time with others left many with a sense of bewilderment and loss of social opportunities which certainly affected their self identity negatively. Third year students had a different focus again as they were struggling with the pressure to complete on time and pass. All these institutional aspects clearly affected how the
PhD student interviewees understood both their sense of self and the value of the work they were conducting.

From the enterprise cohort the selection of research participants is the most obvious limitation. Some had been operating their ventures for very short periods and others for over a decade. Their adoption or rejection of their external identity as collectively regarded entrepreneurs therefore may have been reflective also of how long they had occupied the role, but more specifically six completely different founders may have had completely different experiences.

### 8.2.1 Interpretive research weaknesses

Some theorists challenge the validity of interpretive studies as rhetoric (Jasper 1994, Paley 2005) insisting that although they make no claims to be generalisable, they tend to conclude with generalisations. Others insist subjectivist methods are incredibly valuable and that their use in management research is still under represented (Endres & Wood 2007, Fraser 2004, Garcia & Hardy 2007, Gartner & Birley 2002, Johansson 2004). The researcher’s interpretation and own experience of both occupations may have had an effect on what was divulged by the interviewees. As someone who was an existing PhD student at the time of the research and who has a history of entrepreneurial endeavours prior to entering the PhD programme, it is possible that interviewees might have seen me, the researcher, as an expert and tailored their responses accordingly. The research participants were selected because of our prior relationships and because I wanted to achieve the maximum variation sampling possible. I was therefore purposive in selecting those who I knew would not be intimidated or threatened by me inquiring
about their sense of identity and who could explain exactly what they hope to accomplish by becoming an entrepreneur or a PhD research student.

The caveat to such critical comments of including individuals you have prior relationships with is that it was felt that because they already knew and trusted me I was able to induce a greater degree of honesty and reflective consideration from the interviewees. It was perhaps because I knew the majority well that they were conscious their stories could be corroborated quite easily or explored further when areas unknown to me arose. In this study, knowing all the interviewees quite well was regarded as a methodological strength, not weakness. Inquiring about self identity and personal experience of their occupation is a very personal and sometimes uncomfortable area as shown in the experiences they shared with me.

### 8.2.2 Size of the study

This research was a small study of just twelve people, six in either occupation. Therefore the results are not presented as generalisable across the whole of society due to the small number of participants. Twelve others might have completely different experiences and so would have produced quite different results. The theory put forward from these findings and analysis does however merit further testing and either confirmation or refutation with a larger number of participants. The interviewees were also all located in the North West of England but that is not thought to have had a limiting effect on the study because both these occupations can and are carried out by people across the globe.

### 8.3 Future research opportunities
The theory put forward from the findings of the research could be tested using large established questionnaires. It could be tested through cross cultural surveys similar to the GEM or the TEA surveys for entrepreneurship and introduced into PhD surveys also. It might be helpful to determine individuals’ purpose at the outset and throughout their research student experience.

Purpose as an under researched indicator could easily be introduced into questionnaires in GEM for example, but also into the application process for future students coming forward to undertake PhD research degrees. An open ended ‘what for’ type question might be included. The HESA survey and others emphasise or at least provide the approved option of ‘Career Advancement’ when inquiring why people entered doctoral training programmes which could be omitted as it is somewhat loaded with acceptability.

The universal assumption that all PhD students enter research training so as to become an academic is proven false in this study and needs to be tested with a wider population both prior to commencement of doctoral study as well as during participation of the PhD experience.

The ‘student’ label was rejected by almost all these highly educated, highly capable individuals. There is now a greater need to address this labelling barrier as already noted earlier, recent studies insist that in Europe at least, doctoral students prefer to be collectively known as ‘early career researchers’ (Aittola 2008, Bazeley 2003, Kehm 2007).
There is scope to test my theoretical proposition that identifying an individual’s purpose can separate those whose actions are fuelled by principle, profit/prestige or problem solving and so be a basis for providing more targeted support and incentives according to recognised purpose. It is suggested that my theory could be tested as easily using quantitative measures and methods as it could in qualitative methods as employed in this research.

8.4 Conclusion

This study challenges common knowledge economy and enterprise economy ideology by comparing what we have come to casually label entrepreneurs with PhD research students examining both their practical processes and their sense of self in one or either of these occupations. The aim was to determine if their externally polarised division was a valid one by exploring how both are experienced from a practical process and self identity perspective.

An inductive approach was employed to illuminate its central questions about what people hoped to achieve by entering and remaining in the practices of PhDship and entrepreneurship. This approach enabled exploration of perceptions of self and role in a small sample of people of different ages, gender, class, ethnicity and economic standing of two externally polarised occupational groups. This interpretive method permitted a compare and contrast of both similarity and difference between the two cohorts from an individual perspective.

This research was concerned with uncovering both the practical processes and self identities of people participating in these two oppositely presented occupations. The primary data was scrutinised rigorously through critical narrative analysis. This
relatively recent form of analysis proved valuable both for analysing micro aspects of experiences and equally the meso and macro patterns that emerged from studying secondary data relative to the occupations under investigation.

The findings present challenging conclusions and some opportunities to further our understanding of what people in both roles experience and how that in turn affects their sense of self. The artificial polarisation of enterprise founders and PhD researchers as being two different species is dismissed. It was found that they share many experiential similarities including a shared sense of isolation, uncertainty and self doubt. The differences within each cohort were indeed greater than the differences between them. The only significant difference between the two groups was in their practical process in relation to completion time or exit point. One group has to work to a strict four year deadline, whilst the other desperately seeks to increase their credibility by operating indefinitely with no predetermined exit point.

The areas of similarity were identified by analysing the data through a ‘what for’ filter as oppose to a ‘why’ filter. This highlighted how individuals in both roles can be reconceptualised and relabelled according to their identified purpose. Purpose is believed to have been a significant indicator of what people entered and remained in these roles to accomplish. It is consequently suggested that the labels of conformists, alterpreneurs, vocationalists or changemakers offer more accurate depictions of not only how the interviewees regard themselves, but also how they can more clearly be identified by level of intended objectives.
## Appendices List

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Appendix 1

Excluded Occupations
### Excluded Occupations from the entrepreneur category

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<th>Acupuncturists</th>
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<td>Animal breeders</td>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>Arsonists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>Assassins</td>
<td>Auctioneers</td>
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<td>Bailiffs</td>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>Bank Robbers</td>
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<td>Barristers</td>
<td>Beauticians</td>
<td>Beggars</td>
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<td>Builders</td>
<td>Burglars</td>
<td>Buskers</td>
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<td>Butchers</td>
<td>Café owners</td>
<td>Car Park owners</td>
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<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>Carpet fitters</td>
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<td>Chemists</td>
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Appendix 2

Mini Biographies of Interviewees
Mini Biographies of interviewees

PhD research students

P1
HEI Teaching Fellow with over a decade of experience. US born. Married with 2 children. Aged 44. Doing her PhD by Publication. Commenced 2007 when employer of 3 years indicated without a PhD she would not have her contract renewed. Fees wavered. Heavy teaching load. Part time student. Reluctant PhD. Funding for her teaching is tied to her completion of a PhD. Topic not her first choice as an economist. Topic is anthropology of bilberries. University funded

P2
Professional actor with national success. British. Aged 58. No children. Part time PhD. Lives in Cambridge where everyone has a PhD he says so he won’t stand out there. Topic is an investigation into how acting can benefit business. His PhD is his legacy explained as a substitute for not being a father. Sees acting techniques as key to improving business performance. Is irritated that actors and corporate consultants aren’t seen as equal professions and intends to change that. PhD will give his views credibility. Self funding

P3
Never left higher education. Engineering degree then management degree now PhD in strategic management field. Intends to become an academic when he completes. Avoided topics he is passionate about for fear of contaminating his values by finding something he disapproves of. Maths and History are his first loves. Had terrible experiences with supervisors. Name then Name. Father is academic. One of four children. Lives with parents. Self funding

P4
Aged 34, married, three children. Clinical researcher for public health sector organisation. Senior Managerial level. Part time PhD. Research that is studying datasets of UK families health needs. Wants to expose their weaknesses and corruptibility by GPs and PCTs. Crusader element to her interview with whistleblower tendencies. Employer sponsored research.

P5
Biochemistry PhD. Full time. Age 23. Never been out of education. Straight from first degree to MSc then PhD. Lives with parents. Unmarried, no children. Doing PhD because funding was available. Considers it a job. Studying same thing she did at undergrad. Doesn’t get on with rest of team. Very unhappy. Affecting her health. In her second year. Describes a clash of values because her biochemical research is in developing something environmentally damaging she believes. Wants to quit.

P6
Aged 36. Recently separated. One child. Biopharmaceutical consultancy background. Full time PhD. Reason for PhD was to escape ex husband and USA. To come back home for a reason. Wants credibility in the workplace. Ego driven. Studying finances of start ups in her area of biopharmaceuticals. Almost quit several times due to financial constraints or family difficulties. Working outside academia to pay PhD fees and expenses. No intention of being an academic but admits she may have to. Self funded
Enterprise founders

E1
Over 30 years as senior nursing professional. Married. 3 grown up children. 2 grandchildren. Family crisis caused her to resign and set up her dressmaking venture. Reason – to be with her family. Business has £14k t/o with £4k net profit. Lifestyle and hobby venture. Sells on eBay and direct to clients.

E2a & E2b
Married couple. 2 children. His age 50s. Recent Graduate. Unemployed since leaving further education so feels coerced into starting a business. Reluctant business owner. Turned hobby into a business because £1k grant funding was promised to start up a new business. No intention of growing the business. House husband. Says children come first. Wife works F/T to subsidise the business. T/O less than £4k pa. No profit and not yet reached breakeven point after 3 years. Relies on welfare benefit to get by.

E3
Identified a problem and began working on a solution in 1993. Started small by producing a pamphlet, selling it to interested firms for £11 a month. This was the start of the price comparison culture. With a partner they designed a web programme and built the business from there. The business took off but his partner disappeared. The company went public in 2007. Over 600 employees. Has set up another 3 firms. 2 not revenue ready yet.

E4
Married. 2 children. One with special needs. Age 50s. Three business started to cater for people with learning difficulties. Health education project. Social events project. Dating site. All motivated by her experience of her daughters condition. Lottery funding secured for health education project in 3rd year of development. Others self funded. Three social enterprises with profit not being the motivation.

E5
Married with grown up children. Biotech scientist. University spin out firm in the field of DNA diagnostics. Not an original business but felt pressured by his university to set it up in their incubator. Funding from Europe. Expects that to be withdrawn this year. Business 5 years old. One employee, his wife. t/o less than £10k pa. Not making enough to pay themselves a salary. Publicly sponsored venture.

E6
Appendix 3

Samples from PhD Survey as Secondary Data

Chemistry

English

Molecular Biology

Sociology
Know yourself and know what doctoral study entails

12.4% of the chemistry students surveyed offered advice about this topic.

I think a lot of people come to graduate school because they either don't know what to do next, are not ready to get a job, or think that they want to be a professor (and that is all they know if they have been in school for their whole lives). I would think clearly about why to go to graduate school and then get the most out of it by planning and meeting goals.

I have started to think that graduate school should be treated more as career development: What skills do you have? What skills do you want to develop further? What sort of career do you want to have?

Be very thoughtful and do your homework before going to graduate school. I had very little idea what academic research was about before I entered the program. Fortunately, I learned quickly and managed to adjust before I dropped out, but I think the experience could have been much better and I could have learned more if I had done my homework before entering.

Know the professors in the program you will apply to and select your advisors rationally. I chose much more haphazardly. Fortunately again, I chose a wonderful advisor who helped me grow as a scholar and a person, but it could have been much worse.

I think I would work very hard to describe what the day-to-day experience of a graduate student in my field. I think students entering the program are always woefully under prepared for what is to come. In particular, I think not enough is done to point out that apart from questions about intellectual ability, graduate school is an extreme experience that places large emotional demands on the student.

When I see students choosing research projects I don’t see them addressing these things like: How quickly do you need feedback or measures of your progress? Do you rely on external interest in your work to motivate yourself or is it enough that the project be worthwhile in some abstract sense? What will pursuing this project look like on a day-to-day basis? Do you enjoy that as much as you like the idea of the project? Do you like to work collaboratively or alone? Would you rather work on several smaller projects or one large one?
Know exactly why you are going to graduate school. Do not use graduate school as a method to keep from entering the real world. You will waste your time and the department/faculty's time.

Constantly reiterate to yourself your motivation for being in grad school.

Make sure that you really want to go to grad school and that you know what you are getting into before you start.

Make sure that you know the environment of the research group you are joining—in addition to liking the research, you must like the people in the group as well as the advisor.

Be very certain you want to be in graduate school. People who are most successful in grad school have a reason to be there, i.e., they know what type of job they want and realize the degree is necessary.

Graduate school is not difficult, but you must be willing to put in the effort to get through. It requires an immense amount of self-motivation.

I've seen people enter graduate school for wrong reasons. Basically the wrong reason to embark on a course of research is in the hopes of getting a better job. If future jobs are an important issue, students should be shown that a master’s is the best route. A Ph.D. is really demanding and can be a very frustrating course of study. It should only be undertaken if you really enjoy research. A Ph.D. does not guarantee a job.

Don’t do it. The hours are too long. The training period is way too long and you just get really tired of being this poor. In chemistry, the job market is okay, but not great. I love chemistry, but I just am not sure that it is worth this.
Understand the job market

33.5% of the English students surveyed offered advice about this topic.

Know exactly what you want out of your degree. If it's a career in academia, take time to assess the possibility of never finding a full-time position. Will the degree still be valuable to you if you don't get the teaching job you hope for? What else might you gain from your grad program?

If you're not absolutely sure you're in the place you want to be, with a strong support network around you, think about alternative career paths once you reach the master’s level. The rewards, at least in the humanities, are not commensurate with the pay we receive, nor job prospects, nor the sacrifices we make to get the Ph.D.

Knowing everything that I know now, I would recommend that the number of available slots in graduate school would be so small that there wouldn't be any need for more advice. Graduate school in the humanities is a low-rent economic and employment system that is in crisis. It demands far more graduate students than it can possibly support as full-time career teachers. The job itself is too demanding for the pay scale. The emotional environment is often terrible, often much worse than real world jobs (in many of which I have worked, before, during, and after grad school). Grad school does create expectations that the professors have to know in some sense are false. If there are 17 people admitted each year and only 2 to 3 jobs being found, there is a problem.

Consider carefully the state of the academic profession before spending years in penury as a graduate student. If there's anything else you would be happy doing, do it. If you decide to stay in the graduate program, do it--quickly. If there's anything you would be happy doing with your graduate degree besides being a college/university faculty member, do it.

Keep non-academic career options open. Use summer vacations and winter breaks to explore career opportunities and to develop life skills rather than use the time off simply in academic pursuits.
I would strongly advise students who plan to pursue teaching careers to have a Plan B in case they cannot get an academic job or if they should decide that academia just isn't what they really want after all. Holing up in a Ph.D. program in the humanities is the perfect way to insulate yourself from alternative career opportunities. Faculty members in my program acknowledge that there is a job shortage and make this clear to incoming students, but do precious little else to encourage students to consider just what else they might be good for outside the ivory tower. The longer I'm in this program the more burned out on academia I become and the more I wish I had done more to prepare myself for alternatives outside of college/university teaching.

The job market is very bad in the humanities, and although many incoming students are vaguely aware of this fact, I think more should be done to really let people know the current state of employment in academia. I don't think it is wise to go into a Ph.D. program unless you are really committed to a long job search (3-5 years at least), and the possibility that you won't ever get a job in your field. I would still have made the choice I did, but I think a lot of students are fully aware of the realities of the academic world when they enter graduate school. They just know that they are good at being students and want to continue being students.

Carefully research job opportunities in the field before you invest so much time and lost income. Be a good consumer--what is the department's placement record? How do they help students get jobs? Most people get Ph.D.'s because they love teaching and/or research and expect a career in it. That's not the case for a large percentage of Ph.D.'s--even from “top 10” schools. Departments need to take more responsibility for this: being clear about the situation during recruitment, lowering the number of incoming students, etc.
Select your advisor carefully

43.1% of the molecular biology students surveyed offered advice about this topic.

Be careful about choosing an advisor....Your advisor makes or breaks your career. Talk to previous students about advisor and lab with whom you think you would like to work. Make sure your prospective advisor has a good track record, has graduated many students in a reasonable amount of time. Do a long rotation in the lab you think you would like to do your research. The dynamics from lab to lab are very different. And if you decide to work in that lab, the environment will affect your work. Make sure you can survive in the environment of the lab you choose. Simple things like radio stations and type of jokes told will become important if you are to stay in one lab for 5 or more years.

Be extremely careful selecting your advisor. Make sure they have the following qualities:
1. successful graduation of students from their lab
2. good funding
3. good publication record
4. good recommendations from former students
5. good people working for them
6. time to meet with you

I have learned that the two criteria I used for selecting a major professor to work with were not the best criteria. I selected the lab I chose to enter based on the availability of funds and my interest in the research project itself. I should have selected the lab I was going to enter based on the PERSONALITY and MENTORING capabilities of the major professor. To work for someone who truly has no interest in a graduate student's personal growth is very disheartening. Learning about science is difficult enough and the learning process should not be burdened with having to live (yes, lab work requires a lot of living in lab) with someone who really doesn't care about you as a living human being.
For ethnic minority grad students, talk to your advisor about racial issues. If he or
she says race issues are unimportant or not issues for scientists to discuss, leave
hastily. This person probably doesn't have your best interest in mind.

Find a good advisor who cares about you and your work who will take an active
and positive role in getting you successfully through grad school. The topic is not as
important as your advisor.

Lay out your plans for you thesis as early as possible; certainly by the second year.
Have more than one project running right from the start that might turn into a thesis
project (not every project will work). Write the introduction to your thesis by the
end of your second year.

Meet regularly with your advisor AND other faculty about your work/ideas (at
least once a year but more is better) you need input from as many of your committee
members as possible as early as possible. Be up-front about your expectations from
them and from your time in grad school. I want to graduate by the year 2000, will
this plan of action get me there?

It doesn't matter what research you end up doing, a bad advisor can screw you over.
The personality of the potential advisor and a proven track record are much more
important than your actual work. They have complete control over whether you
succeed or fail. For one person to have this much power over you is very scary, so
choose advisors carefully and negotiate a thesis project before you formally enter the
lab.

Find out as much as possible about the style of your advisor, especially from
students who have recently come out of the lab (gotten their degree). Also, try to
have a very clear understanding with the advisor about expectations for what
constitutes an acceptable thesis, and the type of professional the advisor wants to
mentor (i.e., teachers, researchers, etc.). Try to form a close relationship with a
tenured professor outside of your thesis committee, someone who can give unbiased
professional advice and help mitigate conflicts with the advisor.

Know yourself--strengths, weaknesses, motivations--and choose your lab according
to your ability to learn from that advisor in that environment, NOT on how
appealing the research sounds.

Maintain high expectations for yourself and don't accept your advisor's advice as
absolute truth.

Establish a relationship with a mentor ASAP!, use senior graduate students as
guides.

Insist on regular and constructive evaluations of your work and progress.

Read. A lot.
Talk to people about your work and about theirs, and don't be afraid of wasting their time, because they can always tell you to go away.

Choose an advisor that you have a good relationship with, and a lab that fosters a helping attitude. Whether the advisor has 6 publications in the last year or 2 doesn't matter as much as their record for training students and being a good mentor. Don't be afraid to take a chance on a younger faculty member. Most of the students that changed advisors started with a well-known faculty member, but ended up with someone who was a better mentor.

Do not be naïve. Realize that faculty have a different set of priorities, i.e., they need to fund their grants, not get a degree and a job. It is not in a P.I.'s best interest to have a broadly-educated, interesting person in their lab if they can not produce. So be sure to sit down with a prospective advisor and make sure that both of you will be happy if you join the lab. Discuss how long you will be there, how often you will meet, and your project, i.e., what is the goal and how it will be reached in detail.
Understand and get funding

15.1% of the sociology students surveyed offered advice about this topic.

Consider funding very seriously when making a decision about which graduate school to attend. This is a long process no matter what, which means many years of just scraping by -- the more money you can get guaranteed the better.

Get enough financial support so you can progress through dissertation stage without conflict/distractions.

Ask direct questions, before choosing a school, about how they get funded to do fieldwork/archival work. Most who utilize quantitative methods have much easier access to data for their research. The rest of us (and there are a significant proportion of us across the social sciences) need outside funding. So, if there is not a lot of cash available at the school you are considering, ask directly about the kind of support and mentorship there is for writing grant proposals.

Secure fellowship or scholarship funding.

Think seriously about what being admitted without a financial commitment will mean to you financially as well as how it will affect faculty's perception of your potential.

Save up some money first so that you have cash reserves to fall back on and can attend professional meetings as you wish.
Appendix 4

Transcript of One Entrepreneur Interview
Entrepreneur Interview Transcript

So you are in what type of business would you say? Audio visual?

Yeah (name of firm) audio visual. Soon to be replaced that card unfortunately

Ok I think I picked one of these up actually

Phone numbers, phone number's changed

Oh that's comforting

Yes I've had loads of hassle over my mobile phone number

Ok, ah right ok, a little bit of background about yourself first, family circumstances, work experience, education that kind of thing

Oh right ok, I'm married 18 years just gone; Two children 16 year old and a 14 year old this month; I live in (Borough name) I've lived in (Borough name) all my life, erm my employment background erm has been pretty, pretty consistent 'cos I've not had many jobs, worked for a company called (company name)this is yonks ago, which was a little camera shop on (road name), then I left and went to work for (company name) the telly company, I quite enjoyed that, that's when (company name) was a small independent company, then I left that and went back to the first company which was then called (company name) Audio visual. Ever heard of them?

Nope

Oh that's good, erm and basically worked for them, worked for them up until they went into administration

Oh?

In February

This year?

This year

Oh right

So it's coming up to 22 years, and erm, so my, my job role there, we did change, quite quite dramatically over the years erm 'cos on my, my immediate boss was the owner of the company (boss's name) he erm, he basically did everything, but my main responsibility was looking after the hire and conference work that the company used to do, that I used to do for the company erm which amounted to about half a million pound a year plus I had a team of about 8 people to supervise

8 or 80?

8

8 yeah

8
I was going to say

But I’m afraid all that’s erm all that’s gone now and erm

Do you know why in went into liquidation?

Because he couldn’t afford to pay redundancies so he kicked us all out

Right I see

And within two hours of going bust, he set himself up again

Ok

Exactly the same trading name everything, just a different set of people so there’s a niche in the market on the Wirral now where he left ‘cos he, when he uprooted the company he transferred it to Manchester and he had the cheek to say he never knew it was coming. The more we now know about what had gone on, the more it was so obvious, no way could he have done it quickly. He had to have had it planned.

So his actions, rightly or wrongly created a market in the (Area)

Yeah erm for a small AV company, I had no choice ‘cos it’s the only job, it’s the only job I know

So tell me about the business?

So yea so I formed (company name)Audio visual Ltd on the 1st, it was registered on, in March but started trading on the 1st of April first part, the vast majority of business that I’ve done so far is just, just on my own database you know from customers that I’ve known from my previous job erm and it’s been quite reasonably healthy, its allowed me to invest in the company, its allowed the business to able to be self, self supporting

Already?

Yeah, I didn’t have to put any money into it, I haven’t had any wages out of it yet bar a very small amount of money which is only like you know, tax allowance per month erm but it’s been self, self funding, the time turned over about 55 thousand since April and I’ve got another 30 odd thousand pending over the next couple of months, my target is to get to 100 thousand by Christmas

Wow, so you’ve managed to bring erm business from your previous erm contracts I presume

Yes

New business? Generally

New business, yep there has been a fair bit of new business aswell yeah, I’ve managed to obtain some more for next year, a company called (company name) it’s not until April, not until April, but at least they’ve confirmed it. It’s quite an, quite expensive job erm, new business. Oh yea h(company name)

I don’t need to know the names
There’s a fair bit of new business ticking over. Erm but as soon as I break out into the day to
day hire market, where at the moment, well to date I’ve only been concentrating on the
larger conference jobs where the customer needs to talk to you know a large group of
people so they hire a hotel, similar to last night, in fact last night...

Was that yours?

No, well last night was a little bit disappointing even, it was a good night, it was a very good
night but Mike down stairs erm said to me at a (company name) job that I did in May, that he
wanted exactly the same as what we put into (event name) at the Village Hotel. So that set
me up and going to get organised for that size of job in readiness and, well, it never
materialised. I felt a little bit ripped off to be honest. They used their own projector and the
hotels PA system. So I was a bit disappointed last night to be honest.

Ok I am a complete idiot. I use AV equipment but you said you were concentrating on
the daily hire?

Yes there is the, I class it as the conference work and the hire work. The conference work is
you may say you have got to talk to 100 people in a hotel and I supply you with all the
equipment. Anything that allows you to do that. So all the client has to do is sort out the
hotel side. I don’t get involved in the catering or anything like that on that side of it. So I deal
with all the AV equipment. You then come along with your stream of guest speakers. You
collect all their pen drives with their PowerPoint slides on them and I collate them together
and I put them on the laptop. I put them on a second laptop as a backup then I do all the
audio visual work. You just concentrate on giving your invited audience your presentations
and I control all the media stream and the other side of it, the day to day hire stuff is you tell
me you have got a meeting in Manchester for instance, you haven’t got a PowerPoint
projector in a meeting room like this. I hire it to you for a day. So it is equipment hire. And
you either, either I deliver it to you or you collect it from me and bring it back when you have
finished.

This is not cheap equipment that we are talking about is it?

No it certainly isn’t. I’ve got, I’ve spent about seven thousand pounds so far on equipment
and there’s a fair, a fair bit more to go. It’s mainly PA systems, maybe mic’s. The sound
systems are really important too. There are potentially lost treasures when people speak to
large audiences so sound id paramount, perhaps more so than visual presentation material
that can be forwarded or downloaded later but the voice has to heard clearly so sound
equipment is very important to the clients.

Ok so what was the clincher that made you decide to become a business owner?

I’ve always wanted to do; I’ve always wanted to go, to be self employed. When I worked at
(company name) because I, my position in the company the only way for me to have got
anywhere was for me to have bought that company from the guy and that was on the cards.
So that’s why I feel you know, a little bit bitter towards this guy. So I kind of realised that was
probably, well it was going to be difficult to do, because of the amount of money I would
have to raise then the only solution would have been to have gone self employed. But the,
the, the thing that was preventing me from doing it was giving up basically a thirty thousand
pound job. It is really difficult to walk away from that. I guess it was less, I wasn’t on thirty I
was on twenty five but it would have been the same on say eighteen thousand the same
would be it wouldn’t be easy to walk away from it. However because it happened so quickly
and I had a fair amount of work already pending at (employers name) when I eventually
walked out the door at (employers name) which was a couple of days after it had gone bust,
and I stayed on, unpaid helping to tidy things up. That was when we didn’t know what was
going on, so anyway, it just happened more quick, more quickly than I wanted it to do, wanted it to happen. Had he, had he, had he let me in on what was going on it would have been so much easier for him and for me.

The other people who were made redundant at the same time as you, are you still in touch with those?

Some of them I am yes.

Are they professional contacts as well, even if they are not working perhaps it is a skill base that might help you out?

Definitely! Yes. One of the girls went off to a company called (name) I see her from time to time. A few other people are in totally unrelated jobs so.

Is there a skills issue for this market, this industry that you have set up in?

Erm, do you mean as an individual getting trained?

Yes

Erm yes there is. Yes. The only way a person can get trained in how to do anything is and even my, my, my skills are limited. With audio visual you either, you tend to favour either visual equipment or audio equipment. Never the two really come together or some people will like lighting and basically you concentrate on lighting and you don't do anything else. Whereas at the moment I am doing a little bit of all of it which is what I have done anyway but, when I was at (employers name) I had a team of people that if I didn't know how to do something, then I knew somebody who did know about how to do it. But there is a skills issue where there are no college courses you can go on. Most of it is on the job.

Even though my wife works full time she is in on this with me. We are in this together very much. Once I had decided to go for it and once I had had a good six week trading period straight off the line she was less worried about things and I think she is much more content with it now. It was just a bit of a shock to all the family in those first few days if you know what I mean and we were a;; a bit panicky about what was the best thing to do. I am not shy, I can speak in groups and things like that. I am nervous inside but I can speak out in groups you know so I do like to keep involved in everything a little bit and ask questions wherever I can. Whereas my wife, my wife is not that keen on participating in discussions with strangers you know. She finds it difficult to speak to a group. My wife finds it difficult because if we are meeting people to do with the business, potential clients or even existing ones, my wife finds that really uncomfortable but she does her best and she knows it has to be done if we are going to get new business and keep old business. She is getting better now but it was really difficult for her at first. She just lacks confidence in front of some people. I am probably joining Chamber of Commerce to get into their networking because it is much more in line with whom I am trying to attract as clients and so we are hoping that my wife can gain some skills at networking through that really.

I was talking to one guy last night who is an artist and he does art that goes onto your television. It is some kind of moving picture that goes on your television and a DVD and there's some music playing in it too somewhere, so I was talking to him about how he could like have an exhibition of it, sort of a central projections screen and loads of plasma screens dotted everywhere repeating the image around the room which he was quite interested in. It is a good idea but expensive to do. I mean a typical, a typical one day conference could be, it could be anything from 500 quid up to you know, seven thousand, eight thousand pounds.
so the people last night erm, weren't in my catchment group. I need, I need big, bigger businesses. So that's where Chamber of Commerce comes into it.

Do you belong to any professional bodies?

No, not yet but I am probably joining the (name) Association.

You have to educate me now because they are?

Right ok well they are a hire association of Europe.

Hire?

Hire yes. It's quite good to have their logo on the bottom of your letterheads and things. The just give you lots of help and support on vast amounts of issues. They are a big organisation. I don't know a whole lot about them but there is a section covering audio visual which I am going to investigate a bit more. And I will probably be joining the Small Business Federation as well.

The way I see my business going is, last night we were talking about having a vision. I agree with that scenario of having a vision. In eighteen months to two years and beyond down the line you see at the moment I am really based from home. I have all the equipment and everything stacked up at home to the roof almost. My wife doesn't mind. It's all in the garage. I'm doing my garage out, as a warehouse and as an office and erm there is oh there is equipment here, there and everywhere. Twelve months down the line I will probably, shortly after Christmas I am going to get a small unit. Eighteen months down the line from now, I will be looking for an even bigger unit which I want to try and buy. I don't want to rent it, it is dead money. But as this business grows, or as I am hoping this business grows, my responsibility or my duties within this business are not going to be the audio visual side of it. I will employ somebody to do that. So my skills, my skills are going to be communication skills, people skills, being able to sell to people.

It is a rapidly developing field isn't it, anything to do with audio visual because we now don't even communicate for the most part face-to-face.

That's true.

It's all done through images and subliminally. You were talking about the artist and what he's doing with his artwork in another evolving media field. I suppose you have to keep on top of what other people are doing so you can remain up to date.

Yes we need to remain up to date with equipment and yes but the type of jobs I'm producing for at the moment are not the complicated jobs. I've always thought that. From erm, from an individual's point of view, erm how can I explain it, I had this conversation with my past employers, you know if you were self employed, you are aren't you? Well you could do something that you like doing but doesn't necessarily make you any money. Whereas you do something that is ok to do but makes you some money. So that's the way I look at it. Most people, most people I say that if you concentrate on the smaller jobs you can do multiple jobs on top of each other. You don't need to think about them. They are just run of the mill, and then you go well they might be a bit tedious. They might cost the customer up to £1000 or £1500 but you can do six or seven of those jobs on top of each other and come away with a healthy profit. Whereas you take one job on which is say an awards evening, it will take you a lot to organise it, it will take you a lot more staff to do, you will incur a heck of a lot more in costs because some of the equipment you are not going to have, you will have to hire them in. Particularly lighting, you have to hire in the expertise in lighting and you can
only do one of those jobs say per week whereas the other jobs you can do three or four per
week. Then again I am not opposed to doing that kind of job if one of those jobs comes in.

So you are chasing volume really at this stage?

Yes. Fairly low, fairly low cost, but high volume, because it is very profitable.

So clearly you have thought about how you can take it in this direction or that
direction and you have made a conscious choice to take it in the direction you are
going in. So what made you decide to do it?

What, what made me decide to do it? Well it has made me move a bit quicker and I was
under no illusions that this was going to be a ride in the park and it has been really hard
work.

Was what your previous employer did to you; was that a push or a pull?

It was a push.

Was it? So erm, you would have stayed an employee until the time suited you but that
option was taken away with him closing the firm down, is that what you
mean?

Yes it was a push

It was a push early? Yes. It's an important one for me because I want to understand
as you do and it may also have been a pull because now that he has gone you had to
sit down for a week and think hey, wait a minute there is still this market out there
that is not being catered for.

Yes exactly but that's why I am trying to break into the day-to-day hire market. (Hands
researcher a flyer) that's going out to print soon which is one of the things I want to talk to
some people about later this week. If you have all these, the niche in the market on
(Borough name) now with the Capital of Culture coming round, is all the hotels. You have
got loads of hotels well there are about twenty five plus all battling with each other but we
could do with some larger, some larger hotels that can hold a lot more people. They just
need day-to-day equipment. There's nothing complicated on that equipment. And this is
what the vast majority of these small hotels in the area would want.

It all looks very technical and very scary. There's lots of XGA25 and a whole number
sequence.

Yes that not technical.

Someone has got to know what they are doing. I mean if you are going to hire this
equipment out do you give them erm...

Usually, usually, when a venue phones up for a conference it's not for them. All they are
going to do is hand it to the customer when they walk through the door that's got their
conference. Nine times out of ten that customer will know how to use it. Having said that,
I've always offered to set it up for them, and to plug them in. It works both ways that
because if I drop off a projector in a hotel and then twenty four hours later when I go and get
it back they will say it didn't work. We're not paying for it. So if I have plugged it in for them
set it up and got a picture up on screen before I walk away, I know I am going to get paid.
Yes and it is not cheap equipment. You are not dropping off a box of business cards; this is serious money that you are leaving in people’s hands that possibly don’t know what they are doing with it.

Yes. I have had a few stories I could tell of hotel managers claiming they don’t know how to plug in a projector and other’s claiming they know, well a lot more than they evidently do so I take no chances now and that’s why I have hefty insurance.

**Does being based here in the North West have any impact do you think?**

It’s an ideal situation here on (borough name). There’s a fine few competitors yes there’s quite a few of them. There’s one in (area name) and there’s a different type of competitor based in (borough name) called (business name) but we all get along quite well with each other.

**Enough work to go around?**

There’s enough work. There is enough work. Yes there is definitely enough work to go round. Nowadays it’s not, it’s not whether or not you can supply all this equipment. It’s whether or not, you know if you asked me to supply, if you had a conference to put on and I came and met you about what, what you want to do, right so you would have given me a brief rundown of what you want to achieve, you’ve got to have the confidence in me that I can actually pull it off for you. It’s irrespective what equipment I put into that hotel. It’s irrelevant. It’s just is this guy, going to turn up on time, supply the right equipment, operate the equipment so it works properly and all your guest speakers will go away feeling happy. Feeling like that was a good event to go on.

**You are doing corporate clients for the most part?**

Yes

**So you have got 25 hotels in the immediate area?**

Yes there are more than 25 venues though. So at the moment I am only concentrating on this type of stuff I am only going local and certain parts of Liverpool city centre. I am then more likely to start going down the M53 towards Chester and then from Chester to the outskirts of Chester and then it starts drifting into North Wales. They have got some really good hotels out there. Liverpool, erm beyond Liverpool city centre is erm not really worth it at the moment.

**Not going towards Manchester.**

Yes that’s right there is even more competition in Manchester.

**You said you skill set is on the face-to-face stuff and relationship building. How do customers get in touch with you?**

Well I, I’ve had my Free phone number set up. I’ve managed to get my own domain name. I had that booked, I had that well booked, well before (employers name) went into administration. My mobile number is published and a large proportion of it is on recommendation.

**Right so word of mouth.**

Yes.
Presumably the hotel owners get to know you on a personal basis?

Well it is, I mean if you can get into a hotel to supply their day-to-day equipment and then they get somebody in that wants to do a full blown conference the chances are they will say, well use this guy because they already know I am reliable. The hotels act as mediators for me too so I like to look after them too in return.

What has been the effect of the business on you and your family and who you are?

Erm, err it’s been quite stressful. It has been quite stressful. Because I’m working from and I sit watching, occasionally watching the telly and I see all my files stacked up, I can’t turn off from it. Sending emails out at eleven o clock at night. I do growl at the kids. Laughs. I growl at the dog when he comes in and stands on my paperwork. Laughs.

With mucky paws? I've got a cat that does that. Laughs

So it is, it has caused erm, it stresses me it does stress me out. It stresses me out because things aren’t happening as quickly as I want them to happen. I don’t mean getting customers and all that stuff. It’s when I, when I contact the supplier and they are not as hungry as I think they ought to be for new business. I am finding that there are quite a few suppliers that, that don’t well no they don’t really come up to scratch with me.

So you’ve been running now for what is it, six months without drawing an income from the business...

Well I have, I have had a small income but I only draw the £435 a month which is my tax allowance

Which is not the same as the £30k you had before so is everyone happy with that at home? It’s usually children that notice that erm...

Well yes, they do have a few moans. But when I was made redundant in the first place, my wife’s employers because she was only part time, put her on full time straight away.

Right so you got support even from them.

Exactly yes so that was good and my wife is a, works at a doctors in (borough name) and through her networking with, with her colleagues and the guy that owns the practice, he’s the Chairman of (borough) PCT and so there’s a door there which is, which is slightly open at the moment and we, they had a get together yesterday and my wife was talking to some of them about something or other about developments there and new initiatives so with any luck I might get some work from the PCT.

Very good. What are the family’s expectations for the business? Do they see you now erm, I've got teenagers as well and they have a strange mindset, do they see you as just you doing another job or do they see it differently because you are working for yourself?

My daughter said, my daughter doesn’t understand it at all. She, she thinks that we could be rolling in money because now I am working for myself.

Yes classic.
Yes doesn’t understand it at all. But my son, he laughs at me, he’s 16 and he’s quite a good lad him so is my daughter but he is the one, he says I want you to do well in this company ‘cos when you die you are leaving it to me. Laughs.

Ah the mercenary era

He understands it a little bit more. He understands the stress of it and he understands that his, you know if I’ve got problems with the company and then he’s moaning about, I don’t know not doing the dishes then it can make me go off on one sometimes so a trivial, trivial little thing can be blown all out of proportion sometimes. It’s terrible to admit but I do.

Were you like that before when you were working at (employers’ name)?

Erm yeah to a certain extent.

But now you feel more guilty about it?

Yes definitely. I feel... I feel used. I do I feel used by my previous company because I put my heart and soul into that place. I feel used yeah. That’s the only expression I can use.

What about parents have they supported you in anyway? Has anyone offered to chuck some money your way to get the business started?

No, no nobody has done that. I haven’t even asked them for any money to be honest. And I wouldn’t have done that anyway. No I want... I want... if this is going to work it is going to be down to my wife. Nobody else is going to be involved. There was, there was a possibility of a partnership between me and one of my other err customers that I had. A company called (company name) in (city name). So I worked for them through (employers’ name) on their jobs. They would get the work in and I would do the work for them. And there was a possibility because he wanted me to go and work for him as an employee. He asked me on a number of occasions and then when this happened with (employers’ name) he wanted to try and form a partnership. But when we actually got down to discussing it and everything, I thought, this is just not going to work. I could see myself, me working the clock round and this guy, although he’s a nice guy, he would be more inclined to be working for his own company and not for the new company.

So he wasn’t closing the first one, he was adding on an extension.

He was adding an extension to it yes. He thought there was a niche because he, he gets a conference job in like one of these jobs, he gets a conference job and he would subcontract me to do the work for him. And he was thinking that he could get this job in and have a separate company that could supply all this equipment so he gets two bites of it. But you know it was not going to work. So I am quite happy doing it on my own.

Erm, your future and the future of the business as you see it, where are you going to be in erm, five years? That’s the classic question.

I want to own my own premises. Preferably owning my own premises which are not connected to the business. Definitely that. Erm...

You mean not commercial premises?

Yes commercial premises but I own them personally. Not through the business and the company will pay me rent. Something like that. I need to more research on that but that’s the way I see it anyway. So somewhere along the lines of 2500 square feet on a reasonably
nice looking industrial estate that everyone knows where it is. A couple of vans; sign written vans and erm at least £50,000 worth of equipment holding so I've got another 42 to go. 

Laughs. And a couple of employees. Preferably like a personal Assistant stroke Secretary and at least two other people, guys who could do the jobs and the rest of the people would be freelancers.

Does that effectively free you up to be the salesman?

It would free me up to run the business and to get more business in.

Well I think that’s about all of it I think. I have taken up your precious time for long enough but it has been really interesting to hear about your situation and unfortunately happens quite a lot where someone is made redundant and so set up their own business but I hope others don't go through it the way you did with your previous employer. When you said you want a few employees, can I just ask are you not afraid of employing people?

No, well, apprehensive. Apprehensive. I need to learn a hell of a lot more. I don’t underestimate how difficult all this is going to be at all. In fact if I think I have done something wrong I know it. I mean I am the only employee of this company. I had a long chat with the accountant about this. I am registered as an employer but I don't think I registered myself as an employee.

You, you are a Director?

Yes I am a Director of the company, yes.

So you are also, you are automatically an employee of the company. People often make this mistake. Your soul purpose as a Director is to act in the interests of the company making you an employee of (company name) limited.

Oh am I? Ok right, thank you. That was worrying me a bit.

There’s no charge for that by the way. Erm that's pretty much it unless there is anything else I can help you with? Your interview is going to contribute to my research and there are another eleven people also sharing their experiences with me so I am very grateful to all of you of course but yours is a high quality business and not all of them could be described as such.

With my business, particularly with putting these backdrops in, everything is to do with quality. Everything is to do with first impressions. I know... I know I have got a long way to go but hopefully I have what it takes to keep the business going and eventually growing. At least that's our plan.

Ok thank you again for your help.
Appendix 5

Transcript of one PhD student Interview
PhD Student Interview Transcript

Ok so what does your PhD mean to you? You were just about to get into the flow.

Well its, yeah it’s the highest level of educational achievement. I always remember being really young in school and thinking yeah, I’m definitely going to university you know, so that was always there. And then when I got into university and I did my bachelors and I really thought, you know ooh I really like this. Then I farted around and didn’t actually do very well on that then I went off and worked for a few years and when I got into a really competitive work environment which was [company name] and I started to do very well in this department and I remember someone saying well, you know, you are never going to get much further or very far here because you need to have a masters or whatever it was at the time. I had started doing the work of senior managers and doing loads of work for the partners and stuff and thinking well I could go back to do the masters and I told them where to shove the job where the sun doesn’t shine because I was being called on to do other people’s work and them saying well, you need to do this, you need to cover for people. When I went to do the masters it was such a night and day difference. So erm, I just loved it. I really, really loved it.

Masters?

Yeah and then one of the professors at the time [name] said you could easily do a PhD and I thought yeah, I will be a doctor. I don’t know what it was. When I went back to do the masters I suddenly just got this huge appreciation of how much there is to learn about something and how great it was to learn about something that I really cared about and I was really, really interested in. The masters, my masters was in, it was called technology management but what it was, was looking at innovation in the economy, looking at it in firms. So it was macro, micro level sort of economic stuff on a much more interesting level. And that’s all you had to worry about, you didn’t have to worry about sociology or any of the other things I did as part of the bachelors. It was such a concentration of effort on something that I actually liked that I realized that when I did that, I did really, really well. Barely missed getting a first by one percent you know? Then they said, so are you going to do the PhD but then of course at the time, I couldn’t. [Husband’s name] wouldn’t settle in Manchester. He had to go back to America. So I just thought well we will come back, I am going to come back and do a PhD. I thought well if I can do well in the masters then I know that I can probably do the PhD in throwing all my energies up at something even more specialized and I had good input at the time. You know the professors that were there [name, name, and name] and they were all like yeah this is you. You can do it you know? There was a friend off my course [name], He went on to do the PhD. He and I were the only ones out of our class who had any notion of it.

Before you said a professor suggested to you that you do a PhD? Was it suggested to you first while you were on your masters?

No I had thought about it before. At the time, the way they were selling the masters was as a stepping stone to a PhD as well. At the time in 2000 it was still (university name) I could have added a PhD on in two years. And that was very appealing because even beforehand, and I think being in that workplace and I saw the types of respect that some of the very senior consultants had, who all have PhDs and there were specialists in so many areas, I just thought yeah. I think, when I look back on it I realize how much when I go into the workplace and sort of realizing there are different people with different qualifications and how they got treated differently. Especially with being a woman, and especially being blonde and everything else I think, it did, I did think, I mean, I know I’m clever, so if it takes putting letters after my name to make it doubly, so as you know, so everyone is in no doubt, then
that's what I will do. Like I say, I was doing the work. I was a junior analyst and yet I was doing the work of people who had like ten years more experience than I had and so it became one of those insidious things with people saying well why don't you become a certified accountant or a certified management accountant and I thought urghh. I was like what? If I'm going back to uni it's to do the masters or something more, you know I didn't put any... To me those types of qualifications weren't good enough. They weren't worth all the effort and sacrifice just to be an accountant or worse still a management accountant even worse. You know so, yeah when I applied to UMIST I think that was part of it. You know a PhD. I was like yeah, definitely. So there was probably some suggestion there that helped me to think I'm definitely going to do it you know? But when I got into it [husband's name] was just so unhappy and he couldn't find a job. We had to go back to America. So, I remember leaving and being so kind of disappointed. At that time in 2000 the masters was still quite, it wasn't, and you know not many people had them. So when we went back I got my first job and I think it also helped me get a higher salary. At that time, the nature of the job that I was going into, the pharmaceutical industry, it is a science industry. Then suddenly I am jumping into an environment where I am surrounded by people who had PhDs. So of course I realized that the masters was good, but, and I had one and not many other people did but it was just always at the back of my mind. When would be a good time to go back and get it?

In a not quite good enough, is that the prequel to that?

Yes. I think, well I have never, ever had a confidence issue. I had so much confidence and so much belief in myself and what I could do and everything else and what I've found is I saw the PhD as a validation of that, you know, look at me. I am, you know, clever enough to be called doctor. I've got evidence of this tremendous achievement you know? So even if you thought about treating me as inferior, you know, don't, because, I'm not.

So you appear to be pursuing the credential for the credentials sake. It is going to make the difference; it's the letters are going to make the difference?

The letters absolutely; Even when I entered into the PhD programme, I know this is terrible but it is the truth, I never thought the PhD was going to give me something that I never had before. Which I know is terrible because I have learned a lot and I am so glad of the first year. Doing the philosophy course, I loved it and in retrospect I am so glad we did it but, to me this has never been a training process. I know it is supposed to be but to me this has always something that I had to figure out, and do, on my own to get my qualification.

You have got a little girl. What do you think she will think in ten years or so when she is in a position to judge Mummy, about you having a PhD?

I hope that she will be really, really proud and that she will be proud to say my Mummy is a doctor and my Mummy runs her own company. Yeah you know?

What does the rest of the family think about it?

They are really, they are so proud. They are so you know this is a high point in our family. I've got a large extensive family and no one else in the family is at that level. So I would be the first and I mean we are talking hundreds of people. My Mum is one of eight. My Dad is one of eleven. Lots of cousins and everything else so there is that but they are, they are all very proud of me. They keep saying that they are so supportive and I mean for god sake they also moved their lives to help me achieve this you know? They didn't have to move to England and stay with me for the last year and a half. Now I am living with them in the house in Ireland you know? I think as well more so for my mum than my dad, it's definitely the banging thing. 'Oh yes my daughter with her PhD' which is fine. Oh yeah. Great you
So you say you are the first in the family? Do you think you may have inspired other people as well?

I hope so because there are a lot of very clever people in my family you know? There are so many people who have started their own businesses actually you know, and who have done really well for themselves, without having a PhD as well but maybe for some of my cousins, the younger ones. I like to think it is inspiration for them as well. And the fact is, yes my PhD is in a social science but I still think that is important but I’m not stupid enough to think that a PhD in a science, in a lab, you know ultimately that’s where you are going to find cures for cancer and cures for disease. You know I have got one cousin and he is a chemical engineer and I met him in America and we had a chat and we were chatting away and I had never really thought about what happens after my degree and we had a good chat and I said you know, if you like what you are studying, that makes a huge difference. And find a way to carry on to the highest level I said, because that’s where you really can start to make a big difference.

It may be a bit difficult to say because you haven’t actually completed yours, but if you wanted say younger cousins to come through and do something similar how would you encourage them?

I would like to do, what I have had two of my friends do. Both [name] and [name] when I have felt really down and really despairing I have rang both of them and they have both been able to say that it is a cycle of emotion. It is a complete rollercoaster and you have got to recognize when you are on the highs and lows, particularly the lows, and they have said, you can get through it. That’s all it is. It’s not that you can’t do it. So, they have given me that great advice and I’ve seen how important that advice has been.

Have they both completed?

Yes, and what is ironic is that I have talked; I had to talk to another friend of mine. She has started her PhD already. She is doing hers at what is now called the University of Western Scotland, but was called Paisley. It is one of these new universities. She did the masters with myself and [name], her name is [name]. Again a very clever girl working in industry, sorry, technology transfer in the University of Western Scotland. We had just been chatting and I said [name] a PhD, to me it is about sticking through it, having clear goals, and getting through the process. I said, I think you can do that, because I think she heard that I was going for mine and she thought I can do this too and I said to her you know, of course you can do it. So she started and I have found that it is the most bizarre thing that I am now starting to give her the same advice that I was given, you know, one, two years ago. It’s just amazing, it’s amazing that its, it’s almost; it is very much the same set of emotional problems that people go through you know, so. Having, even though I’m coming into the third year now I still, I think, I think there could definitely be a better process of mentoring. I think that is one thing that the university could try and do better than it is.

So you are mentoring someone else who is doing it and it is a very long process. It sounds like your network or friends and relations with over a hundred relatives in your network and friends. Is it a certain type? Do you see the same groups of people coming through to do the PhD?

Erm, well a lot of them are much younger. Well they are definitely not like me. They haven’t got children, and they don’t have mortgages and things you know. I think, well [name] she’s already got a full time job and I’ve said to her at some point you are going to have to take a sabbatical whether it is for three months or six months. You can’t write up, you’re not going
to have the time because she is already struggling with the whole time thing which is what I
struggled with greatly when I was trying to work. I did that full time contract for five months.
But I think for me what is, I couldn’t honestly tell you at the moment any first or second years
now. I don’t know any second years, I wish I did but I don’t.

We can come back to the system if you like.

The answer is to have some proper coordination and regular sessions where you are
brining all these students together. Once you set that up they will come. Not all of them, but
a lot of them will.

Even though you are just coming into your third year, how relevant is what you have
gone through, the emotional cycle, balancing, moving to three countries now...

In terms of what I’ve gone through in the last two years with the PhD process, do you mean?
How did that compare?

Yes? I mean if it is a training programme, what is it a training programme for? From
what you are saying you have been through, do you see it as a similar relationship
between you and an employer? I mean do you think if something was wrong between
you and an employer you would have any redress for instance or do you think you
would stay if you had as bad a situation in an employment realm? Have you simply
come to deal with everything in terms of acknowledging a not very good relationship
between me and an employer?

Yes, but you feel kind of impotent in a way because even though we have gone to the PGR
office or the administration people, some of them are ok which I think is completely reflective
of the workplace as well, where you have got some people that you can go to who will help
you and other people who don’t so, in that respect, it is the same because the workplace is
certainly not a perfect environment either. But what I learned about the supervisor type
aspect, I like that relationship but again, it stuns me how good [supervisors name] is and
how I am extraordinarily lucky to have the supervisor I have, because I see so many other
people struggling with their supervision you know? Yes that’s like being in the workplace
where you have got a good experienced person to learn from, who helps you, big you up,
and really helps motivate you. So I think it is. There are lots of similarities in that respect, but
yeah. I’ve always felt that you are doing it on your own, kind of thing, that you are not
necessarily part of a structured approach that you are very much kind of, led to believe and
in the university environment is very much every man for himself. You just need to make it
work for you. But I would say that is less so in the workplace, because you are usually part
of a team and they are usually team goals and all that whereas, that is completely absent in
the university which is ridiculous because really, the way the whole university could look at it
is as we have got a cohort of PhD students in my division that you know? They should be
saying let us do everything that we can to get this cohort of people through the PhD process
and help them get their PhDs because at the end of the day it is going to make the
university look better. There is just nothing of that at all. Nothing!

So the common argument is it is training for a career in academia, not training for a
career in everything, which is fair comment. Though an awful lot of the undergraduate
degree, which takes about the same amount of time, is allegedly training people for
whatever they want to do when they graduate but the PhD is presented and defended
as training for employment, inside; to become an academic?

Well I don’t think it is even training me to be an academic or for what is required in
academia.
This is the problem that I have in that although it is training me to be an academic; you don't, they just, like as you say in your first year, you are fairly supported, they give you a little bit of a community aspect, and then they go, now go away and do it for three years.

Yes, yes. they expect us to be researchers don't they?

Love it loathe it, there is a need for a social interaction environment. The PhD after your first year, as soon as they have got you ticked off, you need to go away each year and teach yourself how to do this.

I don’t know how that can be seen as training you to be an academic. I don’t see how they can justify getting away with that. Well that is what they claim. The only thing that is training us to be an academic is to write like them and read like them and that is only one tiny part of it. Being an academic to me is being part of a research community, where everyone is up to speed on some really important issues and you would have a forum where you would talk about them and debate them and all that. There is none of that.

Go on; tell me about your research. Why the topic that you have got?

Well I worked as a research analyst for [company name] and I then went on to [company name] for three and a half years so it was an analytical job where I looked at industries and what affected them and all that and when I did the masters I did the thesis on the pharmaceutical industry and it was the first time I had really been exposed to the pharmaceutical industry and that again was Professor [name] who had spent her life researching the pharmaceutical industry and about different drugs and cancer drugs and how they were made and all that. She was a fascinating person to be mentored by so I ended up doing the master’s thesis on the pharmaceutical industry and all the alliances of the pharmaceutical industry which was a hot topic even then. So I started interviewing companies for that. I interviewed pretty big hot shots in the six biggest companies at the time. So I wrote the thesis and when I started looking for jobs after the masters I put it on my CV, and I noticed that I started getting headhunted by these companies that were doing consulting in the industry. So that is when I got a job with [company name]. It was focusing on one industry which was brilliant for me because I had come from an environment where I had to try and be an expert in so many different types of industry you know being an analyst for [company name]. So the specialization, I loved it and of course the more I got into it, you know I worked for [company name] for six years before I left to do the masters. What was interesting though was we worked with a lot of big companies and that’s who our clients were.

Do you mean before you left to do the PhD?

Yes, the big pharmaceutical companies. Yes that is who our clients were. At the time the company was going through a lot of turmoil. A lot of my friends left. There was a group of about ten of us that were quite close and got on quite well and socialized and all the rest of it and out of all of them, there were I think only two of us that stayed. The others all ended up leaving, but they ended up leaving to a lot of smaller organizations. The dynamic, when we would get together for dinners and chats was startling. They would talk about the dynamics of being in a small company and how it was just amazing to look at. And one of them in particular had gone to work for a company that had one drug, or was it two? Anti-infectives. And one day my friend walked into work and the whole company had been sold for a billion dollars. This was for one drug. It was almost like it was a watershed moment because he could suddenly pay off his house. He could then go on and do something else because he actually didn’t really like the company anyway. And I just couldn’t get over it and then I suddenly realized I had been focused on all these big companies and their issues and then
another thing happened where my old boss at [pharmaceutical firm name] had been relocated to San Diego. He had been asked to head up the R&D and like the early stage discovery stuff for [company name] just outside San Diego because of its proximity to all the small, clever, cleverly run little companies out there. Now that was a completely different dynamic when I went to work for him. He and I worked well together so I’ve been out to California several times. And it was just so, I felt like I had just been missing something really important that was going on in my industry. Then I just started reading journals and reading anecdotally and I just thought, god, what on earth is going on with these small companies? You know what is going on with this money? And why are big pharma paying all this money? And then what really happens with this money? And then that was it. I wrote to Professor [name] who was still at Manchester, and I said I want to do a PhD in this and she wrote back and said brilliant. Do you want me to reference you to get into Columbia? Professor [name] is there, or Carnegie, Pittsburg I can reference you to get in there with Professor [name]. So I said, oh no I don’t want to do it over here, I want to do it back in Manchester where I know everyone. A few of the Professors were still there you know Professor [name], Professor [name] and Professor [name]. I just felt I wanted to be back in that environment with them not anywhere else. Anyway I wrote to her and I flew over and we met and we talked about it and she said it was fascinating. So it was a relatively easy process for me to submit that topic. And I have to admit, even when I look back on my work, I haven’t really veered off the topic that much. They wanted me to kind of look at variability’s and growth but I haven’t as much concentrated on that as I have how money impacts innovation you know; new product development and all that. But so many people seem to have veered off topic and you know I think that is another one, I think I had such support for the topic from the beginning and then when she introduced me to Dr [name] who is now my supervisor, he thought it was fascinating as well so I think because that topic was always initially interesting for everyone it has managed to stay fairly intact. Yes but that’s where it came from. Literally one minute working in the industry and then suddenly being aware of this incredibly important dynamic of what is going on in these smaller companies and these huge amounts of money that were changing hands. Now there has always been a lot of work done on a topic that is related to that which is what happened after, whoever Pfizer or someone bought that compound for a billion dollars but that has had a lot done on that. Funnily enough that wasn’t what interested me. What interested me was the dynamics of all of that, of the leading up to that exchange of money. How the little company attracted that attention? How that they developed a product that was interesting enough for someone else to pay a billion bucks for it? That is really what my PhD is trying to focus on.

So when we talk about smaller pharma companies, how small is small? Are they fairly well established but just small in comparison to the big five or six is it?

Yes because the ones that I have already interviewed range from like, fifteen people to two hundred and fifty.

So they would be medium sized some of them?

Medium in terms of employees but they have got no revenue. No sales. So it is a really odd set-up. They effectively suck cash. They are cash draining entities and the problem is, the argument is that, some of them, the technology is not good enough for them to take the amount of money that they do out of the pool of money and yet there is still this problem of how do we let, how do we stop these ideas from becoming commercial entities when they are never going to work, yet a hundred million dollars later the company is out of business because they can’t get the compound to work the way they thought it would so a part of that is the interaction of people who have vast sums of money to spend. How they make the assessments I think that’s potentially some postdoc work for me. I can’t even go down that road yet but that’s part of it. It’s how you come to have a company with a technology that is not that great and yet they get large sums of money anyway. They get it from venture
There is just one company gone public in the last year? One drug development company I should say. UK or US?

In the US

Only one?

Yes.

So VCs are queuing up to give them money and support even for dead ducks, wow. So you came back to Manchester for the social support you thought you were going to get. You were living in the states for how many years?

I’ve been living in the states for, altogether it was ten years but it was before the masters. After the masters it was a six year, six and a half years.

And your contact had said I can get you into a US university?

Yes, she had yes. I had said no, I didn’t want that.

That’s interesting that you wanted to come back to the fold.

I did. I chose my alma mater twice over you know, back for my masters and I had great faith in the research that had already been done there. Some pretty important works on the economics of technological change and innovation has historically come from Manchester. [name], [name], [name] these are all Manchester people and have been for years.

So was it the university I mean if any of those people had been in the US would it have affected you or would you still have wanted to come home to Manchester?

I think I wanted to come home…

Although clearly Manchester is not your home.

Yes but it is proximity. My closest friends that have known me for years are an hours’ drive away from Manchester so and also I was fairly unhappy in America with no social life there because people work too much and I had a big house and nobody to really, really enjoy it with on a regular basis.

So the PhD, it came at a pretty traumatic time?

Yes. I was separating so…

Is there any chance that the PhD is being done at this particular point in your life because of everything else that was going on?

Yes and I have to be frank about that because in a way the PhD was my excuse to walk away from the marriage and the situation in which I was in. I always knew I would do it but I had to realize that it was a brilliant way for me to say I am going to do this. If you want to come you can. The other thing about doing it America is if you don’t find funding, you know you are looking at a $200,000 expense. I just thought, oh no. For a good university for fees you could be looking at $50,000 a year. My friend went to quite a good university and I think
she is paying $44,000 a year. That was too much money for me. That's how much I pay for my house for god sake so there is no way I was going to pay it for a PhD especially when I knew I could get one at Manchester for what is three, six, nine, worst case scenario £12,000 yeah. I mean, for god sake you know. I can add and subtract.

So it just didn't stack up?

No, not those numbers.

Ok a final point. Your PhD sounds to be a title you are aiming for, an opportunity to free yourself from a situation you didn't want to be in, at the same time an opportunity for you to come home to people you needed to be around at that point in your life because of everything that was going on. You always knew you could do it, this is just going to prove it, and yet you don't want an academic career particularly?

No, no. Well maybe to supplement. I would like to make my mark with my own company but at the same time I did enjoy the teaching and I did enjoy being around university. I find when I walk into Manchester and I'm strolling around Harold Hankins or the library or I am walking around there I, I don't know how to describe it but I feel….

Like you belong?

Yeah, absolutely, yeah definitely. I feel like so happy and so, you know my first day back, I will never forget it, getting off the train and walking up on that first day of induction and we were all in that big room and I was literally, I was so overjoyed. I was just; I was like the cat that got the cream. I couldn't believe that I had finally done it that I had taken all those huge steps to make that huge change in my life and to be finally embarking on that final academic achievement. Yes, every step that I got closer to Manchester I just thought you know, and consequently I opened my big mouth to my supervisor a couple of weeks later and I said something stupid in retrospect. I said well I'm here now, that was the biggest step I said. I will get it. And he just laughed and went ok we just need to be kind of a little bit more humble and I was like no, no, no. Of course and now I have gone through that whole cycle of oh my god really, can I, am I actually good enough?

Where does that come from because as you said you were never short of confidence in you work, your family or the real world, so what is it about the PhD that makes you doubt yourself?

I know I don't really know. For me what I went through for the last three to four weeks, there is a few things. I think part of it was this moving target. Every time I thought I was getting to where I needed to be, suddenly the boundaries were moved, artificially and I think that was one thing. The other thing I think was that the expectations. There was no clarity. Maybe they are the same thing I don't know, moving boundaries but there was no clarity about exactly what was expected of me. If I had been told, you know, a few months ago, by the way you really have to, always make sure that when you talk about your PhD it is in the context of the literature, or how you are going to publish and make a contribution, because prior to that, we are told not to worry about that. You are told that there are fifteen different ways you can make a contribution and have a PhD. It doesn't mean it has to be life changing. And then three weeks ago I am told, well actually it kind of does and you have to make a stand and you have to publish. So you know, I worried because I write so many technical things for work and I know that I write well, and I am usually quite good at getting my point across so to be told that you know, there was still some doubt, about whether or not I would publish or really, where was my research situation in the literature. For me, unfortunately I had just read some of the Phillips & Pugh book that had said, some people just aren't capable of making that academic leap into that very strange and nebulous what's
expected of you or what’s this tone we are supposed to produce at the end of it. And of course now three weeks later I think yep, there are people out there but I am not one of them. I can write like this but I want it to be quite clear of what is expected of me. So I am going to manage that going forward. I absolutely intend to manage that. And a lot better than I have because I think part of it is my fault in that I haven’t kind of drawn it out of my supervisor. Now he is you know, none of us are going to let it happen again. But I did have long periods of time when I should have been always in touch with him and I wasn’t. Because when I do get in touch with him he makes me feel better, he reassures me that I am more than capable of doing it.

**Is it transformative or has it been for you at least?**

Yes definitely. Well it isn’t what I was prepared for I mean I’m not that woman who walked in that first day overjoyed at having arrived of course. You know we should do what they do on those programmes where they have a video diary and you talk into it every day just to see how much those hopeful souls are systematically torn to shreds when they get here by a system of, a system of you know, constant and destructive reminders that none of us will ever be good enough you know?

**That is an established research methodology you know?**

Yes I know but what are they. Who is doing that . Are they avatars or something (laughs). But seriously it has changed me because all through the PhD has been a different experience. I think my association with dealing or understanding that is it is a self directed piece of work and as long as I stick at it and I do plenty of reading and I interview well and stick to the things I am good I will be fine but I think in fairness it has made me, well it has taken me down a peg or two which probably needed to happen, that’s fine. I probably needed to have a little bit of that you know. Lack of humility coming in but I think they need a bit more of an appreciation of what academic research is versus being in industry and being in that environment and there are different environments and you have got to manage them both slightly differently and so erm, it has given me an appreciation for that and how we conduct academic research and seeing what you do in, in industry. So it’s a bit one sided I think. They have their way and we have our way but they only think their way works.

**Right. This question may be a bit premature. Do you feel you need to have the doctor in front of your name and have survived for someone to understand you even though you said you won’t necessarily give the next forty years of your life to academia and conducting research?**

Well I suppose if you want to be an academic not having done a PhD is a lock out but also in industry it has powerful associations that you are clever which is appealing to me. I mean it has transformed me much well particularly in the first year because I was actually working for (employers name) at the same time as trying to take all the classes and write assignments and everything else so I was doing work all the time for (firm name) and all these people so the first year was almost like a blur. And then I have moved house one, two, three times and I had a small child start school so in a way I’m a little bit sad that I’ve never been able to fully throw myself into the process. I don’t think it’s really had a chance to affect me a lot because I had to make it fit into my life and all the crazy things that have happened in the last two years. So in a way it hasn’t really had a chance to really impact my life. It’s had to fit in with my life and all the bloody crazy things I have done in the last two years so I’m not sure it has transformed me. Maybe I have transformed it.

**Ok**
Seeing how other PhD students you know, the whole mosaic of personalities and abilities have had it worse I think from what they tell me. You know everyone is entitled to complain if they work in a bad company and leaving because most people just wouldn’t put up with it there, but they put up with it here. I mean I’m no different. I put up with it here because I have got the goal, I’ve got something I am going to walk away with that I desperately want so in that other environment there’s nothing I want, well there’s money, but I actually have walked out of the house and don’t have to worry about the mortgage so I don’t know if this is relevant or not but I’m going to say it anyway. I have had lots of conversations where I actually despaired of some of the quality of the students who are doing a PhD. I still do. I still think that some of the topics are ridiculous and I look at people who have already dropped out, you know young, single people, who have nothing else to do and they still couldn’t get through it, give me a break. Ultimately I think you should be, if there was a way to assess PhD students starting off you know the courage of their convictions and the strength of their topic I think we would honestly find that people who genuinely believe in what they’re trying to research and what they’re trying to find out and who have got a bit of gumption and a bit of sticking power, they’re the ones who are going to stick through it. You know it just seems a shame that they admit people to the programme. There’s got to be some way of figuring out better how they, how you, how you get rid of those people, not get rid of but how you even stop them from becoming students in the first place because you know they are just not going to cut it. The problem seems to be come all as long as you have got a decent masters from a decent university but the PhD is nothing like a masters. The only measure they seem to use is can you get funded or can you afford this. Well I find that deeply upsetting if I’m honest. I don’t think ability to pay should be the number one factor in who gets in and who doesn’t because there are plenty of wealthy idiots in the world aren’t there? I mean some of these people have never had, have no commitments, no ties, never had a job and are just cruising through life on their parents income and it does make me very angry. And it’s a waste of their money too isn’t it?

The other side of that point though might be that young people are somewhat stigmatized by that filtering aspect you were talking about in that they will carry that for a very long time. The sense that I wasn’t good enough.

Well the alternative is what we are doing now and that is saying, well actually, we know you are not good enough intellectually and you don’t have the stamina and there is no burning in your belly to see you through the rough patches but you have money so we will let you join in knowing you won’t go the distance. That’s insane. How do you operate on a daily or weekly basis because you have other chaos to deal with too?

Well I am completely individualistic and rude, often, if there are distractions I can’t block out like if (daughters name) is in one of her moods or my parents are unwilling to help with child minding or what have you but that’s how I have to be. If I am going to successfully complete my research, on time, on budget and you know, make it worthwhile I have to be a bit of a battle axe. They know I don’t mean to be but it is incredibly stressful and well maybe I have a bit of a demon side that surfaces from time to time.

Is that demon side the same as having the burning in the belly drive you mentioned?

Yes it probably is. For sure. Well if you look at it a good PhD student has to be all things to all people. We have to be project manager, budget controller, author, researcher, publicist, international traveller, networker, critic, ball breaker and all that on top of our domestic roles so yes it does take a good deal of managing in all areas of our lives which too many I have met and spoke to just can’t cope or don’t want it badly enough to find ways of coping. In the first year I organized a few get together’s and that was fine I had some really good nights
and that but when I moved back to Ireland and I thought I am leaving everyone else behind I learned that actually no, they were not my friends. I mean no one else bothered and I thought ah, you were not my friends, not really. I know who I will stay in touch with but I can’t lament other people who don’t want to make the same effort. The rest are well yes I know them, they are acquaintances not friends so stuff them. Too bad for you, you know, I’m too good for you, you know? It’s sad. It’s sad that there isn’t a better organization. Sad that people can’t seem to get out of their own self destroying box. They don’t even realize it that if they just made the effort to meet maybe every two weeks or every month they could come together and have a collective mind have a sigh and a chat it would actually do them an immense amount of good. Strangely it is all those that started before me who are about to complete who are now interested in forming a community.

Is that the PhD culture or your university specifically?

Oh I don’t know about other universities but having read a few of those guide to PhD books it is pretty universal (laughs).

Ok is there anything else you wanted to add that we haven’t already covered?
No and I’m sorry for getting so irate. I didn’t mean to

No don’t apologize, that show you are passionate about things which is good for this kind of research. It is more telling than stilted, calculated answers to a set questionnaire so thank you very much for your honesty and your frank contributions.
Appendix 6

The Telegraph Article

Second eBay millionaire emerges from recession

16th March 2009
Second eBay millionaire emerges from recession

Second eBay millionaire emerges from recession. Booming online sales of electronic accessories have helped former Tesco trainee manager Mark Radcliffe to become eBay's second individual UK millionaire

By Roland Gribben 7:34PM GMT 16 Mar 2009

Internet shopping is booming as traditional retail outlets struggle to attract customers and head off further falls in sales.

Customers are switching to the internet in the search for bargains and small businesses and entrepreneurs are benefiting from the upsurge.

The eBay website is celebrating the arrival of its second online British millionaire and its growing economic importance, with the introduction of a survey charting the volume of business.

The first of a series of surveys that could provide further insight into the boom and add to the existing data from the British Retail Consortium, the CBI and the Office of National Statistics, is due shortly.

Mark Radcliffe who used £200 he had saved from his wages as a trainee manager at Tesco to start his eBay shop 10 years ago, has joined Jamie Murray in the ranks of individual eBay millionaires.

Cardiff-based Mr Murray secured his millionaire status by building up sales of mobile phones and electronic accessories over the last three years to now pull in £2m a year.

He employs eight people but sees no need to develop a traditional network of shops because of his online success with BMCdigital. In the run-up to Christmas, his December sales were worth £230,000 compared with a monthly average of £120,000 during the year.

Mr Radcliffe, who started his business First2save in a garden shed in Southport, has built up an electronic accessories business with sales of more than £5m a year. He is eBay's biggest-selling business in Britain with 36,000 monthly orders and ranks sixth in the international league table.

He has 6,000 different product lines and is looking to expand from his current 10,000 sq ft warehouse to a building with three times the space. He is also seeking to increase staff numbers from 19 to 34.

More attention is being focused on the internet as an economic indicator because this is the first time online shopping has been faced with recession.

The latest eBay data also shows how online exporters are taking advantage of the weaker pound.
In January alone 244,000 British-based sellers generated £57m in export business, an increase of 49pc on a year earlier. They sold 2.4m items, a 40pc year-on-year improvement.

Small businesses are estimated to have achieved a 10pc rise in export sales by value and 13pc in volume terms in January, compared to December levels.
Appendix 7

Financial Times Article

Entrepreneurial academics need support

20th December 2010
Entrepreneurial academics need support

By Markus Perkmann and Ammon Salter

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It is a common lament that academics lack entrepreneurial flair. However, this perception appears to be far from reality. Drawing on a large-scale survey of thousands of UK academics sponsored by the Advanced Institute of Management Research we found that, on average, academics are five times more likely to be entrepreneurs than a member of the general public. Academic entrepreneurs are found in almost all disciplines, even the much maligned social sciences.

The best research often produces the greatest opportunities for entrepreneurship. The most active academic entrepreneurs tend to be among the most productive researchers.

The primary motivation for academics to become involved in creating a venture is not financial but rather to help ensure that their research is developed and used. Academic entrepreneurs see entrepreneurship as an exciting and challenging activity, stretching their research into unanticipated ways. Very few academics say they are motivated by money or peer pressure to start their companies. The so-called Porsche effect – where an academic launches a venture because his colleague purchased a posh new car from proceeds of the business – is an urban myth.

However for many academics, starting a venture remains a daunting task. And although universities and business schools are keen to highlight the number of start-ups they have launched, their employment practices, rules and regulations often make it difficult for academic entrepreneurs. Academic entrepreneurs perceive higher barriers to engagement with industry than do other academics, which in turn signals the need for the further education sector to pay more attention to supporting entrepreneurs.

Critically, universities and business schools need to open the door to entrepreneurship rather than seeking to hold down and control the value of firms created by their staff.

Academic entrepreneurs see the main obstacles to be overcome when starting a company as a lack of time and resources. A means of resolving this would be for universities to consider
creating entrepreneurial sabbaticals, alongside traditional academic sabbaticals. Academics also believe that their entrepreneurial activities count little in the promotion and recruitment decisions of their universities, which tend to prize research excellence over other contributions. If institutions wish to stimulate entrepreneurship among their staff, they need to provide appropriate rewards.

Universities and governments have invested in a range of programmes and institutions to support entrepreneurship, including technology transfer offices (TTOs). These investments have increased the scale and professionalism of academic entrepreneurial efforts. Yet many of those companies created by academics operating outside the formal university support system rely on the ideas and resources of individual academics, rather than formal intellectual property held by their universities. So far, university TTOs have appeared to be better at supporting companies based on patented technology, especially in the life sciences, rather than the development of service-based businesses operating in fast-paced markets.

This suggests there may be opportunities for TTOs to widen their competencies to include support for service-based ventures.

The strongest motivator for an academic to become involved in a venture is that it will increase the chances of their research having a meaningful impact. In this sense, it is not money, but impact that makes academics become entrepreneurs. Helping academics in their entrepreneurial efforts is an opportunity for universities and business schools to fulfil their wider objective of making a social and economic difference.

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