

**BECOMING A MUTUAL: HOW MEMBERS NEGOTIATE
IDENTITY DURING AND AFTER PUBLIC SECTOR ‘SPIN-OUT’**

Submitted by Hugh Edward Waters to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership Studies, January 2020.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides one very intensive case-study account of the challenges that a public service organisation faces as it ‘spins out’ of the public sector and becomes a public service mutual. The study of public service mutual’s is important due to their vital role in the delivery of public services in austerity and post-austerity Britain (and elsewhere), the organisational form is used widely in other sectors, and yet there are challenges in or gaps in how the lived experiences of an organisation are played out and understood. The turbulence of both changing environments and institutions introduces between stakeholders a multitude of tensions and interactions. Stakeholders therefore seek to negotiate individual and organisational identity simultaneously, through the challenges of change. This thesis explores two main questions: What are the challenges a ‘public service’ organisation faces during a major change? And how do stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change?

To investigate these questions, this research employs a qualitative, interpretive, social-constructionist perspective theoretically based in the fields of identity, organisational change and sensemaking. I was embedded in the organisation to collect data across a period spanning three years consisting of extensive observation, document collection, interviews, focus groups augmented by participatory activities. The account tells the stories of how stakeholders respond to and enact organisational evolution. Narratives of change were prepared through an interpretive analysis of the observational, documentary and interview transcripts presenting an in-depth chronological account of evolution. This chronological re-reading of events explores how identities are constructed and reconstructed over time, through a blending of sensemaking about the past, present and future.

This research arrives at four theoretical contributions 1) Stakeholders perform identity work by creating their own narrative for identity as a new organisational form evolves, pieced together from senior level and local level organisational narratives and the ambiguity arising in-between. 2) In a spin-out, identity formation processes unfold through. 3) The iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity manifests through evolution to present initially hybrid, and then multiple, identities. The latter arising from the way identities are composed and/or deconstructed through identity legitimisation and contestation 4) Stakeholders use sensemaking processes through certainty and uncertainty to initially temporally frame what is changing, then to determine a position for their own continuity.

This case study presents insights across three years following the ‘spin out’ of a public service from local authority ownership into an independent entity. This work provides direction for practice and public policy by framing the major challenges of change for becoming a public service mutual: communication, independence and the implementation of new ways of working. This new understanding can sensitise managers and stakeholders to the significance of identity challenges during and after spin-out process, and guide them as to the events and milestones that might offer opportunities for constructing/reconstructing identities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whilst the PhD is primarily a research journey, it also a period that you also undertake a considerable amount of identity work as an individual. I have learned a considerable amount, which is beyond representation in this thesis. I would like to express my thanks to a number of people during the completion of the thesis, without whose support this would have not been possible. Firstly I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Beverley Hawkins, Professor William Harvey and Professor Tim Coles for your invaluable wisdom and guidance through my PhD journey. I have been so fortunate to have a team of supervisors who have cared about my work so much and to support my development as an academic. I would also like to make a specific mention to those that have supported me behind the scenes, Dr Kate Gannon, Dr Adrian Bailey Dr Graham Perkins and to all my colleagues and friends of whom I've met along the way your motivational support has been incredible and I could not have achieved what I have without your support. I would also like to thank the research organisation Eduvate and to those who supported me to establish this research project from the outset.

FUNDING

This research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council under a doctoral studentship research training grant.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing the Context

Through Labour and successive Conservative governments, the agenda to ‘open up’ public services has progressed by promoting that charities, social enterprises and private companies (Walsh, 1995) offer an alternative form of organizing for new and innovative service delivery (HM Government, 2011). The Cabinet office (2006) define the process of public sector commissioning as ‘the cycle of assessing the needs of people in an area, designing and then securing an appropriate service’ (p.5); in a later report “service” was replaced with the term ‘outcome’ (Cabinet Office, 2010:7). More recently reforms have sought to separate public services from state ownership and their transformation into mutual non-profit organisations, which as formal structures include charities, cooperatives, and social enterprises. As such ‘mutual’ spin-outs emerged in this policy arena in the 2000s (Cabinet Office 2010, 2011b; Transition Institute 2013), with increased contracting out of public services leading to their marketization.

Commissioning ultimately forms a policy agenda acting as a driver towards new forms of public service delivery (Rees, 2014). However commissioning itself becomes a complex activity whereby responsibilities for service delivery fall to many different areas of government, with a distinction between central government and local authority commissioning. The provision of many public services remain the statutory duty of local authorities regardless of whether their operation is commissioned to an external provider, thus instigating a closeness between local

authority and the commissioned organisations. Conversely it has been reported that ‘both public service commissioners and providers struggled with the more fundamental ideas underpinning commissioning’ (Checkland et al, 2012: 540), suggesting a lack of understanding over the core purpose of commissioning itself. The notion of public service commissioning at the local governmental level has become associated with perceptions of cost saving whereas central government idealise over the collaborative elements and delivery of social outcomes (Rees, 2014). Whilst cost saving, collaboration and social outcomes can all be seen as agendas driving commissioned public service delivery the extent to which all three can be delivered successfully under a commissioned contract is questionable.

The imposition of ‘austerity’ measures have seen a significant proportion of local authorities unable to adequately deliver statutory services (Exchange, 2015), experiencing severe adversity by those organisations commissioned to provide services through stepped reductions in funding. This thinking was initially supported by the Conservative Party’s community government initiative in the form of the ‘Big Society’ agenda, relating to the way in which ‘politics of government have come to define, shape and orient communities [attempting] to responsabilise certain groups of citizens for particular purposes and ends’ (Ilcan & Basok, 2004: 130). In other words the Big Society intends to put citizens in charge of their own community services, though this can be construed as a removal of governmental accountability for services which remain a statutory responsibility (Ferry & Murphy, 2018)

Public sector initiated or sponsored partnerships contend with struggles in the formation of identity as a single autonomous organisation, though a singular identity is neither relative or desired amongst the plurality of identities surrounding an evolving organisation, nonetheless a

challenge is presented at the initial stages of creation in ambiguity over form (Howard & Taylor, 2010).

There is an expectation under the mutualisation agenda that organisations should function like businesses following the principles of efficiency, being ‘customer driven’ and ‘client oriented’ (Kickert, 2001: 136), as such directly accountable to all organisational stakeholders. This manifests as a form of responsabilised autonomy whereby government ‘...is relieved of its power and obligations to know, plan, calculate and steer from the centre [...] no longer required to answer all of society’s needs’ (Rose, 1999: 174). Government subsidies and grants act as a steering mechanism, although leave organisations open to challenges of accountability, diverting attention away from political gaze through the multitier nature of hybridity. Put simply leaving stakeholders to determine who or what an organisation is.

The act of commissioning appears to elicit compromise in respect of organisational mission and objectives, as contractual requirements often result in sacrificed mission based values. In the realm of public service this has the potential to be perceived as socially undesirable by stakeholders. Milbourne (2009) highlights that strategic commissioning is intended to support collaboration, across both service areas and sectors. Rees (2014) concludes that the shifting relationship between the state and third sector has many uncertain dimensions, however despite much contention over the approach the sector appears strong in terms of community and user engagement, a necessity in delivering social ‘outcomes’ and impact (Miller, 2013).

Social enterprise is considered to possess a uniqueness in its ability to innovate and prevail over the shortcomings inherent within the public sector, going a step beyond mere contractual arrangements (Bubb & Mitchell, 2009; Buckingham, 2009; Macmillan, 2010, 2013). Despite diffusion from the state in responsibility of public services through commissioning, the

concept of isomorphism suggests that third sector organisations operating under commissioned contracts are likely to take on the structures and practices of their funders (Rees, 2014). Thus a closeness continues to exist between the state and ‘commissioned’ service providers, falling contrary to the supposed increase of innovation and autonomy anticipated through the act of ‘commissioning’.

The context of mutualisation leads to much confusion and conflation of terminology for stakeholders adding to complicate perceptions of this unique space. In 2018 Social Enterprise UK published a report which indicated that 115 public service mutuals were now in existence in accordance with DCMS’s definition with a combined turnover of £1.6 billion , this demonstrating the growing size of the sector. A Public Service Mutual is defined as an ‘organisation which has left the public sector [...], and continue to deliver public services, and in which employee control plays a significant role in their operation’ (Mutuals Taskforce 2012: 6) or as: ‘an organisation that has transitioned out of a public sector body to become an independent public service provider’ (Transition Institute, 2011: 35). Whilst studies have collated data across a range of public sector mutuals an in-depth account of the challenges such organisations face and the process of evolution they undertake to become successful in the long term is less well evidenced. The empirical focus of this research is on Eduvate (a pseudonym applied for the purpose of anonymization of the case), which is an independent Public Service Mutual organisation and formerly a public service directly operated by an English local authority. The service initially operated over fifty branches of an English county in addition to four mobile units and three prisons, growing in a year to additionally take on a contract for services in a geographically proximate unitary authority. Intentionally disruptive processes of organizing continue to define the ‘going’ as turbulent and uncertain, but bring opportunity for innovation

towards new trajectories for the organisation. At the point of ‘spin-out’ a briefing document was published from the ‘chair of the new mutual’ with the following excerpt outlining the intentions for Eduvate.

The alternative operating model will be a new, independent organisation which will be a public service mutual. This new organisation will be able to make savings through a tailored approach to management, support and running costs and have the freedom to access new sources of income. It will be more agile and focused to respond quickly and flexibly to community needs and demands and will be able to work in more innovative and collaborative ways with [the county’s] communities and other partners. The new organisation is likely to have charitable status and a mix of staff and community ownership. The new organisation aims to develop a strong, sustainable business model that will enable it to thrive. As a mutual organisation, independent from [local authority], the service will maintain and grow professional expertise and experience, deepen links to the community, enshrine a social ethos and purpose and will be able to make additional savings as well as access new forms of income, whether directly from developing new chargeable services, by eligibility for grant funding, encouraging sponsorship and philanthropy or delivering additional contracts. This flexibility means that it is the only viable option for keeping all [the counties branches] open and professionally run, and able to innovate and adapt to remain relevant into the future.

[Eduvate, 2015, p.5]

The focus of this work is then to present new knowledge in processual accounts of organisational change, underpinned theoretically by sensemaking (Weick, 1995; Brown et. al., 2008; Mills et. al., 2010) and identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia et al., 2010; Hatch et al., 2015; Howard-Grenville et al., 2013; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Rindova et al., 2011). This type of organisation is seen as vital to the delivery of public services in austerity and post-austerity Britain (and elsewhere), the organisational form is used widely in other sectors, and yet there are challenges in or gaps in how the lived experiences of an organisation are played out and understood. This review will explain why we need more research on identity and change which is specific to new forms of public sector organizing.

1.2 Preview of Bodies of Knowledge

I use three core bodies of knowledge as lens by which to view experiences for this work, which include identity, change and sensemaking. Here I preview these core bodies of knowledge, It should be noted that many of the insights from these core bodies of knowledge have been focused in the context of private, public and voluntary sector organisations which do not include Public Service Mutuals. This raises several important questions for consideration, 1) the novelty of Public Service Mutual's and their applicability to both an identity and change context. Unlike corporate acquisitions or mergers, the identity formation stages offer something new to the development of a primarily staff led entity. Therefore do PSM's raise new challenges for thinking in relation to identity and change which cannot be adequately addressed by existing bodies of knowledge? I will return to discuss these questions in the literature review Chapter 2.

There is a growing body of literature on 'hybrid' organisations as a means to describe forms of organizing in the public service space, imprinted with differing and sometimes competing logics, (Billis, 2010, Battilana & Lee 2014, Brandsen, Van de Donk & Putters, 2005). To date hybrids have been discussed at the organisational level, though the very means by which they both become enacted and established requires a view beyond organisations (Montgomery et al., 2012; Nicholls & Huybrechts, 2016). Integral to the concept of public service reform is the concept of the hybrid, this is not directly a form or structure, but a means to reference and apply sense to organisations which blur boundaries or combine competing logics. Billis (2010: 3) remarks on ambiguities found in reference to hybrid organisations 'What has often been called the 'blurring' of the boundaries of the public, private and third sector has long been recognized in the literature [there is a] need to move beyond that vague description [...] practice, policy and theory now have an urgent need for a tougher conceptual approach to the phenomenon'. In this

vein, both ‘hybrid’ and ‘hybridity’ appear to remain relatively unexplored providing a handful of definitions by which to compare. Amongst those scholars who have defined hybrids and or hybridity it is apparent that variations exist between each definition, although at the core is the existence of ‘something’ taking influence from more than one source. Battilana & Lee (2014) refer to such organisations as those which combine identities, forms and/or institutional logics. In the commissioning context, ‘hybrid’ organisations bring together entrepreneurial as well as social logics. These logics may also work in competition as trade-offs have to be made between social goals and resource transfers (Mullins et. al., 2012). Hybridity is not a new concept with origins drawing upon the ethnographic study of postcolonial borderlands, now finding usage in relation to organisational forms (Hannerz, 2002).

Table 1 Definitions of hybrid, hybrids and hybridity

Term	Author	Definition
Hybrids	Borys & Jemison, 1989: 235	Organisational arrangements that use resources and/or governance structures from more than one existing organisation.
Hybrids	Kickert 2001:136	[...] expected to function like businesses: to be efficient, customer driven, and client oriented. Yet, they perform tasks that are inherently public.
Hybrids	Blessing, 2012: 190	[...] spanning state and market, combining public and private action logics, and subject to multiple sets of institutional conditions.
Hybrid	Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 303	Hybrid may occur either because designer deliberately mix forms in an attempt to blend the advantages of two or more different types or because the organisation is changing.
Hybridity	Kraatz & Block 2008:243	The organisation confronting institutional pluralism plays in two or more games at the same time [...] thus possesses multiple, institutionally-derived identities which are conferred upon it by different segments of its pluralistic environment.
Linking identity and logics	Meyer & Hammerschmid 2006:1012	[...] shifts in institutional logics can be tracked by the extent to which actors draw on the social identities derived from the competing logics [...] hybrid logics and identities the actors construct by mixing a new orientation with more orthodox beliefs. [...] vocabularies and accounts that actors employ to communicate their identity claims reflect such local versions of broader logics.

Definitions presented in Table 1 demonstrate that discussion on hybrids focus at the (2010) argues notions of hybridity to date have been better explored independently in relation to

the public and private sectors. The definitions highlighted in Table 1 seeking to define the concept of hybridity become illustratively rich in their own right, but do not offer insight into the complexity of diminished sectoral boundaries. Bransden et al. (2005) and Evers (2005) consider that hybrid organisations are seen as a separate sector and therefore are not able to fit into public, private or third sector frames. The concept of such enacted hybrids are discussed in relation to other forms of ‘voluntary associations’ particularly in relation to Housing Associations

Organic hybrids’ where organisations moved away from a classical voluntary association form, as a result of key changes such as employment of staff, engagement in trading to generate income and ‘enacted hybrids’ which are set up from the start as hybrid forms with mixed principal owners (as in the case of stock transfer housing associations in England with their hybrid governance of tenants, local authority persons and ‘independents’). The move towards the more entrenched forms of hybridity (defined by Billis, 2010, p. 59) as ‘the permanent influence by public and private actors on the governance and operations of an organisation in return for the resources provided by these actors’ is evident for example in US public housing organisations where the entire operation has become dependent on resources from a combination of sectors and could no longer function as a ‘pure’ single sector organisation.

[Mullins et. al, 2012]

A particular focus in this definition is an acknowledgement that the resourcing structures of such organisations have come to rely on the benefits of a combination of sectors that they could no longer function within one single sector. The emphasis here on a ‘pure’ single sector, is somewhat dubious as many organisations who do not consider themselves to be hybrid may still draw upon other sectors for influence. Hence, definitions of hybrid organisations to date appear to lack depth, which attend to the many different kinds of sectoral influences that may shape hybrid organisational forms. Organisations in this space often exist as single autonomous entity, albeit influenced by a hybrid form with differing overarching legal identities that can be selected. This is further complicated by a lack of consistency over the type of forms used in organizing (Townsend & Hart, 2008). The complex combination of influences as noted here aims to be

‘intentionally disruptive’ to a way of organizing, due to past modes of organizing that become taken for granted. It should be acknowledged that the Hybrid does not become an accidental form. The form in ‘Eduvate’, was created purposefully to embed a socially entrepreneurial way of working. Hatch & Cunliffe (2006: 303) consider that ‘hybrids may occur either because designer deliberately mix forms in an attempt to blend the advantages of two or more different types or because the organisation is changing. In a search for continuity individuals within an organisation latch on to what they have done in the past that they may feel comfortable with rather than things they may not be familiar. Therefore what is required at the beginning stages of a newly formed hybrid for learning about becoming socially entrepreneurial? The exploration of hybrid organisations in this way is not to prescribe a single definition, to show/acknowledge that no two hybrid organisations may look the same, which renders definition difficult (Scott, 1981: 45). Yet some further clarification is needed in terms of how this concept is or at least how it can be anchored to a specific context. Without such clarification hybridity remains an abstract notion and therefore allows for only limited focus in both practitioner and academic literature. The concept of enacted hybrid introduced by Billis (2010) applies here although this itself remains relatively unexplored, especially regarding how people ‘do hybridity’ in practice. The enormity of the challenge of providing further clarity on this concept and may well be a reason as to why this concept has not benefitted from an extensive empirically focused study to date, instead merely being a descriptive of a trend. Added to this the rise of organisational forms which can be construed as hybrids further complicates our ability to understand the concept as these forms in their own right present a unique context.

1.2.1 Mutualisation

Major political reforms introduced under a conservative government promoting social enterprise as a solution to efficiency and innovation in public service, have seen the UK public sector undergo and continue to undergo major transition, operating through unprecedented austerity (Vickers et al., 2017). The mutualisation agenda set out the right for public sector workers to request to take over services they deliver (Le Grand, 2012), with many service based organisations operating under newly constructed employee-led models for such purposes. These organisations draw upon both economic and social forces presenting challenges on traditional organisational boundaries. The ‘Service Mutual’ came to be formally defined under the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat Coalition seeing employee-led spinouts arise in a range of local and central government services (Cabinet office, 2011, 43). As of 2018 the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport are consulting on the definition for PSM’s to see what types of organisation should be included. Francis Maude Minister of the cabinet office with responsibility for public service efficiency and reform, commented that such models empower public sector workers to release their ‘entrepreneurial vigour’. While the primary strategic objectives for these organisations remains to create value that is social as well as financial in society, the space in which they operate becomes a hybrid of economic and social agendas, both operationally and in terms of stakeholder demands.

The concept of the enacted hybrid appears in the work of Billis (2010) a precursor to the mutualisation reform movement, referring to an organisation which becomes established through direct government creation or sponsorship from day one. In relation to mutualisation this manifests as the ‘right to request’ by employees to ‘spin out’ of the public sector. This is however contested in some instances, where local authorities have instead taken a lead role in the creation

of entirely new organisations, through commissioned agreements to run services previously managed in-house. Arising in this way organisations often lack the autonomy and necessary skills to reform a service, counter to the intentions of the mutualisation agenda (Le Grand & Roberts, 2018). The most notable aspect here being that the service provider becomes an independent entity in their own right, with involvement from the state only in capacity as an advisor, commissioner or funder. This most commonly achieved through a public service mutual structure, however this in itself is not recognized as a legal form, with much nuance existing around specific forms of organizing. Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) published research in 2018 which interviewed 75 public service mutual. Within this sample a range of legal forms and ownership models were found. Over half existed as a form of Community Interest Company (CIC). A small proportion were companies limited by share, some existing as community Benefit Societies and others Co-operative Societies. In addition some separately or dually registered as charities. Respondents were asked how they identified themselves as an organisation predominantly this was as a Social Enterprise with 55 of the 75 respondents identifying in this way. A further significant proportion identified as spin-outs notably from NHS structures under the Department of Health's Right to Request programme. Thirty two identified as a mutual and 28 as public sector spin-outs. Sixteen described themselves as employee owned with a further seven identifying as co-operatives. It is important to note public service mutual's are not identical in their structure but represent a growing group of organisations working in the place of the state to run public services, being distinct from capitalist firms or traditional non-profit organisations (Le Grand & Roberts, 2017).

It is therefore understandable of the confusion surrounding what mutualisation itself represents. The findings from SEUK demonstrate the uniqueness of organisational form under

the mutualisation umbrella and the disparate lexicon used as identifiers in this sector. The nature of legal form and ownership models merely provides a shell structure for organizing, the criticality of the mutualisation process is present in how existing operations spin-out and evolve to inhabit their new shell.

The UK government established a Mutual Support Programme to assist local authority service departments to establish themselves as public service mutual (PSM's), defining PSM's as:

...an organisation principally made up of individuals who have left the public sector in order to deliver public services (and potentially other services) by way of that organisation, and where employee ownership or engagement has a significant impact on the governance of the organisation. A Public Service Mutual can take a variety of forms in terms of business model, legal structure and membership.

[Cabinet Office, 2014].

Organisations themselves can take on considerably varied legal structures and still be recognised as a mutual and, this is illustrated below in an excerpt obtained from the mutual's guidance pages (Cabinet Office, 2014).

Table 2 Mutual Legal forms

Legal form	Overview	Ownership	Liability
Company limited by guarantee	Usually not-for-profit	Members control the company. Typically, members can attend general meetings and vote, and in most companies they can appoint and remove the directors, and have ultimate control over the company	Members have limited personal liability, usually up to £1. This is usually written into the articles of association
Company limited by shares	Usually profit motivated	Shareholders with voting rights ultimately control the company. Other shareholders can exist with non-voting rights	Shareholders have no personal liability if the company goes into debt
Co-operative	Organisation that is often equally owned by members	Members, often consumers, producers or employees, own and democratically control the organisation	Can be limited or unlimited where each member takes on the full liability of the organisation if it falls into debt

[Source: gov.uk]

However legal forms are not limited to non-profit structures. The mutual term therefore appears to repackage the concept of the hybrid organisation as explored earlier (an all-encompassing term by which organisations drawing upon varying sectoral influences can be recognised). The creation of a new mutual appears to continue to be sponsored by ‘government funds’ though created initially by government to fulfil the service need. Guidance is published by the Cabinet Office (2014) in terms of ‘starting a public service mutual providing links to cases on adult social care, children’s services, young peoples, education, health and cultural, all of which have spun out of local authority. Though there is the potential for such organisations to utilise for profit structures over not for profit structures there is arguably greater potential to be entrepreneurially enterprising in profit driven organisations, which suggests challenges around the prioritization of financial gain and the creation of ‘social’ value.

1.3 Aims of the Thesis

The thesis builds through depth of discussion, outlining how this research can further develop understanding in the identified fields, of organisational change, individual and organisational identity and sensemaking. Theoretically this thesis presents a processual account, based in understandings of identities, both individual, and organisational, as continuously enacted through sensemaking. A preliminary review of the literature identifies the need for greater understanding on processes of which identity is initially formed and then plays-out over time within a given organisation. This research therefore seeks to make sense of the challenges presented to both individuals and organisations in relation to identity through the processual continuum of change. The following research questions were developed from the literature review.

RQ1: What are the challenges a ‘public service’ organisation faces during a major change?

RQ2: How do stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change?

RQ2 Sub Questions:

Part a) How is an identity of a new organisation formed by organisational stakeholders?

Part b) How do multiple organisational identities unfold over time?

Part c) How do organisational stakeholders make sense of processes of change in relation to their own identities?

Methodologically from an interpretive phenomenological stand point the above research questions were designed to explore processes of identity formation for both individuals and

organisations. This in addition to making sense of identity in relation to change. To achieve this I collected data using multiple methods consisting of interviews, observation and document collection informed by longitudinal case study approaches. Analysis involved thematically organizing data against identified constructs. The findings therefore present a chronological processual account of organisational evolution. The questions are addressed by the evidence collated from this chronological account in Chapter Five.

This work seeks to make four theoretical contributions drawing upon the findings of this three year study which explains how stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change. First, stakeholders perform identity work by creating their own narrative for identity as a new organisational form evolves, pieced together from the senior level and local level organisational narratives and the ambiguity arising in-between (Section 5.2). Second, in a spin-out, identity formation processes unfold through iteration between individual and organisational identity (Section 5.3), I theorize two specific practices; specifically assimilation (5.3.1) and repositioning (5.3.2) which occur in this process. Third, I integrate these two practices to explain how the iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity manifests through evolution to present initially hybrid, and then multiple, identities (Section 5.4). The latter arise from the way in which identities are composed and/or decomposed through identity legitimisation and contestation. Finally then, stakeholders use sensemaking processes through certainty and uncertainty to initially temporally frame what is changing, then to determine a position for their own continuity (Section 5.5). In a context where funding cuts to services through reduced local government budgets, stakeholders in these organisations must seek innovative solutions to service delivery, which in turn places a greater reliance on the third sector for the sustained delivery of public services. This research builds understanding about how

individuals negotiate these changing demands, making sense of their organisation's evolving place in the world and then presents a model for sensemaking accounts of third sector change.

1.4 Eduvate the case

The case, Eduvate formerly a public service department under a UK local authority was created as a shell organisation company limited by guarantee with a board of trustees. The organisation was formerly run by the local authority, but its operation then 'spun out' of the public sector to become an independent social enterprise (see Figure 4). Staff or friends (individuals from community groups attached to local branches) of the organisation could become members and by doing shared limited liability to the value of £1. In becoming independent Eduvate was tasked with finding new sources of income due to a declining local authority grant year-on-year, the organisation is now able to choose their own strategic direction, with relatively light touch oversight from their principal commissioner the local authority. Eduvate has been able to apply for a wider range of funding sources, and develop new ways of working. This significant strategic decision has implications for all of Eduvate's employees placing requirements on individuals to develop skills in identifying new streams of revenue to secure the organisation's future.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in six broad chapters, introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion followed by conclusions and limitations. Chapter Two the Literature Review is presented in three sections which cover the policy context outlining the public service reforms leading to the creation of spin-out organisations from local and national government. I then

explore the three core areas of literature which provide the theoretical basis of the thesis, which include individual and organisational identity, organisational change and processes of sensemaking.

Chapter Three discusses the methodological approach taken, outlining research design, the ethical considerations surrounding fieldwork alongside data collection and analysis. This chapter presents the process of research design and the selection and implementation of methodology used to explore the research questions arising from the literature as outlined in the previous chapter. The chapter begins with an explanation of the research design, explicitly how the approach addresses the research questions. This chapter focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of the chosen methodology, before discussing the practical considerations of collecting data, including using a case study approach alongside qualitative data collection methods. Key issues will also be identified that emerged at different stages in the process of design and delivery and form the basis of some limitations in the study.

Chapter Four Observing the process of Evolution provides an in-depth chronological account of Eduvates Evolution woven together from interview, observation and documental data. The chapter is structured in a chronological way, focusing on the 'critical events' in the life of the organisation which become the cues and frames for sense to be made of the past, present and future in respect of identity, both individual and organisational. These critical events therefore form a frame by which findings are represented, to give both a sense of the journey but also the prominence that each event commands towards the construction and/or deconstruction of identity and the processes of sensemaking undertaken through change.

Chapter Five the discussion, I return to answer the research questions and develop four theoretical contributions drawing upon the findings of this three year study which explain how

stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change and the iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity. I refer to the theoretical underpinnings of the research to position these contributions against existing debates within the literature.

Chapter Six presents the conclusions of the research covering a summary of the key findings and re-stating the four contributions theoretical contributions. 1) Ambiguity and the evolution of identity over time, 2) The iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity, 3) The manifestation of hybrid then multiple identities, 4) The temporal framing of change. The limitations are also outlined in relation to the methodology, specific constraints arising through the course of the study and wider applicability of the findings. Finally I consider how this research can further develop understanding in identified fields and practically, with clear implications for practitioners leading change in the public and non-profit sectors.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Organized into three broad areas this literature review first considers the current political context in which public sector organisations find themselves operating within or rather as a consequence of. The substantive part of the review focuses on three core bodies of literature, identity, organisational change and sensemaking. These literatures are selected as a theoretical foundation for this work as they become illustrative of the process of organizing. My contributions develop theory from empirical enquiry as organisational identity is discussed with a specific focus on identity formation, considering both the social actor and social constructionist perspectives. Identity work is explored in relation to how individuals accomplish their own identities through continual re-negotiation over time; a key focus within the identity literature concerns the fluidity versus the endurance of identity where the former is argued here as the progressive approach towards identity studies. The literature explores change as a process of becoming, with a core focus on processual perspectives linking with the temporality of change and the sensemaking process.

2.3 Identity & Organizing

A particular focus in this thesis will be given towards better understanding how and why identity comes to be formed in reference to the changing organisational entity. Mutualisation requires

changing organisations to re-define themselves prompting questions of organisational identity. It is first necessary to look at current definitions on identity and organizing, terms which I refer to throughout this work. 'Identity' can be defined in terms of perception eg: 'who I am, who are we', this has implications for membership and or belonging in the organisational setting. Organizing becomes a means of putting order around a way of being, within such order seeing 'an everyday that is sometimes exciting, sometimes moving and sometimes mundane (Czarniawska, 2008: 134). Before I consider organisations as entities, Weick (1995:1) argues 'Instead, assume that there are processes which create, maintain and dissolve social collectivities and that these processes constitute the work of organizing, and that the ways in which these processes are continuously executed are the organisation'. Identity in this way becomes a medium for the maintenance and dissolution of such collectivities, to the extent that the process of organizing becomes the organisation.

2.3.1 Organisational identity

To take a process as evolution perspective on organisational identity (i.e. Corley & Gioia, 2004; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia et al., 2010; Hatch et al., 2015; Howard-Grenville et al., 2013; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Rindova et al., 2011). Albert & Whetten's (1985) conceptualisation of organisational identity as central, enduring and distinctive (CED) remains foundational to research on organisational identity, though continues to be scrutinised through the development of scholarship in this field (Chremin, 2005; Gioia et al., 2000; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). The central characteristic refers to the 'more or less internally consistent system of pivotal beliefs, values and norms, typically anchored in the organisational mission that informs sense-making and action' (Ashforth & Mael, 1996: 26). Centrality works towards a reflection of the desires of

the organisation or that which members define as the vital features. Ideas of identity communicated by senior members of the organisation only become legitimised when members also share the same understanding of that organisational identity. ‘Fixed perspectives’ on identity are contested (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998) in favour of perspectives that consider identities to be much more fluid, especially where processes of organizing are considered evolutionary. Therefore in anticipation to both planned and unplanned change a dissonance may arise amongst members over future identity (Kreiner et al., 2015). Both centrality and endurance focus on those features of identity which remain prominent over time, therefore establishing a sense of distinctive identity attributes.

Distinctiveness connotes an element of difference in terms of how members see their organisation in comparison to how others see the organisation (King, Felin & Whetten, 2010). Institutional theory offers an important perspective here, as isomorphic tendencies become a challenge towards maintaining a sense of distinctiveness, where some attributes may continue to be shared between the commissioner (local authority) and the commissioned organisation, with particular regard to funding procedures (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983). Distinctiveness becomes less tangible the context of mergers, acquisitions and spinoffs, where the alignment of identity is said to be much less clear between that of historic identity and that of “new” identity, where members make ‘new sense of what their organisation is really about’ (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006: 455).

In addition to Albert and Whetten (1985), foundational works have sought to provide a definition for organisational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998), yet only recently have scholars begun to explore the emergence of identity in terms of how

identities are produced and enacted and how they shift across time and space. Following a process approach this research examines a period of significant change in what is perceived to be central and distinctive about an organisation undertaking mutualisation, focusing on the events and processes underlying such transformation (Fachin & Langley, 2018).

Schultz et al (2012) argue that a shift in focus is needed from ‘... “organisation” to “organizing” as a first step to enabling scholars to ‘capture both elements of identity: the *being* and the *becoming* of identity’. They call for more mixed method approaches to shed light on identity processes’ (p.11). Process approaches to identity refer to the ongoing accomplishment of organisational identity (e.g. Fiol, 2002; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Coupland & Brown, 2004). Of significant importance here is the study of organisational identity formation in *creating* a new organisation. Whilst studies have considered aspects of identity formation (Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998; Corley & Gioia, 2004; Clegg, Rhodes, & Kornberger, 2007), few have addressed how *identity forms in new organisations*. This is important because shifts in organisational status, form and name may have a strong impact on the perceptions of ‘who we are’ and destabilise previous assumptions in reference to that which is central, enduring and distinctive. Most notably in reference to public to private sector transitions and the altogether novel focus on public service mutuals, as the name suggests from public origins existing in the private sector. This poses some questions in terms of what it is that can be considered to be a new organisation and the extent to which existing literature on identity and change can be applied in this instance.

It is acknowledged that a new organisation always carries with it some history, though it is the capture of this history that becomes essential to understanding the process of identity formation, as it is this history that forms the basis for identity to evolve. There is potential for

this thesis to contribute to existing knowledge by examining how identity work is performed as a new organisational form evolves over time, recognizing that:

‘Inter-identity boundary interfaces may be permeable or strong depending on whether and how strongly individuals sense an overlap between aspects of their own individual identity and that of the organisation...the organisational identification process as one in which individuals perceive overlap and oneness between their own identity and the organisation’s identity, a boundary perspective on identification acknowledges the same dynamic but focuses our attention on the interaction between multiple aspects of individual and organisational identity’

[Maclean & Webber, 2015: 158]

Therefore, the development of identification and identity work will be explored on a premise of permeability between individual and organisational identity which become strengthened when the two overlap or align.

2.3.2 Perspectives on organisational identity

The field of organisational identity is divergent over two dominant schools of thought, the social actor perspective and the social constructionist perspective (Pratt, 2016). Both perspectives have implications for the development of organisational identity and the process of change which are at the heart of this thesis. In recent years attempts have been made to connect both the social constructionist and social actor perspectives (Gioia & Patvardhan, 2012; Gioia, Price, Hamilton & Thomas, 2010). Ravasi and Schultz (2006:436) argue that merit can be drawn from the juxtaposition of the two perspectives in ‘producing a more accurate representation of organisational identities as dynamically arising from the interplay between identity claims and understandings’. After acknowledging the distinctions between the two core perspectives, I develop a model to further assist in understanding organisational identity in the context of organisational change.

2.3.3 The Social actor perspective versus the social construction perspective

The social actor perspective originates from institutional theory and defines organisational identity in alignment to the central, enduring and distinctive (CED) attributes of an organisation (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Inherent is the notion that organisations require continuity, coherence and distinctiveness (Whetten, 2003). However these terms do not appear to sit easily with the processes of change, representing instead the view that identity is rather more fixed. Identity is considered to be a property of an organisation, whereby organisational phenomena are treated as open claims, with identity guiding strategic action (Dennis, Gioia & Hamilton, 2016). Identity is defined as ‘those things that enable social actors to satisfy their inherent needs to be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and to be unique actors or entities’ (Whetten & Mackey, 2002: 396). Relatedly social actor perspectives argue that deeply held beliefs change only rarely, demonstrating a requirement for a sense of consistency and stability in identity. Investigating hybrid identities in relation to rural farm cooperatives, Foreman & Whetten (2002) observed both the existence of business and family identities, concluding that differing social actor identities resulted in conflict. Organisational identity under this perspective is said to convey consistent claims to both internal and external stakeholders. As noted, identity does not formulate a sense of consistency and if it does, it masks underlying inconsistency.

The social constructionist perspective demonstrates a stronger emphasis towards changing interpretations of an organisation’s identity (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Here identity is in the process of continuous change, whereby organisations can possess multiple identities simultaneously (Gioia et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 2002). Under this perspective identity is considered a collectively held frame by which individuals make interpretations (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997). Corley et al (2006: 87) discuss this in the form of ‘self-referential meaning’, that

is, 'an entity's attempts to define itself', whereby leaders may work to reconstruct identity in attempts to define an 'entity'.

Organisational identity is considered relational in terms of how members define themselves in view of being distinctive from others. However such self-referential meanings may be tacit or explicit (Corley & Gioia, 2003). The social constructionist approach prioritises contextual change over the enduring constituents of identity. Human agency therefore becomes a significant force amongst members in renegotiating interpretations of their organisation and what its official identity claims mean to them, particularly how leaders and members negotiate identity within volatile and changing environments. This is known as 'identity work' (2.3.6). Kreiner et al. (2015: 1003) propose three dialectics in relation to the identity challenges members face: 'overarching elasticity', 'centrality' and 'endurance', indicating 'organisational spinoffs, divisions, or schisms can involve considerable identity challenges for members, as taken-for-granted assumptions about identity seem to disappear'.

This study draws attention to the importance of 'identity elasticity' as a core characteristic through the continual renegotiation of organisational identity, this means identity can be mouldable, stretch or change back over time. In other words, what was known before diminishes in existence to be reconstructed in a new way, adding further credibility to existing arguments of fluidity over endurance (e.g Chremin, 2005; Gioia et al., 2000; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). This is not to say that through the reconstruction of identity that one can be ignorant of the past, but the elastic nature of identity discussed by Kreiner et al (2015) suggests that form is instead being re-shaped in a different way, drawing upon those characteristics which are considered to be central today. Albert & Whetten's (1985) notion of endurance appears to be out of place here, because accomplishing identity through continual renegotiation suggests identity

can no longer endure in its entirety, although certain core fragments may persist. In relation to public sector organisations the process of ‘spinning out’ from the local authority can be seen as a catalyst towards such identity shift, but at the same time people may continue to retain certain norms/ways of doing things which relate to the enduring and central elements of identity. However of importance to this research is to gain understanding towards which aspects of identity remain prominent and which are more fluid. Therefore in this work I do not treat the two perspectives independently, but instead following other scholars view them as complementary (Gioia & Hamilton, 2016; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006, Gioia et al., 2010).

2.3.4 Identity formation and plurality

‘Identity formation’ in a PSM may present challenges due to the initial existence of conflicting identities grounded in hybrid logics for example attempting to combine both commercial and public service principles (Jager & Beyes, 2010; Kreutzer & Jager, 2011). How identity comes into being in this context remains elusive beyond the explanations of organisational members. As such the ways in which organisations manage identities are many and varied, drawing upon mechanisms and practices as a means of understanding (Chenhall et al., 2015), although understanding gleaned from such mechanisms and practices towards the management of conflicting identities remains limited. The use of ‘conflicting’ in reference to multiple identities connotes a degree of negativity, although for identity to form it can be argued that conflict becomes a generative part of the process. Pratt and Foreman (2000) propose a framework of identity management response which classify four major types of managerial responses: compartmentalization, deletion, integration, and aggregation. These form the basis of Chenhall et al.’s (2015) study, exploring how identity conflicts can be resolved. The first focus on conflict,

raises questions in terms of the limited usage of the well-founded identity literature which supports a necessity of conflict to some degree. The findings provide some plausible new insights on the complexity of which identity conflicts can be embedded within an organisation, though such claims remain explorative propositions with further theoretical support required. A further point of critique is the basis for which things like budgets and informal meetings are considered to promote identity and routines, which are considered to be demonstrative of emphasizing an organisations values. The use of routines as a basis to explore the continual re-negotiation of identity appears a promising starting point as it is the daily activity of individuals within the organisation become the routines on which identity is based. This would suggest identity struggles occur on a daily basis, with a need for sense to be made of such struggles at the individual level. Struggles in the context of routine activity require an awareness that routine itself encompasses a sense of diverseness and thus influences the creation of competing demands. Whilst Chenhall et al. (2015) acknowledge that the case study places a prominent focus on labels for identities, the evidence remains limited in support of the prominence of routines which may come to influence the management of identities.

Clegg et al. (2007) focus on the formation of identity within emerging industries, focusing on how newly constructed identities become legitimate, arguing that ‘it is the ongoing interaction between multiple identities that creates the dynamic and dialectic struggle between being and becoming’ (p.509), concluding that stakeholders performed certain identities in order to legitimise and validate their organisation’s own actions and goals. The work of Clegg et al., (2007) remains limited, with data collection focusing solely on the principals of firms, failing to acknowledge the relational construction of identities. Identities therefore viewed as ‘emerging’

through social interactions require insights from wider stakeholder groupings and organisational members, in order to understand how they are relationally constructed.

Kroezen and Heugens (2012) present a conceptual model of identity formation based upon the Dutch micro brewing industry, which rely upon two central processes (a) initial imprinting of potential identity attributes upon organisations (b) the subsequent enactment of selection of these attributes by identity insiders. Of particular note is the found importance with other actors in the industry and the role of peers and external audiences in identity formation. Hatch and Schultz (1997), Hatch and Schultz (2002) and Ravasi and Schultz (2006) discuss how new identities become substantiated through shared histories, characteristic attributes and unique practices in collective construction and revision of organisational self-definitions. Parallels are drawn here with the social actor perspective on organisational identity. They argue that identity claims are not random but rather drawn from a specific set of organisational claims (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). However this becomes problematic when organisational claims may not yet be founded or in the case of a new mutual organisation which is reliant on key individuals and their accomplishment of identity, in order to found an organisational identity. This is where my thesis seeks to add to the literature.

Hybrid organisations may employ practices in attempts to manage multiple competing identities in a similar way that corporate identity seeks to impose an identity upon an organisation (Golden Biddle, 1997). Some scholars challenge Albert and Whetten's (1985) notion that identities can be enduring and instead argue that they are in a continual state of negotiation and re-negotiation (Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2006). Therefore is it possible for an organisation to manage its own identity or that of associated individuals and if so how is this achieved?

Organisational control mechanisms act in the form of processes to move people towards a common objective (Ouchi & Johnson, 1978), but this begs the question: how does control become related to the management of identity? Alvesson and Wilmott (2002: 623) refer to a form of identity regulation, 'Identity becomes a locus and target of organisational control as the economic and cultural elements of work become de-differentiated'. Identity regulation is therefore focused on the social practices of work and their implications for identity construction and reconstruction. It can be argued that organisational identity in this instance becomes the product of such self-regulated socialisation in relation to the organisation. In a corporate sense a desired organisational identity may align with/shape the processes of identity work which are relied upon to bring into alignment an individual identity. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) argue the point by exploring how the organisation becomes 'significant' as a source of identification through such means as corporate identity. This becomes a base for identity 'work', but the extent to which organisational control is exercised may be seen to have an impact on identity work.

The state of organisational transition raises a different kind of challenge concerning a shifting basis of control in relation to an individual's positioning as a base for identity work, particularly where the 'new' organisation may not yet be seen as 'significant' in terms of identification in comparison to the transitioning entity. Pratt (2000) argues that in the creation of a new entity, influence from another entity may typically be drawn upon, often as a means to establish legitimacy.

2.3.5 Hybrid organisational identity

The concept of hybrid organisational identity has received attention under institutional theory (Battilana & Lee, 2014) referring to organisations that combine identities, initially defined

under identity theory by Albert and Whetten (1985: 270) as identities that are ‘not expected to go together’. Pratt (2016) highlights that researchers should ‘pay particular attention to the conditions where different organisations join together or split apart’ (p.113), further suggesting that multiple organisational identities may be at play when organisations split or spin-off into a new organisation. Hybridity as a concept is considered with recognition towards dynamic change processes in the creation of new organisational forms that shape ‘who the organisation is’ (Pratt, 2016: 107). It is suggested that hybrid identities can be categorized in two types of structure: ideographic or holographic (Pratt & Foreman, 2000) Whilst the literatures on organisational identity, organisational forms and organisational logics offer complementary perspectives, with each contributing towards understanding ‘hybridization’ (Battilana & Lee, 2014), the focus here is on the boundaries, identities and interactions of members in a given field (Tracey, Phillips & Jarvis, 2011). The three perspectives hybrid organisations, hybrid organizing and hybrid identity each refer to the notion of being ‘hybrid’, yet their arbitrary usage across different bodies of literatures conflates meaning (Pratt, 2016). Hybrid identity can be seen to be distinctly different from hybrid organisations and hybrid organizing, though hybrid organisations may also hold hybrid identities (Pratt, 2016). The third sector is arguably unique in its formation, further complicating the understanding of organisational positioning and “identity”. In this sense self-classification is deemed both impossible and undesirable due to the complex nature of organisations, the continuous change within which they engage and the notion that identity is assumed (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Though the notion of hybrid is considered in relation to holding two identities, and multiple identity refers to two or more, research conducted by Pratt and Dutton (2000) found that oppositional sub identities may be present, thus repackaged as multiple hybrids, whereby Pratt

(2016) affirms it may be possible for organisations to hold multiple and hybrid identities though future research should address ‘how “multiple hybrids” play out in organisations’ (p.115).

Pratt (2016: 108) states ‘I did not find empirical papers in top journal outlets that explored how organisational identity hybridity influenced the organisation’s external relationship with stakeholders’. Thus there is an empirical and theoretical need to specifically explore how organisational identity may impact upon external relationships with stakeholders. This can be broken down into two components: first the perceptions of hybrid identity by external stakeholders. Second, how such perceptions of identity impact upon relationships with external stakeholders. The external stakeholders in relation to the organisational case of this research may have low affiliation with the organisation. The understanding of perceptions of this group therefore become particularly pertinent in terms of awareness to any change to the organisation’s identity.

In contrast to hybrid identity, normative and utilitarian identities can come to exist together but can be categorized as either ideographic or holographic, depending on identities that are embodied. Those considered ideographic exist as a singular identity in one grouping, though empirical research has yet to consider how a clear distinction between a normative and utilitarian split can be made (Pratt & Rafaelli, 1997). Besharov and Brickson (2016) talk of becoming hybrid at organisational birth which would suggest that hybrid organisational forms are a product only of newly created organisations. However legitimacy sought through sectoral alignment can create challenges for the hybrid organisation. Brown and Toyoki (2013) suggest that it is the construction and performance of identities that become the way in which organisational legitimacy is constructed. Legitimacy in this context refers to the actions of the organisation in responding to their environment driving conformity towards social expectations amongst stakeholders (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983). Brown and Toyoki (2013: 876) discuss internal legitimacy suggesting

there are two broad kinds in relation to identity work ‘legitimacy affirming’ and ‘legitimacy contesting’. However Skelcher (2012: 18) suggests hybridity becomes more than a search for legitimacy instead concerning the ‘context of a political struggle over questions of identity, boundaries, and legitimacy’. The focus on legitimacy centred on a social constructionist frame opens up the possibility for the existence of multiple identities, where those most dominant come to be legitimized by stakeholders. The debate on hybrid and multiple organisational identities offers in part a paradoxical scenario, that there can be one or the other or a combination of the two, though scholars have yet to consider a process based view whereby multiple/ hybrid identities aren’t mutually exclusive to, or might follow on from, one another.

2.3.6 Identity work

Organisational identity incorporates psychological phenomena such as beliefs, values and assumptions (He & Brown, 2013). Albert and Whetten (1985) argue that organisational identity becomes a reflection of an organisation’s attributes, values, culture, and activities. Thus identities are formed through ‘work’ in the form of a ‘range of activities that individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept’ (Snow & Anderson, 1987: 1348). Theories on identity work support the notion that the formation of identity is an enacted ongoing accomplishment between individuals, their relationships and dynamic social contexts (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006). The social context in which identity work and organisational identity take place is a dynamic one, yet the relationship between identity work and organisational identity remains somewhat loose. Individuals engage in ‘forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness’ (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003: 1165). Therefore they form

‘the varying ways in which individuals seek to establish their identity positions’ (McInnes & Corlett, 2012: 27). This provides a useful basis upon which to develop an understanding of how identity is built by social actors where there is a great richness and depth to be uncovered in how identity is constructed, where individuals strive to create coherent and distinctive ideas of themselves (Watson, 2008; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Svenningsson & Alvesson, 2003) reaffirmed through membership of social groups such as organisations (Coupland, 2001; Tracy, 2000; Tracy, Myers & Scott, 2006). Czarniawska (2004: 408) consider ‘actors’ to be ‘legitimized social groupings’ where “actions create actors or, rather their identities’, for example work groups, departments, corporations and public organisations, in accordance with ‘organisational fields’, described by DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 148) as identity work which: ‘involves the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of a personal self-identity’. This relates to discussion around organisational identity and the associations of distinctiveness that can be drawn between the self and the organisation, in terms of ‘who am I?’

Identity work becomes a way in which organisational members negotiate and improve boundaries between personal and organisational identity (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006). Gioia and Thomas (1996) illustrate how managers enact influence towards organisational identity, which may impact on identity work. However, managerial interventions towards shaping organisational identity are considered largely ineffective. They often take the form of an attractive vision which works to influence identity from a managerial perspective (Reger, 1994). Elsbach (1999) suggests major organisational change elicits subsequent change in identity, where ‘managers’ play a role in influencing members to relinquish old identification before new identity can be embraced. This extends beyond the role of managers to include:

‘Opinions and impressions, feelings and fantasies, hopes and expectations expressed by employees, suppliers, customers, shareholders, governments, and their regulatory agents as well as community members, the general public, the media, and political activists-whether positive or negative – all contribute to defining the identity of an organisation identity presents an original collage of the experiences and expectations of a wide array of people who view the organisation from a multiplicity of perspectives and approach it with a variety of motives’.

[Hatch & Schultz, 2004:1]

The above extract makes limited reference to individual identification, which is in a continuous cycle of evolution combining both the old and new. ‘Once I know who I am then I know what is out there. But the direction of causality flows just as often from the situation to a definition of a self as it does the other way’ (Weick, 1995: 20). Environments therefore become enacted through change, such fluidity provides an illustration towards actor constructs of organisational identities through histories in adaption to change as a means of sensemaking (Skalen, 2004). Gagliardi (1986) argues that the main strategy of an organisation is to maintain its identity under threatening conditions, although notes that organisations appear to change in order return back to a previous ‘sense of self’. This raises the question as to whether the maintenance of organisational identity through threatening conditions is perpetuated by the desire to preserve a sense of identity at the individual level. However, it should be acknowledged that organisational identity work is also concerned with issues of image preservation (Bartel & Dutton, 2001), which seeks to examine the externally driven aspects of identity: negotiating image and reputation, but seemingly at the exclusion of internally driven aspects of identity. However Gioia et al. (2000) argue there is a closeness between image and identity whereby the portrayal of image has the potential to influence future identity, regardless of whether image is construed as false or accurate. The implication for this research is in relation to historic image for example an image of what the

organisation previously ‘was’ or ‘represented’ and how that image may come to shape current and future identity, but how then image is construed as false or accurate by those that perceive it.

Beech et al., (2012: 46) highlight that tensions can become self-perpetuating both through the enactment of aspirational identities and movement both from dis-identities and hybrid identities, with tension responsive identity work contributing to the reproduction of identity. Here the reinforcement of tensions is considered to be self-perpetuating, and difference is sought through identity work to legitimize one’s own narrative in making sense of those tensions. The implications extend to how negatively impactful threatening conditions (e.g those giving rise to tensions between disassociation of current and historic identities and those fostered through the establishment of new organisational forms) can become in view of maintaining one’s own identity. This also relates to aspirational identities which may largely be construed as positive, yet become subject to negotiation and re-negotiation through identity work.

‘Conscious identity work is thus grounded in at least a minimal amount of self-doubt and self-openness, typically contingent upon a mix of psychological-existential worry and the skepticism or inconsistencies faced in encounters with others or with our images of them. Such tensions are stopped, or at least suspended, when receptiveness to identity securing positions and routines is matched by [...] opportunities for investing self in organizing practices’

[Alvesson & Willmott, 2002: 626].

Alvesson and Wilmott (2002: 626) claim that ‘In comparatively stable or routinized life situations, the narrative of self-identity runs fairly smoothly’. This work explores identity at the organisational level questioning how the organisation may deal with conflicting identity, though threats and conflicts become implicit to a group context and the interplay between groups.

2.3.7 Identification in a multiple identity context

Considering the existence of a multiple identity context for this research, it is important to understand how individuals work to ‘identify with’ multiple organisational identities. Dutton (1994: 293) offers the following definition ‘organisational identification is the degree to which a member defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation’. This situates organisational identification as a sense of oneness with an organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989 ; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Organisational identification can be considered in two ways; both at the individual level in relation to the distinctive attributes members associate with their alignment to an organisation, and at the organisational level when it forms the collective of distinctive characteristics of individual members (Empson, 2004). Organisational identity both acts to influence but also take influence from organisational identification during turbulent times, providing an expression of how members define themselves as a group (Empson, 2004). Similar to mergers and acquisitions, the formation of hybrid organisations imply a blurring of boundaries between traditional sectoral characteristics. However, as discussed in relation to identity formation historic identities are inevitably drawn upon in the creation of new identities (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Nonetheless the notion of organisational identity presents much ambiguity, remaining somewhat contentious in that an ‘organisational identity’ only becomes significant where members share a relatively common understanding of what it might be. However Skalen (2004) suggests that organisational identity is only loosely aligned to individual identity and describes ‘that organisational identity is constructed through the process of sensemaking’ (2004: 253). Therefore sensemaking becomes a means by which identification or dis-identification may be accomplished.

Whilst much literature has focused on organisational identification, it is important to explore the process of dis-identification, also acknowledging an impartial stance which may be felt by some, or a mix of both identifying and dis-identifying with different parts of the organisation (schizo-identification) (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). Whilst in pursuit of the study of identification it is possible to ignore the parallel processes of dis-identification, which is proposed here to hold significance in the capacity to take on new identities.

Collinson (2003) suggests that members can be categorised into three different selves. The first being 'conformist' in relation to those strongly identifying with an organisation and want to be observed as such by those in authority. This relates back to the notion of identity regulation where conformist practices amongst organisational members reinforce identity attributes. Secondly 'dramaturgical' selves are those acting to be seen as the 'right' person, informed by Goffman's (1959) notion of impression management, when individuals seek to exude upon others a certain impression. Finally resistant selves referring to those who strongly contest the notion of identity preferred by the organisation, instead an alternative argument is that 'resistant selves' engage in 'un-doing' identity work to fit with the values and beliefs that they feel are central and enduring to that organisation.

Maclean and Weber (2014) consider how multiple identities exist at both the individual and organisational levels, affecting the process and content of organisational identification playing a key role in shaping member affiliation, particularly in relation to hybrid organisations with numerous affiliations seeking to further understanding how individuals with multiple identities navigate the identification process. Svenningson and Alvesson (2003) argue that a focus should be placed on the processes which come to shape identity, as opposed to a focus that both individuals and organisations are in a process of becoming rather than being (Ashforth,

1998). Svenningson and Alvesson (2003: 1165) place a specific focus on being close to ‘experienced reality’ and ‘everyday practice’ as such to capture identity ‘presentations’ and struggles. Thus a divertive attempt is made by Svenningson and Alvesson to move the study of identity away from quantitative measures, towards single informant interviews, providing a richer insight from a managerial focus. Whilst richness is desirable, a managerial focus may ignore how identity is formed and renegotiated through the interrelations with other stakeholders. Thus this thesis supports a wider organisational perspective in terms of how identity is formed and renegotiated between stakeholders which becomes a contribution of this thesis.

2.3.8 Identity, fluidity and endurance

Whilst the fluidity of identity has previously been acknowledged by scholars (Gioia et al, 2000), how and why identity ‘endures’ remains an important question. It is considered that identity ‘constructed as versatile-malleable, stretchable, and negotiable-yet also constructed to maintain a link to the past and preserve central meaning’ (Kreiner et al., 2015: 1004). This model recognises change as a continual process, yet provides an understanding of how identity can simultaneously be enduring and fluid. The enduring aspect becomes relative to the preservation of central meaning, whereby at any point of malleability, negotiation and renegotiation, some aspects of identity may stay the same.

The presence of core for identity suggests in accordance with Kreiner et al. (2015: 1004) that ‘organisational members use a wide array of means to hold dualities in tension in a continual interplay of difference and unity’. This does not however establish what such difference and unity centers on. Whilst this presents a substantial contribution to the organisational identity literature the interview methods adopted by the authors employ the use of rather directive

questioning techniques utilising predetermined social constructions in investigation of key themes, addressing ‘multiple identities’, ‘tension’, ‘mission’. Little prior consideration is given by the authors for the familiarity or meaning of these constructs amongst participants. The authors also state that questions were tailored over emerging trends in the data and the unique vantage point of individuals although they do not clarify the act of ‘tailoring’. The authors identified that ‘longer term’ identity issues were established from insights emanating from documental sources from the organisation across a 10 year period.

Pratt (2003) claims organisational identity can be a shared belief considering how a collective views itself as an entity, and relates to all sizes and forms of groups. This recognizes that identity can be the product of a much wider sphere than a single organisation. However much is based on the underlying assumption that collectives ‘hold’ an identity, represented through the social construct of identity itself (Brown, 2006). The way the “collective” is construed is problematic because it has as much to do with inclusion as exclusion. In other words what is included in the identity of the collective and what is excluded and why? The ‘central, enduring’ and ‘distinctive’ aspects of identity become open to interpretation by organisational members. An inherent shortcoming on collective identities is that whilst in considering distinctiveness, much emphasis is placed on ‘groupness’, overlooking how identity talk breaks down established boundaries to transcend social and cultural divisions. Discussion of collective identity therefore aids the study of organisational identity through understanding the way in which actors talk identity into being (Ybema et al., 2012). The recognition that organisations can also hold dual, or hybrid identities is of pertinence here. In this sense stakeholders, do not construct sole organisational identities, instead hybrid identities can be developed often incorporating conflicting dimensions (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997). Such identities may be

maintained by individual segments of the organisation becoming independent symbols of identity or diffused throughout the organisation. However, assuming that boundaries between stakeholder groups become permeable, the diffusion of such identity may become more prevalent: 'Organisational members construct a common perception of their organisation as having certain key characteristics, as being distinctive from other organisations in some respects, and as showing a degree of continuity over a period of time' (Alvesson & Empson, 2008: 2). The term 'enduring' features prominently as an identity characteristic, with reference to how members see themselves as a social grouping in relation to their external environment (Dutton et al., 1994). This enduring characteristic as determined previously becomes relational to the central aspect to which members hold deeply which allows them to draw comparative associations with their external environment. Organisations may exude a relatively coherent and consistent appearance as consensus, and still at times display a tense character where the distinctive or enduring aspects are contested by groups or individuals (Brown, 2006). In this way identity becomes a tumultuous ongoing negotiation between internal and external stakeholders (Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998; Gioia, 1998; Gioia et al., 2000; Scott & Lane, 2000; Hatch & Schultz, 2002).

Alternately first and foremost discussion of dualism with reference to two, ontologically separate identities, becomes relevant towards exploring the foundation for entanglement of multiple identities. Miscenko and Day (2015:7) suggest that future research on multiple identities should focus on deepening understanding of interaction between different work-related identities adopting dynamic perspectives on multiple identities. The simultaneous occurrence of differing identities remains relationally focused in terms of 'who are we?', indicating a need to know how 'identities' are negotiated, formulated and accomplished, leading to the formation of a hybrid

organisational identity (Corley et. al., 2006: 87). Parallels can be drawn between the identity of an individual as an influencer of individual behaviour alongside the identity of an organisation as an influencer of organisational behaviour.

Within the literature, duality of identity is linked to Cartesian accounts of reality in which things have ‘essences’. Here, a commercial and public service identity exist separately before being merged in the organisation, a duality that is enacted or ‘performed’ into being as identities are accomplished. Discussions here are often linked to the constructionist/postmodern accounts which reject the idea of an objective ‘essence’ or structure to identity – and position identities as being more fluid and precarious than in the first approach. In the case of multiple identities a binary such as PSM can’t describe this effectively as within the duality described above there are many sub-identities which make up the multiple.

2.4 The maintenance of continuity

2.4.1 Change vs continuity

The notion of organisational change, its essence and how to approach it remains a debated topic amongst scholars (Burnes, 1996; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). The topic is challenged ontologically as to whether organisations consist of processes or things in addition to the epistemologies for the study of change (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010). The defining characteristics of change appear to vary, although two reoccurring dimensions persist which include movement over time from a ‘present’ to ‘future’ state, and that conceptualizations should give consideration to the scale and scope of change. However two prominent debates emerge over whether change is an intentional planned activity or rather an emergent activity driven from the bottom (Iveroth & Hallencreutz, 2016). To an extent both may hold relevance, though this is problematic in the

application of change models to specific contexts in that each context can be considered unique and thus requires an adaptive approach to the use of models. Iveroth and Hallencrutz (2016) present a comparison of planned and emergent change, adapted from (Weick & Quinn 1999:366) and (Marshak 1993: 403), where distinct differences exist between the two perspectives. Fundamentally neither perspective can be considered in isolation, where both concern complex processes, and with particular reference given to stakeholders any organisation will have numerous affiliations each with differing observations of the organisation. Therefore a degree of planning will be required in anticipation of responses, though the emergent properties cannot be accounted for as they signal a response to the unknown. Thus Weick (2000) and Burnes (2009) favour a balanced view drawing upon both the planned and emergent aspects.

Dawson (2003) highlights that we risk being too simplistic in defining organisational change, by often trying to produce an all-encompassing definition and failing to delineate between large scale change and that on the day-to-day. Therefore it may not be possible or helpful to try and present a single definition for change as an influence for this work, but rather better to take the lead of participants in how they experience change phenomenologically. This provides a framework on change that forms a basis for this investigation. Foundational work within the change literature make distinctions between a first and second order change (e.g. Watzlawick et al., 1974; Bateson, 1972). First order represents continuous and evolving change, whereas second order represents episodic and discontinuous change. Whilst a dominance of literature places a focus on a particular 'change' in time, namely: change programmes, transformations and episodic change, it is only recently that a greater body of work has emerged construing change as the norm and not as the exception (Feldman, 2000). It can be argued that both the 'first' and 'second' order perspectives on change have a place in the understanding of

organisational activity. Though before such understanding can be realized there is a need to breakdown the sense of equivocality surrounding the concept of change specifically to explore how and why particular ‘activity’ becomes construed and labelled as change.

In this work change as a concept is considered in the context of conscious thinking, yet in reference to the process of ‘changing’ it would appear that one only becomes aware of what has changed once it has occurred (Wiebe, 2010). Organisational narratives become centered around change as a way to frame organisational thinking. However, in order to conceptualize change in a particular context, it is first necessary to understand what may constitute the particular attributes of an organisation as a stable entity. This notion is treated with some caution, whereby many traditional perspectives on change privilege stability, viewing change merely as a by-product of organizing. Much work has been done by Orlikowski (1996), Weick (1995) and Feldman (2000) in terms of presenting a perspective which does not view change, but instead considers the ongoing processes of organizing. Therefore, the idea that change may be occurring is not accepted instead the focus is on what are the processes that maintain continuity. Change programmes become a convenient means to package an event which may cause shocks with the organisation, thus to frame thinking in lessening the impact of anticipated outcomes and to state that what happens now is change, however such programmes do not often produce anticipated change (Beer & Nohria, 2000). Is change therefore used by management as a tool to manipulate schemata? Schemata influence the absorption of new knowledge where individuals may become aware of things that fit into their schema. For example change sits outside of this where management may use schemata to influence the absorption of knowledge about change and thus make individual schemas more receptive.

Three ontologically different perspectives on change illustrate contradictory assumptions over the stability of organisations and the fluidity of change. A preoccupation with stability becomes problematic by shifting focus towards what is perceived as the norm, often disguising the ‘everyday’ change occurring within ‘organisational routines’. Feldman (2000: 613) empirically demonstrates that organisations are sources of perpetual interaction and change which are ‘emergent accomplishments’ with ‘flows of connected ideas, actions and outcomes’. This accords with Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002: 567) idea that change is always there if only we care to look. They define change as ‘the reweaving of actors webs of beliefs and habits of action to accommodate new experiences obtained through interactions’, thus recognising change as an ongoing accomplishment. The essence of change programmes therefore work in a similar way to organisational routines which do not come to an end but are instead adjusted by actors to take on a new form (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002), thus changing on an ongoing basis (Orlikowski 1996). Orlikowski (1996: 65) argues that change is:

‘Grounded in the ongoing practices of organisational actors, and out of their (tacit and not so tacit) accommodations to and experiments with everyday contingencies, breakdowns, exceptions, opportunities, and unintended consequences that they encounter’.

Thus there is a need to understand the ‘past’ to determine what is different about ‘now’, yet difference may not be immediately visible or apparent over a short time, for example from yesterday-today. Short comparison becomes framed instead by routine.

Feldman places a specific focus on change through the use of organisational routines, defining them as ‘temporal structures that are often used as a way of accomplishing organisational work’ (Feldman, 2000: 611) as a source of continuous change. Whilst it can be agreed that routines themselves are temporal structures, the idea that they may be dominant in accomplishment of organisational work presents a narrow view of change. Change may well

elicit a need to conform, but inertia may well come through institutional forces from going beyond the prescriptive nature of routines. Such routines can produce dynamic tensions between organisational stakeholders through specific individual needs in relation to change (Kraatz & Block, 2008). Feldman (2000) acknowledges that most routines are undergoing some form of change, where it falls to organisational actors to re-shape how routines are enacted. However this work acknowledges that routines themselves, over time, can be considered to become a major contribution towards change, yet in their everyday function remain largely unnoticeable. Yet if routines are framed in terms of continuity, they just become part of process, socially evolving and fluctuating over time. As such, organisational routines can be considered as reenactments of the past, entailing 'self-reflective' and 'other reflective' behaviors, as such defined 'as repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions, but they cannot be understood as static, unchanging objects' (Feldman, 2003: 95) Routines therefore appear to legitimise organisations as institutions (Meyer & rowan, 1977; Feldman and March, 1981) and can be seen as a key component to the process of organisational learning (Levitt & March, 1988; Argote,1999). Feldman's view of change through organisational routines appears to align with that of Orlikowski's suggesting that change emanates through ongoing practices (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Orlikowski, 2007). In this way organisational change becomes a driver for identity work as this is focused on the ongoing practices of individuals.

Over a decade Orlikowski, Weick, Feldman, Tsoukas and Chia have established that change is rather an ongoing process, but at the same time contrasting theories on change have developed. Dawson (2003) argues models of change themselves go through a continuous evolution whereby management consultants add/change components to suit their needs. This suggests that perhaps inappropriate theories are being favoured in practical application over

better situated theories which are not explicitly describing change as the extraordinary, for the convenience of swift diagnosis and neat explanation, presenting a detached view of organisational phenomena. An illustrative example is Lewin's (1951) model of change, which is widely criticized amongst scholars in terms of its linearity, simplifying change to three seemingly unconnected stages 'unfreezing-moving-refreezing', yet still commonly cited. Lewin's illustration of change fits with notions of change programmes, neatly packaged by management rather more for communicative purposes, than a representation of the dynamically changing organisation where it is apparent that change is simultaneous at different levels of the organisation in a non-linear fashion. Whilst episodic change is still acknowledged, it can no longer be viewed independently as it seeks to isolate aspects of organisational change for the convenience of study, obscuring interrelated movement within an organisation. Tsoukas & Chia (2002) revolutionize thinking here, producing a much wider view on change, moving away from privileging stability, instead seeing change as an ongoing process, rephrasing the rhetoric of 'organisational becoming'.

Organisations do not exist as entirely independent entities, as such change must be viewed beyond an isolated phenomenon, and arguably it is necessary to explore happenings at the micro, macro and meso levels of the organisation. Gersick (1994:11) notes that often methods are employed in the study of change to detect the occurrence of change, rather than the challenges managers face and the decisions they must make which may initiate events. In contrast, Boje et. al. (2011) comment that change has become too much of a managerialist function, by this meaning the views of all stakeholders are deemed to be best represented by a few managers who believe they can gauge the needs of a vast array of stakeholders. Such practice risks delegitimizing the diverse representation situated under the 'stakeholder' concept.

Lewin's (1951) theory suggests that change becomes the responsibility for all those involved with an organisation. An organisation, through processes of organizing, can be considered the product of all stakeholders, with multiple and often competing agendas for change. Though change itself often legitimised as an abstract function which exists outside the status quo, here I consider change a process which is enacted constantly at all levels of an organisation, with differing emphasis or definition attributed to it by those enacting it, so far as it can be construed change maintains continuity to some extent.

Stakeholder management theory is criticized in its approach towards change, specifically in making assumptions regarding identity (Beech & Macintosh, 2012). Often assumptions about an organisations 'single' or 'aggregated' identity in practice are made, yet as is noted above a single identity does not necessarily fully define an individual (Watson, 2009). The very essence of stakeholder management suggests stakeholders can be managed, but becomes somewhat meaningless in view of change, whereby it is the extent to which individual stakeholders become immersed in organisational process that shapes their awareness of what is changing, with each having a different level of exposure to the organisation. Change bring about relationships of high influence, power and interplay amongst stakeholder groupings, which in turn can be seen to reinforce or disrupt common experiences of change for those who may not have experienced, but equally present commonly perceived challenges to change or rather continuity. Therefore stakeholders may be rather more self-managed than is assumed by organisational leaders and thus somewhat misaligned to the way in which change unfolds or continuity is maintained. Instead, stakeholder engagement, as opposed to management, may acknowledge their perspectives and the intricacies of relationships which places them as individuals outside of the collective stakeholder grouping. Stakeholder mapping to understand who and where stakeholders

are can therefore only bring a cursory effort towards understanding their engagement and influence on change, for which a particular stakeholder group reacts within its own sphere of dynamic activity. Change must be approached from within, where change is recognized as a product of stakeholder interactions rather than something which is ‘parachuted’ onto people (James, 1996). The interpretation of change made by stakeholders comes to rely on the activities of which one is engaged to realise what is changing (Beech & Macintosh, 2012). Whilst this notion provides a focus for the study of change, is it always possible to determine what is changing until it has changed? Thus the notion of change becomes retrospective, meaningful only in connecting the past to the present, providing trajectories for the future. Though linearity of change acts as a constraint that the emphasis is largely towards a future state, which precludes the significance of in-betweenness.

2.4.2 The processual perspective

The processual perspective is not that of episodic change programmes or the assumption that change can be some form of isolated phenomenon but instead views change as an ongoing accomplishment and thus shaped by three core components: politics, context and substance (Dawson, 2003). This perspective considers that change a ‘continuous, dynamic and contested process that emerges in an unpredictable and unplanned fashion’ (Dawson, 2011: 116).

Pettigrew’s (1997) work on ‘what is processual analysis’ endorses the notion that change can only be achieved in context, over time understanding timing and sequencing of events and that context and action become interlinked: ‘context is not just a stimulus environment but a nested arrangement of structures and processes where the subjective interpretations of actors perceiving, learning, and remembering help shape process’ (Pettigrew, 1997: 341). This would suggest

‘change’ cannot merely be categorised as episodic, major, minor or otherwise; it must be understood in relation to time. The processual approach defined as follows:

‘Processual research on change can be defined as the contextual, retrospective and real-time study of change as-it-happens over time through the observed, documented and lived experiences of people as they seek to make sense individually and collectively to decision and non-decision making activities, the actions and torpidity of others, the multiple stories that transform and compete over time, and the events and critical incidents that occur in unexpected ways. The research is interested in the formal documented accounts, post hoc rationalizations and official versions of events, as well as in revealing the emergent, complex, muddled and unforeseen processes of change. It is interested in capturing attitudes and perceptions at all levels within the organisation, from senior managers to operational employees as well as various key stakeholders’

[Dawson, 2011: 120]

Methodologically the processual approach appears to encapsulate a comprehensive account of what constitutes change in organisations. Particularly recognition is given here to the different attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders at all levels of the organisation. Fundamentally attention is drawn to that of the ‘unforeseen processes of change’, in some respects change is continuous in presenting the unforeseen, yet from a process perspective the act of change may only be comprehended in retrospect. Thinking of change in abstract forms appears to obscure the very essence of change itself, from a philosophical standpoint ontology makes the notion relative to the realms of activity and process in life, ‘Process is fundamental: The river is not an object but an ever changing flow; the sun is not a thing, but a flaming fire. Everything in nature is a matter of process, of activity, of change’ (Rescher, 1996: 10). Pettigrew (1985: 439) argues change creates tension over the existing distribution of resources through threatening the position of some whilst opening opportunities for others. In addition, there is no beginning and end point and remarks continuity is often ‘a good deal easier to see than change’. Therefore a need is apparent to understand ‘how such “things” come to be constituted, reproduced, adapted and defined through ongoing processes’ (Langley, 2007: 2).

Tsoukas' (2005) critical ontological view of change considers the essential view of the organisation itself as a process of organizing in a world of continuous change. Does an organisation develop its identity through processes of change? If so the focus is on stability arising from the processes that maintain the organisation as the same recognisable 'thing' by an observer or on the processes or 'work' to deliberately change it. Though the organisation itself cannot be considered to become a static in a world of changing things. It is therefore the extent to which those recognizable things are merely surface manifestations.

If change is considered to be a continuous process, the corollary question is how do we distinguish the severity of change taking place or yet to take place? One perspective is that this is construed against change that has already taken place or that which is yet to take place, or does this rather depend on the perception of stakeholders? Here I consider two notions of change: the 'grand' strategic level, but also a day-to-day routinized or minor incremental level as defined by Schultz et al (2012) referring to the often taken for granted activity through the daily course of organisational life. The extent to which major and minor levels of change may be interrelated is not always apparent or in fact that of the middle ground between these. The proposal here is not to view change in a polarized way, but instead begin to acknowledge that the way in which change is categorized may influence how it is perceived. If in the majority we see a lot of branded 'change' at the strategic level we may come to perceive 'that's what change looks like'. Though change on the day-to-day level may be oriented towards ourselves individually or within groups recognition of change may not be so apparent. The co-occurrence of minor incremental change and major radical change is acknowledged in several studies (e.g. Jansen, 2004; Ginsberg & Venkartramen, 1995), whereby Jansen (2004) illustrates an interrelation between incremental and major change. This is an important point to note as dictated by the processual perspective

that a view of separated ‘change’ or ‘changing things’ becomes consequential to the act of ‘things’ being constituted, reproduced, adapted and defined.

The categorization of change can therefore be argued to be largely subjective, based on the perceptions of those experiencing change (Bovey & Hede, 2001). The meaning making by which change becomes a prescribed activity are created and legitimated through the social context (Dutton & Duncan, 1987: 280). The punctuated equilibrium theory perspective of change suggests that there is stability in normal state of play, but major shocks within an organisation’s environment (Anderson & Tushman, 1990; Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). Though for an organisation to experience some form of ‘shock’ would suggest some responsive action would be required, thus signaling change. The response to shock overrides forms of pre-existing change, to be the dominant discourse of change at hand. Numerous triggers are recognized in relation to organisational change, the identification of which resides within and outside of the organisation. However, these in themselves may not initiate major change, instead falling to how such factors are interpreted by the organisation and subsequently acted upon. Therefore, the question as to how we differentiate between cognitively framed types of change remains unclear, though here discussion is situated in viewing change as continuous rather than about a state of interrupted stability.

2.4.3 Temporality

Dawson (2003: 18) proposes a model for use in the categorisation of change which focuses on the temporal element of transition from a present state to a future state, the scale of change (whether small incremental change or large-scale radical change), the political dimension of change (whether change is generally accepted as being central and worthwhile or whether it is

perceived as a threat and hence challenged). The substantive element of change (whether this is generally accepted as being central and worthwhile or whether it is perceived as a threat and hence challenged).

Whilst Dawson's (2003) model demonstrates some illustrative purpose towards categorizing change, it relies on static/episodic models of change in comparison to what Schultz et al. (2012) describe as a form of emergent continuous change. The notion that change occurs over a specified timeframe and that there can be some form of anticipated end state is somewhat questionable in relation to how such change processes can abruptly cease within predetermined temporal constraint. For it is the significance of events which are seen as episodic in this way that come to form the catalyst for ongoing change, but also the reconstruction of change. Not all change may be seen as substantive, though as is already recognised here change cannot be considered in isolation, thus entwined in multiple interconnected layers. Despite the limitations of this model it can be seen to aid in drawing out particular aspects of change in the organisational context as highlighted for further exploration, therefore adaption to include a recognition for the interrelated aspects of change is necessary and some flexibility towards the acknowledgement of the continuation of change beyond a 'determined' end state. A further developed version of Dawson's (2003) model is included below whereby it is suggested greater value is achieved using frameworks which capture 'the murky' and contradictory essence of change.

Temporality becomes a key consideration in the process of change. Findings from Gersick (1994) in using a process method for the study of organisational change in relation to a new start-up organisations, suggests that temporal pacing regulates momentum and change in organisational strategy. Furthermore reorientations of strategy took place at 'key' temporal

milestones, where others took place on initiations of particular actions when an event occurred. Whilst temporality can be considered an important aspect in the study of change it is worth exploring how temporal milestones become categorized as such by stakeholders in organisation. Pragmatically, categorisation would only seem possible once a milestone has been accomplished. Here adopting a processual approach to change provides greater flexibility in allowing for the dynamism of and understanding that events may alter in meaning over time. In comparison to the variance approach to the study of change which tends to seek uniformity across contexts, placing emphasis on immediate causation appears too linear in its ability to capture much of the critical and interesting aspects of change (Poole et. al., 2000). Therefore the focus here is on that of the irregularity of the organisational context and not the uniform aspects. The temporal trajectory of the organisation is therefore important in terms of how movement is interpreted, whereby trajectories enable time between the present and a future horizon (Hernes & Schultz, 2016). A processual account of change requires us to understand how the negotiation process works. This is where the sensemaking that individuals undertake offers us a useful insight in this regard.

2.5 Sensemaking

Sense defines ‘a way in which an expression or a situation can be interpreted; a meaning’ created as we interpret our worlds. Sensemaking in its most basic form concerns the different meanings assigned to the same event, enacted through uncertainty and ambiguity (Mills et. al., 2010). Sensemaking therefore helps to explain ‘how individuals connect with stories of organisational change on a micro-level, as they construct the day-to-day activities of organisations’ (Thurlow & Mills, 2015: 247). The making sense of change and, to an extent, bringing about change, discussed in relation to bettering our understanding of the processual

perspective of change (Langley, 1999; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). Here sensemaking is used to draw together the theoretical perspectives underpinning this thesis; which include identity and change from a processual perspective. The theoretical study of sensemaking in this chapter draws a parallel to the capture of enacted sensemaking in the methodology for this research. ‘Organizing’ is part of ‘making sense’ – we arrange, categorise, prioritise to create our social reality. Orlikowski (1996: 63) views: ‘change as endemic to the practice of organizing and hence as enacted through the situated practices of organisational actors.’ This statement connotes a social actor perspective, with relevance to this work in terms of the established relationship between change and organizing. However sensemaking can be seen not to relate to that merely of a cognitive process, but instead ‘... confirming events as the main constituents of processes, in which forces of stabilization are played out as embodied pasts are projected upon possible futures’ (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010: 31). Brown et. al. (2008: 1055), offers that sensemaking and organizing can be viewed as one and the same:

‘To make sense is to organize, and sensemaking refers to processes of organizing using the technology of language – processes of labelling and categorizing for instance – to identify, regularize and routinize memories into plausible explanations [...]’

Stein’s (2004) work focuses on that of crisis within the organisation, developing the notion of the “critical period” with reference to shocks experienced and subsequent diminished routine through organisational crisis, to unearth thinking on how sense is made of change at the individual level through feelings of anxiety and fear. Similarly, Weick (1995) considers sensemaking to comprise of seven interrelated properties, which include identity construction, retrospection, focus on extracted cues, driven by plausibility, enactive of the environment, social and ongoing in nature (explained in more detail on p.56) Whilst these properties provide a useful underpinning towards a process based view of sensemaking, the journey of an individual, as the

organisation may intentionally or unintentionally seek to impose a pre-determined view of change . Sensemaking here is privileged in the context of the organisation, however its significance becomes much wider than the organisation in terms of frames used in the-making-sense-of our everyday having reference to all aspects of life. Thus we cannot view sensemaking in isolation, as it becomes integral towards the comprehension of change, identity and the tensions we experience between aspects of our daily lives. Weick’s seven principles therefore need to be viewed independently in consideration of how each are relevant to the frames ¹and cues constructed to make sense of our worlds (Colville et al. 2013), though it should be noted that these principles were developed with a focus on “organisation” which may ignore the influence of ‘other’ life variables in the sensemaking process.

Grounded in identity construction – This property considers ‘who we are’ the factors that influence our lives and how we see the world. It recognises that identity is continually being redefined in terms of our experiences and interactions with others. ‘To shift among interactions is to shift among definitions of self. Thus the sensemaker is himself or herself an ongoing puzzle undergoing continual redefinition, coincident with presenting some self to others and trying to decide which self is appropriate’ (Weick,1995:20). Depending on who I am, my definition of what is “out there” will also change. Weick (1995) asserts sensemaking collapses when identity is unclear, this work is seen as foundational within the sensemaking literature focusing predominantly on how individuals make sense of their environment. In later works, Weick et al. (2005) view sensemaking as a wider organisational phenomena. ‘Whenever I define self, I define “it,” but to define “it” is also to define self’ (Weick, 1995: 20). Therefore the implications of

identity work in newly third sector focused organisations relate to how grounding becomes restrictive towards dis-identities. Newly third sector focused organisations may seek to create new value by navigating the continual challenge of becoming an independent entity. In a sense this becomes a process of celebrating the successes in negotiating new identity over carefully managing challenging situations as not to become characterised by such influences.

Retrospective – the focus here is on how past experiences help us to interpret current events, suggesting that sensemaking holds a comparative purpose allowing meaning to be given to the present by comparing with events or experiences that have gone before in order to make sense of the here and now. Whilst newly third sector organisations may hold a ‘history’ in the form of ‘being’ a different entity, retrospection may inevitably form an aspect of an individual’s sense of the here and now. Questions arise over how much of past experience are relevant to how we construct a sense of now and prospectively address where we may be in the future.

Focused on and by extracted cues –this distinguishes between which cues may be drawn upon to make sense of a situation and which may be ignored. Thurlow and Mills (2015: 248) highlight that “if there is inconsistency in the cues, or some important cues for the dominant change process may not be supported, or understood as plausible”. Subsequently “making sense involves the ongoing development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing” (Patriotta & Brown, 2011: 35).

Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy – This property considers how we look for cues that make our sensemaking seem plausible, it is suggested that in doing so we may distort or eliminate what is accurate. However questions arise over what we deem to be accurate. The plausibility aspect becomes highlighted as amore central property and how such interpretations become legitimate

We are still left with a gap in the literature between understandings of individual-level reactions to, and relationships with, change and connections to the broader language of organisational change, including whose stories are being privileged and whose are being ignored, or more simply, what gets enacted in the change process and the use of language and whose choice it is.

[Thurlow and Mills, 2015: 247]

The question here is how do organisational members formulate an understanding of what may be construed as ‘accurate’ in relation to organisational change when they themselves may not be privy to complete knowledge? Instead it is possible that organisational members only become exposed to elements of enacted change in reference to that which they are ordinarily associated. Thus the plausibility of change would appear to become a product of that which is presented in the immediacy of our enacted environments, guided by carefully constructed organisational narratives on change. Using the example of a bank in Chremin’s (2005: 571) study on ‘the Continuity-Change Duality’.

Narratives can establish breaks with a past considered, in the present and future consistency with a long past [...] Alternatively, narratives can establish breaks with a past considered in the present, to be a liability. Such breaks can create a pressure for stakeholders to accept an impending change.

Enactive of the environment – Here sensemaking produces the environment, whereby sensemaking is either constrained or created by the very environment that we find ourselves in. The implication here in relation to newly formed organisations is that the environment is constructed as shifting against that which we make sense of, thereby our sensemaking becomes constrained because of ambiguity & uncertainty which makes the environment difficult to ‘enact’.

Social – The sensemaking perspective is aligned to our interactions with others whether physically present or not. In addition rules, routines, symbols and language all contribute towards

an individual's sensemaking activities. This property talks of routines and scripts in doing so suggests where these are not eminent individuals are left to make sense in their own ways.

Ongoing – The final process of sensemaking is that it follows a sequential process that never stops, although challenged ontologically that sensemaking is a consequence of shocks or ambiguity. These abstract categories act as a useful heuristic, but to achieve a better understanding of how we enact our environment through sensemaking, we need to see them embodied, connected to contexts – in short, we need empirical research on sensemaking. Insight towards whether these categories play out simultaneously or work independently may help towards such understanding.

Mills et al. (2010) argue that Weick's (1995) model is limited in understanding of the processes beyond that of interpretation and enactment, whereby a more democratic voice becomes illustrative of the general consensus. In accordance with Weick's (2005: 413) later view, organisational sensemaking arises from 'disruptive ambiguity'. Therefore through sensemaking, individual search for plausibility in the moment and move on temporally. These illustrate mere moments of sensemaking in real-time; these moments become stretched and therefore gain significance beyond attributed significance in the 'moment'.

2.5.1 Meaning-making and becoming

Meaning-making characterizes the process by which people connect past and present and future whereby organisations are the becomings of events:

Sensemaking narratives create a point of stability during the flux of organisational life, such stories consist of sensemaking devices developed from life-history narratives assisting in the making sense of change as such making meaning from interactions through a fluctuating reality through the incorporation of change to find a unified self in a continuous process of becoming.

[Maclean, Harvey & Chia, 2012: 20]

We as individuals make sense of the here and now based upon past experience, but it is unclear how individuals make sense of ‘shocks’ for which they may have no previous experience: ‘Action clarifies sensemaking because people not only make sense cognitively, they also make sense acting their way into meaning’ (Colville et al., 2014: 228). The sensemaking perspective suggest understanding comes from the frames and cues to which we are exposed, frames being past moments of socialisation and cues the present moments of experience (Colville et al., 2014). Here we move beyond the narrative of story, rather it is the linkage made between these moments and subsequent creation of meaning, a process by which we label and categorize the content emerging from frames based on past experience found in cues by which to capture and rationalize the present (Weick et al., 2005; Weick 1995). Cunliffe and Coupland contest the notion that sensemaking is purely a ‘retrospective and linear activity’ (p.66). Colville (2014, 2012) suggests people enact (make ‘real’ sense) prior experiences, where rather than a preoccupation with cognitive processes, such action instead should be considered embodied sensemaking. Further Colville et al. (2016) raise the important question of what do we base our assumptions of something which has not happened before in such times of continuously discontinuous change? They respond that sensemaking has not outlived its usefulness, but requires amendment notably through reducing equivocality.

Routines reflect rules categorizing meaning which becomes institutionalized into ways of knowing and acting (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012), as such with change in the form of organisational transition past rules and routines are drawn upon in determining plausibility of new interpretations, in this way although Weick (1995) acknowledges the interrelatedness of the seven principles of sensemaking some come to take more dominance. Thurlow and Mills (2015: 248) support this stating ‘identities that were meaningful in the past will influence the

construction of, or adherence to, identities in the future'. Colville et al. (2015) explore making sense of the 'sensible', using the works of Weick as a foundation for discussion the paper addresses the processes by which people 'make sense and make sense to learn'. Stated contributions align to how sensemaking can be updated to take account of the 'dynamic complexity' of 'contemporary conditions'. A second contribution is identified on the basis of recent criticisms concerning a neglect of prospective sensemaking in favour of retrospective sensemaking, whereby Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) suggest that the vast majority of sensemaking studies are merely based on interpretation. Colville et al. (2015) attempt to address such concerns suggesting a need for a rebalancing of the sensemaking perspective taking into consideration the turbulence of 'modern times', but this calls into question what is so turbulent about modern times where we have seen war, industrial revolution and massive social change throughout history. The third contribution proposes that retrospective and prospective combine to form a 'thorough-going process perspective' going beyond unfolding experience to consider the *what* but also the *how* sensemaking is accomplished. Colville et al. (2015: 3) consider this to be grounded in "the quality of attention, captured in words such as wisdom, judgement, phronesis and imagination". The paper concludes that current theories do not well equip us for the 'unusual, unexpected and unprecedented' (p.9). At its core, sensemaking is a means by which ambiguity can be reduced, therefore arguing a shift is needed from frames conceived yesterday to 'perceiving cues of current action' (p.9). Through the rebalancing of sensemaking Colville et al. (2015) present a new perspective towards positioning learning as a process that becomes integrated with organizing and sensemaking, thus arguing that this process approach moves beyond the reach of the current sensemaking perspective, suggesting that it becomes helpful to make attributions to that which has gone before as a process of learning, in the context of

shaping an entirely new way of being. This builds on the work of Weick in terms of how we draw upon the past in how making sense of the here and now through the reduction of ambiguity. Whilst histories will always exist, of greater importance here is how and when multiple identities surface, how a new identity becomes distinctive that we enact alongside pre-existing identities and how does a new identity create its own space or re-position other identities we enact, is this re-negotiated through daily social interaction.

When change happens do we lose an identity, or are they retained at a lesser degree of prominence amongst the multiple? Here there is an apparent need in identity work for how we formulate prospective visions in terms of who are we now and where might be going, in terms of our enacted environment.

2.5.2 The time, change and sensemaking triad

‘Clock’ time keeps us from seeing the process of change as it is material thing (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Chia, 1999), Wiebe (2010) seeks to ‘privilege time that is context dependent, which better allows us to see the processes of organisational change’ (p.214). Though the question remains: ‘How do we conceptualise between past, present and future?’, it can be argued that we share a sense of time, although unexpected events may challenge or change these shared perceptions of time (Staudenmayer et al., 2002). Wiebe (2010) explores how time is used to frame change, whereby actors are said to construct the flow of time. Employing a narrative approach Pentland (1999) argues that members’ cognitive processing can be accessed to reveal and firsthand ongoing experiences of change. Wiebe (2010) uses a structural analysis technique by which to uncover an individual’s ‘reality’ through their telling of a story. Such cognitive processes outlined by Pentland (1999) remain difficult to access through linear story-telling. This is

because sensemaking may not be construed as a linear process and therefore it remains unclear how stories surface from a chronology of individual-specific events, as an approach to sensemaking may not easily translate into words. Visual representations may therefore act as a cue to recount stories and capture the sporadic prominent aspects of an individual's journey.

Wiebe (2010) presents a 'temporal framing of the five worlds of organisational change'.

Continuity/discontinuity, then, appears to be determined by drawing on the future and the past in making sense of perceptual elements in the present. What is sensed in the present is assessed by our anticipation of the future; and elements of the past (in our memory), as they pertain to the anticipated future, are utilized to determine the meaning of what is emerging in the present (p.232).

These findings suggest that managers based perceptions of continuity on engaging all three temporal dimensions which included the past, future and ever-changing present. However the notion of the ever-changing represents a tautology in that change itself is changing, the exploration of the ever-changing present in the study is limited, thus potentially precluding aspects of the present which may not change, in relation to those things which are held on to as a means of continuity. The alternative route in the model presented is that of discontinuity and equally here some identity characteristics may change, yet some may stay the same. We not only remember the past, imagine the future, and respond to the present in a certain way as we are impacted by emergent events, shape the past to account for that present, and create trajectories for the future (Mead, 1932). We can consider that the present to be formed from how we revise the past and project the future (Mead, 1932; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; and Wiebe, 2010).

Ricoeur's (1984: 150) use of stories demonstrates how the reader is 'pulled forward' through time, illustrative to the way in which, stories, conversation and communication become the narratives of the organisation, contingent upon a 'present of past' (memory), 'present of present' (perception) and 'present of future' (expectation) a continuous process iteration in

becoming toward's a future state (Maclean et al, 2012: 29). The notion of momentum in the process of becoming inevitably complements how change is considered to be accomplished. The inertia through meaning-making itself holds dual meaning in terms of retaining a state of stability or staying in uniform motion. In this investigation, the momentum of change is considered in an exploratory way, where there is uncertainty over whether current organisational activities may achieve future strategic goals (Schultz et al., 2012).

Feldman's (2000) work on routines as the temporal frameworks for organisational work suggests that such routines act as a guide by which we can frame the significance of a certain event or activity that we have experienced. Through the sensemaking process, we can then consider what may have changed or be changing in accord with the events or activities perceived to be prominent in the course of routine. So a frame shapes and guides the 'cues' we bracket as worthy of attention.

2.6 Conclusions and research question

A core focus for this research, emanating from the literature review, relates to how identity is both initially formed and plays out over time within the organisation. More critically it is consider the relevance of seminal works in the area of organisational identity and change which relate to the UK public service context. In this vein, it is important to note that much of the discussion of identity in the literature emanates from American, European and non-public service contexts. Whilst fundamental aspects of identity are discussed in relation to Albert and Whettens 1985 model, this has been applied as a foundation for the current body of organisational identity literature. Can the existing body of literature therefore provide an adequate foundation by which to assess the rather dramatic changes to public services imposed by Labour post 1997 and also

subsequent conservative governments. This research therefore seeks to make sense of the challenges presented to both individuals and organisations in relation to identity through the processual continuum of change. Identity work considers that individuals contend with a liminal state of in-between-ness in negotiation and renegotiation of multiple identities, making sense through iteration between images of the retrospective self in identification of the retrospective organisation towards the projected future self-amongst visions of the projected future organisation (Mc Adams, 1993; Ricouer, 1984). It appears that a certain identity may rise to prominence at a particular point in time, taking a priority over other identities which are held by individuals. Such contestation of identity becomes embroiled with a tumultuous composition of threat and tension underpinned by confusion, contradiction and self-doubt (Collinson, 2003; Pettriglierri, 2011).

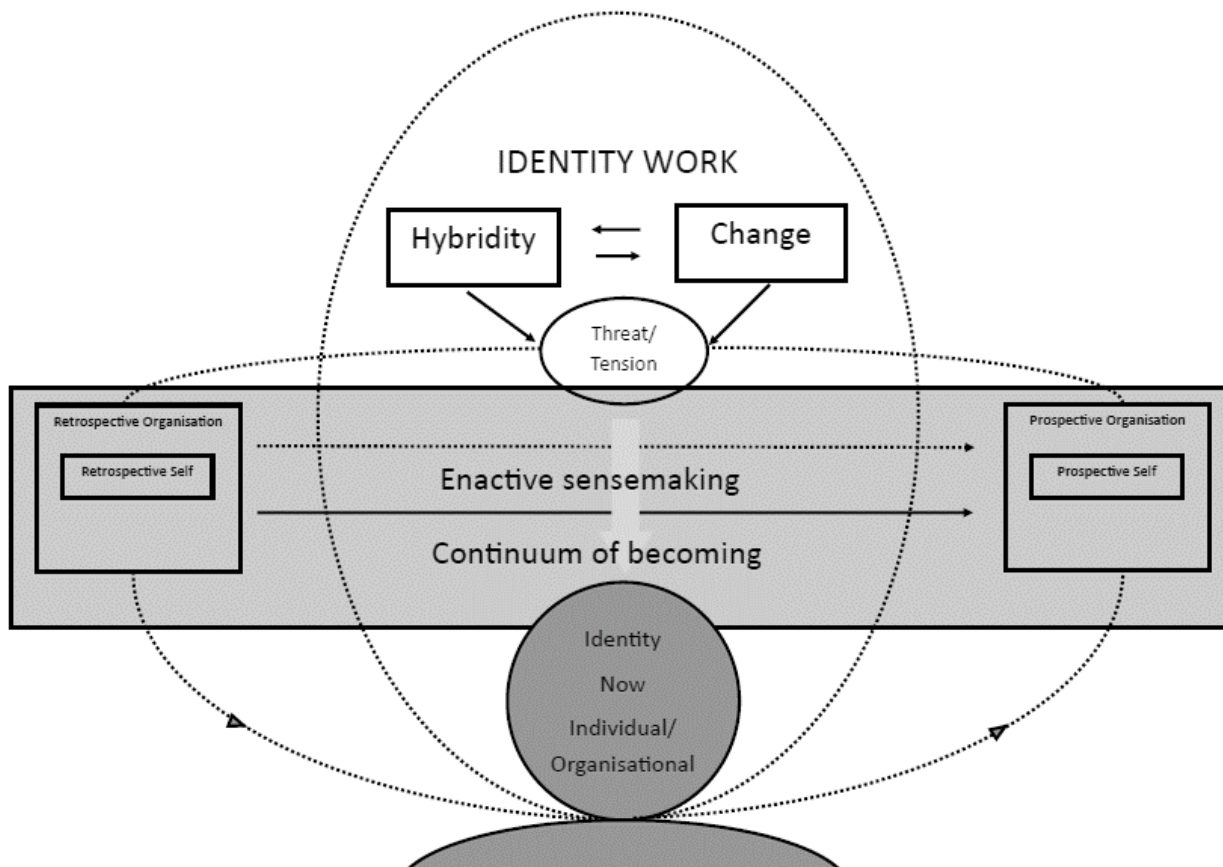


Figure 1 Enactive Sensemaking Version 1

The model proposed (Figure.1) seeks to challenge assertions that identity adaptations ‘occur incrementally and involve considerable work’ (Brown, 2015). It reinforces that such adaptations occur continuously over the course of time, flexing and modifying, acting in response to tension over a self-guided need to adapt. The model illustrates how an individual makes sense of change and the accomplishment of their identity within the organisational sphere. The retrospective and prospective exist as two poles with individual and organisational identity situated at the centre. Sensemaking works as a push and pull on this continuum, taking account of new influences with threat and tension arising from the space which emerges between this continuous push and pull. Mundane organisational routine becomes of interest here, relating to how we use identity work over time in accomplishing our own identities, to the point daily

activities form an inevitable contribution to a wider notion of change, the product of which may only become acknowledged over a space and time. This sits in contradiction to Giddens (1991) who argues against the significance of such ‘mundane’ identity work. The level of involvement a stakeholder may have with the organisation also becomes of interest here, particularly in terms of how they make sense of change over time. Those who have infrequent contact with the organisation may observe change (e.g. such as transition towards being a PSM) more noticeably due to contact being only periodic and this way identity formation may also take a different pace. What remains unknown is whether through such contact identities become less fluid, because cues and influencers towards threat and tension may become less apparent or ‘appear more stable’.

There is a recognition here that one may not become aware of change, until it becomes a threat to identity. The self-concept through change maintains an infinitely plastic state (Gergen, 1972). However Petrigelieri (2011: 644) points out that ‘individuals are strongly motivated to maintain and enact their identities in their current state in order to achieve a sense of stability’.

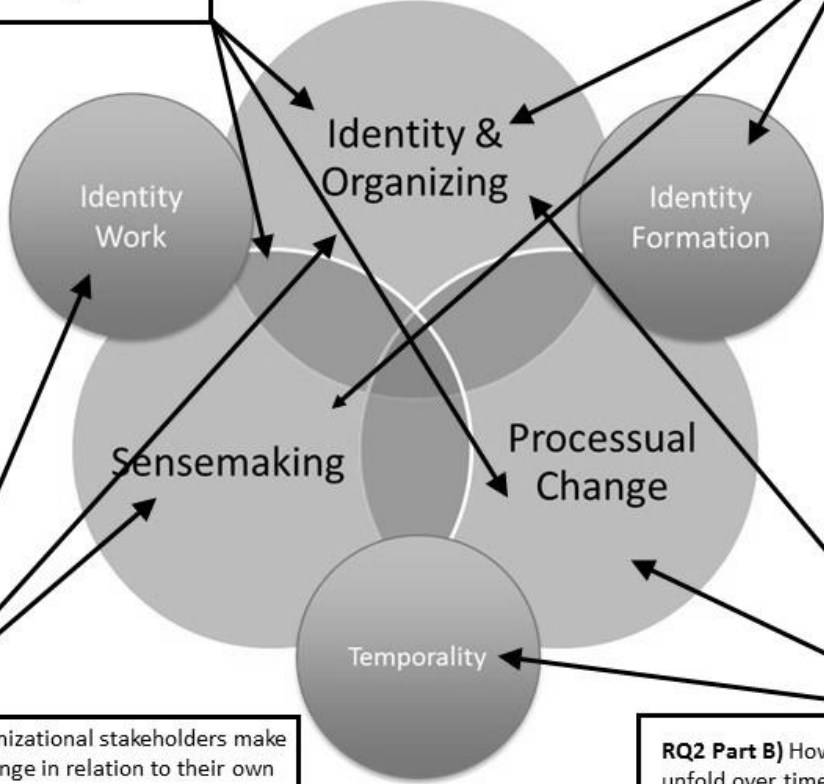
Sensemaking concerns the meanings assigned to the same event enacted through uncertainty and ambiguity, in the construction of day-to-day activity, therefore becoming a heuristic for insight into the creation of stories around organisational change at the micro-level, as they construct the day-to-day activities of the organisation (Mills et. al., 2010, Thurlow & Mills, 2015). Stein’s (2004) work focuses on that of crisis, developing the notion of the “critical period” acknowledge that shock, diminished routine through organisational crisis unearth thinking on how sense is made of both change but also the at the individual level anxiety and fear which may be experienced through the process. Daily reflection on ‘routinised’ activity allows a capture of how such daily activities come to be constructed. Similar, Weick (2009) considers

sensemaking as a form of cartography whereby individuals draw their own maps from lived experience. This is important in terms of how sensemaking is studied. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) make a call for identity dynamics to be better understood through the adoption of frames from identity work and sensemaking. The challenge therefore arises in terms of how identity work can be captured with reference to Watson's (2008: 129) work illustrating 'the processes adopted through identity work in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness'. Identity work can therefore be seen to take place in the present but must be understood

Research Question 1) How do people experiencing a major organizational change negotiate identity challenges?

Research Question 2) How do stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change?

RQ2: Part A) How is an identity of a new organization formed by organizational stakeholders?



RQ2 Part C) How do organizational stakeholders make sense of processes of change in relation to their own identities?

RQ2 Part B) How do multiple organizational identities unfold over time?

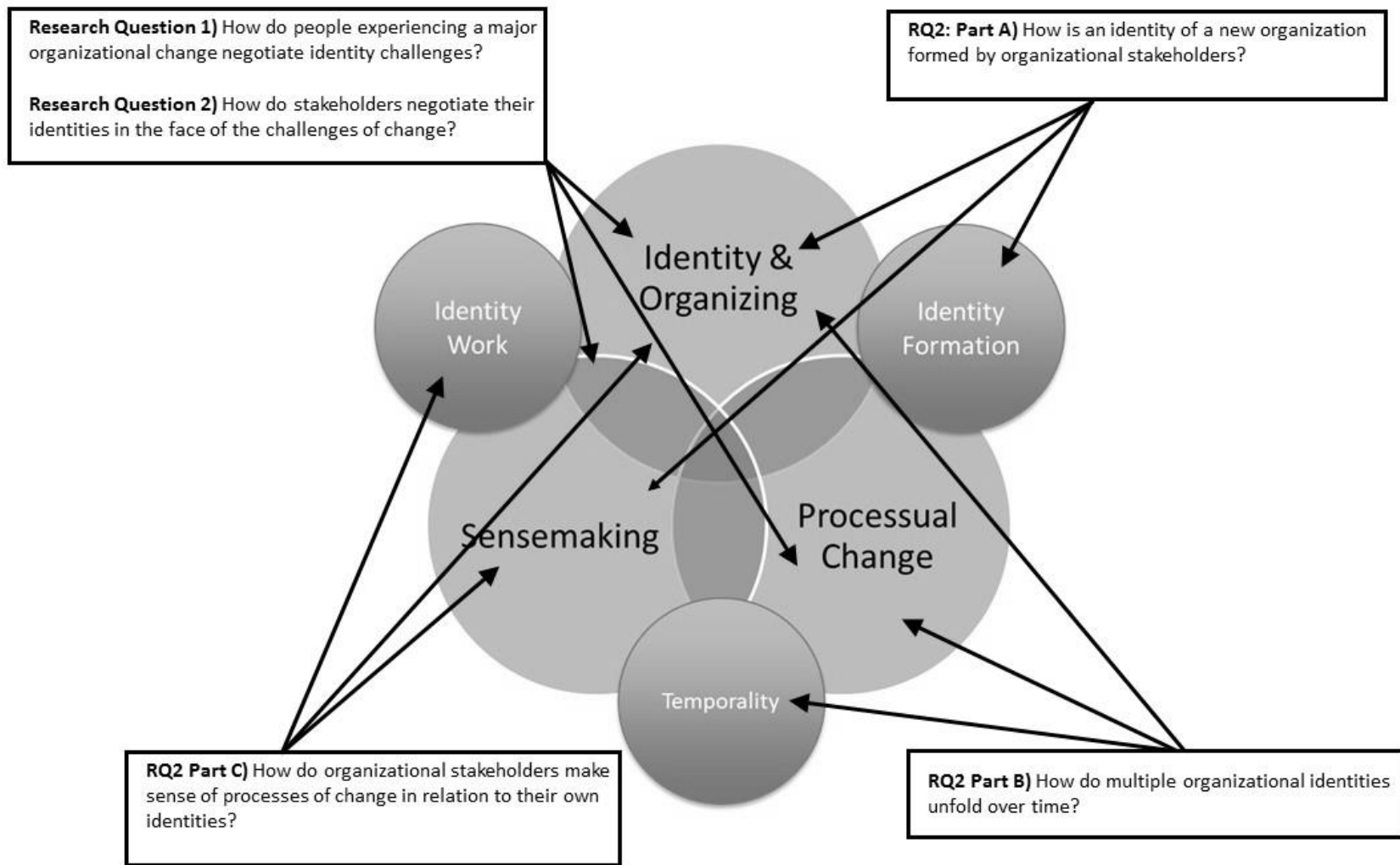


Figure 2 Research questions and theoretical frame

in context of the entire life course whilst that which is taking place now should have both strong associations to the past and also to the future.

Enactive sensemaking can be construed as anything but a linear process (Helms Mills & Mills, 2010), but here the focus is placed on meaning-making. Identity and legitimacy become an integral aspect of the process of sensemaking. These concluding conceptualisations become the scope for investigation, with the research questions as illustrated in Figure 2 emerging from the review of literature in the three core areas of identity, change and sensemaking. Figure. 2 p.69 illustrates how the three sub-questions (p.14) which map to the core areas of literature and sub literatures, with each question covering three bodies of literature in order to investigate linkage between them.

Chapter Three

METHOD

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the process of research design and the selection, design and implementation of methodology used to explore the research questions arising from the literature as outlined in the previous chapter. The chapter begins with an explanation of the research design, explicitly how the approach addresses the research questions. It addresses the philosophical underpinnings of the chosen methodology, before discussing the practical considerations of collecting data, including using a case study approach alongside qualitative data collection methods. Key issues will also be identified that emerged at different stages in the process of design and delivery. The need for an iterative approach in the development of design for this research is highlighted, through the phased implementation of data collection with a view to strengthening the quality of data collected. Attention is then given to the process of observation, interviewing and participatory methods, discussing the effectiveness of each and how they provide a distinctly different contribution to the findings.

3.2 Research Design

The review of literature on identity and change both draw parallels on sensemaking as a mechanism for their enactment. Whilst it is acknowledged that individuals make sense of the present based on the past present and future, the way in which this is investigated methodologically remains largely undeveloped. This research attempts to address current methodological shortcomings through the use of an exploratory case study following a process perspective, seeking to develop theory as opposed to testing existing theory (Suddaby, 2006).

The case study approach itself is not novel though the importance comes from its ability to capture the ‘rich’ insights that are accessible to a specific single case or multiple cases. A case study strategy is proposed facilitating the exploration of the constructed nature of identities within a non-profit organisation.

Data collection took place in the period 2015–2018 (see appendix A) and evolved in phases across three years using an ethnographically informed approach. Methods included: participant observation, documental insight, visual participatory mapping to inform interviews and group interviews. The plan was to conduct participant observation from the outset of the project at board meetings, alongside document analysis. Documents refer to examples of formal communications that have been used to communicate with organisational members (i.e. memos and meeting minutes).

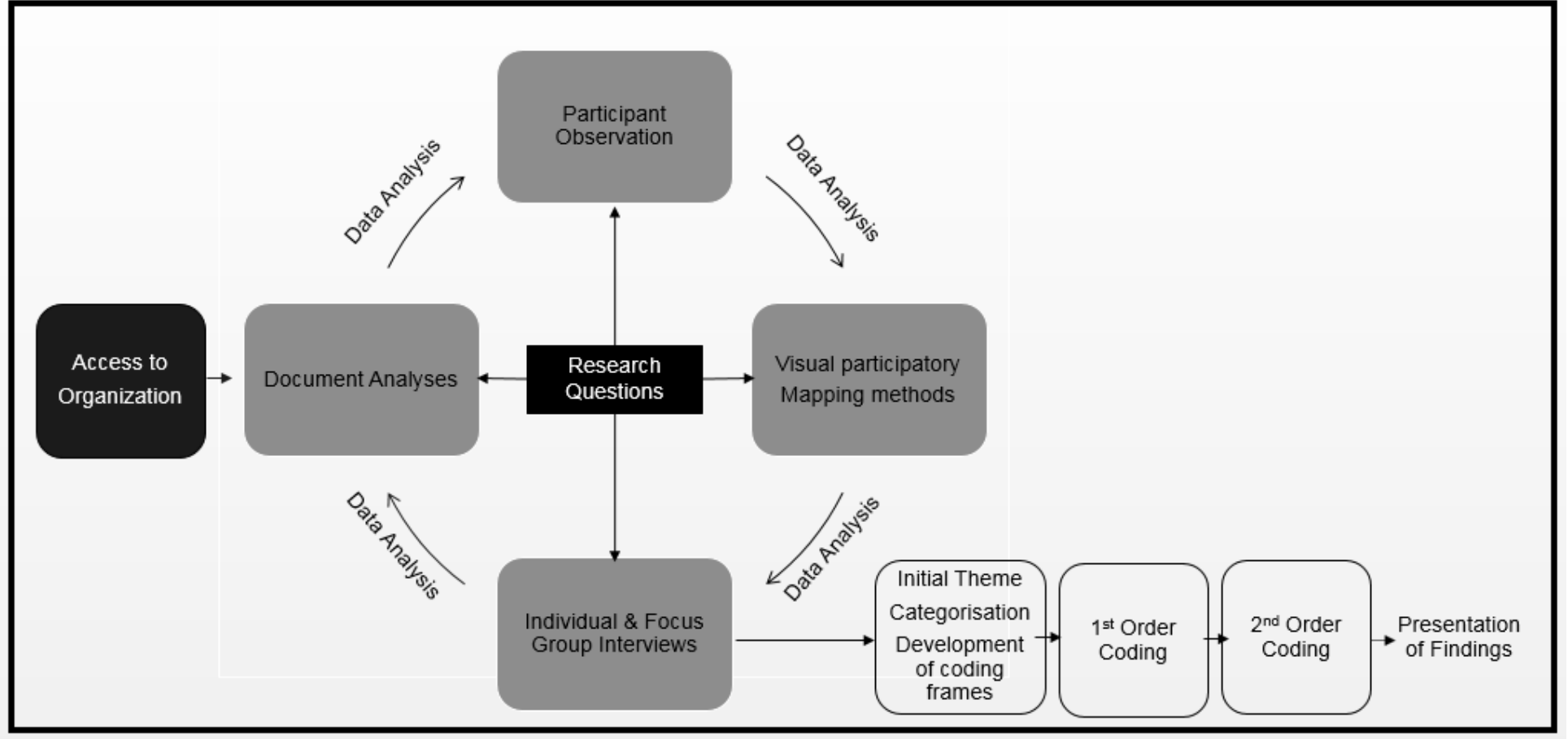


Figure 3 Data Collection Process

(Figure. 3) illustrates the data collection process with the core methods employed in a cyclical nature, allowing for iteration between each method. Document analysis and observation were intended to inform later phases of participatory methods, interviews and group interviews.

(Figure. 4) illustrates the evolution of the organisation and the extent of the period of study.

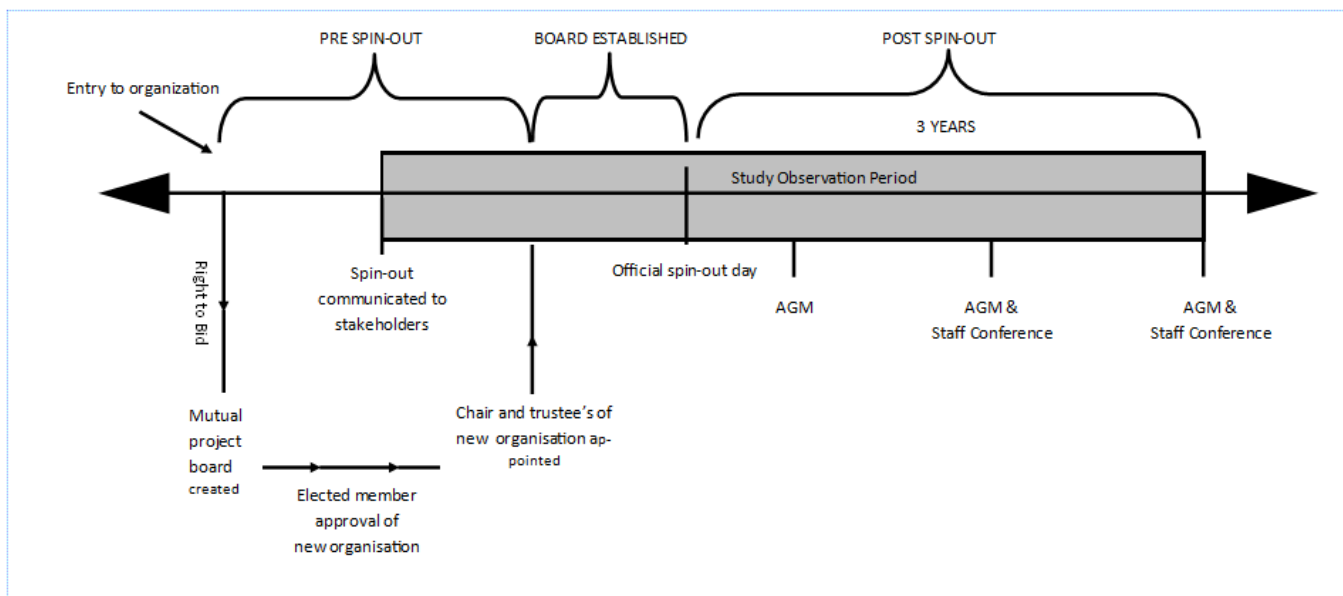


Figure 4 Evolution of organisation and period of study

3.2.1 Methodological Perspective

Research becomes driven by one's own set of beliefs about the nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002). Ontology seeks to unpack the underlying structure of reality, concerning the meaning of being or demarcating distinct positions towards the underlying nature of reality. Here the ontological position informs the state of the relationship between the researcher and that being researched on the understanding

That there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed.

[Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 12]

Specific to this research is an organisational process ontology where 'the world is composed of events and experiences rather than entities' (Langley et al, 2013; Pettigrew et al, 2001; Van de Ven et al, 2005). It becomes important to distinguish between the approach as process or variance, Van de Ven & Poole (2005) draw the two extremes together in consideration that one views as an organisation as made up of things or it is a free flow of events and actions. To this extent a unique design is required that elements of both perspectives may present themselves. In this view events are therefore seen as the object of enactment, whereby enactment takes place at events and as such certain events evoke recollections of past events and the imaging of future events (Hernes & Schultz, 2016). Thus the ontological stance here is that of organisations as flow rather than comprising of things (Singh, 2015).

The epistemological grounding for this research focuses on what we can know about a world - the 'nature of knowledge' (Crotty, 2003), and considers the types of knowledge claims that can be made about a world and thus how the credibility of such claims can be assured. The corollary epistemic concern of this research is what must be added to those beliefs in order to

convert them into knowledge (Klein 1998, 2005). The axiological assumptions from an interpretivist stance are that values help determine what are considered to be the facts and the interpretations become that which can be drawn from these facts. To view organisations or organizing as process, the concepts of doing and becoming feature prominently in relation to evolution. To access processes of evolution in relation to organisations, the literature calls for largely observation-based longitudinal data collected in real time to events occurring (Balogun, Huff, & Johnson, 2003) Longitudinal observational data can surface emergent patterns over the period of the research, but may not tell a complete story, thus supplementing observational data with internal and external documents, interviews, and informal discussions brings not only the perspectives of a range of stakeholders, but acts as methodological mechanism to support or reject observations, for the important reason of individual difference in the study of identity claims. Therefore I do not seek through this research to uncover an organisational identity as fact, but rather the processes by which identities are formed, negotiated, dissolved or components of which become adopted or rejected by the collective.

This interpretivist approach is considered inherently biased, though bias comes to be recognized as a feature of this approach and can be both acknowledged and accounted for in the research design by, the researcher (Chenail, 2011; Farquhar, 2012).

3.2.2 Justification for Interpretivism

Interpretivism seeks “participants’ views [realities] of the situation’ in this case relating to identity and perceptions of change (Creswell, 2003: 8). This becomes relative to the approaches and outcomes of the research conducted. The aims of the research influence the discussion of ontology, particularly in terms of the intended or unintended participatory role of the researcher.

The methods addressed within this chapter rely upon a closeness of the researcher to the research setting, but also an awareness of the biases the researcher may bring to that setting (Chenail, 2011). Under the interpretivist paradigm the perspective on social reality explored here is that realities are being socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1979), with the researcher considered as an integral part of these constructionist approaches, arguing that there is a reality beyond the mind, though the meaning derived from this reality remains inherently social. Here lies the search for ‘meaning’ defined as ‘what values, beliefs, and/or feelings an artefact represents beyond any ‘literal’, non-symbolic referent’ (Yanow, 2000: 252). The postmodern position, although rooted in a subjective ontology aims to deconstruct individual or social realities. The need for an interpretive and postmodern stance or a combined approach become apparent, in terms of both acknowledging what is beyond the mind but also to challenge and unpack differing social realities which may be present. Therefore postmodern thinking comes from the questioning and deconstruction of meaning. However this presents a tension between the interpretation of meaning but also the *anti-interpretational* in terms of meaning deconstruction. Thus the presentation of multiple social realities proves problematic in instances where such realities may differ or conflict. Of interest to this research is how individuals come to dismantle or ‘un-do’ their own social realities in place of revised or new realities, investigated in relation to identity. In reference to identity work as a theoretical grounding and the epistemic other, the idea of epistemic pluralism comes to the fore, ‘Resolving that however much we are committed to our own styles of thinking, we are willing to listen to others without denying or suppressing otherness’ (Schwandt, 2007: 230).

Epistemic pluralism is not isolated to the interpretivist standpoint, but also becomes pertinent to the process of sensemaking, so far reviewed as part of this study’s theoretical

framework. Though sensemaking can also be considered an epistemological tool in that individuals use sensemaking to come to terms of pluralities in the everyday.

A hermeneutic, sense-making circle expresses the idea that there is no fixed starting point for inquiry: the process of sense-making begins wherever the individual “is” in her understanding at that moment, with whatever grasp of things she has at that time. It also suggests there are no “conclusions” in the sense-making research cycle: there are only momentary stopping points, to collect one’s thoughts, perhaps to publish or otherwise disseminate what one understands at that point in time, before one continues on the interpretive path.

[Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013: 30-31]

The notion that there are no conclusions, only momentary stopping points, is commensurate with the processual conceptual approach. Therefore, the methods chosen should recognize data collection exercises as momentary stopping points and that there is not necessarily a starting or end point to inquiry, but rather a lens on a temporal period in whatever way that comes to be defined by the realities shared.

Alvesson (2016) discusses the use of ‘interpretive unpacking’, described as a mild form of interpretivism seeking to explore meaning just under the surface, whereby such meanings may be loose, fluid, contradictory and hard to specify with any great certainty. This approach thus allows for the consideration of instability in meaning. Alvesson (2016) applies the interpretive unpacking model to the understanding of *organisational images and identification*, in reference to Dutton et al.’s idea of ‘organisational identification’. In this way the interpretive unpacking approach focuses on the variation of context alongside the inconsistency of *talks on self-definitions* and *definitions of organisations*.

The potential pluralism of self-definitions as well as of organisational characterizations would make simple comparisons difficult but the potential intersections, departures as well as incompatibilities of self-talk and organisation-talk are all viewed as, in principle, possible to study.

[Alvesson, 2016: 16]

This approach also takes into consideration *the coherent or varied constructions of outsiders* and the reasoning behind their thinking. The interpretive unpacking approach becomes justified for this research in its suitability to the exploration of identity as outlined in Alvesson's illustration of the model to the work of Dutton et al on 'organisational identification'. The interpretivist approach alone is limited in its ability to accommodate ideas of deconstruction without necessitating a hard deconstructionist or postmodern approach. Interpretive unpacking however combines both interpretive and postmodern thinking in the exploration of a phenomenon; in this instance notably identity. This research therefore employs an interpretivist unpacking approach linking the interpretivist and postmodern perspectives, the latter bringing a much needed critical stance on interpretations presented which seeks to question and explore the assumptions underpinning them.

3.2.3 Case Study Strategy

This research follows an exploratory case study strategy, which becomes suitable for situations where extensive in-depth insight of a phenomenon is sought, exploring and understanding a complex problem and the need to study a research question in context (Yin, 2009). However, the approach remains flexible enough to be adapted, bearing in mind the need for both an iterative approach to data collection and for maintaining academic rigor (Farquhar, 2012: 38), which is discussed in a later section. In this way case studies become relevant when the context and phenomenon under investigation are closely linked, as demonstrated in the section on 'Policy, context & form' but the 'how' is not always clear (Yin & Davis, 2007). The case study is suitable for answering questions that begin with *how*, *who* and *why* (Yin, 2009). Using a single case requires justification in relation to intended theorization from that case whilst ensuring academic

rigor can be maintained. A single-case can be justified using five different rationales which include having: a critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal case (Yin, 2014: 51). The adoption of a single case for this research is justified using the longitudinal rationale, an approach supported by a process as evolution perspective on organizing. This rationale states the use of a single case is justified where data is collected over two or more points in time and/or at set intervals. This becomes particularly advantageous in the collection of rich in-depth data where the researcher is embedded within the organisation. This is important to the study of identity and change, where there is a need to capture the *doing, being* and *becoming* of organizing over time (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Pettigrew (1997) under the processual perspective uses a single longitudinal case to iterate between deduction and induction, the advantage of which is the simultaneous theory building between the empirical context and the literature. Therefore data collection (see appendix A) took place at set intervals and scheduled in anticipation of observing the above and where ‘change’ may occur (Yin, 2014). Data was collected in two phases, with additional observation taking place throughout the course of this study. Due to the intensity of data collection a multiple case-study approach was discounted due to resource limitations. The implementation of a multiple case approach would have impacted upon on the depth of data that could be collected from a single case.

This research assumes an *ongoing* view of time whereby individuals remain in the present, where they construct and reconstruct the past and future (Mead, 1932). In such a view the past and future are not set periods of time, but rather a cause for interplay on an on-going basis. This provides justification for two formal data collection phases situated six months apart in order to observe changes and reinterpretations of the past, present and future, bearing in mind it is not always possible to know what is changing until it has changed. The continual nature of

observations allows the researcher to observe the interplay between the past, present and future in relation to organisational events observing the ‘playing’ out of identity over time (Clark, Gioia, Ketchen & Thomas, 2010). The embedded nature of a case study becomes important when it can involve more than one unit of analysis within one organisation.

A view of the organisation is desirable at the micro, meso and macro levels. Therefore a design where the researcher becomes embedded within an organisation allows for richer insight to be obtained through in-depth investigation of research questions across ‘units’ within a single organisation. This could relate to branches, departments, formal and informal groupings. A core aim of this research is the exploration of oppositional sub-identities and how sub-units in organisations ‘hold’ multiple and hybrid identities. This relates to self-defined groups in an organisation which share similar values and beliefs but in addition to shared other values and beliefs. The case study approach is well suited to investigating events that are occurring in a contemporary context. In this study, the contemporary relates to new ways of organizing. Whilst a single case may be studied, this approach is suited to the investigation of multiple units of study, becoming preferable in: when, how or why questions are being asked; when the researcher has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2009).

3.3 Fieldwork

3.3.1 Case selection

Access to the case organisation was obtained during 2015, in making speculative contact with a representative at a UK local authority, first discussing the affiliations being made from their side with social enterprises across the county. This agenda with the pursuit of the continued deliverance of public services, through the act of commissioning organisations to provide

existing services at the time operated within local government. It was explained that a case fulfilling the following three criteria was required for the study: 1) in receipt of government funding; 2) affiliated with multiple stakeholder groups; 3) in the process of significant change. The service was then suggested by the representative as a case, explaining their intentions to mutualize existing operations with the aim of keeping them intact. In this instance it can be considered that the local authority run service fitted the description of a 'longitudinal case' in accordance with the rationales outlined by Yin (2014) , due to the size of the organisation (and its sub units) and the scale of change, through transition and beyond. The mutualisation of the service at that time was not publicised and had been undergoing significant internal setup, driven by a dedicated project board. Thus the proposal for this work and a preliminary study was presented to the project board for approval. Support was readily granted and a relationship developed with the project manager to gain specific access to begin collecting data. The merits of the preliminary study were found to be attractive by the local authority in providing a snapshot of the service prior to spin-out. The local authority run service, following a preliminary study became the primary case study for this research, transitioning to become the independent Public Service Mutual, which I refer to by the pseudonym of Eduvate.

3.3.2 Access

Having received initial outline permission from senior management and the board to conduct research within the organisation during 2015, this was then reviewed later in 2015 prior to the commencement of this study by the Chair of Trustees and CEO of the new organisation Eduvate. Support was subsequently granted with Eduvate in November 2015. In obtaining access it became important that a relationship of trust was established both at senior levels of the

organisation and also with stakeholders more widely. Whilst broad consent was obtained from organisational gatekeepers through the Board of Trustees, I thought it was good practice and courteous to seek approval from those responsible for particular parts of the organisation and/or senior members of staff in specific branch locations, many of whom may also have been participants. This helped to establish a good rapport from the outset.

Consent was obtained from individuals who directly participated in the study in the form of focus group interviews and individual interviews (see appendix D and E). This research has benefitted from the privileged access granted from the outset of the project to attend and observe organisational board meetings by agreement of all the board members. There was a need to maintain an impartial position for observation purposes, but it is acknowledged that some participation took place on the part of myself as the researcher in building rapport with the membership of the board and others, in order to engender a sense of trust. At times my impartiality was challenged when requested to share thoughts on a particular discussion or questioned directly, in these instances I offered a polite decline to comment. In terms of observation both at board of trustee meetings and other key organisational events, my presence was made public on entry into the organisation by the CEO and CT of the organisation. This sense of being 'on and off duty' in terms of observation became important from my perspective as the researcher, particularly in the need to liaise with senior organisational members in other capacities. In the majority of cases, observation involved the general group, though at times the need to distinguish between roles at board meetings in terms of making observational field notes meaningful. Inclusion on the trustee mailing list was granted by the chair of the board of trustees in order to receive board papers prior to each board meeting, some of which were confidential, and this signaled a sign of trust from the organisation.

3.3.3 Qualitative Approach

The selection of methods for this research was determined by the research questions emerging from the literature review. As indicated by the nature of the research questions the most appropriate form of enquiry follows a qualitative design, defined as non-numerical data collection. This approach is deemed ‘to interpret the meanings people make of their lives in natural settings, on the assumption that social interactions form an integrated set of relationships best understood by inductive processes’ (Payne & Payne, 2004: 175). However the use of solely ‘qualitative’ research methods has been criticized for replicability (Silverman, 1993), though here ‘qualitative’ research is discussed in justification of its usage to the selected methods of observation, document analysis, visual mapping to inform individual and group interviews. Whilst these methods align with the interpretivist stance of this work they also become relevant in terms of the study of processual change, as evidenced by Dawson’s (2011: 120) view on what is required to adequately capture the

Contextual, retrospective and real-time study of change as-it-happens over time through the observed, documented and lived experiences of people as they seek to make sense individually and collectively to decision and non-decision making activities, the actions and torpidity of others, the multiple stories that transform and compete over time, and the events and critical incidents that occur in unexpected ways.

It is therefore important that such methods relate to and are able to adequately capture ‘attitudes and perceptions at all levels within the organisation’ (Dawson, 2011: 120). In this way the qualitative approach becomes best suited to capturing the ‘multiple stories that transform and compete over time’, as methods are able to obtain a depth and richness of explanatory data that quantitative methods are not able to capture in the same way.

Additionally, methods under this qualitative approach allow a greater closeness of the researcher to the research setting, which is advantageous as I the researcher became immersed in the specific context of gaining insights that could not be captured from a distance. Donmoyers (1990) uses a single case study from the perspective of enriching ones schema about the topic of study, the strength of which comes from the learning obtained from such immersion and the stories from within, in addition to vicarious learning from experience. It has been acknowledged already that such a relationship with a research setting does not come without biases, though this can be counteracted through the use of a parallel reflexive account from the perspective of the researcher running simultaneously to the collection of fieldwork data discussed in a later section. The reflexive account in relation to Donmoyer's (1990) idea on developing schema, provides the opportunity for the researchers to comment on their own thinking and how this develops over time. As the researcher I was living 'the journey' with those stakeholders that I was observing and interviewing, in this way I began to build a relationship of trust over time. I was therefore in a privileged position to access more candid data, than I might have otherwise being seen as an 'outsider'. Not all relationships could be described as 'warm' and by some stakeholders I was always seen as 'outsider' which meant that it was challenging conduct data collection in the way I had initially planned where it was felt that individuals time was scarce at pressured points in the organisations evolution.

Drawing upon Kreiners 2015 study utilizes insights gained from a vast array of documents to explore organisational identity and tension, whilst this presents a unique aspect of an organisational reality, this method alone fails to capture meaning in order to make sense of such documents. Alternatively informants could have been interviewed during this process to deepen understanding of these communications. This would have better aided the development

of frames in order to elicit responses during interview in relation to identities, tension and mission without direct reference. The legitimacy of understanding relies on the extent to which such topics surface at the forefront of conversation or prominence at the individual level, without the need to manufacture an environment where discussion toward such topics may appear forced or unnatural in the course of conversation.

A second point of criticism, but rather an opportunity for developing a methodology for this work concerns the richness of data and the state that this becomes diminished in the particular usage of coding and analysis techniques. The approach adopted in the study, ‘meaning condensation’, ‘whereby researchers abstract the most relevant themes’, is somewhat detractive towards the study of identity as something produced through shared meanings in interaction. Relevant terms would be better checked by participants themselves. Participatory methods might therefore complement the existing work here to show how organisational members construe the relevance and prominence of themes in discussion, to offer insight on how relationships between concepts come to be constructed. Utilising participatory methods, this study addresses concerns over reduction of meaning in relation to the use of themes extracted specifically by the researcher. Instead themes for this study would be co-produced by participants during participatory exercises. These themes form the basis of frames both for subsequent interviewing and data analysis.

3.3.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation offers the researcher a means of close study to the organisational case, in some contexts referred to as organisational listening (Grbich, 1999). The notion of organisational listening can also encompass documentary analysis for background information, and formal

interviews conducted with key informants (Payne & Payne, 2004). Whilst it is noted there are different types of observation (Anderson, 2013), participant observation becomes appropriate as it is suited towards the specifics of this research. In this instance I obtained access to attend key organisational events, thus participant observation accommodates the interaction of the researcher at such events (McKechnie, 2008). Participant observation is defined as ‘data collection over a sustained period by means of watching, listening to, and asking questions of, people as they follow their day-to-day activities, while the researcher adopts a role from their setting and partially becomes a member of the group in question’ (Payne & Payne, 2004: 166). However using this method the researcher has limited control over that being researched, though this does not become a constraint as this research does not seek to control variables, instead being exploratory by nature. The involvement of the researcher in reacting to and interacting with others in the events and situations that unfold, cannot be prepared for in all eventualities, whereby the polite decline in engagement with certain topics of conversation is required at times (DeWalt, 2010). In this study, I observed during organisational board meetings from the conception of Eduvate, from March 2016 to September 2018. From the organisations conception, members consisted of the CT, CEO and 10 trustees, with others invited from time to time to deliver specific business and papers. Participant observation here is intended to capture events at the time when Eduvate ‘spun out’ of the local authority whereby multiple identities may be at play at the point of split (Pratt, 2016). For a period, the ‘new’ organisation Eduvate was established with shadow board meetings taking place, prior to the transfer of undertakings from the local authority. Observation were also conducted at key organisational events within the organisational calendar for example the AGM, friends groups and key ‘staff’ meetings. It was acknowledged at the initial stages of this research project that observation began without a great

awareness of what was to be found. This was intentional on two counts: first limiting preconceived notions and second to gain an understanding of how the organisation was constructing its own context, which coincided with a literature search focusing on organisational identity, change and sensemaking to explore pre-existing theoretical conceptualizations that would inform the project and subsequent research questions. During this process several explanatory models emerged which helped formulate a second phase of data collection to focus on a visual participatory mapping exercise that was held with both groups and individuals followed by interviews with individuals or group interviews.

The success of observation relied upon how it was conducted. Crang and Cook (2007) note: 'it is not uncommon for people under the researcher's gaze to feel self-conscious or threatened knowing that anything they say may be 'written down and used in evidence against them' (p.45). This raises some important ethical considerations (explored in depth in section 3.3.7) surrounding observation practices, these include the protection of participants through anonymity and 'where' and 'when' observation would occur. The content of each board meeting was made public by way of formal minutes produced and published by Eduvate on their own website. The use of findings from the observations did not include specific names, but were distinguished by the role of individuals. In order for the observation to be successful I made an effort to build trust with organisational members by interacting with participants before and after meetings and coffee interludes. Whilst ethical considerations are important there is a need for participants to forget that I was 'an outsider, and to establish trust and thus share insights and information normally privileged to insiders, by beginning to view the me as an insider.

A reliance on making good field notes was essential throughout observation. Due to the sheer volume of data being collected 'It is unwise to trust to memory, notes should be written as

soon as possible' (Seligman 1951: 45) though over time as acknowledged by DeWalt (2010) the process of observation is iterative whereby the researcher develops a tacit understanding of meanings events and contexts. It is important that this meaning is recorded as the tacit at somepoint will need to become explicit in the analysis of data. Therefore I used handwritten observation notes in the form of 'jot notes' (Bernard, 2006; Emmerson et al 1995) or 'scratch notes' (Sanjek, 1990) recording words phrases, or sentences during each meeting as cues to memory in producing formally typed notes after each meeting. In addition to field notes, I produced a short reflexive entry to illustrate the nature of personal interaction was produced after most meetings.

The use of observation also provided context for sampling, open ended interviewing, and the construction of interview guides (DeWalt, 2010: 13). Observation in this case allowed me to gain an understanding of the organisational narrative and thus enabled interview guides to be framed accordingly.

3.3.5 Visual participatory mapping

Visual participatory methods in this work refer to the use of participant mapping, which seeks to illustrate the process of meaning making through the act of drawing (Guillemin, 2004). The use of visual methods can be justified methodologically from an epistemological base that knowledge about identity is not necessarily fixed or, in reference to process theory stable. 'Participatory research also places the focus of research on the individuals and groups in the social context, thus by working with "insiders" in a particular context allows for a better understanding of their realities' (Maguire, 1987: 26).

The use of an integrated approach that involves the use of both visual and word-based research methods offers a way of exploring both the multiplicity and complexity that is the base of much social research interested in human experience.

[Guillemin, 2004: 273]

Kreiner et al's (2015) study provides further justification for participatory methods in their adoption of 'meaning condensation' practices where 'researchers select the most relevant themes', though this does not fit with the study of identity in that a form of co-production could be better placed in terms of participants themselves identifying the most relevant themes as part of participatory methods conducted. This enables participants to construe both the relevance and prominence of themes which arise through the course of discussion allowing the researcher better understanding of any relationships between concepts. In this study themes emerge from the visual mapping exercise to later categorize interview and focus group data.

Participatory via visual methods in this research relate to the production of 'lived experience' maps by participants. This was conducted with both individuals and groups during pre-arranged friends group and staff group meetings (existing within the organisational calendar as a means of communication to both of these key stakeholder groups), there is potential for maps to be obtained from 'others' by arranging focus group sessions. Mapping sessions are informed here in alignment with Weick's (2009) view of sensemaking in that it becomes a form of *cartography* whereby individuals draw their own maps from lived experience. 'Drawings offer a rich and insightful research method to explore how people make sense of their world' (Guillemin, 2012: v4-261). Previously visual methods have been used by Ziller (1990), examining personal meaning making through the use of photographs of people's selves and life events.

Drawings are as much about the drawer's history as it is about their present (and, possibly, their future). The drawing as a visual product is a visual record of how the drawer understands his or her condition at that particular place and time. In this way,

drawings, like other representations, can be used as ways of understanding how people see their world.

[Guillemin, 2012: 264]

Visual participatory mapping is developed for this research to invite stakeholders both in self-identifying groups and as individuals to map representations of the present, but also drawing upon the past and future in that representation.

The way in which identities become substantiated through shared histories provides further justification for this method in relation to how environments become enacted through the process of change and how individuals adapt through sense-making (Skalen, 2004). The mapping sessions were planned to be repeated on two separate occasions with the same individuals to observe movement of histories. However due to significant fluctuation in staff and friends group representatives who participated this was not possible. In some cases movement had occurred in these self-identifying groupings, which should be taken into consideration. Thus, different 'ways of seeing' become opened by visual mapping, in that 'we never look just at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves' (Berger, 1972: 9).

The first phase of mapping took place in June 2017, coinciding with a pre-planned staff and friends group meeting organized by Eduvate. The purpose of the session was for participants to produce a pictorial representation of the past, present and future from their own perspective journey in relation to the service. No constraints were placed on how this should be represented, allowing participants ultimate freedom of expression. The larger group was divided in terms of self-identifying groupings. The activity was planned on the premise that within the number of participants attending that there would be enough participants for groupings to emerge naturally. A time limit of 20 minutes was placed on the mapping exercise, both to make co-ordination feasible allowing time for the researcher to move between groups in facilitating mapping.

Following the visual mapping exercise, group interviews were conducted with those who completed the mapping exercise as a group. The specifics of interviews are outlined in the following sections. Mapping therefore becomes vital to understanding identity work not just in the present but also in relation to an individual’s entire life course alongside associations to the past but also to the future with a particular focus on ‘...forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness’ (Watson, 2008: 129). The maps themselves are used as aids in questioning (Stewart et al, 2007). A field work schedule is provided below which details data collection in each phase of evolution (figure. 4 p.74)

Table 3 Phases of Data Collection

	Data Collection Phase 1 (Aug 2015 – Apr 2016)	Data Collection Phase 2 (Apr 2016 – Apr 2017)	Data Collection Phase 3 (Apr 2017 – Sept 2018)
Observation		X	X
Interviews	X	X	X
Focus Groups		X	
Archival Documents	X	X	X
Visual Mapping		X	

3.3.6 Interviews

Interviews were held with self-identifying staff or friend’s group representatives from July to August (2015) and again in September (2017) with further interviews held with trustees from March to April (2018). Theses semi-structured interviews with various organisational members were conducted in order to explore the study’s major research questions. Semi Structured interviews are chosen as they allow for detailed investigation of personal perspectives, which

provide in-depth understanding of delicate phenomena through open questioning. Practically this is important as observation provides one lens on organisational activity, interviews allow participants to directly express their perspective about particular events and happenings. Kreuger and Casey (2000, p.xi) outline that the sole focus of interviews is not in questioning but: “It is about paying attention. It is about being open to hear what people have to say. It is about being nonjudgmental. It is about creating a comfortable environment for people to share. It is about being careful and systematic with the things people tell you”.

The interviews taking place in the period of September 2017 with staff and friends group representatives were structured in two parts. The first part consisted of a visual participatory mapping exercise, with further detail provided in section 3.3.6. In this activity, participants mapped their own journey in relation to the organisation both in terms of identity and events that they deemed to be significant. The second part of the interview then utilised a format of open questions based upon constructs which had surfaced both during earlier observations and the content of the participant’s visual map produced in the first part of the interview. Probes were then used to explore particular aspects of the map in greater depth with a list of pre-determined optional probes, for which the interviewer could draw upon at their discretion. A cross section of key informants from differing stakeholder groups were sampled to take part in separate interviews for this study. These participants were sampled using the broad knowledge and affiliated stakeholders in discussion with the CEO of the organisation. Diversity was sought in terms of those with differing levels of contact with the organisation. However during the participatory visual mapping it was not always possible to schedule a follow-up interview in a timely enough period as such those participants who could not be interviewed were omitted.

A core consideration in the facilitation of interviews is that they do not become detached from the worlds to which they relate (Seymour, 2001). In contrast to Kreiner et al. (2015) minimal prior consideration was given for familiarity or meaning amongst participants of these constructs in relation to ‘multiple identities’, ‘tension’, ‘mission’. This study sought to address this by using both data from observation and visual participatory mapping exercise to shape interview questions, driven largely by participants in reference to cues from maps that they had produced. In Kreiner et al.’s study, insights on ‘identity issues’ were obtained emanating from documental sources from the organisation across a 10-year period. However the ability to question the meaning of language within such documents appears limited to the point of data collection at interview. Utilising insights gained from the vast array of documents key informants could have used during this process to deepen understanding of specific communications, by way of developing frames in order to elicit responses during interview in relation to identities, tension and mission without direct reference. In this research interview guides were based on topics in relation to the exploration of core research questions using familiar language to participants by which to frame questions arising from the visual mapping exercise.

It is therefore the combination of methods proposed under the design of this research that allow for immersion in the organisational setting whereby greater understanding can be taken towards ‘what is happening here?’.

We live in a world of potentially multiple, intersubjective social realities in which the researcher (as well as the researched) is also an interpreter of events that transpire and sometimes an actor in them, an interview might be conducted to ascertain how the particular person interviewed experienced the event in question; and if different interview participants provide different versions of the event, that is normal and to be expected. Indeed, it is precisely those differences that are of analytic interest to the researcher, as they suggest what is significant – what is *meaning*-ful – about the event to each person speaking.

[Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013: 41]

It is through the rich volume of data from multiple methods that one case study can be justified. Specifically interviews are justified here for their ability ‘to access the perspective of the person being interviewed...., to find out from them things that we cannot directly observe’ (Patton, 1990: 270). In this study the use of interviews is designed to complement observation as initial observation was used to inform the interview questions. This is further supported by Rubin and Rubin (1995) stating that interviews become a way of uncovering and exploring the meanings of people’s lives, routines behaviors and feelings.

Developing the interview schedule

In the interview period from July- August 2015 interviews were based primarily on the change that was about to happen and was a means learn how participants identified with the organisation and their awareness of the ‘spin-out’ which was about to happen. During the second phase of interviewing from September 2017 Separate interview schedules were developed for interviews with different stakeholders based upon the language and framing captured during the participatory mapping exercise. Some standard questions were used at the outset of each interview to put participants at ease, with the remainder of questioning developed in the form of an adaptable list of open questions.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, hand written notes were made by the interviewer during the interview, with reference to specific points that the interviewee raised with a view to further questioning.

3.3.7 Focus group interviews

The participatory mapping sessions were followed by focus groups to discuss what participants have produced in the visual mapping exercise. Groups were formed by self-identifying at the micro, macro and meso levels of the organisation as staff or friends group representatives. The focus group sessions consisted of a few partially structured questions for the purpose of initiating group conversation based on content within maps, with further probes to steer conversation as necessary. In group interviewing, the key to success is making the group dynamic work in service of the goals and objectives of the research (Morgan, 2001). Focus groups are inherently social, as such the complexity of social dynamics cannot necessarily be known prior to interviewing taking place (Hollander, 2004). However whilst group dynamics must be considered they cannot be manufactured, it remains important that the interview resembles as close to possible a natural conversation (Olsen, 2012). In conducting group interviews facilitation was aided by ensuring each participant had a name tag, though ethically only a first name was obtained to provide some basis of rapport for questioning (Stewart et al., 2007).

Forsyth (2006:10) observed that ‘group members do things to and with each other’ in the everyday, as a result people will behave differently when in groups than when they are alone. There are essential differences between interviews and focus groups Agar and MacDonald (1995) argue that a group interview format requires the facilitator lead discussion and encourages a level of forced discussion producing a level interaction similar to a meeting. On the other hand they argue that individual interviews encourage informants to explain themselves where group conversation evokes ‘indexed knowledge’ where individuals feel they do not need to explain themselves when referring to one another.

In this research diversity cannot be accounted for as individuals were from their own self identifying groups. However it is suggested that the formation of artificial diversity in groups provides greater perspective and innovation (Levine & Moreland, 1998), though is not considered relevant for this research as groups were selected for their self-identifying natural composition.

The setting for the focus groups was found to be of paramount importance to creating an atmosphere of trust and openness, reflecting in the quality of data elicited from participants. In all cases focus groups were held at branch locations of the organisation, typically in a meeting room or quiet corner. At the beginning of each interview reassurances over anonymity of the data were given to participants. Due to the dynamics of groups in some instances it was found that not all members contributed equally to the discussions even though all members were given the opportunity to speak. The simplest technique to encouraging contributions from each participation was to ask each group member for his or her opinion in turn. This technique could not be used with each question because it tended to stifle interaction among group members, but was successful in several instances to draw out contributions from reluctant respondents. The focus group interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim in readiness for analysis.

3.3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are considered here in accordance with both the University of Exeter's ethics policy (2008) and the ESRC 'Framework for research ethics' utilizing the University of Exeter Business School's ethics checklist prior to submission of a full ethical proposal. The proposal included templates of ethical consent forms which were used with participants. This proposal along with

ethical consent forms and information for participants were submitted to the University of Exeter Business School's ethics committee for which the proposal was accepted without revision and approval granted in 2015. The University of Exeter 'ethics policy' (2008) dictates 'Ethical practice in such cases requires that participants and/or legal guardians, at a minimum, be fully informed, free to volunteer, free to opt out at any time without redress, and be fully protected in regard to safety according to the limits of best practice' (p.3). In first constituting whether this research could be deemed ethical the four ethical principles outlined by (Diener & Crandall, 1978) were considered: whether there is harm to participants; whether there is a lack of informed consent; whether there is invasion of privacy; whether deception is involved. This framework is utilised below in outlining how this study addresses the core ethical considerations of this research.

3.3.7.1 Mitigation of harm to participants

Due to the nature of the research, harm to participants was considered low. Potential harm may arise in respect of group interviews where people may talk openly for other in the group may here. In such instances it is important that the state of such groups is reinforced as a safe space by which the content of discussion does not leave the group, though it is acknowledged that this cannot be guaranteed by the researcher. However participants who participate in group interviews were required to complete a non-disclosure along with informed consent prior to participating.

3.3.7.2 Ensuring informed consent.

This research study is already supported by the organisation forming (the case) having received outline permission from senior management and the board to conduct research within the organisation. However consent of each individual of whom participated directly with the study in the form of group and individual interviews was also sought. In terms of observation, my presence was made public on entry to the organisation and also at the point observation concluded. At no point will specific individuals be the subject of observation, though the need to distinguish between role may be needed in analyzing observation data. For the majority general group observations will be made, permission of organisational gatekeepers was sought and that of organisational members when observation occurred at other key organisational events.

Individuals affiliated with Eduvate volunteered to participate in the study through the process of informed consent following ethical approval from the University of Exeter Business School. The recruitment of participants required details of the study's specific aims to be kept minimal in order not to influence potential responses during data collection. However there was fine balance to be struck in terms of providing enough information that full informed consent of participants could be obtained.

The core ethical considerations in terms of observation, were for trust to be built through reassurances of the protection of participants through anonymity and ensuring my presence was known in terms of 'where' and 'when' observation would occur. The analysis of findings from observation do not include specific names, though role may be distinguished. Permission of 'Gatekeepers' was sought prior to observation taking place which included the CEO and Chair of Trustees, including approval from the board of trustees. There was ample opportunity provided throughout observation for organisational members to raise concerns.

As data collection was proposed to evolve during the course of the study, being conducted in interval phases across three years using: observation, document analysis, visual mapping to inform interviews and group interviews, it is acknowledged that individuals under the gaze of the researcher may come to feel self-conscious, though my observation was largely focused on board of trustee meetings and core organisational events.

Group interviews were held with self-identifying groups at the micro, macro and meso levels of the organisation, consisting similarly of a few partially structured questions for the purpose of initiating group conversation, with further probes to steer conversation as necessary. No limit is placed on the number of group interviews to be held, as this is dependent on the number of groups to be present at each event and that are willing to participate. Groups were arranged in an open space, I made a concerted effort to provide space between groups to allow free movement in actively collaborating to produce maps. Participants were asked to introduce themselves for the purposes of transcription and how they identify in accordance with stakeholder groupings. However pseudonyms will be applied in representation of data for the body of this report to protect anonymity. In facilitating group interviews participants were required to wear name badges to allow for ease in questioning and for the facilitator to establish rapport.

Visual participatory mapping was conducted as the first part of the individual and group interviews. The group sessions involved pre-defined groupings, such as staff and friends groups as part of these groups participants produced maps outlining how they made sense of change and the evolution of their identity, these maps are then used as a basis for the interviews and group interviews which are planned to follow. Informed consent was obtained initially for the visual mapping exercise and then the interviews and group interviews to follow, as each was classed as

separate data collection event, even though the visual mapping sessions were designed to feed into and inform both the individual and group interviews. The informed consent document clearly indicated the requirements for each part of the session, and that the interviews would form two parts. This was to avoid confusion on the part of the participant that they may not be aware of what they have consented to.

3.3.7.3 Maintaining Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity for all participants, compliance with the storage is in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act. As this project involves obtaining and processing of personal data relating to living individuals, in relation to the recording of interviews and group interviews with subjects, the findings will be made anonymous to other third parties beyond the researcher, though compliance with the Data Protection Act is of paramount importance particularly in ensuring that sufficient consent is sought from participants and that personal data will be stored securely for an appropriate period of time. The University of Exeter records management procedures are adhered to in terms of holding data by encryption, keeping information confidential and providing participants with pseudonyms in order to protect their identity to others beyond the researcher.

3.3.7.4 Mitigating deception through transparency

Full informed consent was obtained from all participants clearly detailing what is required of them and the broad aims of the study and how their data will be used, with provision for them to ask questions in person or via email, with the right to withdraw at any point until data is consolidated, the date of which is indicated in consent documents. A broad outline of the main

aims of the research were presented to participants prior to consenting, in good time that questions and concerns can be raised with the researcher prior to data collection taking place, contact details were provided ahead of data collection.

Whilst formal ethical approval was sought at the outset of the project, the research team reviewed particular ethical considerations as they arose through the course of the project. It should be noted that the longitudinal nature of this research gives rise to changing circumstances which have to be considered as and when they arise with advice sought and mitigation implemented as appropriate.

3.4 Analytic method

I use a method of ‘Temporal bracketing’ recommended by Anne Langley (2010: 930) for case study-based process data that consists of ‘detailed event histories over time’. The ‘Temporal bracketing analytical strategy [is] for dealing with process data, that is, case study data that are composed of detailed event histories over time’ (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010: 919).

Specifically, the approach involves decomposing time lines into distinct phases where there is continuity in activities within each phase. The critical events of Eduvate’s evolution unfolded sequentially overtime, a period of approximately three years in this study. The analytic approach is inductive, building and refining theory from rich longitudinal process data (Eisenhardt, 1989). The process of analysis involves breaking down the evolution of Eduvate into temporal blocks across the three year period from 2015 to 2018 thus ‘bracketing’ period’s of time, usually in reference to how an event or period was constructed in the eyes of participants. This notably became defined by the ‘birthdays’ of the organisation, which fell each year upon the same date and which defined ‘year’ blocks. For example, the birth of Eduvate describes when it formally

transitioned from local government to a public service mutual; its first and second birthdays are the two years that followed the birth. Within each block, further temporal brackets are created by critical event histories again defined in the eyes of participants. Through these phases of time, continuity or discontinuity could be observed, with each bracket (event or phase) being a separate unit of analysis for the replication of emerging theory in reference to the three core research questions.

Evidence is drawn together from observational, documentary and interview data through the process of setting out it out into distinct histories as they evolved over time. This can then be used to illustrate how actions of one period lead to changes in the next. In summary, temporal bracketing is a particularly useful analytical strategy in processual case research because it allows the structured investigation of dynamic elements within complex temporally organized data sets. The data following temporal bracketing is coded using a codes-to-theory model as described by (Saldana, 2009). This process follows several stages: first familiarization with the data, reflection on what the data is saying, a process of open coding and then conceptualization towards identifying concepts and themes that enable understanding (see appendix C). Some re-focusing of the coding frame takes place as more of the data is coded, iterating being conceptualization and refinement.

The data were analysed in relation to the main research questions. The overarching RQ2 How do stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change? draws upon the analysis of data from September 2015 just prior to the spin out of the organisation right through until the September 2018, when the organisation was more established. This question is explored in three parts, each of which have a unique focus as outlined below.

RQ2 part a) How is an identity of a new organisation formed by organisational stakeholders? focuses more specifically on how organisational members come to form their own and others identities in the context of the organisation. The theoretical basis for analysis is identity work and how individuals negotiate and renegotiate identities to the shifting basis of control.

RQ2 part b) How do multiple organisational identities unfold over time? Here specific attention was given to identity work processes which take place to establish the existence and prominence of certain identities over time and how certain identities may have come to be deconstructed and the processes by which this is accomplished. This is largely confined to the board and senior leadership team, as individuals within these groups were integral in the formation and continuation of Eduvate.

RQ2 Part c) How do organisational stakeholders make sense of processes of change in relation to their own identities? draws upon both the ‘maintaining continuity’ and sensemaking literatures, particularly in relation to how sense is made of the present in relation to the past, present and future. Of particular interest here is how and when the ‘new’ organisation comes into prominence in representation of the past, present and future and over the course of time the prominence of particular identities may change.

3.4.1 Thematic Coding and Analysis

This section previews the data collected across phase 1, 2, 3 of the study. During phase 1 the majority of data consists of individual and group interviews. With some observation of early board meetings and stakeholder events as shown in Table 4. In phase two and three data

collection focused primarily on observation of board meetings and other events with stakeholders. With some interviews held with key stakeholders.

Table 4 Data collected across phases of evolution

	Phase 1 (Pre Spin-Out)	Phase 2 (Birth – 1 st Birthday)	Phase 3 (1 st Birthday – 2 nd Birthday)
Observation			
Board Meeting 3/16	O		
Board Meeting 4/16	O		
Board Meeting 5/16		O	
Board Meeting 9/16		O	
Board Meeting 11/16		O	
Board Meeting 01/17		O	
Board Meeting 03/17		O	
Board Meeting 05/17			O
Board Meeting 07/17			O
Board Meeting 09/17			O
Board Meeting 11/17			O
Board Meeting 2/18			O
Board Meeting 5/18			O
Strategy Meeting			
Board Development			
Staff Meeting 3/16	O		
AGM		O	
Staff Conf & AGM			O
Interviews			
Chair		O	
Trustee x 2		O	
Area Supervisor	O		
Volunteer x 3	O		
Service User x 6	O		
Friends Group Rep	O		
Staff Member x 4	O		
Mother/Service User x 2	O		
Board meeting agendas, (Board)			

A thematic means of analysis was applied to the data (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) by examining how material was relevant to the research question. As noted under the qualitative approach the analysis process is iterative and thus an openness is retained in the modification of coding frames if required. The coding frame (see appendix B and C) illustrates how data were coded, using a codes-to-theory model (Saldana, 2015). I treated the process of coding as an interpretive exercise which was conducted by hand. First I read through the data in chronological order to familiarize myself with the content, with the focus of the study in mind I gave particular attention to what the data was suggesting and whose point of view was being expressed, making markers and annotations to return to later.

Having familiarized myself with the large body of data I was able to reflect on what the data were saying, considering whether it supported current knowledge, did the data challenge if anything and did it answer currently unanswered questions? This led onto a process of open-coding where I attempted to make sense of links between data and categories that data chunks would naturally fit into. I summarized chunks of data into first order categories, for the coding to be efficient a definitional frame was constructed whereby each category was given a descriptor listing indicative content (see appendix B) and was supported by vignette's of representative data. The visual data was not coded as it was used as means to interview participants and as such the interview data through the eyes of participants provides and interpretation of the visual element.

Mayring (2010: section 5.2.4) outlines how subcategories can be generated from qualitative content in a data-driven way by progressive summarizing, which involves going through the data using the following steps:

- 1. Reading the material until a relevant concept is encountered.*
- 2. Checking whether a subcategory that covers this concept has already been created.*
- 3. If so, mentally 'subsuming' this under the respective subcategory.*
- 4. If not, creating a new subcategory that covers this concept.*
- 5. Continuing to read until the next relevant concept/ passage is encountered.*

This exercise is followed until a point of saturation is reached in that no new concepts can be identified. Boyatzis (1998) propose a method of comparing and contrasting which can also be used to develop an entire coding frame in a data-driven way, becoming useful for comparing different sources. This is relevant given the different sources of data collected for this research highlighting similarities and differences between sources to corroborate or challenge findings.

In some cases definitions were too narrow so these were expanded through iteration as I saw fit in accordance with emerging data driven material. I was aware that codes would likely need to be re-focused as coding continued. In order to test for the quality of categorization some of the data was coded two times to ensure that coding definitions were not ambiguous, rather justified by a second round of coding refinement (simplifying terms or definitions) (Schreier, 2014). In a second reading, I was then able to determine a second order coding structure. As the rigour of analysis relies on the structure of categories (Slater, 1998), I considered the concepts and themes that appeared important for understanding and included a short descriptor for each first order code.

The coding frame was integral to managing the large volumes of data produced under the qualitative approach in this case study. In relation to the methods used, observation, archival documents, visual mapping alongside individual and group interviews, therefore data from a wide spectrum of stakeholders and sources was obtained. Through the chronological reading of data and reduction of material into ordered ‘chunks’ made the process manageable (Welsh, 2002). Methods were used to answer particular aspects of the research questions highlighted. Therefore coding is organized in relation to question topic, and data compiled from differing sources accordingly. Data becomes layered according to source and topic, thus building evidential support for later discussion. At no point is the coding frame finalised as it was realised that amendments may need to be made to the frame.

When main categories had been created subcategories were then created driven by theoretical concepts identified in the literature review and emerging data. The combination of theory and data became important in shaping categories as whilst theory shaped the research questions initially, the data seeks to challenge this by providing new insights, and thus new insights cannot be accounted for under existing theory. Thus concept driven categories are based on previous knowledge: a theory, prior research, everyday knowledge, logic, or an interview guide (Schreier, 2015).

The foundations for the coding frame became essential and followed the steps outlined by Schreier (2014): selecting material; structuring and generating categories; defining categories; revising and expanding the frame (Boyatzis, 1998; Mayring, 2010; Rustemeyer, 1992; and Schreier, 2012). Through this stage of focused coding the data structure appeared stronger where the framework was applied to code the remainder of data of which fed into three aggregate

theoretical dimensions. These included, organisational change narrative, identity formation and positioning continuity.

3.4.2 Documentary Analysis

Documents are defined here as the ‘literary, textual or visual devices that enable information to be shared and ‘stories’ to be presented. Thus, all documents are, in that sense, artefacts that are created for a particular purpose, crafted according to social convention to serve a function of sorts’ (Coffey, 2014: 369). The analysis of documents has to be approached in a mindful way, in looking at *what they are* and for *what they are used to accomplish* in the organisational context (Coffey, 2014). As a guide ‘the manner in which such material is actually called upon and manipulated, and the way in which it functions, cannot be determined (though it may be constrained) by analysis of content [...] The text has meaning only in the context of its use and its nature is defined by its use’ (Prior, 2011: 8). As a framework Prior (2003) identifies four routes to the analysis of documents 1) The study of content, 2) The social construction of documents and records, 3) Documents in 'the field', 4) Documents in action and documents in networks.

In this work the majority of documentary data accompanies or supports observation of critical events, e.g minutes and board papers from observed board meetings. In the analysis of documents it becomes of interest to consider their deconstruction in light of other data sources. For example what reality does the document create? How is this different from that which was observed? Or that of independent accounts provided during interviews? ‘deconstruction is a process that rests on several assumptions. The first is that ideology imposes limits on what can and cannot be said. The second is that most authors write and actors act from within an ideology. Therefore their texts and actions are bound by the limits of their ideology. Deconstruction as an analytical tool aims at exposing these ideological limits’ (Feldman, 1995: 51). Therefore

deconstruction in analysis of documents looks at ‘how language creates some meanings and suppresses other meanings’ (Manning, 1992: 203–204). The intentional or unintentional suppression of meanings can be extracted illustrating the state of organisational rhetoric, but also observing how this may change over time in the context of identity. Through source triangulation the meanings and suppression of meaning may be better illuminated, where these sources each corroborate or challenge another reality. Further ‘deconstruction is a means to see words in context and to examine the effects of changing contexts on meaning’ (Manning, 1992: 202).

The interest in documents lies in the distinctive and particular use of language associated with the organisational context, thus becoming associated with a particular group or activity. In developing an interpretative understanding of documents the language, words and phrases, and the order and structure of the text become of interest. Hence we are interested in the ways in which ‘the messages (the meanings or social realities) are produced and articulated by an author or authors to an audience (or audiences)’ (Coffey, 2014: 372), and thus what this means in relation to construction or deconstruction of identities. The majority of documentary data is collected in reference to the board meetings in the way of board papers, minutes and agendas, of which extracts are analyzed in conjunction with observational data.

3.4.3 Analysis of Visual Data

Here, I outline the process used to analyse visual data from maps participants produced to illustrate how they make sense of the past, present and future in their capacity as a stakeholder of Eduvate. The analysis of visual data was immediate following the visual mapping exercise and then used as a basis for questioning during interviews. Flick (2009) argues that methods of analysis for visual data are underdeveloped, and thus used here only as a supporting method for

interviews. The mapping technique was designed to allow participants time independently to evoke memories of the past, reflect on the present and consider the future in relation to the organisation Eduvate. Having been given space to produce these visual representations the interviews were designed to elicit more detail about what they had reproduced and why. The immediate method of analysis concerns how the maps participants produced were initially interpreted by me prior to the corresponding individual and group interviews and the framing of interview questions from the maps. This immediate analysis was guided by Rose's (2001) critical visual methodology is the context of the production of the maps. Rose provides a framework with the following questions for the immediate analysis of the maps. Not all of the questions in the framework were used for analysis as participants were afforded the freedom to produce the maps as they wished. Many participants found comfort in using handwritten text to illustrate the past, present and future, making Rose (2001) points of analysis of little use.

Question	Sub questions
1) What is being show in participant's maps?	a) What are the components of the image? b) How are they arranged?
2) What relationships are established between the components of the image?	
3) What use is made of colour?	a) What colours are used? b) What is the significance to the drawer of the colors used?
4) What do the different components of the map signify?	a) What is being represented?
5) What knowledges are being deployed?	a) Whose knowledges are excluded from this representation? b) Is this a contradictory image? (to other data collected, for example, in interviews)

Consequently some of the questions for analysis become further points of questioning during the interviews, but most importantly familiarization and interpretation was conducted with the participant present. This method of analysis becomes particularly interesting in the group exercise as it illustrates how different interpretations of the same or similar content of the maps are interpreted differently by participants, thus illustrating how sense and or meaning is made in individual worlds as part of a wider group. This method of analysis is used in addition to the thematic analysis as outlined above, though this will be centered more on the data collected from interviews as the visual maps are intended to inform and supplement the guide and basis for both group and individual interviews.

3.5 Conclusions

In setting out to obtain accounts and experiences through an organisational process ontology where the world is composed of events and experiences my work is focused on a qualitative approach. In this section I have highlighted the interpretivist postmodern methodological perspective chosen to explore one in-depth case study, justified for its unusual insight and longitudinal potential. The research design uses multiple methods to collect observational data supported by documentary data and interview supported by visual data across three years. I sampled stakeholders from across the organisation to participate in both interviews and focus groups, however it was necessary to focus data collection efforts to particular groups and geographical areas at times due to resource limitations. Source triangulation was achieved through the combination of sources of data collected. My fieldwork was conducted with full ethical consent from participants where my role as researcher was made overt by the CT from the outset of the study, there was a need to reaffirm my status at various points through the project. I

chose a process of thematic analysis to primarily analyse the observational and interview data. Visual analysis techniques were used to prior to the follow-up focus group and individual interviews to analyse the participants visual map data in order to structure interview questions. However it is important to note that the visual maps were not analysed again in the later formal coding process, this focused only on interview, focus group, observation and documentary data. The visual analysis was conducted purely at interviews to frame questions to participants, the interpretation of visual data therefore comes from participants own accounts through the process of interviews as to the meaning of the visual data. In the next chapter I present the findings of the research from the analysis of data.

Chapter 4

OBSERVING THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured in a chronological way, focusing on the ‘critical events’ in the life of the emergent and then evolving organisation (Table 5). These ‘critical events’ become the cues and frames for sense to be made of the past, present and future in respect of identity, both individual and organisational. These critical events therefore form a frame by which findings are represented, to give the reader both a sense of the journey but also to illustrate the prominence that each event commands towards the construction and/or deconstruction of identity. In the style of the evolutionary nature of identity, this longitudinal study presents data from July 2015 to September 2018 from sources of observation recorded in fieldwork journals, transcribed interviews and group interviews, documents and visual representations. Data collected at different points within this timeframe are therefore presented in relation specific critical events which are explored chronologically using date references. For example, a description of an event that I observed may be interwoven with interviews conducted with participants at a later date, during which they recall something about the event in question. This method of presenting the data is reflective of how in sensemaking, people draw from the past and the present when they reflect about the future. The findings are presented without use of a conceptual lexicon, instead reference is made to the emergence of conceptual contributions of which are unpacked in the discussion chapter in relation to the theoretical framework of this research. Data collected from other occasions which corroborates or contradicts my observations is therefore referenced in relation to the chronology of events as played out in real-time. Findings may therefore appear intense and iterative, but it is this that allows for meaning to be made of how ‘identity work’

processes play out between past, present and future. The later discussion section draws out the themes of the core research questions Chapter 5.

Table 5 Critical Events and their significance

Date	Critical Event	Significance
2015		
	Pre Birth (spin-out)	
	Preparing for spin-out	Mutual project board established through threat to the service, options from public consultation
July - 15	Staff Advisory Group	Communications with staff through internal forum regarding the future of the local authority service.
	Recruitment of Chair	Signals the formal start of the new organisation Eduvate at this point completely independent from the service of which would be transferred to it.
	Recruitment of Trustees	Selection and recruitment of trustee's with the 'necessary skills' to take the new organisation forwards.
2016		
Feb - 16	All staff/friends group meetings	Communication about the spin-out and the structure of Eduvate to key stakeholder groups.
Becoming Independent		
Mar - 16	'A cosy matey club or self sufficient?'	Setting up as the independent organisation Eduvate with the first meeting of all trustees
Apr - 16	Signing the contract and transfer of undertakings	The 'official' spin-out date and transfer of undertakings to the already created mutual Eduvate.
Birth ('Spin-out')		
Apr - 16	Public Launch 'What do we feel the problem is'	Board of Trustee Development Session, perspectives on the functioning of the board.
May - 16	'Decisions have to be made'	First 'challenging' debate and decision for the full Board of Trustees
Sept - 16	Re-Structure The Annual General Meeting (AGM)	The first public AGM of Eduvate as a charitable organisation held with members.

2017		
Apr - 17	The First Birthday	A celebration with invited stakeholders to mark one year since the public launch of Eduvate. A reflection on the journey setting up Eduvate was given by the CT and CEO.
May - 17	‘Is our direction around the arts?’	A strategy workshop with senior managers and trustees
July - 17	‘Playing catch-up in a world that has exploded’	Board of Trustee meeting which surfaces the role of technology and data for the future organisation.
Oct - 17	The Staff Conference and Annual General Meeting	The first major gathering of all staff signaling the shift towards arts and culture for the organisation, followed by the second public AGM
Nov - 17	‘We need to grow’	Trustee’s make decisions about growth of the organisation and the best way to achieve this
2018		
Feb - 18	Changing the composition	Some Trustees stand down from the board, a search for trustees with a different set of experience ensues.
Apr - 18	The Second Birthday	A celebration of the passing of the second year of Eduvate as an independent organisation.
Sep - 18	Who is accountable	An open scrutiny meeting held by the local authority to determine extent of Eduvates responsibilities
	‘What does the future hold’	Perspectives on the future

The public service mutual² organisation is now fully operational and describes itself in their own words:

[Eduvate] is a new and independent staff and community owned social enterprise, established in April 2016 with the support of [the local authority]. We are a company limited by guarantee with charitable status pending.

[Eduvate, 2016]

The organisation Eduvate obtained charitable status from the charities commission with their publicly stated mission centering on six social purposes.

1. Promoting and encouraging a love of reading
2. Providing free access to information to help people in their everyday lives
3. Inspiring people of all ages to learn, imagine, create, succeed and realise their potential
4. Guiding and supporting people to explore and connect to the wider world
5. Offering a welcoming space to meet, socialise, learn, read and enjoy new experiences
6. Supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals and local communities.

These social purposes are said to embody the organisation's core values and beliefs, indicative of its diverse stakeholder associations.

4.2 Pre Birth ('Pre spin-out') July 2015

A significant amount of work had taken place by key individuals before the 'spin-out' of the service from the local authority by the mutual project board. It had been established within the local authority that the service was 'at risk' (a rhetoric heavily used within local government and local media) and a new independent organisation should be created to sustain it.

At this point much focus by the mutual project board was given to communications with stakeholders with key messages (Former Service) to communicate the change. In these communications anything outside of what was considered the norm at the current time was packaged under 'the change' (terminology used by the mutual project board) more commonly referring to the creation of an independent organisation under the mutualisation agenda set out by the UK Government in 2014 (Cabinet Office, 2014). This agenda set out that public service workers could use a 'right to bid' to take over the operation of a public service within which they worked. The Cabinet Office created a programme to assist in the establishment of new public

service mutuals with differing levels of support being offered depending upon when the process was initiated. In relation to Eduvate the mutual project board formed initially within the local authority comprising of senior staff running the current service to establish the new public service mutual organisation Eduvate. Alongside senior staff the board comprised of other representatives from the local authority including officers and elected councilors, operational staff from within the current service at the time, and external expertise from a private company who had assisted in the setup of other new public service mutual within the UK.

A core component of becoming a mutual was that the organisation should be run by staff who had previously worked in the service under local authority control. The objectives of the mutualisation agenda encouraged these organisational members to unleash their entrepreneurial spirit in sustaining a hoped more dynamic sustainable mode of organizing (LeGrand, 2012). However, this represents a significant shift in what may have been expected from staff in the past.

The minutes from a staff advisory group meeting held in July 2015 note feedback from staff stating that language used in frequently asked questions about the transfer had been deemed to be a bit ‘high tech’ meaning that the explanatory language of senior members of staff was predicated upon a certain amount of pre-existing knowledge about mutualization. However it had been noted that generally there had been few comments from staff about the plans for the new organisation [Eduvate] or the work of the Staff Advisory Group. It was stated in the minutes that assumptions had been made by management about reasons for this such as ‘*Staff are very busy*’, ‘*Some staff are happy with what they read on Sharepoint and Weekly Bulletin*’, ‘*There is also a possible feeling that this is all very abstract at the moment and people will get more involved when they feel they will be directly affected by actions/decisions*’. The minutes also stated that:

A few members of staff have commented that they feel that management are “spinning” the information that is disseminated. (the word “hope” is used a lot. Some people feel that this leaves a huge gap for things not to end up as we hope.) StAG [Staff and Advisory Group] recognised these concerns but feel that there is a very difficult balance between telling staff everything when much is still uncertain and not saying anything and subsequently being accused of not communicating with staff. There is a lot that we genuinely don’t know at the moment and the overarching desire of management and StAG is to be as open and transparent as possible and we have been encouraged to say as much as we can.

[Staff and Advisory Group Minutes, July 2015]

The quotation above highlights that this was a critical point prior to spin-out for communications with staff and other stakeholders about the new organisation, the words used to describe how management were handling information as ‘spinning’ is not clear at this point. It would appear perhaps, that uncertainty about Eduvate had prevented openness in sharing information to staff. This could have been construed by those staff that senior managers were deliberately withholding information. Prior to transfer the communications strategy document highlighted a number of issues. Most issues focused on staff as communicators of information to other stakeholders, implying that staff should be well informed about ‘the change’ by which to communicate with *other* stakeholders. The communications issues included:

- Demonstrating how the establishment of [the service] as an independent organisation will impact upon a range of stakeholders;
- The ability of staff to answer questions asked by stakeholders in relation to the establishment of the new organisation;
- Effective engagement of elected members [referring to local authority elected councilors] – the majority of members are currently supportive without being fully engaged;
- Communication for the project currently remains the responsibility of the few – the intention is to enable all [...] staff take on responsibility for ensuring effective communication with stakeholders;

Reduce the number of key messages to a concise list/elevator pitch that is understood by all [...] staff.

[Communications Strategy, Edevate, 2015]

I conducted interviews with staff and other stakeholders during the summer of 2015 at locations in five districts of the local authority-run service to explore what was understood about the new organisation Edevate prior to the ‘spin-out’ and how these stakeholders saw their attachment to the current organisation. The quotations below from staff, reference understandings about the organisation and proposed change, demonstrating that some staff appear to be clearer than others on what would be happening in terms of the ‘Spin-out’.

Well I know the [...] service is going through a period of great change and it moves over to becoming a mutual and there is a call out at the moment for people to become part of the trustee board. Of the mutual which is very similar to the governance of a school, members of the community who provide that top layer of governance, question how people are working and what people are doing. It is a period of great transition really, so time will tell how that governance comes out, it is very important that members of the community who where their [services] are based are part of that feedback.

[MP5 Staff Member, Mid County]

This member of staff describes that the service is going through ‘great change’, likening the situation to that of school, stating a process of ‘great transition’ referencing how time will decide how things play out. Stakeholders mention transition at various points in the evolution of the organisation, notably again by a friends group representative in September 2017 stating ‘We are at a transition point’. The implication is that different stakeholders are experiencing transition at different points in the organisation’s evolution, even several years on from the point of spin-out.

No not really, I don't understand the practicalities, as long as I am not asked to contribute any money that would be the main thing. I have seen obviously they are looking for people to be friends of the [service] and umm people to be involved in the discussions for the new organisation, but I think that is as far as my understanding goes.

[MP6 Staff Member, Mid County]

The above staff member is clear that [he or she] does not understand how the new organisation will operate, sensing some threat to their personal circumstance in expressing 'as long as I am not asked to contribute any money'.

Uhhh umm [the local authority] will still have responsibility for providing the service and own the buildings, but the services are going to be run as a charitable organisation [...] i think that's my understanding of it, I think the same staff are going to be around, but I don't know if that means when people leave they are not going to be replaced, whether volunteers will take their place I don't know.

[MP1 Retiree, Mid County]

I think there will be more staff involvement and perhaps more local involvement and local community involvement and what they would like from the [Service].

[WDP4, Staff Member]

The interviewees above both use 'I think' in relation to their descriptions of what they understand about the new mutual, suggesting that they are not clear if what they understand is correct or is overridden still by sense of uncertainty.

Well the whole thing is so new, I know York and Suffolk have about three years' experience of it. The videos that were shown on the I.T link with videos of their staff and representatives and how positive they feel about their experience. I just wonder if the things they have been able to do as a result of the change, funding ideas and new involvements within the communities, just a different way of looking at the whole nature of the service I suppose.

[Staff Member, South District]

This member of staff is optimistic about the change, but expresses hesitancy through phrases like 'I suppose' and 'I just wonder' illustrating that this individual is piecing together various information to make sense of what might happen.

4.2.1 Becoming independent and preparing for ‘Spin out’

Stories come to define the process of organizing observed within the organisation over the period of this study. To illustrate the process of differentiation for Eduvate as a mutual in the process of becoming independent before the ‘Spin out’ and ‘Birth’, I return to the public intention as stated by the newly appointed CT and highlight the basis for which a ‘public’ identity for the new organisation Eduvate emanates. In a statement published in various organisational sources and publicly the CT states:

The alternative operating model will be a new, independent organisation which will be a public service mutual. This new organisation will be able to make savings through a tailored approach to management, support and running costs and have the freedom to access new sources of income. It will be more agile and focused to respond quickly and flexibly to community needs and demands and will be able to work in more innovative and collaborative ways with [the counties] communities and other partners. The new organisation is likely to have charitable status and a mix of staff and community ownership. The new organisation aims to develop a strong, sustainable business model that will enable it to thrive. As a mutual organisation, independent from [the local authority], the service will maintain and grow professional expertise and experience, deepen links to the community, enshrine a social ethos and purpose and will be able to make additional savings as well as access new forms of income, whether directly from developing new chargeable services, by eligibility for grant funding, encouraging sponsorship and philanthropy or delivering additional contracts...

[Eduvate, 2015: 5]

This statement from the CT sets out an aspirational frame for organizing, with much promise around anticipated difference which should become apparent to stakeholders as a result of selecting the Public Service Mutual form. The select choice of positive statements shown here, seeks to lay the foundations for decisions to ‘spin-out’ from the local authority to be perceived in a favourable light by the majority of stakeholders. This is reflected in the focus on turning to what could be perceived as public sector failings in relation to the previous ‘threat’ to the service, into opportunities for the new organisation. This also diverts attention away from the uncertainty

and risk that such opportunity also brings; presenting a positive public facade is a theme that emerges consistently through the findings.

As identified within the literature, identity formation as a concept has been discussed significantly in relation to formation at the organisational level but less so at the individual level and the shifting relationships between the two. It was the responsibility of the 'Mutual project board' at the individual level to establish the new 'mutual' organisation as an entirely separate entity to continue the deliverance of services in the county. In the creation process of the new PSM, key individuals were required to draw upon past experience in terms of shaping what the future organisation might look like. A critical milestone was the appointment of a Chair of Trustees to lead the board of trustees. It was decided that Eduvate would take on a mutual structure where staff and friends groups could become members and as such would be limited to the liability of £1 to the organisation in case of failure. It became the responsibility of the CT and appointed trustees at the time to 'setup' the organisation to the point that the local authority would commission the new organisation to deliver the service, at which point it would trigger a transfer of staff and material assets under a Transfer of Undertakings Procedure (TUPE) to enable the operation of the service.

The journey of the individuals involved with establishment of the new organisation as the mutual project board, themselves bring individual representations of experiences and identities of their respective backgrounds. Each held the autonomy to mould these representations into a projection for the future of Eduvate. Following the appointment of a CT, independent, community and staff trustees for the new PSM, representations of what the service stood for could begin to be enacted by these individuals. However, these representations became enacted at critical points first by the CT and head of the current organisation in a different association to

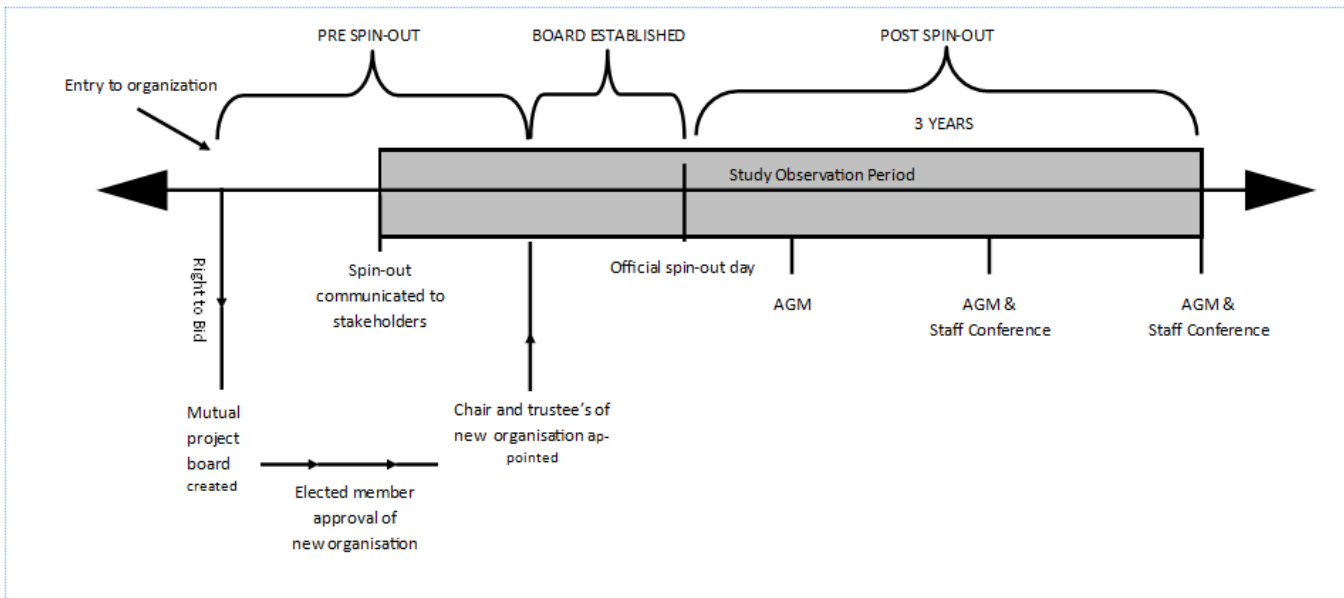
those who subsequently joined as trustees. In a later interview with a trustee [he/she] remarked that:

I remember the missions and values were presented to us. So there had been obviously a lot of thought and discussion between the senior management team as to what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it. So the rest of the board weren't involved in any way in putting that together.

[Trustee, Eduvate]

The newly appointed senior management team was then responsible for setting up the new PSM as Eduvate for it then to become introduced to other organisational members. Other than corporate messages and informal conversation, organisational members remained largely unaware of the background processes until the point of transfer itself.

In this section, I discuss identity formation in relation to the overt and potentially covert processes of organizing and in the gradual becoming of a new collective identity as an independent organisation, considering the notions of identity and dis-identity. Figure 5 (p.127) illustrates the process of becoming and extent of the period of study, with key events and stages of history presented as an attempt to provide a crude chronology of process. These stages should not be viewed as stop/start points in that process, but rather as influencers to change or continuity which may or may not become enacted by organisational members.



Source: Author

Figure 5 Stages of Eduvate's Evolution

The aspirational vision for Eduvate the organisation referred to here as the 'organisational level identity' can be construed as distinctly different from that which is manifest at the point of transition with feelings of 'Same day, different name'.

Figure 6 Essential Features of Eduvates Communications Strategy August 2015 – April 2016



Source: Communications Strategy, 2015, p.17

The process of identity formation of a new way of organizing as a PSM, therefore, becomes reliant on first accomplishing identity at the individual level amongst key individuals as previously noted. Here it is argued that the process of transition does not run along a continuum instead, a rather unique constellation of phenomena as the journey of organizing as a PSM is non-linear.

As a researcher, I have also gained a unique perspective on the process of organizing starting my own ethnographic journey with the organisation at the point a new way of organizing as a PSM was proposed. In this privileged position I too became part of the group embarking upon this journey often described as an ‘exciting opportunity’, notably as referenced in an advertisement for a chair of trustees to lead the new organisation in 2015. For the most crucial part of identity formation, through observation I witnessed a group of highly experienced individuals become appointed as trustees to lead a well-established public sector service on a new trajectory, stepping out into the unknown. The chair of trustees (CT) demonstrated her

leadership by hard negotiation of favourable terms and adequate resource for Eduvate with the local authority, in so-doing combating challenges which stood in the way of becoming an independent organisation such as the competing tensions with other local authority services for resources as a result of severe austerity at the time.

4.2.2 ‘A cosy matey club or self-sufficient?’ The shadow board March 2016

The convening of the shadow board is the first of several ‘critical incidents’ that I will discuss in this chapter. I arrived at the first meeting of the shadow board on the 16th March 2016, to find a number of people already present tentatively helping themselves to tea and coffee in the corner of a rather large room, with tables and chairs set out prominently in the middle of the room, perhaps indicative of the importance afforded to this meeting. Shadow board members displayed the usual politenesses and courtesies introducing themselves to each other and to me, where it was apparent that some members had met prior to the meeting. There was a sense of newness amongst the group, with initial hesitation about where to take a seat at the table.

The chair of trustees of the new organisation along with the head of the current organisation entered, seating themselves together on one side of the table, with everyone else filling space around the circle that had been pre-positioned. The chair of trustees (CT), with a warm smile, began by making an opening address, first apologizing for being late remarking that she had just arrived from a difficult meeting with the local authority regarding the commissioning agreement, followed by a sharp intake of breath and a chuckle, others looked upon with a sense of validation. The CT then asked for a round of introductions from those present, a sense of pride was expressed from individuals in declaring their roles particularly by those who had been elected as staff and community trustees to be representatives of their

respective groups at board level. Whilst introductions were being made each trustee was handed a letter which formally confirmed their role and fiduciary responsibility as a trustee for the new organisation with Companies House, this being an important milestone of the establishment of the PSM prior to the spin-out of the service from the local authority. The agenda was then read aloud by the CT, the first topic of which being titled the ‘commissioning relationship’.

This meeting for the first time provided an insight on the tensions present in the establishment of the PSM, with the opening address from the CT specifically noting tensions arising from earlier discussions in the meeting with the local authority concerning the commissioning document. The CT expressed that there was resistance from the local authority on a number of points as set out in the key legal document between the new PSM and local authority which established what the new organisation would provide as a commissioned entity. Of particular interest a point was made as noted in the minutes ‘[the new organisation] to be referred to as a PSM (Public Service Mutual) consistently throughout all documents’.

There appeared to have been reluctance on the part of the local authority to share information and most importantly information concerning the new operational points until the last minute before transfer. The CT formally declared, in a forceful tone, that ‘the board of trustees will not sign any agreement until the business model is felt to be viable’. It became visible that the trustees were seemingly finding their place at the table being careful to consider how they should contribute, the uncertain way they handled the vast array of documentation before them confirmed that they were unused to their roles and conveyed a sense of overwhelm at this critical moment. I contemplated whether this made them ‘onlookers’ at this moment or ‘new participants’ who were not yet at ease in their new identities? This was further supported by a later interview with a trustee.

I don't say we were sort of, you know, blagging it, we weren't doing that, but it was just different to what I was used to. But then it was just started, you know, that was the big thing about it and everybody was feeling their way including everybody else, you know.

[Trustee, Eduvate]

Later in the meeting the topic of 'commissioning arrangements' with the local authority re-surfaced on the agenda. The one trustee that had been appointed simultaneously to the CT with a financial background had been closely involved in the financial negotiations and commissioning agreement spoke assertively proposing that maybe a close working relationship was not necessarily desirable with the local authority. I observed a general sense of unease from others in the room at this comment, as many of the senior leadership team present were still employees of the local authority. This suggested to me that this was not yet a cohesive board being still only in the initial stages of its formation. Whilst some hesitance could be expected, the clear feeling of unease created by the comment did not trigger a response to support or dismiss what had been said.

Following an awkward silence, further justification emerged from the same trustee for the seemingly controversial comment. He stated that some tension had emanated from a desire on the part of the local authority not to fully financially support some aspects of the new PSM. The CT, current head of the organisation and the trustee with financial expertise had been leading the negotiations with the local authority prior to the first shadow board meeting, and the facial expressions of the other trustees conveyed that they had been unaware of this and their surprise at apparently being kept 'in the dark'. This dynamic set a foundation for how future board meetings would play out. The other board members treated the CT as a visionary gaining a prominent place at the table. In her own introduction to remark upon her extensive experience of leading sizeable public sector organisations in relation to healthcare and conveying that others

could be confident that she knew what she was doing. This set a tone of strength and independence at an early stage in the life of the organisation. The CT's comments evidenced a desire for a clean-break from aspects of the organisation's history. Discussing the organisation's commissioning agreement with the local authority, she noted, 'We have to consider whether we want a cosy matey club or to be a more self-sufficient organisation', suggesting that there were no longer benefits for associations that acted to constrain a new entrepreneurially spirited identity. Instead seeking associations already identified in the spin-out/transfer communications plan, to mirror aspirations for current-ness and innovation that Eduvate represented.

The head of the current organisation raised that the new mutual structure would 'see an end to freedom of information requests coming to the organisation, as this was an obligation that was only required to be satisfied under local authority control'. S/he expressed that the organisation may appear less transparent if freedom of information requests would no longer be honored and suggested this could cause stakeholders to become dis-enfranchised. It would, s/he argued be seen to work in contradiction to the vision of openness set out for the new mutual organisation.

When discussing difficulties with negotiating the commissioning agreement with the local authority, the Chair of Trustees made comparison on several occasions to a 'similar' contract negotiation with Virgin, whom she felt would have been unlikely to accept many of the proposals that the local authority were making to Eduvate. She instructed senior management for further information to be found on the process of procurement in instances of these large commercial providers.

Despite the apparent issues, the Chair of Trustees went on to suggest that the signing of the commissioning agreement with the local authority could be a good photo opportunity,

however the chair remained adamant that the agreement would not be signed if it was not right, even though it could financially forfeit the organisation a significant sum for the first financial year. She acknowledged again that this would not be good for the organisation, but remained dominant in her view, insisting that this action would place responsibility directly with local authority who would ultimately be held to account over the matter and could potentially be ‘thrust’ into the public domain if it was not resolved. Again, challenge was not made to this comment by others at the table, instead displaying expressions of submission to this course of action.

4.2.3 All staff meetings

In the same week, two ‘all’ Staff Meetings were held in February 2016: one in the north and the other in the east of the county with the purpose of informing staff about the ‘spin-out and proposed changes to the structure of the organisation, with the opportunity for those present to ask questions. Whilst the meeting was open to all, it became apparent that most staff attending were on the front line of service delivery. The meeting signaled a critical moment of transition for the local authority service, being the first opportunity for many to hear directly about plans to create Eduvate and transfer existing undertakings. I attended the meeting in the east of the county, which was the first opportunity to announce my entry to the organisation as a researcher, the following section is written from notes recorded in my observational field journal.

The newly appointed Chair of Trustees (CT) opened the meeting, immediately noting her previous experience of chairing the board of a mental health service provider and leading various NHS trusts in London. Introductions were made to the various appointed trustees, noting pride in

having appointed individuals from diverse backgrounds and that staff and community representatives were able to have a 'voice' at board level under the new organisational structure.

The CT expressed to the audience the importance of partnership in respect of the new PSM, acknowledging that there had been previous conflict over 'change' where services had been at threat and that 'friends' had been important advocates of the service in this respect. She remarked in a powerful voice: 'It is time to put the placards away, the fight is over', with an expression of relief, followed by a laugh and a big smile. The CT made a deliberately slow and emphasized comment about the legal identity of the new organisation which was described as being completely separate from the local authority 'owned' brand for the service. The CT used the words 'evolve gradually, collectively and locally' to describe the new journey that everyone was embarking upon together, of which presented her first reference to unity for the new organisation.

Discussion then moved to new arrangements for staff, which it was clear that this was the news that had been eagerly awaited from staff, given the poised positions of those in the audience, where others sat with crossed arms in anticipation. The CT then clarified for staff the new governance and regulatory arrangements for the PSM. She explained that the organisation would have a charitable status and would therefore be under the jurisdiction of the charity commission, but would also be responsible for the local authority service provision within the county. The board of trustees would be held to account by the local authority with the CEO being responsible for the day to day running of the organisation, alongside a newly appointed senior management team.

The CT likened the new organisation Eduvate to that of a family, stating it would have a legacy and responsibility for three hundred and sixty staff members, a number of local level

friends groups, each being independent registered charities in their own right. In this way she went on to express that: ‘it will be important for the public that one face of family is presented’. I noted again the CT’s use of metaphors to reflect unity and family, which signaled the organisation would bring a new more informal approach than the ‘bureaucracy’ of local authority ownership. An opportunity for questions then arose, though not directly answered at the time, instead written on a flip chart, barely visible at the front of the room, for answers to be provided later and to be shared with those unable to attend the meeting. The following questions were posed by the audience:

- Is the new organisation an independent charity?
- Will the identity of the new organisation be consistent with that of the previous local authority run service?
- What will the terms of the board be and how will board activity be communicated?

To the third question, the CT quickly interjected and confirmed that the board was meeting regularly during the setup phase but would eventually be meeting bi-monthly with committees taking place in-between, and that the minutes of each board would be published on the organisation’s new website.

Other key issues were discussed by the current head of the organisation which are summarized in Table 6. The present head of the service updated the meeting regarding governance and systems expressing the importance of the ‘independence’ that the new PSM would have and that communication would be critical to keep all stakeholders informed, negotiations over how much money the new organisation will have were ongoing with the local authority. I noted the emphasis of communication as being critical to keep stakeholders

informed, not unsurprising, given the significant influence key stakeholder groups such as staff and friends groups were anticipated to have under proposed new organisational structure.

Table 6 Key Issues Arising from 'all staff meetings' regarding Spin-out

Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A public consultation which was conducted was referred to be taken back to the council in response to the cabinet decision to then appoint trustees to establish the new organisation.- The current senior management would be having discussions over the new leadership team structure and there would be the need to make substantial savings in the new organisation and that this could also lead to some redundancies.- It was mooted that there was a need for more commercial/ entrepreneurial skills within the new organisation.

Source: All staff meeting flipchart notes, 2016

The current head of the service confirmed to the audience that the new PSM would legally be a company limited by guarantee where staff and friends group members could become members limited to the liability of one pound should the organisation cease to operate. As a note of reassurance the head of the service quickly added that: 'other local authorities have already asked when they could join the organisation', followed by a chuckle and a look of disbelief, remarking that she had responded to say 'we are still setting up'. The head sought to broadcast a message of excitement in what the organisation and its staff were doing. She suggested this could be considered pioneering activity, given that others also wanted to do it and in so doing confirmed the organisation's new identity as a desirable one and reassured those present that the 'right' thing had been done to secure a sustainable future for the service.

A break out session followed the main presentations where those present were asked to form small groups of 5-6, I shadowed one of these groups to observe, a series of questions were given to each group for consideration where answers were recorded on flip chart paper. After some preliminary chat, the group decided to look at the first question: 'How informed do you feel about [Eduvate]' (likert 1-5). A question arose from a member of the group asking, in relation to the question, 'what do they mean by informed?' It was the perception of one of the friends group representatives at the table that some were more informed than others, stating discontentedly that 'perhaps staff are more informed'. The friends group representative explained on behalf of the group that 'up to 100 people are in some friends group networks' and felt that this would require another stream of communication. There was no challenge to this comment, the group instead moved onto the second question 'How involved do you feel with the [organisation]'.

The friends group representative spoke first to explain that: 'when the first meetings about setting up the new organisation had arisen, friends groups were invited to be part of the development story, but a model was then chosen without their knowledge which was pushed through the involved people'. The representative gave no elaboration as to who they considered the 'involved' people to be, but described that it started off involving the CT where the group spent time in Suffolk and brought the model back to friends groups 'Virtually nothing to something'. The activity was a site for members or friends groups to position themselves against 'others', notably in opposition to 'involved people' – a term which, they felt, excluded friends groups. The participant notes that friends groups were in fact one of the first groups to become 'involved' – responding actively to the threat of closure and decline of the service. The activity itself through the questions and prompts posed to serve as a fulcrum around which people can

construct social hierarchies and in/out-groups, which help them to make sense of the uncertainty and confusion in the ‘vacuum’ that is a new organisational form, but this set up possibilities for conflict later on in the evolution of the organisation.

The group then moved on to the final question hurriedly, having just been nudged by the facilitator. The implication of which sought to restrict the conversation of the group. The final question ‘looking to the future thinking about things you have been involved with, what would you take to the future or not?’ A member of the group, whose affiliation was not clear commented that ‘should we as a group have been given the money and told to get on with it’. It appeared that collectively independence from the local authority was appreciated, but friends groups were questioning who takes ownership in terms of what is required for their community. Time was then called on the activity by the facilitator.

In reflection several core themes emerged from this early communication with staff and friends group representatives as key stakeholders. Whilst messages of unity and the importance of communication were emphasized by the CEO and CT, later work between stakeholders in mixed groups unearthed uncertainties and confusion, which appeared to remain unresolved following the activity.

4.3 Birth (‘Spin-out’)

The day of Eduvate’s birth was a private affair between the CT, CEO and officials from the local authority. I myself not being present, learned of the day’s events at a later meeting of the board of trustees following the spin-out. Separate to the official spin-out a public launch was held for dignitaries following a suitable period for the majority of contractual issues with the spin-out between the local authority and Eduvate to have been resolved.

4.3.1 The ‘public Launch’

I received an invitation to attend the public launch of the new PSM which was held on a Saturday in April 2016. Due to the social nature of the event there was not capacity for extensive observation. I do however offer my brief reflections on the event as a critical moment for Eduvate. I arrived at the county’s flagship premises of the service, where I was directed upstairs by a member of staff. I made my upstairs to find many people being quickly ushered into a tightly packed room which had been laid out in theatre style. The CT and CEO were sat on the stage ready to make introductions and talk about the journey so far, offering thanks to those who had been of support. A general celebratory mood could be felt in the room with generous applause following the speeches. Attendees were invited to the lobby for refreshments and cake to mark this momentous occasion. The event itself was considered the ‘birth’ of the organisation, where celebratory events held on the same day of the coming years were referred to as birthdays of the organisation. It was clear that the CEO was sought out by several attendees hoping for a short congratulatory conversation, others swiftly made an exit, giving their apologies. This particular ceremony was an important marker of progress in the identity narrative of Eduvate, being used to publicly mark change, beginning a process to elevate the status of the organisation notably through its founders the CEO and Chair acting to reinforce status hierarchies and differentials, and/or serve to overturn them.

4.3.2 ‘What do we feel the problem is’ (Board Development) September 2016

During the first year on the 16th September 2016, one of the regular board meetings had been scheduled to be followed by a board development session in a rural and remote service location. I was asked by the CT and CEO if I would like to stay and observe the meeting. I agreed,

thinking that this would be a rare opportunity to gain reflection on group formation, in a natural setting of the board. The focus of my observations for the majority had centered on establishing Eduvate until this point. From my field journal I present the following findings and reflections from the session.

As the board development session was a continuation of the board meeting itself, everyone remained in the same room. The circumstances around the scheduling of this particular meeting became apparent when the CT clarified that an online survey had been circulated to board members prior to the meeting for them to complete, focusing on questions around cohesion and voice of the board. Key topics covered by the survey were promptly scrawled onto a flipchart by the CT, with a page for each topic 'Things that could work better', 'Length of meetings – should timed items be restricted', 'Timeliness of paper circulation', 'Freedom to express views and contribute', ready for the forthcoming discussion.

Whilst the survey itself was completed anonymously via survey monkey. I wondered internally how anonymous the survey could have been given the size of the board and nature of the comments being made. Once the CT began discussion of the results it appeared that there was some awkwardness amongst other members of the board where people had answered in an opposing way to questions in the survey. Some trustees felt obligated to share why they had answered the survey in the way that they did. In particular one trustee expressed nervously that she had found it particularly difficult to speak on certain issues due to her position as a member of staff. She, also noted that it had been difficult to contribute in general terms as conversations amongst board members were often quickly closed down. The trustee commented that she was currently the only staff trustee to reside on the board due to a vacant position which remained unfilled. The board members collectively acknowledged that they would each try to be more

respectful of this and allow space for additional comment when issues were raised. I will return later to this point in relation to how a moment of debate over key decision-making shaped identity formation of identity for the new PSM.

The CEO then took a turn to speak, quickly following up the comment of the staff trustee to reinforce that the staff perspective was important and gave thanks to the staff trustees for raising issues however difficult that may be in their conflicted position. Several trustees independently raised that they felt that they did not share enough experience of running a public service to be able to challenge or question the kinds of issues that often arose at the board. The CT seemed surprised by this point and sought to justify these arguments, noting that each member of the board had been chosen for their specific experience and that it was important to hear different perspectives on debates. The distinction often made between the board and the executive (senior leadership team) appeared to place some distance between the two groups, even though some members held dual roles and were often present at the board, although not official members themselves. Some trustees expressed that through their perceived lack of knowledge there was concern around them being able to fully scrutinise papers brought to the board, limiting the effectiveness of board meetings.

The CEO, on behalf of executive, acknowledged that they felt some concern over bringing things up at the board because they might be challenged. The CT then referred to boards that she had experienced in the past where there had been a fear to challenge others, expressing that the position of the current board was at one extreme on a spectrum where other boards could be considered too social, which was also felt, by the chair, not to be a good dynamic, although she did not provide explanation for this comment. In a later interview with a trustee he/she expressed.

[The board] was sometimes operated in a fairly dictatorial way where I felt there were individuals on the board whose skills were very solid and valid, and they just weren't given an opportunity to express them, they were shot down pretty quickly. As a consequence they didn't pro-actively offer the sort of opinions that I would have.

[Trustee, Eduvate]

The CEO raised the topic of openness again which had surfaced earlier in the meeting but had been quickly brushed over by the CT. She made specific reference to the trustee's comment on the importance of being open and to accommodate free speech from all in meetings. The CT felt compelled to ask trustees 'do you feel you are being challenging to the executive?' An awkward silence followed, with a seeming reluctance from trustees to provide an answer.

The CT used the recent appraisals that she had conducted with members of the board as an anecdote, where she emphasized that all trustees had felt strongly enough to enforce that greater challenge be made in meetings, so asked why this was not happening. This appeared to further heighten the tense feeling observed through body language of those present in the room. The chair then turned to the topic of 'ability to contribute', which was first met with a prolonged silence in the room. The CT attempted to fill the silence, commenting in defence that anyone could contribute at any-time. The prolonged silence from trustees appeared to indicate that individuals felt unable to voice concerns in this forum, but at other times had expressed dissenting views. This particular meeting appeared somewhat interrogative in the way the 'anonymous' survey had been used as mechanism by which to entice public response from those who may have written seemingly accusatory comments and worked to counter attempts to address perceived issues by the CT.

The board discussed the topic of 'balance of skills' possessed by the different members, where the CT directly asked the group whether the composition of the board was deemed to be

appropriate. There was again an intense silence in the room, followed by a trustee stating: ‘I don’t think we lack anything’ although they added the caveat that perhaps the board lacked knowledge of property and law. The ‘intense silences’ that had become a reoccurring theme through the meeting illustrated both status differentials between members of the board in their non trustee identities, such as members of staff on the ‘front line’ or friends groups representative who felt to some degree overpowered. The silences were also evidence of the identity work that trustees needed to do to be able to learn how to enact their roles as trustees, particularly where status differentials were also at play. The conditions of the ‘boardroom’ did not promote the ‘family’ atmosphere as had been previously encouraged by the CT at the all staff meetings, instead dominant voices prevailed over the silences which seemingly held que’s to the constraint others felt in expressing themselves.

The CT then outlined an aspiration for the group to become a high performing board. This appeared to me to be an interesting assertion given that the session had not addressed many of the challenges the board was facing in order to become a cohesive group in the first instance, of which the challenges included; the ability of trustees to contribute effectively during meetings, expertise to adequately scrutinise board papers. The CT did not provide any clarification to the group on what she felt a high performing board to be. Again there was an uncomfortable silence in the room, where individuals felt a lack of ability to respond. The CT went on to enforce that trustees are not to get involved with running of the organisation, there was no challenge to this remark, even though several trustees had extensive experience and affiliation to boards of other organisations. As little response on the subject was forthcoming, it was suggested by the CT that maybe there was a ‘piece of work’ to do on what a high performing board looks like.

Conversation turned to a situation with a particular stakeholder group. The staff trustee stated that one of the most challenging aspects of their role had become helping and supporting friends groups in their branches. With the organisation being now owned in part by the community such groups represented a strong voice that was often neglected in favour of operational matters. Friends groups still wore an ‘othered’ identity as challenging advocates for the service by senior management rather than supporters as had arisen through the threat to the service. This is illustrated in interviews held with friend’s group members following the spin-out of Eduvate.

We felt for the [service] because there were threats made and political and all the rest of it [...] we could foresee certain measures being taken to restrict or dispose of staff or whatever so to reduce it so that there’s less cost to the council as that’s what it was years and years ago [...] So things have moved on while the objective for both of us is to try and keep it moving onwards – I know we’re getting on but that doesn’t matter, we recognise that and the system is moving forward because if you don’t you’ll be left behind and we don’t want to be left behind..

[Friends Group Rep, NAFR 1]

There was a sense from the CT that friends groups (a significant stakeholder group) had fallen adrift of leadership, which was reinforced through the process of othering friends group by the board. The CT made a comparison between the new and old regime, particularly emphasising how a large number of friends groups had arisen through the need to save public services where attempts had been made by senior management to re-orientate their focus on enhancing their local service offer for its users. A friend’s group representative commented during an interview, to suggest that attempts to re-orientate friend’s group’s focus in creating Eduvate had been successful in some instances. However throughout my data collection it became apparent that I was being steered towards the more ‘focused’ friends groups, of which each branch location had an affiliated group.

I like to attend the regular meetings that are going on so that you can get the update from X about what's going on with [Eduvate] and how it links into what we are doing as Friends groups because you want to be working together for the same purpose [...] the new technology [...] might be something that we are able to fundraise for if it's not going to come from central funds that's something that we can add [services] need to be moving forward.

[Friends Group Rep, NAFR 1]

I was asked by the CT and CEO to reflect on my observations of the development session to them on their own, once the other trustees had left. I presented a broad reflection with the recommendation to re-think the approach to high performing boards, allowing trustees to construct their own questions around this subject, perhaps thinking about what a high performing board means to them.

My own reflection following the board development session, it was curious how each question and its results were addressed by the chair, rather than someone more neutral. The CT notably asked trustees 'what do we feel the problem is' with a particular issue highlighted, the framing of issues as problems invoked a sense of tension amongst the group where it became apparent many trustees were unsure of their place or did not feel comfortable to make a contribution in light of this. For this reason, the session had appeared disjointed with no clear resolutions to issues being found. Through earlier observation of discussions of important topics at board meetings, the dynamic by which decisions were arrived at became a point of intrigue in my observational work. Notably certain topics warranted lengthy discussions without apparent cause, resulting in no consensus over a decision, with the chair over-ruling in taking her own consensus on how to proceed, it was not common practice to vote or ballot decisions.

Over time, certain voices on the board became stronger, though others remained quiet, both through little change made to facilitate contributions or through individual conflicts on

issues, such as members of staff appointed to the board, who felt unable to partake in decisions which were ultimately going to affect them, it seemed that the dynamics of the board prevented certain voices from being heard, particularly those who expressed their views in a contemplative manner. The new PSM had been established on the principle that both staff and the community were intended to have a strong influence, likened to a family by the chair on several critical occasions, notably at the all staff meetings prior to spin-out. But the representation at board level seemingly struggled to enact a 'family' identity, reverting back to familiar hierarchical that had been enacted in the past. It appeared that people didn't understand how to enact their identity as 'board members' in an organisational form predicated on employee engagement, and where they have been encouraged to be a 'family' which might suggest a space where tensions are often surfaced and expressed very clearly. Instead, individuals reverted to norms of hierarchy and managerialism that were familiar from the organisation's former public sector identity.

4.3.3 'Decisions have to be made' January 2017

The following excerpt of a board meeting held on the 27th January 2017 from observations based on notes from my field journal, is included as it focuses on the first landmark decision debated by the board as Eduvate. I arrived at the one of the modern 'flagship' centres of the organisation in the county, each board meeting took place in a different venue each time. Having announced my arrival at the main desk, I was promptly directed to the upstairs meeting room. The room resembling a classroom with a fixed white board and projector and various periphery objects, had been set in typical board room style. Board members drifted in, commenting on the weather to alert their presence. They tentatively placed their things in a space at the table, then made their way to circulate the coffee table, emerging back into the main room with their discussions, which

became audible to me. The CT then arrived and placed her bag at the centre of the table. She initiated discussions with board members about stories of senior people in other organisations coming to light in the news that were forced to stand down due to unethical practice.

The last few members of the board, hurriedly rushed into the room grabbing coffee on the way. The CT made a prompt start, glancing at the clock on the wall, remarking that there was a lot to get through. The CT welcomed everyone, then as had become customary, the usual round of introductions followed from everyone at the table. It became apparent from this that several new trustees had recently been appointed when introducing themselves, with the CT then declaring that one former trustee had now stood down and another was absent. I noticed a tension in the room, and the items present on the agenda and papers that had been circulated prior to the meeting gave an air that this was not going to be an easy meeting. With a cautionary tone the CT informed the board that members of the staff forum would be attending to observe for later business.

The first item on the agenda was a continuation of discussion regarding actions arising from the last meeting in relation to a property transfer still taking place with the local authority as there were various requirements that still needed to be satisfied for the transfer to happen. The CT remarked, frustratedly that 'it has now been a year on since the spin-out has taken place' and that it was surprising that the transfer had still not happened. In my own reflection it appeared that there was some degree of control still being exercised by the local authority in their reluctance to complete the property transfer. It was anticipated by the head of commercial and innovation that the transfer would take place from the 1st April this coming year.

The next item addressed applications for membership, with new applications to become a member of the organisation noted from staff and friends groups. A question arose from a trustee

of ‘what does becoming a member actually signify?’ [Membership on the payment of £1 awarding the member voting rights at the AGM] The CEO said they would look into this to see how the benefits were currently being presented.

The staff forum then entered the room, looking subdued, and seating themselves together against the back wall of the room away from the main table. They joined the meeting ahead of the substantive discussion on the removal of enhanced pay (this related to an uplift to the standard banded rate of employees, given to those who work weekend hours). In practice the impact of this decision only applied to those who worked at two branches of the organisation, but would send a certain message about the future of the organisation to all staff.

The CT then called upon the Head of Finance to present the current financial position to the group, making a case of support for the proposal to remove enhanced pay.

One Trustee questioned what the major savings were that had not been discussed, one of which was the local government pension scheme. The Head of Finance carefully dismissed this point, stating that part of the growth strategy for the organisation would be to take on other contracts and that there was a need to retain the local government pension scheme in order to take those contracts on.

Another trustee highlighted that a large untapped potential stood within rental space rather than having to make this particular difficult decision. This appeared as diversion away from the difficult decision that was put before the group. The Head of Finance was again quick to rebut the comment to state that rental income had already been accounted for in the long term plan. The CT put forward that there was a need for strategy to diversify away from the core contract with council, as there was currently too much reliance on it and that contracts with other local authorities would be needed. This illustrated a shift towards a more entrepreneurially

minded organisation with ambitions for growth. The CT went on to emphasize that this could not be seen as growth in itself as the contracts would be tight and other strategies would be required to run the service.

The topic of fundraising, which emphasized Eduvate becoming as charity, was on the agenda. The CT noted that the March (2017) board would outline a fundraising strategy. However, it was felt that personal donations could be explored further as a revenue stream, though this was met with some resistance from the head of the organisation as she expressed that she did not want it to be ‘that type of organisation’ and that she felt that ‘there would be a feeling that because people already pay for the service through their taxes, why should they ‘pay’ again?’ This was an interesting message as the organisation now held a charitable status, but did not appear to want to use this due to the perceptions of stakeholders. The CT emphasized that despite this there was a need for fundraising to work in addition to the core contract to ‘bolster’ the organisation. It became clear to me that this meeting of the board was one of the first to display a collective strength of confidence from trustees to challenge the executive in the way in which questions were posed and thought was given to ‘how else’ the situation could be approached.

The CEO highlighted proudly that a significant milestone for the organisation had now been achieved in that it had been one year since the establishment of Eduvate as an independent PSM, but that ‘decisions have to be made’. The staff forum was acknowledged by the CEO as having been pivotal in shaping the consultation documents and process to this point. The CT outlined that it was the role of the board to outline financial stability and sustainability and therefore consider the risks of the proposal. The discussion on enhanced pay had been the first

landmark ‘difficult decision’ for the board and would need to be considered properly, despite it already having caused staff concern.

The CEO then invited the head of service to explain how the consultation process for the removal of enhanced pay had gone. Sadly, the head of service explained to the group the detailed procedure that the consultation had taken, with the process and outcomes noted in Table 7.

Table 7 Enhanced Pay Debate Actions and Outcomes

Actions	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants filled out an online questionnaire with an outline of the consultation process - Senior management read every comment using a set of core themes which they scored against. - Codified responses against themes to arrive at four categorised responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived high level of engagement, with a wide demographic captured in the survey - Some comments deemed challenging - Clear impact of proposal on health and wellbeing - Some would need to seek alternative employment - Weekend seen as family day. - Motivation and morale - Disconnect between staff and managers - Could be difficulty in attracting future staff - Extensive discussion as leadership team

The Head of Service Delivery then outlined the options for the board to consider as a result of the consultation process, which included:

Options	Drawbacks from the perspective of Senior Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A pay cut for all staff – enhanced pay seen as unfair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those working long or short hours may lose out the most – could impact on pension contributions - Damage employer brand

It was acknowledged that the trade union of which many staff were members had given their formal response on the proposals which she read to the meeting. To quote from my observation notes:

‘If the organisation were to be setting out for its future, this proposal would categorically not be supported’ and ‘If enhanced pay were to be phased in allowing time for individuals to readjust to personal standards or to adopt a differential approach, this could be accepted’.

[Head of Service Delivery, Eduvate]

The Head of Service Delivery concluded by saying that it was clear that the organisation wants to be seen to stand on its own two feet. This remark presented a clear focus on reputation and identity for the organisation, where concern had been placed on what is *seen to be* by others as opposed to a desire to ‘actually’ stand on their own two feet. The Head of Service Delivery continued to explain to the board that it would be too difficult to re-negotiate terms with local authority rather than to implement the proposal to remove enhanced pay. This comment suggesting a somewhat delicate relationship between the two previously close entities. The Head of Service Delivery then opened the proposal to the board for questions and discussion, further questions ensued. Several points for clarity were raised, where one trustee asked what the terms of those employed on other smaller contracts with the organisation such as prisons in the locality were. Another trustee asked the group whether they considered that Sunday was a special day in

consideration that many other shops and businesses do not open on a Sunday and asked what the plan for the organisation was in this respect going forward. Again, these questions were indirectly asking ‘what type of organisation are we?’

One trustee expressed that there had been a great deal of excitement in the way Eduvate as an independent organisation had been setup, and how ‘that things had now turned in relation to discussing the unpleasantness of enhanced pay’. Another trustee stated the risks needed to be discussed, particularly in relation to potential trade union action, as this was felt to be a significant risk and could be damaging for the organisation’s reputation. Following lengthy discussion, a consensus was taken by the CT that the original recommendation on removal of enhanced pay as outlined in the proposal was to be carried out. The distance between senior management and ‘frontline’ staff trustees in discussion of the issues surrounding removing enhanced pay, had been particularly noticeable. During the board development session which had taken place a few months before staff trustees had also raised concern about the distance between ‘frontline staff’ and senior management. Rarely, a vote had taken place through which the board arrived at the eventual decision, but staff trustees did not form the majority in terms of board composition to hold sway in the eventual decision.

The CT introduced the next item on the agenda which was a bid to a cultural funding organisation or funds to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), where a paper had been circulated prior to the meeting in the agenda pack for discussion at the meeting. There was apparent confusion amongst the board in discussion of the bid in terms of what artistic quality meant. The CEO noted that the language used in the arts and cultural sector was quite different and would require particular expertise on the part of board members.

One member of the board who had previously worked with an arts and cultural funding council was identified as being a lead for the board in this respect.

As the last item on the agenda the CT announced that she had appointed a new vice chair of which appeared to have taken place in private discussions outside the meeting, though important to note that this appointment was now a considerable time from the organisation having been established, where many other ‘things’ had been prioritized. Though appointed trustee had experience in the arts, where looking in retrospect signaled the trajectory for the organisations future.

In reflection the celebratory tone that began the meeting shifted, as people struggle to navigate past the legacy of Eduvate’s historic ‘local authority’ identity through the need to make ‘difficult’ decisions about the new organisation to secure its future. There are several occurrences throughout the board meeting which support this. These include the confusion about being perceived as or having to enact oneself as ‘a cultural institution’ as opposed to a service provider, and the need to address enhanced pay in order to remain a viable social enterprise. There was a general sense of excitement in the room on the work and future direction of the organisation’s reach into the arts. Each of these instances problematize the board members’ understanding of how to ‘be’ a PSM and are themes which distinguish the PSM way of organizing as distinctive from what had gone before. In relation to the discussion on enhanced pay it appeared difficult for the board to agree on a way forward, members felt a sense of discomfort, in that a decision had to be arrived at, with some opting for a deferment so that difficult issues did not have to be addressed until a later date for fear of how it may make the organisation look. It was clear that this had become a defining moment for a changing direction for the organisation, looking beyond what had always been provided/accomplished under the local authority.

4.3.4 The Annual General Meeting

The first annual general meeting of the new organisation Eduvate held in the north of the county was a brief and modest affair. This event was critical to the evolution of Eduvate as not only was it the first AGM to be held in the organisations history, it was also one of the first opportunities for members (staff and friends group representatives) with voting rights to become involved with some aspect of the organisations governance. I was invited to attend the meeting as an observer. Staff and members eligible to vote began entering the room, where tea and coffee had been made available with people helping themselves. Some sat together in groups where others sat on their own. The meeting had been organized in one of the currently unused floors of the building where the chairs had been set out in a theatre style. The CT sat behind a table at the front of the room alongside the CEO and the Head of Finance. The CT welcomed everyone to the first AGM of the new PSM with a smile. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to approve the accounts for the year and make an appointment for an auditor for the coming year. No other business had been included on the agenda. The CT explained that trustees of the board would be present for a meet and greet following the session, the trustees were waiting on the sidelines away from the official proceedings at the front. The meeting then closed, and an applause came from the audience. A few little laughs then followed from the audience by remarks such as ‘Is that it?’, ‘that was short and sweet’, a somewhat underwhelming experience for the first AGM. The meeting was of a calmer atmosphere than the board meetings that had taken place before, partly as there had been no precedent for how an Annual General Meeting should be in Eduvate’s history as a PSM, but nonetheless being the first set a tone for the future.

4.4 The 1st Birthday (1 yr. post spin-out)

Following the first Birthday of Eduvate I attended one of the staff and friend's group meetings in September 2017 which were two key stakeholder groups of the organisation. The first part of the meeting had taken place prior to my arrival where those who participated had confirmed attendance to me for the workshop prior to the session which focused on looking at the past, present and future from their perspective. I asked participants to produce maps illustrating the past, present and future, of which images are presented through this section. I conducted follow up interviews with willing participants, asking them to talk through what they had depicted on their maps, the interviews were then transcribed and are used here to illustrate the 'friend's perspective' in combination with illustrations.

In discussing achievements with participants over the last year they expressed confidence and excitement in relation to the future of the organisation, expressing their view on the future trajectory of the organisation.

Personally I would just really like to keep that going and I know that's not always going to be realistic, there's going to be times when things don't work, when that initial sort of burst of 'oo its going great' you know, sort of dips off, but it's about keeping going through that. I suppose there is always that sort of thing in the background like X was saying you know, about it's a very remote, isolated little part of a big structure and it's about not being forgotten, not thinking 'oh well that's dispensable with' sort of idea and making the large organisation aware that of what we are doing and what we hope to do.

(P3, Staff Member)

Some interviewees felt detached from the wider organisation in particular remote location the service is provided as expressed below.

I think for me it's like looking at something that's like being a corporate business and a family business and [X]town is very much a family business therefore the corporate, it doesn't quite hold as good in a family environment really.

[P2, Friends Group Rep]

The respondent likens the local service provision setting to that of a ‘family’ positioned against a more corporate view of the wider organisation. This presents a distinct contrast, particularly given the ideals set out by the organisation in its vision and mission.

I thought today has been really good to sort of come together and feel part of a whole thing because you’re doing so much locally and very very isolated because you don’t have much connection with the other local [branches...] because we’re isolated (laughter), because that’s the structure of us, that’s the nature of it, we’re not a sub-branch [...] are we?

[P1, Friends Group Rep]

The physical location of branches, seems to be significant in respect of the how individual sees themselves and the organisation. This is also noted in terms of how the overarching organisation Eduvate is location specific to one branch in the county, presented in the earlier comment from a participant.

A conversation then ensued between participants to determine ‘where they saw themselves’ in the organisation.

no it’s a branch in its own right

[P3, Staff Member]

so there’s no sort of local sort of second tier really is there? It’s quite good that it is quite a flat organisation in that respect.

[P2, Friends Group Rep]

it’s good to have the autonomy but it’s also nice to know that there is a bigger network out there.

[P2, Friends Group Rep]

it’s important to be part of it

[P3, Staff Member]

Two participants express that they feel it is important to feel a part of something even though it would appear that geographic location features in the participant's concept of identity for the organisation.

The topic of distance from 'the organisation' is expressed through feelings of remoteness, isolation and a diminished sense of importance 'little part of a big structure'. This reinforces the distance between the local branch and organisation, expressing the feelings of being just a 'part' where power appears to gravitate towards the centre of the organisation. Another comments 'it's about not being forgotten, not thinking oh well that's dispensable with' sort of idea and making the large organisation aware that of what we are doing

Yeah I think it's brief because I'm not sure what the future is going to be because we are in this situation that we are in now, I'd like to think that looking at it as we are now that we can diversify and promote the [service] in totally different ways, not taking away its traditional [sic] but adding to it and I think if we don't that's why the future for me is a concern because I can see it becoming a bit of an outdated facility that people think we just done need any more rather than something that is traditionally something of benefit and has other things that go with it. I just don't know I've got no idea how that's going to pan out in our scenario (laughs).

[P2, Friends Group Representative]

This participant's feelings about the organisation iterate between excitement and nervousness.

They describe uncertainty about 'the future' and go on to express optimism about 'the situation now' and how the service could be diversified, noting specifically 'not taking away it's traditional but adding to it'. They then revert back to concern and nervous laughter, when discussing where the organisation is going.

4.4.1 'Is our direction around the arts' May 2017

This section is based on my observation notes of a strategy workshop held for the board of trustees and senior leadership team in May 2017 as seemed popular followed one of the usual bi-

monthly board meetings; this particular session took place in the afternoon following a sandwich lunch in the same room. The morning meeting had been long in its duration, with attendees refueling on coffee before the strategy workshop began. Members of the organisation's senior leadership team had also been invited to take part. The CT assertively opened the workshop stating, in reference to members of the board 'we cannot continue to overlay more onto the Senior Leadership. This meeting is about what we will say no to as well as what we will say yes too... We therefore require a framework which enables us to make those decisions effectively'. This comment suggested that the board was experiencing difficulty in functioning, but also trying to navigate towards an improved state (and towards a better sensemaking frame) as a decision-making forum for the organisation.

The CT acknowledged a conflict amongst various stakeholders about how the organisation should grow. She asked those present to consider 'what 'we' might look like as an organisation in ten years' time'. The CT posed the question: 'Is our direction around the arts? If we grow too fast then failure may occur'. In a cautionary tone, the CT acknowledged that challenges will continue to surface over time, noting that through the 'next' period the organisation would face difficult decisions and will find that the organisation as a result of these difficult decisions will be thrust into a political arena. It seemed a somewhat unspecific definition of the 'next' period but perhaps purposefully so.

An expert on the establishment of Public Service Mutuals from a private company had been invited to lead the workshop. Standing at the front of the room, the expert introduced himself and his colleague to the group. He began by setting the context, stating that the organisation was now successfully operating as an independent organisation, stating that attention should now turn towards sustainability, growth income and for those present to think

about how things will be delivered in the future. He reinforced that the organisation needs a strategic vision, posing several questions to the group for thought, including:

‘What is the appetite for growth? What will that look like? How will it be resourced?’ He explained that the organisation was constrained by a declining grant from the local authority year on year and that the organisations activities now need to be diversified in order to accommodate this. The strategic and financial drivers were outlined, where from a strategic perspective he expressed that there was a need for divergence to enable growth. He posed a rhetoric question asking ‘What is the rationale for growth as well as other opportunities in the pipeline including strategic fit to shape a business case but also need to consider risk as part of this?’ In my reflection the emphasis on risk became notable here, given the CT’s earlier comments about how the organisation should appear in the eyes of its stakeholders. The expert presented a case both for and against growth to the group, frequently referring to the mission statement of the organisation. The CEO outlined the need to embed the values of the organisation into the appraisal process which had started to be used last year.

The CEO was quick to note that ‘the board has signed off on the organisation’s service plan previously’ and had been a part of grouping strategic objectives to help shape the service plan. She went on to explain that in the first year of the organisation operating a training and development plan had yet to be produced. In a later interview with a trustee he/she stated

So you’re talking about the here and now and not the strategy and the whole point of a board such as that with [Eduvate] is really to form the strategy and the overall picture and structure and to leave the management team to actually do the remainder, and I found increasingly there were lots of operational matters that were brought in that in my mind don’t sit within the board.

[Trustee, Eduvate]

The comment from this Trustee suggests that present operational issues were acting as a barrier towards a vision of the future for the board of trustees. The extract is reflective of the pace of change and the apparent short termism which became an overriding uncertainty on restricting the development of strategy for the future.

The CEO proceeded to highlight that ‘our existence becomes dependent on engaging with those who do use us and those that don’t’. She emphasized a need to change terms in the service plan to acknowledge ‘people’ rather than ‘staff’, and ‘[service] experience’ to just ‘experience’. The room agreed that trustees and the senior leadership team were happy with the vision and mission as they stood. The CEO then handed over to the Head of Finance to outline the organisations financial position. The head of finance got up from his seat to present, immediately posing several critical questions to the group for consideration, in a serious tone. His opinion was that financial resilience was of utmost importance and for the group to consider how that would be ensured. ‘How can savings be delivered effectively? Could this consist of a smaller [...] provider becoming part of the overall and or bringing in the arts?’ He emphasized that the business plan should not just consider growth in their core service provision, but also considered it important that reserves are achieved as needed, as part of being a ‘charity’. The term charity was not often used as a frame for identity at board meetings, where the term mutual was preferably used from the outset. Its usage here was indicative of how individuals were beginning to unravel ‘charity’ as one of Eduvate’s identity facets.

4.4.2 ‘Playing catch-up in a world that has exploded’ July 2017

This section focuses on how the organisation approaches new challenges at a macro level. The following excerpt is based on notes from my observational field journal of a meeting of the board

of trustees that took place on the 14th July 2017. The CT welcomed everyone to the meeting asking everyone to make introductions and announcing apologies. The CT thanked the senior leadership team for their ongoing hard work and acknowledged that workload had been high due to many competing grants and bids for money, but that this had paid off.

The minutes of May 12th and June 21st Board of Trustees meetings were ratified with notifications of matters arising and status of actions from the action log. One trustee asked if the name of the organisation and its intellectual property had been registered, expressing that ‘it might be embarrassing for the organisation if the company name [Eduvate] was to be registered by a competitor organisation in the meantime’. A look of disappointment appeared on the face of the CEO who confirmed that this had not yet been done, but would be looked at. The reaction to this comment afforded little reassurance to the concerns highlighted by the trustee. To scrutinize this further the organisation having already celebrated its first birthday it appeared that the protection of the Eduvate brand was not seen as a priority, despite it being one of the most distinct material features of change. This made me question whether key individuals themselves saw the organisation as Eduvate or as the former public sector service.

The recently appointed Marketing and Communications (M&C) manager, not usually in attendance at board meetings, was invited by the CT to present an overview of the current position on the organisation’s marketing strategy. The M&C Manager began by acknowledging that there had been a strong start in building partnerships which had resulted in national and regional media coverage and considered that the organisation now had an established brand. This appeared a now contentious comment given the concerns previously raised around the protection of the Eduvate brand. She noted that there had been significant changes about the brand of the local operation, which sits under the main brand of the organisation in their respective locations

across the county. She suggested that to increase usage, they need to generate greater awareness of the services that the organisation currently offers, including commercial aspects such as the café services in larger branches in addition to the event offer. The M&C manager introduced to the group the concept of brand champions which she had recruited, of which she was seemingly proud; she explained that they were assisting her to ensure that the organisation's house style remained consistent. She explained that to date the old brand had been protected to reassure 'them' that nothing has changed. Interestingly, it was not clear who the manager was referring to by 'them', suggesting some confusion about the diverse stakeholder groups now party to the organisation. The assertion over appearing as though nothing had changed by protecting the old brand was somewhat paradoxical in view of the public celebrations that had been recently held to mark the first birthday of Eduvate. The CEO, quickly intervened to state that it was clear to her who runs the service, but perhaps not all staff and users were aware of this. The M & C manager, sensing a need to defend her position, emphasized that branding guidelines had been issued to all branches which followed a central branding image, stating that there was still a need to increase engagement with stakeholders and confirmed that it would be one of her focuses for the year alongside supporting the Brand Champions, Website and digital development. This dialogue at the board meeting seemingly teased out two parallels of organisational evolution one at the senior level where those present at the board had a great deal of awareness and knowledge of Eduvate by this point, whereas other stakeholders were seemingly being withheld from exposure to Eduvate through a desire use the old brand as a means of 'default safety'.

The M&C manager expressed, with emphasis, that the integration of services was critical when taking on new contracts and that each would require a strong web presence. She went on to outline some marketing 'quick wins' which included 'developing a marketing strategy on room

hire, new facilities for the north of the county with pioneering services.’ She suggested that the organisation should look to raise its profile at external events, including the use of blogs, case studies and videos, particularly those which demonstrate social value to look at how the service has changed people’s lives. She explained that market research was needed to map stakeholders and service usage, looking specifically at non-users and how they could be engaged. The M & C manager asked rhetorically ‘Who should we be talking to [and] who should we pull back from? The universal vs the bespoke offer, what we do and what individuals want...’

A document was then circulated to the group by the M&C Manager mapping stakeholders in relation to the organisation and their perceived power and influence. The M & C Manager argued that power and interest work in different ways for different stakeholders. One trustee posed a question in terms of how this could be monetized, the M&C manager looked unsure and replied that this had not yet been thought about. The M&C manager stated that she would be putting together an activity plan to monitor what the organisation is doing which could be useful in order to showcase things that have been achieved to customers and to staff...

Following the presentation from the Marketing and Communications Manager, one of the trustees asked if the different websites for the service would be confusing for users and asked whether it would be better to re-direct customers to one central website. This suggested that awareness of trustees over external perceptions of the organisation had heightened. The M&C manager responded to state that the focus was on seeing the role of the service as a connector by targeting influential stakeholders, although there was still a negative image of the organisation being portrayed through certain media channels, she felt a stronger web presence would be central to maintaining reputation. In context the negative reputation referred to the threat that the

counties service had been under due to financial pressures as referenced by friends group representatives at the ‘all staff’ meetings prior to the spin-out of Eduvate.

The CT, in a serious tone, stated that ‘moving from the organisation’s history to the future will be challenging’, but did not elaborate. Following this seemingly important statement, another trustee raised that the friends groups have a separate branding presence and asked how this would be incorporated. This suggested that the friends groups as a stakeholder group could be one of the ‘challenges’. The CT stated that she felt friends groups attached to the organisation were still in transition from ‘saving our [service]’ to ‘running our [service]’ and ‘some may have differing views on how they think they should be running the [service]’, followed with a chuckle. This resonated with the remark made by the CT prior to spin-out in the all staff meetings saying to friends groups present at the ‘all staff’ meetings ‘it’s time to put the placards away, the fight is over’.

The CEO expressed to the group ‘What do we need to focus on, room hire, raising awareness, or increasing footfall?’ She suggested that some of the metrics that had been set may be a hostage to fortune, and in her opinion were felt to be unrealistic. The CT made her own acknowledgement to the group that ‘we are still moving out of the county council...each year what we measure should be reviewed as new territory’. In my reflection, this appeared to be an intriguing comment, given that each year the organisation entered was considered a ‘new territory’ in the eyes of the chair, where it had also become a tradition to mark each new year of the organisation as a birthday. This symbolized both a sense of newness but also sought to legitimize the organisation’s establishment in front of important stakeholders. The annual celebratory act of the ‘birthday’ suggested the spin-out was likened to the birth of something new as opposed the ‘transfer’ of something old.

The CT announced that whilst service usage figures were declining nationally, the organisation would need to demonstrate that its usage figures were increasing or at least stable in order to continue to receive funding support from the local authority. She then proceeded to question their existing customer base asking rhetorically how are our customers retained and communicated with? Quickly adding with intent that the planned market research would cover this, the chair remarked in a surprised tone ‘I didn’t know as a member all of the services we offer’, emphasizing that there needed to be a shift in culture within the organisation and that this work would begin that process.

The CEO was then invited to run through her update to the group which had been circulated prior to the meeting in written form. She started by describing a recent trip that she had attended in New York on data privacy, where ‘important’ topics had surfaced regarding the impact on people’s access to and capacity for free speech and free thought. The role of our service is in providing access to information and what this does to support civic participation and what this does to reinforce our values. The CEO described that we are in a new era where everyone is carrying devices and that everyone knows so much... ‘Is there a role for the organisation to be standing up for consumers and citizens’ rights? Are people talking about their concern for privacy, but do they know? How does the service exemplify good practice in privacy – should we be encouraging this conversation? Is there tension between ethics of using of data for commercial advantage but also remaining a neutral space – how does this relate to practice?’

According to my observational notes, the chair stepped into say ‘it feels like we are playing catch-up in a world that has exploded’ as if to close down discussion of the topic. Upon reflection it appeared as though this item had been notably future-orientated. The action of the CT in closing discussion down on data, privacy and its implications sought to prioritize other

operational issues, even though externally in reference to other types of organisation these were felt to be important, emphasizing some discomfort over the topic.

The CEO continued with her update announcing with excitement the plans for the upcoming staff conference, the first one the new organisation had ever held. She said this would be held at one of Eduvate's locations, which also shared facilities with an arts centre where staff themselves were taking a lead in organizing. This was going to be an important event in terms of Eduvate becoming cultural spaces for arts and culture. A prestigious speaker line-up would include famous authors and the head of a major national cultural organisation. The trustees appeared impressed by this announcement, with looks of approval.

On reflection, this meeting focused in part on the physical image of the organisation, which was becoming a priority a year into Eduvate's evolution. This was significant in identity terms where discussion had focused on stakeholders and how the organisation was engaging with them. It was important to note how members began to position the organisation at the interstices of science in reference to the discussion on data and its implications for use of data and privacy for the organisation in a rapidly changing world and the discussion in relation to culture and significance of the staff conference. Both of these discussions illustrated how members were navigating between these two normative discourses in developing a 'new' identity because they draw on norms that are very different from the local-authority rhetoric. This became important as the organisation had yet to make a stance on such issues and in preference dismissed the topic, which raises significance on the organisation's future in relation to its use of data and privacy, where a clear objective in the organisation's mission was on promoting literacy, but this did not appear to translate to literacy in a digital sense, thus emphasizing some elements of the organisation's activities were prefaced over others.

4.4.3 The staff conference and Annual General Meeting, October 2017

As I was invited to the staff conference and AGM as a guest rather than an observer my own observational insights are limited, but have been included from the formal public press release. The combined first staff conference and second AGM of Eduvate signified a change towards an arts and cultural trajectory for the organisation wishing to move away from its former public service identity. The events held great importance for both internal and external stakeholders to visibly see change in a public space where discussion could take place between members. Added to this, the public figures lent legitimacy and credibility through influential speeches supporting and funding the change towards an arts and cultural trajectory.

The CEO in the previous board meeting of July 2017 noted the staff conference and AGM was set to be a significant event for Eduvate. I received an invitation via Eventbrite addressed from the ‘Chair of Trustees’ to Eduvate’s 2nd AGM on Monday 30th October. The invitation read ‘[The AGM will] celebrate our first year of operation and thank everyone who has played a role in our journey so far’.

Registration will be open from 17:00 on the ground floor. On arrival, enjoy a cream tea, explore [the premises] and see a mini ‘TechLab’ demonstration. The press release for the event was titled ‘[...] leaders fly in for [Eduvate’s] staff culture conference’, reflecting a certain level of aspiration to gravitas. The CEO of Eduvate in the release spoke of her own passion and commitment. She said: ‘Our first staff conference has been a terrific success, and it has been great to see so many people moved and inspired by the fantastic speakers we have heard here today. As a public service provider, it’s not often that we get the chance to bring large numbers of our staff together. Today saw 120 of our staff, from front line services, to business support and

finance teams and our management, Board and trustees all come together. The day reminded us that what we are all doing through our work is so important, and why we must continue to innovate and grow as an organisation to ensure our services provide much-needed support to the people of [the county]. Our new NPO status means that we will be able to develop a high-quality and diverse cultural programme across [the county]. The day gave those attending the opportunity to understand what's involved in becoming an NPO and how branches across [the county] will be able to get involved over the next 4 years. We must also thank those staff who were not able to be with us today but were continuing to keep our 50 [branches and other functions] open to the public'.

The CT remarked in the press release '[...] against the backdrop narrative of national [...] usage decline, is that the people of [the county] still use their [services...]. In [the county], our [services] are thriving because we are evolving with people's needs and listening to the voices within our communities. Today has officially marked the end of our first fantastic year and filled us all with motivation and enthusiasm to face the challenges that lay ahead of us as we continue on our journey'.

The press release signals the importance of the staff conference and AGM as a bid to establish authority as an 'innovative organisation. This reinforces the aim to prove to staff that a PSM would generate more investment in staff and attract high profile people.

4.4.4 'We need to grow' November 2017

The following is based on observations of the board meeting held on 17th November 2017. I selected this event because it evidences a turning point for Eduvate in pursuit of growth and diversification demonstrating the identity work performed at individual and organisational levels

in pursuit of this. The CT made her usual welcome, asking for a round of introductions and apologies from the group. The meeting began in a positive way with congratulations being given by the CT to the CEO for recently being awarded an OBE, a round of applause followed the announcement. The CT then remarked, in a disappointed way that for this meeting the board was ‘somewhat depleted due to several posts currently being recruited for’. A quick count was made to confirm that there was a quorum. The factual accuracy of the last meetings minutes were recorded, with the CT asking for trustees to ratify this. She swiftly moved to next item on the agenda which was the action log, no discussion was had, simply asking if anything was outstanding. This was followed by an announcement of new ‘Key’ staff appointments to the board.

Next on the agenda an external contractor was invited to present to the board, on the impact on staff of a recent arts and culture project for which external funding had been successfully secured. The contractor emphasized how the organisation was moving through a ‘cultural shift’ where this particular project had engaged people who were not currently engaging and who want to engage. She asked a rhetoric question to the board ‘How do you develop a programme that all the people understand what we are offering?’ Tackling the challenge of people who do not want to complete feedback and how to engage them, as feedback was important for the reporting processes to the funder.

One trustee, in a serious tone noted the current impact being felt on staff within the service. She brought her perspective from her position on the workforce committee, one of the sub committees of the board, and emphasized that she perceived a real change in how staff feel about the future direction of the organisation, and could see the direction towards becoming a arts and cultural organisation. The trustee explained that staff perceptions are changing and are

beginning to see the value this could bring for the future. Another trustee considered this to be an important milestone as people can see that ‘we [referring to the board as a group] are able to take risks and what we can potentially do’. There was much to take from the positive experience of working with different partners, which is essential to the future and how staff are able to build confidence to work outside of the organisation. This trustee felt that this was changing user perceptions of the organisation, ‘breaking the mould of what the [service] is’ and changing its skill base. This appeared to be a reassurance to the board that change was beginning to be perceived positively by staff as a major stakeholder group. The external contractor quickly added that this highlighted that as the project had been run with innovation funding it, was about pushing boundaries and taking risks. One trustee asked ‘How could the model be developed to tour across the organisation for less money to have a similar impact? How do you share what has been learnt about moving to a cultural identity? There was not much response to this comment from the board of trustees. It appeared that the trustees seemed unable to articulate a response, which highlighted a lack of understanding in this area.

The CEO then presented the service plan for the coming year and highlighted the need to spend time with the board to develop the overall strategic plan, looking at each member directly in turn. She explained it would however be the responsibility of individual teams within the organisation to develop more detailed plans, using the service delivery team as a specific example. The CEO referred to the need to understand the identity of the new organisation as an NPO, highlighting that a cultural coordinator would be required to manage this, however she emphasized strongly that ‘if one person is seen to be the person or project it will not become adequately embedded in the organisation’.

The CT recognised that a duality now existed around the separate NPO and local authority contracts and that new brands need to be created in order to distinguish between this, referring to it as a ‘Whistle jacket’, perhaps in reference to needing a prominent façade for each. A strong discussion ensued amongst the trustees on the position of the service to make a judgement on quality of art or literature. The discussion concluded by the chair stating that work needed to be done on building a shared identity on NPO expressing the risk on seeing NPO as something separate from what they currently do, it was acknowledged that ‘we are going through change these things do not exist separately’.

The CT invited the Head of Finance to provide an update on performance and finance to the board. As part of the update the Head of Finance focused on financial regulations (paper circulated to board), half yearly financial performance (paper circulated to board), and corporate dashboard (paper circulated to board). In comparison to the debate around the organisation’s cultural offer, I observed a lack of comment from trustees around underlying issues on commercial performance. I wondered if this was a lack of understanding or a reluctance to contribute. One trustee did however ask for greater granularity on the data presented, which highlighted that the board members were not confident enough in their interpretations to comment. The CT emphasized the need for the organisation to get better at reporting data and interpreting it in specific contexts.

The CEO then updated the group, with her report, a draft of which had been circulated to the board prior to the meeting. A specific focus was given to the staff conference and Annual General Meeting held in September 2017. The CEO expressed how staff had directly commented to her that the event was surprisingly good. She expressed her view to the group that this had ‘set

a tone for an organisation that is going somewhere', this remark was positive for the future trajectory of Eduvate, again providing reassurance to the board.

One trustee highlighted that whilst it was nice to hear the 'good news' stories, the challenging issues were often not noted in the CEO's report. He questioned why this was so and enquired why the CEO's report was not shared with staff and other stakeholders as they would be interested to know about many of the things happening. The trustee asked that the challenging issues be represented in the report alongside the good news stories. A few reluctant nods came from the CEO in acknowledgment of the comment.

Following this the CT announced that we would be moving to 'part 2' of the board meeting. Although this part of the meeting was minuted, these minutes were not made publicly available online as other minutes were. The meeting focused on the procurement of another local service operation, another significant milestone for Eduvate which signaled ambitions for growth. My observation notes were limited here due to the commercial sensitivity of the subject matter. Service provision in rural areas was also discussed in part two of the meeting as it was felt to be a contentious subject. The board meeting was scheduled to be followed by a lunch and fundraising workshop, which I was not able to attend.

On reflection, this meeting was notable for its discussion on seemingly pivotal organisational such as the staff conference and AGM, and on discussion of the introduction of arts and cultural activities in preparation for NPO and the work of the UP project. Significantly, reference was made to a new cultural identity for the organisation, and reducing that dependence on the local authority as the sole commissioner. In addition, staff expressed their sense of optimism about the future of the organisation following comments about the staff conference, and this optimism was reinforced by the CEO from her own observations. However, towards the

end of the meeting it became apparent that information was in part being obscured from trustees, as in the comment from the trustee in the ‘good news’ stories only ever being shared and the lack of depth in data being presented to the board by which they were expected to make decisions. Yet the most prominent feature of the meeting remained the organisational shift towards arts and culture of which initial optimism was to overshadow the significant challenges that lay ahead.

4.4.5 Changing the composition (February 2018)

The board meeting of February 2018 heralded the arrival of two new independent trustees to the board, following a process of appraisals between the CT and existing board members. The CT remarked that this process had concluded and that it was time for some trustees to move on from the board. This was a significant moment as it signaled the first major change in composition of the board of trustees since Eduvate’s conception, this coupled with efforts to grow the organisation and pursue an arts and cultural offer. The CT announced that two new trustees would be joining the board with two different backgrounds one in the arts and the other with a business and commercial focus, which appeared to satisfy the objectives of growth and development of an arts and cultural offer. This demonstrated a significant shift in direction for Eduvate in developing its arts and cultural offer, introducing expertise from key individuals to frame this identity for the organisation. The meeting had been scheduled in the north of the county, in the newly opened technology facility, which was going to have its formal opening after the meeting. The usual tea and coffee had been laid on outside the room where several long standing trustees were in quiet conversation with each other, everyone else had already seated themselves at the table in the meeting room. The CT opened the meeting, first welcoming the two new trustees, with two long standing members of the board announcing their departure.

Introductions were made in a new way where the CT asked for everyone to introduce themselves with an ‘interesting fact’ about themselves so that they could be memorable for everyone. This took place, followed by laughter which lightened a rather intense mood in the room.

The next item on the agenda was the Rural Services Review, for which a paper had been circulated to the board in the agenda pack prior to the meeting. The Head of Commercial and Innovation was invited to run through the background of the rural services review which he confirmed had stood as one of the original objectives for money savings from the transfer of the service from the local authority. He defined ‘rural services’ as communities outside of where static provision was currently available. Some challenge immediately erupted from the table on what the statutory responsibility for provision for services in the county was. He replied stating that the county could just provide one branch for the whole county if it wanted too as there was no minimum requirement. The trustees were taken aback by this. The Head of Commercial and Innovation said that there was a consultation to provide evidence for the local authority’s decision on service provision. The CEO interjected that the local authority was currently silent on their decision for rural service provision. A question arose from the board regarding processes of decision making based on previous consultations, asking how communities would feel about potential withdrawal of services. One of the new board members, in an assertive tone, raised a question to ask ‘what is plan B going to be?’ This was quite significant that a trustee asserted themselves in this way, having been only newly appointed. This implied that the board was growing in confidence and expertise, given the change in composition.

Important concerns were then raised by trustees in relation to the potential implications for removing rural service provision, notably for children as a known user demographic of the rural service. Another trustee raised implications for staff who were employed to run rural

services and then the potential reputational damage to the organisation of any detrimental decision. The CT asked the executive, ‘what exactly is it that we are consulting on?’, ‘How do we counteract consultation on things that appear to already have a solution?’ The CT said ‘it appears that the heart is guiding the head over a decision on the rural services review’. She noted that it appeared the consensus was to take the slower option to any changes, over ruling voices that presented legitimate challenge and counter debate. These extracts indicate the challenge of identity work during uncertainty specifically around the ‘commercial’ aspect of the public service mutual, instead deferring to an option which could be perceived as representing less risk.

In a later interview with a trustee, he/she remarked

You can’t go from an institutional public sector body to what in effect is a commercial organisation without developing skill sets which are required within a commercial environment. But that entire area seem to be swept under the table so when I voiced opinions from a commercial perspective, I think there was no empathy because the people, a lot of the people around the table, couldn’t identify with that because they don’t come from that background and so it was something I think, that restricted the success of the board.

[Trustee, Eduvate]

The CEO then gave her verbal update, apologizing to the group that she had not been able to circulate a written report prior to the meeting, with a little sigh of regret. A reflection of the pace of change taking place in Eduvate outside of the board room. She began by discussing the major issues the organisation was continuing to experience with the roll out of a new I.T. system, explaining that this was not good for the organisation, but that she was impressed by the way the staff were handling things ‘on the front line’. The expression of staff ‘on the front line’ often used by seniority of the organisation was an intriguing one, perhaps a convenient term to describe those engaging in customer facing work, but continued to hold connotations of a them and us dyad.

Again a marker of the pace of change, the CEO acknowledged that significant capacity issues remained in the senior management team and that a pursuit of growth had become a norm.

The minutes of the board published after the meeting noted:

‘The Leadership team have spent time looking at how we build an even stronger culture around monitoring and improving performance. There will be a greater focus in the future on building stronger accountability for performance at all levels of the organisation’

The *them* and *us* dyad was reinforced in a comment made by the trustee who chaired the workforce and remuneration sub-committee commenting that there was a detached feeling of staff in relation to the leadership of the organisation. However the CEO remarked as recorded in the minutes ‘We have recently delivered two collaboration days for managers and supervisors where there was lots of positive energy and staff were very engaged in sharing ideas and experiences of projects and initiatives being taken forward in different [branches]’. The CT stated that there should be greater focus on staff engagement as there was significant change still taking place in the organisation.

The CT then raised that the election of new staff and community trustees would be taking place shortly to replace the community trustee that was stepping down, expressing that she hoped the newly appointed trustee would be in place by the May board meeting. The CT then also stated that it was the end of the staff trustee’s term. She expressed that she wanted the whole workforce, including those as part of the new contract for another local authority to be involved in the election. This comment again reinforced the message of growth which had been the main focus of the agenda from the outset of meeting, notably important for identity work that the organisation was still evolving. The CT set a timeframe that she wanted this to be done by June/July 2018. The CT asked the one remaining staff trustee to remain in post until the new staff

trustee was in place, and the current trustee agreed. This was the first time in the organisation's history that the composition of the board had changed substantially from its conception, this signalled both a changing direction for Eduvate but also a feeling that those who had set up the organisation had served their time where new knowledge and experience was required for the organisation to grow.

4.5 The 2nd Birthday (2 yr. post spin-out)

The clear emphasis on growth had been suitably positioned before the 2nd Birthday celebrations of Eduvate. I received an invitation to the second birthday of the organisation via email which had been circulated from Eventbrite and was branded using Eduvate's logo and colours.

To thank you for your ongoing help and support, we would like to invite you to join us as we celebrate our second birthday, and look back at all that we have achieved together over the past two years.

Please come along [...] on Wednesday 18th April, from 5pm—7pm, to enjoy a drink and some nibbles as we raise a toast to the hard-work and commitment of our staff, trustees, Friends Groups, volunteers, partners and collaborators. We look forward to seeing you.

An evening reception was held on the 18th April 2018 named the 'second birthday' of the organisation. Those who had helped the organisation along its way had been invited for celebratory drinks and nibbles. I attended, but upon entering the main county service headquarters, I found no public visibility of the 'second birthday'. Upon asking a member of staff, she directed me to an upstairs balcony which had been made 'private' for the event. Upon mingling, I realized that all those in attendance had been invited as thanks for their part in 'helping' the organisation in its journey so far. The event was less formal than the 'first birthday had been' with a smaller group of stakeholders present. Speeches from the CT and CEO expressed thanks to everyone whilst reminiscing on how far the organisation had come since the

spin-out and broadcasting Eduvate's future ambitions, which again included the importance of growth. It had become a custom that a cake was cut and shared with those that had been invited. The cutting of the cake was quite symbolic: as at every major event in the PSM's history a cake was present, with celebratory cutting and sharing. The cake itself symbolized 'a major event' in the organisation's evolution.

4.5.1 Re-structure

The re-structure was a critical event for Eduvate that took place prior to the spring of 2018 though focused primarily in one district of the county. Discussion of the re-structure did not feature much at the full board meetings. However the perspective of one former Eduvate employee published in an open letter online stating some observations following the [Local Authority] Scrutiny Committee of 12th June, 2018.

To quote the former employee from the letter, they state:

The [...] service has lost its way. Every charity has a purpose which it must fulfil. [Eduvate] has forgotten this and has become focused, instead, on growing their organisation.

[Former Staff Member, July 2018]

Growth of the organisation is acknowledged here, which had become a dominant focus of the board following the 1st Birthday of Eduvate. However the employee suggests the direction of growth does not align to Eduvate's charitable purpose.

I would not be writing this if I did not see my local [...] services being unnecessarily eroded and destroyed. This redundancy puts me in the unusual situation of being interested and in touch with staff from many branches and removes me from the internal pressures forcing members of staff to be silent.

[Eduvate] describes itself as “open” and “transparent”. However, it is not clear what public donations [...] are being used for [...]. Members of staff who have asked managers what it is being used for have received conflicting answers.

The participant references two aspects of the organisation which had been noted by the CT at the very outset in being ‘open’ and ‘transparent’. It would appear that confusion is expressed in terms of how the service is funded, notably how being a charity and social enterprise allows for different revenue streams to be obtained.

There is no way for staff or members of the public to contact the Board of Trustees directly. After more than two years of asking I have still received neither answer nor explanation of why we are not allowed to communicate directly with the Charity’s board.

The tone of the letter emphasizes distance between the board of trustees and senior members of the organisation to those on the ground. Some frustration emerges in supposedly not being able to contact the board. In response to the letter Eduvate published a statement:

The [branch], the second busiest in [the county], plays ‘an important role in meeting the changing needs of local communities’ and is a hub for [...].

The statement added:

The team, many of whom have been working in [the county’s branches] for a number of years, is well managed and supported, and resources are managed in line with our charity’s financial regulations and broader policies.

To adapt to the changing ways that people are engaging with [our services] and in line with budget reductions, the team at [xx branch] has been reviewed in the past year.

This has focused on ensuring we have clear roles and responsibilities with strong and effective local management and leadership of the [service].

We have staff and community trustees on our Board, an elected Staff Forum and we have regular meetings, AGMs, collaboration days and our annual staff conference, where we

bring as many of the [Eduvate] team members together to share ideas about the future of the organisation.

[Eduvate Spokesman, 2018]

This response reinforces Eduvates entrepreneurial outlook over its public service orientated past. The message emphasises that change is still required in order to sustain the service and that decisions made by senior members of the organisation under the guise of a charity may be different to those of its past. The final part of the message in reference to bringing team members together picks up again on the theme of unity expressed by the CT of Eduvate from birth, though this appears to sit in disharmony with the perspective of the former employee who states:

The odd secrecy and lack of information Senior Management insists upon runs throughout the organisation. While I was there we were discouraged from open communication with our colleagues.

[Former Eduvate Employee, 2018]

The perspective from this former employee, following the second birthday, highlights that communications to and from stakeholders appears a prominent concern. This exchange is poignant as it was aired publicly and presents a perspective of one individual's reality, was shared following their departure from Eduvate. Nonetheless this emerged as a result of earlier decisions taken by the board of trustees and had made an impression on the organisations reputation as the story was published in the local press, becoming another narrative in Eduvate's evolution.

4.5.2 Who is accountable September 2018

The open scrutiny meeting of 25th September 2018 on webcast saw the organisation called to a local authority scrutiny meeting alongside the commissioners supposedly responsible for awarding and monitoring the contract to deliver the service. I use supposedly here because, as my data extracts convey, confusion arose over who is directly responsible for the county councils service provision. The following excerpt was transcribed from video web cast, with actions noted from the footage of the meeting. The scrutiny councilor notes thoughtfully whilst speaking to the committee.

We have the duty to provide [services] and we have delegated the responsibility for the [particular] service but not the accountability for that to um [county], no uh sorry to [Eduvate]

[Scrutiny Councilor, Local Authority]

Initially confusion arises over who is responsible for the service, although the councilors are themselves a significant stakeholder group for Eduvate, it appears they have not been close to the organisation. The scrutiny councilor continues in reference to the commissioning councilor

...you are the commissioner for that and you ensure that part is done and that we are happy with that and we scrutinise that. In relation to the non-bits which we scrutinise anything else of added value then that is a matter for their board of directors, who sructinise that? Or do we take responsibility for scrutinising that?

[Scrutiny Councilor, Local Authority]

Again these questions would indicate that there is uncertainty over the structure of Eduvate and raises questions over what it is that the organisation provides for the local authority. The use of the descriptor 'non bits' is somewhat elusive, suggesting the council hold no interest in what the organisation does beyond the core service it provides to the authority.

Providing that they are doing the contract with us to satisfactory levels then they are a private business in all intents and purposes answerable only to the board of directors and shareholders. I think the board of directors and shareholders are one and the same people aren't they? I am not sure who the shareholders are [...] we heard today that the chair of the board is stepping down after 2 years, no 3 and half years ok... so how easy are you finding it to recruit and maintain trustees of the caliber you need [...] and what steps are you going to take to replace obviously the chair after she moves down, thank you.

[Scrutiny Councilor, Local Authority]

This comment is interesting in that it is addressed to the commissioning councilor who has no legal power to appoint or recruit trustees or the chair of trustees as Eduvate is now and independent entity with independent governance structures from the local authority. The scrutiny councilor appears to be exercising power in her position as if Eduvate were still part of the local authority.

[Scrutiny Councilor, Local Authority]

The commissioning councilor responded in an assertive tone, with serious expression

I will answer a bit of that... Yes, you are right, you as the scrutiny committee are responsible for scrutinising [the counties] service [not the organisation commissioned to deliver it] We have not abrogated our responsibility to [for the county's] comprehensive and efficient [...] service, we commission it and the public service mutual provides it. I was at the original interview for the former chair and we had several applicants at that time, it was two and a half years ago now, err and [the former chair] came across as being the person. I think it was the right decision at the time, but she does have a long history of public service. What I would like to do to appoint the next chairman, err the next chair of the board of governors is to bring in a business man and or women of some description from outside public service, umm in order to move the [...] service or [Eduvate] if you like further on in their quest [...].

[Commissioning Councilor, Local Authority]

The commissioning councilor reinforced here the need to support the future direction of Eduvate, noting expertise is needed from outside the public sector, but retains an interest in the success of the whole organisation. This also reinforces how the backgrounds of senior leaders of Eduvate came to shape the organisation it was becoming, notably here the reference to 'long history of

public service'. The councilor highlights that new backgrounds are required to take the organisation forwards.

The CEO quickly grabbed the microphone to remark

Just in terms of your questions, who scrutinises the extra, for example [other local authorities] scrutinise the contract[s within their jurisdiction], the NPO would be scrutinised by [the governing cultural funding organisation], so we have a series of stakeholders and funders of whom we need to report our progress against our contractual obligations, so that's where scrutiny happens. Obviously we are a charity we need to comply with charity commission regulations, recruitment for a chair is currently underway and we are looking at a range of sectors and we have a nominations committee, which is a sub-committee of the board of trustees that has been established in order to lead that recruitment process, which is ongoing at the moment.

[Chief Executive, Eduvate]

The comment from the CEO seeks to enforce that Eduvate is an independent entity from the local authority with contracts for several commissioners and that recruitment for a new CT is something which is directly managed by Eduvate's current board of trustees.

4.5.3 'What does the future hold?'

Following the events of the scrutiny meeting, the question remained 'what does the future hold' for Eduvate. An advert with a recruitment pack was placed on jobs section of Eduvate's recruitment webpages which detailed prescriptive criteria for the trustee role. The advert described 'Board members of [Eduvate] will be both directors of a company and trustees of a charity. They will therefore, have duties and responsibilities under company law and charity law'. Whilst not onerous these must be taken seriously [The Government website then referenced on what trustees should know]

Key Role of Trustees:	In addition with other trustees, each trustee must hold the charity 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries by:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the organisation complies with its governing document and pursues the objectives defined in it. • To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets. • To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation. • To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation. • To ensure the financial stability of the organisation. • To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds. • To appoint the Chief Executive Officer and monitor his or her performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, purpose and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these. • Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its 'corporate' behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
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Source: Author

The initiation of the recruitment process for new trustees and a chair of trustees now three years on from spin-out signaled a big shift in the organisation's future, now with greater focus on arts and culture professional expertise was sought to support this future direction. This would be a new chapter in Eduvate's evolution, at which point I leave the story.

4.6 Conclusions

In this chapter through the presentation of findings through chronological sequence of the case as 'critical events' I have sought to articulate the process of evolution of Eduvate. The process of evolution illuminates the complexities of identity formation both organisationally and individually for stakeholders. This is illustrated by the use of 'critical events' in the life of the organisation which become the cues and frames for sense to be made of the past, present and

future in respect of identity. To reiterate the major chronological stages of independence and preparing for spin-out was a critical point in becoming, the first all staff meeting brought a wide spectrum of stakeholders into the process. The board of trustee meeting ‘decisions have to be made’ was the first landmark decision for the board which took an entrepreneurial focus. The first AGM introduced the new governance arrangements to those that now held voting rights, the first birthday a celebration of success that the organisation had achieved one year of independence. The first staff conference provided an opportunity for the organisation to shift trajectories towards arts and culture, is our direction around arts? This provided an opportunity to reflect on the past whilst looking to growth for the future, the second birthday a chance to celebrate two years of success as an independent mutual with refined group of stakeholders and finally the scrutiny meeting who is accountable an opportunity for those who had instigated the service to see what it had become.

I must also acknowledge my own unique perspective on the process of organizing as I embarked on this ethnographic journey. As researcher, I accessed material and information for this research and was placed in a position of trust amongst stakeholders of the organisation. It was important throughout this time for me retain a professional distance whilst also blending in with organisational life. The implications of the data are discussed in Chapter 5, in answer of the research questions and offers elaboration on the contributions of this work.

Chapter 5:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this section I return to answer the research questions and develop four theoretical contributions drawing upon the findings of this three year study which explains how stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change. First, stakeholders perform identity work by creating their own narrative for identity as a new organisational form evolves, pieced together from the senior level and local level organisational narratives and the ambiguity arising in-between (Section 5.2). Second, in a spin-out, identity formation processes unfold through iteration between individual and organisational identity (Section 5.3), I theorize two specific practices; specifically *assimilation* (5.3.1) and *repositioning* (5.3.2) which occur in this process. Third, I integrate these two practices to explain how the iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity manifests through evolution to present initially hybrid, and then multiple, identities (Section 5.4). The latter arise from the way in which identities are composed and/or decomposed through identity *legitimation* and *contestation*. Finally then, stakeholders use sensemaking processes through certainty and uncertainty to initially temporally frame what is changing, then to determine a position for their own continuity (Section 5.5).

5.2 Negotiating identity through change

This section discusses how stakeholders perform identity work by creating their own narrative for identity as a new organisational form evolves, pieced together from the *senior level* and *local level* organisational narratives and the ambiguity arising in-between. The core research question asks (RQ2): How do stakeholders negotiate their identities in the face of the challenges of change? I answer this question by arguing that identity is negotiated against the challenges of change through the senior level organisational narratives and the local level organisational narratives.

The challenges of change are identified from the findings as communication with stakeholders, establishing independence from local authority and embracing new ways of working. It can be observed from the data that senior level messages about the creation of Eduvate initially emerge during phase 1 the pre-spin-out period. Through the Conservative government's right to bid scheme, key individuals from the local authority run service took responsibility for the setup of Eduvate, which included the CEO and CT. In the years that followed spin-out (phases two and three), the messages continued to be broadcast by key individuals namely the CEO and CT as a means to frame organisational identity. Of particular interest is how such communications are perceived by stakeholders, what senior level messages say or do not say and how these messages shape a concept of organisational identity for individuals. I outline in the case of Eduvate how the senior level and local level narratives manifest in sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 respectively.

5.2.1 Senior Level Organisational Perceptions

The *senior level organisational* perceptions refers here to communications made by senior members of Eduvate regarding new values, purpose, vision or mission by senior members of the organisation. In addition control, ownership, organisational structures and processes are also discussed. From a sensemaking perspective reliance is placed by individuals in the case on communications from senior members of Eduvate to construct frames, these act as ‘guidance’ on how change may play out. The CT and appointed trustees ‘setup’ Eduvate to the point that the local authority would commission the new organisation to deliver the county’s service. The journey of the individuals involved with establishment of the new organisation termed the mutual project board, themselves bring individual representations of experiences and identities of their respective backgrounds. These individuals hold the autonomy to mould their own representations into a projection for the future of Eduvate which emerge as the senior level perspectives in the findings.

For example in the pre-spin out phase the CT uses positive statements as a persuasive mechanism to favorably justify decisions to ‘spin-out’ from the local authority. The statements attempt to divert stakeholder’s attention away from the uncertainty and risk which was prevalent during the pre-birth period (Phase 1). The findings show consistent attempts were made to present a positive public façade. Further evidence of uncertainty arises in the minutes of a staff advisory group meeting held in July 2015 where staff suggested that as communications had been predicated upon a certain amount of pre-existing knowledge. In this instance assumptions had been made by senior members that existing communications were adequate, and that individuals would become involved when actions/decisions directly affect them. This would indicate a more reactive approach to managing communications. The minutes recorded that it

was not possible to tell staff everything when much was still uncertain. It was clear that management had a desire to be open against sharing Eduvate's new mission, but there was still a considerable amount of uncertainty arising during the pre-spinout phase. Many informal narratives surface through interviews conducted with staff, friend's group representatives and service users during this period.

The spin-out was a critical point for communications with staff and other stakeholders about the new organisation, as it presented the opportunity for an aspirational organisational frame distinctly different from that which had gone before. It would appear that uncertainty was an overriding factor which limited the receptiveness of communications about the spin-out to Eduvate for stakeholders. However this demonstrates the boldness of change, given that the underlying driver was to sustain the service for the future which became the common shared interest amongst stakeholders.

5.2.2 Local Level Organisational Perceptions

The *local level* organisational perceptions comprise of control, ownership, organisational structures and processes. In addition stakeholder's expression of uncertainty, perceptions of sameness or difference and reference to specific events are included.

To provide context on how local level perceptions arise, I first detail the aspect of stakeholder immersion in organisational life. To elaborate, the findings demonstrate that different stakeholders will each experience varying levels of exposure to an 'aspect' or 'aspects in parallel' of organisational life at any one time. This unique exposure can itself exclude other aspects of organisational life. These aspects of organisational life are either supported or contested by stakeholders creating the informal narratives within the organisation explicating perceptive

realities. I refer to section 4.2.3 (p. 133), to provide an example which demonstrates how these local level narratives occur. At a point prior to the spin-out (phase 1) the CT states ‘it will be important for the public that one face of family is presented’. This can be interpreted as an attempt by the CT to override the un-familial nature of local authority ownership through introduction of a more informal approach. Throughout this period staff and friends group representatives perceived the flow of communication about the new mutual structure of Eduvate to be slow, where uncertainty, perceived threat and in some cases optimism emerges in the communication ‘gaps’.

The formal aspirational messages communicated by senior leaders of the public service became mixed with the informal narratives which arose between members. This exacerbated the overall ambiguity felt by stakeholders as clear channels of communication could not be determined. A pertinent example arises in section 4.5.1 (p. 183) where in September 2018 councilors who at the point some three years after the spin out, in a capacity as commissioners, did not appear to be clear about the structure of Eduvate or what they themselves as councilors were responsible for. Partly through changes to the electorate over three years councilors were a stakeholder group with seemingly less immersion in the organisational life of Eduvate. A further explanation which details how certain stakeholders with less immersion in organisational life, such as the councilors in this example, can be taken from the practices of assimilation and repositioning under identity formation which I theorize in section 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

5.3 Identity Formation

This section discusses how identity formation by organisational stakeholders unfolds through the *senior level* and *local level* organisational perceptions of change in relation to the overt and

potentially covert processes of organizing. I theorize two practices which occur in identity formation *assimilation* (5.3.1) and *repositioning* (5.3.2). I then go on to explain how through the practices of *assimilation* and *repositioning* the iteration between individual and organisational identity formation occurs (5.4).

First, I return to answer the research question ‘How is an identity of a new organisation formed by organisational stakeholders?’ The becoming of a new collective identity in the case of Eduvate is initially reliant on change perceptions broadcast by senior members as discussed in section 5.2. Identity formation as a concept has been discussed significantly in relation to formation at the organisational level (Kroezen and Heugens, 2012; Empson, 2004), but less so at the individual stakeholder level and the shifting nature of relationships between the two.

In the case of Eduvate it was the responsibility of the ‘Mutual Project Board’ at the individual level to establish the new ‘mutual’ organisation (Eduvate) as an entirely separate entity. The primary aim of this group of individuals was to continue and sustain the deliverance of services in the county. In the mutual creation process, key individuals from this group were required to draw upon their own past experiences of running the local authority service to invent something new. These past experiences were used to shape what the future mutual organisation would look like. Meanwhile, as news of the creation of the mutual reaches stakeholders, the local level narratives often begin to emerge within self-identifying groupings, for example local branches, departments and friends groups affiliated to branches. News arising through local level channels such as leaks of information, gossip and imagined truths based on fragments of senior level communications.

I argue it is the space between the senior level and local level organisational narratives that gives rise to heightened ambiguity for stakeholders. Such ambiguity encourages stakeholders

to consider whether they accept, reject or revise official claims of the new organisation. It is not necessarily the content but rather the source of the local level narratives which makes them salient to particular stakeholders, where often the source may be from a trusted colleague as opposed to a well-rehearsed email memo. Section 4.2.3 (p.133) offers an example, here the CT remarks upon her extensive experience of leading sizeable public sector organisations conveying confidence to others. As this message was broadcast at the point of the spin-out to Eduvate it conveyed a sense of strength and independence at an early stage in the life of the organisation desiring a clean-break from aspects of the organisation's history. At the same time the formal transfer of undertakings from the local authority to Eduvate was due to take place. Quite suddenly, overnight the organisation had structurally changed with little time for sense to be made by the majority of stakeholders that the spin-out had occurred, at least on the ground it may have appeared as though nothing had changed.

The process of transfer was a critical point for identity formation as discussed in section 5.3, as for Eduvate being a new organisation, a significant organisational history had been inherited at the point of transfer. We see already from the work of identity scholars (e.g. Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Hatch and Schultz, 2002; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006) that new identities become substantiated through shared histories. To reference shared histories as a public sector service therefore becomes a dominant temptation amongst stakeholders where new organisational claims in the case of Eduvate as a new mutual organisation may not yet be founded. Instead the enduring elements of the public sector histories set a foundation for a new organisational identity to be built upon. Associations with external stakeholder groups had been outlined in the organisations communications plan to mirror aspirations for current-ness and innovation that Eduvate represented. Through associations with external stakeholders and the

garnering of their support would be a means to legitimize the actions and comments of senior leaders.

Kroezen and Heugens (2012) consider that processes of identity formation rely on two central processes (a) initial imprinting of potential identity attributes upon organisations (b) the subsequent enactment of selection of these attributes by identity insiders. However their theory on the processes of identity formation does not go far enough in considering the role of enduring histories. I argue that whilst an initial identity may be imprinted on a form of organizing the subsequent enactment of the imprinted identity does not orderly follow. Clegg's (2007) work helps to explain that it is the ongoing struggles through interactions between people that influence the enacting of a new identity. This raises the importance of the role of others who come to influence the identity formation process, for example through exchanges with other stakeholders both internal and external such as colleagues or those in seniority. I argue that the role of organisational histories can be more powerful than the initial identity imprinting process proposed by Kroezen and Huegens, whereby individuals can contest new attributes through decidedly not enacting what is deemed to be new in the face of an established history. Therefore uncovering the importance of such histories by using longitudinal methods which allow for the telling of histories is vital in the emergence of this finding.

5.3.1 Assimilation

The term assimilation refers to attempts by individuals to 'integrate' their own identity and their concept of the organisations identity towards that which is being broadcast by senior leaders. Evidence is drawn from the findings to illustrate three components individuals undertake which form the practice. First, stakeholders form perceptions of the organisation. Second,

perceptions of the organisation are aligned to individual identity attributes. Third, individuals adopt new identity attributes from the organisational narrative and adapt their concept of the organisation. This is not a one-time process, instead a continuous iterative process mirroring change within the organisation.

Assimilation occurs where individuals support and attempt to adopt the components of identity being put forward by senior leaders, but not to the detriment of their own sense of enduring identity. Those who do not support do not necessarily seek to undo identity but rather preference their own identity frame for the organisation and do not seek to make attempts at assimilating to the desired organisational identity. The primary objective in the creation of Eduvate was to bring together a public service identity with a commercial identity to make the organisation sustainable. By bringing together public service and commercial objectives creates a hybrid, put simply bringing two things together that could be considered disparate in some way. It is important to recount that a key motive for becoming a mutual was that the organisation should be run by staff who had previously worked in the service under local authority control. The objectives of the mutualization agenda sought to empower public sector workers to release their 'entrepreneurial vigor' in sustaining a hoped more dynamic sustainable mode of organizing. In this way in September 2016 the CT made a comparison between the 'new' and 'old regime', one of the first references to a hybrid identity where the 'old regime' referred to being a public service within the local authority. The CT differentiating between the new and old regime was a prominent moment in attempting to align friends groups and staff to the idea of social entrepreneurialism which had arisen though the old need to retain services to the new need to sustain services. This played out from the initial message from the CT through by senior management to re-orientate the focus of friends groups and encourage staff into new ways of

working. This example demonstrates how senior members influence organisational identity (Gioia and Thomas, 1996), and through major organisational change can elicit subsequent change in identity, where senior members play a role in influencing other members to relinquish old identification before a new identity can be embraced (Elsbach,1999). However through this process a hybrid identity occurs where the ‘old and ‘new’ play out alongside each other until the stronger gains salience. I argue that old identity is not relinquished through this process but rather *repositioned* against the new identity. The second part of the process focuses on the positioning of existing identities when individuals come to adopt new identity components. The concept of repositioning I will discuss below.

5.3.2 Repositioning

The concept of repositioning is constituted alongside the process of identity formation. The findings illustrate a process of repositioning identity that individuals undertake I argue following or in combination to processes of assimilation as I describe in section 5.3.1 is where individuals are encouraged to reposition former identities about the organisation, still retaining them but slowly strong attributes emerge from the new identity and become positioned over former identities. The former identities remain in the conscious to be recalled but hold a lesser degree of prominence over time. As Clegg et al. (2007) remark the legitimization of identities formed within emerging industries is the process of ongoing interaction between identities. This is where stakeholders perform certain identities in order to legitimise and validate their organisation’s own actions and goals. In addition I find that the founding of new organisational identity is initially reliant on the accomplishment of identity work by key individuals such as the CEO and CT of Eduvate. Stakeholders relationally construct identities construed as ‘emerging’ from the ‘new’ in

contrast to the 'old' from the identity work performed by senior leaders. For example under local authority control the service had been at threat of cut's and branch closures. During this period, 'friends' as a stakeholder group had relationally constructed an identity as advocates for the service, campaigning for its future. In the pre-spin out stage the CT seeks to formulate a new collective identity with 'friends' remarking that 'It is time to put the placards away, the fight is over', and then in a slow and deliberate way emphasizes that the new organisation is completely separate from the local authority 'owned' brand for the service. In so doing she uses specific frames for this new identity 'evolve gradually, collectively and locally'. The friends therefore see from the identity work performed here by the CT that change is occurring which aligns in part to their identity concept for the organisation. This in accordance with McInnes & Corlett (2012) allows individuals to reconsider their own identity position against the ideals of the new organisation, whilst retaining the enduring elements of the past and their own origins in relation to the organisation.

It was following the first and second birthdays of Eduvate that stakeholders began to experience transition between the old and new, but at different paces for each individual depending on the level of immersion each stakeholder had previously with the organisation. The birth of Eduvate marked a shift towards processes of iterative identity formation between individual and organisational identity. Up until the birth of Eduvate its organisational identity was merely a vision of the future, the point of spin-out signaled this vision become a reality for stakeholders, regardless of their awareness at the particular point of transfer. The process of iteration between individual and organisational identity works to illuminate what is changing through immersion in organisational life.

5.4 The iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity

This section discusses how the practices of *assimilation* and *repositioning* contribute to the iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity through organisational evolution to present multiple, identities. First, I return to answer research question part b) How do multiple organisational identities unfold over time? The findings indicate that multiple organisational identities arise from the way identities are initially formed and then either legitimised or contested amongst subsets. Besharov and Brickson (2016) talk of becoming hybrid at organisational birth, which would suggest that hybrid organisational forms are a product only of newly created organisations. Identity formation in the case of Eduvate can be observed to come initially from the CEO and CT of whom bring their own histories in public service. These histories are used intuitively to construct a vision for the new organisation. For example in the meeting the shadow board March 2016. In her own introduction the chair of trustee's remarks upon her extensive experience of leading sizeable public sector organisations in relation to healthcare and conveying that others could be confident that she knew what she was doing.

In Section 4.2.3 I provide an example from February 2016 where the CT's use of metaphors to reflect unity and family signaled the beginning of a new structure for Eduvate as an organisation. This was intended to bring a more informal approach for stakeholders than the 'bureaucracy' of local authority ownership. I argue that this is not applicable in the case of Eduvate as the shell organisation is 'new' the reference to family at this point was only an aspiration, a legacy is transferred to the 'new' organisation under its former existence. The local authority typifies a model of bureaucratic control whereas the transition to a normative model of control creates a space itself for identity formation, with that formation contending facets of both bureaucratic and normative ideals. In the case of Eduvate a hybrid identity begins to establish at

this point. The spin-out itself was considered the ‘birth’ of the organisation, where celebratory events held on the same day of the coming years were referred to as birthdays of the organisation. Eduvate’s birthdays in accordance with Brown and Toyoki (2013) can be likened to ‘legitimacy affirming’ events where through the celebration of achievements in the previous year the organisation is driving conformity towards social expectations amongst stakeholders (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983). For example many accomplishments in the first year of Eduvate legitimize becoming independent from the local authority. The birthdays therefore positively reinforce this accomplishment for stakeholders, even if they do yet perceive this to be positive. The social construction of ‘legitimacy’ allows for many different interpretations and opens up the possibility for multiple identities to exist, surfaced through struggles where identities construed as legitimate by some are contested by others. The most dominant identities through this process come to gain salience for the majority of stakeholders. Scholars have yet to consider a process based view whereby through spin-out a hybrid organisational identity may form initially, and where multiple organisational identities begin to develop over time as oppositional sub-identities establish themselves. Brown and Toyoki (2013) describe through the process of legitimacy contestation.

In the case of Eduvate, multiple identities begin to occur beyond the point of transition where stakeholders continue to enact what they believe their organisation stands for and for each stakeholder a different variation of this can be seen to exist. Examples of this relate to feelings of what the service should be or about its structure of ownership. Early in Eduvate’s existence trustees with different backgrounds and experiences decided that the organisation should branch out into an arts and cultural offer which could be deemed to be different from the organisation’s past. This new arts and cultural identity was overlaid again onto previous identities by a few key

individuals. This leaves stakeholders with choices through assimilation attempts about which identities they will enact based on their own values and beliefs about the organisation. Processes of contestation arise where individuals may choose not to enact a certain desired identity and legitimacy where they do enact desired identities. The problem occurs where the legitimate identity may be construed as the correct one, this is not so, as legitimacy would rather indicate the identity which is affirmed by those in power, rather than the majority. In stakeholder groupings a majority view can be held which does not align to the portrayed organisational identity. To the individual the process of *assimilation* is aligned to legitimacy where individuals attempt to align their own identity and their concept of the organisations identity towards that which is being broadcast by senior leaders. In time this encourages individuals to reposition former identities about the organisation, still retaining them but slowly strong attributes emerge from the new identity and become positioned over former identities. The former identities remain in the conscious to be recalled but hold a lesser degree of prominence over time. Pockets of sub-identities emerge based on those who share certain beliefs themselves and about the organisation though this is often influenced by external factors too. An early example of this was evident in the establishment of the board of trustees, where a trustee states: ‘I remember the missions and values were presented to us. So there had been obviously a lot of thought and discussion between the senior management team as to what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it. So the rest of the board weren’t involved in any way in putting that together’. This demonstrates how the senior management who already knew the organisation crafted an identity for the new organisation Eduvate which was not necessarily shared by others on the board, but rather imposed.

Multiple identities begin to surface where, for example, the CT recognised that a duality was emerging in the organisation around the separate NPO and local authority contracts and that new brands needed to be created to distinguish between this. The discussion concluded by the CT stating that work needed to be done on building a shared identity on NPO expressing the risk on seeing NPO as something separate from what they currently do, it was acknowledged that ‘we are going through change these things do not exist separately’ . This statement demonstrated struggles over enacting the new organisational identities being presented such as NPO. Stakeholders were struggling to position the new identity alongside the other identities they held for the organisation. Nonetheless this moment further enforced independence as the organisation had moved beyond its role as commissioned entity for the former local authority run service. The staff conference (Section 4.4.2) in October 2017 was an attempt by senior leaders with statements from the CEO and CT about the future of the organisation to assimilate stakeholders towards their ambition to become an arts and cultural organisation. Chenhall et al.’s (2015) work suggest how mechanisms and practices are used towards the management of conflicting identities. The use of ‘conflicting’ arises in relation to how multiple identities form and are held amongst other identities, conflict becomes a generative part of this process of formation and becomes a necessity rather than a constraint towards maintaining the distinctiveness of these identity components. The basis of Chenhall et al.’s (2015) study, exploring how identity conflicts can be resolved. It is clear in the case of Eduvate that identity conflicts are both embedded and deeply seated within the organisation, given that the primary identity of the organisation for some considerable time was as a public service provider. Conflicts occur through the enaction of the individual in relation to organisational identity frames. I explore how stakeholders make

sense of change to enact identities against individual and organisational frames in section 5.5 in reference to the processes of sensemaking through certainty and uncertainty.

5.5 Sensemaking processes through certainty and uncertainty

In this section, using evidence from the data I discuss how stakeholders use sensemaking processes through *certainty* and *uncertainty* to initially temporally frame what is changing. I argue temporal frames are then used to determine a position for continuity for individuals. First, I return to answer research question part c) How do organisational stakeholders make sense of processes of change in relation to their own identities? In answer of this research question I argue that stakeholders make sense of the process of change through the use of organisational frames (section 5.4.1) and individual frames (section 5.4.2). These frames are used in the organisational context to illuminate what is changing and in the individual context for how stakeholders relate to this in respect of their own identities for the maintenance of continuity (section 5.4.3).

Maclean, Harvey and Chia's (2012) notion of sensemaking explains how narratives which create a point of stability during the flux of organisational life. These stories consist of sensemaking devices developed from life-history narratives. Perceptions have been a strong theme throughout this work, drawing upon the senior level and local level organisational and individual narratives. In section 4.2.3 (p.133) questions of clarification from staff and friends group representatives which arose at the point of spin-out were one of the first observations of sensemaking in practice. The questions posed themselves refer to the past to frame the change that is being communicated, although not directly answered at the time provide insight on how stakeholders were positioning what was to come. These early communications with staff and friends group representatives as key stakeholders sought to provide organisational frames to

orientate stakeholders towards change. Whilst messages of unity and the importance of communication were emphasized by the CEO and CT through these frames, later work between stakeholders in mixed groups unearthed uncertainties and confusion, which appeared to remain unresolved following the activity, which acted only to return these concerns to dormancy until later evoked. The activity itself through the questions and prompts posed to serve as a fulcrum around which people can construct social hierarchies and in/out-groups, which help them to make sense of the uncertainty and confusion in the ‘vacuum’ that is a new organisational form, but this set up possibilities for conflict later on in the evolution of the organisation. In this way as Colville et al (2014) suggests understanding comes from the frames and cues to which we are exposed, frames being past moments of socialisation and cues the present moments of experience. The above event poses a ‘moment of experience’ that invokes frames of public service mutual logic (i.e. entrepreneurialism, innovation and difference from the old ways) but is not necessarily a frame itself.

Table 7 Phases of evolution and the role of sensemaking in relation to identity formation

	Phase 1 Pre-spin out - Birth	Phase 2 Birth (Spin-out) – 1st Birthday	Phase 3 1st Birthday – 2nd Birthday
Organisational Identity	Public Sector Service, Local Authority	Public Service Mutual, Social Enterprise	Arts and cultural Public Service Mutual, Social Enterprise
Identity Framing	Public Service, Nonprofit, Bureaucratic	Public Service Provider, Entrepreneurial, Socially orientated mission, non- profit charity	Public Service, Entrepreneurial, Socially orientated, non-profit charity,
Sensemaking Outcomes	Static, routinized, stable, risk averse.	Turbulent, entrepreneurial, future orientated, building risk tolerance	Creative, entrepreneurial innovative, risk-taking

Source: Author

Table 7 illustrates the broad organisational and individual frames which emerged through the three phases of evolution of Eduvate. Through each phase the frames lead to particular sensemaking outcomes as a consequence of change which was occurring. The table also illustrates the rapid speed of change over three years from the Public Service orientated individual and organisational frames in Phase 1 to the arts cultural and socially entrepreneurial frames extant within phase 3. This table represents a simplified reality of change for stakeholders of Eduvate where many micro frames were also present. I therefore emphasize that the phases should not be considered as linear, but instead more fluid with facets of ‘old’ frames still being extant within certain pockets during phases 2 and 3. I therefore use specific case examples below to outline the processes of sensemaking for particular stakeholders.

One trustee in Section 4.4.3 in a serious tone noted the current impact on staff within Eduvate. She brought her perspective from her appointed position on the workforce committee, one of the sub committees of the board, and emphasized that she perceived a real change in way staff felt about the future direction of the organisation, and could see an end goal in becoming a cultural organisation. The trustee explained that staff perceptions are changing and are beginning to see the value changes in the organisation could bring for the future. Another trustee considered this to be an important milestone as people can see that ‘we [referring to the board as a group] are able to take risks and what we can potentially do’. There was much to take from the positive experience of working with different partners, which is essential to the future and how staff are able to build confidence to work outside of the organisation. This trustee felt that this was changing user perceptions of the organisation, ‘breaking the mould of what the [service] is’ and changing its skill base. At one board meeting an external contractor who had been working on an arts and cultural project internally for Eduvate remarked that the project had been run with

innovation funding and it was about pushing boundaries and taking risks. It was through board meetings such as this that a change in vernacular emerged, using terms such as innovation, risk, pushing boundaries with greater familiarity. This signaled a change in use of different frames to define the organisation. This builds on the work of Weick in terms of how individuals draw upon the past in how individuals make sense of the here and now through the continual need for the reduction of ambiguity. The reinforcement provided through framing in itself is a means to reduce ambiguity amongst stakeholder groups. The comment from the trustee here not only affirms the feelings of other stakeholders in the organisation, but uses the perspective of these stakeholders to build an identity frame for the board of trustees to legitimize the occurrence of change and what is visibly seen and felt by others.

Due to Eduvate's legacy, a large number of stakeholders were already associated with the organisation prior to the spin-out from the local authority. As a result some stakeholders experienced a more direct transition between the old way of organizing as a public service and the new way as a public service mutual. Thurlow and Mills (2015) claim such 'identities that were meaningful in the past will influence the construction of, or adherence to, identities in the future' (p.248). Whilst histories will always exist, of greater importance here is how and when multiple identities surface and how a new identity becomes distinctive. This has implications for how stakeholders enact new identities alongside pre-existing identities and how a new identity creates its own space amongst the multiple through the process of re-positioning amongst the other identities that an individual may hold. This I argue is a continuous process where re-negotiation of identity positions takes place through daily social interaction.

I consider that for the majority of organisational stakeholders the point of transition (spin-out) represents no significant feeling that anything may have changed except for those key

individuals involved with the set-up of Eduvate. Examples include staff members who were also trustees, though leaving open to the contestation of being caught in a state of in-betweenness and may remain so for some considerable time. Each member involved with the organisation in different ways held multiple identities in their own right for example an employee could also have been a service user, parent with child service user, a trustee and friends group representative. It would be these experiences in different capacities that came to define an identity for the new organisation, where in certain instances identities became conflicted or contested. Do we lose an identity, or are they retained at a lesser degree of prominence amongst the multiple? Here there is an apparent need in identity work to understand how we formulate prospective visions of ourselves and organisations. This can be relative to ‘who are we now’ and ‘where might we be going’, in terms of our enacted environment.

Feldman’s (2000) work on routines as the temporal frameworks for organisational work suggests that routines act as a guide by which we can frame the significance of a certain event or activity that we have experienced. Here stakeholders use routines through sensemaking to benchmark what may have or be changing in accord with the events or activities which are perceived to be prominent in the course of a routine. So a frame shapes and guides the ‘cues’ we bracket as worthy of attention, although they may not always be enacted.

5.5.1 Organisational Frames

This section highlights how milestones are used as organisational frames in the process of evolution which categorize both certainty and uncertainty. Independence in becoming the mutual Eduvate introduced a break from the local authority, this also brought the challenge of establishing the then independent public service mutual. Independence here refers to Eduvate

becoming an entirely separate entity from the local authority with its own governance structures with a transfer of undertakings of the county's service. Tensions are first highlighted in the establishment of the PSM in March 2016 (Section 4.2.2), with the CT remarking upon a difficult discussion with the local authority concerning the commissioning document. This would be a critical point for sensemaking, because whilst the break was made at the moment of signing the contract between Eduvate and the local authority the struggle for independence would continue to play out across Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 of Eduvate's evolution. This illustrates a shift towards a new identity for the former public service that emerged from being an independent organisation with an entrepreneurial trajectory. This independence provided the opportunity to experiment with new ways of working, some of which directly arose from the independent break with the local authority, of which had previously restricted the services ability to innovate. The staff and community directed governance structure comprised of the board of trustees and sub-committees enabled the development and implementation of new strategies. The trustees then reframed the organisational identity and strategy, with associated structural changes. They took new actions that produced new outcomes which in turn reinforced independence as 'Eduvate' practices and norms were established. This required individuals to use the new organisational frames to enact new ways of organizing.

Early on in phase one the CT asks the board of trustees and senior managers 'What type of organisation do we want to be?' she notably referenced a strong or distant relationship from the local authority. This appeared timely in the construction of a new organisational frame as associations with the local authority had centered on threats to reductions and closure of the service, therefore a tactical choice posed to stakeholders who may see benefits of dissociation with the local authority. The latter was preferred by trustees and as such sought that 'Eduvate'

would be different introducing new ways of organizing'. The removal of enhanced pay for staff who worked weekends followed which engaged a significant number of staff and acted towards asserting the change that was happening. The first birthday of Eduvate heralded that a greater sense of entrepreneurialism was emerging, with much emphasis given to the activities that the organisation was conducting to sustain itself. This combined with a shift in strategic direction to becoming arts and cultural organisation phase two brought new organisational frames.

I argue that organisational frames are used by individuals to make sense of change with frames themselves a legitimacy affirming tool. These organisational frames act to reinforce a position of accomplishment for the new organisation as they are built upon critical markers in the process of becoming and subsequently influence a position for individual framing.

For example the passing of the first and second birthdays both critical markers in Eduvate's process of becoming establish a shared moment among influential stakeholders by which individual frames are aligned. The birthday each year not only became a marker but a signal of progress in the identity narrative of Eduvate, publicly celebrating change through the accomplishments of the previous year and each birthday that followed to elevate the status of the organisation. Notably this was achieved through its founders the CEO and CT acting to reinforce status hierarchies and differentials, and/or overturn them. This arises because more enaction amongst stakeholders occurs over time as change is slowly introduced. The act of the CEO and CT here seeks to provide a frame for the next phase of evolution which is yet to unfold. The actions of individual stakeholders produce, promote, re-work identity inside and outside these frames through the creation of individual frames.

5.5.2 Individual Frames

In this section I discuss how individual frames are created by stakeholders from influences surrounding them, in this context organisationally. The events that individuals experience in the process of transition are significant in becoming defining moments of change itself. However it is important to highlight that the events that were considered as significant were not the same for all organisational members. Some events were only relevant to or experienced by a specific groups of stakeholders. I argue that this shapes a unique set of frames for each individual.

During the pre-birth phase expressions of uncertainty arose from stakeholders in reference to the change about to occur from the mutualisation process. The question arises over whether those engaged with the daily activities of the organisation have an awareness of change before it manifests as a threat to one's own identity or creates tensions between multiple identities. An example of this occurred in Section 4.3.3 (p.139) where the CT asks trustees 'what do we feel the problem is?' in a board development session concerning the role of the board and trustees individually. It was intriguing to observe the framing of issues as 'problems' which seemingly invoked a sense of tension amongst the group. The identity narrative was seemingly becoming more turbulent than that of the past under the former local authority operation with a status quo of a problem rather than solution focus. This manifested as trustees seeming unsure of their place or did not feel comfortable to make a contribution. For most trustees their role ran alongside another identity both internal and external to Eduvate. For example some trustees were 'front line' members of staff and others friends group representatives of their local branch. In other instances trustees sat on boards of other companies in addition to running their own business. Each of these instances reflected a different level of immersion in the organisational life of Eduvate, whilst also bringing wider influences to identity to that which they were exposed

in their respective positions on the board of trustees. Given this there were many competing tensions for each trustee which can be illustrated by the rising and falling of prominence of any of their particular identities in a given moment. With each trustee possessing a different organisational perspective, independent trustees had much more strategic immersion in the organisation where members of staff and friends group members had deeper immersion 'on the ground'. For this reason sensemaking frames were different for each individual and in this way created struggles for the emerging board dynamic. To this point the creation of the organisation stemmed from the top and thus a senior perspective remained dominant, this reinforced a distance to those on 'the ground' and the voicing of emergent issues.

Elaborating on the board dynamic the 'intense silences' that become a reoccurring theme of board meetings in the data illustrate the status differentials of individuals. The silences follow questions between members of the board in their non trustee identities, such as members of staff on the 'front line' or friends group representatives who felt to some degree overpowered reinforcing the position of 'conflicted identities' as they emerge in the moment. For example some staff trustees desired to voice their opinions in their capacity as a trustee, but felt conflicted for the implications voicing such opinions may have in the role as a member of staff. In March 2016 at the first shadow board of trustees conveyed a sense of overwhelm at this critical moment in setup. This was interesting to observe as trustees themselves were easing into their new identities. Seemingly through the silence which occurred at this particular meeting, trustees exercised their duties with caution initially, voices became strengthened as identities rose to greater prominence. Chenhall et al.'s (2015) study, exploring how identity conflicts can be resolved, already alludes to how identity conflicts can be both embedded and deeply seated

within an organisation requiring further theoretical support. However, this does not take account of how identity conflicts come to the fore in a given setting.

As Eduvate matures the new ideology superimposes onto that of the former local authority's bureaucratic public service identity, which introduces a conflict. From this we learn it is not necessarily at the point of transfer or prior to transfer that identity conflicts may occur, but instead later in the process of evolution as that new identity becomes enacted by senior management but also employees and other stakeholders themselves. At the same board development session a trustee states: 'I don't think we lack anything' (p.145) although they added the caveat that perhaps the board lacked knowledge of property and law even though organisational strategy was still being developed. This again provides an insight on perceptions of this trustee, influenced by organisational frames which shape the view that property and law of which were dominant topics of board meetings at the time. This is an interesting perspective as the trustee appears to use a retrospective view of the organisation to put forward the assertion 'I don't think we lack anything', but then quickly reframes this to a prospective view highlighting particular deficiencies around property and law as these relate to the particular challenges that they have been immersed with. Put simply continuous iteration between a retrospective and prospective frames of the organisation provides a position for an individual to establish continuity.

5.5.3 Maintaining continuity

This section discusses how through sensemaking stakeholders achieve a status of continuity through the major challenges of change of becoming a public service mutual spin-out. I highlight three core challenges from the findings of this research which arise in the

maintenance of continuity: First, communication initially during the pre-spin-out period and then through the years that follow; Second, the need to achieve and sustain independence from the stage of Eduvate's birth, and finally, how Eduvate brings together social and entrepreneurial objectives under a charitable structure to embrace new ways of organizing.

The findings support that stakeholder based perceptions of continuity on engaging the past, imagining the future whilst existing in the ever-changing present. Continuity is characterized in this work by the notion of holding on to remnants of the past. Emergent events or the 'critical events' as termed in this study, shape the past to account for that present, and create trajectories for the future in accordance with Mead (1932). Thus continuity in the present consists of how we revise the past and project the future (Mead, 1932; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; and Wiebe, 2010). How we revise the past and project the future is dependent on frames communicated to us. I relate this concept to the processes stakeholders conduct day to day. Whilst the snapshot revealed in this study should not be viewed as a stop/start point for change for Eduvate, it provides a window on organisational life at a given point in time. As already discussed in, (Section 5.2), senior organisational members act as influencers to change or continuity which may or may not become enacted by other members. Thus, I argue it is the maintenance of continuity that is preferenced and prioritized through the senior level and local level organisational perceptions over discontinuity through notions of change. It is this maintenance of continuity that is also desired through communication, where gaps intentional or unintentional give rise to ambiguity for those receiving the communication.

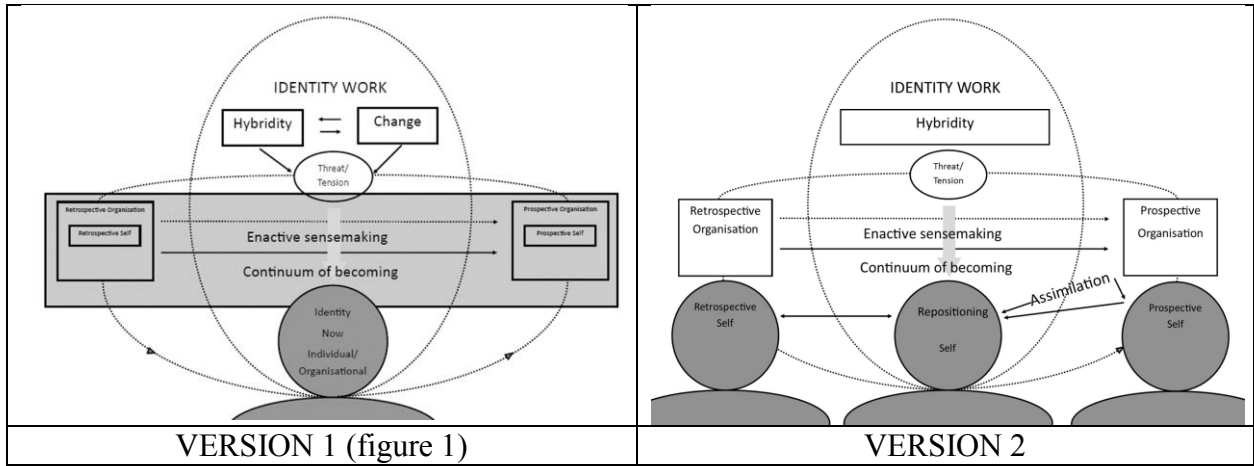
Ricoeur's (1984: 150) work demonstrates how the reader is 'pulled forward' through time using stories, illustrative to the way in which, stories, conversation and communication become the narratives of the organisation. A common theme in the case of Eduvate is the senior level and

local level organisational narratives which manifest as stories contingent upon a ‘present of past’(memory), ‘present of present’ (perception) and ‘present of future’ (expectation) a continuous process of iteration in becoming towards a future state (Maclean et al, 2012: 29). It is through this temporal lens that one can observe how sense is made of identity based upon a bricolage of senior level communications, local level communications and speculation

5.6 Model for sensemaking through organisational change

Following a review of the literature in Section 2.6 I proposed a model for enactive sensemaking and demonstrate how this links to identity work conducted by individuals. I adapt the model as initially proposed in Section 2.6 highlighting where components are supported or contested by the findings of this research. It is apparent from my data that certain identities rise to prominence at particular moments in time and gain salience over other identities held by individuals, this I illustrate as the process of identity *repositioning*. This process for the individual is not straightforward but embroiled with a tumultuous composition of threat and tension. The original model (Figure 1) below has been amended in light of findings from the case against the model I originally proposed prior to the fieldwork taking place.

Figure 7 Enactive Sensemaking Comparison Version 1 and Version 2



Source: Author

The model remains (Figure.1) to challenge assertions that identity adaptations ‘occur incrementally and involve considerable work’ (Brown, 2015). It reinforces that such identity adaptations occur continuously over the course of time. I argue however this is not to the detriment of the components of identity that an individual may hold on to. Rather than a self-guided need to adapt as originally proposed the process of assimilation (Figure.7) has greater prominence as described in Section 5.3.1. The amended model of enactive sensemaking (Figure.8) is not exclusive to PSM’s , but illustrates how an individual makes sense of change and the accomplishment of their identity within a changing organisation. At the polar ends of the continuum the retrospective organisation and retrospective self with the prospective self and the prospective organisation at the other end. The individual remains buoyant between these two opposites, and I argue, an oscillation between the two polar ends gives rise to the experience of threat and tension through enactive sensemaking. I refer to the existence of the individual in a buoyant position, this is so because the individual can be drawn towards the prominence of the prospective or retrospective self or organisation at any given time. Sensemaking through individual and organisational frames works as a push and pull on this continuum taking account of new influences such as the organisational frames created by senior organisational members set against that of the past which retain value for those individuals.

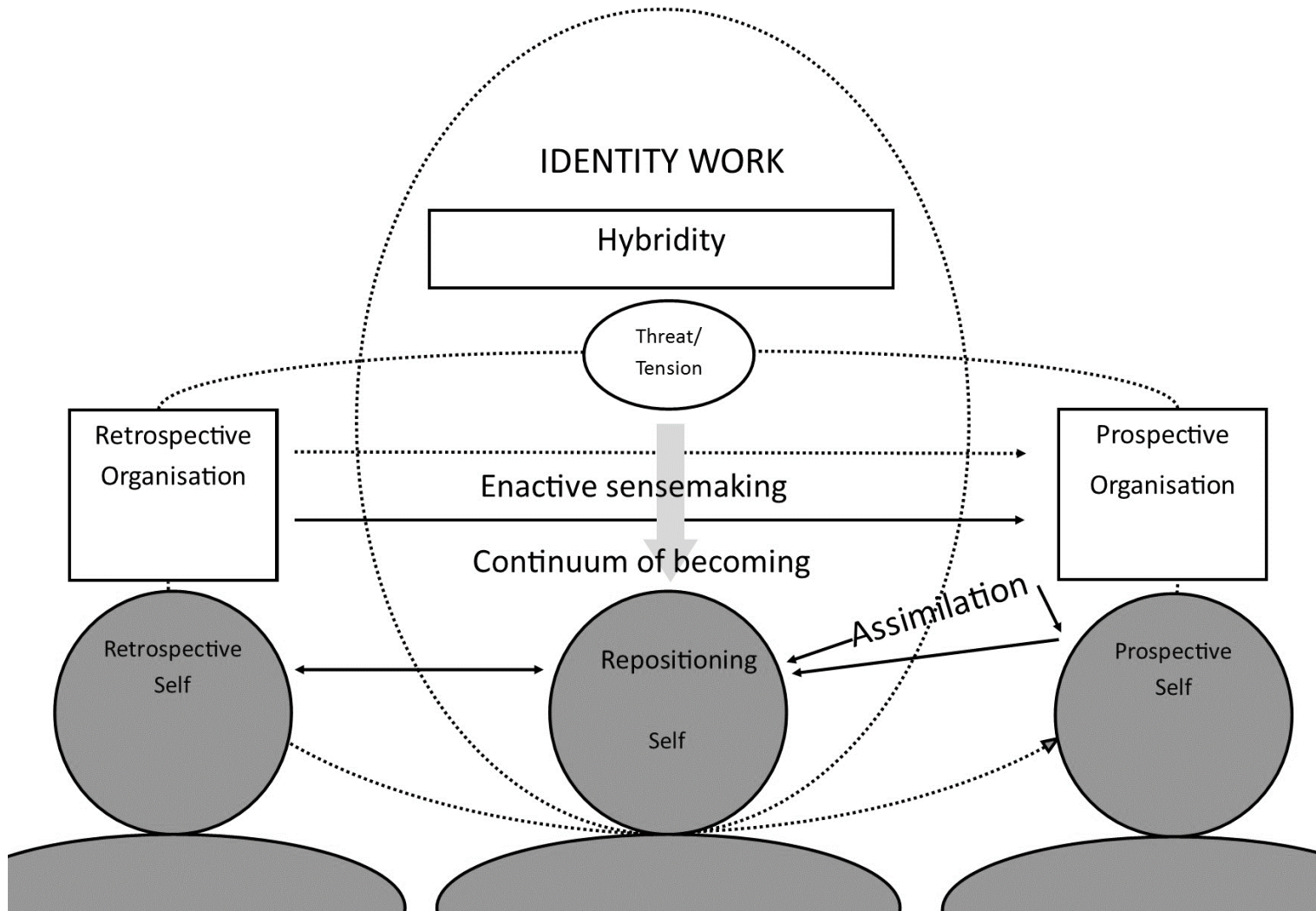
The original model (Figure 1) featured the notion of mundane organisational routine, relating to how we use identity work over time in order to accomplish our own identities, to the point daily activities contribute to a wider notion of change. As discussed already in Section 5.5 the level of involvement a stakeholder has with an organisation becomes relative to how they make sense of change over time. Those with less contact or exposure to organisational life

observe change more noticeably due to contact being only periodic and this way identity formation may also take a different pace. This is where identity formation may be slower or selective in a sense that it is built upon fewer frames as a result of less exposure to organisational life either internally or externally. What now becomes clear is that organisational and individual frames are less effective where stakeholders have less immersion with organisational life either internally or externally. Equally, organisational routine itself does not illuminate change, but can be enactive of incremental change to which critical events act to reinforce what has changed, but this takes place through an organisational frame which in time can influence an individual frame where attributes are adopted incrementally. However, it remains that an individual may only become aware of or adjust as a result of change until such time it becomes a threat to identity or its constituent parts.

Sensemaking concerns the meanings assigned to the same event enacted through uncertainty and ambiguity arising through the senior level and local level narratives of the organisation. Stein's (2004) work focuses on that of crisis, developing the notion of the 'critical period' acknowledge that shock, diminished routine through organisational crisis unearth thinking on how sense is made of both change but also at the individual level anxiety and fear which may be experienced through the process. Individuals inevitably conduct reflection on their 'routinised' activity which allows a form of capture on how such daily activities come to be constructed. It is the activity which is irregular or in some way different that can become the focus of this reflection. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) make a call for identity dynamics to be better understood through the adoption of frames from identity work and sensemaking. Therefore the amended model of enactive sensemaking (Figure 8) provides a solution to this call, but does

not seek to simplify what is a complex process through the interconnected nature of existing theoretical concepts.

Figure 8 Enactive Sensemaking Version 2



The model takes into account the life course of the individual focusing on that which taking place now, but recognising both the strong associations to the past and also to the future.

Enactive sensemaking can be construed as anything but a linear process (Helms Mills and Mills, 2010), but here the focus is placed on meaning-making. Thus power, identity and legitimacy become an integral aspect of the process of sensemaking. These concluding conceptualisations become the scope for investigation, with the following research questions emerging from the review of literature in the three core areas of identity, change and sensemaking. (Figure. 2 p.69) Illustrates how the three sub-questions map to the core areas of literature and sub literatures, with each question covering three bodies of literature in order to investigate linkage between them.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws the thesis together, and presents my concluding thoughts. Firstly, in summarizing my core arguments, I have presented a summary of the findings outlining how this research can further develop understanding in identified fields, before explicitly describing the contributions of this research, theoretically Section 6.3.1, and, finally, practically, with clear implications for practitioners leading change in the public and non-profit sector Section 6.3.2. It is important to highlight that in any study there will be limitations I present these limitations and suggest areas for further research in Section 6.4.

6.2 Summary of findings

The aim of this thesis was to present new knowledge in processual accounts of organisational change. This longitudinal case study of the spin-out of local authority public service to an independent public service mutual revealed how stakeholders negotiate the identity challenges of change to make sense of an evolving organisational identity. Through the chronological presentation of the case as ‘critical events’ I have sought to articulate the process of evolution of Eduvate. The process of evolution illuminates the complexities of identity formation through three identified stages (Table 5, p. 115) Phase 1 - Pre-spin out (Birth), Phase 2 – Spin-out (Birth) - 1st Birthday, Phase 3 - 1st Birthday – 2nd Birthday. Each of these phases features a set of critical events which become defining points (markers) in the evolutionary journey of the organisation

and the accomplishments of its stakeholders. The passing of each year in Eduvate's history was celebrated by a birthday, with a gathering of invited stakeholders to share the year's successes. I consider these events to be legitimacy affirming for those associated with the organisation. The findings demonstrate how a range of stakeholders align or contest organisational frames and senior level organisational narratives to make sense of change over a three year period. The core challenges of change to emerge from the findings include, communication before and after spin-out, establishing independence from the local authority and embracing new ways of working. The CT and CEO have a dominant presence as leaders of the spin-out process and then Eduvate following the transfer of undertakings from the local authority. In their senior positions they become strong influencers for the shaping of identity for the organisation and subsequent identities individuals shape for themselves. For these individuals (stakeholders) reference is made in the interviews and focus groups of the 'critical events' in the life of the organisation and orientation to how they see the future in reference to the former local authority run service. Reference to the future in respect of how the organisation may change in the most part is clouded with uncertainty. These become the cues and frames for sense to be made of the past, present and future in respect of identity and come to define what is changing.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions of the Research

Four theoretical contributions are made in this work. First, stakeholders perform identity work by creating their own narrative for identity as a new organisational form evolves, pieced together from the senior level and local level organisational narratives and the ambiguity arising in-between (Section 5.2). Second, in a spin-out, identity formation processes unfold through iteration between individual and organisational identity (Section 5.3), I theorize two specific

practices assimilation (Section 5.3.1) and repositioning (Section 5.3.2) which occur in this process. Third, I integrate these two practices to explain how the iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity manifests through evolution to present initially hybrid, and then multiple, identities (Section 5.4). The latter arising from the way identities are composed and/or decomposed through identity legitimisation and contestation. Finally, stakeholders use sensemaking processes through certainty and uncertainty to initially temporally frame what is changing, then to determine a position for their own continuity (Section 5.5). Each contribution is elaborated in the next sections.

6.3.1 Ambiguity and the evolution of identity over time

This contribution concerns how stakeholders perform identity work over time as a new organisational form evolves in this particular case as a public service mutual. I argue stakeholders perform such identity work by piecing together their own organisational story through the ambiguity arising in senior level and local level narratives. The local level narratives comprise of perceptions of control, ownership, organisational structures and processes. In addition stakeholder's expressions of uncertainty, perceptions of sameness or difference and reference to specific events are included amongst these narratives.

To provide context on how local level narratives arise, I first detail the aspect of stakeholder immersion in organisational life. The spin-out was a critical point for communications with staff and other stakeholders about the new organisation, as it presented the opportunity for an aspirational organisational frame distinctly different from that which had gone before. It would appear that uncertainty was an overriding factor which limited the receptiveness of communications about the spin-out to Eduvate for its stakeholders. The formal aspirational

messages communicated by senior leaders of the public service became mixed with the informal narratives which arose between members due to the ambiguity of formal messages. This exacerbated the overall uncertainty felt by stakeholders as clear channels of communication could not be determined. A pertinent example arises in section 4.5.1 (p. 188) where in September 2018 councilors who at the point some three years after the spin out, in a capacity as commissioners, did not appear to be clear about the structure of Eduvate or what they themselves as councilors were responsible for. Partly through changes to the electorate over three years councilors were a stakeholder group with seemingly less immersion in the organisational life of Eduvate although albeit a politically important responsibility due to the geographical stretch of the organisation across districts of the region and perceived accountability for its partial public funding. Regardless of this there was less awareness amongst councilors about what had changed, with only one individual in this stakeholder group holding responsibility for the commissioning of the organisation. A further explanation which details how certain stakeholders with less immersion in organisational life, such as the councilors in this example, can be taken from the practices of assimilation and repositioning under identity formation.

6.3.2 The iterative emergence of individual and organisational identity

The legacy transfer of undertakings through spin-out provides an account for the complexity of identity formation processes as they unfold over time focusing on the iteration between individual and organisational identity through the evolution of Eduvate. These formation processes begin based on representations of identities held by a few key individuals who form the mutual project board initiating the establishment and transfer of undertakings to Eduvate. This leaves other stakeholders with choices through assimilation attempts about which identities

they will enact based on their own values and beliefs about the organisation. Primarily this is shaped by what they know retrospectively about the organisation, with assimilation guided by communications which begin to emerge about the new organisation Eduvate. Processes of contestation arise where individuals may choose not to enact a certain 'desired identity' and legitimacy where they do enact desired identities. When talking about desired identity I refer to those formal messages communicated by senior leaders although it should be recognized this may not be the desired identity of individual stakeholders, hence their efforts to contest. The problem occurs where the legitimate identity may be construed as the correct one, this is not so, as legitimacy would rather indicate the identity which is affirmed by the majority. In stakeholder groupings a majority view can be held which does not align to the portrayed organisational identity. To the individual the process of assimilation is aligned to legitimacy where individuals attempt to align their own identity and their concept of the organisations identity towards that which is being broadcast by senior leaders. In time this encourages individuals to reposition former identities about the organisation, still enacting them but slowly strong attributes emerge from the new identity and become positioned over former identities. The former identities remain in the conscious to be recalled but hold a lesser degree of prominence over time. Pockets of sub-identities emerge based on those who share certain beliefs themselves and about the organisation though this is often influenced by external factors too.

6.3.3 The manifestation of hybrid then multiple identities

Having outlined the initial processes of identity formation, I argue that individual and organisational identity emerge through evolution. A hybrid identity can be considered to be present where two significant identities are playing out simultaneously, this notion is already

strongly supported within the literature. What is less well understood is how ‘hybrid identities’ transition to ‘multiple identities’ over time. From the initial duality of the hybrid at the point of transfer, put simply the old and new organisation co-existing, a greater realm of sub-identities are either composed and/or decomposed through identity legitimisation and contestation processes. In the case of Eduvate, multiple identities begin to occur beyond the point of transition where stakeholders continue to enact what they believe their organisation is about. For each stakeholder a different variation of this can be seen to exist hence the existence of the realm of sub-identities which form the multiple aspect beyond the primary duality of the old and new organisation. The process of organisational change places salience on new identity components which shape a new organisational identity where the ‘old’ becomes overridden or repositioned by the new. It should be acknowledged that this is a slow process and can take varying lengths of time for different stakeholders.

6.3.4 The temporal framing of change

Stakeholders use sensemaking processes through certainty and uncertainty to temporally frame what is changing to determine a position of their own continuity. Through early communications senior leaders become influencers through the organisational frames they present which hold the potential to orientate stakeholders towards change. Whilst messages are broadcast by senior leaders, work is also conducted between stakeholders to unearth uncertainty and confusion. Individuals used the framing of events and prompts as a fulcrum around which to construct social hierarchies and in/out-groups, which help them to make sense of the uncertainty and confusion in the ‘vacuum’ that is a new organisational form. Whilst this is a means to make sense of change the fulcrum set up possibilities for conflict later on in the evolution of the organisation.

6.4 Practical Contribution

In addition this work makes two contributions to practice through the framing of the major challenges of change for becoming a public service mutual. These include: communication, independence and the implementation of new ways of working. The insights on these challenges become useful to practice and to practitioners who are undertaking or about to undertake a similar journey. Two contributions are therefore made. Firstly, they sensitize both managers and stakeholders to the challenges of change who themselves may be facing similar challenges in the commissioning of public sector services, transfer of undertakings, embedding new ideals as the result of a transfer or takeover. Secondly, for local authorities and commissioners of public services in providing empirical examples of how a major public service change plays out in real time and the implications this has for stakeholders. The implications of this can be used to enable further implementation of innovative solutions to sustain and evolve service delivery against a backdrop of reduced local government budgets.

This work also provides direction for public policy at this critical period in time. In a context where funding cuts to services through reduced local government budgets are still being felt, even though announcements have been made by government to end austerity. Stakeholders in these affected organisations must seek innovative solutions to service delivery, which in turn places a greater reliance on alternative forms of organizing such as public service mutual for the sustained delivery of public services. This research therefore holds pertinence for the Cabinet office's existing mutual support programme.

To sensitize leaders, managers and employees of public service mutuals a programme of engagement is proposed to emanate from this research. This will take the form of challenge focused workshops to relate findings to individual's daily work.

6.5 Limitations

In this section I address the limitations of the study exploring the methods, practical constraints and wider applicability of the findings. The study focuses on the extensive exploration of a singular case using in-depth qualitative methods. The case of Eduvate was deemed to be revelatory given the opportunity afforded to me to follow the organisation before and after its transitions at a critical point in time. Access was swiftly granted with data collection beginning immediately following ethical approval. This gave little time to test methods instead the process of data collection was continuously reviewed and revised as appropriate. At times the site of study was too vast for the sole researcher to navigate given multiple locations and scope of exploration necessary to be re-assessed given the quantities of data that any given period presented. The data collection was therefore orientated primarily to board operations as a basis continuance for observations.

Over time, I experienced greater depths of integration with Eduvate becoming seen as more of a compatriot to colleagues in the setting. This was both humbling and advantageous for access for the research, but also presented significant challenges. At times my role may have been forgotten by 'others' as I blended into proceedings and routines. This on occasion elicited more candid comment from participants or required the sensitive handling of information of which I had been privy too. This in reflection demonstrated participants at ease in their setting and a significant level of trust exercised by the organisation. Whilst this can be viewed as

advantageous from a research perspective it presented a continuous need to reassess boundaries and how to 'play the role of the researcher' whilst in the 'master's house'. Here it is important to reiterate that this research was conducted at a time where the organisation was operating under significant constraints and that it was necessary to revise proposed data collection and approaches to accommodate the needs of the organisation. Nonetheless, these are the only circumstances under which processual data in this context can be gathered, because of the sensitivity of the transition process and the challenging nature of the decisions taking place. Therefore it is a necessary limitation and an accepted part of the process by which knowledge can be constructed in this context.

My findings chapter presents a rich diversity of data and interpretation of stakeholders through the process of evolution. The collection of multiple sources of data was necessary to demonstrate the complexity of change and specific identity formation processes which one method could not solely capture. Observation primarily provided the greatest insight as I was able to observe events firsthand as they played out in real time. Interviews acted as either prospective or retrospective views on what had happened or what was going to happen according to key stakeholders. This alone presented an all-important individual standpoint. As such the resulting chronological sequence of organisational evolution requires the reader at points to maintain a narrative through the discourse. In some senses accounts are unifying, where in others they are contested which requires the reader to also draw their own interpretations. Whilst it was always the intention of this work to be interpretive the further interpretation by the reader is unavoidable, which is potentially part of any research text. The discussion chapter therefore emphasizes my interpretive frame on the data as the researcher.

This work presents the story of one case, though the case was felt to be empirically rich to justify the singular focus and found to revelatory as it was undergoing transition at beginning of this study. Whilst the sample could have been enlarged this would have compromised the richness of data and considerations given towards greater resource to enable such a study to be undertaken. This is however a double-edged sword given the richness of data that the case offers, as such only a fraction of the data can actually be reported in a textual artefact such as this thesis. The selection of participants to interview and form group interviews was opportunistic in the sense of formal introductions to be made to group members in specific locations through gatekeeper access and as I as the researcher got to know individuals in the research setting over the course of the study. This presents greater risk of bias in terms of the information that could be elicited from known informants, than an anonymous survey would for example. An anonymous survey would however have diminished the richness of data that was achieved through the combination of observation and interviews. The personal rapport between the researcher and participant as already mentioned achieved a greater level of trust of which participants appeared willing to provide contributions. A survey is also conducted on the assumption that one has an idea of what they are looking for from the outset. Given the exploratory nature of this study and need for quick entry to the field the core themes and concepts emerged as the study progressed, initially through observation which then informed later interview frameworks. Rigour is produced through crystallization, the combination of sources and accounts which provide great depth in the data approached from different angles.

Another limitation is presented in that the thesis forms a textual artefact. This is of course the traditional format of a doctoral thesis, although presents several questions in its appropriateness to report the full richness of the lived experience under ethnographically

informed research. Through attempts to represent the fullness of data the thesis by length was a limit itself. Whilst considerable depth has been represented from the data collected, there is still more that could be included from such a rich case study. For reasons of balance and proportion I found myself constrained to deliver the essential components. This is further exacerbated by the mediation against visual representation, something which in the 21st century is gaining increasing prominence as a primary medium of communicating information.

6.6 Further Research

This study promotes several areas for further research which I outline in this section giving consideration to the wider applicability of this research, does the research travel given differences within geographic areas of the UK and finally revisiting the case itself given changes to the context. One of the most fundamental opportunities for further research arises from the changed political context since this study was initiated. The process of mutualisation arose in an era of austerity with the main aim of saving and sustaining public services run by UK local authorities. We are now in an era post austerity with the prospect of Brexit looming. This poses a new question as to what would happen if the same issues that form the foundation of this research were revisited using the same methods now.

The potential for further research is not confined to direct replication study but also to consider the idea of transferred ownership in other contexts. For example there is a need to consider models of transferred ownership in other sectors outside arts and culture the geographical context is also potentially important looking beyond the UK.

The UK itself also offers scope to consider differences in areas which have been granted devolved powers from central government, looking specifically at differences in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland separately.

The context of the case Eduvate has now also changed since this study began. There have been several notable changes that offer the potential for new insight. For example there has been a complete change in the composition of the board of trustees and a new CEO appointed. New contracts have been awarded to the organisation and old contracts renewed. This raises the question of whether organisational identity has evolved again to reflect these changes.

Appendix

Appendix A Data Table

Post-Transfer Data			
SESSION	STAKEHOLDER	DATE	TYPE OF DATA
Visual Mapping Sessions & Focus Groups			
Friends Group Session 1	Staff, Friends Group Reps	28/09/2017	Visual mapping informed focus groups
Friends Group Session 2	Staff, Friends Group Reps	28/09/2017	Visual mapping informed focus groups
Friends Group Session 3	Staff, Friends Group Reps	28/09/2017	Visual mapping informed focus groups
Interview Data			
Ex-Trustee (Exposure to org prior, & through transition)		20/04/2018	In-depth Interview
Ex-Trustee (Exposure to org prior, & through transition)		30/04/2018	In-depth Interview
Chair of Board of Trustees		27/04/2016	Interview (Handwritten Notes)
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 25/5/2018	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 23/2/2018	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 17/11/2017	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 22/09/2017	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 14/07/2017	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 12/05/2017	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 17/03/2017	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 27/01/2017	Board papers, observation notes

Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 11/11/2016	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 16/09/2016	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Fri 20/05/2016	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Wed 13/04/2016	Board papers, observation notes
Board Meeting	Board of Trustees	Wed 16/03/2016	Board papers, observation notes

Other Meetings

Staff Meeting	All staff (mixed grades)	Tue 08/03/2016	Observation notes
Board Development	Board of Trustees	Fri 16/09/2016	Observation notes
Strategy Meeting	Senior Management	Fri 12/05/2017	Observation notes
AGM	Staff, Members	26/09/2018	

Pre-Transfer Data

Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Staff Member	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Branch Supervisor	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Focus Group	Friends Group Chair Staff Member Service User Service User Staff Member	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Volunteer	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Volunteer	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Friends Group Rep	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Staff Member	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Focus Group	Service User/ Friends Group Rep	Aug-15	

	Friends Group Rep Staff Member		
Interview	Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Staff Member	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Interview	Staff Member	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed
Focus Group	Service User Service User/ Friends Group Rep Service User Service User Service User	Aug-15	Recorded and Transcribed

Appendix B Coding frame mapping theoretical dimensions to representative data

Theoretical Dimensions, Themes & Categories	Representative Data
Organisational Change Narrative	
1. Senior Level Narrative	
A. Reference to values purpose vision or mission.	A1. 'As a mutual organisation, independent from [the local authority], the service will maintain and grow professional expertise and experience, deepen links to the community, enshrine a social ethos and purpose and will be able to make additional savings as well as access new forms of income, whether directly from developing new chargeable services, by eligibility for grant funding, encouraging sponsorship and philanthropy or delivering additional contracts' (doc) A2. 'It is time to put the placards away, the fight is over' (obs)
B. Discussion of control, ownership, organisational structures and processes	B1. 'it will be important for the public that one face of family is presented'. (obs) B2. 'This new organisation will be able to make savings through a tailored approach to management, support and running costs and have the freedom to access new sources of income. It will be more agile and focused to respond quickly and flexibly to community needs and demands and will be able to work in more innovative and collaborative ways with Devon's communities and other partners. The new organisation is likely to have charitable status and a mix of staff and community ownership'. (doc)
2. Local Level Narrative	
C. Discussion of control, ownership, organisational structures and processes	C1. 'Uhhh umm [the local authority] will still have responsibility for providing the service and own the buildings, but the services are going to be run as a charitable organisation [...] i think that's my understanding of it, I think the same staff are going to be around, but I don't know if that means when people leave they are

not going to be replaced, whether volunteers will take their place I don't know'.

- D. Expression of uncertainty
- C2. 'I thought today has been really good to sort of come together and feel part of a whole thing because you're doing so much locally and very very isolated because you don't have much connection with the other local [branches] because we're isolated (laughter), because that's the structure of us, that's the nature of it'
- D1. 'StAG [Staff and Advisory Group] recognised these concerns but feel that there is a very difficult balance between telling staff everything when much is still uncertain and not saying anything and subsequently being accused of not communicating with staff. There is a lot that we genuinely don't know at the moment and the overarching desire of management and StAG is to be as open and transparent as possible' (doc)
- D2. 'Well the whole thing is so new, I know York and Suffolk have about three years' experience of it. The videos that were shown on the I.T link with videos of their staff and representatives and how positive they feel about their experience. I just wonder if the things they have been able to do as a result of the change, funding ideas and new involvements within the communities, just a different way of looking at the whole nature of the service I suppose' (int)
- E. Perceptions of sameness or difference
- E1. I think for me it's like looking at something that's like being a corporate business and a family business and [the local branch] is very much a family business therefore the corporate, it doesn't quite hold as good in a family environment really (int)
- F. Reference to specific events
- F1. 'The Birth', 'First Birthday', 'Second Birthday'
- F2. 'Staff Conference', 'Becoming Independent'

Identity Formation

3. Organisational Frames

- G. Differentiating between the *old* and the *new*
- G1. '[the staff conference] reminded us that what we are all doing through our [work] is so important, and why we must continue to innovate and grow as an organisation to ensure our services provide much-needed support to the people of [the county]. Our new NPO status means that we will be able to develop a high-quality and diverse cultural programme across [the county]'
- G2. 'The CT made a comparison between the new and old regime, particularly emphasising how a large number of friends groups had arisen though the need to save [services] where attempts had been made by senior management to re-orientate their focus on enhancing their local [branches] offer for its users'(obs).
- H. Reference to collective
- H1. '[The Staff conference] has officially marked the end of our first fantastic year and filled us all with motivation and enthusiasm to face the challenges that lay ahead of us as we continue on our journey' (doc)
- H2. 'One trustee highlighted that whilst it was nice to hear the "good news" stories, the challenging issues were often not noted in the CEO's report. He questioned why this was so and enquired why the CEO's report was not shared with staff and other stakeholders as they would be interested to know about many of the things happening' (obs)

4. Individual Frames

- I. Reference to self-concept
-

J. Reference to self in past and present
J1. 'StAG [Staff and Advisory Group] recognised these concerns but feel that there is a very difficult balance between telling staff everything when much is still uncertain and not saying anything and subsequently being accused of not communicating with staff. There is a lot that we genuinely don't know at the moment and the overarching desire of management and StAG is to be as open and transparent as possible' (doc)

K. Threat to individual identity/status/position/role
K1. We felt for the [service] because there were threats made and political and all the rest of it [...] we could foresee certain measures being taken to restrict or dispose of staff or whatever so to reduce it so that there's less cost to the council as that's what it was years and years ago

5. Assimilation

L. Individual perceptions of organisation
L1. 'so there's no sort of local sort of second tier really is there? It's quite good that it is quite a flat organisation in that respect'. (int)

M. Alignment to individual identity attributes

N. Adopting new identity attributes from organisational narrative
N1. 'I like to attend the regular meetings that are going on so that you can get the update from X about what's going on with [Eduvate] and how it links into what we are doing as Friends groups because you want to be working together for the same purpose' (int)

6. Repositioning

O. Holding former identities
'evolve gradually, collectively and locally' (obvs)

P. Placing together old and new identity attributes
'Bureaucratic', 'entrepreneurial', 'innovative'

Q. Selective prominence of identity to be enacted
'I remember the missions and values were presented to us. So there had been obviously a lot of thought and discussion between the senior management team as to what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it. So the rest of the board weren't involved in any way in putting that together' (int)

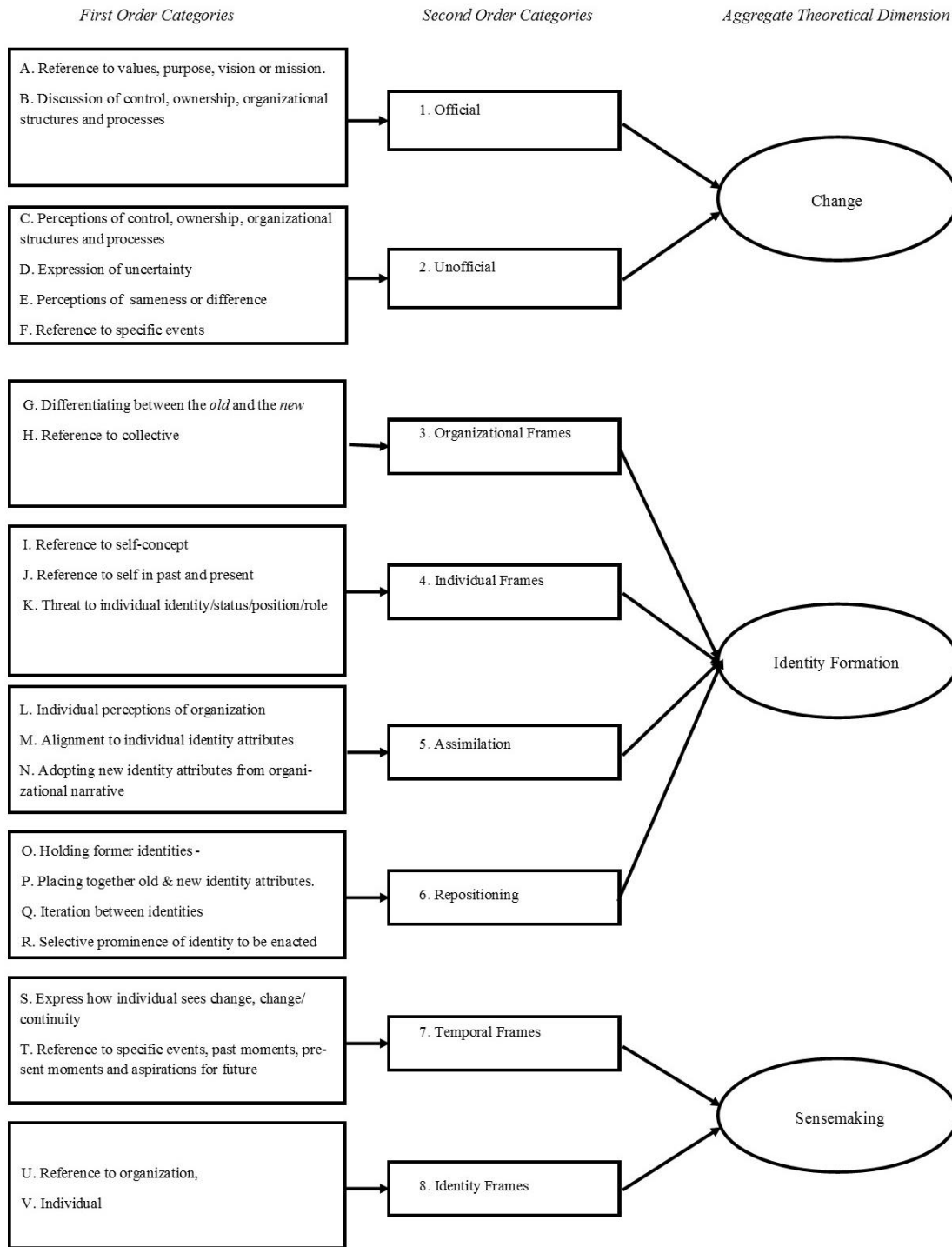
Sensemaking

7. Temporal Framing

R. Express how individual sees change, continuity
S1. 'Personally I would just really like to keep that going and I know that's not always going to be realistic, there's going to be times when things don't work, when that initial sort of burst of "oo its going great" you know, sort of dips off, but it's about keeping going through that'. (int)

S. Reference to specific events, past moments, present moments and aspirations for future.
'Yeah I think its brief because I'm not sure what the future is going to be because we are in this situation that we are in now, I'd like to think that looking at it as we are now that we can diversify and promote the [service] in totally different ways, not taking away its traditional [sic] but adding to it and I think if we don't that's why the future for me is a concern because I can see it becoming a bit of an outdated facility that people think we just done need any more rather than something that is traditionally something of benefit and has other things that go with it. I just don't know I've got no idea how that's going to pan out in our scenario' (int)

Appendix C Data Structure



Appendix D



Research Project: Stakeholder Perceptions of Organisational Change

Informed Consent - Interviews

This interview will explore the experiences and journeys of people with Eduvate.

We would like to capture some information from this interview. This information will take the form of:

- 1) **Audio Recording of the interview.** This recording will help to inform understandings about how people make sense of change in relation to affiliation with an organisation. The audio data will be anonymised and you will be able to turn off the recording device at any time. The transcripts and recordings will be kept securely and in line with the University of Exeter's strict code of practice for research ethics.

If you foresee any problems with the procedure outlined above, please contact Hugh Waters H.Waters@exeter.ac.uk

With thanks

Hugh Waters, Postgraduate Researcher, University of Exeter Business School

In signing this form I confirm that I understand the terms under which this research is being conducted and consent to participate in the research.

Researcher Signature:

Date:

Participant Signature:

Date:

Appendix E



Research Project: Stakeholder Perceptions of Organisational Change

Informed Consent – Focus Groups

This focus group will explore the journeys of people with

We would like to capture some information from this focus group. This information will take the form of:

- 1) **Individual handwritten journey maps.** The maps will inform the basis of later discussion. All maps will be anonymised other than noting your own self-identifying association with the organisation.
- 2) **Audio Recording of the focus group.** This recording will help to inform understandings about how people make sense of change. The audio data will be anonymised and you will be able to turn off the recording device at any time. The transcripts and recordings will be kept securely and in line with the University of Exeter's strict code of practice for research ethics.

If you foresee any problems with the procedure outlined above, please contact Hugh Waters H.Waters@exeter.ac.uk

With thanks

Hugh Waters, Researcher, University of Exeter Business School

In signing this form I confirm that I understand the terms under which this research is being conducted and consent to participate in the research.

Researcher Signature:

Date:

Participant Signature:

Date:

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